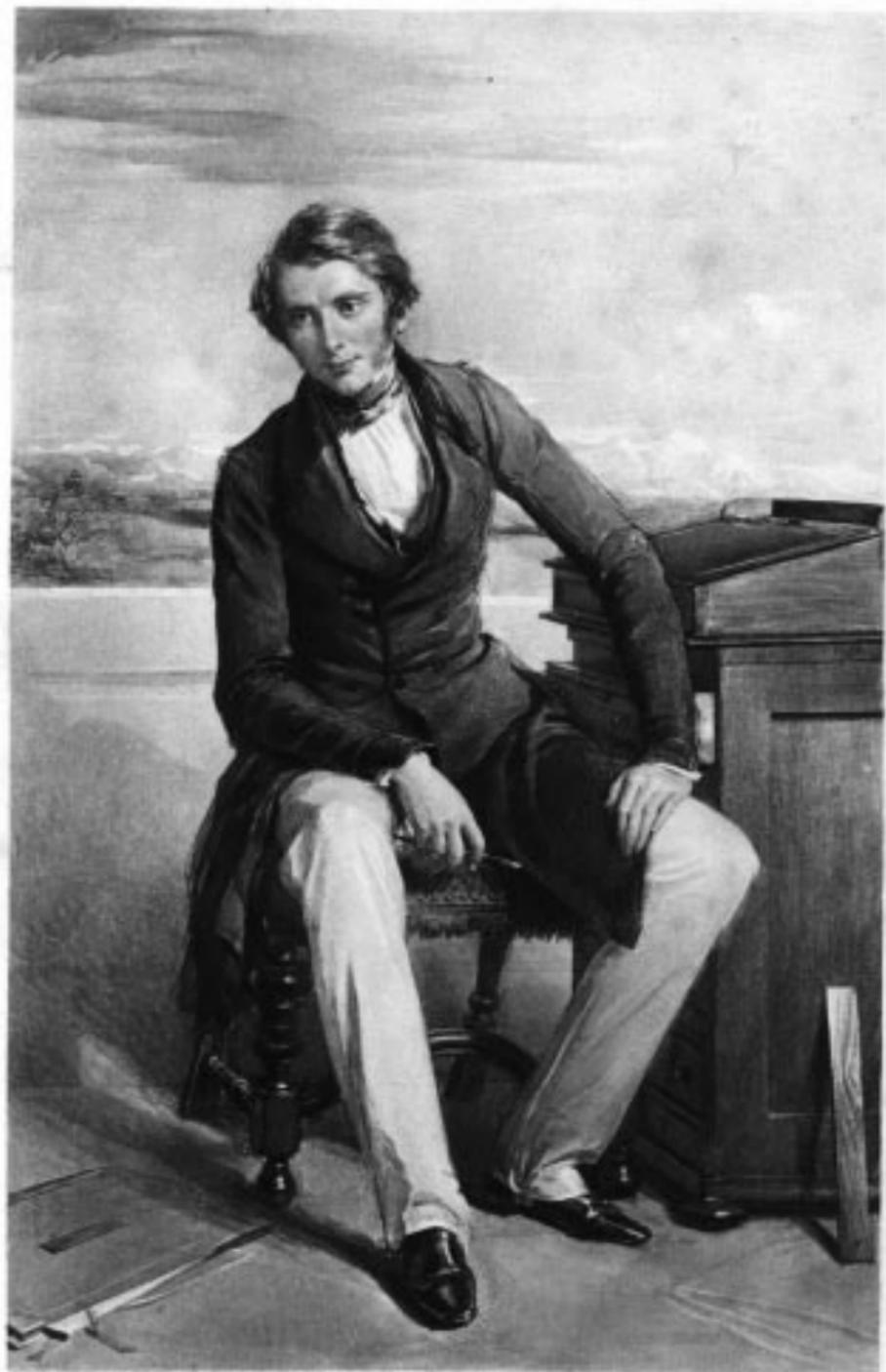


THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

Two thousand and sixty-two copies of this edition—of which two thousand are for sale in England and America—have been printed at the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh, and the type has been distributed.



G. Bicknell.

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Author of "Modern Painters," (1843)

LIBRARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO

1903

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LIBRARY EDITION

VOLUME III

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME I

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME I

CONTAINING

PARTS I AND II

OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

AND OF TRUTH

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

“Accuse me not

*Of arrogance,
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence.”*

WORDSWORTH

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1903

TO THE
LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR

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Note.—Of these illustrations, Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 13 have not before been published. The *frontispiece* was published (by half-tone process), in the *Magazine of Art*, Jan. 1891, and in the *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Colling-wood, 1893, i. 108. No. 1 was published (on a somewhat smaller scale, by autotype process) in the large-paper edition of E. T. Cook's *Studies in Ruskin* (1890). No. 2 was published (on a smaller scale, by half-tone process) in *Scribner's Magazine*, Dec. 1898 (p. 661). Nos. 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 14 were published (on a larger scale, by photogravure process) in *Turner and Ruskin*, ed. by F. Wedmore (1900).

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. III

The following pages contain the first volume of *Modern Painters*, the book by which Ruskin, whose *juvenilia* have occupied the preceding volumes of this edition, first made his mark as a prose-writer. The successive volumes of *Modern Painters* were in some respects independent works. They form not one book, but four or five. The first volume was published in 1843; the fifth not till 1860. Between the first and second there was an interval of three years (1843–46), and in point of view and in style a marked distinction. Between the second volume and the third and fourth (which were issued together) there was an interval of ten years (1846–56); and there was another interval of four years (1856–60) before the fifth and final volume was published. During these intervals Ruskin did a great deal of other work. Thus, to mention his principal books only, during the second of the intervals he wrote and published *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*; and in the last interval, *The Political Economy of Art*, foreshadowing his studies in social and political questions. There is in the five volumes of *Modern Painters* a unity of purpose, but it is an increasing purpose. “In the main aim and principle of the book,” said its author in his preface to the last volume, “there is no variation, from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfect and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with, or subjection to, that.” But in the illustration of this underlying purpose, there are “oscillations of temper” and “progressions of discovery.”¹ As the author’s studies were widened and deepened, his judgments on particular painters and schools of painting were subject to successive changes, so that, some knowledge of the influences which affected him is necessary to understand the book aright. Many changes, too, were made in its text, especially in that of the first volume, some of which, as its main text now stands, was written in 1843, some in 1846, some in 1851. Again, criticisms upon and allusions to the volume, which occur elsewhere, sometimes refer to passages removed from later editions, or to opinions subsequently discarded or modified by the author. Thus, some knowledge of the bibliography of *Modern Painters* is also essential to

¹ Author’s preface to vol. v. of *Modern Painters*.
iii.

the correct appreciation of it. To supply the information which is necessary for both these reasons is the main object of the introduction to this, as to the later volumes of the work.

Ruskin was only twenty-four when the first volume of *Modern Painters* appeared, but the germ of the book dates back to a much earlier time. *Modern Painters* was the work of an "Oxford Graduate"; the essay which contained its germ was written in the week before he matriculated. In October 1836, as already explained (Vol. I. p. xxxiii.), he had written a reply to a criticism in *Blackwood's Magazine* of Turner's pictures exhibited in that year. In those pictures—"Juliet and her Nurse," "Rome from Mount Aventine," and "Mercury and Argus"—Turner had developed the characteristics of his later manner "with his best skill and enthusiasm. . . . His freak in placing Juliet at Venice, instead of Verona, and the mysteries of lamp-light and rockets with which he had disguised Venice herself, gave occasion to an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* of sufficiently telling ribaldry, expressing, with some force, and extreme discourtesy, the feelings of the pupils of Sir George Beaumont at the appearance of these unaccredited views of Nature. The review," continues Ruskin, "raised me to the height of black anger in which I have remained pretty nearly ever since; and having by that time some confidence in my power of words, and—not merely judgment, but sincere *experience*—of the charm of Turner's work, I wrote an answer to *Blackwood*, of which I wish I could now find any fragment."¹ Ruskin's intention was to send the paper to *Blackwood*, but his father thought it right to ask Turner's consent to the publication. Turner's reply is given in *Præterita*.² Instead of returning the MS. for publication, he asked leave to send it to Mr. Munro of Novar, who had bought the picture of Juliet. Munro, says Ruskin, "never spoke to me of the first chapter of *Modern Painters* thus coming into his hands. Nor did I ever care to ask him about it." A contemporary copy of the essay has now been found among Ruskin's MSS.,³ and is here printed for the first time⁴ in Appendix i. (pp. 635–640). It is a most characteristic production, and should be read as a Prelude to *Modern Painters*. Alike in substance and in style, it is truly described as "the first chapter" of the book. It

¹ *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 243.

² Ruskin and his father did not at this time know Turner personally. Ruskin was introduced to him, by Griffith the picture-dealer, on June 20, 1840, as related in *Præterita* (ii. ch. iv. § 66), and from that date he was on very friendly terms.

³ In MS. Book vii.: see "Notes on the MSS. of the Poems" in Vol. II. p. 532.

⁴ One short extract from it was, however, given in Mr. Collingwood's *Life of John Ruskin*, 1900; see below, p. 635 n.

shows how effectively Ruskin had even then occupied the ground on which his defence of Turner was to be based. *Blackwood* had criticised Turner's pictures as being "out of nature"; Ruskin maintained, on the other hand, that they were true to the vital facts of nature, while giving at the same time "the consecration and the poet's dream." And something of "the scarlet and the gold"¹ of the painter's fancy passed into the young critic's defence. The style was hereafter to be more fully informed, and more deeply suffused with passion; to be chastened also and matured; but Ruskin the golden-mouthed² is already there. It cannot, however, be considered other than fortunate that Turner discouraged his young champion from entering the fray. The years which intervened before the germ of *Modern Painters* bore fruit were full of various instruction, equipping Ruskin the better for his task.

The history of the years of preparation for the writing of *Modern Painters* has already been traced in the Introductions to Volumes I. and II. Ruskin's education was broken and discursive, but it gave him many advantages. It was an education in literature, in art, and in nature.

His reading, if discursive, had been deep. He was saved, alike by his own genius and by broken health, from the dangers of cram. He read to learn, rather than to pass examinations. In after years Ruskin was given to belittling his classical attainments.³ But if he was never a scholar in any philological sense, he had the heart of the matter in him; he had assimilated much of the best classical literature.⁴ Already in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, as in *The Poetry of Architecture* before it, the vitality and freshness of his classical allusions are remarkable. The description he gave of himself, "A Graduate of Oxford," was borne out by much of the contents of his first volume. His method of argument—starting everywhere from the particular fact—shows from the first the influence of Aristotle. His elaborate classifications, divisions, and marginal summaries are reminiscent of Locke, whose *Essay on the Human Understanding* is frequently cited in the earlier chapters of this volume. But

¹ See below, p. 624.

² St. Chrysostom (St. John the Goldern-mouthed) was the name given to Ruskin by his friend, Mrs. Cowper Temple (the late Lady Mount Temple).

³ See, e.g., *Præterita*, i. ch. xi. § 220, and *Instructions in the Preliminary Exercises arranged for the Lower Drawing School*, Oxford, 1872, p. 9 n.

⁴ "Curiously scanty and desultory as his scholarship had been as a student, we are continually struck in the Oxford lectures with the range of reading, the subtle comments, and the force of sympathy with which he had reached the inmost soul of so many classical writers, both prose and verse, Roman as well as Greek. Nor has any Professor of Greek, of Poetry, or of Philosophy, touched with a wand of such magic power so many inimitable passages of Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Pindar, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Lucian; or again of Virgil, Horace, and Catullus" (F. Harrison, *John Ruskin*, 1902, p. 136).

Ruskin had not only read a good deal; he had himself already written much, as the two stout volumes of his *juvenilia* testify. "Though I shall always think," he wrote in after years, "those early years might have been better spent, they had their reward. As soon as I had anything really to say, I was able sufficiently to say it."¹

Ruskin's studies in art have already been noticed in connexion with his *juvenilia* in prose and verse. We have there followed in detail the statement made in his preface to this volume (p. 5), that he had "been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art." Especially should it be remembered, in reading the present volume, that Ruskin's descriptions of Turner were founded on long practice in copying that master's drawings and making studies—sometimes in water-colour or black-and-white, sometimes in oils—from his pictures. We have followed him also in the travels to which he referred when he added that his criticisms of the old schools of landscape painting were "founded on familiar acquaintance with every important work of art, from Antwerp to Naples." He might well have included England, for his acquaintance with the treasures of art in country-houses was also, as we have seen, unusually extensive. The foreign tour of 1833 had taken him to Brussels, Antwerp, Cologne, Milan, Genoa, Turin, and Paris. Though he was under the regulation age, he obtained permission to copy in the Louvre.² The tour of 1835 added Venice and Munich to his list; during the winter of 1840–41, he had seen Florence and spent weeks in the picture galleries and churches of Rome and Naples. His diaries in these years are not so full, as they afterwards became, of technical notes on pictures; but occasionally he makes a careful memorandum. Here, for instance, is an entry in his diary for 1841:³—

TERNI, *April 17*.—Our last day in Rome I devoted to Sistine Chapel, and received real pleasure from it. I can appreciate Michael Angelo because his colour is so exquisitely subordinate to his light and shade. I do not remember seeing many notices of the delicate and refined feeling with which he has introduced the Madonna, meek, subdued, retiring behind the majesty of the Christ, but robed, the lower limbs at least, in the transparent blue of the heaven. This blue tells at first as a part of the firmament forming the background, and assists in keeping the figure subdued. This touch of delicate feeling is singularly contrasted with the unapproachable majesty—the infinite power—of the conception of the principal figure.

¹ "My First Editor," in *On the Old Road*, § 7.

² *Præterita*, i. ch. iv. § 94.

³ *Cf.* in Vol. II. p. 167, the entry on the picture gallery at Bologna.

At Rome, too, during this winter, he was thrown much into the society of Joseph Severn and George Richmond, and in their company saw the galleries, and spent long evenings in the talk of the studios.¹ His earlier prose pieces reflect on many a page his recollections and impressions of pictures in foreign lands.² It should be remembered that at this period Ruskin had learnt, among the foreign masters, to delight chiefly in northern art, and especially in Rubens.³ He now ranked Rubens, Vandyck, and Rembrandt, his favourites among the old masters, on an equality with Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Velasquez. Of the Venetians he as yet knew comparatively little;⁴ it was not till 1845 that he “discovered” Tintoret. The influence of Harding—Ruskin’s drawing-master at the time when the first volume of *Modern Painters* was being written—told strongly against “the various Van somethings and Back somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea.”⁵ Harding “had religious views in sympathy with his pupil, and he soon inoculated Ruskin with his contempt for the minor Dutch school—those bituminous landscapes, so unlike the sparkling freshness that Harding’s own water-colour illustrated, and those vulgar tavern scenes, painted, he declared, by sots who disgraced art alike in their works and in their lives.”⁶ One “discovery,” made in the year before the first volume of *Modern Painters* was published, must specially be noted. In his earlier period he had sought, in sketching, for effects and views of specially romantic character; he had looked at nature, also, through the eyes of Prout or Turner, and had tried to compose in their way. But one day, in the spring of 1842, he noticed, on the road to Norwood, “a bit of ivy round a thorn stem, which seemed, even to my critical judgment, not ill ‘composed.’” The lesson thus learnt—the lesson of thinking nothing common or unclean, and of seeking beauty through truth—was re-enforced later in the year in the forest of Fontaine-bleau, when he found himself “lying on the bank of a cart-road in the sand, with no prospect whatever but a small aspen tree against the blue sky. Languidly, but not idly, I began to draw it; and as I drew, the languor passed away: the beautiful lines insisted on being traced. . . . With wonder increasing every instant, I saw that they ‘composed’

¹ See *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii.

² See, for instance, in Vol. I., allusions to Caravaggio, p. 147; Claude, Salvator, and Poussin, p. 112; Rubens, p. 146; Titian, p. 249; and in Vol. II., to pictures at Bologna, p. 167; Aix la Chapelle, p. 351; and Cologne, p. 352.

³ See preface (§ 7) to *Modern Painters*, vol. v., where he asks to be forgiven for the excessive admiration of Rubens in the first volume.

⁴ See *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 101, and author’s preface to vol. v. of *Modern Painters*.

⁵ Below, pt. i. sec. i. ch. i. § 4.

⁶ W. G. Collingwood: *Life of John Ruskin*, 1900, p. 81.

themselves by finer laws than any known of men. . . . 'He hath made everything beautiful in his time,' became for me thenceforward the interpretation of the bond between the human mind and all visible things; and I returned along the wood-road feeling that it had led me far."¹ It was to lead him to *Modern Painters*. The impression made upon him at the time by his new interest in simple studies from nature is well shown, and clearly expressed, in the Letter to a College Friend, of August 19, 1842.²

It was, however, to his long apprenticeship to Nature that Ruskin attached the greatest importance among the formative influences on his thought. "The beginning of all my own right art work in life depended," he says, "not on my love of art, but of mountains and sea. . . . I would pass entire days in rambling on the Cumberland hill-sides, or staring at the lines of surf on a low sand; . . . and through the whole of following life, whatever power of judgment I have obtained in art, which I am now confident and happy in using, or communicating, has depended on my steady habit of always looking for the subject principally, and for the art only as the means of expressing it."³ It was this long study of nature that gave to Ruskin, in writing *Modern Painters*, his confidence and tone of authority. "I should not have spoken so audaciously," he wrote at the time, "had I not been able to trace, in my education, some grounds for supposing that I might in deed and in truth judge more justly of him [Turner] than others can. I mean, my having been taken to mountain scenery when a mere child, and allowed, at a time when boys are usually learning their grammar, to ramble on the shores of Como and Lucerne; and my having since, regardless of all that usually occupies the energies of the traveller,—art, antiquities, or people,—devoted myself to pure, wild, solitary, natural scenery; with a most unfortunate effect, of course, as far as general or human knowledge is concerned, but with most beneficial effect on that peculiar sensibility to the beautiful in all things that God has made, which it is my present aim to render more universal."⁴ The same justification for his confidence is expressed in the passage from the fourth Book of Wordsworth's *Excursion*, which Ruskin placed on the title-page of every volume, in every edition, of *Modern Painters*. "He has just gone," writes his father on one occasion, "from a hurried dinner, to the sunset, which he

¹ *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. §§ 74, 77; and see below, pt. ii. sec. iv. ch. iv. § 10 *n*. See also Plate No. 25 in Vol. II., and p. xlii. of the Introduction there; and see the drawings of the aspen in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. Plates 27 and 28.

² Vol. I. p. 470.

³ *Eagle's Nest*, § 41.

⁴ See Letter to Liddell, in Appendix iii., below, p. 669.

visits as regularly as a soldier does his evening parade.”¹ He was young in years when he sat down to write the book; but already, as the preceding volumes have shown, he had long “walked with Nature,” and offered his heart “a daily sacrifice to Truth.”

It was natural, therefore, that Ruskin’s immediate preparation for *Modern Painters* should be a sojourn at Chamouni. The book in some form seems to have been in his mind during his long sojourn on the Continent in the winter of 1840–41; for on February 12, 1841, he wrote to his College Friend, “I have begun a work of some labour which would take me several years to complete.”² At that time, however, his health forbade hard work, and, moreover, his final examinations at Oxford were still in front of him. These were disposed of in May 1842; and he at once set out with his parents for Switzerland. He had been greatly impressed in the spring of this year by the sight of Turner’s new foreign sketches—the “Splügen” drawing, which was presented to Ruskin by his friends in 1878, being among the number. Of these sketches, and of the drawings made from them, an account is given in the Epilogue to Ruskin’s *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, and repeated references to them will be found in the following pages.³ Many of the original sketches may be seen in the National Gallery.⁴ The lesson of these drawings was the same as Ruskin learnt from his “discovery” described above. He saw in them examples, in Turner’s highest power, of the landscape-art which owes nothing to traditional rules of composition, but attains, after long study of nature, to impressions of her inmost truth and spirit. His admiration of the “Splügen” drawing “directed mainly,” Ruskin says, “all my mountain-studies and geological researches.”⁵ Ruskin and his parents went by Rouen, Chartres, Fontainebleau, Auxerre, Dijon, and Geneva. At Fontainebleau came the artistic revelation of the aspen already mentioned; at Geneva—in church one Sunday—a fit of self-reproach, and a resolution to get “some real available, continuing good, rather than the mere amusement of the time.” This “was the origin of Turner’s work”⁶ The immediate impulse was the same as in the case of the essay of 1836. A review of the Royal

¹ Letter to W. H. Harrison from Dijon, May 28, 1844.

² Vol. I. p. 434.

³ See below, pp. xxiii., 250, 551.

⁴ Nos. 280, 286, 287, 288, and 289 are the first sketches of afterwards completed drawings. There are also hundreds of other Swiss sketches made at the same time.

⁵ Epilogue to vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*.

⁶ *Præterita*, ch. iii. § 58, ch. iv. § 78; and see the letter to Osborne Gordon, in Appendix iii., below p. 666.

Academy's Exhibition of 1842 had reached Ruskin at Geneva, and filled him with rage.¹

Ruskin had seen the pictures before leaving England, and, as the subsequent notices in this volume show, greatly admired them. The review which reached him at Geneva was probably that in the *Literary Gazette* or the *Athenæum*, both of which papers W. H. Harrison was in the habit of sending to Ruskin or his father. Some extracts are worth giving as showing the kind of criticism against which the first volume of *Modern Painters* was directed.² The *Literary Gazette* (No. 1321, May 14, 1842, p. 331) wrote:—

“No. 52, ‘The Dogano’ (*sic*), and 73, ‘Campo Santo,’ have a gorgeous *ensemble*, and produced by wonderful art, but they mean nothing. They are produced as if by throwing handfuls of white, and blue, and red, at the canvas, letting what chanced to stick, stick; and then shadowing in some forms to make the appearance of a picture. And yet there is a fine harmony in the highest range of colour to please the sense of vision; we admire, and we lament to see such genius so employed. But ‘Farther on you may fare worse.’ No. 182 is a Snow-storm of most unintelligible character—the snow-storm of a confused dream, with a steamboat ‘making signals,’ and (apparently, like the painter who was in it) ‘going by the head’ [*sic*; the word was of course lead]. Neither by land or water was such a scene ever witnessed; and of 338, ‘Burial at Sea,’ though there is a striking effect, still the whole is so idealised and removed from truth, that instead of the feeling it ought to effect, it only excites ridicule. And No. 353 caps all before for absurdity, without even any of the redeeming qualities in the rest. It represents Buonaparte,—facetiously described as ‘the exile and the rock-limpet,’ standing on the seashore at St. Helena. . . . The whole thing is so truly ludicrous, that the *risum teneatis* even of the Amici is absolutely impossible.”

The *Athenæum* (May 14, 1842, No. 759, p. 433) was more ribald. Only by contemplation of Creswick's delicious landscape, it seems, could the spectator be prepared for the painful effect of Turner:—

“This gentleman has on former occasions chosen to paint with cream, or chocolate, yolk of egg, or currant jelly,—here he uses his whole array of kitchen stuff.³ . . . We cannot fancy the state of eye, which will permit any

¹ The pictures by Turner in the Exhibition of 1842 were (1) Venice (view across the Grand Canal and Giudecca), National Gallery, No. 372 (now at Leicester); (2) Venice, the Campo Santo (in Mr. Bicknell's collection, referred to below, p. 250); (3) Snow-storm (N.G. No. 530; see below, p. 570); (4) “Peace” (Burial of Wilkie), N.G. No. 528; (5) “War: the Exile and the Rock-Limpet” (Napoleon), N.G. No. 529; see below, 273.

² Examples of the skits from the comic papers are given in Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, 1877, p. 398. Thackeray was among the scoffers (*ibid.* p. 399).

³ For Ruskin's reply to this “eggs and spinach” criticism, see below, p. 277 *n.*

one cognizant of Art to treat these rhapsodies as Lord Byron treated 'Christable'; neither can we believe in any future revolution, which shall bring the world round to the opinion of the worshipper, if worshipper such frenzies still possess."

The "Burial of Wilkie" and "Napoleon" were guyed in turn, and the critique concluded with surprise that the perpetrator of such outbreaks should have been allowed a place on the walls.

With these criticisms ringing in his ears as a call to action, Ruskin went on to Chamouni, hoping to say what was burning in his heart and mind within the limits of a pamphlet. But at Chamouni he became engrossed "with snow and granite."¹ And the more he considered, the larger grew the enterprise. The scheme for a pamphlet became one for a treatise. The defence of Turner was, therefore, postponed for autumn work at home. Some account of the expansion of Ruskin's scheme will be found in the description of the MSS. here given in Appendix v.

Of the tour of 1842, and of the studies at Chamouni immediately preparatory to the first volume of *Modern Painters*, no diary is now extant; perhaps little or none was written. His "feelings and discoveries" of this year were, he says, "too many and too bewildering to be written."² A few extracts from the diary of 1844, when he returned to like pursuits at Chamouni, will show how the days were passed in the earlier year also:—

GENEVA, *May* 1.—We arrived here yesterday. . . . The day before I should remember, for the walk I had at St. Laurent; above all, for the phenomenon at sunset which I had never seen till then—of the sun's image reflected from a bank of clouds above the horizon, for at least a quarter of an hour after he had set. It had all the brilliancy of a reflection in water, and if I had not seen the sun set, I should have taken it for the sun itself. A point of greatest intensity was on the edge of the cloud, but it shot up a stream of splendid light far towards the zenith, as well as downwards towards the sun. . . . About me lay the grey concave blocks of the Jura limestone—slippery with wet. Large black and white snails had come out everywhere to enjoy the rain. In the crevices of the rocks the lily of the valley grew profusely—accompanied by the wild strawberry and cowslip. I found a root of the star gentian, and kissed it as the harbinger of the Alps. The sunlight on the mossy ground burned russet as I returned, and died away in rose upon the piny hills.

¹ See the letters to W. H. Harrison and Rev. W. L. Brown, given in a note to Ruskin's poem, "A Walk in Chamouni," at Vol. II. pp. 222–223.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 78.

CHAMOUNI, *June 20.*—8, morning. An hour ago, I had the most beautiful sight that ever morning gave me among the Alps. The clouds had broken into fragments about the aiguilles which appeared brownish in the sky and transparent on the rocks, showing the whole form through; the tops of the crags were all clear, freshly and deeply laden with snow, and dark against the pale morning blue; but each had blowing from its peaks northward, a fringe of sunny cloud of intense brightness; that on the Charmoz was unbroken, and appeared like a glory. Below, under the Tapia, all was grey, dark cloud—cutting off their connection with the earth; on the Dru, the cloud was blowing from the north, the north side being clear; and the vapour rolling away in dark folds like a volume of smoke on the south, but the upper edge of every fold touched like a star with sun-shine, and one bit, hanging in a cleft on its side, wedge shaped, shone like a bonfire. Mont Blanc, just seen and no more, through the transparent mist, ghost-like; but the white Aiguille du Goûter pure and serene in intense light, every spot of its sides down to the Pavillon covered with pure new snow so as to make it as beautiful as the highest Alp. But all passed away as soon as seen. . . .

CHAMOUNI, *June, 23.*—9 o'clock, morning. There is a strange effect on Mont Blanc. The Pavillon hills are green and clear, with the pearly clearness that foretells rain; the sky above is fretted with spray of white compact textured cloud which looks like flakes of dead arborescent silver. Over the snow, this is concentrated into a cumulus of the Turner character, not heaped, but laid sloping on the mountain, silver white at its edge, pale grey in interior; the whole of the snow is cast into shadow by it, and comes dark against it, especially the lower curve of the Aiguille du Goûter. But on the summit the cloud is melted into mist, and what I suppose to be a heavy snow-storm is falling on the Grand Plateau, and in the hollow behind the Grands Mulets; into this shower the mountain retires gradually, and the summit is entirely veiled.

CHAMOUNI, *June 26.*— $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4, morning. Of all the lovely dawns I ever saw on Mont Blanc, this bears the bell. When I woke at $\frac{1}{2}$ past three, its form was scarcely distinguishable through morning mist, which in the lower valley hung in dense white flakes among the trees along the course of the Arve. There were heavy white clouds over the Pavillon, relieved against a threatening black ground which reached the horizon. The outline of the snow was throughout indistinct with what I thought were wind avalanches, but I believe they must have been evaporating moisture, blowing towards Cormayeur. As the dawn grew brighter, a brown group of cloud formed near the Dome du Goûter—not on it, but in the sky, blowing also towards Cormayeur. Presently the black threatening part of the horizon grew luminous, and threw out the clouds, before white, as grey masses from its body,

gradually disappearing itself into the ordinary light of pure horizon. A few minutes afterwards the first rose touched the summit, the mist gradually melting from the higher hills, leaving that in the valley arranged at the top in exquisitely fine, horizontal, water-like cirri, separated by little intervals from its chief mass. The light lowered to the Tacul and Dome, and such intense fire I never saw. The colour is deeper in the evening, but far less brilliant; a quarter of an hour afterwards, when it had touched the Aiguille du Goûter, it began to diminish on the summit, which then looked feeble and *green* beside the Tacul and Aiguille du Goûter; then the Aiguille du Midi caught it, but in proportion as it touched the lower height, it was less rosy. It is now intensely white, a little tawny, reaching to base of the Aiguille du Goûter, on which, as well as on the Breven and top of Mont de la Côte, there is deep fresh snow. The clouds became first brown, then rosy, then melted away—all but one cirrus which yet hangs just over the Dome. The valley mist is nearly melted, a fleecy flake hangs here and there among the pines; the air is intensely clear, and the meadows white-green with dew. Now another bank of mist has formed down the valley. It is instructive to observe that though apparently snow-white on the pastures, it comes vigorously dark against the pure sky of the south-west. The green light on the flank of the Breven is beautiful beyond measure.

On such “constant watchfulness,” as Ruskin says, were the statements in *Modern Painters* founded.¹ Thus for long and happy days did Ruskin study the “Aiguilles and their Friends”;²

“And by the vision splendid
Was on his way attended.”³

On days of blue unclouded weather, he climbed the hills and explored the glaciers with his Savoy guide;⁴ or pondered among the gentians and the Alpine roses; or sketched in the Happy Valley.⁵ On days of rain, he would work indoors—sorting or sketching his minerals and flowers, or making careful studies of tree-structure from branches of pine. It was “beneath the cloudless peace of the snows of Chamouni” that Ruskin was to write, half-a-century later, the epilogue of the book “which their beauty inspired and their strength guided.”

From Chamouni Ruskin returned home by the Rhine and Flanders, and, in his study at Herne Hill, set himself to writing his first volume. “Returning,” says Ruskin, “in the full enthusiasm and rush of sap in the too literally sapling and stripling mind of me, (I) wrote the first

¹ *Præterita*, ii. ch. iii. § 49, and ch. v. § 94.

² The title of Plate 69 in vol. v. of *Modern Painters*.

³ Wordsworth: *Intimations of Immortality*.

⁴ In 1842 Michel Devouassoud (*Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 78).

⁵ The frontispiece to Volume II. is from a drawing of Chamouni made in 1842.

volume of *Modern Painters*.”¹ His mind was well stored. His heart was burning within him. His pen had already learnt much of its cunning. His home surroundings were favourable, too, to his work. Herne Hill was in those days at the edge of the open country. *Modern Painters* could never have been written, Ruskin used to say in later years, except in the purer air of fifty years since.² In October 1842 the Ruskin household was moved from Herne Hill to the larger house and grounds of Denmark Hill. Here Ruskin’s study, on the first floor, looked on to “the lawn and further field”; while the window of his bedroom above, looking straight south-east, “gave command of the morning clouds, inestimable for its aid in all healthy thought.”³ Near by was Croxted Lane,⁴ then a green by-road passing through hedge-rows. “There,” says Ruskin, “my mother and I used to gather the first buds of the hawthorn; and there, in after years, I used to walk in the summer shadows, as in a place wilder and sweeter than our garden, to think over any passage I wanted to make better than usual in *Modern Painters*.”⁵ And, for his special art work, Ruskin was otherwise well placed. He had Dulwich Gallery close by, for examples of the ancients; and for Turner, he had not only the run of the master’s own gallery in Queen Anne Street; but, nearer home, the collection of Mr. Bicknell at Herne Hill freely open to him, and the yet richer one of Mr. Windus within an easy journey at Tottenham. At Norwood, too, within an easy walk of Denmark Hill, was Mr. Griffith, the picture-dealer, who had first introduced Ruskin to Turner, and in whose house pictures and drawings by the artist were always to be seen.⁶ Of the spirit in which Ruskin set himself to his task, the *Letters to a College Friend* and to Dale have already had something to tell. He had felt intensely a call to the interpretation of art and nature, “not by a flying fancy, but so long as I can remember, with settled and steady desire.”⁷ But it was a “serious call,” and he threw into his answer to it all the earnestness and solemnity of a highly-strung temperament. Two long letters—written to Liddell and Osborne Gordon respectively—have been preserved, explaining plainly in his own words the temper and the object in which he set

¹ Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (1883 ed.), § 3.

² *The Art of England*, § 184. *The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, 1884, p. 137; and see the account of Herne Hill and its surroundings in *Præterita*, i. ch. ii.

³ *Præterita*, ii. ch. viii. § 150, where Ruskin further describes his study. For the date of the move to Denmark Hill, see *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 474. At Herne Hill Ruskin’s study was on the second floor, looking out upon the front garden.

⁴ It was in Croxted Lane that Mr. Allen drew for Ruskin “Spirals of Thorn” (plate 52 in *Modern Painters*, vol. v.).

⁵ *Fiction Fair and Foul*, § 1.

⁶ For Mr. Bicknell, see below, p. 244 n.; for Mr. Windus, p. 234 n.; for Mr. Griffith, Epilogue to Ruskin’s *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*.

⁷ Letter to Dale, Vol. I. p. 398.

himself to write his book. These letters are printed in Appendix iii. (pp. 665–671). It seems that by this time Ruskin had abandoned the idea of taking Orders, which he had for some time entertained,¹ but Bible study still formed a part of his daily discipline. Among the MSS. of *Modern Painters* now in America (p. 682) is a translation, with notes, of the Epistle to the Romans. The MS. goes as far as ch. v. verse 7. It is an endeavour to translate the Greek text with close accuracy. The MS. does not seem worth printing, as an example of Ruskin's biblical studies at this period is included in the *Letters to a College Friend*.² It was Ruskin's habit, late on in life also, to do a little bit of very careful translation—from the Bible or Plato—every day. His style was in some measure the result of infinite pains.

With 1843 the diaries are again available. A few entries selected from the early months of the year will afford a glimpse of the author at work, showing his diverse interests and enthusiasms, and recording the progress of his composition:—

Jan. 15.—Noble sermon from M[elville],³ relating chiefly to the constant necessary progress of man, even in eternity, and the necessary property of the Deity to be able to reveal Himself constantly, more and more, to all eternity without ever exhausting His attributes.

I had a bright, sunny walk afterwards—on the hills: cloudless, though hard frost, and sparkling dusty snow half an inch deep brightening everything. I was delighted at the top of the hill, to catch the edge of the road, in shade—all snow—against the sky, and then the first touches of sun on the ruts as I rose. It was the light of the Alps, and their look against the sky—for a moment of fancy.

Jan. 16.— . . . Turner is going to do ten more drawings, and I am in a fever till I see the subjects. . . .⁴

Jan. 19.—Yesterday with Richard⁵ to Geological . . . To-day pleasant lesson from Harding, and got splendid Modern Italy⁶ at Jennings', and some valuable notes at Royal Academy; but late tonight, and must be up to organize in the morning. Tennant said that a man published a paper a little while ago concerning geology, in which he described mountain limestone as granite; this is certainly rather broader than I could have fancied.

¹ See *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. pp. 415, 433, 460.

² In the letter (xvi.) of Jan. 8, 1843, and the essay on "Was there Death before Adam fell?" Vol. I. pp. 475–487.

³ See Vol. I. p. 490.

⁴ See above, p. xxiii.

⁵ Richard Fall; see Vol. II. p. 429.

⁶ *i.e.* a print from Turner's picture, for which see below, p. 300 *n.* The notes at the Academy must have been from the Diploma Gallery (see below, p. 190).

Jan. 24.—I am getting quite dissipated—out at Drury Lane last night. Macready in *Macbeth*, wretched beyond all I had conceived possible; quite tired and bored, but Gordon liked it. . . .

Jan. 25.— . . . Walked down to Zoological Gardens, and had a pleasant saunter with Gordon. Many new animals; I think I shall manage to go there oftener. Curious essay of Newman's I read some pages of—about the ecclesiastical miracles: full of intellect, but doubtful in tendency. I fear insidious, yet I like it.¹

Jan. 26.—Pleasant evening with Gordon and his sister and Richard, but little done. Sauntered with him into Dulwich Gallery, and wrote a little, and drew badly. The days get long apace, however, and my work is beginning to assume form.

Jan. 27.—Gordon left us to-day, and I miss him very much—kind fellow, and clever as kind. Took him into town, and called on Turner; found him in, and in excellent humour, and will come to me on my birthday. Then on to Jones,² with whom I chatted for a long time, he condescendingly going on with his work. I had a delicious day altogether, counting a pleasant lesson from Harding, who says I yield a great deal too much to my feelings in drawing, and don't judge enough. I feel this to be true, and will try to conquer it; it is new to me. . . .

Jan. 31.—I have worked hard to-day, but I have done nothing. My stuff is getting a little into shape at last . . . Scarcely read a word now or do anything but the matter in hand. . . .

Feb. 8.—The happiest birthday evening save one I ever spent in my life. Turner happy and kind; all else fitting and delightful. . . .

Feb. 9.—I wish my work went as the days do; I am terribly behind. All day long in town to-day, and bothered in the Nat. Gall.—quite certain of the villainousness of the pictures, but difficult to prove.

Feb. 10.— . . . Nothing done beyond a single chapter to-day.

Feb. 11.—Worked hard to-day and got on. . . .

Feb. 12.—So go the seven years, fat and lean; they are of more even tenour now, and will be, I hope, for ever. . . .

Feb. 15.—Bless me, how the days go! Only 14 days to the time I gave myself for finishing my work. However, I mustn't write here, but go to sleep, and be up early and at work. . . .

Feb. 18.— . . . Worked a good deal, but got on very slowly.

Feb. 21.—It is strange—I work and cannot get on; had to rewrite a whole chapter to-day. But I had a lovely walk—mild sun and baking wind—and I got to the snowdrifts where they

¹ Cardinal Newman's "Essay on the Miracles recorded in Ecclesiastical History" first appeared in 1842 as an introduction to his translation (vol. i.) of Fleury's *Ecclesiastical History*.

² Presumably George Jones, R.A. (1786–1869), Keeper of the Royal Academy, and a great friend of Turner.

still lay deep and pure, and glowed in the sun as if they had been on the Alps; and the dogs went half out of their wits with delight, rolling and kicking in it, and throwing it over each other. What a lovely thing a bit of a fine, sharp, crystallized, broken snow is, held up against the blue sky, catching the sun! Talk of diamonds!

Feb. 24.—... Called at Turner's ... insisted on my taking a glass of wine, but I wouldn't; excessively good-natured to-day. Heaven grant he may not be mortally offended with the work!

*May 1.*¹—Couldn't write while I had this work for Turner to do; had not the slightest notion what labour it was. I was at it all April from 6 morning till 10 night, and late to-night too—but shall keep on, I hope.²

The first volume of *Modern Painters* was published in the first week of May 1843.³ Ruskin was then just twenty-four years of age. The author's youth was the reason of his concealing his personality under the description "A Graduate of Oxford"—"sure," he says, "of the truth of what I wrote, but fearing that I might not obtain fair hearing, if the reader knew my youth."⁴ This was a counsel of prudence—as also the adoption of a *nom de plume* for *The Poetry of Architecture*—which Ruskin owed to his father.⁵ The concealment was at first well sustained; even college tutors and friends were unaware of the author's identity.⁶ The title which Ruskin originally chose for the volume was *Turner and the Ancients*. To this, however, the publishers objected; and to them the title *Modern Painters* was due. Ruskin, however, was not entirely deprived of his Turner and the Ancients, and the title-page of the book was well filled as follows:—

Modern Painters: | Their Superiority | In the Art of
Landscape Painting | To all | The Ancient Masters | proved
by examples of | The True, the Beautiful, and the Intellectual, |
From the | Works of Modern Artists, | especially From those of J.
M. W. Turner, Esq., R.A. | By a Graduate of Oxford | [Quotation
from Wordsworth] | London: Smith, Elder & Co., 65 Cornhill. |
1843.⁷

¹ The diary skips from February 27 to May 1, except for a brief note on March 12.

² *i.e.* at work for the second volume.

³ The date, April 5, given in Wise and Smart's Bibliography, is incorrect. On April 22 the book was advertised as "nearly ready"; on May 6, as "just published."

⁴ *Academy Notes*, 1856, preface.

⁵ Cf. *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 250.

⁶ See Liddell's letter, below, p. 668 *n.* Ruskin notes also in his diary (on May 15, 1843), that "Richmond seems to have no idea at present it can be mine."

⁷ The underlined words appeared on the back, with the design reproduced below (p. lvii.). For further particulars, see Bibliographical Note. For the story of the title, see Ruskin's letter to Liddell, below, p. 668; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xii. § 1 *n.*

Ruskin accepted the compromise, but did not like it. The cumbersome description was afterwards dropped, and he must have been satisfied with the short title, for in after years he preferred to call himself “the author of *Modern Painters*.”

The book was published by Messrs. Smith, Elders & Co. Ruskin’s father, who until his death in 1864 acted as his son’s literary agent, had in the first instance offered the book to John Murray, without, however, showing him the MS. “He said,” wrote J. J. Ruskin to W. H. Harrison (March 31, 1847), “the public cared little about Turner, but strongly urged my son’s writing on the German School, which the public were calling for works on.” Murray asked, however, for sight of a sheet. “I thought,” continues J.J. Ruskin, “if I sent a sheet, and the work was refused, I should be offering my old friend P. Stewart a rejected book. I therefore declined submitting any sheet, and carried the work at once to Smith & Co.” Harrison had written to ask if it was true, as reported, that the book had been rejected by Murray. “I am the party to blame,” continues J.J. Ruskin, “but I by no means regret the event. Books, like men, are often the better of beginning the world in adversity. If *Modern Painters* had been cradled in Albemarle Street, and fondled in the *Quarterly*, it might have been overlaid in the nursing—smothered with flattery.”¹ The firm of Smith, Elder & Co., in which P. Stewart was then a partner, “accepted the proposal to publish with alacrity, and thus was inaugurated Ruskin’s thirty years’ close personal connexion with Smith, Elder & Co., and more especially with George Smith, on whose shoulders the whole responsibilities of the firm were soon to fall.”²

Murray’s answer to J.J. Ruskin is of additional interest as showing the current taste of the time. To place the first volumes of *Modern Painters* in their historical position, it is necessary to consider the opposing forces which they had to combat, as well as the compelling influences of the author’s idiosyncrasy. The public, then, “cared little about Turner.”

¹ In the Memoir of George Smith in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Supplementary vol. i., 1901, p. xvi.; p. 11 of the privately circulated reprint), it is stated that Ruskin’s father “failed to induce John Murray to issue it on commission.” This statement is, it will be seen, somewhat misleading.

² *Memoir of George Smith*, p. 11. George Smith at this time was living on Denmark Hill. Ruskin had already had some dealings with the firm through *Friendship’s Offering* (see Vol. II. p. xix., and cf. p. xlii.). “The late Mr. Smith” (*i.e.* George Smith’s father, who died in 1846), wrote J. J. Ruskin, “offered to get Murray to take it if I particularly wished it.” When the book had appeared and made its mark, Murray desired Ruskin to contribute to the *Quarterly*. This he declined to do, as a letter from his father (June 26, 1845) shows; though subsequently, and in a different connexion, he did write for the *Review* (See *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 192).

It has sometimes been supposed that Ruskin introduced Turner to the English public. It is true that the two names will ever be associated, owing to the conjunction whereby the original genius of the artist found in his own day the genius of a critic, no less original, to understand and to interpret him. But Turner had become a Royal Academician nearly twenty years before Ruskin was born. He was famous and wealthy long before Ruskin's book appeared. Ruskin did not discover Turner in the sense that he discovered Carpaccio and re-discovered Tintoret; but he did for him a service even more conspicuous. He rescued him not from obscurity, but from misunderstanding. He was not the first to praise Turner, but he intervened in order that he should be praised rightly. It was, as we have seen, the change to Turner's later manner, and the contemptuous misunderstanding of this change on the part of the critics, that called Ruskin into the fray.¹ He stemmed the tide of war, and in doing so he laid the foundations not only of a better appreciation of a great master, and of broader views of the art of painting, but also generally of saner and more scientific criticism. "Turner's impressions displease us," said the critics of the day; "we have never seen such things; they do not conform to existing rules and traditional conventions." Ruskin's was the more modern attitude. He discarded authority and looked to principle. "What does the artist mean?" he asked; "what laws does he exemplify? what is he driving at?" In answering such questions, Ruskin, as has been truly said, produced "the first notable work of general criticism in the spirit of the modern age,—the pioneer and standard-bearer in the war against Philistinism and prejudice."² "But where is your brown tree?" was Sir George Beaumont's question to Constable. Sir George looked at pictures through eyes attuned only to the tone of certain ancient masters. Ruskin taught us to look at nature and to consider pictures by the light of the truths of nature.

Again, while current criticism ridiculed Turner's later manner, "the public called for works on the German School." At that time the scheme for painting the walls of the new Houses of Parliament was on foot; it was to the German painter, Cornelius, that the British Government first applied. Among British artists, Maclise was the great

¹ See *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. Appendix 11, where in reaffirming (1851) his faith in Turner, Ruskin says: "I like his later pictures, up to the year 1845, the best; and believe that those persons who only like his early pictures, do not, in fact, like him at all. They do *not* like that which is essentially *his*. . . . His entire power is best represented by . . . pictures . . . painted exactly at the time when the public and the press were together loudest in abuse of him." Cf. Ruskin's letter to the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine* in Appendix ii., below, p. 654.

² See an essay on "The Genesis of *Modern Painters*," by W. G. Collingwood, in *Igdrasil* (Journal of the Ruskin Reading Guild), vol. i., 1890, p. 7.

painter of the day. The Italians, and especially the early Italians, were little known. Those, it must be remembered, were days before photography had familiarized the eyes of the general public with Italian masterpieces. "There was no discrimination then," says Mr. Holman Hunt, "with artists, more than with the public, that Guido, Parmigiano, and Le Brun, Murillo, Sassoferrato, and such crew, were birds of a different feather to their great idols, so that the name of the princely Urbinite was made to cover all conventional art."¹ In this work of discrimination also Ruskin was a pioneer, and in considering the warmth of his invectives it is necessary to remember the contrary opinions which he was assailing. In the field of landscape, the Dutch and the French masters of the seventeenth century were the accepted models. It was by their standard that Turner was found wanting; to clear the ground for Turner, he sought to demolish the others. This led him, no doubt, into some exaggeration of blame and into excess of emphasis. He has been accused—to take an instance typical of many others—of unfairness towards Claude,² and it may be that he strained some points unduly against that master.³ But any one who will take the trouble to read all Ruskin's references⁴ will see that he was by no means blind to Claude's merits. He did full justice to Claude's amenity and pensive grace; to the beauty of his skies and the skill and charm of his aerial effects. Ruskin's main work in relation to accepted masters was, however—and necessarily from his point of view—destructive. At the time when he began to write *Modern Painters*, Claude was accounted the prince of all landscape painters. The estimate of Claude against which Ruskin protested may be found in Goethe. "Claude Lorraine," he said, "knew the real world thoroughly, even to its smallest detail, and he made use of it to express the world contained in his own beautiful soul. He stands to nature in a double relation,—he is both her slave and her master: her slave, by the material means which he is obliged to employ to make himself understood; her master, because he subordinates these material means to a well-reasoned inspiration, to which he makes them serve as instruments." And elsewhere, Goethe expresses his admiration for the depth and grasp of Claude's powers. Ruskin, in vindicating the greater sweep and depth of Turner's genius, fastened with all the emphasis of an advocate upon the weak points in Claude's artistic and intellectual armoury. By so doing he cleared the ground for a truer appreciation of Claude, as well as

¹*Contemporary Review*, April 1886, p. 476.

²See *The National Gallery*, edited by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A., 1899, vol. i. p. 192.

³See, e.g., below, p. 113 n.

⁴Ruskin himself brought them together in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 10.

of Turner. It is probably a true criticism that Ruskin's judgments upon painters will stand more in what he has praised than in what he has blamed;¹ but, at any rate, in reading those judgments it is necessary to remember the conditions and circumstances of their delivery.

It is remarkable, in view of the heretical teaching of *Modern Painters* (as it then seemed), that the first volume made its mark so quickly. The very audacity of its criticisms, and the air of confident authority with which they were pronounced, must have carried much of the ground by storm; but what impressed the critics most was the closeness of the author's reasoning, his wealth of illustrative reference, and the force and beauty of his style. One of the earliest notices of the book was in the *Globe* newspaper (Aug. 30, 1843), which pronounced the volume to be "the production of one who is profoundly versed in the principles as well as in the mechanical details of the art; . . . it is equally clear that he has studied nature with the most enthusiastic devotion, and in localities and under circumstances especially propitious to the study. . . . It is evidently the work of a poet as well as of a painter, and one of no common order. The dryness which would appear to be almost inseparable from a disquisition on art is utterly lost in the bursts of startling eloquence, poetic feeling, and touching pathos, which everywhere abound in this beautiful book." The *Weekly Chronicle* (Sept. 16, 1843), in the course of a very long review, "knew not how enough to commend the beautiful spirit of the work." The author showed "great brilliancy of illustration, a thorough analytical mind, a minute observance of nature; and a great practical acquaintance with the subject he is discussing renders his pen at all times instructive and interesting. Few books, indeed, that we have ever read, purely dedicated to an analysis of painting, contain such an abundance of materials, or evince such a profundity of thought in its reading, as the work before us." This reviewer went on to make some objections on particular points; and to these Ruskin replied in a letter here reprinted (Appendix ii., p. 641). The *Churchman* (Oct. 1843, pp. 671–673) saw in its daring an evidence of genius: "it is no

¹ Sir William Richmond, R.A., K.C.B., son of George Richmond, has an interesting reminiscence in this connexion. "I remember upon one occasion when a tirade of the art of Claude was pouring out of his mouth like a cataract, in order that he might put Turner upon a yet higher pedestal, that my father became irritated. He turned sharply to Ruskin and said, 'Ruskin, when your criticism is constructive you talk like an angel; when it is destructive you declaim like a demon.' This vexed the impulsive thinker, but years afterwards he said to me, 'Your father once administered a very just rebuke when I talked nonsense about Claude.' Ruskin had real modesty, for no one was more critical of himself than he" (*St. George*, vol. v. 1902, p. 289).

common mind that can soar above the mists and delusions of traditionary prejudice, if we may use the phrase, and such a mind we have here." The *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1843, pp. 451–469), in the course of an expository article, praised the author's "ingenuity of reasoning, profuse display of examples and illustration, and elaborate richness of description and imagery." The *Church of England Quarterly* (vol. xv. Jan. 1844, pp. 213–221) declared the volume to be "the production of a poet as well as a painter," and "one of the most valuable, because one of the most practical and philosophic treatises on art that have appeared in modern times." The *Spectator* (Dec. 7, 1844, pp. 1167–1169) was later in the field, but ultimately had a long review, commending "this able and excellent treatise on landscape painting to all, whether artists or amateurs, who desire to have their perceptions of the beauties of nature and their judgment of pictures enlightened, by the observation and reasoning of a writer possessing exact and extensive knowledge of his subject, with refined taste and elevated views." The *Artist and Amateur's Magazine* (vol. i. pp. 257–264) was of the same opinion. "That this work is possessed of more than ordinary merits may be fairly judged," it said, "by the many public notices it has received, and by the variety of opinions it has called forth. . . . It is, taking it with all its defects, by far the most intelligent, philosophic, and comprehensive work on the subject of Art that has issued from the press of the present day. . . . It is impossible, in the whole range of writing on the subject, to find anything more enlightened in perception, more refined in feeling, more profoundly philosophic, more deeply learned in the mysteries of Art, more illustrative of its capabilities and powers, more explanatory of its means as connected with one great branch of its practice, than this short essay affords; nor is it possible to give the thoughts it contains a more defined and perfect form, or to clothe and grace them with all the resources of language—all that is comprehensive, forcible, appropriate, complete." Ruskin contributed two papers to this *Magazine* at the time; they are here reprinted in Appendix ii. (pp. 645–661). *Fraser's Magazine* (March 1846, pp. 358–368) expounded the arguments of the volume at length, and called it "perhaps the most remarkable book which has ever been published in reference to art. . . . We cannot close this article on the graduate's volume without referring to the singular eloquence and graphic power displayed in very many of its passages. It is evidently not the work of a critic only, but of a painter and poet."¹ But none of the reviews gave so much pleasure at Denmark Hill as that in

¹ Other reviews of a similar tenor may be found in *The Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1843, in *Atlas*, and in other periodicals of the time.

Britannia (Dec. 9, 1843, p. 778), which spoke of the book in the following terms:—

“This is the bold title of a bold work, a general challenge to the whole body of cognoscenti, dilettanti, and all haranguers, essayists, and critics, on the arts of Italy, Flanders, and England for the last hundred years. Of course it will raise the whole *posse comitatus* of the pencil in arms. . . . Yet we shall not be surprised if the time should arrive when the controversialists will be turned into converts, and the heresy be dignified with the honour of the true belief . . . We pronounce the volume to be one of the most interesting and important which we have ever seen on the subject, exhibiting a singular insight into the true principles of beauty, order, and taste—a work calculated more than *any other* performance in the language to make men inquire into the nature of these sensations of the sublime, the touching, and the delightful, and to lead them from doubt into knowledge, without feeling the length of a way so scattered over with the flowers of an eloquent, forcible, and imaginative style.”¹

These reviews accurately reflected the impression made by the book upon understanding readers. It may be interesting, however, to state that the actual sale of the book was slow. Of the edition published in May 1843, 500 copies were printed. By the end of the year only 150 had been sold.² It must then have made its way more rapidly, for the second edition was issued in the following March. But if Ruskin’s audience was at first few, it was fit. Among the first to read it was Wordsworth, who regarded Ruskin as “a brilliant writer,” and placed the volume in his lending library at Rydal Mount.³ A copy of the volume lay on Rogers’ library table. Tennyson saw it there and was instantly attracted by it:—

“Another book I long very much to see (he wrote to Moxon, the publisher) is that on the superiority of the modern painters to the old ones, and the greatness of Turner as an artist, by an Oxford undergraduate, I think. I do not much wish to buy it, it may be dear;

¹ Ruskin and his father attributed this notice to Dr. Croly (for whom see Vol. I. p. 409). “Since I have had the pleasure of seeing you,” wrote J.J. Ruskin to W. H. Harrison (Dec. 12), “I have read with attention the critique in the *Britannia* on *Modern Painters*; the origin cannot be doubted. One would be almost as proud of giving occasion for so masterly and witty a display of critical powers as of producing a tolerable book. . . . If the Book had been abused by all the Press, this would have compensated alone. . . . I write to you *confidentially*, and if you deem it worth while you can name the subject to Dr. Croly, to whom my son, not owning the Book, cannot well express his gratitude or his admiration.”

² *Memoir of George Smith*, p. 11; in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplementary Volume I., 1901, p. xvi.

³ See William Knight’s *Life of Wordsworth*, 1889, ii. 334, iii. 243. For Ruskin’s introduction to Wordsworth at Oxford, see Vol. II. p. xxvii.

perhaps you could borrow it for me out of the London Library, or from Rogers. I saw it lying on his table. I would promise to take care of it, and send it back in due time.”¹

Rogers himself must have been struck by the book, for in the spring of 1844 Ruskin was two or three times invited to his house, and a correspondence followed.² Sir Henry Taylor, author of *Philip van Artevelde*, was another early reader of the book, and he passed on its praises to another distinguished poet. He wrote to Mr. Aubrey de Vere, begging him to read “a book which seems to me to be far more deeply founded in its criticism of art than any other that I have met with, . . . written with great power and eloquence, and a spirit of the most diligent investigation. . . . I am told that the author’s name is Ruskin, and that he was considered at college as an odd sort of man who would never do anything.”³ Sara Coleridge, in a letter to a friend, recommends “a thick volume by a graduate of Oxford.” “The author,” she says, “has not converted, and yet he has delighted me. . . . His descriptions of nature in reference to art are delightful; clouds, rocks, earth, water, foliage, he examines and describes in a manner which shows him to be quite a man of genius, full of knowledge, and that fitness of observation which genius produces.”⁴ Miss Mitford, who afterwards became a dear friend of the author, was also an early admirer of *Modern Painters*.⁵ She sent word of it to the Brownings in Italy. They were already engaged upon the book, deeply interested, but sometimes acutely disagreeing with its judgments:—

“The letter (wrote Mrs. Browning) in which you mentioned your Oxford student caught us in the midst of his work upon art. Very vivid, very graphic, full of sensibility, but inconsequent in some of the reasoning, it seemed to me, and rather flashy than full in the metaphysics. Robert, who knows a good deal about art, to which knowledge I of course have no pretence, could agree with him only by snatches, and we, both of us, standing before a very expressive picture of Domenichino’s (the ‘David’—at Fano), wondered how he could

¹ *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his Son*, 1897, i. 223. Tennyson and Ruskin met in after years, and conversations between them have been recorded (see index volume). Tennyson was once asked to name the six authors in whom the stateliest English prose was to be found. He replied: Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, De Quincey, Ruskin (*ibid.* ii. 415).

² For Ruskin’s first and apparently earlier introduction to Rogers, see *Præterita*, i. ch. v. § 105. His letters to Rogers are given in a later volume of this edition.

³ Collingwood’s *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 94.

⁴ Letter cited in the *Westminster Gazette*, Jan. 31, 1900.

⁵ *The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford*, by Rev. A.G. L’Estrange, 1882, ii. 107.

blaspheme so against a great artist.¹ Still, he is no ordinary man, and for a critic to be so much of a poet is a great thing. Also, we have by no means, I should imagine, seen the utmost of his stature.”²

Mrs. Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë also read Ruskin together, though this was at a somewhat later date, and were at one in admiration of his burning prophecies. “Hitherto,” wrote Miss Brontë, “I have only had instinct to guide me in judging of art; I feel now as if I had been walking blindfold—this book seems to give me eyes. I *do* wish I had pictures within reach by which to test the new sense. Who can read these glowing descriptions of Turner’s works without longing to see them? . . . I like this author’s style much; there is both energy and beauty in it. I like himself, too, because he is such a hearty admirer. He does not give himself half-measure of praise or vituperation. He eulogizes, he reverences with his whole soul.”³ “Ruskin seems to me,” she wrote in another letter, “one of the few genuine writers, as distinguished from book-makers of the age. His earnestness even amuses me in certain passages; for I cannot help laughing to think how utilitarians will fume and fret over his deep, serious (and as *they* will think), fanatical reverence for Art. That pure and severe mind you ascribed to him speaks in every line. He writes like a consecrated Priest of the Abstract and Ideal.”⁴ It was as a prophet that George Eliot also came to regard the author of *Modern Painters*. “I venerate him,” she wrote, “as one of the great teachers of the day. The grand doctrines of truth and sincerity in art, and the nobleness and solemnity of our human life, which he teaches with the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet, must be stirring up young minds in a promising way.”⁵ Among the young minds whom the appearance of *Modern Painters* greatly stirred were many who were destined to have influence in their turn on the minds of others. To Liddell, afterwards Dean of Christ Church, the first volume was “like a revelation.”⁶ To it and its successors a great headmaster owed “more of thought and fruitful power than to any other book or any other living man.”⁷ Robertson of Brighton found in Ruskin’s early writing on art “a sense

¹ See below, p. 184 *n*.

² *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. by F. G. Kenyon, 1897, i. 384.

³ Letter to W. S. Williams (of Smith, Elder & Co), printed in *Macmillan’s Magazine*, Aug. 1891, vol. lxiv., p. 280.

⁴ *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, by Mrs. Gaskell, pocket ed., 1889, p. 368; *cf.* pp. 345 and 383.

⁵ *George Eliot’s Life*, by J. W. Cross, 1885, ii. 7.

⁶ See below, p. 668 *n*.

⁷ *Life of Edward Thring* (of Uppingham), by G. R. Parkin, 1898, ii. 243; and *cf.* p. 245. *Cf.* Dean Farrar’s expression of his debt to Ruskin, *St. George*, vol. ii. (1899) p. 3.

of soothing,” “more precious than even works which treat of scientific truth, such as chemistry, for *they* do not feed the heart.” The following letter from him refers more particularly to the first volume of *Modern Painters*:—

“I rejoice that you have taken up Ruskin; only let me ask you to read it very slowly, to resolve not to finish more than a few pages each day. One or two of the smaller chapters are quite enough—a long chapter is enough for two days, except where it is chiefly made up of illustration from pictures; those can only be read with minute attention when you have the print or picture to which he refers you; and those which you can so see, in the National Gallery, Dulwich, &c., you should study, with the book, one or two at a time. The book is worth reading in this way: study it—think over each chapter, and examine yourself mentally, with shut eyes, upon its principles, putting down briefly on paper the heads, and getting up each day the principles, you gained the day before. This is not the way to read many books, but it is the way to read much; and one read in this way, carefully, would do more good, and remain longer fructifying, than twenty skimmed. Do not read it, however, with slavish acquiescence; with deference, for it deserves it, but not more. And when you have got its principles woven into the memory, hereafter, by comparison and consideration, you will be able to correct and modify for yourself.”¹

It was thus that among an ever-widening circle Ruskin’s book came to be read. At the time the critical opinion which probably exercised most influence was that of Sydney Smith, who, as Canon Dale reported to J. J. Ruskin, “spoke in the highest terms of your son’s work, on a public occasion, and in presence of several distinguished literary characters. He said it was a work of transcendent talent, presented the most original views, and the most elegant and powerful language, and would work a complete revolution in the world of taste.”²

The fructifying effect which the first volume of *Modern Painters* exercised on the minds of general readers, it exercised also on many a young artist. From the artistic memoirs of the time, two instances may be given—typical of many others. The book came to him, Mr. Hodgson, R.A., tells us, “in the light of a revelation, as a new gospel to the world of art.”³ One day, says Mr. Holman Hunt, in describing

¹ *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson*, by Stopford A. Brooke, 1874, pp. 302, 305.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 165. See also the letter from Ruskin there given as a note.

³ *Fifty Years of British Art*, by J. E. Hodgson, R.A., 1887, p. 38.

his student years, “a fellow-student, one Telfer, spoke to me of Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*, and ended by lending it for a few days. . . . To get through the book I had to sit up most of the night more than once, and I returned it before I had got half the good there was in it; but of all readers, none so strongly as myself could have felt that it was written expressly for him. When it had gone, the echo of its words stayed with me, and pealed a further meaning and value in their inspiration whenever my more solemn feelings were touched in any way.”¹ Hunt must thus have read the first volume soon after its publication; his personal acquaintance with the author came some years later. The reception of the book in the circle of painters in which Ruskin and his father moved at the time is described in *Præterita* (ii. ch. ix.). It was somewhat reserved. It was not until October 1844 that Turner himself spoke to Ruskin about the book. Ruskin’s note of the occasion gives a characteristic glimpse of the painter:—

October 20, '44.—Have not written a word [*i.e.* in his diary] since returning from Chamouni, for my days pass monotonously now. Only I ought to note my being at Windus’s on Thursday, to dine with Turner and Griffith alone, and Turner’s thanking me for my book for the first time. We drove home together, reached his house about one in the morning. Boy-like, he said he would give sixpence to find the Harley Street gates shut; but on our reaching his door, vowed he’d be damned if we shouldn’t come in and have some sherry. We were compelled to obey, and so drank healths again, exactly as the clock struck one, by the light of a single tallow candle in the under room—the wine, by-the-bye, first-rate.

It was not in Turner’s nature to say much; it is characteristic again of him that among the things he said on this or some other occasion was that his champion “didn’t know how difficult it is,” and had been too hard on his fellow-artists.² Turner had probably read the book some time before, for on May 15 (1843) Ruskin notes:—

“Called on Turner to-day, who was particularly gracious. I think he must have read my book, and have been pleased with it, by his tone.”

In the Academy of 1843, which opened at the time that the book appeared, Turner exhibited pictures which Ruskin considered among his finest works—especially the “Sun of Venice going to Sea” and the

¹ “The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: a Fight for Art,” by W. Holman Hunt, in *The Contemporary Review*, April 1886, p. 478.

² *Lectures on Art*, § 8.

“St. Benedetto looking to Fusina”;¹ but the press was still bitterly scornful. Ruskin notes in his diary:—

May 10 [1843].—Yesterday at Academy . . . Turner greater than he has been these five years.

May 13.—Nothing but ignorant, unmeasured, vapid abuse of Turner in the periodicals. I believe it is spite, for I cannot conceive ignorance so total in any number of men capable of writing two words of English.

As the years went on, Ruskin’s advocacy in large measure prevailed. “Works by Turner forgotten by the ordinary public were recalled. . . . His timid admirers now grew bolder; his enemies were gradually silenced.”² But Turner himself was nearing the end of his course; by 1845 his powers showed obvious decline; and he died, says Ruskin, “before even the superficial effect of my work was visible.”³

With regard to other artists mentioned with critical approval by Ruskin, “the total group of Modern Painters were,” he says, “more startled than flattered by my schismatic praise; the modest ones, such as Fielding, Prout, and Stanfield, felt that it was more than they deserved,—and, moreover, a little beside the mark and out of their way; the conceited ones, such as Harding and De Wint, were angry at the position given to Turner; and I am not sure that any of them were ready even to endorse George Richmond’s consoling assurance to my father, that I should know better in time.”⁴ Among the artists who wrote to Ruskin’s father about the book—the authorship of which was not allowed by paternal pride long to remain in obscurity—was Samuel Prout. In a letter given in *Præterita*, he is “pleased to find that he has come off beautifully.” In writing, however, to Ruskin himself, Prout seems to have shown some little chagrin. In a letter here printed in Appendix iii. (p. 662), Ruskin explains his position. It was perhaps in view partly of such criticism from his artist-friends that in the third edition of the volume (1846) the author introduced longer notices of Prout and others (see below, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii.).⁵

The reception of the first volume of *Modern Painters* was, then, on the whole, very favourable. But there were exceptions. The old school of

¹ See below, p. 251 *n.*

² Thornbury’s *Life of Turner*, 1877, p. 409. “I am glad, and sorry,” wrote Ruskin to his father (Baveno, August 29, 1845), “to hear of Turner’s Gallery being so cleared; I am sure nobody ever worked to less selfish ends than I;” and *cf.* the note from his diary cited on p. 243.

³ *The Mystery of Life and its Arts*. See also the Postscript to this volume, p. 631.

⁴ *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 171.

⁵ “I am glad,” wrote J. J. Ruskin to W. H. Harrison (July 28, 1846), “my son has been able to say so much of Prout with truth in new edition. He has well examined the works of those he has now made any addition remarks on, I believe.”

conventional art and ribald criticism did not surrender at sight. The principal champions in the crusade against Turner were the *Athenæum* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. Ruskin's first volume was not calculated to conciliate them. Attacks on Turner now became combined with attacks on his prophet. The *Athenæum* devoted two reviews to the book (Nos. 849 and 850, Feb. 3 and 10, 1844)—written in the semi-facetious and wholly slashing style then in vogue. The author of *Modern Painters* reminded the reviewer “of a whirling Dervish who at the end of his well-sustained reel falls with a higher jump and a shriller shriek into a fit.” “What more light-headed rhodomontade,” he asked, was ever “scrawled except upon the walls, or halloed except through the wards, of Bedlam?” It was admitted, however, that the author wrote “eloquent skimble-skamble” better than some other professors of the art. *Blackwood* (Oct. 1843, pp. 485–503) was equally facetious; suggesting also a lunatic asylum as the author's provenance, and ridiculing his language as “very readily learned in the Fudge School.” “We do not think,” said the reviewer, “that landscape painters will either gain or lose much by the publication of this volume, unless it be some mortification to be so sillily lauded as some of our very respectable painters are. We do not think that the pictorial world, either in taste or practice, will be Turnerized by this palpably fulsome, nonsensical praise.”¹

Ruskin took these sallies in the spirit of one eager for the fray. His father, on the other hand, was distressed by them, and, like a cautious and prudent man of business, was doubtful of the expediency of controversy. At an early period he tried to screen his son from the sight of adverse criticisms;² now, the parts were reversed. “We had seen the *Athenæum* before,” writes Ruskin to W. H. Harrison (1844). “I do not forward it to my father, simply because the later he is in seeing it, the less time he will have to fret himself about what is to come *next week*. In fact, if by any means he could be got to overlook these things, it would be all the better, for they worry him abominably, and then *he* worries *me*. Do not send anything of the kind in future unless he fishes it out for himself. I believe you know pretty well how much *I* care for such matters.” He cared for them only as blows to be returned, as errors still to be corrected. “*Blackwood* sends back its petty thunders,” wrote

¹ Another equally hostile review appeared in *The Art Union Monthly Journal* (June 1843). The reviewer was especially indignant at the Graduate's criticisms of Maclise, and said:—

“From this new teacher the public may hope nothing—the beginning, end, and middle of his career is Turner, in whose praise he is vehement and indiscriminate; when speaking of other artists not in the vein of his own taste, he hesitates not at indulgence in scurrilities, such as have not disgraced the columns of any newspaper.”

²See Vol. II. p. xxxv.

his father to W. H. Harrison (Dec. 12, 1843); "I regret to see that in a letter to Ripplingille he has given *Blackwood* another thrust. He believes the critic of paintings and writer of the article on *Modern Painters* to be a Rev.—Eagles, or some such name, near Bristol."¹ The letter to Ripplingille's *Artist and Amateur's Magazine* is here reprinted in Appendix ii. (see p. 647). "I am only desirous," writes Ruskin's father again (Jan. 2, 1844), "of keeping my son out of broils or brawls or personalities. He can write on Principles and Theories without meddling with any one—no man becomes distinguished by making enemies, though he may by beating them when made to his hand. I wish him to be playful, not spiteful, towards all opponents." It was in the preface to the second edition that Ruskin gave his critics his tit-for-tat. He was at work upon it during the winter of 1843–44. "Put my rod nicely in pickle for *Blackwood*," he writes in his diary on Dec. 29; adding on Jan. 20, "Wish I could get my preface done; cannot write contemptuously enough, and time flies."² On March 14 it was finished; it appeared in the second edition, issued on March 30.³

¹ The Rev. John Eagles, author and artist, who had studied in Italy, trying to form his style on Gaspard Poussin and Salvator Rosa; he was a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine* from 1831 to 1855. That Ruskin's conjecture was correct appears from Mrs. Oliphant's *Memoirs of the Blackwoods*. She gives a curious letter (no date) from Richard to John Blackwood, suggesting that there should be a second review, conceived in a different style from that of Eagles, and that Ruskin himself should be asked to contribute, as he "had heard he would be a great acquisition to the magazine" (*William Blackwood and his Sons*, 1897, ii. 403).

² Ruskin continued in after years to enjoy a dig at *Blackwood*; see, e.g., *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 26 n., and vol. iv. App. i. But the magazine (as is the way with such) had the last word. Upon Ruskin's death, it published a final attack upon him quite in the old style (March 1900).

³ It appears from a letter of J. J. Ruskin to W. H. Harrison (March 27, 1844) that a few copies of the preface to the second edition were struck off for private circulation. The following extracts from Ruskin's diary refer to the preface to the second edition, and reflect the alternate moods of satisfaction and the reverse which accompanied the composition of it:—

Jan. 27.—Wrote a little—badly. . . . Can't tell how it is, my writing gets more and more obscure and a labour to me. Perhaps in my early papers I did not see so far.

Feb. 2.— . . . Certainly this is not a bright time with me. I write half a line sometimes in half-an-hour; I scratch it out again.

Feb. 10.—A most successful day; wrote much and well, and carried my Sir R. I. forward splendidly and easily.

Feb. 16.—A good day. Wrote well; saw my way through preface.

Feb. 22.—Wrote on with my preface; but cannot get way in it; it labours and sticks on my hands wofully.

March 7.—Got all the difficult part of my preface over.

March 14.—Finished my preface at last-satisfactorily, but exhausted: shall do nothing now but draw.

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

"My Sir R. I." means a drawing which he was doing for Sir Robert Inglis, for whom see *Academy Notes*, 1855, s. No. 159.

Neither praise nor blame diverted Ruskin from the path he had marked out for himself. He fought his hostile critics with a will, and he accepted his recognition gladly. He was conscious of his merits, but also of his limitations. He was confident because he felt that he had the root of the matter in him; but he knew at the same time that he was a learner still. The completion of the first portion of his essay was to him a spur to further studies. These will be described in the introduction to the next volume.¹ It is necessary, however, to anticipate here so far as is required to explain the successive changes in the text of the first volume. A second edition was issued, as already stated, in March 1844. The variations in the text were few; Ruskin's standpoint was still the same. He did not travel abroad in 1843; his home studies, so far as art was concerned, were such as have already been described. In 1844, as already stated, he returned to Chamouni, and continued his studies from nature. In 1845 he went abroad, for the first time without his parents, and studied Italian art. He wrote home daily letters eloquent of the intimacy between father and son; these letters, as well as a diary in which he made notes of pictures, have now been drawn upon to illustrate passages added to the text in the edition of 1846. This tour profoundly affected his outlook, as will be seen in the next volume. The second volume was issued in April 1846. Ruskin had already left for the Continent, where he remained from April to September. His parents on this occasion accompanied him, and he went over much the same ground as in the preceding year. He revised the proofs of the third edition of the first volume at Sestri,² and some of the passages inserted therein were written during his travels.³ "My son," writes J. J. Ruskin from Genoa, July 14, "has greatly altered, and I hope improved, the volume, and added much new criticism; it has cost him no little labour." His faithful mentor, W. H. Harrison, passed the edition finally for press; it appeared on September 16, 1846. Passages from Ruskin's letters and diaries, written abroad, are cited in notes to the following pages, at places where they illustrate additions made in the third edition. It was very largely revised. The author's more extended studies in Italian art are reflected in the new version of pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. (pp. 169 *seq.*). The chapter on "Water, as painted by the Ancients," was almost entirely re-written (see p. 495 *n.*); and there were many minor alterations (see, *e.g.*, pp. 117, 126, 277, 316, 322, 401, 435, 444, 545). The fourth edition (1848) shows little variation from the third;

¹ A glimpse in advance has already been given in the Letter to a College Friend of June 17, 1843, describing a typical day's work and reading, Vol. I. p. 493.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 174.

³ See below, pt. ii. sec. v. ch. i. §§ 3*n.*, 7.

the fifth (1851) was again largely revised, and a postscript was added (p. 631). In later editions the alterations were very slight, but to the edition of 1873 Ruskin added a new preface. The prefaces to the first and second editions were retained by the author in subsequent editions. The prefaces to the third and 1873 editions were not; they are here printed, in smaller type, after the earlier prefaces. Full bibliographical details are contained in the note following this introduction (pp. 52–54). The foregoing summary is given here in order to remind the reader once more that in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, as it now stands, he has before him a work put together by the author at different times and under different influences.

It is this fact (together with difficulties about the illustrations in vols. iii. to v.) which explains Ruskin's frequent changes of mind and plan with regard to the republication of *Modern Painters*. It will be seen that already in 1846, in the preface to the third edition (p. 53), Ruskin felt some qualms with regard to reissuing the first volume in its original form. By the time he had written the second volume, he had in some respects outgrown, as it were, the first. Then, after many years, came the third, fourth, and (after another pause) the fifth, volumes. He had now, in turn, outgrown the second volume. In particular, he had outlived the religious phase in which it was written, and had come to deplore its sectarian narrowness. Moreover, the fourth and fifth volumes covered, in large part, the same ground as the first volume. An appearance of uniformity in plan is indeed preserved by a division of the subject into ideas of truth (vol. i.), beauty (vols. ii. iv. and part of v.), and relation (vol. v.); but these divisions were in the later volumes hardly more than formal, and, in fact, vols. iv. and v., in their analysis of mountains, clouds, and trees, treat, on a more extended scale, and with corrections, the subject-matter of much of vol. i.¹ Hence Ruskin had some doubts whether it was well to let the less complete treatment of these matters given in vol. i. stand beside the fuller treatment in later volumes. Again, in other respects—besides the estimate of particular painters, already noticed (p. xxi.)²—Ruskin came to be dissatisfied with his first volume. He felt that its classification of the means by which art makes its appeal—

¹ For passages thus requiring correction, see below, pp. 372 *n.*, 447 *n.*

² Ruskin notices his changes of opinion with regard to ancient masters in the preface to vol. v. of *Modern Painters*, and again in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter lxxvi. With regard to *Modern Painters*, the reader of this volume will be able to trace many modifications in the collation of various editions. In a letter to his father from Venice (Sept. 18, 1845), Ruskin, referring to his studies for the second volume, says:—

“I meant by extinguishing the former book that I would try to outshine it, not to contradict it. I have nothing to retract, except the implied overpraise of Landseer.”

ideas of power, imitation, truth, beauty, and relation—was needlessly complicated and over subtle.¹ He felt also that he had allowed too little weight to ideas of power, and that the importance which he had rightly attributed to the subject might nevertheless be open to misinterpretation.² Some of these points were cleared up in his Oxford Lectures, and especially in the course entitled “Readings in *Modern Painters*.” Some references to this course (for which the author’s notes have been found among his MSS.) are given as notes in this volume;³ the lectures themselves, as they deal also with many extraneous matters, and are characteristic of the author’s method in his partly extempore courses, are reserved for publication among the Oxford Lectures. In other matters, the irregular and discursive treatment, consequential on the composition of a treatise at intervals during seventeen years, involved him, he perceived, in appearances of inconsistency and risks of misunderstanding. He dealt partly with this source of confusion by giving in later volumes harmonies and summaries of his statements—such as his estimate of Claude, his theory of the place of colour in art, his views on “finish.”⁴ But not all readers are careful and patient, and Ruskin felt that the irregular form of his work was likely to detract somewhat from its usefulness.⁵

Under the influence of this conviction Ruskin set to work at various times between 1860 and 1884 to revise *Modern Painters* thoroughly, and more especially to recast and rearrange (and largely to discard) the contents of volume one. Two copies of the book, which Ruskin kept by him for this purpose, are preserved at Brantwood. They have been drawn upon for notes to the following pages; some further account of them will be found in the Appendix v., describing the manuscript sources to which the editors have had access in preparing this edition.

But during these years, as always, Ruskin had a great many tasks on hand at the same time. The beginning of new books attracted him more than the revision of old ones. By 1873 he had not completed any re-draft of *Modern Painters*, and demands for a new edition of the book (then long out of print) were pressing. Accordingly he consented, as explained in the preface to the “New Edition” of that year (p. 54), to the republication of the book. It will be noticed that at the beginning of this preface he speaks of the edition as being “in its original form,” but, at the end, as being the last “in its complete form.” Had he said in both sentences “its *original* form,” some future difficulties would have

¹ The systematization, he said, was “affected and forced.” See below, p. 93 n.; and *cf.* “Readings in *Modern Painters*” (in a later volume of this edition).

² See below, p. 88 n.

³ See below, pp. 86 n., 93 n.

⁴ See above, p. xxxiv., and below, pp. 162 n., 176 n.

⁵ His feelings in this matter are shown in the notes for an unwritten preface given in Appendix v., p. 683, and in the *Letters to Chesneau* there referred to.

been avoided, as will presently be seen. Some of the original plates were becoming worn, and Ruskin was determined that they should not be used any more. Some were, in fact, destroyed. But it seems clear that, in 1873, Ruskin intended also never again to reissue *Modern Painters* in its original form, so far as the text was concerned.

This is shown by the preface to *Fronde Agrestes: Readings in 'Modern Painters,'* issued in 1875. The volume of selections was compiled by Miss Beever; many particulars in regard to it will be found in the volume containing Ruskin's letters to the compiler (*Hortus Inclusus*). His preface is here printed (p. 677). Passages from the first volume included in *Fronde* are indicated in the text of this volume, and any notes appended to them by Ruskin are given at the proper place. A collation of the selections is supplied in the Bibliographical Note (p. lxi.). Among Ruskin's MSS. a sheet has been found which was destined for some later edition of *Fronde*. It is printed here as bearing upon the subject now in hand:—

“I add to this passage, for my own contribution to the book, one of my favourite pieces in the fifth volume, which will be useful, I think, in several ways: first, in its own matter; secondly, in showing how the last volumes of *Modern Painters* grew out of, and in real substance superseded a great part of the first; so that I cannot think it desirable to republish all the simpler expressions of the earlier volumes with the more elaborate later ones, though I am glad that my friend should choose from them what she pleases;—lastly, this passage will place in the reader's possession my views on the subject of pictorial composition, of which I wish my positive statement to be generally known, it being a notion much gone abroad among shallow artists that I despise composition.

“Among shallow artists, I say, and those who read my first volume of *Modern Painters*, and not my last. For in justice to that first volume, I must finally say, that innocent and childish as it was, it knew itself thoroughly to be a ‘first volume,’ and entirely contemplated, from the first sentence of it, every statement of principle made to the end; contenting itself with doing its own business in its own time, and never for an instant supposing that a foolish public would ever think the first saying of a man at five-and-twenty all that he had got to say in his life.”

The reference to the “favourite piece” in vol. v. is not given.¹

The publication of *Fronde Agrestes* did not originate with Ruskin, and was no part of his schemes for dealing with *Modern Painters*. What he intended at the time was to make a number of separate books of it,

¹ Probably it was some portion of pt. viii. ch. i. (“The Law of Help”). In that chapter Ruskin insists strongly on the importance of composition in art (§ 10), and connects it with moral and political ideas in a passage (§ 6) which he often quoted (see, e.g., *Unto this Last*, § 54, and *Ethics of the Dust*, § 120).

each dealing with a subject of its own. What the number was to be, and which the subjects, were questions which at different times he answered to himself in different ways. "I mean," he wrote in 1874, "to take the botany, the geology, the Turner defence, and the general art criticism of *Modern Painters*, as four separate books, cutting out nearly all the preaching, and a good deal of the sentiment."¹ The intention to collect the art teaching was reaffirmed in a public letter from Venice in 1876. "It is precisely," he said, "the Art teaching which I am now gathering out of the *Stones of Venice*, and will gather, God willing, out of *Modern Painters*, and reprint and reaffirm every syllable of it; but the Religious teaching of those books, and all the more for the sincerity of it, is misleading—sometimes even poisonous; always, in a manner, ridiculous; and shall not stand in any editions of them published under my own supervision."² At other times, however, Ruskin seems to have thought that the collection of his former art teaching was rendered unnecessary by his restatements of it in his Oxford courses.³ But in 1883 he put out a separate edition of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., with various alterations and deprecatory notes—as will be seen in the next volume of this edition. In the following year he took in hand some part of the design explained in the letter to Miss Beever of nine years earlier. This scheme is explained in the preface to *In Montibus Sanctis*, here reprinted in Appendix iv. (p. 678). He now proposed to collect the scientific matter from *Modern Painters* into three treatises, dealing respectively with Mountains, Clouds, and Trees. Ruskin was ever particular about his titles, and often got no further with a book or a chapter than hitting upon a title that attracted his fancy. "In Montibus Sanctis," for Mountains, and "Cæli Enarrant" for Clouds were selected⁴; a search for a similar title for Trees, to which he set one of his undergraduate friends, was indecisive, and this third part of the design was put aside. The other two sections started together in 1884. Of *In Montibus Sanctis* three chapters (in two separately issued Parts) were published. The preface, as already stated, is given here; the other matter, having nothing to do with volume one of *Modern Painters*, is reserved for inclusion in later volumes of this edition. *Cæli Enarrant* got no further than Part I. The preface and the chapters (i. and ii.) belong to volume four of *Modern Painters*. Yet another carving out of the old book—making six⁵ in all—was at one time contemplated, namely, a collection of

¹ *Hortus Inclusus*, letter from Perugia of June 12 (1874).

² *Fors Clavigera*, Letter lxxvi., dated Venice, March 4, 1877.

³ See Preface to *In Montibus Sanctis*, below, p. 678.

⁴ Vulgate, Psalms, lxxxvii. 1 and xix. 1.

⁵ Namely, Mountains, Clouds, Trees, the Turner Defence, General Art Criticism, and Education.

passages dealing with education;¹ but this was never begun by the author.

Broken health and pressure of other pursuits and interests again prevented the recasting of *Modern Painters*; it did not get itself done either during the period 1860–73, or during 1873–84. In 1888, as in 1873, the demand for *Modern Painters* had again become insistent. Ruskin, who by this time had dispersed his inherited fortune, and was dependent upon his earnings as a writer, yielded to the demand, and a new edition of the book—in its original form, so far as the text went—was issued. Ruskin was at the time in bad health, and did not in any way supervise the preparation of the edition, though he wrote an epilogue for it. The edition differed, however, from its predecessors in the matter of the plates, several of which were re-engraved, while others were retouched. This fact, however, was held by some to be not sufficient to justify the reissue of the book, in view of the 1873 preface;² Ruskin dealt with this matter in his epilogue (Vol. VII. of this edition). A collation of all the editions, and an elaborate index, prepared by Mr. Wedderburn, was added in a supplementary volume. This collation, revised, corrected, and supplemented, is incorporated in the present edition, which is “complete” in a sense that is not applicable to any other edition. The index will be embodied in the final volume of this edition. It should be remembered that only volumes three, four, and five of *Modern Painters* were illustrated by the author. For remarks on the reproduction in this edition of the original illustrations, the reader is referred to the introductions to those volumes. Issues of the book after 1888 were reprints in one form or another of the edition of that year; for other particulars, mainly of typographical interest, the curious in such matters may consult the Bibliographical Note. Here, therefore, the long and somewhat complicated story of *Modern Painters* may close. It covers a period—from the first germ in 1836 to the author’s epilogue in 1888—of fifty-two years.

It remains to explain the arrangement of the text and notes in this edition, of which arrangement the principal objects are to combine completeness for the collector with convenience for the student. The *text* is, in accordance with the general rule of the edition, that last revised

¹ See preface to *In Montibus Sanctis*, and cf. *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 29 *n*. A collection of passages from Ruskin’s Works generally, bearing on education, was made by Mr. W. Jolly in 1894, but this was unauthorized, and was withdrawn from sale shortly after publication.

² The subject was hotly discussed in *The Scots Observer*, June 1—July 27, 1889. The correspondence and editorial comments were afterwards printed as a fly-sheet, entitled “The Reissue of *Modern Painters*.”

by the author; *i.e.* the text of volume one as it appeared in the “New Edition” of the whole work issued in 1873; the edition of 1888 has been followed in its correction of a few obvious misprints. All substantial variations in successive editions are given in the body of the book. Minor variations are collected in Appendix vi. (p. 685). In the case of shorter passages, the various readings are given as footnotes to the page at the place where each occurs. The author’s notes, added in *Fronde Agrestes*, are similarly given. Some longer passages are given in their entirety at the end of the chapters to which they severally belong. Not every reader of the first volume of *Modern Painters* has read the same book. Those who possess only one of the first two editions, or whose recollection of the book is derived from them, have sometimes been regretfully puzzled at the disappearance of favourite passages. It has seemed better in these cases—and it was also typographically more convenient—to print the original text *in extenso*, at the end of the several chapters. The most important case of this kind occurs in pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. Paragraphs §§ 6–47 (pp. 169–253) were added in the third edition, a few sentences only of the original text being incorporated. The original text (§§ 6–13) can here be read connectedly and *in extenso* (pp. 253–258). Opinions may differ as to whether the author’s revision was in this case an improvement; but at any rate his first thoughts—such a passage, for instance, as the characterization of David Cox, whose pencil never fell but in dew (p. 253), or the longer one describing successive impressions of Venice (pp. 255–257)—are intensely characteristic, and are too important to every appreciative reader, to be pieced together from footnotes. Other chapters which were largely rewritten, and of which, therefore, the original version is here printed consecutively, are pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. (see pp. 316–318), and pt. ii. sec. v. ch. i. (pp. 520–527).

The *manuscripts*, etc., of this volume to which the editors have had access are of two kinds:—(1) The two printed copies above referred to, containing Ruskin’s notes and excisions; (2) MS. of the drafts of portions of volume one. An account of these MSS., with extracts, is given in Appendix v.; and passages from the author’s draft are occasionally cited or referred to in notes upon the text. But a few general remarks may here be made. Ruskin in *Præterita* describes his literary work, at the time of the early volumes of *Modern Painters*, as having been “always done as quietly and methodically as a piece of tapestry. I knew exactly,” he says, “what I had got to say, put the words firmly in their places like so many stitches, hemmed the edges of chapter round with what seemed to me graceful flourishes, touched them

finally with my cunningest points of colour, and read the work to papa and mamma at breakfast next morning, as a girl shows her sampler.”¹ Ruskin is here contrasting himself with Carlyle, and in the literary workshop at Denmark Hill there was, it is true, nothing of those wrestlings and objurgations with which Carlyle tortured refractory matter into shape. But it must not be supposed that Ruskin’s stitches never went wrong, or that his chapters came full-born as they now stand from his brain and pen. A description which he gives elsewhere accords more nearly with the actual state of things as shown by his MSS. “A sentence of *Modern Painters*,” he says, “was often written four or five times over in my own hand, and tried in every word for perhaps an hour—perhaps a forenoon—before it was passed for the printer.”² So far as the arrangement of the matter went, he wrote and re-wrote and re-wrote again; and there are pages also in which hardly a word was not altered at least once. Of the final drudgery of correcting the proofs for the press, Ruskin was, it should be added, relieved in large measure by the good offices of W. H. Harrison. In writing a notice of his “old literary master,” many years afterwards, Ruskin confessed to some “instinctive terror lest, wherever he is in celestial circles, he should catch me writing bad grammar, or putting wrong stops, and should set the table turning, or the like. For he was inexorable in such matters, and many a sentence in *Modern Painters*, which I had thought quite beautifully turned out after a forenoon’s work on it, had to be turned outside-in, after all, and cut into the smallest pieces and sewn up again, because he had found there wasn’t a nominative in it, or a genitive, or a conjunction, or something else indispensable to a sentence’s decent existence and position in life. Not a book of mine, for good thirty years, but went, every word of it, under his careful eyes twice over—often also the last revises left to his tender mercies altogether, on condition he wouldn’t bother me any more.”³ Ruskin’s description of his composition as patch-work is in one respect curiously appropriate, so far as the manual labour was concerned; for he was in the habit of using wafers or sealing-wax to paste second versions of sentences over the first—thus literally dove-tailing

¹ *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 135.

² *Fiction Fair and Foul*, § 123.

³ *On the Old Road*, § 1. In a letter to W. H. Harrison, written shortly after the appearance of the 3rd ed. of vol. i. of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin says:—

“There is only one mistake of the *sense* of a word in the whole book—classification for classicality; and, as far as I have yet seen, only one *literal* mistake—Prosperine for Proserpine. No book could possibly be edited more accurately; the punctuation is sometimes deficient in the way of commas, but that was entirely my own fault.”

The mistakes in question occurred in passages on pp. 230, 242 of this edition.

them in. His favourite MS. material was blue or white foolscap, ruled. There were often at least three stages in the composition (though this remark applies more particularly to later volumes). First, a draft in his hand in a note-book, often heavily corrected. Secondly, a fairer copy, also in his hand, on loose foolscap sheets, again corrected. Thirdly, a copy of the last, written out by an amanuensis,¹ and then once more copiously revised by the author.

The *frontispiece* to this volume is reproduced directly from the water-colour portrait by George Richmond, R.A. The portrait, which is at Brantwood, was painted for Ruskin's father, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1843.² "A charming water-colour," Ruskin called it, "of me sitting at a picturesque desk in the open air, in a crimson waistcoat and white trousers, with a magnificent port-crayon in my hand, and Mont Blane, conventionalized to Raphaelesque grace, in the distance."³ Richmond painted it in February 1843, as the following extract from Ruskin's diary shows:—

February 24.—In at Richmond's, and had a pleasant sitting. He says my chief aim in art is—infinity, which I think a clever guess, if it be a guess.

The other *illustrations* in this volume are from (1) drawings by Ruskin, or (2) drawings or pictures by Turner. Ten of the plates have been made expressly for this edition; four, though not hitherto published, were made during Ruskin's lifetime and on his instructions. Just as he had various schemes for rearranging and republishing the text of *Modern Painters*, so also he formed various plans for the further illustration of that and other works. He had a considerable number of drawings engraved under his personal superintendence at various times, which he designed for use in this way. Among the number are several steel-plates which he entrusted to Mr. George Allen. Of these some appear to have been intended for use in *Modern Painters*,⁴ which book they serve, at any rate, to illustrate; they are therefore included in this edition. Four are inserted in the present volume; namely (*a*), a drawing by Ruskin of the Aiguille du Dru and the Valley of Chamouni (No. 7).

¹ In earlier years "George" (for whom see Introduction to next volume); later, Crawley and Baxter (whose acquaintance we shall make in subsequent volumes).

² No. 1061, described in the Catalogue as "John Rusken (*sic*), jun., Esq."

³ *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 169.

⁴ They may have been intended for the separate publication of plates of which he speaks in the preface to *In Montibus Sanctis* (see Appendix v., p. 679).

This is one of many studies of "Aiguilles and their Friends" made in 1842 or 1844 (*cf.* above, p. xxvii.). (*b*) A study of ivy and other foreground foliage (No. 6), and (*c*) a study of leafage and boughs (No. 13)—samples of many sketches of a similar kind made by Ruskin in the same years and throughout his life. The extracts from his diary, given below, may refer to these drawings.¹ (*d*) A drawing by Ruskin of a portion of the foreground in Turner's drawing entitled "The Long-ships Lighthouse, Land's End" (No. 10). The drawing is frequently referred to in this volume (see note on p. 404); it is reproduced in vol. ii. (p. 220) of *Turner and Ruskin*. Ruskin's study, here given, shows a portion of the wreckage which occupies the middle foreground of the drawing. Three of these plates, (*a*), (*b*), and (*d*), were engraved for Ruskin by J. C. Armytage, to whose skill a tribute was paid in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* (author's preface, § 6 *n.*). The other, (*c*), was drawn and etched by Ruskin himself.

Three other drawings by Ruskin, reproduced by photogravure in this volume, illustrate various passages in it, and continue also the illustration of his handiwork given in the preceding volumes of this edition. The "San Michele, Lucca" (No. 1) is from a water-colour drawing made by Ruskin on the spot in 1845, as described below (p. 206 *n.*). The original is in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford (see *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, No. 83). The "Casa Contarini Fasan, Venice" (No. 2) is from a pencil drawing (touched with sepia) made in 1841, and shows Ruskin's careful study of architectural detail (see p. 210 below). The original is also in the Drawing School (see *Catalogue of the Reference Series*, No. 65). It was exhibited at the Fine Art Society's Gallery in 1878 (see Ruskin's *Notes on his own Drawings*, 13 R.). The other Ruskin drawing here reproduced is of "Chamouni" (No. 4). It is referred to in *Præterita* (ii. ch. i. § 10), where Ruskin calls it "Chamouni in afternoon sunshine." It was made for his old tutor and friend, Osborne Gordon; the original water-colour (11¼ x 9¼) is now in possession of Mr. Pritchard Gordon, by whose kind permission it is here included.

The other illustrations in the volume are photogravures from pictures and drawings by Turner, described or referred to in the text. In selecting these, it has been thought unnecessary to include works which are accessible in public galleries, or are familiar from engravings in widely distributed publications. The works here reproduced

¹ *Dec.* 8, 1843.—Had a long, very long walk, nearly to Bromley,—studying boughs of trees, ivy-leaves on roots, etc. *Dec.* 11.—Drew a little; touched vignette from Armytage of leaves.

are all in private collections (except No. 12, which is in a public gallery in America).

The "Valley of Chamouni" (No. 3) is reproduced (by kind permission of Mr. F. H. Fawkes) from the drawing at Farnley. It is referred to by Ruskin in this volume at p. 239 *n.* A rough sketch of the same subject is in the National Gallery collection (No. 554), made from nature in 1803. It is interesting to compare Turner's drawing with Ruskin's of a very similar subject (No. 4). This is the earliest of the works of Turner here illustrated; the Swiss series at Farnley belong to about 1810 (see note on p. 239).

The "Okehampton" (No. 9) is from the drawing of 1826, formerly in the Ruskin collection. It is frequently referred to in the following pages (see pp. 235, 266 *n.*, 410, 421, 594).

The "Port Ruysdael" (No. 11) is from the painting of 1827, which Ruskin saw and described when it was in the Bicknell collection (see p. 568).

The "Llanthony Abbey" (No. 8) is from the drawing of 1834, formerly in Ruskin's collection. It is often referred to (see p. 401 *n.*).

The "Mercury and Argus" (No. 14) is of special interest in this volume, because the picture is one of those exhibited in 1836, which first inspired Ruskin to enter the lists as the champion of Turner's later manner.

The "Slaver" (No. 12) is also of particular interest in connection with *Modern Painters*. The picture, exhibited in 1840, was enthusiastically described in the first volume (see pp. 571–572); and it shortly afterwards became Ruskin's property, being given to him by his father in gratitude for the success which the book had obtained. "Its success was assured," says Ruskin, "by the end of the year [1843], and on January 1st, 1844, my father brought me in the 'Slaver' for a New Year's gift,—knowing well this time how to please me" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 81). "I write," he notes in his diary (January 1, 1844), "with the 'Slaver' on my bed opposite me—my father brought it in this morning for a New Year's present. I feel very grateful. I hope I shall continue so. I certainly shall never want another oil of his. We had a fine washing at it, and got it into beautiful condition, as fresh as can be." In 1869 Ruskin sold the picture (for £2042, 5*s.*); the subject—the throwing overboard of the dead and dying, who are seen struggling in the water surrounded by sharks and gulls—had, he used to say, become too painful to live with.

The "Venice, Dogana and the Salute" (No. 5) is from the picture of 1843—one of the later Venices by Turner, which Ruskin greatly admired (see p. 250).

The *facsimiles* of Ruskin's manuscript here given are from the "Allen (now Pierpont Morgan) MS.," described in Appendix v. (p. 682). The first (p. 89) is a rough draft of a well-known passage, the description of Landseer's "Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner"; the second (p. 256), of a passage which does not appear in the final text. The first four lines of it stood in the first edition; the rest, a characterisation of Prout, was re-written for that edition (see p. 216).

E. T. C.

[*Bibliographical Note.*—The bibliography of *Modern Painters* falls under three heads, dealing respectively with (1) editions of separate volumes; (2) editions of the whole work; (3) selections from it. The separate editions of the other volumes will be dealt with in each of them.

SEPARATE EDITIONS OF VOLUME I

VOLUME I.—*First Edition* (1843).—For title-page of this, see above, p. xxxi.

Large crown 8vo, pp. xxxi.+420. The title-page of this and all subsequent editions had the quotation from Wordsworth (as on the title-page here). On p. v. was the Dedication, “To the Land-*scape Artists of England.*” Issued (price 12s.) in green (or purple) cloth boards; lettered on the back with the words, “Modern Painters Their Superiority in The Art of Landscape Painting to the Ancient Masters”; this title was enclosed in the device (here reproduced) of two trees, a lake, and the setting sun, which figured in all subsequent editions of the book, up to and including that of 1873. The larger sized page and familiar pale green binding was not adopted until vol. ii. and the third edition of vol. i., both of which appeared in 1846. No illustrations.

Second Edition (1844).—Title-page identical with first edition, except that the date is altered, and the words “Second Edition” are added below the quotation.

The new preface (here pp. 7–52) caused the introductory matter to increase to pp. lxxxviii., and the revision of sec. vi. ch. iii. (see here, pp. 625–626) caused the other pages to number 423. Otherwise the revisions of the text were very slight. A slip, containing the following list of *Errata*, was inserted after the title-page:—



- | | | | |
|------|----------|-------|---|
| Page | xxxiii., | 1.8 | from bottom, for ἐτιρπεν, read ἐτέρπεν. |
| " | xxvii, | 1. 2, | for Greeks, read Greek. |
| " | lx., | 1.8, | for neglected, read solitary. |
| " | 122, | 1.9 | from bottom, for us, read as. |
| " | 329, | 1.6 | from bottom, for water, read matter. |

Issued in cloth boards, of dark slaty-blue colour.

Third Edition (1846).—This was issued soon after ed. 1 of vol. ii., and

conformed to the larger page adopted for the latter—viz. Imperial 8vo (as in all later editions). The title-page was altered, thus:—

Modern Painters. | Volume I. | Containing | Parts I. and II. | By a
Graduate of Oxford. | [Quotation] | Third Edition | Revised by the
Author | London: | Smith, Elder & Co., 65, Cornhill. | 1846.

pp. lxii.+422. New preface (here, pp. 52–53). The text was largely revised (see above, p. xlv.). Issued (Sept. 16, 1846) in pale green cloth boards. This and all later volumes were lettered simply, “Modern Painters, Volume I., II.” etc. The price was raised to 18s. “Made-up sets,” *i.e.* third eds. of vols. i. and ii., and first eds. of vols. iii., iv., and v., have in recent years been sold in the auction rooms at prices ranging, partly according to condition, from £31 (1887) to £15 (1902).

Fourth Edition (1848).—Except for the alteration of date and number of edition on the title-page, and omission of the *Preface to the Third Edition*, this edition was substantially identical with the last; variations in the text were few and unimportant.

Fifth Edition (1851).—This edition was the first to bear the author’s name, though the authorship had already been publicly avowed, for *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, issued in 1849, was “by John Ruskin, author of *Modern Painters*.” The title-page was:—

Modern Painters. | Volume I. | Containing | Parts I. and II. | Of General
Principles, and of Truth. | By John Ruskin, | Author of “The Stones of
Venice,” “The Seven Lamps of Architecture,” | etc., etc. | [Quotation] | Fifth
Edition, Revised by the Author. | London: | Smith, Elder & Co., 65,
Cornhill. | 1851.

The text was again largely revised, and a Postscript on the death of Turner was added (here, p. 631). Issued in Sept. 1851.

Sixth Edition (1857).—The same as the Fifth, except for alteration of date and number of edition on the title-page.

Seventh Edition (1867).—The same as the Fifth, except for similar alterations, and for the addition on the title-page of the letters “M.A.” after the author’s name, and of these words at the foot: “The author reserves the right of translation.”

This was the last separate edition of volume i. For bibliographical notes on separate editions of volumes ii. iii. iv. and v., see those volumes severally.

EDITIONS OF THE WHOLE WORK

New Edition (1873).—Generally known as the *Autograph Edition*, from the fact of the new preface (here, p. 54) being signed by the author. The title-pages were as follow:—

Modern Painters. | Volume I. | Containing | Parts I. and II. | Of General
Principles and of Truth. | By John Ruskin, LL.D. | Author of “The Stones of
Venice,” etc., etc. | [Quotation] | A New Edition London: | Smith, Elder &
Co., 15 Waterloo Place. | 1873. | [The Author reserves the right of
translation.]

Modern Painters. | Volume II. | Containing | Part III. | Sections I. and II. | Of the Imaginative and Theoretic Faculties. | By John Ruskin, LL.D. | etc., etc.

Modern Painters. | Volume III. | Containing | Part IV. | Of Many Things. | By John Ruskin, LL.D. | etc., etc.

Modern Painters. | Volume IV. | Containing | Part V. | Of Mountain Beauty. | By John Ruskin, LL.D. | etc., etc.

Modern Painters. | Volume V. | Completing the work, and containing | Parts VI. Of Leaf Beauty. | VII. Of Cloud Beauty. | VIII. Of Ideas of Relation. | 1. Of Invention Formal. | IX. Of Ideas of Relation. | 2. Of Invention Spiritual. | By John Ruskin, LL.D. | etc., etc.

The collation is:—vol. i. pp. lxiii.+423; vol. ii. pp. xvi.+224; vol. iii. pp. xix.+348; vol. iv. pp. xii.+411; vol. v. pp. xvi.+384. In volume i. of this edition is added a preface limiting the edition to a thousand copies, and signed by the author's own hand. Beyond this the work is a reprint without alteration from the last editions of the different volumes of the work. Issued (on June 26, 1873) in pale green cloth boards, similar to those of the previous editions of separate volumes. The published price of the five volumes was Eight Guineas. Sets have in recent years been sold in the auction rooms at prices ranging, partly according to condition, from £19 (1889) to £6, 12s. 6d. (1902).

To vol. ii. as to vol. i. there were no illustrations. Vol. iii. contained a frontispiece and 17 plates; vol. iv., a frontispiece and Plates 18–50; vol. v. a frontispiece and Plates 51–100. Several wood-cuts were also given in vols. iii. to v. Particulars of the illustrations are in this edition given in the Introductions and Bibliographical Notes to those volumes. The plates added in this edition to vols. i. and ii. are not numbered (on the plates) in order to preserve the author's numbering in the later volumes. In the "Autograph Edition" of 1873, all the illustrations were printed from the original plates.

That edition included at the end of vol. v. three indices to the whole work, first given in the separate issue of vol. v. (1860), viz. Local Index, Index to Painters and Pictures, and Topical Index.

Complete Edition (1888),¹—This was the first edition published by Mr. George Allen, instead of by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. With the exception of this alteration, of the altered date, and of "Complete Edition" for "A New Edition," the wording of the title-pages was the same as those of the 1873 edition, except (further) that the author was now described as "John Ruskin, LL.D., Honorary Student of Christ Church, and Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford". The title of each volume was enclosed within a plain ruled frame. The collation is:—vol. i. pp. lxiii.+425; vol. ii. pp. xxvii.+264; vol. iii. pp. xix.+351; vol. iv. pp. xii.+420; vol. v. pp. xvi.+364. Each volume contained "Additional Notes" at the end, these being derived from *Fronde Agrestes* (see below), the rearranged edition of vol. ii. (see Bibliographical Note to next vol. of this edition), *In Montibus Sanctis* and *Cæli Enarrant* (see below). The fifth volume contained three additional plates (see Bibliographical Note to that vol.) and an Epilogue by the author dated "Chamouni, Sunday, September 16, 1888." Three of the original plates (Nos. 12, "The Shores of Wharfe," 73, "Loire Side," and 74, "The

¹ So dated on the title-page, but not issued till the following year.

Millstream") had been destroyed. They were reproduced for this edition from early proofs of those originally etched by the author's own hand. Nine other plates were re-engraved, viz.:—

			<i>Originally engraved by</i>	<i>Re-engraved by</i>
Plate	14.	The Lombard Apennine	T. Lupton	G. Allen.
"	15.	St. George of the Seaweed	"	"
"	12A.	¹ The Shores of Wharfe	"	"
"	49.	Truth and Untruth of Stones	"	C.A. Tomkins.
"	52.	Spirals of Thorn	R.P. Cuff	G. Cook.
"	58.	Branch Curvature	"	"
"	68.	Monte Rosa: Sunset	J.C. Armytage	"
"	80.	Rocks at Rest	"	"
"	81.	Rocks in Unrest	"	"

Several of the original plates were retouched by Mr. George Allen or his son, Mr. Hugh Allen. The "Complete Edition" was in other respects a reprint of that of 1873, with no alterations of text, except in the case of wrong references or obvious errors. The prefaces and one or two other passages were divided into numbered sections for the sake of the references in the index volume (see below); the indices given at the end of vol. v. in the 1873 edition were not reprinted. The edition was issued (on May 9, 1889) in brown cloth boards. Two thousand copies were printed, the price being Six Guineas the set of five volumes; also 450 Large-Paper copies (on Whatman's hand-made paper) at Ten Guineas; these latter were issued (Jan. 31, 1889) in green cloth, the steel engravings being on India paper.

With this edition was issued an index volume (by Mr. A. Wedderburn). The following are extracts from the Prefatory Note:—

"The present volume, though issued with Mr. Ruskin's sanction, has been compiled without reference to him, and he is, therefore, in no way responsible for it.

"The references used in the index will be found equally applicable to all the editions of the different volumes of the work. The old index hitherto contained in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* is omitted from the 'Complete Edition,' but embodied in the present index, though not always under quite the same headings. . . .

"A bibliography of *Modern Painters*, and a collation of the main differences between the various editions, are placed at the end of the volume, and will, it is believed, be valued by collectors and students of Mr. Ruskin's works."

The collation is pp. vii.+316. The price of the volume was 14s.; and (uniform with the large-paper copies), 21s.

(An account of the "Complete Edition" of 1888, with various details supplied by Mr. George Allen, appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 1, 1889, and was reprinted in E. T. Cook's *Studies in Ruskin*, 1890, pp. 196–200.)

Second Complete Edition (1892).—This was a reprint of the foregoing; price Five (now Four) Guineas the set of five volumes; index volume, 14s. (now 10s.).

[*New Edition in small form* (1897).—This was similar in all respects to the Complete Editions of 1888 and 1892, except that the size was crown 8vo, and that the plates were correspondingly reduced. The price of the five volumes

¹ The mezzotint in vol. iv. of Plate 12 in vol. iii.

Was 37s., and index volume, 5s. The volumes were, however, sold separately, and they were reprinted as required. Vols. i. and ii. (sold together) were reprinted in 1898, 1900, vol. iii., in 1898, 1901; vol. iv., in 1898, 1902; vol. v., in 1898, 1902; the index volume in 1898 (with some revision).

SELECTIONS FROM "MODERN PAINTERS"

Fronde Agrestes (1875).—This is the form in which passages from *Modern Painters* have been most widely issued from the press. The selection was made by Miss Susan Beever, as described in the letters printed under the title *Hortus Inclusus*. The title-page was:—

Fronde Agrestes. | Readings in 'Modern Painters.' | Chosen at her
pleasure, | by the Author's friend, | the younger Lady of the Thwaite, |
Coniston. | "Spargit agrestes tibi silva frondes." | George Allen, | Sunnyside,
Orpington, Kent, | 1875.

Post 8vo, pp. viii.+184. The author's preface (here, p. 677) occupied pp. v. -vii. Page viii., blank at first, contained in some later issues a table of contents, etc., giving the divisions specified in the collation below. Thirty-four notes were added by the author; these were reprinted in the appendices to each volume of the "Complete Edition" of 1888, and of later editions reprinted from it. In this edition they are given as notes to the text. Issued (on April 28, 1875) in brown leather, price 3s. 6d. Some copies of the fifth and later editions were issued in cloth boards, with a white-paper label; later editions were also issued in green cloth, price 3s. The following are the dates of publication of successive editions:—1875, 1876, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1883, 1884, 1886, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1893, 1895 (two), 1896, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1902. In all, 36,000 copies of these selections have been printed.

No alteration has been made in the text of any of the editions.

The following table gives the references to the passages contained in *Fronde Agrestes*, an asterisk denoting those to which notes were added by the author. The references are (in the second column) to the volumes (i. -v.), and (in the third column) to the parts (in the case of vols. i. and v., which alone contain more than one part), sections, chapters, and paragraphs of *Modern Painters*:—

SECTION I.—PRINCIPLES OF ART			18.*	IV.	11. 8, 9.
1.	I.	i.i. 6. 1, 2.	19.*	IV.	20. 2.
2.	II.	i. 3. 9.	20.*	IV.	1. 2, 3.
3.	II.	i. 1. 8.			
4.*	II.	i. 3. 13.			
5.*	III.	7. 16.			
6.*	III.	5. 6.			
7.*	III.	7. 15.			
8.*	III.	4. 22.			
SECTION II.—POWER AND OFFICE OF IMAGINATION					
9.*	III.	4. 5.			
10.*	III.	2. 7.			
11.	III.	16. 24.			
12.*	III.	7. 19. 20.			
13.*	III.	16. 23, 29.			
14.*	II.	ii. 3. 33.			
15.	III.	7. 8.			
16.	III.	17. 3.			
17.	III.	10. 8.			
SECTION III.—ILLUSTRATIVE: THE SKY					
			21.*	I.	iii. 1. 1, 2, 3.
			22.*	V.	4. 6.
			23.	I.	ii. iii. 1. 13.
			24.*	V.	vii. 1. 2, 3, 9.
				IV.	v. 5. 2-5.
			25.*	I.	ii. iii. 4. 31-4.
			26.*	IV.	6. 2-9.
SECTION IV.—ILLUSTRATIVE: STREAMS AND SEA					
			27.	I.	ii. v. 1. 1.
			28.	V.	vii. 4. 5.
			29.*	I.	ii. v. 2. 3.
			30.*	IV.	12. 1, 2, 3.
			31.*	I.	ii. v. 3. 38.

	SECTION V.—ILLUSTRATIVE: MOUNTAINS	58. V. vi. 10. 22. 59. V. vi. 10. 24. 60. V. vi. 10. 25.
32.*	IV. { 7 except 5, and 1st par.; and 2nd par. of 9.	SECTION VIII.—EDUCATION
33.	I. ii. iv. 1. 3.	61. V. ix. 11. 20, 21.
34.**	IV. 9. 6.	62. III. 17. 32.
35.*	IV. 13. 11–14.	63.* III. 17. 34.
36.*	IV. 10. 4, 5.	64. III. 17. 24.
37.	IV. 16. 16, 17.	65. V. ix. 11. 22.
	SECTION VI.—ILLUSTRATIVE: STONES	66. V. ix. 11. 15.
38.	IV. 18. 6, 7.	67. III. 17. 13.
39.	IV. 17. 37–8.	68. III. 17. 35.
40.	III. 9. 6.	69. III. 1. 2.
70.	III. 18. 32.	70. III. 18. 32.
42.	IV. 11. 2.	71. I. ii. i. 7. 8.
43.	IV. 10. 3.	72.* II. i. 6. 2.
44.	IV. 18. 26.	73.* II. i. 12. 2.
	SECTION VII.—ILLUSTRATIVE: PLANTS AND FLOWERS	74.* II. i. 12. 2.
45.	V. vi. 1. 3.	75. IV. 18. 5.
46.	V. vi. 8. 20.	SECTION IX.—MORALITIES
47.*	V. vi. 9. 7–9.	76.* V. vii. 4. 22.
48.	V. vi. 9. 15–16.	77. III. 4. 16.
49.	I. ii. ii. 2. 2.	78. II. i. 14. 27.
50.	V. vi. 10. 7.	79. II. i. 15. 11.
51.	V. vi. 10. 2, 3.	80. II. i. 14. 5.
52.	IV. 3. 16.	81. II. i. 14. 9.
53.	V. vii. 1. 7.	82. II. i. 14. 10.
54.*	{ I. ii. iv. 2. 19. II. ii. i. 12. 1.	83. II. i. 7. 1.
55.	II. iii. i. 13. 10, 11.	84. I. i. i. 1. 5.
56.	V. 10. 18.	85. II. i. 7. 7.
57.	III. 14. 51, 53.	86. IV. 19. 3, 4.
		87.* V. ix. 2. 11.
		88. I. { i. pref. to 2nd edition.
		89. IV. 20. 18.
		90. IV. 20. 45–end.

In Montibus Sanctis (1884–85). For the origin and intention of this and the following series of selections, see above, p. xlix. The title-page was:—

In Montibus Sanctis. | Studies of Mountain Form | and of its visible causes.
| Collected and completed | out of | ‘Modern painters.’ | By | John
Ruskin, | Honorary Student of Christ Church, Honorary Fellow of Corpus
Christi | College; and Slade Professor of Fine Art, Oxford. | Part I. | 1885 |
George Allen, | Sunnyside, Orpington, | Kent.

Small 4to, pp. vii.+40. Issued (on Oct. 1, 1884) in cream-coloured paper wrapper, with the title-page reproduced upon the front. Price 1s. 6d. 3000 copies printed. The Preface (pp. iii.–vii.) is here reprinted at p. 678. Part I. contained “Chapter I. Of the Distinctions of Form in Silica” (Read before the Mineralogical Society, July 24, 1884), and a “Postscript to Chapter I.” These were not from *Modern Painters*; they are reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

“Part II., 1885” (title-page otherwise the same), pp. ii.+45, was issued on Feb. 8, 1885. Price 1s. 6d. 3000 copies printed. It contained “Chapter II. The Dry Land (*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. vii.),” “Postscript to Chapter II.,” “Chapter III. Of the Materials of Mountains” (*Modern Painters*, pt. v., the

beginning of ch. viii.), and “Postscript to Chapter III.” The author added a few notes. These, with the above-mentioned postscripts, were reprinted in the successive issues of the “Complete Edition,” and are in this edition incorporated in vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*.

No further Parts of *In Montibus Sanctis* were issued, and Parts I. and II. are still in the first edition.

Cæli Enarrant (1885). The title-page was as follows:—

Cæli Enarrant. | Studies of Cloud Form | and of its visible causes. | Collected and completed | out of | ‘Modern Painters.’ | By | John Ruskin, | Honorary Student of Christ Church, Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi | College, and Slade Professor of Fine Art, Oxford. | Part I. | 1885. | George Allen, Sunnyside, | Orpington, | Kent.

Small 4to, pp. viii.+32. Issued on Feb. 1, 1885, in the same form, and at the same price, as the two parts of *In Montibus Sanctis*. It contained “Chapter I. The Firmament (*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. pt. v. ch. vi.),” and “Chapter II. The Cloud Balancings (*Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. i.)” The author added a few notes. These, together with a portion of the preface, were reprinted in the successive issues of the “Complete Edition.” In this edition, the notes and preface are incorporated in vols. iv. and v. of *Modern Painters*.

It will be observed that Ruskin expressly “reserved the right of translation.” He was not always well disposed to the idea of foreign translations of his book (see a letter, in a later volume, of Jan. 25, 1888). Under the present head should, however, be noted a German translation: “*Modern Maler*. Übersetzt von Charlotte Broicher und W. Schölermann, published by Eugen Diederichs in Leipzig, being vols. xi.-xv. of *John Ruskin: Gesammelte Werke*.” Vols. i. and ii. of *Moderne Maler* appeared in 1902; vols. iii.-v. are announced (1903) as in preparation.

Unauthorised American editions of *Modern Painters* have been very numerous, and in various styles, from a “People’s Edition” at two dollars, to an “Elegant 8vo Edition” at thirty dollars.

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME I

III.

A

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION¹

[1843]

1. THE work now laid before the public originated in indignation at the shallow and false criticisms of the periodicals of the day on the works of the great living artist to whom it principally refers. It was intended to be a short pamphlet, reprobating the manner and style of those critiques, and pointing out their perilous tendency, as guides of public feeling. But, as point after point presented itself for demonstration, I found myself compelled to amplify what was at first a letter to the editor of a Review,² into something very like a treatise on art, to which I was obliged to give the more consistency and completeness, because it advocated opinions which, to the ordinary connoisseur, will sound heretical. I now scarcely know whether I should announce it as an Essay on Landscape Painting, and apologize for its frequent reference to the works of a particular master; or, announcing it as a critique on particular works, apologize for its lengthy discussion of general principles. But of whatever character the work may be considered, the motives which led me to undertake it must not be mistaken. No zeal for the reputation of any individual, no personal feeling of any kind, has the slightest weight or influence with me. The reputation of the great artist to whose works I have chiefly referred, is established on

¹ [Retained in all subsequent editions of the book. The numbering of the paragraphs was first introduced in the ed. of 1888.]

² [Cf. the letter to Osborne Gordon in Appendix iii., p. 666. The reference here is not so much to the "Reply to *Blackwood*," written in 1836 (see Appendix i.), as to the hostile criticisms, in the press, of Turner's pictures in 1842: see above, Introduction, p. xxiv.]

too legitimate grounds among all whose admiration is honourable, to be in any way affected by the ignorant sarcasms of pretension and affectation. But when *public* taste seems plunging deeper and deeper into degradation day by day, and when the press universally exerts such power as it possesses to direct the feeling of the nation more completely to all that is theatrical, affected, and false in art; while it vents its ribaldry on the most exalted truth, and the highest ideal of landscape that this or any other age has ever witnessed, it becomes the imperative duty of all who have any perception or knowledge of what is really great in art, and any desire for its advancement in England, to come fearlessly forward, regardless of such individual interests as are likely to be injured by the knowledge of what is good and right, to declare and demonstrate, wherever they exist, the essence and the authority of the Beautiful and the True.

2. Whatever may seem invidious or partial in the execution of my task is dependent not so much on the tenour of the work, as on its incompleteness. I have not entered into systematic criticism of all the painters of the present day; but I have illustrated each particular excellence and truth of art by the works in which it exists in the highest degree, resting satisfied that if it be once rightly felt and enjoyed in these, it will be discovered and appreciated wherever it exists in others. And although I have never suppressed any conviction of the superiority of one artist over another, which I believed to be grounded on truth, and necessary to the understanding of truth, I have been cautious never to undermine positive rank, while I disputed relative rank. My uniform desire and aim have been, not that the present favourite should be admired less, but that the neglected master should be admired more. And I know that an increased perception and sense of truth and beauty, though it may interfere with our estimate of the comparative rank of painters, will invariably tend to increase our admiration of all who are really great; and he who now places Stanfield and

Callcott above Turner, will admire Stanfield and Callcott more than he does now, when he has learned to place Turner far above them both.

3. In three instances only have I spoken in direct depreciation of the works of living artists,¹ and these are all cases in which the reputation is so firm and extended, as to suffer little injury from the opinion of an individual, and where the blame has been warranted and deserved by the desecration of the highest powers.

Of the old masters I have spoken with far greater freedom; but let it be remembered that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public, and it must not be supposed, because in that particular portion, and with reference to particular excellences, I have spoken in constant depreciation, that I have no feeling of other excellences of which cognizance can only be taken in future parts of the work. Let me not be understood to mean more than I have said, nor be made responsible for conclusions when I have only stated facts. I have said that the old masters did not give the truth of nature; if the reader chooses, thence, to infer that they were not masters at all, it is his conclusion, not mine.

4. Whatever I have asserted throughout the work, I have endeavoured to ground altogether on demonstrations which must stand or fall by their own strength, and which ought to involve no more reference to authority or character than a demonstration in Euclid. Yet it is proper for the public to know that the writer is no mere theorist, but has been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art.

Whatever has been generally affirmed of the old schools of landscape painting is founded on familiar acquaintance with

¹ [As this passage occurred in ed. 1, it must refer to criticisms contained therein. Presumably, therefore, the reference is to (1) Maclise; see pp. 82, 619. The latter reference occurred only in eds. 1 and 2; in ed. 2 there was a further reference, in pref. § 45 *n.* (2) Holland; see p. 529. (3) A painter unnamed; see p. 126. If we were to include references introduced in the second and later editions, we should have to add Martin (pp. 36, 38), Cattermole (pp. 220, 461), and Pyne (p. 479).]

every important work of art, from Antwerp to Naples.¹ But it would be useless, where close and immediate comparison with works in our own Academy is desirable, to refer to the details of pictures at Rome or Munich; and it would be impossible to speak at once with just feeling, as regarded the possessor, and just freedom, as regarded the public, of pictures in private galleries. Whatever particular references have been made for illustration have been therefore confined, as far as was in my power, to works in the National and Dulwich Galleries.²

5. Finally, I have to apologize for the imperfection of a work which I could have wished not to have executed but with years of reflection and revisal. It is owing to my sense of the necessity of such revisal, that only a portion of the work is now presented to the public; but that portion is both complete in itself, and is more peculiarly directed against the crying evil which called for instant remedy. Whether I ever completely fulfil my intention will partly depend upon the spirit in which the present volume is received. If it be attributed to an invidious spirit, or a desire for the advancement of individual interests, I could hope to effect little good by farther effort. If, on the contrary, its real feeling and intention be understood, I shall shrink from no labour in the execution of a task which may tend, however feebly, to the advancement of the cause of real art in England, and to the honour of those great living Masters whom we now neglect or malign, to pour our flattery into the ear of Death, and exalt, with vain acclamation, the names of those who neither demand our praise, nor regard our gratitude.

THE AUTHOR.

¹ [See above, Introduction, p. xx.; and for further illustration of the notes on pictures in Ruskin's diaries, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. v. § 5.]

² [The pictures in the Dulwich Gallery have since 1892 been renumbered. In notes to the following pages the new numbers are supplied.]

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION¹

[1844]

1. It is allowed by the most able writers on naval and military tactics, that although the attack by successive divisions absolutely requires in the attacking party such an inherent superiority, in quality of force, and such consciousness of that superiority, as may enable his front columns, or his leading ships, to support themselves for a considerable period against overwhelming numbers; it yet insures, if maintained with constancy, the most total ruin of the opposing force. Convinced of the truth, and therefore assured of the ultimate prevalence and victory of the principles which I have advocated, and equally confident that the strength of the cause must give weight to the strokes of even the weakest of its defenders, I permitted myself to yield to a somewhat hasty and hot-headed desire of being, at whatever risk, in the thick of the fire, and began the contest with a part, and that the weakest and least considerable part, of the forces at my disposal. And I now find the volume thus boldly laid before the public in a position much resembling that of the *Royal Sovereign* at Trafalgar, receiving, unsupported, the broadsides of half the enemy's fleet; while unforeseen circumstances have hitherto prevented, and must yet for a time prevent, my heavier ships of the line from taking any part in the action. I watched the first moments of the struggle with some anxiety for the solitary vessel, an anxiety which I have now ceased to feel; for the flag of truth waves brightly through the smoke of the battle, and my antagonists, wholly intent on the destruction of the

¹ [Retained in all subsequent editions of the book. The numbering of the paragraphs was first introduced in the ed. of 1888.]

leading ship, have lost their position, and exposed themselves in defenceless disorder to the attack of the following columns.

2. If, however, I have had no reason to regret my hasty advance, as far as regards the ultimate issue of the struggle, I have yet found it on occasion much misconception of the character, and some diminution of the influence, of the present Essay. For though the work has been received as only in sanguine moments I had ventured to hope,¹ though I have had the pleasure of knowing that in many instances its principles have carried with them a strength of conviction amounting to a demonstration of their truth, and that, even where it has had no other influence, it has excited interest, suggested inquiry, and prompted to a just and frank comparison of art with nature; yet this effect would have been greater still, had not the work been supposed, as it seems to have been by many readers, a completed treatise, containing a systematized statement of the whole of my views on the subject of modern art. Considered as such, it surprises me that the book should have received the slightest attention. For what respect could be due to a writer who pretended to criticise and classify the works of the great painters of landscape, without developing, or even alluding to, one single principle of the beautiful or sublime? So far from being a completed essay, it is little more than the introduction to the mass of evidence and illustration which I have yet to bring forward; it treats of nothing but the initiatory steps of art, states nothing but the elementary rules of criticism, touches only on merits attainable by accuracy of eye and fidelity of hand, and leaves for future consideration every one of the eclectic qualities of pictures, all of good that is prompted by feeling, and of great that is guided by judgment; and its function and scope should the less have been mistaken, because I have not only most carefully arranged the subject in its commencement, but have given frequent references throughout to the essays by which it is intended to be succeeded, in which I shall endeavour to

¹ [For criticisms of vol. i. on its first appearance, see above, Introduction, pp. xxxv.-xxxvii., xliii.]

point out the signification and the value of those phenomena of external nature which I have been hitherto compelled to describe without reference either to their inherent beauty, or to the lessons which may be derived from them.

3. Yet, to prevent such misconception in future, I may perhaps be excused for occupying the reader's time with a fuller statement of the feelings with which the work was undertaken, of its general plan and of the conclusions and positions which I hope to be able finally to deduce and maintain.

Nothing, perhaps, bears on the face of it more appearance of folly, ignorance, and impertinence, than any attempt to diminish the honour of those to whom the assent of many generations has assigned a throne; for the truly great of later times have, almost without exception, fostered in others the veneration of departed power which they felt themselves; satisfied in all humility to take their seat at the feet of those whose honour is brightened by the hoariness of time, and to wait for the period when the lustre of many departed days may accumulate on their own heads, in the radiance which culminates as it recedes. The envious and incompetent have usually been the leaders of attack, content if, like the foulness of the earth, they may attract to themselves notice by their noisomeness, or, like its insects, exalt themselves by virulence into visibility. While, however, the envy of the vicious, and the insolence of the ignorant, are occasionally shown in their nakedness by *futile* efforts to degrade the dead, it is worthy of consideration whether they may not more frequently escape detection in *successful* efforts to degrade the living; whether the very same malice may not be gratified, the very same incompetence demonstrated, in the unjust lowering of present greatness, and the unjust exaltation of a perished power, as, if exerted and manifested in a less safe direction, would have classed the critic with Nero and Caligula, with Zoilus and Perrault.¹ Be it remembered, that the spirit of detraction is

¹ [For Zoilus, see the "Reply to *Blackwood*," below, p. 638. Charles Perrault (1628–1703), French Academician, author of the *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, which set on foot the famous literary quarrel of ancients and moderns, summarised in Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, vol. iv. pt. iv. ch. vii.]

detected only when unsuccessful, and receives least punishment where it effects the greatest injury; and it cannot but be felt that there is as much danger that the rising of new stars should be concealed by the mists which are unseen, as that those throned in heaven should be darkened by the clouds which are visible.

4. There is, I fear, so much malice in the hearts of most men, that they are chiefly jealous of that praise which can give the greatest pleasure, and are then most liberal of eulogium when it can no longer be enjoyed. They grudge not the whiteness of the sepulchre, because by no honour they can bestow upon it can the senseless corpse be rendered an object of envy; but they are niggardly of the reputation which contributes to happiness, or advances to fortune.¹ They are glad to obtain credit for generosity and humility by exalting those who are beyond the reach of praise, and thus to escape the more painful necessity of doing homage to a living rival. They are rejoiced to set up a standard of imaginary excellence, which may enable them, by insisting on the inferiority of a contemporary work to the things that have been, to withdraw the attention from its superiority to the things that are. The same undercurrent of jealousy operates in our reception of animadversion. Men have commonly more pleasure in the criticism which hurts than in that which is innocuous; and are more tolerant of the severity which breaks hearts and ruins fortunes, than of that which falls impotently on the grave.

5. And thus well says the good and deep-minded Richard Hooker:² “To the best and wisest, while they live, the world is continually a froward opposite; and a curious observer of their defects and imperfections, their virtues afterwards it as much admireth. And for this cause, many times that which deserveth admiration would hardly be able to find favour, if

¹ [The tragedy of vindications that come too late—of building memorials only to the dead—was a recurrent theme with Ruskin throughout his books. See, *e.g.*, in this vol., ch. i. § 5; and in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., Appendix i.; vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 20. And *cf.* *A Joy for Ever*, § 70; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter xvi.]

² [Ruskin had at this time been reading with care—by the advice of his old tutor, Osborne Gordon—Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*; for its influence on his style, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 184, and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. Addenda *n.*].

they which propose it were not content to profess themselves therein scholars and followers of the ancient. For the world will not endure to hear that we are wiser than any have been which went before.”—Book v. ch. vii. 3. He therefore who would maintain the cause of contemporary excellence against that of elder time, must have almost every class of men arrayed against him. The generous, because they would not find matter of accusation against established dignities; the envious, because they like not the sound of a living man’s praise; the wise, because they prefer the opinion of centuries to that of days; and the foolish, because they are incapable of forming an opinion of their own. Obloquy so universal is not likely to be risked, and the few who make an effort to stem the torrent, as it is made commonly in favour of their own works, deserve the contempt which is their only reward. Nor is this to be regretted, in its influence on the progress and preservation of things technical and communicable. Respect for the ancients is the salvation of art, though it sometimes blinds us to its *ends*. It increases the power of the painter, though it diminishes his liberty; and if it be sometimes an incumbrance to the essays of invention, it is oftener a protection from the consequences of audacity. The whole system and discipline of art, the collected results of the experience of ages, might, but for the fixed authority of antiquity, be swept away by the rage of fashion, or lost in the glare of novelty; and the knowledge which it had taken centuries to accumulate, the principles which mighty minds had arrived at only in dying, might be overthrown by the frenzy of a faction, and abandoned in the insolence of an hour.

6. Neither, in its general application, is the persuasion of the superiority of former works less just than useful. The greater number of them are, and must be, immeasurably nobler than any of the results of present effort, because that which is the best of the productions of four thousand years must necessarily be, in its accumulation, beyond all rivalry from the works of any given generation; but it should always be remembered that it is improbable that many, and impossible

that all, of such works, though the greatest yet produced, should approach abstract perfection; that there is certainly something left for us to carry farther, or complete; that any given generation has just the same chance of producing some individual mind of first-rate calibre, as any of its predecessors; and that if such a mind *should* arise, the chances are, that, with the assistance of experience and example, it would, in its particular and chosen path, do greater things than had been before done.

7. We must therefore be cautious not to lose sight of the real use of what has been left us by antiquity, nor to take that for a model of perfection which is, in many cases, only a guide to it. The picture which is looked to for an interpretation of nature is invaluable, but the picture which is taken as a substitute for nature had better be burned: and the young artist, while he should shrink with horror from the iconoclast who would tear from him every landmark and light which have been bequeathed him by the ancients, and leave him in a liberated childhood, may be equally certain of being betrayed by those who would give him the power and the knowledge of past time, and then fetter his strength from all advance, and bend his eyes backward on a beaten path; who would thrust canvas between him and the sky, and tradition between him and God.

8. And such conventional teaching is the more to be dreaded, because all that is highest in art, all that is creative and imaginative, is formed and created by every great master for himself, and cannot be repeated or imitated by others. We judge of the excellence of a rising writer, not so much by the resemblance of his works to what has been done before, as by their difference from it; and while we advise him, in his first trials of strength, to set certain models before him with respect to inferior points,—one for versification, another for arrangement, another for treatment,—we yet admit not his greatness until he has broken away from all his models, and struck forth versification, arrangement, and treatment of his own.

9. Three points, therefore, I would especially insist upon as necessary to be kept in mind in all criticism of modern art. First, that there are few, very few, of even the best productions of antiquity, which are not visibly and palpably imperfect in some kind or way, and conceivably improvable by farther study; that every nation, perhaps every generation, has in all probability some peculiar gift, some particular character of mind, enabling it to do something different from, or something in some sort better than, what has been before done; and that therefore, unless art be a trick or a manufacture of which the secrets are lost, the greatest minds of existing nations, if exerted with the same industry, passion, and honest aim as those of past time, have a chance in their particular walk of doing something as great, or, taking the advantage of former example into account, even greater and better. It is difficult to conceive by what laws of logic some of the reviewers of the following Essay have construed its first sentence into a denial of this principle, a denial such as their own conventional and shallow criticism of modern works invariably implies. I have said that “nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration without possessing in a *high* degree *some* species of sterling excellence.”¹ Does it thence follow that it possesses in the *highest* degree *every* species of sterling excellence? “Yet thus,” says the sapient reviewer, “he admits the fact against which he mainly argues, namely, the superiority of these time-honoured productions.” As if the possession of an abstract excellence of some kind necessarily implied the possession of an incomparable excellence of every kind. There are few works of man so perfect as to admit of no conception of their being excelled;² there are thousands which have been for centuries, and will be for centuries more, consecrated by public admiration, which are

¹ [The opening words of ch. i., below, p. 79.]

² [Eds. 2, 3, and 4 here gave the following footnote:—

“One or two fragments of Greek sculpture, the works of Michael Angelo, considered with reference to their general conception and power, and the Madonna di St. Sisto, are all that I should myself put into such a category; not that even these are without defect, but their defects are such as mortality could never hope to rectify.”]

yet imperfect in many respects, and have been excelled, and may be excelled again. Do my opponents mean to assert that nothing good can ever be bettered, and that what is best of past time is necessarily best of all time? Perugino, I suppose, possessed some species of sterling excellence, but Perugino was excelled by Raffaele; and so Claude possesses some species of sterling excellence, but it follows not that he may not be excelled by Turner.

10. The second point on which I would insist is, that if a mind *were* to arise of such power as to be capable of equalling or excelling some of the greater works of past ages, the productions of such a mind would, in all probability, be totally different in manner and matter from all former productions; for the more powerful the intellect, the less will its works resemble those of other men, whether predecessors or contemporaries. Instead of reasoning, therefore, as we commonly do, in matters of art, that because such and such a work does not resemble that which has hitherto been a canon, therefore it *must* be inferior and wrong in principle; let us rather admit that there is in its very dissimilarity an increased chance of its being itself a new, and perhaps a higher, canon. If any production of modern art can be shown to have the authority of nature on its side, and to be based on eternal truths, it is all so much more in its favour, so much farther proof of its power, that it is totally different from all that have been before seen.*

* This principle is dangerous, but not the less true, and necessary to be kept in mind. There is scarcely any truth which does not admit of being wrested to purposes of evil; and we must not deny the desirableness of originality, because men may err in seeking for it, or because a pretence to it may be made, by presumption, a cloak for its incompetence. Nevertheless, originality is never to be sought for its own sake, otherwise it will be mere aberration; it should arise naturally out of hard, independent study of nature: and it should be remembered that in many things technical it is impossible to alter without being inferior, for therein, says Spenser, "Truth is one, and right is ever one;" but wrongs are various and multitudinous.¹

¹ [Eds. 2 and 3 add, " 'Vice,' says Byron, in *Marino Faliero*, 'must have variety; but Virtue stands like the sun, and all which rolls around drinks life from her aspect' " (*Marino Faliero*, Act. ii. Sc. i.). The quotation from Spenser is from *The Faerie Queene*, book v. canto ii. v. 48. Cf. the line quoted in Aristotle's *Ethics*, ii. 5, 14.] esqloi men gar aplwV pantodapwV de kakoi.]

11. The third point on which I would insist is, that, if such a mind were to arise, it would at once divide the world of criticism into two factions: the one, necessarily the larger and louder, composed of men incapable of judging except by precedent, ignorant of general truth, and acquainted only with such particular truths as may have been illustrated or pointed out to them by former works, which class would of course be violent in vituperation, and increase in animosity as the master departed farther from their particular and preconceived canons of right, thus wounding their vanity by impugning their judgment; the other, necessarily narrow of number, composed of men of general knowledge and unbiassed habits of thought, who would recognise in the work of the daring innovator a record and illustration of facts before unseized; who would justly and candidly estimate the value of the truths so rendered, and would increase in fervour of admiration as the master strode farther and deeper, and more daringly into dominions before unsearched or unknown; yet diminishing in multitude as they increased in enthusiasm. For by how much their leader became more impatient in his step, more impetuous in his success, more exalted in his research, by so much must the number capable of following him become narrower; until at last, supposing him never to pause in his advance, he might be left in the very culminating moment of his consummate achievement, with but a faithful few by his side, his former disciples fallen away, his former enemies doubled in numbers and virulence, and the evidence of his supremacy only to be wrought out by the devotion of men's lives to the earnest study of the new truths he had discovered and recorded.

12. Such a mind has arisen in our days. It has gone on from strength to strength, laying open fields of conquest peculiar to itself. It has occasioned such schism in the schools of criticism as was beforehand to be expected, and it is now at the zenith of its power, and, *consequently*, in the last phase of declining popularity.

This I know, and can prove. No man, says Southey, was

ever yet convinced of any momentous truth, without feeling in himself the power as well as the desire of communicating it. In asserting and demonstrating the supremacy of this great master, I shall both do immediate service to the cause of right art, and shall be able to illustrate many principles of landscape painting, which are of general application, and have hitherto been unacknowledged.

For anything like immediate effect on the public mind I do not hope. "We mistake men's diseases," says Richard Baxter, "when we think there needeth nothing to cure them of their errors but the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before they receive that evidence." Nevertheless, when it is fully laid before them my duty will be done. Conviction will follow in due time.

13. I do not consider myself as in any way addressing, or having to do with, the ordinary critics of the press. Their writings are not the guide, but the expression, of public opinion. A writer for a newspaper naturally and necessarily endeavours to meet, as nearly as he can, the feelings of the majority of his readers; his bread depends on his doing so. Precluded by the nature of his occupations from gaining any knowledge of art, he is sure that he can gain credit for it by expressing the opinion of his readers. He mocks the picture which the public pass, and bespatters with praise the canvas which a crowd concealed from him.¹

Writers like the present critic of *Blackwood's Magazine** deserve more respect; the respect due to honest, hopeless,

* It is with regret that, in a work, of this nature, I take notice of criticisms which, after all, are merely intended to amuse the careless reader, and be forgotten as soon as read; but I do so in compliance with wishes expressed to me since the publication of this work, by persons who have the interests of art deeply at heart, and who, I find, attach more importance to the matter than I should have been disposed to do. I have, therefore, marked two or three passages which may enable the public to judge for themselves of the quality of these critiques; and this I think a matter of justice to those who might

¹ [For other remarks on art criticism in the newspapers, see the last chapter of this volume, and *Academy Notes*, 1855 (Supplement).]

helpless imbecility.¹ There is something exalted in the innocence of their feeble-mindedness: one cannot suspect them of partiality, for it implies feeling; nor of prejudice, for it implies some previous acquaintance with their subject. I do not know that, even in this age of charlatantry, I could point to a more barefaced instance of imposture on the simplicity of the public, than the insertion of those pieces of criticism in a respectable periodical. We are not so insulted with opinions on music from persons ignorant of its notes; nor with treatises on philology by persons unacquainted with the alphabet; but here is page after page of criticism, which one may read from end to end, looking for something which the writer knows, and finding nothing. Not his own language, for he has to look in his dictionary, by his own confession, for a word* occurring in one

otherwise have been led astray by them: more than this I cannot consent to do. I should have but a hound's office if I had to tear the tabard from every Rouge Sanglier of the arts, with bell and bauble to back him.²

* Chrysopraxe. *Vide* No. for October, 1842, p. 502.³

¹ [In addition to the review of *Modern Painters* in *Blackwood's Magazine* for Oct. 1843, Ruskin is referring to its critiques of the Annual Exhibitions for 1841 (Sept. 1841), 1842 (July 1842), and 1843 (Aug. 1843). For his "difficulty in being contemptuous enough," see above, Introduction, p. xliv. In the number for July 1842, the writer spoke thus of Turner's pictures, which, however, he added, showed some improvement:—

"Turner's eye must play him false; it cannot truly represent to his mind either his forms or colours—or his hallucination is great. There were a number of idolatrous admirers who, for a long time, could not see his exhibited absurdities; but as there is every year some one thing worse than ever, by degrees the lovers fall off, and now we scarcely find one to say a good word for him . . . We would recommend the aspirant after Turner's style and fame to a few nightly exhibitions of the 'Dissolving Views' at the Polytechnic, and he can scarcely fail to obtain the secret of the whole method."

The reviewer's description of Turner's waning popularity corresponds, it will be observed, with the process traced by Ruskin at the end of § 11, above. It may be added that the reviewer's favourite in the exhibition of 1842 seemed to be Eastlake; that painter reminded him of Raphael.]

² [The reference is to Rouge Sanglier, the herald of William de la Marck: *Quentin Durward*, ch. xxxiii.]

³ [The actual reference is to the No. for October 1843, where, in the review of *Modern Painters*, the critic quotes the description of the "Fall of Schaffhausen" (pt. ii. see v. ch. ii. § 2, p. 529), containing the phrase, "all the hollows of the foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysopraxe." The reviewer's comment was: "Satque superque satis—we cannot go on . . . Whenever you speak of water treat it as fire—of fire, *vice versa*, as water; and be sure to send them all shattering out of reach and discrimination of all sense; and look into a dictionary for some such word

of the most important chapters in his Bible; not the commonest traditions of the schools, for he does not know why Poussin was called “learned;”* not the most simple canons of art, for he prefers Lee to Gainsborough; † not the most ordinary facts

* Every schoolboy knows that this epithet was given to Poussin in allusion to the profound classical knowledge of the painter. The reviewer, however, (Sept. 1841), informs us that the expression refers to his skill in “composition.”¹

† Critique on Royal Academy, 1842.—“He (Mr. Lee) often reminds us of Gainsborough’s best manner; but he is *superior* to him always in subject, composition, and variety.” Shade of Gainsborough! deep-thoughted, solemn Gainsborough, forgive us for re-writing this sentence; we do so to gibbet its perpetrator for ever, and leave him swinging in the winds of the Fool’s Paradise. It is with great pain that I ever speak with severity of the works of living masters, especially when, like Mr. Lee’s, they are well-intentioned, simple, free from affectation or imitation, and evidently painted with constant reference to nature. But I believe that these qualities will always secure him that admiration which he deserves, that there will be many unsophisticated and honest minds always ready to follow his guidance, and answer his efforts with delight; and, therefore, that I need not fear to point out in him the want of those technical qualities which are more especially the object of an artist’s admiration. Gainsborough’s power of colour (it is mentioned by Sir Joshua as his peculiar gift) is capable of taking rank beside that of Rubens; he is the purest colourist, Sir Joshua himself not excepted, of the whole English school; with him, in fact, the *art* of painting did in great part die, and exists not now in Europe. Evidence enough will be seen in the following pages of my devoted admiration of Turner; but I hesitate not to say, that in management and quality of single and particular tint, in the purely technical part of painting, Turner is a child to Gainsborough. Now, Mr. Lee never aims at colour; he does not make it his object in the slightest degree, the spring green of vegetation is all that he desires; and it would be about as rational to compare his works with studied pieces of colouring, as the modulation of the Calabrian pipe with the harmony of a full orchestra. Gainsborough’s hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud, as swift as the flash of sunbeam; Lee’s execution is feeble and spotty. Gainsborough’s masses are as broad as

as ‘chrysoprase,’ which we find to come from χρῆσοϕ, gold, and πρᾶσον, a leek, and means a precious stone.” Ruskin’s reference above is to Rev. xxi 20, in the description of the walls of the New Jerusalem— “the tenth, a chrysoprasus” (a golden-green variety of the beryl). The chapter was often referred to in his books; see, *e.g.*, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. ix. § 8, sec. i. ch. xv. § 1; vol. v. ch. xii. § 19; and *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. iv. § 64. Mrs. Browning speaks of “the chrysopras of the orient morning sky” (*A Vision of Poets*).]

¹ [*Blackwood*, No. cited, p. 346, where the reviewer (in “A Critique of the Exhibitions of the Year”) quotes Thomson’s lines:—

“Whate’er Lorraine light-touch’d with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa dash’d, or learned Poussin drew.”

For Poussin “naturalized in antiquity,” see below, § 19 *n.*]

of nature, for we find him puzzled by the epithet “silver,” as applied to the orange blossom,¹ evidently never having seen anything silvery about an orange in his life, except a spoon. Nay, he leaves us not to conjecture his calibre from internal evidence; he candidly tells us (Oct. 1842) that he has been studying trees only for the last week,² and bases his critical remarks chiefly on

the first division in heaven of light from darkness; Lee’s (perhaps necessarily, considering the efforts of flickering sunlight at which he aims) are as fragmentary as his leaves, and as numerous. Gainsborough’s forms are grand, simple, and ideal; Lee’s are small, confused, and unselected. Gainsborough never loses sight of his picture as a whole; Lee is but too apt to be shackled by its parts. In a word, Gainsborough is an immortal painter, and Lee, though on the right road, is yet in the early stages of his art; and the man who could imagine any resemblance or point of comparison between them is not only a novice in art, but has not capacity ever to be anything more. He may be pardoned for not comprehending Turner, for long preparation and discipline are necessary before the abstract and profound philosophy of that artist can be met; but Gainsborough’s excellence is based on principles of art long acknowledged, and facts of Nature universally apparent; and I insist more particularly on the reviewer’s want of feeling for his works, because it proves a truth of which the public ought especially to be assured, that those who lavish abuse on the great men of modern times are equally incapable of perceiving the real excellence of established canons, are ignorant of the commonest and most acknowledged principle of the art, blind to the most palpable and comprehensible of its beauties, incapable of distinguishing, if left to themselves, a master’s work from the vilest school-copy, and founding their applause of those great works which they praise, either in pure hypocrisy, or in admiration of their defects.³

¹ [The reviewer (Oct. 1843, p. 494) had quoted Ruskin’s description of “La Riccia” (pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 2, p. 279) and italicized the words *silver* and *orange* (“silver flakes of orange spray”), remarking that such colours cannot co-exist.]

² [Again a reference to the review of *Modern Painters* (Oct. 1843, p. 502). (The reference in the text, “1842,” is a mistake for “1843.”) The reviewer cited Ruskin’s description of trees as not tapering until they throw out branch and bud (pt. ii. sec. vi. ch. i. § 2, p. 575), and continued: “We have carefully examined many trees this last week, and find it is not the case; in almost all, the bulging at the bottom, nearest the root, is manifest. There is an early association in our minds that the birch, for instance, is remarkably tapering in its twigs.”]

³ [Frederick Richard Lee (1799–1879), landscape and sea painter, A.R.A. 1834, R.A. 1838, for many years after 1848 worked in collaboration with T. Sidney Cooper, R.A. See *Academy Notes*, 1856 (R.A. No. 221), for Ruskin’s appreciation of his sea-pieces, as showing “quite a new energy in his mind.” For other references to Gainsborough, see in this vol., pp. 176, 189, 245; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 8 n.; *Elements of Drawing*, § 133. The reference to Sir Joshua’s estimate of Gainsborough is to the fourteenth of his *Discourses*.]

The passage from *Blackwood* criticised in the note above occurred in the critique not of 1842, but of 1843 (August 1843, p. 196). For another reference to *Blackwood’s comparison of Lee to Gainsborough*, see Ruskin’s letter to the *Artist and Amateur’s Magazine*, January 1843, in Appendix ii., p. 647.]

his practical experience of birch. More disinterested than our friend Sancho, he would disenchant the public from the magic of Turner by virtue of his own flagellation; Xanthias-like, he would rob his master of immortality by his own powers of endurance.¹ What is Christopher North about?² Does he receive his critiques from Eton or Harrow, based on the experience of a week's bird's-nesting and its consequences?³ In all kindness to Maga, I warn her, that, though the nature of this work precludes me from devoting space to the exposure, there may come a time when the public shall be themselves able to distinguish ribaldry from reasoning; and may require some better and higher qualifications in their critics of art, than the experience of a schoolboy and the capacities of a buffoon.

14. It is not, however, merely to vindicate the reputation of those whom writers like these defame, which would but be to anticipate by a few years the natural and inevitable reaction of the public mind, that I am devoting years of labour to the development of the principles on which the great productions of recent art are based.⁴ I have a higher end in view, one which may, I think, justify me, not only in the sacrifice of my own time, but in calling on my readers to follow me through an investigation far more laborious than could be adequately rewarded by mere insight into the merits of a particular master, or the spirit of a particular age.

It is a question which, in spite of the claims of Painting

¹ [For the reference to Sancho, see *Don Quixote*, Book iv. ch. viii. "Xanthiaslike" refers to the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, Xanthias being the slave with whom Dionysus sets forth on his adventures in search of a poet. To escape the wrath of Aeacus, porter at the palace of Pluto, Dionysus changes clothes with Xanthias; whereupon the latter offers his master to Aeacus for vicarious punishment. Dionysus tries to resume his godhead, and Aeacus in bewilderment applies an ordeal by flogging to determine who is who.]

² [The *nom de plume* under which Professor John Wilson (1785–1854) contributed his *Noctes Ambrosianae* to *Blackwood's Magazine*, on the editorial staff of which he had been since 1817.]

³ [Eds. 2 and 3 add, "How long must art and its interests sink, when the public mind is inadequate to the detection of this effrontery of incapacity! In all kindness," etc.]

⁴ [For an explanation of Ruskin's aims in pursuing his studies, see the letters to Gordon and Liddell in Appendix iii., pp. 666, 669].

to be called the sister of Poetry, appears to me to admit of considerable doubt, whether art has ever, except in its earliest and rudest stages, possessed anything like efficient moral influence on mankind. Better the state of Rome when “magnorum artificum frangebatur pocula miles, ut phaleris gauderet equus,”¹ than when her walls flashed with the marble and the gold “nec cessabat luxuria id agere, ut quam plurimum incendiis perdat.”² Better the state of religion in Italy, before Giotto had broken on one barbarism of the Byzantine schools, than when the painter of the Last Judgment, and the sculptor of the Perseus, sat revelling side by side.³ It appears to me that a rude symbol is oftener more efficient than a refined one in touching the heart; and that as pictures rise in rank as works of art, they are regarded with less devotion and more curiosity.⁴

15. But, however this may be, and whatever influence we may be disposed to admit in the great works of sacred art, no doubt can, I think, be reasonably entertained as to the utter inutility of all that has been hitherto accomplished by the painters of landscape. No moral end has been answered, no permanent good effected, by any of their works. They may

¹ [From Juvenal’s account of the old and hardy days when the soldier was rough and not an amateur of Greek art; when, at the sacking of a town, “he would break goblets by great designers for trappings to please his horse” (*sat.* xi. 102). Ruskin was perhaps thinking of the same passage when, at the end of ch. ii. of *Unto this Last*, he imagined “that England may cast all thoughts of possessive wealth back to the barbaric nations among whom they first arose; and that, while the sands of the Indus and adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger . . . she . . . may at last attain to the virtues and the treasures of a Heathen one, and be able to lead forth her Sons, saying, ‘These are my Jewels.’ ”]

² [From Pliny’s account of the luxurious extravagance of Imperial times, when painting was superseded by marble and gold, and “luxury ceases not to busy itself in order that as much as possible may be lost whenever there is a fire” (*Nat. Hist.*, Book 35, c. 1).]

³ [For references to Michael Angelo’s “Last Judgment” in the Sistine Chapel, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. §§ 23, 28. Ruskin had at this time been reading Benvenuto Cellini’s Autobiography (see below, p. 144); the painter and the sculptor were friends, if not boon companions, and Cellini (as he relates) was sent to persuade Michael Angelo to return to Florence.]

⁴ [The question raised in this section was often to be discussed by Ruskin. It is complicated, and has many sides to it, and therefore his views on it are sometimes misunderstood. For his final statement of the relation of Art to Morals, see ch. iii. of *Lectures on Art* (1870). With this paragraph, *cf.* especially § 77 there; *cf.* also *Two Paths*, Lecture i., and *Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge*.]

have amused the intellect, or exercised the ingenuity, but they never have spoken to the heart. Landscape art has never taught us one deep or holy lesson; it has not recorded that which is fleeting, nor penetrated that which was hidden, nor interpreted that which was obscure; it has never made us feel the wonder, nor the power, nor the glory of the universe; it has not prompted to devotion, nor touched with awe; its power to move and exalt the heart has been fatally abused, and perished in the abusing. That which ought to have been a witness to the omnipotence of God, has become an exhibition of the dexterity of man; and that which would have been lifted our thoughts to the throne of the Deity, has encumbered them with the inventions of his creatures.¹

If we stand for a little time before any of the more celebrated works of landscape, listening to the comments of the passers-by, we shall hear numberless expressions relating to the skill of the artist, but very few relating to the perfection of nature. Hundreds will be voluble in admiration, for one who will be silent in delight. Multitudes will laud the composition, and depart with the praise of Claude on their lips; not one will feel as if it were *no* composition, and depart with the praise of God in his heart.

16. These are the signs of a debased, mistaken, and false school of painting. The skill of the artist, and the perfection of his art, are never proved until both are forgotten. The artist has done nothing till he has concealed himself; the art is imperfect which is visible; the feelings are but feebly touched, if they permit us to reason on the methods of their excitement. In the reading of a great poem, in the hearing of a noble oration, it is the subject of the writer, and not his skill, his passion, not his power, on which our minds are fixed. We see as he sees, but we see not him. We become part of him, feel with him, judge, behold with him; but we think *of* him as little as of ourselves. Do we think of Æschylus, while we

¹ [Cf. the definitions in ch. i. of *The Laws of Fésole* (1877), "The art of man is the expression of his rational and disciplined delight in the forms and laws of the creation of which he forms a part," and "All great art is praise."]

wait on the silence of Cassandra;* or of Shakspeare, while we listen to the wailing of Lear? Not so. The power of the masters is shown by their self-annihilation. It is commensurate with the degree in which they themselves appear not in their work. The harp of the minstrel is untruly touched, if his own glory is all that it records. Every great writer may be at once known by his guiding the mind far from himself, to the beauty which is not of his creation, and the knowledge which is past his finding out.

And must it ever be otherwise with painting? for otherwise it has ever been. Her subjects have been regarded as mere themes on which the artist's power is to be displayed; and that power, be it of imitation, composition, idealization, or of whatever other kind, is the chief object of the spectator's observation. It is man and his fancies, man and his trickeries, man and his inventions, poor, paltry, weak, selfsighted man, which the connoisseur for ever seeks and worships. Among postherds and dunghills, among drunken boors and withered beldames, through every scene of debauchery and degradation, we follow the erring artist, not to receive one wholesome lesson, not to be touched with pity, nor moved

* There is a fine touch in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, alluding, probably, to this part of the *Agamemnon*:—

‘Εγώ δ’ ἔχαιρον τή σιωπή. καί με τοντ’ ἔτρπεν
οὐχ ἤττον ἢ νῦν οἱ λαλοῦντες.¹

The same remark might be well applied to the seemingly vacant or incomprehensible portions of Turner's canvas. In their mysterious and intense fire, there is much correspondence between the mind of Aeschylus and that of our great painter. They share at least one thing in common—unpopularity.

‘Ο δῆμος ἀνεβοα κρίσιν ποιεῖν.
ΞΑ. ὁ τῶν πανούργων; ΑΙ. νή Δι’, οὐράνιον γ’ ὅστιν.
ΞΑ. μετ’ Αἰσχύλον δ’ οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι ξύμμαχοι;
ΑΙ. Ὀλίγον τό χρησόν ἐστιν.²

¹ [See line 916. Euripides in his contest with Aeschylus has been complaining that the latter muffled up his characters, and left it to the chorus to speak while they were silent. “And I was glad at their silence,” says Dionysus, “and this delighted me no less than the chatters of to-day.”]

² [See line 783. Aeacus explains to Xanthias that the mob has called out for a public trial between Aeschylus and Euripides. “You mean the mob of scoundrels.” “Aye, scoundrels without number.” “But had not Aeschylus comrades of another sort?” “The good are few.”]

with indignation, but to watch the dexterity of the pencil, and gloat over the glittering of the hue.

17. I speak not only of the works of the Flemish school, I wage no war with their admirers; they may be left in peace to count the spicula of haystacks and the hairs of donkeys; it is also of works of real mind that I speak, works in which there are evidences of genius and workings of power, works which have been held up as containing all of the beautiful that art can reach or man conceive. And I assert with sorrow, that all hitherto done in landscape, by those commonly conceived its masters, has never prompted one holy thought in the minds of nations. It has begun and ended in exhibiting the dexterities of individuals, and conventionalities of systems. Filling the world with the honour of Claude and Salvator, it has never once tended to the honour of God.

Does the reader start in reading these last words, as if they were those of wild enthusiasm, as if I were lowering the dignity of religion by supposing that its cause could be advanced by such means? His surprise proves my position. It *does* sound like wild, like absurd enthusiasm, to expect any definite moral agency in the painters of landscape; but ought it so to sound? Are the gorgeousness of the visible hue, the glory of the realized form, instruments in the artist's hand so ineffective, that they can answer no nobler purpose than the amusement of curiosity, or the engagement of idleness? Must it not be owing to gross neglect or misapplication of the means at his command, that while words and tones (means of representing nature surely less powerful than lines and colours) can kindle and purify the very inmost souls of men, the painter can only hope to entertain by his efforts at expression, and must remain for ever brooding over his incommunicable thoughts?¹

18. The cause of the evil lies, I believe, deep-seated in the system of ancient landscape art; it consists, in a word, in the painter's taking upon him to modify God's works at his

¹ [It is interesting to compare this passage with the *Essay on the Studies of Painting and Music*, written by Ruskin in 1838 (Vol. I. pp. 267 *seqq.*). The superiority which he there claims for painting is based on its power of communicating thoughts and "addressing the intellect"—a capacity which he denied to music.]

pleasure, casting the shadow of himself on all he sees, constituting himself arbiter where it is honour to be a disciple, and exhibiting his ingenuity by the attainment of combinations whose highest praise is that they are impossible. We shall not pass through a single gallery of old art, without hearing this topic of praise confidently advanced. The sense of artificialness, the absence of all appearance of reality, the clumsiness of combination by which the meddling of man is made evident, and the feebleness of his hand branded on the inorganization of his monstrous creature, are advanced as a proof of inventive power, as an evidence of abstracted conception; nay, the violation of specific form, the utter abandonment of all organic and individual character of object (numberless examples of which from the works of the old masters are given in the following pages), is constantly held up by the unthinking critic as the foundation of the grand or historical style, and the first step to the attainment of a pure ideal. Now there is but one grand style, in the treatment of all subjects whatsoever, and that style is based on the *perfect* knowledge, and consists in the simple unencumbered rendering, of the specific characters of the given object, be it man, beast, or flower. Every change, caricature, or abandonment of such specific character is as destructive of grandeur as it is of truth, of beauty as of propriety. Every alteration of the features of nature has its origin either in powerless indolence or blind audacity; in the folly which forgets, or the insolence which desecrates, works which it is the pride of angels to know, and their privilege to love.¹

19. We sometimes hear such infringement of universal laws justified on the plea, that the frequent introduction of

¹ [To understand Ruskin aright it is necessary to emphasize the word *specific* in this passage, and in the following paragraph the word *universal*. Careless readers have sometimes found a contradiction between passages such as this and Ruskin's subsequent defence of "Turnerian Topography" (*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. ii.). "The fact is," it has been said, "that Ruskin never could make up his mind whether to espouse the realist or the idealist view of landscape-painting." The confusion exists not in Ruskin's mind, but in the failure of his critics in this matter to follow the distinction between vital truth and topographical accuracy. Ruskin never denied or disparaged the value of imagination and the place of composition in landscape-painting. What he maintained is, that both must be consistent with truth of specific character, or "vital truth," as he sometimes called it. Topographical accuracy is one thing; it has its place and value in Art, but it is a lower form of Art than imaginative impression.

mythological abstractions into ancient landscape requires an imaginary character of form in the material objects with which they are associated. Something of this kind is hinted in Reynolds' fourteenth Discourse;¹ but nothing can be more false than such reasoning. If there be any truth or beauty in the original conception of the spiritual being so introduced, there must be a true and real connection between that abstract idea* and the features of nature as she was and is. The woods and waters which were peopled by the Greek with typical life were not different from those which now wave and murmur by the ruins of his shrines. With their visible and actual forms was his imagination filled, and the beauty of its incarnate creatures can only be understood among the pure realities which originally modelled their conception. If divinity be stamped upon the features, or apparent in the form, of the spiritual creature, the mind will not be shocked by its appearing

* I do not know any passage in ancient literature in which this connection is more exquisitely illustrated than in the lines, burlesque though they be, descriptive of the approach of the chorus in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes; a writer, by-the-by, who, I believe, knew and felt more of the noble landscape character of his country than any whose works have come down to us, except Homer. The individuality and distinctness of conception, the visible cloud character which every word of this particular passage brings out into more dewy and bright existence, are to me as refreshing as the real breathing of mountain winds. The line "dia tw'n koilwn kai tin dasewn antai plagiai," could have been written by none but an ardent lover of hill scenery, one who had watched, hour after hour, the peculiar oblique sidelong action of descending clouds, as they form along the hollows and ravines of the hills. There are no lumpish solidities, no pillowy protuberances here. All is melting, drifting, evanescent; full of air, and light, and dew.²

Truth of form is another thing; it is vital, and must never be sacrificed to ideal generalisations resulting in unnatural forms or uncharacteristic compositions. A painter may, or may not, be justified in moving a tree from this place to that; he cannot be justified in making an oak bend like "india-rubber." Cf. below, note on p. 624.]

¹ [As, for instance, when Sir Joshua says: "To manage a subject of this [mythological] kind, a peculiar style of art is required; and it can only be done without impropriety, or even without ridicule, when we adapt the character of the landscape, and that, too, in all parts, to the historical or poetical representation: this is a very difficult adventure, and it requires a mind thrown back two thousand years, and, as it were, naturalized in antiquity, like that of Nicolas Poussin, to achieve it." for a note on Ruskin's general opinion of Reynolds' *Discourses*, see Vol. I. p. 491, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. i.]

² [The passage quoted is line 325 of *The Clouds*, "Through the hollows and the thickets they come aslant." For other references to Aristophanes in this connection, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xv. §21, ch. xvi. § 3, and vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iv. § 10.]

to ride upon the whirlwind, and trample on the storm; but if mortality, no violation of the characters of the earth will forge one single link to bind it to the heaven.

20. Is there then no such thing as elevated ideal character of landscape? Undoubtedly; and Sir Joshua, with the great master of this character, Nicolo Poussin, present to his thoughts, ought to have arrived at more true conclusions respecting its essence, than, as we shall presently see, are deducible from his works. The true ideal of landscape is precisely the same as that of the human form; it is the expression of the specific— not the individual, but the specific—characters of every object, in their perfection. There is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree, it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease.¹ Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or cloud; and in his highest ideal works all their distinctions will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition. Where the sublime is aimed at, such distinctions will be indicated with severe simplicity, as the muscular markings in a colossal statue; where beauty is the object, they must be expressed with the utmost refinement of which the hand is capable.

21. This may sound like a contradiction of principles advanced by the highest authorities; but it is only a contradiction of a particular and most mistaken application of them. Much evil has been done to art by the remarks of historical painters on landscape. Accustomed themselves to treat their backgrounds slightly and boldly, and feeling (though, as I shall presently show, only in consequence of their own deficient powers) that any approach to completeness of detail therein injures their picture by interfering with its principal subject, they naturally lose sight of the peculiar and intrinsic beauties

¹ [Ruskin here applies, it will be seen, the Platonic doctrine of “ideas” as archetypes and patterns. While writing this part of *Modern Painters*, he “read a little bit of Plato very accurately every day”: see *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 494.]

of things which to them are injurious, unless subordinate. Hence the frequent advice given by Reynolds and others, to neglect *specific* form in landscape, and treat its materials in large masses, aiming only at general truths; the flexibility of foliage, but not its kind; the rigidity of rock, but not its mineral character. In the passage more especially bearing on this subject (in the eleventh Lecture of Sir J. Reynolds), we are told that “the landscape painter works not for the virtuoso or the naturalist, but for the general observer of life and nature.” This is true, in precisely the same sense that the sculptor does not work for the anatomist, but for the common observer of life and nature. Yet the sculptor is not, for this reason, permitted to be wanting either in knowledge or expression of anatomical detail; and the more refined that expression can be rendered, the more perfect is his work. That which to the anatomist is the end, is to the sculptor the means. The former desires details for their own sake; the latter, that by means of them he may kindle his work with life, and stamp it with beauty. And so in landscape; botanical or geological details are not to be given as matter of curiosity or subject of search, but as the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness.

22. In his observation on the foreground of the San Pietro Martire, Sir Joshua advances,¹ as matter of praise, that the plants are discriminated “just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more.” Had this foreground been occupied by a group of animals, we should have been surprised to be told that the lion, the serpent, and the dove, or whatever other creatures might have been introduced, were distinguished from each other just as much as was necessary for variety, and no more. Yet is it to be supposed that the distinctions of the vegetable world are less complete, less essential, or less divine in origin, than those of the animal? If the distinctive forms of animal life are meant for our reverent observance, is it likely that those of vegetable life are made merely to be swept away?

¹ [In the same *Discourse*, No. xi. This picture perished by fire in the sacristy of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, in 1866. For other references to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. §§ 19, 22 *n.*, ch. iv. § 17; vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 13, pt. ix. ch. iii. § 17; *Academy Notes*, 1856; *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, pref. § 39.]

The latter are indeed less obvious and less obtrusive; for which very reason there is less excuse for omitting them, because there is less danger of their disturbing the attention or engaging the fancy.

23. But Sir Joshua is as inaccurate in fact, as false in principle. He himself furnishes a most singular instance of the very error of which he accuses Vasari,—the seeing what he expects; or, rather, in the present case, not seeing what he does not expect. The great masters of Italy, almost without exception, and Titian perhaps more than any (for he had the highest knowledge of landscape), are in the constant habit of rendering every detail of their foregrounds with the most laborious botanical fidelity: witness the “Bacchus and Ariadne,” in which the foreground is occupied by the common blue iris, the aquilegia, and the wild rose;* *every stamen* of which latter is given, while the blossoms and leaves of the columbine (a difficult flower to draw) have been studied with the most exquisite accuracy. The foregrounds of Raffaele’s two cartoons,¹ “The Miraculous Draught of Fishes,” and

* A mistake, of which the reader will find the correction in the following letter, for which I sincerely thank the writer, and which I think it right to publish, as it is no less confirmatory of the principal assertions in the text, which it is my great object to establish, than condemnatory of my carelessness in mistaking the plant in question:—

“Mr. Newton, of the Department of Antiquities, mentioned to me your name, and I then told him of a slight (but important to the naturalist) unintentional inaccuracy into which you had fallen at p. xxvii. of the ‘Preface to the Second Edition’ (I quote ed. 3, London, 1846), in which, speaking of the ‘Bacchus and Ariadne,’ a picture which, like you, I have absolutely, mentally and ocularly, ‘swallowed’ many a time, you speak of ‘the wild rose, every stamen,’ etc.; now, as you afterwards refer *botanically* to the *Crambe maritima*, allow me to say that the plant you call a wild rose in an admirable study from a common Italian and Greek plant, figured in Sibthorp’s ‘Flora Græca,’ and called *Capparis spinosa*. By calling some day, when you are in the Museum direction, I can show you *this*: or should you be near the Linnæan Society’s house, Soho Square (in the corner), and should ask for Mr. Kippist, the librarian, he will show you Sibthorp’s figure.—Adam White. *Zoological Department, British Museum, March 13, 1849.*”²

¹ [In the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum. For other references to “The Charge to Peter,” see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 16, ch. xviii. § 14; to the “Miraculous Draught,” vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iv. § 12, vol. iii. ch. xviii. §§ 10, 14, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 8.]

² [This note was first added in the 5th ed. (1851). The “Bacchus and Ariadne” is No. 35 in the National Gallery; see below, note on pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. i. § 15, p. 268.]

“The Charge to Peter,” are covered with plants of the common sea colewort (*Crambe maritima*),¹ of which the sinuated leaves and clustered blossoms would have exhausted the patience of any other artist; but have appeared worthy of prolonged and thoughtful labour to the great mind of Raffaele.

It appears, then, not only from natural principles, but from the highest of all authority, that thorough knowledge of the lowest details is necessary, and full expression of them right, even in the highest class of historical painting; that it will not take away from, nor interfere with, the interest of the figures, but, rightly managed, must add to and elucidate it; and, if further proof be wanting, I would desire the reader to compare the background of Sir Joshua’s “Holy Family,” in the National Gallery, with that of Nicolo Poussin’s “Nursing of Jupiter,” in the Dulwich Gallery.² The first, owing to the utter neglect of all botanical detail, has lost every atom of ideal character, and reminds us of nothing but an English fashionable flowergarden; the formal pedestal adding considerably to the effect. Poussin’s, in which every vine leaf is drawn with consummate skill and untiring diligence, produces not only a tree group of the most perfect grace and beauty, but one which, in its pure and simple truth, belongs to every age of nature, and adapts itself to the history of all time. If then, such entire rendering of specific character be necessary to the historical painter, in cases where these lower details are entirely subordinate to his human subject, how much more must it be necessary in landscape, where they themselves constitute the subject, and where the undivided attention is to be drawn to them!

24. There is a singular sense in which the child may peculiarly be said to be father of the man. In many arts and attainments, the first and last stages of progress, the infancy

¹ [“To-day all went right,” says Ruskin in his diary, Feb. 15, 1844, “. . . and I have found out the plant of Raphael’s sea-beach foregrounds to be the *Crambe maritima*—very curious.”]

² [Reynolds’ “Holy Family,” No. 78 in the National Gallery collection, is now a wreck, owing to the painter’s unfortunate experiments with his pigments, and is no longer exhibited to the public. For another reference to it, see “Sir Joshua and Holbein” (*On the Old Road*, ed. 1899, vol. i. §§ 149, 155). Poussin’s “The Infant Jupiter suckled by the goat Amalthea” is No. 234 (formerly No. 300) in the Dulwich Gallery. For another reference to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 17.]

and the consummation, have many features in common; while the intermediate stages are wholly unlike either, and are farthest from the right. Thus it is in the progress of a painter's handling. We see the perfect child, the absolute beginner, using of necessity a broken, imperfect, inadequate line, which, as he advances, becomes gradually firm, severe, and decided. Yet before he becomes a perfect artist, this severity and decision will again be exchanged for a light and careless stroke, which in many points will far more resemble that of his childhood than of his middle age, differing from it only by the consummate effect wrought out by the apparently inadequate means. So it is in many matters of opinion. Our first and last coincide, though on different grounds; it is the middle stage which is farthest from the truth. Childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers, which the grasp of manhood cannot retain, which it is the pride of utmost age to recover.

Perhaps this is in no instance more remarkable than in the opinion we form upon the subject of detail in works of art.¹ Infants in judgment, we look for specific character, and complete finish; we delight in the faithful plumage of the well-known bird, in the finely drawn leafage of the discriminated flower. As we advance in judgment, we scorn such detail altogether; we look for impetuosity of execution, and breadth of effect. But, perfected in judgment, we return in a great measure to our early feelings, and thank Raffaele for the shells upon his sacred beach,² and for the delicate stamens of the herbage beside his inspired St. Catherine.*

25. Of those who take interest in art, nay, even of artists themselves, there are a hundred in the middle stage of judgment,

* Let not this principle be confused with Fuseli's "love for what is called deception in painting marks either the infancy or decrepitude of a nation's taste."³ Realization to the mind necessitates not deception to the eye.

¹ [Cf. *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv. §§ 22 *seqq.*]

² [The reference is to the cartoons mentioned above in § 23. Raphael's "St. Catherine" is No. 168 in the National Gallery; for other references to it, see below, p. 253, and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xii. § 10, sec. ii. ch. v. § 21 (where the saint is described as, in this picture, "looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day").]

³ [See *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, R.A., ed. J. Knowles, 1831, vol. iii. p. 107 (Aphorism, No. 125). For Ruskin's appreciation of Fuseli's writings, see *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 491.]

for one who is in the last; and this, not because they are destitute of the power to discover, or the sensibility to enjoy, the truth, but because the truth bears so much semblance of error, the last stage of the journey to the first, that every feeling which guides to it is checked in its origin. The rapid and powerful artist necessarily looks with such contempt on those who see minutiae of detail *rather* than grandeur of impression, that it is almost impossible for him to conceive of the great last step in art by which both become compatible. He has so often to dash the delicacy out of the pupil's work, and to blot the details from his encumbered canvas; so frequently to lament the loss of breadth and unity, and so seldom to reprehend the imperfection of minutiae, that he necessarily looks upon complete *parts* as the very sign of error, weakness, and ignorance. Thus, frequently to the latest period of his life, he separates, like Sir Joshua, as chief enemies, the details and the whole, which an artist cannot be great unless he reconciles; and because details alone, and unreferred to a final purpose, are the sign of a tyro's work, he loses sight of the remoter truth, that details perfect in unity, and contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master.

26. It is not, therefore, detail sought for its own sake, not the calculable bricks of the Dutch house-painters, nor the numbered hairs and mapped wrinkles of Denner,¹ which constitute great art, they are the lowest and most contemptible art; but it is detail referred to a great end, sought for the sake of the inestimable beauty which exists in the slightest and least of God's works, and treated in a manly, broad, and impressive manner. There may be as much greatness of mind, as much nobility of manner, in a master's treatment of the smallest features, as in his management of the most

¹ [Balthasar Denner, German Painter, 1685–1749; examples of his heads of old men and women may be seen in the Louvre, at Hampton Court, and in most of the Continental galleries. Cf. below, § 29. Ruskin notes in his diary (Feb. 26, 1844):—

“ . . . to Watling Street with Harrison to see a curious collection of a cotton manufacturer's set. A head by Denner: I never remember seeing one before, and was much gratified by the fine quality of flesh colour in it, as well as by the amazing delicacy of hand. Nothing else in it but bad taste.”]

vast; and this greatness of manner chiefly consists in seizing the specific character of the object, together with all the great qualities of beauty which it has in common with higher orders of existence,* while he utterly rejects the meaner beauties which are accidentally peculiar to the object, and yet not specifically characteristic of it. I cannot give a better instance than the painting of the flowers in Titian's picture above mentioned.¹ While every stamen of the rose is given, because this was necessary to mark the flower, and while the curves and large characters of the leaves are rendered with exquisite fidelity, there is no vestige of particular texture, of moss, bloom, moisture, or any other accident, no dewdrops, nor flies, nor trickeries of any kind;² nothing beyond the simple forms and hues of the flowers, even those hues themselves being simplified and broadly rendered. The varieties of *Aquilegia* have, in reality, a greyish and uncertain tone of colour; and, I believe, never attain the intense purity of blue with which Titian has gifted his flower. But the master does not aim at the particular colour of individual blossoms; he seizes the type of all, and gives it with the utmost purity and simplicity of which colour is capable.

27. These laws being observed, it will not only be in the power, it will be the duty, the imperative duty of the landscape painter, to descend to the lowest details with undiminished attention. Every herb and flower of the field has its specific, distinct, and perfect beauty; it has its peculiar habitation, expression, and function. The highest art is that which seizes this specific character, which develops and illustrates it, which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape, and which, by means of it, enhances and enforces the great impression which the picture is intended to convey. Nor is it of herbs

* I shall show, in a future portion of the work, that there are principles of universal beauty common to all the creatures of God; and that it is by the greater or less share of these that one form becomes nobler or meaner than another.³

¹ [Above, § 23.]

² [Cf. *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, pref., §§ 13, 14.]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. I.]

and flowers alone that such scientific representation is required. Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision. And thus we find ourselves unavoidably led to a conclusion directly opposed to that constantly enunciated dogma of the parrot-critic, that the features of nature must be “generalized”; a dogma whose inherent and broad absurdity would long ago have been detected, if it had not contained in its convenient falsehood an apology for indolence, and a disguise for incapacity. Generalized! As if it were possible to generalize things generically different. Of such common cant of criticism I extract a characteristic passage from one of the reviews of this work, that in this year’s *Athenæum* for February 10:—“He (the author) would have geologic landscape painters, dendrologic, meteorologic, and doubtless entomologic, ichthyologic, every kind of physiologic painter united in the same person; yet, alas for true poetic art “among all these learned Thebans! No; landscape painting “must not be reduced to mere portraiture of inanimate substances, Denner-like portraiture of the earth’s face. . . . “Ancient landscapists took a broader, deeper, higher view “of their art: they neglected particular traits, and gave “only general features. Thus they attained mass and force, “harmonious union and simple effect, elements of grandeur “and beauty.”¹

28. To all such criticism as this (and I notice it only because it expresses the feelings into which many sensible and thoughtful minds have been fashioned by infection), the answer is simple and straightforward. It is just as impossible to generalize granite and slate, as it is to generalize a man and a cow. An animal must be either one animal or another animal: it cannot be a general animal, or it is no animal; and so a rock must be either one rock or another rock; it cannot be a general rock, or it is no rock. If there were a creature in the foreground of a picture of which he could not decide whether

¹ [From a “second notice” of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, in the number for Feb. 10, 1844; see above, Introduction, p. xliii.]

it were a pony or a pig, the *Athenæum* critic would perhaps affirm it to be a generalization of pony and pig, and consequently a high example of “harmonious union and simple effect.” But *I* should call it simple bad drawing. And so when there are things in the foreground of Salvator of which I cannot pronounce whether they be granite, or slate, or tufa, I affirm that there is in them neither harmonious union, nor simple effect, but simple monstrosity. There is no grandeur, no beauty of any sort or kind, nothing but destruction, disorganization, and ruin, to be obtained by the violation of natural distinctions. The elements of brutes can only mix in corruption, the elements of inorganic nature only in annihilation. We may, if we choose, put together centaur monsters; but they must still be half man, half horse; they cannot be both man and horse, nor either man or horse.¹ And so, if landscape painters choose, they may give us rocks which shall be half granite and half slate; but they cannot give us rocks which shall be either granite or slate, nor which shall be both granite and slate. Every attempt to produce that which shall be *any* rock, ends in the production of what which is *no* rock.

29. It is true that the distinctions of rocks and plants and clouds are less conspicuous, and less constantly subjects of observation, than those of the animal creation; but the difficulty of observing them proves not the merit of overlooking them. It only accounts for the singular fact, that the world has never yet seen anything like a perfect school of landscape. For just as the highest historical painting is based on perfect knowledge of the workings of the human form and human mind, so must the highest landscape painting be based on perfect cognizance of the form, functions, and system of every organic or definitely structured existence which it has to represent. This proportion is self-evident to every thinking mind; and every principle which appears to contradict it is either

¹ [Ruskin at this time often went to the British Museum to study the Elgin marbles. The treatment of the centaurs in the metopes of the Parthenon may well have suggested to him the remark made above; see E.T. Cook's *Popular Handbook to the Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1903, p. 172; and cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 29.].

misstated or misunderstood. For instance, the *Athenæum* critic calls the right statement of generic difference “Denner-like portraiture.” If he can find anything like Denner in what I have advanced as the utmost perfection of landscape art, the recent works of Turner, he is welcome to his discovery and his theory. No; Denner-like portraiture would be the endeavour to paint the separate crystals of quartz and felspar in the granite, and the separate flakes of mica in the mica slate; an attempt just as far removed from what I assert to be great art (the bold rendering of the generic characters of form in both rocks), as modern sculpture of lace and buttonholes is from the Elgin marbles. Martin has attempted this Denner-like portraiture of sea foam with the assistance of an acre of canvas; with what success, I believe the critics of his last year’s “Canute” had, for once, sense enough to decide.¹

30. Again, it does not follow that, because such accurate knowledge is *necessary* to the painter, it should constitute the painter; nor that such knowledge is valuable in itself, and without reference to high ends. Every kind of knowledge may be sought from ignoble motives, and for ignoble ends; and in those who so possess it, it is ignoble knowledge; while the very same knowledge is in another mind an attainment of the highest dignity, and conveying the greatest blessing. This is the difference between the mere botanist’s knowledge of plants, and the great poet’s or painter’s knowledge of them.² The one notes their distinctions for the sake of swelling his herbarium, the other, that he may render them vehicles of expression and emotion. The one counts the stamens, and affixes a name, and is content; the other observes every character of the plant’s colour and form; considering each of its attributes as an element of expression, he seizes on its lines of grace or energy, rigidity or repose; notes the feebleness or the vigour, the serenity or tremulousness of its hues; observes

¹ [For Martin, see Vol. I. p. 243, note 2; and below, § 33 *n.*]

² [After many years, Ruskin attempted in *Proserpina* to write a handbook of what he here calls the poet’s or painter’s Botany. See author’s introduction to that book (1874), where he refers to his studies of Alpine botany at Chamouni in 1842, and adds, “But *Blackwood’s Magazine*, with its insults to Turner, dragged me into controversy; and I have not had, properly speaking, a day’s peace since.”]

its local habits, its love or fear of peculiar places, its nourishment or destruction by particular influences; he associates it in his mind with all the features of the situations it inhabits, and the ministering agencies necessary to its support. Thence-forward the flower is to him a living creature, with histories written on its leaves, and passions breathing in its motion. Its occurrence in his picture is no mere point of colour, no meaningless spark of light. It is a voice rising from the earth, a new chord of the mind's music, a necessary note in the harmony of his picture, contributing alike to its tenderness and its dignity, nor less to its loveliness than its truth.

31. The particularization of flowers by Shakspeare and Shelley affords us the most frequent examples of the exalted use of these inferior details.¹ It is true that the painter has not the same power of expressing the thoughts with which the symbols are connected; he is dependent in some degree on the knowledge and feeling of the spectator; but by the destruction of such details, his foreground is not rendered more intelligible to the ignorant, although it ceases to have interest with the informed. It is no excuse for illegible writing, that there are persons who could not have read it had it been plain.

32. I repeat then, generalization, as the word is commonly understood, is the act of a vulgar, incapable, and unthinking mind. To see in all mountains nothing but similar heaps of earth; in all rocks, nothing but similar concretions of solid matter; in all trees, nothing but similar accumulations of leaves, is no sign of high feeling or extended thought. The more we know, and the more we feel, the more we separate; we separate to obtain a more perfect unity. Stones, in the thoughts of the peasant, lie as they do on his field; one is like another, and there is no connection between any of them. The geologist distinguishes, and in distinguishing connects them. Each becomes different from his fellow, but in differing from, assumes a relation to, his fellow; they are no more each the

¹ [For an earlier reference to the flower-fancies of Shelley and Shakspeare, see *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 211 *n.*, where also, in this edition, other references are collected (Vol. I. p. 158 *n.*.)]

repetition of the other, they are parts of a system; and each implies and is connected with the existence of the rest. That generalization then is right, true, and noble, which is based on the knowledge of the distinctions and observance of the relations of individual kinds. That generalization is wrong, false, and contemptible, which is based on ignorance of the one, and disturbance of the other. It is indeed no generalization, but confusion and chaos; it is the generalization of a defeated army into undistinguishable impotence, the generalization of the elements of a dead carcass into dust.

33. Let us, then, without farther notice of the dogmata of the schools of art, follow forth those conclusions to which we are led by observance of the laws of nature.

I have just said that every class of rock, earth, and cloud, must be known by the painter, with geologic and meteorologic accuracy.* Nor is this merely for the sake of obtaining the character of these minor features themselves, but more especially for the sake of reaching that simple, earnest, and consistent character which is visible in the *whole* effect of every natural landscape. Every geological formation has features entirely peculiar to itself; definite lines of fracture, giving rise to fixed resultant forms of rock and earth; peculiar vegetable products, among which still farther distinctions are wrought out by variations of climate and elevation. From such modifying circumstances arise the infinite varieties of the orders of land-scape, of which each one shows perfect harmony among its several features, and possesses an ideal beauty of its own; a beauty not distinguished merely by such peculiarities as are

* Is not this, it may be asked, demanding more from him than life can accomplish? Not one whit. Nothing more than knowledge of external characteristics is absolutely required; and even if, which were more desirable, thorough scientific knowledge had to be attained, the time which our artists spend in multiplying crude sketches, or finishing their unintelligent embryos of the study, would render them masters of every science that modern investigations have organized, and familiar with every form that nature manifests. Martin, if the time which he must have spent on the abortive bubbles of his "Canute" had been passed in walking on the sea-shore, might have learned enough to enable him to produce, with a few strokes, a picture which would have smote, like the sound of the sea, upon men's hearts for ever.

wrought on the human form by change of climate, but by generic differences the most marked and essential; so that its classes cannot be generalized or amalgamated by any expedients whatsoever. The level marshes and rich meadows of the tertiary, the rounded swells and short pastures of the chalk, the square-built cliffs and cloven dells of the lower limestone, the soaring peaks and ridgy precipices of the primaries, have nothing in common among them, nothing which is not distinctive and incommunicable. Their very atmospheres are different, their clouds are different, their humours of storm and sunshine are different, their flowers, animals, and forests are different. By each order of landscape, and its orders, I repeat, are infinite in number, corresponding not only to the several species of rock, but to the particular circumstances of the rock's deposition or after-treatment, and to the incalculable varieties of climate, aspect, and human interference; by each order of landscape, I say, peculiar lessons are intended to be taught, and distinct pleasures to be conveyed; and it is as utterly futile to talk of generalizing their impressions into an ideal landscape, as to talk of amalgamating all nourishment into one ideal food, gathering all music into one ideal movement, or confounding all thought into one ideal idea.

34. There is, however, such a thing as composition of different orders of landscape, though there can be no generalization of them. Nature herself perpetually brings together elements of various expression. Her barren rocks stoop through wooded promontories to the plain; and the wreaths of the vine show through their green shadows the wan light of unperishing snow.

The painter, therefore, has the choice of either working out the isolated character of some one distinct class of scene, or of bringing together a multitude of different elements, which may adorn each other by contrast.

I believe that the simple and uncombined landscape, if wrought out with due attention to the ideal beauty of the features it includes, will always be the most powerful in its appeal to the heart. Contrast increases the splendour of

beauty, but it disturbs its influence; it adds to its attractiveness, but diminishes its power.¹ On this subject I shall have much to say hereafter;² at present I merely wish to suggest the possibility, that the single-minded painter, who is working out, on broad and simple principles, a piece of unbroken harmonious landscape character, may be reaching an end in art quite as high as the more ambitious student who is always “within five minutes’ walk of everywhere,” making the ends of the earth contribute to his pictorial guazzetto;* and the certainty, that unless the composition of the latter be regulated by severe judgment, and its members connected by natural links, it must become more contemptible in its motley, than an honest study of roadside weeds.

35. Let me, at the risk of tediously repeating what is universally known, refer to the common principles of historical composition, in order that I may show their application to that of landscape. The merest tyro in art knows that every figure which is unnecessary to his picture is an encumbrance to it, and that every figure which does not sympathize with the action interrupts it. He that gathereth not with me scattereth,³ is, or ought to be, the ruling principle of his plan; and the power and grandeur of his result will be exactly proportioned to the unity of feeling manifested in its several parts, and to the propriety and simplicity of the relations in which they stand to each other.

All this is equally applicable to the materials of inanimate nature. Impressiveness is destroyed by a multitude of contradictory facts, and the accumulation which is not harmonious is discordant. He who endeavours to unite simplicity with magnificence, to guide from solitude to festivity, and to contrast

* “A green field is a sight which makes us pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanoes, oranges, and ices.”—*Don Juan*.⁴

¹ [Cf. *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 231 (Vol. I. p. 172).]

² [“The Law of Contrast” in composition was worked out by Ruskin in *The Elements of Drawing*, §§ 221 *seqq.*]

³ [Matthew, xii. 30; Luke, xi. 23. On Ruskin’s Bible references, see below, p. 674.]

⁴ [Canto x. 76. Guazzetto, the Italian ragout: cf. “the legitimate landscape ragout,” p. 135 n.]

melancholy with mirth, must end by the production of confused inanity. There is a peculiar spirit possessed by every kind of scene; and although a point of contrast may sometimes enhance and exhibit this particular feeling more intensely, it must be only a point, not an equalized opposition. Every introduction of new and different feeling weakens the force of what has already been impressed, and the mingling of all emotions must conclude in apathy, as the mingling of all colours in white.

36. Let us test by these simple rules one of the “ideal” landscape compositions of Claude, that known to the Italians as “Il Mulino.”¹

The foreground is a piece of very lovely and perfect forest scenery, with a dance of peasants by a brook-side; quite enough subject to form, in the hands of a master, an impressive and complete picture. On the other side of the brook, however, we have a piece of pastoral life; a man with some bulls and goats tumbling headforemost into the water, owing to some sudden paralytic affection of all their legs. Even this group is one too many; the shepherd had no business to drive his flock so near the dancers, and the dancers will certainly frighten the cattle. But when we look farther into the picture, our feelings receive a sudden and violent shock, by the unexpected appearance, amidst things pastoral and musical, of the military; a number of Roman soldiers riding in on hobby-horses, with a leader on foot, apparently encouraging them to make an immediate and decisive charge on the musicians. Beyond the soldiers is a circular temple, in exceedingly bad repair; and close beside it, built against its very walls, a neat water-mill in full work. By the mill flows a large river with

¹ [A version of this composition is No. 12 in the National Gallery. It and No. 14 (“The Queen of Sheba”) were the two Claudes which Turner selected for “the noble passage of arms to which he challenged his rival from the grave.” Turner’s pictures—“The Sun rising in a Mist” (479) and “Dido building Carthage” (490)—hang in the National Gallery (in accordance with the terms of his will) beside the two Claudes. The Claude, No. 12, is inscribed “Marriage d’Issac avec Rebecca,” but it is a repetition with some variations in detail of the Claude known as “Il Mulino” (The Mill) in the Doria Palace at Rome. For other references to the picture, see below, pp. 282, 305, 331, 348, 436, 437. For Ruskin’s attitude to Claude generally, see above, Introduction, p. xxxiv.]

a weir all across it. The weir has not been made for the mill (for that receives its water from the hills by a trough carried over the temple), but it is particularly ugly and monotonous in its line of fall, and the water below forms a dead-looking pond, on which some people are fishing in punts. The banks of this river resemble in contour the later geological formations around London, constituted chiefly of broken pots and oyster-shells. At an inconvenient distance from the waterside stands a city, composed of twenty-five round towers and a pyramid. Beyond the city is a handsome bridge; beyond the bridge, part of the Campagna, with fragments of aqueducts; beyond the Campagna, the chain of the Alps; on the left, the cascades of Tivoli.

This is, I believe, a fair example of what is commonly called an "ideal" landscape; *i.e.* a group of the artist's studies from Nature, individually spoiled, selected with such opposition of character as may insure their neutralizing each other's effect, and united with sufficient unnaturalness and violence of association to insure their producing a general sensation of the impossible. Let us analyse the separate subjects a little in this ideal work of Claude's.

37. Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men.* The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep; scattered blocks of black stone, four-square,

* The vegetable soil of the Campagna is chiefly formed by decomposed lavas, and under it lies a bed of white pumice, exactly resembling remnants of bones.

remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests, like a dying fire on defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.¹

38. Let us, with Claude, make a few "ideal" alterations in this landscape. First, we will reduce the multitudinous precipices of the Apennines to four sugar-loaves. Secondly, we will remove the Alban Mount, and put a large dust-heap in its stead. Next we will knock down the greater part of the aqueducts, and leave only an arch or two, that their infinity of length may no longer be painful from its monotony. For the purple mist and declining sun, we will substitute a bright blue sky, with round white clouds. Finally, we will get rid of the unpleasant ruins in the foreground; we will plant some handsome trees therein, we will send for some fiddlers, and get up a dance, and a picnic party.

¹ [§ 37 is printed in *Fronde Agrestes*, § 88. The description was founded on reminiscences of Ruskin's winter at Rome and Naples, 1840-41. The first note of the Campagna in his diary was as follows:—

CISTERNA, *Jan. 6* (1841).—Left (Rome) to-day in a pour of rain. . . . Aqueduct looking excessively like the Greenwich railway over the cabbage gardens at Deptford. Then the Campagna began; the ruins along the Appian Way and the tower of Metella on the right crowded together like a desolate city; fragments of other ruins rising out of heaps and mounds of their débris in all parts of the plain. At the end of the first stage, changed horses opposite a long heap of apparent fallen buildings—fragments of their remains still giving character and angle to the east undulations of its outline. A flight of starlings rose from the wild plain and settled along the frieze of a tall arch, still standing, with a group of minor masses hollow against the sky on the highest point. Then came an ancient stone aqueduct—exquisite in colour and mass of form; and shattered throughout, yet keeping towards its mountain termination a continued line; beyond it, the Apennines, with fresh snow, shone large through breaking rain-cloud, white fragments of it falling along the Campagna and relieving in places its dark groups of ruin, the Alban Mount looking high through drifting shower. Though we missed the rich glow of colour, I am glad to have seen the Campagna for once under this effect, for it added to its desolation.]

It will be found, throughout the picture, that the same species of improvement is made on the materials which Claude had ready to his hand. The descending slopes of the city of Rome, towards the pyramid of Caius Cestius, supply not only lines of the most exquisite variety and beauty, but matter for contemplation and reflection in every fragment of their buildings. This passage has been idealized by Claude into a set of similar round towers, respecting which no idea can be formed but that they are uninhabitable, and to which no interest can be attached, beyond the difficulty of conjecturing what they could have been built for. The ruins of the temple are rendered unimpressive by the juxtaposition of the water-mill, and inexplicable by the introduction of the Roman soldiers. The glide of the muddy streams of the melancholy Tiber and Anio through the Campagna is impressive in itself, but altogether ceases to be so, when we disturb their stillness of motion by a weir, adorn their neglected flow with a handsome bridge, and cover their solitary¹ surface with punts, nets, and fishermen.

It cannot, I think, be expected, that landscapes like this should have any effect on the human heart, except to harden or to degrade it; to lead it from the love of what is simple, earnest, and pure, to what is as sophisticated and corrupt in arrangement, as erring and imperfect in detail. So long as such works are held up for imitation, landscape painting must be a manufacture, its productions must be toys, and its patrons must be children.

39. My purpose then, in the present work, is to demonstrate the utter falseness both of the facts and principles; the imperfection of material, and error of arrangement, on which works such as these are based; and to insist on the necessity, as well as the dignity, of an earnest, faithful, loving study of nature as she is, rejecting with abhorrence all that man has done to alter and modify her. And the praise which, in this first portion of the work, is given to many English artists, would be justifiable on this ground only; that, although

¹ [For "solitary," ed. 2 reads "neglected."]

frequently with little power and with desultory effort, they have yet, in an honest and good heart, received the word of God from clouds, and leaves, and waves, and kept it,* and

* The feelings of Constable with respect to his art might be almost a model for the young student, were it not that they err a little on the other side, and are perhaps in need of chastening and guiding from the works of his fellow-men.¹ We should use pictures not as authorities, but as comments on nature, just as we use divines not as authorities, but as comments on the Bible. Constable, in his dread of saint-worship,² deprives himself of much instruction from the Scripture to which he holds, because he will not accept aid in the reading of it from the learning of other men. Sir George Beaumont, on the contrary, furnishes, in the anecdotes given of him in Constable's life, a melancholy instance of the degradation into which the human mind may fall, when it suffers human works to interfere between it and its Master. The recommendation of the colour of an old Cremona fiddle for the prevailing tone of everything, and the vapid inquiry of the conventionalist, "Where do you put your brown tree?" show a prostration of intellect at once so ludicrous and so lamentable, that we believe the student of the gallery can receive no sterner warning than it conveys.³ Art so followed is the most servile indolence in which life can be wasted. There are then two dangerous extremes to be shunned: forgetfulness of the Scripture, and scorn of the divine; slavery on the one hand, and free-thinking on the other. The mean is nearly as difficult to determine or keep in art as in religion,⁴ but the great danger is on the side of superstition. He who walks humbly with Nature will seldom be in danger of losing sight of Art. He will commonly find in all that is truly great of man's works something of their original, for which he will regard them with gratitude and sometimes follow them with respect; while he who takes Art for his authority may entirely lose sight of all that it interprets, and sink at once into the sin of an idolater, and the degradation of a slave.

¹ [Ruskin was thinking, no doubt, of such expressions as the following in one of Constable's Lectures: "The landscape-painter must walk in the fields with an humble mind. No arrogant mind was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty. If I may be allowed to use a very solemn quotation, I would say most emphatically to the student, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth' " (*Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, by C.R. Leslie, 1845, p. 359). So far did Constable carry his devotion to the book of nature as the landscape-painter's scripture, that he dreaded the formation of a National Gallery. It would bring about, he said, "an end of the art in poor old England, and she will become, in all that relates to painting, as much a nonentity as every other country that has one. The reason is plain; the manufacturers of pictures are then made the criterions of perfection, instead of nature" (*ibid.* p. 105). For a reply to Ruskin's criticisms of Constable's "unteachableness," see C. R. Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters*, p. 274. For other references to Constable, see below, p. 191, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ix. § 13, ch. x. § 3, and App. i.; vol. iv. ch. iii. § 6, ch. v. § 19; *Academy Notes*, 1859; *Two Paths*, App. i. The anecdotes of Beaumont referred to above are on pp. 124–125 of Leslie's *Memoirs*, etc.]

² [Eds. 2, 3, and 4 read, "saint-worship, excommunicates himself from all benefit of the Church, and deprives," etc.]

³ [For "so ludicrous . . . conveys," eds. 2 and 3 read, "so laughable and lamentable, that they are at once, on all, and to all, students of the gallery, a satire and a warning."]

⁴ [For the difficulty in this sort which Ruskin experienced at the time in the matter of religion, see his *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 465.]

endeavoured in humility to render to the world that purity of impression which can alone render the result of art an instrument of good, or its labour deserving of gratitude.

40. If, however, I shall have frequent occasion to insist on the necessity of this heartfelt love of, and unqualified submission to, the teaching of nature, it will be no less incumbent upon me to reprobate the careless rendering of casual impression, and mechanical copyism of unimportant subject, which are too frequently visible in our modern school.* Their

* I should have insisted more on this fault (for it is a fatal one) in the following Essay, but the cause of it rests rather with the public than with the artist, and in the necessities of the public as much as in their will. Such pictures as artists themselves would wish to paint could not be executed under very high prices; and it must always be easier, in the present state of society, to find ten purchasers for ten-guinea sketches, than one purchaser for a hundred-guinea picture. Still, I have been often both surprised and grieved to see that any effort on the part of our artists to rise above manufacture, any struggle to something like complete conception, was left by the public to be its own reward. In the Water-Colour Exhibition of last year there was a noble work of David Cox's, ideal in the right sense; a forest hollow with a few sheep crushing down through its deep fern, and a solemn opening through the evening sky above its dark masses of distance.¹ It was worth all his little bits on the walls put together. Yet the public picked up all the little bits, blots and splashes, ducks, chick-weed, ears of corn, all that was clever and *petite*; and the real picture, the full development of the artist's mind, was left on his hands. How can I, or any one else with a conscience, advise him after this to aim at anything more than may be struck out by the cleverness of a quarter of an hour? Cattermole, I believe, is earthed and shackled in the same manner. He began his career with finished and studied pictures, which, I believe, never paid him; he now prostitutes his fine talent to the superficialness of public taste, and blots his way to emolument and oblivion. There is commonly, however, fault on both sides, in the artist for exhibiting his dexterity by mounter-bank tricks of the brush, until chaste finish, requiring ten times the knowledge and labour, appears insipid to the diseased taste which he has himself formed in his patrons, as the roaring and ranting of a common actor will oftentimes render apparently vapid the finished touches of perfect nature; and in the public, for taking less real pains to become acquainted with, and discriminate, the various powers of a great artist, than they would to estimate the excellence of a cook, or develop the dexterity of a dancer.

¹ [For Ruskin's appreciation of David Cox, see below, p. 193 (and *cf.* p. 253, a passage in the first edition); *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 427; and *Academy Notes*, 1856–59. For a later and less favourable notice, see *Lectures on Landscape*, § 80. The work referred to above was No. 199 in the Exhibition of the Old Water-Colour Society—"Sherwood Forest." For George Cattermole (1800–1868), see below, pp. 220, 397 *n.*, 603, and *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, *pref.*, § 28.]

lightness and desultoriness of intention, their meaningless multiplication of unstudied composition, and their want of definiteness and loftiness of aim, bring discredit on their whole system of study, and encourage in the critic the unhappy prejudice that the field and hill-side are less fit places of study than the gallery and the garret. Not every casual idea caught from the flight of a shower or the fall of a sunbeam, not every glowing fragment of harvest light, nor every flickering dream of copse-wood coolness is to be given to the world as it came, unconsidered, incomplete, and forgotten by the artist as soon as it has left his easel. That only should be considered a picture, in which the spirit, not the materials, observe, but the animating emotion, of many such studies is concentrated and exhibited by the aid of long studied, painfully chosen forms; idealized in the right sense of the word, not by audacious liberty of that faculty of degrading God's works which man calls his "imagination,"¹ but by perfect assertion of entire knowledge of every part and character and function of the object, and in which the details are completed to the last line compatible with the dignity and simplicity of the whole, wrought out with that noblest industry which concentrates profusion into point, and transforms accumulation into structure. Neither must this labour be bestowed on every subject which appears to afford a capability of good, but on chosen subjects in which nature has prepared to the artist's hand the purest sources of the impression he would convey. These may be humble in their order, but they must be perfect of their kind. There is a perfection of the hedgerow and cottage, as well as of the forest and the palace; and more ideality in a great artist's selection and treatment of roadside weeds and brook-worn pebbles, than in all the struggling caricature of the meaner mind, which heaps its foreground with colossal columns, and heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky. Finally, these chosen subjects must not be in any way.

¹ [Cf. Butler's *Analogy* (I. i. § 9, in Gladstone's edition, 1896), where he calls the imagination "that forward, delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some assistance, indeed, to apprehension, but the author of all error."]

repetitions of one another, but each founded on a new idea, and developing a totally distinct train of thought: so that the work of the artist's life should form a consistent series of essays, rising through the scale of creation from the humblest scenery to the most exalted; each picture being a necessary link in the chain, based on what preceded, introducing to what is to follow, and all, in their lovely system, exhibiting and drawing closer the bonds of nature to the human heart.

41. Since, then, I shall have to reprobate the absence of study in the moderns nearly as much as its false direction in the ancients, my task will naturally divide itself into three portions.¹ In the first, I shall endeavour to investigate and arrange the facts of nature with scientific accuracy; showing as I proceed, by what total neglect of the very first base and groundwork of their art the idealities of some among the old masters are produced. This foundation once securely laid, I shall proceed, in the second portion of the work, to analyse and demonstrate the nature of the emotions of the Beautiful and Sublime; to examine the particular characters of every kind of scenery; and to bring to light, as far as may be in my power, that faultless, ceaseless, inconceivable, inexhaustible loveliness, which God has stamped upon all things, if man will only receive them as He gives them. Finally, I shall endeavour to trace the operation of all this on the hearts and minds of men; to exhibit the moral function and end of art; to prove the share which it ought to have in the thoughts, and influence on the lives, of all of us; to attach to the artist the responsibility of a preacher, and to kindle in the general mind that regard which such an office must demand.

It must be evident that the first portion of this task, which is all that I have yet been enabled to offer to the reader, cannot but be the least interesting and the most laborious; especially because it is necessary that it should be executed

¹ [*i.e.* "Ideas of Truth," pt. ii.; "Ideas of Beauty," pts. iii., v.-vii.; "Ideas of Relation," pts. viii., ix.—the threefold division marked out in pt. i. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 6. But subsequently Ruskin's treatment became less methodical. Vol. iii. (pt. iv.) was interpolated, "Of Many Things"; and the analysis of "Ideas of Beauty," in pts. v.-vii. (vols. iv. and v.), covered much the same ground as vol. i.]

without reference to any principles of beauty or influences of emotion. It is the hard straightforward classification of material things, not the study of thought or passion; and therefore let me not be accused of want of the feelings which I choose to repress. The consideration of the high qualities of art must not be interrupted by the work of the hammer and the eudiometer.¹

42. Again, I would request that the frequent passages of reference to the great masters of the Italian school may not be looked upon as mere modes of conventional expression. I think there is enough in the following pages to prove that I am not likely to be carried away by the celebrity of a name; and therefore that the devoted love which I profess for the works of the great historical and sacred painters is sincere and well grounded. And indeed every principle of art which I may advocate, I shall be able to illustrate by reference to the works of men universally allowed to be the masters of masters; and the public, so long as my teaching leads them to higher understanding and love of the works of Buonaroti, Leonardo, Raffaele, Titian, and Cagliari,² may surely concede to me, without fear, the right of striking such blows as I may deem necessary to the establishment of my principles, at Gaspar Poussin or Vandevelde.

43. Indeed, I believe there is nearly as much occasion, at the present day, for advocacy of Michael Angelo against the

¹ [An instrument for testing the purity of the air, or rather the quantity of oxygen it contains, now chiefly employed in the analysis of gases. Ruskin's reference to his work in these scientific terms is not merely rhetorical. He wielded the geologist's hammer, and, if he did not use the eudiometer, he carried abroad, to aid him in his study of skies, a cyanometer (see Vol. I. p. xxx.)]

² [It is curious at first sight that Ruskin should not here include Tintoret, the interpretation of whom was one of the principal aims of his second volume; presumably he was omitted in this place, as not being one of the "men universally allowed to be the masters of masters." For Ruskin's own list of the greatest masters, as they seemed to him at a later date, see *Elements of Drawing*, App. ii. In a first class, as being "always right," he placed two only of those above named—Titian and Veronese, adding Tintoret, Giorgione, John Bellini, and Velasquez. Leonardo came in a second list, among those with whom "question of right and wrong" is admissible; while Michael Angelo and Raphael are mentioned as among the great ones indeed, but as likely to lead students off the right road. For another list which Ruskin drew up, see Introduction to next volume. In reading Ruskin's later criticisms of Raphael, and still more of Michael Angelo (e.g., in the lecture, *The Relation of Michael Angelo to Tintoret*), these earlier notices should be borne in mind.]

pettiness of the moderns, as there is for support of Turner against the conventionalities of the ancients. For, though the names of the fathers of sacred art are on all our lips, our faith in them is much like that of the great world in its religion— nominal, but dead. In vain our lecturers sound the name of Raffaele in the ears of their pupils, while their own works are visibly at variance with every principle deducible from his. In vain is the young student compelled to produce a certain number of school copies of Michael Angelo, when his bread must depend on the number of gewgaws he can crowd into his canvas. And I could with as much zeal exert myself against the modern system of English historical art, as I have in favour of our school of landscape, but that it is an ungrateful and painful task to attack the works of living painters, struggling with adverse circumstances of every kind, and especially with the false taste of a nation which regards matters of art either with the ticklishness of an infant, or the stolidity of a megatherium.

44. I have been accused, in the execution of this first portion of my work, of irreverent and scurrile expression towards the works which I have depreciated.¹ Possibly I may have been in some degree infected by reading those criticisms of our periodicals which consist of nothing else; but I believe, in general, that my words will be found to have sufficient truth in them to excuse their familiarity; and that no other weapons could have been used to pierce the superstitious prejudice with which the works of certain painters are shielded from the attacks of reason. My answer is that given long ago to a similar complaint, uttered under the same circumstances by the foiled sophist:—*Τίς δ' ἐστὶν ὁ ἀνθρώπος ὡς ἀπαιδευτός τις ὅς οὔτω φαῦλα ὀνόματα ὀνομάζειν τολμά ἐν σεμνῷ π ράγματι; Τοιοῦτός τις, ὦ Ἰππία, οὐδέν ἄλλο φροντίζων ἢ το ἀληθές.*²

45. It is with more surprise that I have heard myself

¹ [See the passage from the *Art Union Monthly Journal*, quoted above, Introduction, p. xliiii.]

² [Plato, *Hippias Major*, 288 D. “And who is this man? What an uneducated fellow! who thus presumes to express himself in words so low in an affair so solemn?” “Such is the fellow,—a man who cares for nothing but the truth.” For another quotation from this Dialogue, see Appendix ii., p. 649.]

accused of thoughtless severity with respect to the works of contemporary painters, for I fully believe that whenever I attack them, I give myself far more pain than I can possibly inflict; and in many instances, I have withheld reprobation which I considered necessary to the full understanding of my work, in the fear of grieving or injuring men of whose feelings and circumstances I was ignorant. Indeed, the apparently false and exaggerated bias of the whole book in favour of modern art is, in great degree, dependent on my withholding the animadversions which would have given it balance, and keeping silence where I cannot praise.¹ But I would rather be a year or two longer in effecting my purposes, than reach them by trampling on men's hearts and hearths; and I have permitted myself to express unfavourable opinions only where the popularity and favour of the artist are so great as to render the opinion of an individual a matter of indifference to him.²

46. And now, but one word more. For many a year we have heard nothing with respect to the works of Turner but accusations of their want of *truth*. To every observation on their power, sublimity, or beauty, there has been but one reply:

¹ [Cf. on this point Ruskin's note cited on p. 195 *n*. In a letter, also, to the *Pall Mall Gazette* (Jan. 11, 1875), Ruskin contrasted "the first volume of *Modern Painters*, which praises many third-rate painters, and teaches none," with "the following volumes, which praise none but good painters, and sometimes admit the weakness of advising bad ones" (*Arrows of the Chace*, ed. 1880, ii. 239).]

² [Ed. 2 (only) adds the following note:—

"The disadvantageous prominence given in some of the following pages to Mr. Maclise, was entirely owing to my knowing him to have many friends, and multitudinous admirers, and to my feeling that were his powers exerted in a right direction, he might infinitely elevate and advance our school of art. I am sorry for the harshness with which I have spoken, for it has hurt the feelings of many for whose judgment I have the most true respect; but I have not cancelled the passage because I have not altered my opinion. I cannot help feeling that there is, in many of the creations of Maclise's imagination, a strange character of savage recklessness, which, however striking, animated, and impressive in characters to which it properly belongs, is grievously out of place in anything approaching to ideal subject. I may be entirely wrong in this feeling, but so long as it remains unchanged, I cannot refrain from beseeching Mr. Maclise to devote his vivid imagination and vigorous powers of hand to creations of more tenderness, repose, and dignity; and above all, not to condescend, capable as he is of kindling his canvas with life, and stamping it with character, to spend his time in imitating the sparkle of wine-glasses, and elaborating the fractures of nutshells."

For other references to Maclise, see below, pp. 82, 619; and see also the preface to the first ed., above, p. 5.]

They are not like nature.¹ I therefore took my opponents on their own ground, and demonstrated, by thorough investigation of actual facts, that Turner *is* like nature, and paints more of nature than any man who ever lived. I expected this proposition (the foundation of all my future efforts) would have been disputed with desperate struggles, and that I should have had to fight my way to my position inch by inch. Not at all. My opponents yield me the field at once. One (the writer for the *Athenæum*) has no other resource than the assertion, that “he disapproves the natural style in painting. If people want to see *nature*, let them go and look at herself. Why should they see her at second-hand on a piece of canvas?”² The other (*Blackwood*), still more utterly discomfited, is reduced to a still more remarkable line of defence. “It is not,” he says, “what things in all respects really are, but how they are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*, that we have to consider.” (October 1843, p. 485.) I leave therefore the reader to choose whether, with *Blackwood* and his fellows, he will proceed to consider how things are convertible by the mind into what they are *not*; or whether, with me, he will undergo the harder, but perhaps on the whole more useful, labour of ascertaining what they are.³

[The following Prefaces were contained in those editions only in which they first appeared.]

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

(1846)

It is with much regret, and partly against my own judgment, that I republish the following chapters in their present form. The particular circumstances (stated in the first preface) under which they were originally

¹ [See, for instance, the paper in *Blackwood* in 1836, below, p. 637.]

² [*Athenæum*, in its second review of *Modern Painters*, Feb. 10, 1844, No. 850, p. 133.]

³ [In “The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism” (§ 16), Ruskin referred to the closing words of this preface as an assertion of the principle of realism for the groundwork of all he had to teach in the first volume. “Nevertheless,” he added, “the first volume of *Modern Painters* did by no means contain all that even then I knew;” in the third volume he showed that “a faithful realist, before he could question whether his art was representing anything truly, had first to ask whether it meant seriously to represent anything at all.”]

written, have rendered them so unfit for the position they now hold, as introductory to a serious examination of the general functions of art, that I should have wished first to complete the succeeding portions of the essay, and then to write another introduction of more fitting character. But as it may be long before I am able to do this, and as I believe what I have already written may still be of some limited and practical service, I have suffered it to reappear, trusting to the kindness of the reader to look to its intention rather than its tempe and forgive its inconsideration in its earnestness.

Thinking it of too little substance to bear mending, wherever I have found a passage which I thought required modification or explanation, I have cut it out; what I have left, however imperfect, cannot, I think, be dangerously misunderstood: something I have added, not under the idea of rendering the work in any wise systematic or complete, but to supply gross omissions, answer inevitable objections, and give some substance to passages of mere declamation.

Whatever inadequacy or error there may be, throughout, in materials or modes of demonstration, I have no doubt of the truth and necessity of the main result; and though the reader may, perhaps, find me frequently hereafter showing other and better grounds for what is here affirmed, yet the point and bearing of the book, its determined depreciation of Claude, Salvator, Gaspar, and Canaletto, and its equally determined support of Turner, as the greatest of all landscape painters, and of Turner's recent works as his finest, are good and right; and if the prevalence throughout of attack and eulogium be found irksome or offensive, let it be remembered that my object thus far has not been either the establishment or the teaching of any principles of art, but the vindication, most necessary to the prosperity of our present schools, of the uncomprehended rank of their greatest artist, and the diminution, equally necessary, as I think, to the prosperity of our schools, of the unadvised admiration of the landscape of the seventeenth century. For I believe it to be almost impossible to state in terms sufficiently serious and severe the depth and extent of the evil which has resulted (and that not in art alone, but in all matters with which the contemplative faculties are concerned) from the works of those elder men. On the Continent, all landscape art has been utterly annihilated by them, and with it all sense of the power of nature. We in England have only done better because our artists have had strength of mind enough to form a school withdrawn from their influence.

The points are somewhat farther developed in the general sketch of ancient and modern landscape which I have added to the first section of the second part. Some important additions have also been made to the chapters on the painting of the sea. Throughout the rest of the text, though something is withdrawn, little is changed; and the reader may rest assured that if I were now to bestow on this feeble essay the careful revision which it much needs, but little deserves, it would not be to alter its tendencies, or modify its conclusions, but to prevent indignation from appearing virulence on the one side, and enthusiasm partizanship on the other.

(1873)

I have been lately so often asked by friends on whose judgment I can rely, to permit the publication of another edition of *Modern Painters* in its original form, that I have at last yielded, though with some violence to my own feelings; for many parts of the first and second volumes are written in a narrow enthusiasm, and the substance of their metaphysical and religious speculation is only justifiable on the ground of its absolute honesty.¹ Of the third, fourth, and fifth volumes, I indeed mean eventually to rearrange what I think of permanent interest for the complete edition of my works, but with fewer and less elaborate illustrations; nor have I any serious grounds for refusing to allow the book once more to appear in the irregular form which it took as it was written, since of the art-teaching and landscape descriptions it contains I have little to retrench, and nothing to retract.

This final edition must, however, be limited to a thousand copies, for some of the more delicate plates are already worn—that of the Mill Stream in the fifth volume, and of the Loire Side very injuriously; while that of the Shores of Wharfe had to be retouched by an engraver after the removal of the mezzotint for reprinting. But Mr. Armytage's, Mr. Cousens', and Mr. Cuff's magnificent plates are still in good state; and my own etchings, though injured, are still good enough to answer their purpose.

I sign with my own hand this preface to every copy, thus certifying it as containing the best impressions of the original plates now producible, and belonging to the last edition of the book in its complete form.²



¹ [Cf. for other references to what Ruskin in after years called the "rabid Protestantism" of his early essays, *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, pref. to ed. of 1880, and *Sesame and Lilies*, pref. to ed. of 1871.]

² [On the subject of this preface, see Introduction, p. 1., and Bibliographical Note, p. lix.]

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PART I
OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

SECTION I
OF THE NATURE OF THE IDEAS CONVEYABLE BY ART

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTORY

IF it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence,¹ it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that, while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honour, and award what is undue, have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind; descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature; for it is an insult to what is really great in either to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean or uncultivated faculties. It is a matter of the simplest demonstration, that no man can

§ 1. Public opinion no criterion of excellence, except after long periods of time.

¹ [See above, preface to 2nd ed., §9; and below, Appendix ii., p. 648, where Ruskin enters more fully into the question of public opinion.]

be really appreciated but by his equal or superior. His inferior may over-estimate him, in enthusiasm; or, as is more commonly the case, degrade him, in ignorance; but he cannot form a grounded and just estimate. Without proving this, however, which would take more space to do than I can spare, it is sufficiently evident that there is no process of amalgamation by which opinions, wrong individually, can become right merely by their multitude.* If I stand by a picture in the Academy, and hear twenty persons in succession admiring some paltry piece of mechanism or imitation in the lining of a cloak, or the satin of a slipper, it is absurd to tell me that they reprobate collectively what they admire individually; or, if they pass with apathy by a piece of the most noble conception or most perfect truth, because it has in it no tricks of the brush nor grimace of expression, it is absurd to tell me that they collectively respect what they separately scorn, or that the feelings and knowledge of such judges, by any length of time or comparison of ideas, could come to any right conclusion with respect to what is really high in art. The question is not decided by them, but for them; decided at first by few:¹ by fewer in proportion as the merits of the work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank of mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle; each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it, as to receive its decision with respect; until in process of time, the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of faith, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived.[†]

*The opinion of a majority is right only when it is more probable, with each individual, that he should be right than that he should be wrong, as in the case of a jury. Where it is more probable, with respect to each individual, that he should be wrong than right, the opinion of the minority is the true one. Thus it is in art.²

† There are, however, a thousand modifying circumstances which render this process sometimes unnecessary,—sometimes rapid and certain,—sometimes

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin shortens this passage thus:— “The question of excellence is decided at first by few.”]

² [This note is erased by Ruskin in his copy for revision.]

But when this process has taken place, and the work has become sanctified by time in the minds of men, it is impossible that any new work of equal merit can be impartially compared with it, except by minds not only educated and generally capable of appreciating merit, but strong enough to shake off the weight of prejudice and association, which invariably incline them to the older favourite. It is much easier, says Barry, to repeat the

§ 2. *And there
-fore obstinate
when once
formed.*

impossible. It is unnecessary in rhetoric and the drama, because the multitude is the only proper judge of those arts whose end is to move the multitude (though more is necessary to a fine play than is essentially dramatic, and it is only of the dramatic part that the multitude are cognizant). It is unnecessary, when, united with the higher qualities of a work, there are appeals to universal passion, to all the faculties and feelings which are general in man as an animal. The popularity is then as sudden as it is well-grounded,—it is hearty and honest in every mind, but it is based in every mind on a different species of excellence. Such will often be the case with the noblest works of literature. Take *Don Quixote* for example.¹ The lowest mind would find in it perpetual and brutal amusement in the misfortunes of the knight, and perpetual pleasure in sympathy with the squire. A mind of average feeling would perceive the satirical meaning and force of the book, would appreciate its wit, its elegance, and its truth. But only elevated and peculiar minds discover, in addition to all this, the full moral beauty of the love and truth which are the constant associates of all that is even most weak and erring in the character of its hero, and pass over the rude adventure and scurrile jest in haste—perhaps in pain, to penetrate beneath the rusty corselet, and catch from the wandering glance, the evidence and expression of fortitude, self-devotion, and universal love. So again, with the works of Scott and Byron: popularity was as instant as it was deserved, because there is in them an appeal to those passions which are universal in all men, as well as an expression of such thoughts as can be received only by the few. But they are admired by the majority of their advocates for the weakest parts of their works, as a popular preacher by the majority of his congregation for the worst part of his sermon.

The process is rapid and certain, when, though there may be little to catch the multitude at once, there is much which they can enjoy when their attention is authoritatively directed to it. So rests the reputation of Shakspeare. No ordinary mind can comprehend wherein his undisputed superiority consists, but there is yet quite as much to amuse, thrill, or excite,—quite as much of what is in the strict sense of the word, dramatic, in his works as in any one's else. They were received, therefore, when first written, with average approval, as works of common merit: but when the high decision was made, and the circle spread, the public took up the hue and cry conscientiously enough. Let them have daggers, ghosts, clowns, and kings, and, with such real and definite sources of enjoyment, they will take the additional

¹ [It is worth noticing that the three authors cited in this paragraph—Cervantes, Scott, and Byron—were those with whom Ruskin was early acquainted from his father reading them to him aloud: see *Præterita*, i. §§ 1, 68, 163.]

character recorded of Phidias, than to investigate the merits of Agasias.¹ And when, as peculiarly in the case of painting, much knowledge of what is technical and practical is necessary to a right judgment, so that those alone are competent to

trouble to learn half a dozen quotations, without understanding them, and admit the superiority of Shakspeare without further demur. Nothing, perhaps, can more completely demonstrate the total ignorance of the public of all that is great or valuable in Shakspeare than their universal admiration of Maclise's Hamlet.²

The process is impossible where there is in the work nothing to attract and something to disgust the vulgar mind. Neither their intrinsic excellence, nor the authority of those who can judge of it, will ever make the poems of Wordsworth or George Herbert popular, in the sense in which Scott and Byron are popular, because it is to the vulgar a labour instead of a pleasure to read them; and there are parts in them which to such judges cannot but be vapid or ridiculous. Most works of the highest art,—those of Raffaele, M. Angelo, or Da Vinci,—stand as Shakspeare does,—that which is common-place and feeble in their excellence being taken for its essence by the uneducated imagination assisting the impression (for we readily fancy that we feel, when feeling is a matter of pride or conscience), and affectation and pretension increasing the noise of the rapture, if not its degree. Giotto, Orcagna, Angelico,³ Perugino, stand, like George Herbert,⁴ only with the few. Wilkie becomes popular, like Scott, because he touches passions which all feel, and expresses truths which all can recognize.⁵

¹ ["When the different walks of art have been successfully filled by great men whose reputations have been chronicled and established by time, succeeding artists, though of equal merit, will in the same country be with difficulty allowed the full praise they deserve, especially by the second-hand critics who generally draw a line of separation between the old occupiers of reputation and the new-comers; since it is much easier to repeat the character that is recorded of Phidias, Praxiteles, or Lysippus, than to investigate the merits of an Apollonius or an Agasias" (*The Works of James Barry*, 1809, i. 368). Apollonius was the sculptor of the Torso of the Vatican much admired by Ruskin: see below, p. 608; Agasias, of the "Borghese Gladiator" in the Louvre (for which see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 29). For Ruskin's appreciation of Barry's *Lectures*, see Vol. I. p. 491.]

² [Exhibited at the Royal Academy in the year 1842; now No. 422 in the Tate Gallery. For other references to Maclise, see above, p. 51 *n.*; and below, p. 619 *n.*; also *Academy Notes*, 1855, 1857. It should be remembered that the critics who were most scornful of Turner were also rapturous over Maclise's "Hamlet." Thus the *Athenæum* (No. 758, p. 409), after a column of praise of the painter's "fertility of imagination," "facility of hand," and "luxuriance of fancy," regretted that it had not available another column "to fill with separate portions worthy of praise and enumeration." Similarly, the *Literary Gazette* (No. 1320, p. 316) said: "This is the picture which attracts a neverfailing crowd around it; and well does the genius it displays deserve such homage. In execution it is marvellous. Never was scene more potently filled. Shakspeare is on the canvas in all his imagination and might. It would require a page of our journal merely to enumerate its striking points." *Blackwood* (July 1842, p. 28), while admitting some defects, pronounced the picture the most striking in the exhibition, and as evincing "great genius" on the part of its "poet painter."]

³ [For "Orcagna, Angelico," eds. 1 and 2 read, "Cimabue, Fra Bartolomeo."]

⁴ [For Ruskin's admiration of George Herbert, see Vol. I. p. 409 *n.*, and the other references there supplied.]

⁵ [For other references to Wilkie, see Vol. I. p. 7 *n.*, and below, ch. ii. § 7 *n.*]

pronounce a true verdict who are themselves the persons to be judged, and who therefore can give no opinion, centuries may elapse before fair comparison can be made between two artists of different ages: while the patriarchal excellence exercises during the interval a tyrannical, perhaps even a blighting, influence over the minds, both of the public and of those to whom, properly understood, it should serve for a guide and example. In no city of Europe where art is a subject of attention, are its prospects so hopeless, or its pursuits so resultless, as in Rome; because there, among all students, the authority of their predecessors in art is supreme and without appeal, and the mindless copyist studies Raffaele, but not what Raffaele studied.¹ It thus becomes the duty of every one capable of demonstrating any definite points of superiority in modern art, and who in a position in which his doing so will not be ungraceful, to encounter without hesitation whatever opprobrium may fall upon him from the necessary prejudice even of the most candid minds, and from the far more virulent opposition of those who have no hope of maintaining their own reputation for discernment but in the support of that kind of consecrated merit which may be applauded without an inconvenient necessity for reasons. It is my purpose, therefore, believing that there are certain points of superiority in modern artists, and especially in one or two of their number, which have not yet been fully understood, except by those who are scarcely in a position admitting the declaration of their conviction, to institute a close comparison between the great works of ancient and modern landscape art; to raise, as far as possible, the deceptive veil of imaginary light through which we are accustomed to gaze upon the patriarchal work; and to show the real relations, whether favourable or otherwise, subsisting between it and our own. I am fully aware that this is not to be done lightly or rashly; that it is the part of every one proposing to undertake such a task, strictly to examine, with prolonged doubt and severe trial, every opinion in any way

§ 3. The author's reasons for opposing it in particular instances.

¹ [This sentence—a generalisation from Ruskin's visit to Roman studios in the winter of 1840–41—is struck out in his copy for revision.]

contrary to the sacred verdict of time, and to advance nothing which does not, at least in his own conviction, rest on surer ground than mere feeling or taste. I have accordingly advanced nothing in the following pages but with accompanying demonstration, which may indeed be true or false—complete or conditional, but which can only be met on its own grounds, and can in no way be borne down or affected by mere authority of great names. Yet even thus I should scarcely have ventured to speak so decidedly as I have, but for my full conviction that we ought not to class the historical painters of the fifteenth, and landscape painters of the seventeenth, centuries together, under the general title of “old masters,” as if they possessed anything like corresponding rank in their respective walks of art. I feel assured that the principles on which they worked are totally opposed, and that the landscape painters have been honoured only because they exhibited, in mechanical and technical qualities, some semblance of the manner of the nobler historical painters, whose principles of conception and composition they entirely reversed. The course of study which has led me reverently to the feet of Michael Angelo and Da Vinci, has alienated me gradually from Claude and Gaspar; I cannot, at the same time, do homage to power and pettiness—to the truth of consummate science, and the mannerism of undisciplined imagination.¹ And let it² be understood that whenever

§ 4. *But only on points capable of demonstration.*

¹ [Ed. I here inserted the following passage:—

“And let it be that in all questions respecting the art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we ought not to class the historical and landscape painters together, as possessing anything like equal rank in their respective walks of art. It is because I look with the most devoted veneration upon M. Angelo, Raffaele, and Da Vinci, that I do not distrust the principles which induce me to look with contempt on Claude, Salvator, and Gaspar Poussin. Had I disliked all, I should have believed in and bowed before all; but in my admiration of the greater, I consider myself as having warrant for the repudiation of the less. I feel assured that they cannot with reason be admired together,—that the principles of art on which they worked are totally opposed, and that the landscape painters of the old school have been honoured only because they had in them a shadow and semblance of the manner of the nobler historical painters, whose principles in all points they directly reversed. But be this as it may, let it be understood . . .”

In Ruskin’s copy for revision the sentence in the text—“The course of study . . . imagination”—is struck out. For his earlier view of Claude, see Vol. I. p. 112.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin here inserts “therefore,” and, two lines lower

hereafter I speak depreciatingly of the old masters as a body, I refer to none of the historical painters, for whom I entertain a veneration which, though I hope reasonable in its grounds, is almost superstitious in degree. Neither, unless he be particularly mentioned, do I intend to include Nicholas Poussin, whose landscapes have a separate and elevated character, which renders it necessary to consider them apart from all others. Speaking generally of the elder masters, I refer only to Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Cuyp, Berghem, Both, Ruysdael, Hobbima, Teniers (in his landscapes), P. Potter, Canaletto, and the various Van somethings and Back somethings, more especially and malignantly those who have libelled the sea.¹

It will of course be necessary for me, in the commencement of the work, to state briefly those principles on which I conceive all right judgment of art must be founded. These introductory chapters I should wish to be read carefully, because all criticism must be useless when the terms or grounds of it are in any degree ambiguous; and the ordinary language of connoisseurs and critics, granting that they understand it themselves, is usually mere jargon to others, from their custom of using technical terms, by which everything is meant and nothing is expressed.

And if, in the application of these principles, in spite of my endeavour to render it impartial, the feeling and fondness which I have for some works of modern art escape me sometimes where they should not, let it be pardoned as little more than a fair counterbalance to that peculiar veneration with which the work of the old master, associated as it has ever been in our ears with the expression of whatever is great or perfect, must be usually regarded by the reader. I do not say that this veneration is wrong, nor that we should be less attentive to the repeated words of time: but let us not forget that if

§ 5. *The author's partiality to modern works excusable.*

down, italicizes *none*. Similarly, lower down still, he inserts before Claude, etc., the words "the landscape painters."]

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin tones down this often-quoted phrase into "the various Dutch painters of marine."]

honour be for the dead, gratitude can only be for the living. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been for ever closed, feeling how impotent *there* are the wild love and the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust. But the lesson which men receive as individuals, they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay the honour to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amidst the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay.¹

¹ [This paragraph, from "He who has once stood," etc., to the end, is printed in *Fronde Agrestes*, § 84. Ruskin read the passage in his Oxford course—"Readings in *Modern Painters*," and compared it, to its disadvantage, with a passage from *Unto this Last*. It was a true saying, he said, and sincere, but he had in fact "never so stood beside his dead"; if he had, "he would never, in speaking of the time, have studied how to put three 'd's' one after the other, in 'debt,' 'discharged,' and 'dust.'"]

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF GREATNESS IN ART

IN the 15th Lecture of Sir Joshua Reynolds, incidental notice is taken of the distinction between those excellences in the painter which belong to him *as such*, and those which belong to him in common with all men of intellect, the general and exalted powers of which art is the evidence and expression, not the subject. But the distinction is not there dwelt upon as it should be, for it is owing to the slight attention ordinarily paid to it, that criticism is open to every form of coxcombry, and liable to every phase of error. It is a distinction on which depend all sound judgment of the rank of the artist, and all just appreciation of the dignity of art.

§ 1. *Distinction between the painter's intellectual power and technical knowledge.*

Painting, or art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learnt how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect; but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are

§ 2. *Painting, as such, is nothing more than language.*

merely what rhythm, melody, precision, and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined.¹

Speaking with strict propriety, therefore, we should call a man a great painter only as he excelled in precision and force in the language of lines, and a great versifier, as he excelled in precision and force in the language of words. A great poet would then be a term strictly, and in precisely the same sense, applicable to both, if warranted by the character of the images or thoughts which each in their respective languages conveyed.

Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the words as synonymous) which modern times have seen:—the “Old Shepherd’s Chief-mourner.”² Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear³ painting of the wood of

¹ [This is perhaps one of “many passages” in the volume to which Ruskin afterwards referred as “setting the subject or motive of the picture so much above the mode of its execution, that some of my more feebly gifted disciples supposed they were fulfilling my wishes by choosing exactly the subjects for painting which they were least able to paint.” “It was long,” he said elsewhere, “before I myself understood the true meaning of the pride of the greatest men in their mere execution. . . . Inferior artists are continually trying to escape from the necessity of sound work, and either indulging themselves in their delights in subject, or pluming themselves on their noble motives for attempting what they cannot perform; . . . whereas the great men always understand at once that the first morality of a painter, as of everybody else, is to know his business.” Yet though Ruskin felt that he had been “provoked” too far into “the exclusive assertion” of his proposition—that subject was principal, and technique the means of expression, yet to the truth of the proposition itself he constantly adhered. “The principle itself,” he said, “I maintain, now in advanced life, with more reverence and firmness than in earliest youth; and though I believe that among the teachers who have opposed its assertion, there are few who enjoy the mere artifices of composition or dexterities of handling so much as I, the time which I have given to the investigation of these has only farther assured me that the pictures were noblest which compelled me to forget them” (*Lectures on Art*, § 74; *Eagle’s Nest*, §§ 41–42).]

² [Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1837. Now in the Victoria and Albert South Kensington Museum, Sheepshanks Collection. For other references to Sir Edwin Landseer, see above, Introduction, p. xlvi.; and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iv. § 11 n.; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 20; *Academy Notes*, 1856–58; *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 29.]

³ [So in all the editions of the book; the MS., however (see facsimile), has “clever,” and it would seem that the word “clear” is an original, and never corrected, misprint.]

§ 3. “Painter,” a term corresponding to “versifier.”

§ 4. Example in a painting of E. Landseer’s.

the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog's breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life, how unwatched the departure, of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep;—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the Man of Mind.

It is not, however, always easy, either in painting or literature, to determine where the influence of language stops, and where that of thought begins. Many thoughts are so dependent upon the language in which they are clothed, that they would lose half their beauty if otherwise expressed. But the highest thoughts are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition, and praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. A composition is indeed usually most perfect, when to such intrinsic dignity is added all that expression can do to attract and adorn; but in every case of supreme excellence this all becomes as nothing. We are more gratified by the simplest lines or words which can suggest the idea in its own naked beauty, than by the robe and the gem which conceal while they decorate; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what

§ 5. Difficulty of fixing an exact limit between language and thought.

is ornamental in language and what is expressive. That part of it which is necessary to the embodying and conveying of the thought is worthy of respect and attention as necessary to excellence, though not the test of it. But that part of it which is decorative has little more to do with the intrinsic excellence of the picture than the frame or the varnishing of it. And this caution in distinguishing between the ornamental and the expressive is peculiarly necessary in painting; for in the language of words it is nearly impossible for that which is not expressive to be beautiful, except by mere rhythm or melody, any sacrifice to which is immediately stigmatized as error. But the beauty of mere language in painting is not only very attractive and entertaining to the spectator, but requires for its attainment no small exertion of mind and devotion of time by the artist. Hence, in art, men have frequently fancied that they were becoming rhetoricians and poets when they were only learning to speak melodiously, and the judge has over and over again advanced to the honour of authors those who were never more than ornamental writing-masters.¹

Most pictures of the Dutch school, for instance, excepting always those of Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words; while the early efforts of Cimabue and Giotto are the burning messages of prophecy, delivered by the stammering lips of infants. It is not by ranking the former as more than mechanics, or the latter as less than artists, that the taste of the multitude, always awake to the lowest pleasures which art can bestow, and blunt to the highest, is to be formed or elevated. It must be the part of the judicious critic carefully to distinguish what is language, and what is thought, and to rank and praise pictures chiefly for the latter, considering the former as a totally inferior

§ 6. *Distinction between decorative and expressive language.*

§ 7. *Instance in the Dutch and early Italian schools.*

¹ [Ruskin in his copy for revision made the following note on § 6:—

“This entire paragraph is exaggerated and in many respects false. I should gladly have omitted it, but I think it just, when I have been in error, to show clearly to what extent.”]

excellence, and one which cannot be compared with nor weighed against thought in any way, or in any degree whatsoever. The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass nor beauty of execution, can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought. Three penstrokes of Raffaele are a greater and a better picture than the most finished work that ever Carlo Dolci polished into inanity.¹ A finished work of a great artist is only better than its sketch, if the sources of pleasure belonging to colour and realization—valuable in themselves—are so employed as to increase the impressiveness of the thought. But if one atom of thought has vanished, all colour, all finish, all execution, all ornament, are too dearly bought. Nothing but thought can pay for thought, and the instant that the increasing refinement or finish of the picture begins to be paid for by the loss of the faintest shadow of an idea, that instant all refinement or finish is an excrescence and a deformity.

Yet although in all our speculations on art, language is thus to be distinguished from, and held subordinate, to, that which it conveys, we must still remember that there are certain ideas inherent in language itself, and that, strictly speaking, every pleasure connected with art has in it some reference to the intellect. The mere sensual pleasure of the eye, received from the most brilliant piece of colouring, is as nothing to that which it receives from a crystal prism, except as it depends on our perception of a certain meaning and intended arrangement of colour, which has been the subject of intellect. Nay, the term idea, according to Locke's definition of it, will extend even to the sensual impressions themselves as far as they are "things

§ 8. *Yet there are certain ideas belonging to language itself.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 insert:—

"A pencil scratch of Wilkie's on the back of a letter is a great and a better picture—and I use the term picture in its full sense—than the most laboured and luminous canvas that ever left the easel of Gerard Dow. A finished," etc.

For other references to Carlo Dolci, see below, sec. ii. ch. ii. § 9 *n.*, p. 126; *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ix. § 7.]

which the mind occupies itself about in thinking;”¹ that is, not as they are felt by the eye only, but as they are received by the mind through the eye. So that, if I say that the greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas, I have a definition which will include as subjects of comparison every pleasure which art is capable of conveying. If I were to say, on the contrary, that the best picture was that which most closely imitated nature, I should assume that art could only please by imitating nature; and I should cast out of the pale of criticism those parts of works of art which are not imitative, that is to say, intrinsic beauties of colour and form, and those works of art wholly, which, like the Arabesques of Raffaele in the Loggias,² are not imitative at all. Now, I want a definition of art wide enough to include all its varieties of aim. I do not say, therefore, that the art is greatest which gives most pleasure, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to teach, and not to please. I do not say that the art is greatest which teaches us most, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to please, and not to teach. I do not say that the art is greatest which imitates best, because perhaps there is some art whose end is to create and not to imitate. But I say that the art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies, and in occupying, exercises and exalts, the faculty by which it is received.

If this, then, be the definition of great art, that of a great artist naturally follows. He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.

¹ [*An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, book ii. ch. i.]

² [For another reference to the arabesques with which Raphael decorated the Loggia of the Vatican, see below, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 22, p. 198.]

CHAPTER III OF IDEAS OF POWER

THE definition of art which I have just given requires me to determine what kinds of ideas can be received from works of art, and which of these are the greatest, before proceeding to any practical application of the test.

§ 1. *What classes of ideas are conveyable by art.*

I think that all the sources of¹ pleasure, or of any other good, to be derived from works of art, may be referred to five distinct heads.²

- I. Ideas of Power.—The perception or conception of the mental or bodily powers by which the work has been produced.
- II. Ideas of Imitation.—The perception that the thing produced resembles something else.
- III. Ideas of Truth.—The perception of faithfulness in a statement of facts by the thing produced.
- IV. Ideas of Beauty.—The perception of beauty, either in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.
- V. Ideas of Relation.—The perception of intellectual relations in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.

I shall briefly distinguish the nature and effects of each of these classes of ideas.

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin here inserts the word “ideal,” and lower down he corrects to “I shall briefly *endeavour to* distinguish.” For a description of his proposed rearrangement of this part of the volume, see Appendix v., p. 683.]

² [In his Oxford “Readings in *Modern Painters*” Ruskin referred to this elaborate systematization as “affected and forced.” “Now,” he said, “I should say quite plainly—a picture must, first, be well painted; secondly, must be a true representation; thirdly, must be of a pretty thing; fourthly, must be of a pretty thing which there was some rational and interesting cause for painting.”]

I. Ideas of Power.¹—These are the simple perception of the mental or bodily powers exerted in the production of any work of art. According to the dignity and degree of the power perceived is the dignity of the idea; but the whole class of ideas is received by the intellect, and they excite the best of the moral feelings, veneration, and the desire of exertion. As a species, therefore, they are one of the noblest connected with art; but the differences in degree of dignity among themselves are infinite, being correspondent with every order of power,—from that of the fingers to that of the most exalted intellect. Thus, when we see an Indian's paddle carved from the handle to the blade, we have a conception of prolonged manual labour,² and are gratified in proportion to the supposed expenditure of time and exertion. These are, indeed, powers of a low order, yet the pleasure arising from the conception of them enters very largely into our admiration of all elaborate ornament, architectural decoration, etc. The delight with which we look on the fretted front of Rouen Cathedral³ depends in no small degree on the simple perception of time employed and labour expended in its production.^{*4} But it is a right, that is, an ennobling pleasure, even in this its lowest phase; and even the pleasure felt by those persons who praise a drawing for its

§ 2. *Ideas of power vary much in relative dignity.*

* *Vide Appendix 17 to Stones of Venice, vol. i.*⁵

¹ [In an early draft of this chapter, Ruskin commenced the discussion of Ideas of Power as follows:—

“These I have defined to be the conception of the powers mental or bodily necessary to the production of any work of art. The conception of a power is not less productive of pleasure than the contemplation of a perfection or beauty, and it is often more elevating. Alceste, in the *Misanthrope*, says impatiently of the sonnet of Orontes, ‘Voyons, monsieur, le temps ne fait rien à l’affaire.’ This is not true in works of art, though it is of poetry.”

In re-writing the present passage, Ruskin utilised his quotation from Molière elsewhere; see below, sec. ii. ch. ii. § 2, p. 122.]

² [Ruskin in his copy for revision has here inserted the words “with some subtlety of barbaric taste.”]

³ [Seen and sketched by Ruskin in his tour of 1835; see Vol. II. pp. 400, 430.]

⁴ [For further discussion of “ideas of power” in architecture, see *Seven Lamps*, ch. i. (“The Lamp of Sacrifice,” § 11).]

⁵ [This footnote was added in ed. 5 (1851).]

“finish” or its “work,” which is one precisely of the same kind, would be right, if it did not imply a want of perception of the higher powers which render work unnecessary. If to the evidence of labour be added that of strength or dexterity, the sensation of power is yet increased; if to strength and dexterity be added that of ingenuity and judgment, it is multiplied tenfold; and so on, through all the subjects of action of body or mind, we receive the more exalted pleasure from the more exalted power.

So far the nature and effects of ideas of power cannot but be admitted by all. But the circumstance which I wish especially to insist upon, with respect to them, is one which may not, perhaps, be so readily allowed, namely, that they are independent of the nature or worthiness of the object from which they are received; and that whatever has been the subject of a great power, whether there be intrinsic and apparent worthiness in itself or not, bears with it the evidence of having been so, and is capable of giving the ideas of power, and the consequent pleasures in their full degree. For observe, that a thing is not properly said to have been the result of a great power, on which only some part of that power has been expended. A nut may be cracked by a steam-engine, but it has not, in being so, been the subject of the power of the engine. And thus it is falsely said of great men, that they waste their lofty powers on unworthy objects: the object may be dangerous or useless, but, as far as the phrase has reference to difficulty of performance, it cannot be unworthy of the power which it brings into exertion, because nothing can become a subject of action to a greater power which can be accomplished by a less, any more than bodily strength can be exerted where there is nothing to resist it.

§ 3. But are received from whatever has been the subject of power. The meaning of the word “excellence.”

So then, men may let their great powers lie dormant, while they employ their mean and petty powers on mean and petty objects; but it is physically impossible to employ a great power, except on a great object. Consequently, wherever

power of any kind or degree has been exerted, the marks and evidence of it are stamped upon its results: it is impossible that it should be lost or wasted, or without record, even in the “estimation of a hair;” and therefore, whatever has been the subject of a great power bears about with it the image of that which created it,¹ and is what is commonly called “excellent.” And this is the true meaning of the word Excellent, as distinguished from the terms, “beautiful,” “useful,” “good,” etc.; and we shall always, in future, use the word excellent, as signifying that the thing to which it is applied required a great power for its production.*

The faculty of perceiving what powers are required for the production of a thing, is the faculty of perceiving excellence. It is this faculty in which men, even of the most cultivated taste, must always be wanting, unless they have added practice to reflection; because none can estimate the power manifested in victory, unless they have personally measured the strength to be overcome. Though, therefore, it is possible, by the cultivation of sensibility and judgment, to become capable of distinguishing what is beautiful, it is totally impossible, without practice and knowledge, to distinguish or feel what is excellent. The beauty or the truth of Titian’s flesh-tint may be appreciated by all; but it is only to the artist, whose multiplied hours of

§ 4. *What is necessary to the distinguishing of excellence.*

* ‘Of course the word “excellent” is primarily a mere synonyme with “surpassing,” and when applied to persons, has the general meaning given by Johnson—“the state of abounding in any good quality.” But when applied to things it has always reference to the power by which they are produced. We talk of excellent music or poetry, because it is difficult to compose or write such, but never of excellent flowers, because all flowers being the result of the same power, must be equally excellent. We distinguish them only as beautiful or useful, and therefore, as there is no other one word to signify that quality of a thing produced by which it pleases us merely as the result of power, and as the term “excellent” is more frequently used in this sense than in any other, I choose to limit it at once to this sense, and I wish it, when I use it in future, to be so understood.

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin here compresses this passage. He strikes out the footnote, and for the passage “and is what is commonly . . . its production,” substitutes “—marvellous in power, and excellent in working.”]

toil have not reached the slightest resemblance of one of its tones, that its *excellence* is manifest.

Wherever, then, difficulty has been overcome, there is excellence; and therefore, in order to prove a work excellent, we have only to prove the difficulty of its production; whether it be useful or beautiful is another question; its excellence depends on its difficulty alone.¹ Nor is it a false or diseased taste which looks for the overcoming of difficulties, and has pleasure in it, even without any view to resultant good. It has been made part of our moral nature that we should have a pleasure in encountering and conquering opposition, for the sake of the struggle and the victory, not for the sake of any after result: and not only our own victory, but the perception of that of another, is in all cases the source of pure and ennobling pleasure. And if we often hear it said, and truly said, that an artist has erred by seeking rather to show his skill in over-coming technical difficulties, than to reach a great end, be it observed that he is only blamed because he has sought to conquer an inferior difficulty rather than a great one; for it is much easier to overcome technical difficulties than to reach a great end. Whenever the visible victory over difficulties is found painful or in false taste, it is owing to the preference of an inferior to a great difficulty, or to the false estimate of what is difficult, and what is not. It is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated; far more difficult to sacrifice skill and cease exertion in the proper place, than to expend both indiscriminately. We shall find, in the course of our investigation, that beauty and difficulty go together; and that they are only mean and paltry difficulties which it is wrong or contemptible to wrestle with. Be it remembered then—Power is never wasted. Whatever power has been employed, produces excellence in proportion to its own dignity and exertion; and the faculty of perceiving

§ 5. *The pleasure attendant on conquering difficulties is right.*

¹ [Here again, in his copy for revision, Ruskin compresses, striking out the passage “Wherever, then, . . . difficulty alone.”]

this exertion, and appreciating this dignity, is the faculty of perceiving excellence.¹

¹ [This chapter seems to have given the author much trouble; the MS. shows that it was very largely revised. A passage in one draft contains an effective illustration:—

“It is often said such a man wasted his high powers on painting lemon-peels. No—he let his high powers rest and lie dormant, if he had any, while he used his little and mean powers to paint lemon-peels. If he did use his high powers upon them—if there were anything in the subject which could possibly give any field for the employment of a high power, excellence is produced, excellence capable of giving exactly the same gratification—in a lemon-peel or a Madonna, provided the same power be exercised on them.”

The illustration of the Madonna and the lemon-peel was afterwards introduced lower down; see p. 101 *n.*]

CHAPTER IV
OF IDEAS OF IMITATION

FUSELI, in his Lectures,¹ and many other persons of equally just and accurate habits of thought (among others, S. T. Coleridge), make a distinction between imitation and copying, representing the first as the legitimate function of art—the latter as its corruption; but as such a distinction is by no means warranted, or explained by the common meaning of the words themselves, it is not easy to comprehend exactly in what sense they are used by those writers. And though, reasoning from the context, I can understand what ideas those words stand for in their minds, I cannot allow the terms to be properly used as symbols of those ideas, which (especially in the case of the word Imitation) are exceedingly complex, and totally different from what most people would understand by the term. And by men of less accurate thought, the word is used still more vaguely or falsely. For instance, Burke² (Treatise on the Sublime, part i. sect. 16) says: “When the object represented in poetry or painting is such as we could have no desire of seeing in the reality, then we may be sure that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of *imitation*.” In which case the real pleasure may be in what we have been just speaking of, the dexterity of the artist’s hand; or it may be in a beautiful or singular arrangement of colours, or a thoughtful chiaroscuro, or in the pure beauty of certain forms which art forces on our notice, though we should not have observed them in the reality; and I conceive that none of

§ 1. *False use of the term “imitation” by many writers on art.*

¹ [See his *Works*, ii. 312, and in vol. iii. of the same, Aphorisms 101–102, 187.]

² [For another reference to Burke, see below, p. 128.]

these sources of pleasure are in any way expressed or intimated by the term "imitation."

But there is one source of pleasure in works of art totally different from all these, which I conceive to be properly and accurately expressed by the word "imitation;" one which, though constantly confused in reasoning, because it is always associated, in fact, with other means of pleasure, is totally separated from them in its nature, and is the real basis of whatever complicated or various meaning may be afterwards attached to the word in the minds of men.

I wish to point out this distinct source of pleasure clearly at once, and only to use the word "imitation" in reference to it.

Whenever anything looks like what it is not, the resemblance being so great as *nearly* to deceive, we feel a kind of pleasurable surprise, an agreeable excitement of mind, exactly the same in its nature as that which we receive from juggling. Whenever we perceive this in something produced by art, that is to say, whenever the work is seen to resemble something which we know it is not, we receive what I call an idea of imitation. *Why* such ideas are pleasing, it would be out of our present purpose to inquire; we only know that there is no man who does not feel pleasure in his animal nature from gentle surprise, and that such surprise can be excited in no more distinct manner than by the evidence that a thing is not what it appears to be.* Now two things are requisite to our complete and most pleasurable perception of this: first, that the resemblance be so perfect as to amount to a deception; secondly, that there be some means of proving at the same moment that it *is* a deception.

The most perfect ideas and pleasures of imitation are, therefore, when one sense is contradicted by another, both bearing as positive evidence on the subject as each is capable of alone; as when the

* Artist. Rhet. I. II. 23.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 omit the footnote reference to Aristotle; while ed. 3 adds to it the quotation, "sullogismoV estin, otitouto ekeino," omitted in eds. 4 *et seqq.*]

eye says a thing is round, and the finger says it is flat: they are, therefore, never felt in so high a degree as in painting, where appearance of projection, roughness, hair, velvet, etc., are given with a smooth surface, or in wax-work, where the first evidence of the senses is perpetually contradicted by their experience. But the moment we come to marble, our definition checks us, for a marble, figure does not look like what it is not: it looks like marble and like the form of a man, of then it *is* marble, and it *is* the form of a man. It does not look like a man, which it is not, but like the form of a man, which it is. Form is form, *bonâ fide* and actual, whether in marble or in flesh—not an imitation or resemblance of form, but real form. The chalk outline of the bough of a tree on paper, is not an imitation; it looks like chalk and paper—not like wood, and that which it suggests to the mind is not properly said to be *like* the form of a bough, it *is* the form of a bough. Now, then, we see the limits of an idea of imitation; it extends only to the sensation of trickery and deception occasioned by a thing's intentionally seeming different from what it is; and the degree of the pleasure depends on the degree of difference and the perfection of the resemblance, not on the nature of the thing resembled. The simple pleasure in the imitation would be precisely of the same degree (if the accuracy could be equal), whether the subject of it were the hero or his horse.¹ There are other collateral sources of pleasure which are necessarily associated with this, but that part of the pleasure which depends on the imitation is the same in both.

Ideas of imitation, then, act by producing the simple pleasure of surprise, and that not of surprise in its higher sense and function, but of the mean and paltry surprise which is felt in jugglery. These ideas and pleasures are the most contemptible which can be received from art. First, because it is necessary to their enjoyment that the mind should reject the impression and address of the thing represented,

§ 4. *The pleasure resulting from imitation the most contemptible that can be derived from art.*

¹ [For "subjects of it were the hero or his horse," eds. 1 and 2 read, "subject be a Madonna or a lemon-peel." See above, p. 98 n.]

and fix itself only upon the reflection that it is not what it seems to be. All high or noble emotion or thought is thus rendered physically impossible, while the mind exults in what is very like a strictly sensual pleasure.¹ We may consider tears as a result of agony or of art, whichever we please, but not of both at the same moment. If we are surprised by them as an attainment of the one, it is impossible we can be moved by them as a sign of the other.

Ideas of imitation are contemptible in the second place, because not only do they preclude the spectator from enjoying inherent beauty in the subject, but they can only be received from mean and paltry subjects, because it is impossible to imitate anything really great. We can “paint a cat or a fiddle, so that they look as if we could take them up;² but we cannot imitate the ocean, or the Alps. We can imitate fruit, but not a tree; flowers, but not a pasture; cut-glass, but not the rainbow. All pictures in which deceptive powers of imitation are displayed are therefore either of contemptible subjects, or have the imitation shown in contemptible parts of them, bits of dress, jewels, furniture, etc.³

Thirdly, these ideas are contemptible, because no ideas of power are associated with them. To the ignorant, imitation, indeed, seems difficult, and its success praiseworthy, but even they can by no possibility see more in the artist than they do in a juggler, who arrives at a strange end by means with which they are unacquainted. To the instructed, the juggler is by far the more respectable artist of the two, for they know sleight of hand to be an art of an immensely more difficult

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add, “and one precisely of the same order and degree, whether it be received from the bristles of a boar or the tears of a Magdalen.”]

² [Sir Joshua Reynolds, in *The Idler*, No. 79.]

³ [In one draft of this chapter, Ruskin added the remark:—

“One would fain hope that such [*i.e.* deceptive imitation] was not the criterion of art among the more enlightened of the ancients, and yet, as far as my own reading goes, I remember scarcely a passage of any author, not himself an artist, which does not point to mere deception as the sole end of art, and I cannot but fancy that even the gold and ivory and glass eyes of Phidias can have been good for little else.”]

acquisition, and to imply more ingenuity in the artist than a power of deceptive imitation in painting, which requires nothing more for its attainment than a true eye, a steady hand, and moderate industry—qualities which in no degree separate the imitative artist from a watchmaker, pin-maker, or any other neat-handed artificer. These remarks do not apply to the art of the diorama, or the stage, where the pleasure is not dependent on the imitation, but it is the same which we should receive from nature herself, only far inferior in degree. It is a noble pleasure; but we shall see in the course of our investigation, both that it is inferior to that which we receive when there is no deception at all, and why it is so.

Whenever then in future, I speak of ideas of imitation, I wish to be understood to mean the immediate and present perception that something produced by art is not what it seems to be. I prefer saying “that it is not what it seems to be,” to saying “that it seems to be what it is not,” because we perceive at once what it seems to be, and the idea of imitation, and the consequent pleasure, result from the subsequent perception of its being something else—flat, for instance, when we thought it was round.¹

¹[With this and the following chapter compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv. §§ 20 *seqq.*, where Ruskin places the case against direct imitation “on a loftier and firmer foundation”—namely, that just as great art “is the work of the whole living creature, body and soul,” so also “it addresses the whole creature,” and falls in the scale of nobility if it does not make appeal to “the beholding imagination.”]

CHAPTER V

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH

THE word Truth, as applied to art, signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, or any fact of nature.

§ 1. *Meaning of the word "truth" as applied to art.*

We receive an idea of truth, then, when we perceive the faithfulness of such a statement.

The difference between ideas of truth and of imitation lies chiefly in the following points:

First,—Imitation can only be of something material, but truth has reference to statements both of the qualities of material things, and of emotions, impressions, and thoughts. There is a moral as well as material truth,—a truth of impression as well as of form,—of thought as well as of matter; and the truth of impression and thought is a thousand times the more important of the two. Hence, truth is a term of universal application, but imitation is limited to that narrow field of art which takes cognizance only of material things.

§ 2. *First difference between truth and imitation.*

Secondly,—Truth may be stated by any signs or symbols which have a definite signification in the minds of those to whom they are addressed, although such signs be themselves no image nor likeness of anything. Whatever can excite in the mind the conception of certain facts, can give ideas of truth, though it be in no degree the imitation or resemblance of those facts. If there be—we do not say there is,—but if there be in painting anything which operates, as words do, not by resembling anything, but by being taken as a symbol and substitute for it, and thus inducing the effect of it, then this channel of communication can convey uncorrupted truth, though it do not in any degree resemble the

§ 3. *Second difference.*

facts whose conception it induces. But ideas of imitation, of course, require the likeness of the object. They speak to the perceptive faculties only: truth to the conceptive.¹

Thirdly, and in consequence of what is above stated, an idea of truth exists in the statement of *one* attribute of anything, but an idea of imitation requires the resemblance of as many attributes as we are usually cognizant of in its real presence. A pencil outline of the bough of a tree on white paper is a statement of a certain number of facts of form. It does not yet amount to the imitation of anything. The idea of that form is not given in nature by lines at all, still less by black lines with a white space between them. But those lines convey to the mind a distinct impression of a certain number of facts, which it recognizes as agreeable with its previous impressions of the bough of a tree; and it receives, therefore, an idea of truth. If, instead of two lines, we give a dark form with the brush, we convey information of a certain relation of shade between the bough and sky, recognizable for another idea of truth: but we have still no imitation, for the white paper is not the least like air, nor the black shadow like wood. It is not until after a certain number of ideas of truth have been collected together, that we arrive at an idea of imitation.

Hence it might at first sight appear, that an idea of imitation, inasmuch as several ideas of truth are united in it, is nobler than a simple idea of truth. And if it were necessary that the ideas of truth should be perfect, or should be subjects of contemplation *as such*, it would be so. But, observe, we require to produce the effect of imitation only so many and such ideas of truth as the *senses* are usually cognizant of. Now the senses are not usually, nor unless they be especially devoted to the service, cognizant, with accuracy, of any truths but those of space and projection. It requires long study and attention before they

§ 4. *Third difference.*
§ 5. *No accurate truths necessary to imitation.*

¹ [The last sentence reads in the MS.:—

“Imitation, therefore, appeals only to the senses; truth often only to the mind.”]

give certain evidence of even the simplest truths of form. For instance, the quay on which the figure is sitting, with his hand at his eyes, in Claude's "Seaport," No. 14 in the National Gallery, is egregiously out of perspective.¹ The eye of this artist, with all his study, had thus not acquired the power of taking cognizance of the apparent form even of a simple paralleliped: how much less of the complicated forms of boughs, leaves, or limbs? Although, therefore, something resembling the real form is necessary to deception, this something is not to be called a *truth* of form; for, strictly speaking, there are no degrees of truth, there are only degrees of approach to it; and an approach to it, whose feebleness and imperfection would instantly offend and given pain to a mind really capable of distinguishing truth, is yet quite sufficient for all the purposes of deceptive imitation. It is the same with regard to colour. If we were to paint a tree sky-blue, or a dog rose-pink, the discernment of the public would be keen enough to discover the falsehood; but, so that there be just so much approach to truth of colour as many come up to the common idea of it in men's minds, that is to say, if the trees be all bright green, and flesh unbroken buff, and ground unbroken brown, though all the real and refined truths of colour be wholly omitted, or rather defined and contradicted, there is yet quite enough for all purposes of imitation. The only facts, then, which we are usually and certainly cognizant of, are those of distance and projection; and if these be tolerably given, with something like truth of form and colour to assist them, the idea of imitation is complete. I would undertake² to paint an arm, with every muscle out of its place, and every bone of false form and dislocated articulation, and yet to observe certain coarse and broad resemblances of true outline, which, with careful shading, would induce deception, and draw down the praise and delight of the discerning public.

¹ "The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba;" for other references to the picture, see below, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 5, p. 169.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin substitutes "It would be easy," and strikes out the following personal anecdote down to the end of § 5.]

The other day at Bruges,¹ while I was endeavouring to set down in my note-book something of the ineffable expression of the Madonna in the Cathedral,² a French amateur came up to me, to inquire if I had seen the modern French pictures in a neighbouring church. I had not, but felt little inclined to leave my marble for all the canvas that ever suffered from French brushes. My apathy was attacked with gradually increasing energy of praise. Rubens never executed—Titian never coloured anything like them. I thought this highly probable, and still sat quiet. The voice continued at my ear. “Parbleu, Monsieur, Michel Angle n’a rein produit de plus beau!” “De plus *beau*?” repeated I, wishing to know what particular excellences of Michael Angelo were to be intimated by this expression. “Monsieur, on ne peut plus—c’est un tableau admirable—inconcevable; Monsieur,” said the Frenchman, lifting up his hands to heaven, as he concentrated in one conclusive and overwhelming proposition the qualities which were to outshine Rubens and overpower Buonaroti,—“Monsieur, IL SORT!”

This gentleman could only perceive two truths—flesh colour and projection.³ These constituted his notion of the perfection of painting; because they unite all that is necessary for deception. He was not therefore cognizant of many ideas of truth, though⁴ perfectly cognizant of ideas of imitation.

We shall see, in the course of our investigation of ideas of

¹ [Ruskin returned from Switzerland in 1842 by the Rhine and Belgium.]

² [The statue of the Virgin and Child by Michael Angelo, figured at vol. i. p. 76 of J. A. Symonds’ *Life of the master*. The MS. here inserts after “the Madonna in the Cathedral”: “(which, whether it be Michael Angelo’s or not, is one of the noblest pieces of marble in Europe).”]

³ [For this sentence eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“Had I wished to know if the anatomy of the limbs was faithfully marked—if their colour was truly expressive of light, and beautiful in itself—if the composition of the picture was perfect, or its conception great—I might as well have inquired of one of the Flanders mares in the stable at the Fleur de Blé, as of this gentleman. He could only . . . projection.”

The old Hotel Fleur de Blé is now destroyed, and the theatre stands on the site; it was once the great resort of English travellers to Bruges: see Longfellow’s poem, “The Belfry of Bruges: Carillon”—

“Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé.”]

⁴ [The MS. here inserts, “in common with birds, monkies, and most of mankind.”]

truth, that ideas of imitation not only do not imply their presence, but even are inconsistent with it; and that pictures which imitate so as to deceive, are never true. But this is not the place for the proof of this; at present we have only to insist on the last and greatest distinction between ideas of truth and of imitation—that the mind, in receiving one of the former, dwells upon its own conception of the fact, or form, or feeling stated, and is occupied only with the qualities and character of that fact or form, considering it as real and existing, being all the while totally regardless of the signs or symbols by which the notion of it has been conveyed. These signs have no pretence, nor hypocrisy, nor legerdemain about them;—there is nothing to be found out, or sifted, or surprised in them;—they bear their message simply and clearly, and it is that message which the mind takes from them and dwells upon, regardless of the language in which it is delivered. But the mind, in receiving an idea of imitation, is wholly occupied in finding out that what has been suggested to it is not what it appears to be: it does not dwell on the suggestion, but on the perception that it is a false suggestion: it derives its pleasure, not from the contemplation of a truth, but from the discovery of a falsehood. So that the moment ideas of truth are grouped together, so as to give rise to an idea of imitation, they change their very nature—lose their essence as ideas of truth—and are corrupted and degraded, so as to share in the treachery of what they have produced. Hence, finally, ideas of truth are the foundation, and ideas of imitation, the destruction, of all art. We shall be better able to appreciate their relative dignity after the investigation which we propose of the functions of the former; but we may as well now express the conclusion to which we shall then be led—that no picture can be good which deceives by its imitation, for the very reason that nothing can be beautiful which is not true.¹

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin italicizes the aphorism, “no picture . . . not true.” With this chapter may be compared ch. ii. in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, “The Lamp of Truth.”]

CHAPTER VI

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY

ANY material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way, or in some degree, beautiful. Why we receive pleasure from some forms and colours, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered than why we like sugar and dislike wormwood. The utmost subtlety of investigation will only lead us to ultimate instincts and principles of human nature, for which no farther reason can be given than the simple will of the Deity that we should be so created.¹ We may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with His nature, that we have been so constructed as, when in a healthy and cultivated state of mind, to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature; but we do not receive pleasure from the *because* they are illustrative of it, nor from any perception that they are illustrative of it, but instinctively and necessarily, as we derive sensual pleasure from the scent of a rose. On these primary principles of our nature, education and accident operate to an unlimited extent; they may be cultivated or checked, directed or diverted, gifted by right guidance with the most acute and faultless sense, or subjected by neglect to every phase of error and disease. He who has followed up² these natural laws of aversion and desire, rendering them more and more authoritative by constant obedience, so as to derive pleasure always from that which God originally intended should give him pleasure, and who derives the

§ 1. *Definition of the term "beautiful."*

¹ [With this passage cf. *Letters to a College Friend*, vii. § 4, Vol. I. p. 450.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin here also considerably curtails. He substitutes, "The judgment and enjoyment of art belong only to those who have followed up . . . constant obedience," and then deletes to the end of § 3.]

greatest possible sum of pleasure from any given object, is a man of taste.

This, then, is the real meaning of this disputed word. Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection.¹ He who receives little pleasure from these sources wants taste; he who receives pleasure from any other sources, has false or bad taste.

And it is thus that the term "taste" is to be distinguished from that of "judgment," with which it is constantly confounded. Judgment is a general term, expressing definite action of the intellect, and applicable to every kind of subject which can be submitted to it.

There may be judgment of congruity, judgment of truth, judgment of justice, and judgment of difficulty and excellence. But all these exertions of the intellect are totally distinct from taste, properly so called, which is the instinctive and instant preferring of one material object to another without any obvious reason, except that it is proper to human nature in its perfection so to do.

Observe, however, I do not mean by excluding direct exertion of the intellect from ideas of beauty, to assert that beauty has no effect upon, nor connection with the intellect. All our moral feelings are so interwoven with our intellectual powers, that we cannot affect the one without in some degree addressing the other; and in all high ideas of beauty, it is more than probable that much of the pleasure depends on delicate and untraceable perceptions of fitness, propriety, and relation, which are purely intellectual, and through which we arrive at our noblest ideas of what is commonly and rightly called "intellectual beauty." But there is yet no immediate *exertion* of the intellect; that is to say, if a person receiving even the noblest ideas of simple beauty be asked *why* he likes the object exciting

¹ [Cf. next volume, sec. i. ch. ii. § 8. The words "Perfect taste . . . perfection" are combined (by a connecting "but") with the words in § 1, above, "why we receive . . . wormwood," to form the first paragraph, "Principles of Art," in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

them, he will not be able to give any distinct reason, nor to trace in his mind any formed thought, to which he can appeal as a source of pleasure. He will say that the thing gratifies, fills, hallows, exalts his mind, but he will not be able to say why, or how. If he can, and if he can show that he perceives in the object any expression of distinct thought, he has received more than an idea of beauty—it is an idea of relation.

Ideas of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence,¹ because there is not one single object in nature which is not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts; there being in fact scarcely anything, in pure undiseased nature, like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition—spots of blackness in creation, to make its colours felt.

§ 5. *The high rank and function of ideas of beauty.*

But although everything in nature is more or less beautiful, every species of object has its own kind and degree of beauty; some being in their own nature more beautiful than others, and few, if any, individuals possessing the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable. This utmost degree of specific beauty, necessarily coexistent with the utmost perfection of the object in other respects, is the ideal of the object.²

§ 6. *Meaning of the term "ideal beauty."*

Ideas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral, but not of intellectual perception. By the investigation of them we shall be led to the knowledge of the ideal³ subjects of art.

¹ [Ruskin's copy for revision reads after this point, "because there are few objects in nature which are not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, do not present a greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts." The rest of the paragraph is deleted.]

² [With this passage *cf.* the letter in reply to criticisms, in Appendix ii. p. 643.]

³ [In the copy for revision the words "or pure" are here inserted.]

CHAPTER VII

OF IDEAS OF RELATION

I USE this term rather as one of convenience than as adequately expressive of the vast class of ideas which I wish to be comprehended under it, namely, all those conveyable by art, which are the subjects of distinct intellectual perception and action,¹ and which are therefore worthy of the name of thoughts. But as every thought, or definite exertion of intellect, implies two subjects, and some connection or relation inferred between them, the term “ideas of relation” is not incorrect, though it is inexpressive.

Under this head must be arranged everything productive of expression, sentiment, and character, whether in figures or landscapes, (for there may be as much definite expression and marked carrying out of particular thoughts in the treatment of inanimate as of animate nature,) everything relating to the conception of the subject and to the congruity and relation of its parts; not as they enhance² each other’s beauty by known and constant laws of composition, but as they give each other expression and meaning, by particular application, requiring distinct thought to discover or to enjoy; the choice, for instance, of a particular lurid or appalling light to illustrate an incident in itself terrible, or of a particular tone of pure colour to prepare the mind for the expression of refined and delicate feeling; and, in a still higher sense, the invention of such incidents and thoughts as can be expressed in words as well as on canvas,

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin ends the sentence here, and deletes the five following lines.]

² [The revised copy reads, “both as they enhance each other’s beauty by constant laws of composition, and as they give . . .”]

and are totally independent of any means of art but such as may serve for the bare suggestion of them. The principal object in the foreground of Turner's "Building of Carthage" is a group of children sailing toy boats. The exquisite choice¹ of this incident, as expressive of the ruling passion which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stonemasons or arming soldiers, is quite as appreciable when it is told as when it is seen,—it has nothing to do with the technicalities of painting; a scratch of the pen would have conveyed the idea and spoken to the intellect as much as the elaborate realizations of colour. Such a thought as this is something far above all art; it is epic poetry of the highest order. Claude, in subjects of the same kind, commonly introduces people carrying red trunks with iron locks about, and dwells, with infantine delight, on the lustre of the leather and the ornaments of the iron. The intellect can have no occupation here; we must look to the imitation or to nothing. Consequently, Turner arises above Claude in the very first instant of the conception of his picture, and acquires an intellectual superiority which no powers of the draughtsman or the artist (supposing that such existed in his antagonist) could ever wrest from him.

Such are the function and force of ideas of relation.² They

¹ [In his copy for revision (1867) Ruskin struck out the word "exquisite," and deleted the whole passage following, in which Turner is in this matter compared with Claude. Turner's "Building of Carthage" is No. 490 in the National Gallery; the reference to Claude's "red trunks" is to the "Seaport: Queen of Sheba," No. 14, beside which Turner's picture is placed in accordance with the condition in his will (see above, p. 41 *n.*). *Blackwood's* reviewer (and many critics after him) objected to the comparison as unfair: "The very iron locks and precious leather mean to tell you there is something still more precious within, worth all the cost of freightage; and you see, a little off, the great argosy that has brought the riches; and we humbly think that the ruling passion of a people whose 'princes were merchants and merchants princes,' as happily expressed by the said 'red trunks' as the rise of Carthage by the boys and boats" (Oct. 1843, p. 490). Ruskin's deletion of the passage above perhaps meant that he had come to feel that his point was over-strained; but for other criticisms on "The Queen of Sheba," see below, sec. ii, ch. vii. § 5, p. 169.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin strikes out also the whole of § 3, and all but the last sentence of § 4, adding the following connecting passage:—

"These being the five ideas conveyable by art, we will now endeavour to obtain a true conception of the modes in which the expression of them is blended in great works and sought by good artists."

It appears, from another annotation in the same copy, that he meant here or elsewhere

are what I have asserted in the second chapter of this section to

§ 3. *The exceeding nobility of these ideas.*

be the noblest subjects of art. Dependent upon it only for expression, they cause all the rest of its complicated sources of pleasure to take, in comparison with them, the place of mere language or decoration; nay, even the noblest ideas of beauty sink at once beside these into subordination

and subjection. It would add little to the influence of Landseer's picture above instanced, Chap. II. § 4, that the form of the dog should be conceived with every perfection of curve and colour which its nature was capable of, and that the ideal lines should be carried out with the science of a Praxiteles; nay, the instant that the beauty so obtained interfered with the impression of agony and desolation, and drew the mind away from the feeling of the animal to its outward form, that instant would the picture become monstrous and degraded. The utmost glory of the human body is a mean subject of contemplation, compared to the emotion, exertion, and character of that which animates it; the lustre of the limbs of the Aphrodite is faint beside that of the brow of the Madonna; and the divine form of the Greek god, except as it is the incarnation and expression of divine mind, is degraded beside the passion and the prophecy of the vaults of the Sistine.

Ideas of relation are of course, with respect to art generally, the most extensive as the most important source of pleasure; and if we proposed entering upon the criticism of historical works, it would be absurd to attempt to do so without farther subdivision and arrangement. But the old landscape painters got over so much canvas without either exercise of, or appeal to, the intellect, that we shall be little troubled with the subjects as far as they are concerned; and whatever subdivision we may adopt, as it will therefore have particular reference to the works of modern

to re-write § 3 in a "modified" form. The general point of view expressed in the last sentence of § 3 is, however, very characteristic of Ruskin's permanent preferences in art. See, e.g., the third of his "four essentials of the greatest art," namely, "the face principal, not the body" (*The Relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret*).]

artists, will be better understood when we have obtained some knowledge of them in less important points.

By the term "ideas of relation," then, I mean in future to express all those sources of pleasure, which involve and require, at the instant of their perception, active exertion of the intellectual powers.

SECTION II

OF POWER

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF POWER

We have seen in the last section what classes of ideas may be conveyed by art, and we have been able so far to appreciate their relative worth as to see, that from the list, as it is to be applied to the purposes of legitimate criticism, we may at once throw out the ideas of imitation: first, because, as we have shown, they are unworthy the pursuit of the artist; and, secondly, because they are nothing more than the result of a particular association of ideas of truth. In examining the truth of art, therefore, we shall be compelled to take notice of those particular truths whose association gives rise to the ideas of imitation. We shall then see more clearly the meanness of those truths, and we shall find ourselves able to use them as tests of vice in art, saying of a picture,—“It deceives, therefore it must be bad.”

§ 1. *No necessity for detailed study of ideas of imitation.* Ideas of power, in the same way, cannot be completely viewed as a separate class; not because they are mean or unimportant, but because they are almost always associated with, or dependent upon, some of the higher ideas of truth, beauty, or relation, rendered with decision or velocity. That power which delights us in the chalk sketch of a great painter is not like that of the writing-master, mere dexterity of hand. It is the accuracy and certainty of the knowledge, rendered evident by

§ 2. *Nor for separate study of ideas of power.*

its rapid and fearless expression, which is the real source of pleasure; and so upon each difficulty of art, whether it be to know, or to relate, or to invent, the sensation of power is attendant, when we see that difficulty totally and swiftly vanquished. Hence, as we determine what is otherwise desirable in art, we shall gradually develop the sources of the ideas of power; and if there be anything difficult which is not otherwise desirable, it must be afterwards considered separately.

But it will be necessary at present to notice a particular form of the ideas of power, which is partially independent of knowledge of truth, or difficulty, and which is apt to corrupt the judgment of the critic, and debase the work of the artist. It is evident that the conception of power which we receive from a calculation of unseen difficulty, and an estimate of unseen strength, can never be so impressive as that which we receive from the present sensation or sight of the one resisting, and the other overwhelming. In the one case the power is imagined, and in the other felt.¹

There are thus two modes in which we receive the conception of power; one, the more just, when by a perfect knowledge of the difficulty to be overcome, and the means employed, we form a right estimate of the faculties exerted; the other, when without possessing such intimate and accurate knowledge, we are impressed by a sensation of power in visible action. If these two modes of receiving the impression agree in the result, and if the sensation be equal to the estimate, we receive the utmost possible idea of power. But this is the case, perhaps,

§ 3. *Except under one particular form.*

§ 4. *There are two modes of receiving ideas of power, commonly inconsistent.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 continue:—

“Supposing ourselves even capable of ascertaining in our own persons the truth of what is often by sculptors affirmed of the Laocoon, that the knowledge developed in it must have taken a lifetime to accumulate, we should yet scarcely receive from that statue the same sensation of power with which we are at once impressed by him who hurled the mighty prostration of the limbs of the Jonah along the arch of the Sistine.”

This is the reference to M. Angelo mentioned in § 4, and made unintelligible in later editions by the omission of this sentence.]

with the works of only one man out of the whole circle of the fathers of art—of him to whom we have just referred—Michael Angelo. In others, the estimate and the sensation are constantly unequal, and often contradictory.

The first reason of this inconsistency is, that in order to receive a *sensation* of power, we must see it in operation. Its victory, therefore, must not be achieved, but achieving, and therefore imperfect.

§ 5. *First reason of the inconsistency.*

Thus we receive a greater sensation of power from the half-hewn limbs of the Twilight, or the Day, of the Cappella de' Medici, than even from the divine inebriety of the Bacchus in the gallery,—greater from the life dashed out along the friezes of the Parthenon, than from the polished limbs of the Apollo,—greater from the ink sketch of the head of Raffaello's St. Catherine, than from the perfection of its realization.¹

Another reason of the inconsistency is, that the sensation of power is in proportion to the apparent inadequacy of the means to the end; so that the impression is much greater from a partial success attained with slight effort, than from perfect success attained with greater proportional effort. Now, in all art, every touch or effort does individually less in proportion as the work approaches perfection. The first five chalk touches bring a head into existence out of nothing. No five touches in the whole course of the work will ever do so much as these, and the difference made by each touch is more and more imperceptible as the work

§ 6. *Second reason of the inconsistency.*

¹ [See *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii. § 29, where Ruskin describes his impressions at Florence in 1840: "Everybody about me swearing that Michael Angelo was the finest thing in the world, I was extremely proud of being pleased with him; confirmed greatly in my notion of my own infallibility, and with help of Rogers in the Lorenzo Chapel, and long sittings and standings about the Bacchus in the Uffizii, progressed greatly and vitally in Michael-Angelesque directions." The highly finished Bacchus of Michael Angelo is now in the Bargello: for another reference to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 28 *n*. It is interesting to compare Ruskin's appreciation of its "divine inebriety" with Shelley's criticism that "the countenance of this figure is the most revolting mistake of the spirit and meaning of Bacchus" (see *Essays and Letters from Abroad*, 1840, ii. 273, and *cf.* J. A. Symonds' *Life of Michelangelo*, i. 60). The "polished limbs of the Apollo" refers to the Apollo Belvedere in the Vatican; *cf.* pt. ii. sec. vi. ch. ii. § 2, ch. iii. § 23 *n.*, pp. 608, 627. The ink sketch of the head of Raphael's St. Catherine is in the University Galleries at Oxford (see J. C. Robinson's *Critical Account of the Drawings of Michel Angelo and Raffaello* in that collection, 1870, p. 176).]

approaches completion. Consequently, the ratio between the means employed and the effect produced is constantly decreasing, and therefore the least sensation of power is received from the most perfect work.

It is thus evident that there are sensations of power about imperfect art, so that it be right art as far as it goes, which must always be wanting in its perfection; and that there are sources of pleasure in the hasty sketch and the rough-hewn block, which are partially wanting in the tinted canvas and the polished marble. But it is nevertheless wrong to prefer the sensation of power to the intellectual perception of it. There is in reality greater power in the completion than in the commencement; and though it be not so manifest to the senses, it ought to have higher influence on the mind;¹ and therefore in praising pictures for the ideas of power they convey, we must not look to the keenest sensation, but to the highest estimate, accompanied with as much of the sensation as is compatible with it; and thus we shall consider those pictures as conveying the highest ideas of power which attain the most *perfect* end with the slightest possible means; not, observe, those in which, though much has been done with little, all has not been done, but from the picture, in which *all* has been done, and yet not a touch thrown away. The quantity of work in the sketch is necessarily less in proportion to the effect obtained than in the picture; but yet the picture involves the greater power, if,

§ 7. *The sensation of power ought not to be sought in imperfect art.*

¹ [At this point, Ruskin had in one draft some additional sentences which are interesting as showing some of his preferences:—

“higher influence on the mind. It is only from preferring the sensual, to the mental, perception of power, that so many prefer the handling of Rubens to that of Raphael. This, however, is not the sign of a vitiated, but only of an imperfect, taste. A person totally ignorant of art, or of taste entirely corrupted and false, looks only for “finish,” “softness,” etc., and has no idea whatever of the perception of power, or of the pleasure resulting from it. A person partially instructed in art—on the right road, but not very far advanced—perceives the manifestation of power, but sensually, not intellectually. He goes to Salvator, not to Poussin; to Rubens, not to M. Angelo; to Rembrandt, not to Correggio. Gradually, as his knowledge increases, he perceives the hidden power of higher art, prefers accuracy to velocity, truth to brilliancy, and knowledge to display; and owns in the end a higher and nobler power in Pietro Perugino, than in Rubens. It is evident, therefore, that in praising pictures . . .”]

out of all the additional labour bestowed on it, not a touch has been lost.¹

For instance, there are few drawings of the present day that involve greater sensations of power than those of Frederick Tayler.² Every dash tells, and the quantity of effect obtained is enormous, in proportion to the apparent means. But the effect obtained is not complete. Brilliant, beautiful, and right, as a sketch, the work is still far from perfection, as a drawing. On the contrary, there are few drawings of the present day that bear evidence of more labour bestowed, or more complicated means employed, than those of John Lewis.³ The result does not, at first, so much convey an impression of inherent power as of prolonged exertion; but the result is complete. Water-colour drawing can be carried no farther; nothing has been left unfinished or untold. And on examination of the means employed, it is found and felt that not one touch out of the thousands employed has been thrown away;—that not one dot or dash could be spared without loss of effect;—and that the exertion

¹ [In curtailing and rearranging his material for this and the succeeding chapter, Ruskin omitted the following characteristic passage which occurs in the draft:—

“But yet it is far easier to sketch than to finish—far less power is in reality indicated by the brilliant imperfection, than by the majestic completion of a work. I do not say that there may not be refinements in the sketch of a master which invariably set it above that of other men, but yet not so far as his completion is above their completion. People learn to sketch by finishing, they never learn to finish by sketching. We have numbers of water-colour amateurs, who can blot and dash, and produce masterly effects according to their own notion; but set them to complete anything, and they are children instantly. Hence the admirable advice so frequently and energetically given by Burke to Barry—‘Whatever you do—finish it.’”*

* I must not be supposed here to speak favourably of what drawing masters and young ladies consider “finished” drawings. Whenever I speak of finish, I mean—not number of touches, but quantity of truth. The sketchers and dashers are perfectly right in preferring the good sketch to the faulty completion; but they are wrong in not aiming through it at a good completion, and studying for it and by it.]

² [Tayler (1802–1889), water-colour painter of sporting and pastoral subjects, was President of the (Old) Water-Colour Society from 1858 to 1871. Ruskin was early an admirer of his work: see *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 5 (Vol. I. p. 7), and *cf.* below, pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. iv. § 21. For later criticisms, see *Academy Notes*, 1856, 1858.]

³ [John Frederick Lewis, R. A. (1804–1876), was always classed by Ruskin as one of the great painters of the time, and a leader in the Pre-Raphaelite movement. For another reference, see below, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 37. See also *Poetry of Architecture*, § 5; *Academy Notes*, 1855–59; *Pre-Raphaelitism*; *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880 ed., i. pp. 95, 109, 171; *A Joy for Ever*, § 102 n.; *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 176.]

has been as swift as it has been prolonged—as bold as it has been persevering. The power involved in such a picture is of the highest order, and the pleasure following on the estimate of it pure, and enduring.¹

But there is still farther ground for caution in pursuing the sensation of power, connected with the particular characters and modes of execution. This we shall be better able to understand by briefly reviewing the various excellences which may belong to execution, and give pleasure in it; though the full determination of what is desirable in it, and the critical examination of the execution of different artists, must be deferred, as will be immediately seen, until we are more fully acquainted with the principles of truth.

¹In eds. 1 and 2 this sentence ran thus:—

“The power involved in such a picture, and the ideas and pleasures following on the estimate of it, are unquestionably far higher than can legitimately be traced in, or received from the works of any other mere water-colour master now living.”

[In his copy for revision Ruskin deleted the whole of § 8, and the last four lines and a half of § 9.]

§ 9. *Con-
nection between
ideas of power
and modes of
execution.*

CHAPTER II

OF IDEAS OF POWER, AS THEY ARE DEPENDENT UPON EXECUTION

By the term Execution, I understand the right mechanical use of the means of art to produce a given end.

§ 1. *Meaning of the term "execution."*

§ 2. *The first quality of execution is truth.*

All qualities of execution, properly so called, are influenced by, and in a great degree dependent on, a far higher power than that of mere execution,—knowledge of truth. For exactly in proportion as an artist is certain of his end, will he be swift and simple in his means; and as he is accurate and deep in his knowledge, will he be refined and precise in his touch. The first merit of manipulation, then, is that delicate and ceaseless expression of refined truth which is carried out to the last touch, and shadow of a touch, and which makes every hair's-breadth of importance, and every gradation full of meaning. It is not, properly speaking, execution; but it is the only source of difference between the execution of a commonplace and that of a perfect artist. The lowest draughtsman, if he have spent the same time in handling the brush, may be equal to the highest in the other qualities of execution (in swiftness, simplicity, and decision); but not in truth. It is in the perfection and precision of the instaneous line that the claim to immortality is laid. If this truth of truths be present, all the other qualities of execution may well be spared; and to those artists who wish to excuse their ignorance and inaccuracy by a species of execution which is a perpetual proclamation, "qu'ils n'ont demeuré qu'un quart d'heure à le faire," we may reply with the truthful Alceste, "Monsieur, le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire."¹

¹ [See above, p. 94 n.]

The second quality of execution is simplicity. The more unpretending, quiet, and retiring the means, the more impressive their effect. Any ostentation, brilliancy, or pretension of touch,—any exhibition of power or quickness, merely as such,—above all, any attempt to render lines attractive at the expense of their meaning, is vice.

§ 3. *The second, simplicity.*

The third is mystery. Nature is always mysterious and secret in her use of means; and art is always likest her when it is most inexplicable. That execution which is least comprehensible, and which therefore defies imitation (other qualities being supposed alike), is the best.

§ 4. *The third, mystery.*

The fourth is inadequacy. The less sufficient the means appear to the end, the greater (as has been already noticed) will be the sensation of power.

§ 5. *The fourth, inadequacy; and the fifth, decision.*

The fifth is decision: the appearance, that is, that whatever is done, has been done fearlessly and at once; because this gives us the impression that both the fact to be represented, and the means necessary to its representation, were perfectly known.

The sixth is velocity. Not only is velocity, or the appearance of it, agreeable as decision is, because it gives ideas of power and knowledge; but of two touches, as nearly as possible the same in other respects, the quickest will invariably be the best. Truth being supposed equally present in the shape and direction of both, there will be more evenness, grace, and variety, in the quick one, than in the slow one. It will be more agreeable to the eye as a touch or line, and will possess more of the qualities of the lines of nature—gradation, uncertainty, and unity.

§ 6. *The sixth, velocity.*

These six qualities are the only perfectly legitimate sources of pleasure in execution, but I might have added a seventh—strangeness, which in many cases is productive of a pleasure not altogether mean or degrading, though scarcely right. Supposing the other higher qualities first secured, it adds in no small degree to our impression of the artist's knowledge, if the

§ 7. *Strangeness an illegitimate source of pleasure in execution.*

means used be such as we should never have thought of, or should have thought adapted to a contrary effect. Let us, for instance, compare the execution of the bull's head in the left hand lowest corner of the Adoration of the Magi,¹ in the Museum at Antwerp, with that in Berghem's landscape, No. 132, in the Dulwich Gallery.² Rubens first scratches horizontally over his canvas a thin greyish brown, transparent and even, very much the colour of light wainscot; the horizontal strokes of the bristles being left so evident that the whole might be taken for an imitation of wood, were it not for its transparency. On this ground the eye, nostril, and outline of the cheek are given with two or three rude brown touches (about three or four minutes' work in all), though the head is colossal. The background is then laid in with thick solid, warm white, actually projecting all round the head, leaving it in dark intaglio. Finally, five thin and scratchy strokes of very cold bluish white are struck for the high light on the forehead and nose, and the head is complete. Seen within a yard of the canvas, it looks actually transparent—a flimsy, meaningless, distant shadow; while the background looks solid, projecting, and near. From the right distance (ten or twelve yards off, whence alone the whole of the picture can be seen), it is a complete, rich, substantial, and living realization of the projecting head of the animal; while the background falls far behind. Now there is no slight nor mean pleasure in perceiving such a result attained by means so strange. By Berghem, on the other hand, a dark background is first laid in with exquisite delicacy and transparency, and on this the cow's head is actually modelled in luminous white, the separate locks of hair projecting from the canvas. No surprise, nor much pleasure of any kind, would be attendant on this execution, even were the result equally successful; and what little pleasure we have in it vanishes, when on retiring from the picture, we find the head shining like a distant lantern, instead of seeming substantial or near. Yet

¹ [By Rubens: a large composition of nearly twenty figures.]

² [See below, pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. (additional matter at end of chapter, § 13).]

strangeness is not to be considered as a legitimate source of pleasure. That means which is most conducive to the end, should always be the most pleasurable; and that which is most conducive to the end, can be strange only to the ignorance of the spectator. This kind of pleasure is illegitimate, therefore, because it implies and requires, in those who feel it, ignorance of art.

The legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are therefore truth, simplicity, mystery, inadequacy, decision, and velocity. But of these, be it observed, some are so far inconsistent with others, that they cannot be united in high degrees. Mystery with inadequacy, for instance; since to see that the means are inadequate, we must see what they are. Now the first three are the great qualities of execution, and the last three are the attractive ones, because on them are chiefly attendant the ideas of power. By the first three the attention is withdrawn from the means and fixed on the result: by the last three, withdrawn from the result, and fixed on the means. To see that execution is swift or that it is decided, we must look away from its creation to observe it in the act of creating; we must think more of the pallet than of the picture, but simplicity and mystery compel the mind to leave the means and fix itself on the conception. Hence the danger of too great fondness for those sensations of power which are associated with the last three qualities of execution; for, although it is most desirable that these should be present as far as they are consistent with the others, and though their visible absence is always painful and wrong, yet the moment the higher qualities are sacrificed to them in the least degree, we have a brilliant vice. Berghem and Salvator Rosa are good instances of vicious execution dependent on too great fondness for sensations of power, vicious because intrusive and attractive in itself, instead of being subordinate to its results and forgotten in them. There is perhaps no greater stumbling-block in the artist's way, than the tendency to sacrifice truth and simplicity to

§ 8. Yet even the legitimate sources of pleasure in execution are inconsistent with each other.

§ 9. And fondness for ideas of power leads to the adoption of the lowest.

decision and velocity,* captivating qualities, easy of attainment, and sure to attract attention and praise, while the delicate degree of truth which is at first sacrificed to them is so totally unappreciable by the majority of spectators, so difficult of attainment to the artist, that it is no wonder that effects so arduous and unrewarded should be abandoned. But if the temptation be once yielded to, its consequences are fatal; there is no pause in the fall. I could name a celebrated modern artist—once a man of the highest power and promise, who is a glaring instance of the peril of such a course. Misled by the undue popularity of his swift execution, he has sacrificed to it, first precision, and then truth, and her associate, beauty. What was first neglect of nature, has become contradiction of her; what was once imperfection, is now falsehood; and all¹ that was meritorious in his manner has

* I have here noticed only noble vices, the sacrifices of one excellence to another legitimate, but inferior one. There are, on the other hand, qualities of execution which are often sought for, and praised, though scarcely by the class of persons for whom I am writing, in which everything is sacrificed to illegitimate and contemptible sources of pleasure, and these are vice throughout, and have no redeeming quality nor excusing aim. Such is that which is often thought so desirable in the drawing-master, under the title of boldness, meaning that no touch is ever to be made less than the tenth of an inch broad; such, on the other hand, the softness² and smoothness which are the great attraction of Carlo Dolci, and such the exhibition of particular powers and tricks of the hand and fingers, in total forgetfulness of any end whatsoever to be attained thereby, which is especially characteristic of modern engraving. Compare Part II. Sect. II. Chap. II. § 20 (note).

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin strikes out the reference to an unnamed artist—"I could name . . . beauty," and reads more briefly, "there is no pause in the fall, until all that was meritorious in the original manner," etc.]

² [In eds. 1 and 2 this passage is as follows:—

"broad; such is every effort on the part of the engraver to give roughness or direction of surface by wriggling or peculiarly directed lines, and such the softness and smoothness which are the great attraction of Carlo Dolci. These are the exhibition of particular powers and tricks of the hand and fingers, in total forgetfulness of any end whatsoever to be attained thereby, and would scarcely deserve the pains of criticism were it not for the unaccountable delusion that makes even men of taste and feeling suppose that to be right in an engraving, which they would cry out against as detestable and intolerable in a drawing. How long are our engravers to be allowed to go on murdering the foreground of our great artists, twisting and wriggling and hatching and scratching over the smooth stones and glossy leaves, until St. Lawrence's gridiron is a jest to the martyrdom of the eye, 'making out' everything that the artist intentionally concealed, and smothering everything that he made refined or conspicuous? When shall we have an engraver who will touch his steel as if he had fingers and feelings?"]

become the worst, because the most attractive of vices,—decision without a foundation, and swiftness without an end.

Such are the principal modes in which the ideas of power may become a dangerous attraction to the artist—a false test to the critic. But in all cases where they lead us astray, it will be found that the error is caused by our preferring victory over a small *apparent* difficulty to victory over a great, but concealed one; and so that we keep this distinction constantly in view, (whether with reference to execution or to any other quality of art), between the sensation and the intellectual estimate of power, we shall always find the ideas of power¹ a just and high source of pleasure in every kind and grade of art.²

¹[In his copy for revision Ruskin here inserted the words “connected with execution.”]

²[This is another of the chapters which seem to have given Ruskin much trouble. The MS. shows that the whole of it was rewritten, largely, it would seem, in order to gain greater compression. A passage in one draft is of interest, as giving an additional point of view:—

“Each excellence which is theoretically desirable depends on the nature of the subject. In subjects full of motion and tumult, impetuosity and confusion of execution assist the great impression to be conveyed; in subjects full of repose, simplicity is the great object. A feebleness of touch may be admitted in a Madonna, which would be painful in a Hercules; and a rigidity of execution excusable in a falling figure, which would be intolerable in a recumbent one. A great artist will vary the particular excellencies of his execution; making one more prominent than another according to the nature of his subject. And that execution may be always considered the best which is most illustrative of the subject—tenderness in a Magdalen, energy in an Achilles, simplicity in a Jupiter, Truth in all.”]

CHAPTER III OF THE SUBLIME

IT may perhaps be wondered that, in the division we have made of our subject, we have taken no notice of the sublime in art, and that, in our explanation of that division, we have not once used the word.

§ 1. *Sublimity is the effect upon the mind of anything above it.*

The fact is, that sublimity is not a specific term,—not a term descriptive of the effect of a particular class of ideas. Anything which elevates the mind is sublime, and elevation of mind is produced by the contemplation of greatness of any kind; but chiefly, of course, by the greatness of the noblest things. Sublimity is, therefore, only another word for the effect of greatness upon the feelings;—greatness, whether of matter, space, power, virtue, or beauty: and there is perhaps no desirable quality of a work of art, which, in its perfection, is not, in some way or degree, sublime.

I am fully prepared to allow of much ingenuity in Burke's theory of the sublime,¹ as connected with self-preservation. There are few things so great as death; and there is perhaps nothing which banishes all littleness of thought and feeling in an equal degree with its contemplation. Everything, therefore, which in any way points to it, and, therefore, most dangers and powers over which we have little control, are in some degree sublime.

§ 2. *Burke's theory of the nature of the sublime incorrect, and why.*

But

¹ [*The Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* was one of the earliest works of Edmund Burke, being published in his twenty-seventh year (1756). His theory that sense of beauty is associated with relaxation, and terror with contraction, of the fibres of the body may not be acceptable; but in approaching the criticism of art from the psychological side, Burke's work made a great advance. It profoundly interested and stimulated Lessing, who set about a translation of it. Ruskin, as will be seen, read the essay with great care and attention, and with a large measure of agreement. If Mr. Morley's statement (*Burke* in the "English Men of Letters" Series, p. 18) that "The great rhetorical art critic of our own day refers to it in words of disparagement" is meant to refer to Ruskin, it is incorrect; see especially, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ch. ii. § 14 n.]

it is not the fear, observe, but the contemplation of death; not the instinctive shudder and struggle of self-preservation, but the deliberate measurement of the doom, which is really great or sublime in feeling. It is not while we shrink, but while we defy, that we receive or convey the highest conceptions of the fate. There is no sublimity in the agony of terror.¹ Whether do we trace it most in the cry to the mountains, "Fall on us," and to the hills, "Cover us," or in the calmness of the prophecy—"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God"?² A little reflection will easily convince any one, that so far from the feelings of self-preservation being necessary to the sublime, their greatest action is totally destructive of it; and that there are few feelings less capable of its perception than those of a coward. But the simple conception or idea of greatness of suffering or extent of destruction is sublime, whether there be any connection of that idea with ourselves or not. If we were placed beyond the reach of all peril or pain, the perception of these agencies in their influence on others would not be less sublime; not because peril and pain are sublime in their own nature, but because their contemplation, exciting compassion or fortitude, elevates the mind, and renders meanness of thought impossible.

Beauty is not so often felt to be sublime; because, in many kinds of purely material beauty there is some truth in Burke's assertion that "littleness" is one of its elements.³ But he who has not felt that there may be beauty without littleness, and that such beauty is a source of the sublime, is yet ignorant of the meaning of the ideal in art. I do not mean, in tracing the source of the sublime to greatness, to hamper

§ 3. *Danger is sublime, but not the fear of it.*

§ 4. *The highest beauty is sublime.*

§ 5. *And generally whatever elevates the mind.*

¹ [The MS. here reads:—

"We do not feel it from the cry to the mountains 'Fall on us,' but from the fearlessness of him who can—'the darkling Universe defy—to quench his Immortality.'"]

The quotation is from the poem entitled "The Last Man," by Campbell. "Darkling" should be "darkening."]]

² [Hosea, x. 8; Luke, xxiii. 30; Job, xix. 26.]

³ [See *Of the Sublime and Beautiful*, pt. iii. sec. xiii.]

myself with any fine-spun theory. I take the widest possible ground of investigation, that sublimity is found wherever anything elevates the mind; that is, wherever it contemplates anything above itself, and perceives it to be so. This is the simple philological signification of the word derived from *sublimis*; and will serve us much more easily, and be a far clearer and more evident ground of argument than any mere metaphysical or more limited definition; while the proof of its justness will be naturally developed by its application to the different branches of art.

As, therefore, the sublime is not distinct from what is beautiful, nor from other sources of pleasure in art, but is only a particular mode and manifestation of them, my subject will divide itself into the investigations of ideas of truth, beauty, and relation; and to each of these classes of ideas I destine a separate part of the work.

§ 6. *The former division of the subject is therefore sufficient.*

The investigation of ideas of truth will enable us to determine the relative rank of artists as followers and historians of nature:

That of ideas of beauty will lead us to compare them in their attainment, first of what is agreeable in technical matters; then in colour and composition; finally and chiefly, in the purity of their conceptions of the ideal:

And that of ideas of relation will lead us to compare them as originators of just thought.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read: "originators of new and just thought; as it is new, leading us to observe the powers of fancy and imagination; as it is just, the force of moral truth."]

PART II
OF TRUTH

SECTION I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES RESPECTING IDEAS OF TRUTH

CHAPTER 1

OF IDEAS OF TRUTH IN THEIR CONNECTION WITH THOSE OF BEAUTY AND RELATION

IT cannot but be evident from the above division of the ideas conveyable by art, that the landscape painter must always have two great and distinct ends: the first, to induce in the spectator's mind the faithful conception of any natural objects whatsoever; the second, to guide the spectator's mind to those objects most worthy of its contemplation, and to inform him of the thoughts and feelings with which these were regarded by the artist himself.

§ 1. The two great ends of landscape painting are the representation of facts and thoughts.

In attaining the first end the painter only places the spectator where he stands himself; he sets him before the landscape and leaves him. The spectator is alone. He may follow out his own thoughts as he would in the natural solitude; or he may remain untouched, unreflecting and regardless, as his disposition may incline him; but he has nothing of thought given to him; no new ideas, no unknown feelings, forced on his attention or his heart. The artist is his conveyance, not his companion,—his horse, not his friend.¹ But in attaining

¹ [The first draft of this passage (see below, p. 681) here adds:—

“A railroad, or a stage-coach, would have done as much, and more, in a little longer time; they would have set him down before the true landscape, and left him to his own thoughts.”

Cf. *Academy Notes*, 1875, where Ruskin, referring back to this passage, adds: “The worst of such friendliness, however, is that a conceited painter may at last leave Nature out of the question altogether, and talk of himself only; and then there is nothing for it but to go back to the Government Surveyor.”]

the second end, the artist not only *places* the spectator, but *talks* to him; makes him a sharer in his own strong feelings and quick thoughts; hurries him away in his own enthusiasm; guides him to all that is beautiful; snatches him from all that is base; and leaves him more than delighted,—ennobled and instructed, under the sense of having not only beheld a new scene, but of having held communion with a new mind, and having been endowed for a time with the keen perception and the impetuous emotions of a nobler and more penetrating intelligence.

Each of these different aims of art will necessitate a different system of choice of objects to be represented. The first does not indeed imply choice at all, but it is usually united with the selection of such objects as may be naturally and constantly pleasing to all men, at all times; and this selection, when perfect and careful, leads to the attainment of the pure ideal. But the artist aiming at the second end, selects his objects for their meaning and character, rather than for their beauty; and uses them rather to throw light upon the particular thought he wishes to convey, than as in themselves objects of unconnected admiration.

§ 2. *They induce a different choice of material subjects.*

Now, although the first mode of selection, when guided by deep reflection, may rise to the production of works possessing a noble and ceaseless influence on the human mind, it is likely to degenerate into, or rather, in nine cases out of ten, it never goes beyond, a mere appeal to such parts of our animal nature as are constant and common,—shared by all, and perpetual in all; such, for instance, as the pleasure of the eye in the opposition of a cold and warm colour, or of a massy form with a delicate one. It also tends to induce constant repetition of the same ideas, and reference to the same principles; it gives rise to those *rules* of art which properly excited Reynolds's indignation when applied to its higher efforts; it is the source of, and the apology for, that host of technicalities and absurdities which

§ 3. *The first mode of selection apt to produce sameness and repetition.*

in all ages have been the curse of art and the crown of the connoisseur.¹

But art, in its second and highest aim, is not an appeal to constant animal feelings, but an expression and awakening of individual thought: it is therefore as various and as extended in its efforts as the compass and grasp of the directing mind; and we feel, in each of its results, that we are looking, not at a specimen of a tradesman's wares, of which he is ready to make us a dozen to match, but at one coruscation of a perpetually active mind, like which there has not been, and will not be another.

§ 4. *The second necessitating variety.*

Hence, although there can be no doubt which of these branches of art is the higher, it is equally evident that the first will be the more generally felt and appreciated. For the simple treatment of the truths of nature must in itself be pleasing to every order of mind; because every truth of nature is more or less beautiful: and if there be just and right selection of the more important of these truths—based, as above explained, on feelings and desires common to all mankind,—the facts so selected must, in some degree, be delightful to all, and their value appreciable by all; more or less, indeed, as their senses and instinct have been rendered more or less acute and accurate by use and study; but in some degree by all, and in the same way by all. But the highest art, being based on sensations of peculiar minds, sensations occurring to *them* only at particular times, and to a plurality of mankind perhaps never, and being expressive of thoughts which could

§ 5. *Yet the first is delightful to all.*

§ 6. *The Second only to a few.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 continue:—

“and of those ‘standard’ pictures with which half the walls of Europe are covered, and for the manufacture of which recipes are to be found in most works on art. ‘Take one-eighth light, three-eighths middle tint, four-eighths shadow; mix carefully, flavour with cochineal, cool with ultramarine, and serve up with sentiment.’ Nay, even where a high ideal has been sought for, the search seldom produces more than one good picture, on which a few clever but monotonous changes are rung by the artist himself, and innumerable discords by his imitators, ending in the multiplication *ad nauseam* of the legitimate landscape ragout, composed of a large tree, a bridge, a city, a river, and a fisherman.”]

only rise out of a mass of the most extended knowledge, and of dispositions modified in a thousand ways by peculiarity of intellect, can only be met and understood by persons having some sort of sympathy with the high and solitary minds which produced it—sympathy only to be felt by minds in some degree high and solitary themselves.¹ He alone can appreciate the art, who could comprehend the conversation of the painter, and share in his emotion, in moments of his most fiery passion and most original thought. And whereas the true meaning and end of his art must thus be sealed to thousands, or misunderstood by them; so also, as he is sometimes obliged, in working out his own peculiar end, to set at defiance those constant laws which have arisen out of our lower and changeless desires, that, whose purpose is unseen, is frequently in its means and parts displeasing.

But this want of extended influence in high art, be it especially observed, proceeds from no want of truth in the art itself, but from a want of sympathy in the spectator with those feelings in the artist which prompt him to the utterance of one truth rather than of another. For (and this is what I wish at present especially to insist upon) although it is possible to reach what I have stated to be the first end of art, the representation of facts, without reaching the second, the representation of thoughts, yet it is altogether impossible to reach the second without having previously reached the first. I do not say that a man cannot think, having false basis and material for thought; but that a false thought is worse than the want of thought, and therefore is not art. And this is the reason why, though I consider the second as the real and only important end of all art, I call the representation of facts the first end; because it is necessary to the other and must be attained before it. It is the foundation of all art; like real foundations, it may be little

§ 7. *The first necessary to the second.*

¹ [Cf. above, p. 80; and so Matthew Arnold (*In Utrumque Paratus*):—

“The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams;
Alone the sun rises, and alone
Spring the great streams.”]

thought of when a brilliant fabric is raised on it; but it must be there. And as few buildings are beautiful unless every line and column of their mass have reference to their foundation, and be suggestive of its existence and strength, so nothing can be beautiful in art which does not in all its parts suggest and guide to the foundation, even where no undecorated portion of it is visible; while the noblest edifices of art are built of such pure and fine crystal that the foundation may all be seen through them: and then many, while they do not see what is built upon that first story, yet much admire the solidity of its brickwork, thinking they understand all that is to be understood of the matter; while others stand beside them, looking not at the low story, but up into the heaven at that building of crystal in which the builder's spirit is dwelling. And thus, though we want the thoughts and feelings of the artist as well as the truth, yet they must be thoughts arising out of the knowledge of truth, and feelings arising out of the contemplation of truth. We do not want his mind to be like a badly blown glass, that distorts what we see through it, but like a glass of sweet and strange colour, that gives new tones to what we see through it; and a glass of rare strength and clearness too, to let us see more than we could ourselves, and bring nature up to us and near to us.*

Nothing can atone for the want of truth, not the most brilliant imagination, the most playful fancy, the most pure feeling (supposing that feeling *could* be pure and false at the same time); not the most exalted conception, nor the most comprehensive grasp of intellect, can make amends for the want of truth, and that for two reasons: first, because falsehood is in itself revolting and degrading; and secondly, because nature is so immeasurably superior to all that the human mind can conceive, that every departure from her is a fall beneath her, so that there can be no such thing as an ornamental falsehood. All falsehood must be a blot as well as a sin, an injury as well as a deception.

§ 8. *The exceeding importance of truth.*

* Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. chap. xxx. § 5.¹

¹ [This note was added in ed. 5.]

We shall, in consequence, find that no artist can be graceful, imaginative, or original, unless he be truthful; and that the pursuit of beauty, instead of leading us away from truth, increases the desire for it and the necessity of it tenfold; so that those artists who are really great in imaginative power, will be found to have based their boldness of conception on a mass of knowledge far exceeding that possessed by those who pride themselves on its accumulation without regarding its use. Coldness and want of passion in a picture are not signs of the accuracy, but of the paucity of its statements: true vigour and brilliancy are not signs of audacity, but of knowledge.

§ 9. *Coldness
or want of
beauty no sign
of truth.*

Hence it follows that it is in the power of all, with care and time, to form something like a just judgment of the relative merits of artists; for although with respect to the feeling and passion of pictures, it is often as impossible to criticize as to appreciate, except to such as are in some degree equal in powers of mind, and in some respects the same in modes of mind, with those whose works they judge; yet, with respect to the representation of facts, it is possible for all, by attention, to form a right judgment of the respective powers and attainments of every artist. Truth is a bar of comparison at which they may all be examined, and according to the rank they take in this examination will almost invariably be that which, if capable of appreciating them in every respect, we should be just in assigning them; so strict is the connection, so constant the relation, between the sum of knowledge and the extent of thought, between accuracy of perception and vividness of idea.

§ 10. *How
truth may be
considered a
just criterion
of all art.*

I shall endeavour, therefore, in the present portion of the work, to enter with care and impartiality into the investigation of the claims of the schools of ancient and modern landscape to faithfulness in representing nature. I shall pay no regard whatsoever to what may be thought beautiful, or sublime, or imaginative. I shall look only for truth; bare, clear, downright statement of facts; showing in each particular, as far as I am able, what the truth of nature is, and then seeking for

the plain expression of it, and for that alone. And I shall thus endeavour, totally regardless of fervour of imagination or brilliancy of effect, or any other of their more captivating qualities, to examine and to judge the works of the great living painter, who is, I believe, imagined by the majority of the public, to paint more falsehood and less fact than any other known master. We shall see with what reason.

CHAPTER II

THAT THE TRUTH OF NATURE IS NOT TO BE DISCERNED BY THE UNEDUCATED SENSES

IT may be here inquired by the reader, with much appearance of reason, why I think it necessary to devote a separate portion of the work to the showing of what is truthful in art. “Cannot we,” say the public, “see what nature is with our own eyes, and find out for ourselves what is like her?” It will be as well to determine this question before we go farther, because if this were possible, there would be little need of criticism or teaching with respect to art.

§ 1. *The common self-deception of men with respect to their power of discerning truth.*

Now I have just said that it is possible for all men, by care and attention, to form a just judgment of the fidelity of artists to nature. To do this no peculiar powers of mind are required, no sympathy with particular feelings, nothing which every man of ordinary intellect does not in some degree possess,—powers, namely, of observation and intelligence, which by cultivation may be brought to a high degree of perfection and acuteness. But until this cultivation has been bestowed, and until the instrument thereby perfected has been employed in a consistent series of careful observations, it is as absurd as it is audacious to pretend to form any judgment whatsoever respecting the truth of art: and my first business, before going a step farther, must be to combat the nearly universal error of belief among the thoughtless and unreflecting, that they know either what nature is, or what is like her; that they can discover truth by instinct, and that their minds are such pure Venice glass as to be shocked by all treachery. I have to prove to them that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy, and that

the truth of nature is a part of the truth of God; to him who does not search it out, darkness, as it is to him who does, infinity.

The first great mistake that people make in the matter, is the supposition that they must *see* a thing if it be before their eyes. They forget the great truth told them by Locke, book ii. chap. 9, § 3.¹—“This is certain, that whatever alterations are made in the body, if they reach not the mind; whatever impressions are made on the outward parts, if they are not taken notice of within; there is no perception. Fire may burn our bodies, with no other effect than it does a billet, unless the motion be continued to the brain, and there the sense of heat or idea of pain be produced in the mind, wherein consists actual perception. How often may a man observe in himself, that whilst his mind is intently employed in the contemplation of some objects,² and curiously surveying some ideas that are there, it takes no notice of impressions of sounding bodies made upon the organ of hearing, with the same attention that uses to be for the producing the idea of sound? A sufficient impulse there may be on the organ, but if not reaching the observation of the mind, there follows no perception: and though the motion that uses to produce the idea of sound be made in the ear, yet no sound is heard.” And what is here said, which all must feel by their own experience to be true, is more remarkably and necessarily the case with sight than with any other of the senses, for this reason, that the ear is not accustomed to exercise constantly its functions of hearing; it is accustomed to stillness, and the occurrence of a sound of any kind whatsoever is apt to awake attention, and be followed with perception, in proportion to the degree of sound; but the eye during our waking hours, exercises constantly its function of seeing; it is its constant habit; we always, as far as the *bodily* organ is concerned, see something, and we always see in the same degree; so that the occurrence of sight, as such, to

§ 2. Men usually see little of what is before their eyes.

¹ [And also § 4 of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*.]

² [So in Locke and in the ed. of 1888; “subjects” in earlier editions.]

the eye, is only the continuance of its necessary state of action, and awakes no attention whatsoever, except by the particular nature and quality of the sight. And thus, unless the minds of men are particularly directed to the impressions of sight, objects pass perpetually before the eyes without conveying any impression to the brain at all; and so pass actually unseen, not merely unnoticed, but in the full clear sense of the word unseen. And numbers of men being preoccupied with business or care of some description, totally unconnected with the impressions of sight, such is actually the case with them; they receiving from nature only the inevitable sensations of blueness, redness, darkness, light, etc., and except at particular and rare moments, no more whatsoever.

The degree of ignorance of external nature in which men may thus remain depends, therefore, partly on the number and character of the subjects with which their minds may be otherwise occupied, and partly on a natural want of sensibility to the power of beauty of form, and the other attributes of external

§ 3. *But more or less in proportion to their natural sensibility to what is beautiful.*

objects. I do not think that there is ever such absolute incapacity in the eye for distinguishing and receiving pleasure from certain forms and colours, as there is in persons who are technically said to have no ear for distinguishing notes; but there is naturally every degree of bluntness and acuteness, both for perceiving the truth of form, and for receiving pleasure from it when perceived. And although I believe even the lowest degree of these faculties can be expanded almost unlimitedly by cultivation, the pleasure received rewards not the labour necessary, and the pursuit is abandoned. So that while in those whose sensations are naturally acute and vivid, the call of external nature is so strong that it must be obeyed, and is ever heard louder as the approach to her is nearer,—in those whose sensations are naturally blunt, the call is

§ 4. *Connected with a perfect state of moral feeling.*

overpowered at once by other thoughts, and their faculties of perception, weak originally, die of disuse. With this kind of bodily sensibility to colour and form is intimately connected that higher sensibility

which we revere as one of the chief attributes of all noble minds, and as the chief spring of real poetry. I believe this kind of sensibility may be entirely resolved into the acuteness of bodily sense of which I have been speaking, associated with love, love I mean in its infinite and holy functions, as it embraces divine and human and brutal intelligences, and hallows the physical perception of external objects by association, gratitude, veneration, and other pure feelings of our moral nature. And although the discovery of truth is in itself altogether intellectual, and dependent merely on our powers of physical perception and abstract intellect, wholly independent of our moral nature, yet these instruments (perception and judgment) are so sharpened and brightened, and so far more swiftly and effectively used, when they have the energy and passion of our moral nature to bring them into action—perception is so quickened by love, and judgment so tempered by veneration, that, practically, a man of deadened moral sensation is always dull in his perception of truth; and thousands of the highest and most divine truths of nature are wholly concealed from him, however constant and indefatigable may be his intellectual search. Thus, then, the farther we look, the more we are limited in the number of those to whom we should choose to appeal as judges of truth, and the more we perceive how great a number of mankind may be partially incapacitated from either discovering or feeling it.

Next to sensibility, which is necessary for the perception of facts, come reflection and memory, which are necessary for the retention of them, and recognition of their resemblances. For a man may receive impression after impression, and that vividly and with delight, and yet, if he take no care to reason upon those impressions, and trace them to their sources, he may remain totally ignorant of the facts that produced them; nay, may attribute them to facts with which they have no connection, or may coin causes for them that have no existence at all. And the more sensibility and imagination a man possesses, the more likely will he be to fall into error; for then he will see whatever he

§ 5. And of the intellectual powers.

expects, and admire and judge with his heart, and not with his eyes. How many people are misled, by what has been said and sung of the serenity of Italian skies, to suppose they must be more *blue* than the skies of the north, and think that they see them so; whereas the sky of Italy is far more dull and grey in colour than the skies of the north, and is distinguished only by its intense repose of light. And this is confirmed by Benvenuto Cellini, who, on his first entering France, is especially struck with the clearness of the sky, as contrasted with the *mist* of Italy.¹ And what is more strange still, when people see in a painting what they suppose to have been the source of their impressions, they will affirm it to be truthful, though they feel no such impression resulting from it. Thus, though day after day they may have been impressed by the tone and warmth of an Italian sky, yet not having traced the feeling to its source, and supposing themselves impressed by its *blueness*, they will affirm a blue sky in a painting to be truthful, and reject the most faithful rendering of all the real attributes of Italy as cold or dull. And

§ 6. *How sight depends upon previous knowledge.*

this influence of the imagination over the senses, is peculiarly observable in the perpetual disposition of mankind to suppose that they *see* what they *know*, and *vice versâ* in their not seeing what they do not know. Thus, if a child be asked to draw the corner of a house, he will lay down something in the form of the letter T. He has no conception that the two lines of the roof, which he knows to be level, produce on his eye the impression of a slope. It requires repeated and close attention before he detects this fact, or can be made to feel that the lines on his paper are false. And the Chinese, children in all things, suppose a good perspective drawing to be as false as we feel their plate patterns to be, or wonder at the strange buildings which come to a point at the end. And all the early works, whether of nations or of men, show, by their want of

¹ [In describing a miraculous aureole of glory which rested on his head, Benvenuto says: "I became aware of it in France at Paris; for the air in those parts is so much freer from mist, that one can see it there far better manifested than in Italy, mists being far more frequent among us" (*Life*, book i. ch. 128).]

shade, how little the eye, without knowledge, is to be depended upon to discover truth. The eye of a red Indian, keen enough to find the trace of his enemy or his prey, even in the unnatural turn of a trodden leaf, is yet so blunt to the impressions of shade, that Mr. Catlin mentions his once having been in great danger from having painted a portrait with the face in half light, which the untutored observers imagined and affirmed to be the painting of half a face.¹ Barry, in his sixth Lecture, takes notice of the same want of actual *sight* in the early painters of Italy. “The imitations,” he says, “of early art are like those of children,—nothing is seen in the spectacle before us, unless it be previously known and sought for; and numberless observable differences between the age of ignorance and that of knowledge, show how much the contraction or extension of our sphere of vision depends upon other considerations than the mere returns of our natural optics.”² And the deception which takes place so broadly in cases like these, has infinitely greater influence over our judgment of the more intricate and less tangible truths of nature. We are constantly supposing that we see what experience only has shown us, or can show us, to have existence, constantly missing the sight of what we do not know beforehand to be visible: and painters, to the last hour of their lives, are apt to fall in some degree into the error of painting what exists, rather than what they can see. I shall prove the extent of this error more completely hereafter.

Be it also observed, that all these difficulties would lie in the way, even if the truths of nature were always the same, constantly repeated and brought before us. But the truths of nature are one eternal change—one infinite variety. There is

¹ [George Catlin, an American artist, whose gallery of portraits of the North American Indians was exhibited in 1841 in the Egyptian Hall, and afterwards on the Continent. The exciting story referred to in the text may be read in his *Letters and Notes on . . . the North American Indians*, 1841, ii. pp. 190–194, and *cf.* the *Descriptive Catalogue of Catlin’s Indian Gallery*, s. No. 86. Three distinguished braves were killed in a private quarrel, which arose from the artist painting one of them almost in profile, throwing a part of the face into shadow. “He is but half a man,” cried one of the bystanders; whereupon, after some exchange of insults, fire-arms were resorted to.]

² [Lecture vi., on Colouring, in *The Works of James Barry, Esq., Historical Painter*, 2 vols., 1809, vol. i. p. 521.]

no bush on the face of the globe exactly like another bush:—there are no two trees in the forest whose boughs bend into the same network, nor two leaves on the same tree which could not be told one from the other, nor two waves in the sea exactly alike.

§ 7. *The difficulty increased by the variety of truths in nature.*

And out of this mass of various, yet agreeing beauty, it is by long attention only that the conception of the constant character—the ideal form—hinted at by all, yet assumed by none, is fixed upon the imagination for its standard of truth.

It is not singular, therefore, nor in any way disgraceful, that the majority of spectators are totally incapable of appreciating the truth of nature, when fully set before them; but it is both singular and disgraceful that it is so difficult to convince them of their own incapability. Ask a connoisseur who has scampered over all Europe, the shape of the leaf of an elm, and the chances are ninety to one that he cannot tell you; and yet he will be voluble of criticism on every painted landscape from Dresden to Madrid, and pretend to tell you whether they are like nature or not. Ask an enthusiastic chatterer in the Sistine Chapel how many ribs he has, and you get no answer: but it is odds that you do not get out of the door without his informing you that he considers such and such a figure badly drawn.

A few such interrogations as these might indeed convict, if not convince the mass of spectators of incapability, were it not for the universal reply, that they can recognize what they cannot describe, and feel what is truthful, though they do not know what is truth. And this is, to a certain degree, true. A man may recognize the portrait of his friend, though he cannot, if you ask him apart, tell you the shape of his nose, or the height of his forehead: and every one could tell nature herself from an imitation; why not then, it will be asked, what is like her from what is not? For this simple reason; that we constantly recognize things by their least important attributes, and by help of very few of those: and if these attributes exist not in the imitation, though there may be thousands of others

§ 8. *We recognize objects by their least important attributes*
Part I. Sec. I.
Chap. IV.

far higher and more valuable, yet if those be wanting, or imperfectly rendered, by which we are accustomed to recognize the object, we deny the likeness; while if these be given, though all the great and valuable and important attributes may be wanting, we affirm the likeness. Recognition is no proof of real and intrinsic resemblance. We recognize our books by their bindings, though the true and essential characteristics lie inside. A man is known to his dog by the smell, to his tailor by the coat, to his friend by the smile: each of these knows him, but how little, or how much, depends on the dignity of the intelligence. That which is truly and indeed characteristic of the man, is known only to God. One portrait of a man may possess exact accuracy of feature, and no atom of expression; it may be, to use the ordinary terms of admiration bestowed on such portraits by those whom they please, "as like as it can stare." Everybody, down to his cat, would know this. Another portrait may have neglected or misrepresented the features, but may have given the flash of the eye, and the peculiar radiance of the lip, seen on him only in his hours of highest mental excitement. None but his friends would know this. Another may have given none of his ordinary expressions, but one which he wore in the most excited instant of his life, when all his secret passions and all his highest powers were brought into play at once. None but those who had then seen him might recognize *this* as like. But which would be the most truthful portrait of the *man*?¹ The first gives the accidents of body—the sport of climate, and food, and time,—which corruption inhabits, and the worm waits for. The second gives the stamp of the soul upon the flesh; but it is the soul seen in the emotions which it shares with many, which may not be characteristic of its essence—the results of habit, and education, and accident,—a gloze, whether purposely

¹ [So Tennyson in "Lancelot and Elaine":—

“As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro’ all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest.]

worn or unconsciously assumed, perhaps totally contrary to all that is rooted and real in the mind which it conceals. The third has caught the trace of all that was most hidden and most mighty, when all hypocrisy and all habit, and all petty and passing emotion,—the ice, and the bank, and the foam of the immortal river,—were shivered, and broken, and swallowed up in the awakening of its inward strength; when the call and claim of some divine motive had brought into visible being those latent forces and feelings which the spirit's own volition could not summon, nor its consciousness comprehend, which God only knew, and God only could awaken,—the depth and the mystery of its peculiar and separating attributes. And so it is with external nature: she has a body and a soul like man; but her soul is the Deity. It is possible to represent the body without the spirit; and this shall be like, to those whose senses are only cognizant of body. It is possible to represent the spirit in its ordinary and inferior manifestations; and this shall be like, to those who have not watched for its moments of power. It is possible to represent the spirit in its secret and high operations; and this shall be like, only to those to whose watching they have been revealed. All these are truth; but according to the dignity of the truths he can represent or feel, is the power of the painter,—the justice of the judge.

CHAPTER III

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—FIRST, THAT PARTICULAR TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN GENERAL ONES

I HAVE in the last chapter affirmed that we usually recognize objects by the least essential characteristics. This very naturally excites the inquiry, what I consider their important characteristics, and why I call one truth more important than another. And this question must be immediately determined, because it is evident, that in judging of the truth of painters, we shall have to consider not only the accuracy with which individual truths are given, but the relative importance of the truths themselves; for as it constantly happens that the powers of art are unable to render *all* truths, that artist must be considered the most truthful who has preserved the most important at the expense of the most trifling.

§ 1. *Necessity of determining the relative importance of truths.*

Now, if we are to begin our investigation in Aristotle's way, and look at the phenomena of the subject, we shall immediately stumble over a maxim which is in everybody's mouth, and which, as it is understood in practice, is true and useful; as it is usually applied in argument, false and misleading. "General truths are more important than particular ones."¹ Often, when, in conversation, I have been praising Turner for his perpetual variety, and for giving so particular and separate a character to each of his compositions, that the mind of the painter can only be estimated by seeing all that he has ever done, and that nothing can be prophesied of a

§ 2. *Misapplication of the aphorism:*
"General truths are more important than particular ones."

¹ [So Reynolds in the fourth of his *Discourses*: "Perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas."]

picture coming into existence on his easel, but that it will be totally different in idea from all that he has ever done before; and when I have opposed this inexhaustible knowledge or imagination, whichever it may be, to the perpetual repetition of some half-dozen conceptions by Claude and Poussin, I have been met by the formidable objection, enunciated with much dignity and self-satisfaction on the part of my

§ 3. *Falseness of this maxim, taken without explanation.*

antagonist,—“That is not painting general truths, that is painting particular truths.” Now there must be something wrong in that application of a principle which would make the variety and abundance which we look for as the greatest sign of intellect in the writer, the greatest sign of error in the painter; and we shall accordingly see, by an application of it to other matters, that taken without limitation, the whole proposition is utterly false. For instance, Mrs. Jameson somewhere mentions the exclamation of a lady of her acquaintance, more desirous to fill a pause in conversation than abundant in sources of observation,—

“What an excellent book the Bible is!”

This was a very general truth indeed—a truth predicable of the Bible in common with many other books, but it certainly is neither striking nor important. Had the lady exclaimed,—“How evidently is the Bible a divine revelation!” she would have expressed a particular truth, one predicable of the Bible only; but certainly far more interesting and important. Had she, on the contrary, informed us that the Bible was a book, she would have been still more general, and still less entertaining. If I ask any one who somebody else is, and receive for answer that he is a man, I get little satisfaction for my pains; but if I am told that he is Sir Isaac Newton, I immediately thank my neighbour for his

§ 4. *Generality important in the subject, particularity in the predicate.*

information. The fact is, and the above instances may serve at once to prove it if it be not self-evident, that generality gives importance to the *subject*, and limitation or particularity to the *predicate*. If I say that such and such a man in China is an opium-eater, I say nothing very interesting, because my subject (such a man) is particular.

If I say that all men in China are opium-eaters, I say something interesting, because my subject (all men) is general. If I say that all men in China eat, I say nothing interesting, because my predicate (eat) is general. If I say that all men in China eat opium, I say something interesting, because my predicate (eat opium) is particular.

Now almost everything which (with reference to a given subject) a painter has to ask himself whether he shall represent or not, is a predicate. Hence, in art, particular truths are usually more important than general ones.

How is it then that anything so plain as this should be contradicted by one of the most universally received aphorisms respecting art? A little reflection will show us under what limitations this maxim may be true in practice.

It is self-evident that when we are painting or describing anything, those truths must be the most important which are most characteristic of what is to be told or represented. Now that which is first and most broadly characteristic of a thing is that which distinguishes its genus, or which makes it what it is. For instance, that which makes drapery *be* drapery, is not its being made of silk, or worsted, or flax, for things are made of all these which are not drapery, but the ideas peculiar to drapery; the properties which, when inherent in a thing, make it drapery, are extension, non-elastic flexibility, unity, and comparative thinness. Everything which has these properties, a waterfall, for instance, if united and extended, or a net of weeds over a wall, is drapery, as much as silk or woollen stuff is. So that these ideas separate drapery in our minds from everything else; they are peculiarly characteristic of it, and therefore are the most important group of ideas connected with it; and so with everything else, that which makes the thing what it is, is the most important idea, or group of ideas, connected with the thing. But as this idea must necessarily be common to all individuals of the species it belongs to, it is a general idea with respect to that species; while other ideas, which are not characteristic of the species, and are therefore

§ 5. *The importance of truths of species is not owing to their generality.*

in reality general (as black and white are terms applicable to more things than drapery), are yet particular with respect to that species, being predicable only of certain individuals of it. Hence it is carelessly and falsely said that general ideas are more important than particular ones; carelessly and falsely, I say, because the so-called general idea is important, not because it is common to all the individuals of that species, but because it separates that species from everything else. It is the distinctiveness, not the universality of the truth, which renders it important. And the so-called particular idea is unimportant, not because it is not predicable of the whole species, but because it *is* predicable of things out of that species. It is not its individuality, but its generality, which renders it unimportant. So then truths

§ 6. *All truths valuable as they are characteristic.* are important just in proportion as they are characteristic; and are valuable, primarily, as they separate the species from all other created things; secondarily, as they separate the individuals of that species from one another. Thus “silken” and “woollen” are unimportant ideas with respect to drapery, because they neither separate the species from other things, nor even the individuals of that species from one another, since, though not common to the whole of it, they are common to indefinite numbers of it; but the particular folds into which any piece of drapery may happen to fall, being different in many particulars from those into which any other piece of drapery will fall, are expressive not only of the characters of the species (flexibility, non-elasticity, etc.), but of individuality, and definite character in the case immediately observed, and are consequently most important and necessary ideas. So in a man, to be short-legged or long-nosed, or anything else of accidental quality, does not distinguish him from other short-legged or long-nosed animals; but the important truths respecting a man are, first, the marked development of that distinctive organization which separates him as man from other animals, and secondly, that group of qualities which distinguishes the individual from all other men, which makes him Paul or Judas, Newton or Shakspeare.

Such are the real sources of importance to truths, as far as they are considered with reference merely to their being general or particular; but there are other sources of importance which give farther weight to the ordinary opinion of the greater value of those which are general, and which render this opinion right in practice; I mean the intrinsic beauty of the truths themselves, a quality which it is not here the place to investigate, but which must just be noticed, as invariably adding value to truths of species rather than to those of individuality. The qualities and properties which characterize man or any other animal as a species, are the perfection of his or its form and mind, almost all individual differences arising from imperfections; hence a truth of species is the more valuable to art, because it must always be a beauty, while a truth of individuals is commonly, in some sort of way, a defect.

§ 7. *Otherwise truths of species are valuable because beautiful.*

Again, a truth which may be of great interest when an object is viewed by itself, may be objectionable when it is viewed in relation to other objects. Thus if we were painting a piece of drapery as our whole subject, it would be proper to give in it every source of entertainment which particular truths could supply—to give it varied colour and delicate texture; but if we paint this same piece of drapery as part of the dress of a Madonna, all these ideas of richness or texture become thoroughly contemptible, and unfit to occupy the mind at the same moment with the idea of the Virgin. The conception of drapery is then to be suggested by the simplest and slightest means possible, and all notions of texture and detail are to be rejected with utter reprobation; but this, observe, is not because they are particular or general or anything else, with respect to the drapery itself, but because they draw the attention to the dress instead of the saint, and disturb and degrade the imagination and the feelings; hence we ought to give the conception of the drapery in the most unobtrusive way possible, by rendering those essential qualities distinctly,

§ 8. *And many truths, valuable if separate, may be objectionable in connection with others.*

which are necessary to the very existence of drapery, and not one more.

With these last two sources of the importance of truths we have nothing to do at present, as they are dependent upon ideas of beauty and relation: I merely allude to them now, to show that all that is alleged by Sir J. Reynolds and other scientific writers, respecting the kind of truths proper to be represented by the painter or sculptor, is perfectly just and right; while yet the principle on which they base their selection (that general truths are more important than particular ones) is altogether false. Canova's Perseus in the Vatican¹ is entirely spoiled by an unlucky *tassel* in the folds of the mantle (which the next admirer of Canova who passes would do well to knock off);² but it is spoiled, not because this is a particular truth, but because it is a contemptible, unnecessary, and ugly truth. The button which fastens the vest of the Sistine Daniel³ is as much a particular truth as this, but it is a necessary one, and the idea of it is given by the simplest possible means; hence it is right and beautiful.

Finally, then, it is to be remembered that all truths, as far as § 9. *Recapitulation.* their being particular or general affects their value at all, are valuable in proportion as they are particular, and valueless in proportion as they are general, or to express the proposition in simpler terms, every truth is valuable in proportion as it is characteristic of the thing of which it is affirmed.

¹ [Perseus and the two boxers, Creugas and Damoxenus; in the First Cabinet of the Cortile del Belvedere. "The admiration of Canova," says Ruskin elsewhere, "I hold to be one of the most deadly symptoms in the civilization of the upper classes" (*Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xx. § 11 n.)]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin is less iconoclastic, and omits these words.]

³ [One of the Prophets, by Michael Angelo.]

CHAPTER IV

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—SECONDLY, THAT RARE TRUTHS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FREQUENT ONES

IT will be necessary next for us to determine how far frequency or rarity can affect the importance of truths, and whether the artist is to be considered the most truthful who paints what is common or what is unusual in nature.

§ 1. *No accidental violation of nature's principles should be represented.*

Now the whole determination of this question depends upon whether the unusual fact be a violation of nature's general principles, or the application of some of those principles in a peculiar and striking way. Nature sometimes, though very rarely, violates her own principles; it is her principle to make everything beautiful, but now and then for an instant, she permits what, compared with the rest of her works, might be called ugly: it is true that even these rare blemishes are permitted, as I have above said, for a good purpose (Part I. Sec. I. Chap. VI.); they are valuable in nature, and used as she uses them, are equally valuable (as instantaneous discords) in art; but the artist who should seek after these exclusively, and paint nothing else, though he might be able to point to something in nature as the original of every one of his uglinesses, would yet be, in the strict sense of the word, false,—false to nature, and disobedient to her laws. For instance, it is the practice of nature to give character to the outlines of her clouds by perpetual angles and right lines. Perhaps once in a month, by diligent watching, we might be able to see a cloud altogether rounded and made up of curves; but the artist who paints nothing but curved clouds must yet be considered thoroughly and inexcusably false.

But the case is widely different, when instead of a principle violated, we have one extraordinarily carried out or manifested under unusual circumstances. Though nature is constantly beautiful, she does not exhibit her highest powers of beauty constantly, for then they would satiate us and pall upon our senses. It is necessary to their appreciation that they should be rarely shown. Her finest touches are things which must be watched for; her most perfect passages of beauty are the most evanescent. She is constantly doing something beautiful for us,

§ 2. *But the cases in which those principles have been strikingly exemplified.* but it is something which she has not done before and will not do again; some exhibition of her general powers in particular circumstances, which, if we do not catch at the instant it is passing, will not be repeated for us. Now they are these evanescent passages of perfected beauty, these perpetually varied examples of utmost power, which the artist ought to seek for and arrest. No supposition can be more absurd than that effects or truths frequently exhibited are more characteristic of nature than those which are equally necessary by her laws, though rarer in occurrence. Both the frequent and the rare are parts of the same great system; to give either exclusively is imperfect truth, and to repeat the same effect or thought in two pictures is wasted life. What should we think of a poet who should keep all his life repeating the same thought in different words? and why should we be more lenient to the parrot painter, who has learned one lesson from the page of nature, and keeps stammering it out in eternal repetition, without turning the leaf? Is it less tautology to describe a thing over and over again with lines, than it is with words? The teaching of nature is as varied and infinite as it is constant; and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give (for human life will admit of nothing more) those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most peculiar and striking way. The deeper his research and the rarer the phenomena he has noted, the more valuable will his works be; to repeat

§ 3. *Which are comparatively rare.*

§ 4. *All repetition is blamable.*

himself, even in a single instance, is treachery to nature, for a thousand human lives would not be enough to give one instance of the perfect manifestation of each of her powers; and as for combining or classifying them, as well might a preacher expect in one sermon to express and explain every divine truth which can be gathered out of God's revelation, as a painter expect in one composition to express and illustrate every lesson which can be received from God's creation. Both are commentators on infinity, and the duty of both is to take for each discourse one essential truth, seeking particularly and insisting especially on those which are less palpable to ordinary observation, and more likely to escape an indolent research; and to impress that, and that alone, upon those whom they address, with every illustration that can be furnished by their knowledge, and every adornment attainable by their power. And the real truthfulness of the painter is in proportion to the number and variety of the facts he has so illustrated; those facts being always, as above observed, the realization, not the violation of a general principle. The quantity of truth is in proportion to the number of such facts, and its value and instructiveness in proportion to their rarity. All really great pictures, therefore, exhibit the general habits of nature, manifested in some peculiar, rare, and beautiful way.

§ 5. The duty of the painters is the same as that of a preacher.

CHAPTER V

OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHS:—THIRDLY, THAT TRUTHS OF COLOUR ARE THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTHS

IN the last two chapters, we have pointed out general tests of the importance of all truths, which will be sufficient at once to distinguish certain classes of properties in bodies as more necessary to be told than others, because more characteristic, either of the particular thing to be represented, or of the principles of nature.

§ 1. *Difference between primary and secondary qualities in bodies.*

According to Locke, book ii. chap. 8, there are three sorts of qualities in bodies: first, the “bulk, figure, number, situation, and motion or rest of their solid parts: those” that “are in them, whether we perceive them or no.” These he calls primary qualities. Secondly, “the power that is in any body to operate after a peculiar manner on any of our senses” (sensible qualities). And thirdly, “the power that is in any body to make such a change in another body as that it shall operate on our senses differently from what it did before:” these last being “usually called *powers*.”

Hence he proceeds to prove that those which he calls primary qualities are indeed part of the essence of the body, and characteristic of it; but that the two other kinds of qualities which together he calls secondary, are neither of them more than *powers* of producing on other objects, or in us, certain effects and sensations. Now a power of influence is always equally characteristic of two objects—the active and passive; for it is as much necessary that there should be a power in the object suffering to receive the impression, as in the object acting, to give the

§ 2. *The first are fully characteristic; the second imperfectly so.*

impression. (Compare Locke, book ii. chap. 21, sect. 2.) For supposing two people, as is frequently the case, perceive different scents in the same flower, it is evident that the power in the flower to give this or that depends on the nature of their nerves, as well as on that of its own particles; and that we are as correct in saying it is a power in us to perceive, as in the object to impress. Every power, therefore, being characteristic of the nature of two bodies, is imperfectly and incompletely characteristic of either separately; but the primary qualities being characteristic only of the body in which they are inherent, are the most important truths connected with it. For the question what the thing *is*, must precede, and be of more importance than the question, what it can do.

Now, by Locke's definition above given, only bulk, figure, situation, and motion or rest of solid parts, are primary qualities. Hence all truths of colour sink at once into the second rank. He, therefore, who has neglected a truth of form for a truth of colour has neglected a greater truth for a less one.

§ 3. *Colour is a secondary quality, therefore less important than form.*

And that colour is indeed a most unimportant characteristic of objects, will be farther evident on the slightest consideration. The colour of plants is constantly changing with the season, and of everything with the quality of light falling on it; but the nature and essence of the thing are independent of these changes. An oak is an oak, whether green with spring or red with winter; a dahlia is a dahlia, whether it be yellow or crimson; and if some monster-hunting florist should ever frighten the flower blue, still it will be a dahlia; but not so if the same arbitrary changes could be effected in its form. Let the roughness of the bark and the angles of the boughs be smoothed or diminished, and the oak ceases to be an oak; but let it retain its inward structure and outward form, and though its leaves grew white, or pink, or blue, or tricolour, it would be a white oak, or a pink oak, or a republican oak, but an oak still. Again, colour is hardly ever even a *possible* distinction between two objects of the same species. Two trees, of the same kind, at the same season, and of the same age, are of

absolutely the same colour; but they are not of the same form, nor anything like it. There can be no difference in the colour of two pieces of rock broken from the same place; but it is impossible they should be of the same form. So that form is not only the chief characteristic of species, but the only characteristic of individuals of a species.

§ 4. *Colour no distinction between objects of the same species.*

Again, a colour, in association with other colours, is different from the same colour seen by itself. It has a distinct and peculiar power upon the retina dependent on its association. Consequently, the colour of any object is not more dependent upon the nature of the object itself, and the eye beholding it, than on the colour of the objects near it; in this respect also, therefore, it is no characteristic.

§ 5. *And different in association from what it is alone.*

And so great is the uncertainty with respect to those qualities or powers which depend as much on the nature of the object suffering as of the object acting, that it is totally impossible to prove that one man sees in the same thing the same colour that another does, though he may use the same name for it. One man may see yellow where another sees blue, but as the effect is constant, they agree in the term to be used for it, and both call it blue, or both yellow, having yet totally different ideas attached to the term. And yet neither can be said to see falsely, because the colour is not in the thing, but in the thing and them together. But if they see forms differently, one must see falsely, because the form is positive in the object. My friend may see boars blue for anything I know, but it is impossible he should see them with paws instead of hoofs, unless his eyes or brain be diseased. (Compare Locke, book ii. chap. 32 § 15.) But I do not speak of this uncertainty as capable of having any effect on art, because, though perhaps Landseer sees dogs of the colour which I should call blue, yet the colour he puts on the canvas, being in the same way blue to him, will still be brown or dog-colour to me; and so we may argue on points of colour just as

§ 6. *It is not certain whether any two people see the same colours in things.*

if all men saw alike, as indeed in all probability they do; but I merely mention this uncertainty to show farther the vagueness and unimportance of colour as a characteristic of bodies.

Before going farther, however, I must explain the sense in which I have used the word “form,” because painters have a most inaccurate and careless habit of confining this term to the outline of bodies, whereas it necessarily implies light and shade. It is true that the outline and the chiaroscuro must be separate subjects of investigation with the student; but no form whatsoever can be known to the eye in the slightest degree without its chiaroscuro; and, therefore, in speaking of form generally as an element of landscape, I mean that perfect and harmonious unity of outline with light and shade, by which all the parts and projections and proportions of a body are fully explained to the eye; being nevertheless perfectly independent of sight or power in other objects, the presence of light upon a body being a positive existence, whether we are aware of it or not, and in no degree dependent upon our senses. This being understood, the most convincing proof of the unimportance of colour lies in the accurate observation of the way in which any material object impresses itself on the mind. If we look at nature carefully, we shall find that her colours are in a state of perpetual confusion and indistinctness, while her forms, as told by light and shade, are invariably clear, distinct, and speaking. The stones and gravel of the bank catch green reflections from the boughs above; the bushes receive greys and yellows from the ground; every hair’s breadth of polished surface gives a little bit of the blue of the sky, or the gold of the sun, like a star upon the local colour; this local colour, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light,¹ or quenched in the grey of the shadow; and the confusion and blending of tint are altogether so great, that were we left to

§ 7. *Form, considered as an element of landscape, includes light and shade.*

§ 8. *Importance of light and shade in expressing the character of bodies, and unimportance of colour.*

¹ [See *Notes on . . . the Royal Academy*, 1855, supplement, where Ruskin further explains this passage and compares it with sec. ii. ch. i. § 18, below.]

find out what objects were by their colours only, we could scarcely in places distinguish the boughs of a tree from the air beyond them, or the ground beneath them. I know that people unpractised in art will not believe this at first; but if they have accurate powers of observation, they may soon ascertain it for themselves; they will find that while they can scarcely ever determine the *exact* hue of anything, except when it occurs in large masses, as in a green field or the blue sky, the form, as told by light and shade, is always decided and evident, and the source of the chief character of every object. Light and shade indeed so completely conquer the distinctions of local colour, that the difference in hue between the illumined parts of a white and of a black object is not so great as the difference (in sunshine) between the illumined and dark side of either separately.

We shall see hereafter, in considering ideas of beauty, that colour, even as a source of pleasure, is feeble compared with form; but this we cannot insist upon at present: we have only to do with simple truth, and the observations we have made are sufficient to prove that the artist who sacrifices or forgets a truth of form in the pursuit of a truth of colour, sacrifices what is definite to what is uncertain, and what is essential to what is -
accidental.¹

¹ [The comparative unimportance ascribed in this chapter to colour must be understood strictly in relation to the question proposed—namely, whether form or colour is the more important in explaining the essential characteristics of objects. For the necessary additions to the statement of the case here made, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 24, and vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 8 (where Ruskin collects and connects his various statements respecting colour). In his copy for revision he noted at the end of this chapter, “Now insert new passage.”]

CHAPTER VI

RECAPITULATION

IT ought farther to be observed respecting truths in general, that those are always most valuable which are most historical; that is, which tell us most about the past and future states of the object to which they belong.

§ 1. The importance of historical truths.

In a tree, for instance, it is more important to give the appearance of energy and elasticity in the limbs which is indicative of growth and life, than any particular character of leaf, or texture of bough. It is more important that we should feel that the uppermost sprays are creeping higher and higher into the sky, and be impressed with the current of life and motion which is animating every fibre, than that we should know the exact pitch of relief with which those fibres are thrown out against the sky. For the first truths tell us tales about the tree, about what it has been, and will be, while the last are characteristic of it only in its present state, and are in no way talkative about themselves. Talkative facts are always more interesting and more important than silent ones. So again the lines in a crag which mark its stratification, and how it has been washed and rounded by water, or twisted and drawn out in fire, are more important, because they tell more than the stains of the lichens which change year by year, and the accidental fissures of frost or decomposition; not but that both of these are historical, but historical in a less distinct manner, and for shorter periods.

Hence in general the truths of specific form are the first and most important of all; and next to them, those truths of chiaroscuro which are necessary to make us understand every quality and part of forms, and the relative distances of

objects among each other, and in consequence their relative bulks. Altogether lower than these as truths, though often most important as beauties, stand all effects of chiaroscuro which are productive merely of imitations of light and tone, and all effects of colour. To make us understand the *space* of the sky, is an end worthy of the artist's highest powers; to hit its particular blue or gold is an end to be thought of when we have accomplished the first, and not till then.

§ 2. *Form, as explained by light and shade, the first of all truths. Tone, light, and colour, are secondary.*

Finally, far below all these come those particular accuracies or tricks of chiaroscuro which cause objects to look projecting from the canvas, not worthy of the name of truths, because they require for their attainment the sacrifice of all others; for not having at our disposal the same intensity of light by which nature illustrates her objects, we are obliged, if we would have perfect deception in one, to destroy its relation to the rest. (Compare Part I. Sect. I. Chap. V.) And thus he who throws one object out of his picture, never lets the spectator into it. Michael Angelo bids you follow his phantoms into the abyss of heaven, but a modern French painter drops his hero out of the picture frame.

§ 3. *And de-ceptive chiaro-scuro the lowest of all.*

This solidity or projection, then, is the very lowest truth that art can give; it is the painting of mere matter, giving that as food for the eye which is properly only the subject of touch; it can neither instruct nor exalt; nor can it please, except as jugglery; it addresses no sense of beauty nor of power; and wherever it characterizes the general aim of a picture, it is the sign and the evidence of the vilest and lowest mechanism which art can be insulted by giving name to.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLES

WE have seen, in the preceding chapters, some proof of what was before asserted, that the truths necessary for deceptive imitation are not only few, but of the very lowest order. We thus find painters ranging themselves into two great classes: one aiming at the development of the exquisite truths of specific form, refined colour, and ethereal space, and content with the clear and impressive suggestion of any of these, by whatsoever means obtained; and the other casting all these aside, to attain those particular truths of tone and chiaroscuro, which may trick the spectator into a belief of reality. The first class, if they have to paint a tree, are intent upon giving the exquisite designs of intersecting undulation in its boughs, the grace of its leafage, the intricacy of its organization, and all those qualities which make it lovely or affecting of its kind. The second endeavour only to make you believe that you are looking at wood. They are totally regardless of truths or beauties of form; a stump is as good as a trunk for all their purposes, so that they can only deceive the eye into the supposition that it *is* a stump and not canvas.

§ 1. *The different selection of facts consequent on the several aims at imitation or at truth.*

To which of these classes the great body of the old landscape painters belonged, may be partly gathered from the kind of praise which is bestowed upon them by those who admire them most, which either refers to technical matters, dexterity of touch, clever oppositions of colour, etc., or is bestowed on the power of the painter to *deceive*. M. de Marmontel, going into a connoisseur's gallery, pretends to mistake a fine Berghem for a window. This, he says, was affirmed by its possessor

§ 2. *The old masters, as a body, aim only at imitation.*

to be the greatest praise the picture had ever received.¹ Such is indeed the notion of art which is at the bottom of the veneration usually felt for the old landscape painters; it is of course the palpable, first idea of ignorance; it is the only notion which people unacquainted with art can by any possibility have of its ends; the only test by which people unacquainted with nature can pretend to form anything like judgment of art.² It is strange, that, with the great historical painters of Italy before them, who had broken so boldly and indignantly from the trammels of this notion, and shaken the very dust of it from their feet, the succeeding landscape painters should have wasted their lives in jugglery: but so it is, and so it will be felt, the more we look into their works, that the deception of the senses was the great and first end of all their art. To attain this they paid deep and serious attention to effects of light and tone, and to the exact degree of relief which material objects take against light and atmosphere; and sacrificing every other truth to these, not necessarily, but because they required no others for deception, they succeeded in rendering these particular facts with a fidelity and force which, in the pictures that have come down to us uninjured, are as yet unequalled, and never can be surpassed. They painted their foregrounds with laborious industry, covering them with details so as to render them deceptive to the ordinary eye, regardless of beauty or truth in the details themselves; they painted their trees with careful attention to their pitch of shade against the sky, utterly regardless of all that is beautiful or essential in the anatomy of their foliage and boughs; they painted their

§ 3. *What truths they gave.*

¹ ["At Brussels I was curious to see a rich collection of pictures. . . . The first picture he pointed out was a very fine landscape by Berghem. 'Ah!' exclaimed I, 'I took that picture at first for a window through which I saw the country and these beautiful flocks.' 'This,' said he, with transport, 'is the finest praise ever given to that picture' " (*Memoirs of Marmontel, written by himself*, book viii.). With Marmontel Ruskin came to feel himself in peculiar sympathy; see *Sesame and Lilies* (pref. to 1871 ed.), and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter xvii.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"judgment of art. We have no eye for colour—we perceive no intention in composition—we do not know anything about form—we cannot estimate excellence—we do not care for beauty—but we know whether it deceives. It is a strange thing that . . ."]

distances with exquisite use of transparent colour and aërial tone, totally neglectful of all facts and forms which nature uses such colour and tone to relieve and adorn. They had neither love of nature, nor feeling of her beauty; they looked for her coldest and most commonplace effects, because they were easiest to imitate; and for her most vulgar forms, because they were most easily to be recognized by the untaught eyes of those whom alone they could hope to please; they did it, like the Pharisee of old, to be seen of men, and they had their reward. They do deceive and delight the unpractised eye. They will to all ages, as long as their colours endure, be the standards of excellence with all who, ignorant of nature, claim to be thought learned in art: and they will to all ages be, to those who have thorough love and knowledge of the creation which they libel, instructive proofs of the limited number and low character of the truths which are necessary, and the accumulated multitude of pure, broad, bold falsehoods which are admissible, in pictures meant only to deceive.

There is, of course, more or less accuracy of knowledge and execution combined with this aim at effect, according to the industry and precision of eye possessed by the master, and more or less of beauty in the forms selected, according to his natural taste; but both the beauty and truth are sacrificed unhesitatingly where they interfere with the great effort of deception. Claude had, if it had been cultivated, a fine feeling for beauty of form, and is seldom ungraceful in his foliage; but his picture, when examined with reference to essential truth, is one mass of error from beginning to end. Cuyp,¹ on the other hand, could paint close truth of everything except ground and water, with decision and success, but he had no sense of beauty.² Gaspar Poussin, more ignorant of truth than Claude, and almost as dead to beauty as Cuyp, has yet a perception of the feeling and moral truth of nature, which

¹ [For Ruskin's general view of Cuyp, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 12.]

² [Instead of the words "but he had no sense of beauty," eds. 1 and 2 read, "but then he has not the slightest idea of the meaning of the word 'beautiful.' "]

often redeems the picture; but yet in all of them, everything that they can do is done for deception, and nothing for the sake or love of what they are painting.

Modern landscape painters have looked at nature with totally different eyes, seeking not for what is easier to imitate, but for what is most important to tell. Rejecting at once all idea of *bonà fide* imitation, they think only of conveying the impression of nature into the mind of the spectator.² And there is, in consequence, a greater sum of valuable, essential, and impressive truth in the works of two or three of our leading modern landscape painters, than in those of all the old masters put together, and of truth too, nearly unmixed with definite or avoidable falsehood; while the unimportant and feeble truths of the old masters are choked with a mass of perpetual defiance of the most authoritative laws of nature.

§ 4. *The principles of selection adopted by modern artists.*¹

§ 5. *General feeling of Claude, Salvator, and G. Poussin, contrasted with the freedom and vastness of nature.*

I do not expect this assertion to be believed at present: it must rest for demonstration on the examination we are about to enter upon; yet, even without reference to any intricate or deep-seated truths, it appears strange to me, that any one familiar with nature, and fond of her, should not grow weary and sick at heart among the melancholy and monotonous transcripts of her which alone can be received from the old school of art. A man accustomed to the broad wild sea-shore, with its bright breakers, and free winds, and sounding rocks, and eternal sensation of tameless power, can scarcely but be angered when Claude bids him stand still on some paltry chipped and chiselled quay, with porters and wheelbarrows running against him, to watch a weak, rippling, bound and barriered water, that has not strength enough in one of its waves to upset the flowerpots on the

¹ [In his copy kept for revision Ruskin here says, "Qualify with note."]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"spectator, and chiefly of forcing upon his feelings those delicate and refined truths of specific form, which are just what the careless eye can least detect or enjoy, because they are intended by the Deity to be the constant objects of our investigation that they may be the constant sources of our pleasure."]

wall, or even to fling one jet of spray over the confining stone.¹ A man accustomed to the strength and glory of God's mountains, with their soaring and radiant pinnacles, and surging sweeps of measureless distance, kingdoms in their valleys, and climates upon their crests, can scarcely but be angered when Salvator bids him stand still under some contemptible fragment of splintery crag, which an Alpine snow-wreath would smother in its first swell, with a stunted bush or two growing out of it, and a volume of manufactory smoke² for a sky. A man accustomed to the grace and infinity of nature's foliage, with every vista a cathedral, and every bough a revelation, can scarcely but be angered when Poussin mocks him with a black round mass of impenetrable paint, diverging into feathers instead of leaves, and supported on a stick instead of a trunk.³ The fact is, there is one thing wanting in all the doing of these men, and that is the very virtue by which the work of human mind chiefly rises above that of the daguerreotype or calotype,⁴ or any other mechanical means that ever have been or may be invented, Love. There is no evidence of their ever having gone to nature with any thirst, or received from her such emotion as could make them, even for an instant, lose sight of themselves; there is in them neither earnestness nor humility; there is no simple or honest record of any single truth; none of the plain words or straight efforts that men speak and make when they once feel.

¹ [No. 14 in the National Gallery: "Seaport—The Queen of Sheba," for which picture see also above, pt. i. sec. i. ch. v. § 5, p. 106, and below, pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 15 (eds. 1 and 2), sec. vi. ch. ii. § 1, pp. 317, 607.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read, "a Dudley or Halifax-like volume of manufactory smoke."]

³ [Almost all the rest of this chapter was not included in eds. 1 and 2, which contained instead briefer passages, §§ 6–11. These are here given at the end of the chapter (pp. 253–258). The rest of this chapter, as it stands in the text, is three years later than the rest of vol. i., the 3rd edition (in which it first appeared) having been published in 1846. For Ruskin's account of the following passages substituted in that year, see above, Preface to 3rd ed., p. 53, and *cf.* Introduction, p. xlii.]

⁴ [In the daguerreotype, one of the earliest of photographic processes (first published by Daguerre in 1839), the impression was taken upon a silver plate sensitized by iodine, and developed by exposure to the vapour of mercury. In the calotype process (invented by Fox Talbot in 1841) the "plate" was a paper covered with iodide of silver, and was fixed and developed by hyposulphite of soda. For Ruskin's use of the daguerreotype, see below, p. 210; and *cf.* *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 141.]

Nor is it only by the professed landscape painters that the great verities of the material world are betrayed. Grand as are the motives* of landscape in the works of the earlier and mightier men, there is yet in them nothing approaching to a general view or complete rendering of natural phenomena; not that they are to be blamed for this; for they took out of nature that which was fit for their purpose, and their mission was to do no more; but we must be cautious to distinguish that imaginative abstraction of landscape which alone we find in them, from the entire statement of truth which has been attempted by the moderns. I have said in the chapter on Symmetry in the second volume,¹ that all landscape grandeur vanishes before that of Titian and Tintoret; and this is true of whatever these two giants touched;—but they touched little. A few level flakes of chestnut foliage; a blue abstraction of hill forms from Cadore or the Euganeans; a grand mass or two of glowing ground and mighty herbage, and a few burning fields of quiet cloud, were all they needed; there is evidence of Tintoret's having felt more than this, but it occurs only in secondary fragments of rock, cloud, or pine, hardly noticed among the accumulated interest of his human subject. From the window of Titian's house at Venice,² the

* I suppose this word is now generally received, with respect to both painting and music, as meaning the leading idea of a composition, whether wrought out or not.

¹ [Sec. i. ch. viii.]

² [The house still stands (at S. Cancino ai Birri, in the Campo Tiziano), but the seaward view is blocked out. It had in the painter's time, says W. D. Howells, "an incomparably lovely and delightful situation. Standing near the northern boundary of the city, it looked out over the lagoon—across the quiet isle of sepulchres, San Michele, across the smoking chimneys of the Murano glassworks, and the bell-towers of her churches, to the long line of the sea-shore on the right and to the main-land on the left; and beyond the nearer lagoon islands and the faintly pencilled outlines of Torcello and Burano in front to the sublime distance of the Alps, shining in silver and purple, and resting their snowy heads against the clouds. It had a pleasant garden of flowers and trees, into which the painter descended by an open stairway, and in which he is said to have studied the famous tree in 'The Death of Peter Martyr' " (*Venetian Life*, ed. 1891, ii. 26). For other references to Titian's view from his house, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 22 *n.*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 16, and vol. iv. ch. xv. § 27 (Fig. 26 there given is from a drawing by Titian: "one of the few instances in which he definitely took a suggestion from the Alps, as he saw them from his house at Venice").]

chain of the Tyrolese Alps is seen lifted in spectral power above the tufted plain of Treviso; every drawn that reddens the towers of Murano lights also a line of pyramidal fires along that colossal ridge; but there is, so far as I know, no evidence in any of the master's works of his ever having beheld, much less felt, the majesty of their burning. The dark firmament and saddened twilight of Tintoret are sufficient for their end: but the sun never plunges behind San Giorgio in Aliga without such retinue of radiant cloud, such rest of zoned light on the green lagoon, as never received image from his hand.¹ More than this, of that which they loved and rendered much is rendered conventionally; by noble conventionalities indeed, but such nevertheless as would be inexcusable if the landscape became the principal subject instead of an accompaniment. I will instance only the San Pietro Martire,² which, if not the most perfect, is at least the most popular of Titian's landscapes; in which, to obtain light on the flesh of the near figures, the sky is made as dark as deep sea, the mountains are laid in with violent and impossible blue, except one of them on the left, which, to connect the distant light with the foreground, is thrown into light relief, unexplained by its materials, unlikely in its position, and, in its degree, impossible under any circumstances.

I do not instance these as faults in the picture: there are no works of very powerful colour which are free from conventionality concentrated or diffused, daring or disguised; but as the conventionality of this whole picture is mainly thrown into the landscape, it is necessary, while we acknowledge the virtue of this distance as a part of the great composition, to be on our guard against the license it assumes and the attractiveness of its overcharged colour. Fragments of far purer truth occur in the works of Tintoret; and in the drawing of foliage, whether rapid or elaborate, of masses or details, the Venetian

§ 7. Causes its want of influence on subsequent schools.

¹ [For San Giorgio in Aliga, see Plate 15, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 15.]

² [See above, Preface to 2nd. ed., § 22, p. 28 n.]

painters, taken as a body, may be considered almost faultless models. But the whole field of what they have done is so narrow, and therein is so much of what is only relatively right, and in itself false or imperfect, that the young and inexperienced painter could run no greater risk than the too early taking them for teachers; and to the general spectator their landscape is valuable rather as a means of peculiar and solemn emotion, than as ministering to or inspiring the universal love of nature. Hence while men of serious mind, especially those whose pursuits have brought them into continued relations with the peopled rather than the lonely world, will always look to the Venetian painters as having touched those simple chords of landscape harmony which are most in unison with earnest and melancholy feeling; those whose philosophy is more cheerful and more extended, as having been trained and coloured among simple and solitary nature, will seek for a wider and more systematic circle of teaching: they may grant that the barred horizontal gloom of the Titian sky, and the massy leaves of the Titian forest, are among the most sublime of the conceivable forms of material things; but they know that the virtue of these very forms is to be learned only by right comparison of them with the cheerfulness, fulness, and comparative unquietness of other hours and scenes; that they are not intended for the continual food, but the occasional soothing of the human heart; that there is a lesson of not less value in its place, though of less concluding and sealing authority, in every one of the more humble phases of material things; and that there are some lessons of equal or greater authority which these masters neither taught nor received. And until the school of modern landscape arose, Art had never noted the links of this mighty chain; it mattered not that a fragment lay here and there, no heavenly lightning could descend by it; the landscape of the Venetians was without effect on any contemporary or subsequent schools; it still remains on the continent as useless as if it had never existed; and at this moment German and Italian landscapes, of which no words are scornful enough

to befit the utter degradation,¹ hang in the Venetian Academy in the next room to the Desert of Titian and the Paradise of Tintoret.*

That then which I would have the reader inquire respecting every work of art of undertermined merit submitted to his judgment, is, not whether it be a work of especial grandeur, importance, or power, but whether it have *any* virtue or substance as a link in this chain of truth; whether it have recorded or interpreted anything before unknown; whether it have added one single stone to our heaven-pointing pyramid, cut away one dark bough, or levelled one rugged hillock in our path. This, if it be an honest work of art, it must have done, for no man ever yet worked honestly without giving some such help to his race. God appoints to every one of His creatures a separate mission, and if they discharge it honourably, if they quit themselves like men and faithfully follow that light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as, in its appointed mode and measure, shall shine before men, and be of service constant and holy. Degrees infinite of lustre there must always be, but the weakest among us has a gift,

§ 8. *The value of inferior works of art, how to be estimated.*

* Not the large Paradise, but the Fall of Adam, a small picture chiefly in brown and grey, near Titian's Assumption. Its companion, the Death of Abel, is remarkable as containing a group of trees which Turner, I believe accidentally, has repeated nearly mass for mass in the "Marly." Both are among the most noble works of this or any other master, whether for preciousness of colour or energy of thought.²

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin struck out the words "German . . . degradation," and substituted "recent landscape works of no merit." The Venetian Academy has been rehung more than once since Ruskin wrote the above passage.]

² [See *Guide to the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice*, where Ruskin refers to the two Tintorets as "best possible examples of what, in absolute power of painting, is supremest work, so far as I know, in all the world." For the "Paradise" (or "Adam and Eve"), see below, sec. v. ch. i. § 16, p. 509. For the "Death of Abel," cf. below, sec. vi. ch. i. §§ 11, 23 n., p. 583, 593. For Turner's drawing of "Marly" (engraved in the *Keepsake*), see below, sec. vi. ch. i. § 23. It is not clear what picture Ruskin means by the "Desert" of Titian in the Venetian Academy—presumably the "St. John the Baptist," of which, however, he speaks elsewhere contemptuously; see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 14, and *Guide to the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice* ("black-and-white scabble of landscape").]

however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him, and which worthily used will be a gift also to his race for ever—

“Fool not,” says George Herbert,

“For all may have,
If they dare choose, a glorious life or grave.”¹

If, on the contrary, there be nothing of this freshness achieved, if there be neither purpose nor fidelity in what is done, if it be an envious or powerless imitation of other men’s labours, if it be a display of mere manual dexterity or curious manufacture, or if in any other mode it show itself as having its origin in vanity,—Cast it out. It matters not what powers of mind may have been concerned or corrupted in it, all have lost their savour, it is worse than worthless—perilous,—Cast it out.

Works of art are indeed always of mixed kind, their honesty being more or less corrupted by the various weaknesses of the painter, by his vanity, his idleness, or his cowardice. The fear of doing right has far more influence on art than is commonly thought. That only is altogether to be rejected which is altogether vain, idle, and cowardly; of the rest the rank is to be estimated rather by the purity of their mental than the coined value of it.

Keeping these principles in view, let us endeavour to obtain something like a general view of assistance which has been rendered to our study of nature by the various occurrences of landscape in elder art, and by the more exclusively directed labours of modern schools.

To the ideal landscape of the early religious painters of Italy I have alluded in the concluding chapter of the second volume. It is absolutely right and beautiful in its peculiar application; but its grasp of nature is narrow, and its treatment in most respects too severe and conventional to form a profitable example when the landscape is to be alone the subject

¹ [“The Church Porch,” stanza xv. For Ruskin’s study of George Herbert, see Vol. I. p. 409 *n.*]

§ 9. *Religious landscape of Italy. The admirableness of its completion.*

of thought. The great virtue of it is its entire, exquisite, and humble realization of those objects it selects;¹ in this respect differing from such German imitations of it as I have met with, that there is no effort at any fanciful or ornamental modifications, but loving fidelity to the thing studied. The foreground plants are usually neither exaggerated nor stiffened; they do not form arches or frames or borders; their grace is unconfined, their simplicity understroed. Cima da Conegliano, in his picture in the church of the Madonna dell' Orto at Venice,² has given us the oak, the fig, the beautiful "Erba della Madonna" on the wall, precisely such a bunch of it as may be seen growing at this day on the marble steps of that very church; ivy and other creepers, and a strawberry plant in the foreground, with a blossom, and a berry just set, and one half ripe and one ripe, all patiently and innocently painted from the real thing, and therefore most divine.³ Fra Angelico's use of the Oxalis Acetosella is as faithful in representation as touching in feeling.* The ferns that grow on the walls of Fiesole may be seen in their simple verity on the architecture of Ghirlandajo. The rose, the myrtle, and the lily, the olive

* The triple leaf of this plant, and white flower, stained purple, probably gave it strange typical interest among the Christian painters. Angelico, in using its leaves mixed with daisies in the foreground of his Crucifixion, was perhaps thinking of its peculiar power of quenching thirst.⁴ "I rather imagine that his thoughts, if he had any thought beyond the mystic form of the leaf, were with its Italian name 'Alleluia,' as if the very flowers around the cross were giving glory to God." (*Note by the Printer.*) I was not aware of this Italian name: in the valleys of Dauphiné it is called "Pain du Bon Dieu," and indeed it whitens the grass and rocks of the hill-crests like manna.

¹ [Ruskin in his copy for revision here notes at the side, "Modify by adding about design."]

² [Over the first altar on the right; the subject is "St. John the Baptist, with SS. Peter, Mark, Jerome, and Paul." Ruskin included a photograph of this picture in the "Standard Series" in his Drawing School at Oxford; see *Lectures on Art*, § 150, and for other references to Cima, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 5, *Catalogue of the Educational Series, Guide to the Academy at Venice*, and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 60.]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 5, where Ruskin reaffirms this statement.]

⁴ [For "was perhaps thinking . . . like manna," eds. 3 and 4 read, briefly, "had, I imagine, a view also to its chemical property." For another reference to the flower and its French name, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 5 n. "Did some divinity," Ruskin writes in his diary (Feb. 4, 1844), "and wrote a good letter to my father. Passed a pleasant quiet evening with my mother, and found out my favourite Chamounix plant to be the Oxalis Acetosella—a good day."]

and orange, pomegranate and vine, have received their fairest portraiture where they bear a sacred character; even the common plantains and mallows of the waysides are touched with deep reverence by Raffaelle; and indeed for the perfect treatment or details of this kind, treatment as delicate and affectionate as it is elevated and manly, it is to the works of these schools alone that we can refer. And on this their peculiar excellence I should the more earnestly insist, because it is of a kind altogether neglected by the English school,¹ and with most unfortunate result; many of our best painters missing their deserved rank solely from the want of it, as Gainsborough; and all being more or less checked in their progress or vulgarized in their aim.

It is a misfortune for all honest critics, that hardly any quality of art is independently to be praised, and without reference to the motive from which it resulted, and the place in which it appears; so that no principle can be simply enforced but it shall seem to countenance a vice: while qualification and explanation both weaken the force of what is said, and are not always likely to be with patience received; so also those who desire to misunderstand or to oppose have it always in their power to become obtuse listeners, or specious opponents.² Thus I hardly dare insist upon the virtue of completion, lest I should be supposed a defender of Wouvermans or Gerard Dow; neither can I adequately praise the power of Tintoret, without fearing to be thought adverse to Holbein or Perugino. The fact is, that both finish and impetuosity, specific minuteness and large abstraction, may be the signs of passion, or of its reverse;³ may result from affection or indifference, intellect or dulness. Some men finish from intense love of the beautiful

¹ [For remarks on Turner's failure to paint flowers, see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, under 33 R.]

² [Cf. *Inaugural Address at Cambridge*, § 13, where, referring to the charge that he is apt to contradict himself, Ruskin remarks that, as most matters of any consequence are many-sided, he is "never satisfied that he has handled a subject properly till he has contradicted himself at least three times;" and see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 21, where he assembles a few of the necessary "contradictions" in the application of the subtle principles of "finish" in art.]

³ [In his copy for revision Ruskin italicizes *passion* and *reverse*.]

in the smallest parts of what they do; others in pure incapability of comprehending anything but parts; others to show their dexterity with the brush, and prove expenditure of time. Some are impetuous and bold in their handling, from having great thoughts to express which are independent of detail; others because they have bad taste or have been badly taught; others from vanity, and others from indolence. (Compare Vol. II. sec. i. ch. x. § 4 *n.*)¹ Now both the finish and incompleteness are right where they are the signs of passion or of thought, and both are wrong, and I think the finish the more contemptible of the two, when they cease to be so. The modern Italians² will paint every leaf of a laurel or rosebush, without the slightest feeling of their beauty or character; and without showing one spark of intellect or affection from beginning to end. Anything is better than this; and yet the very highest schools *do* the same thing, or nearly so, but with totally different motives and perceptions, and the result is divine. On the whole, I conceive that the extremes of good and evil lie with the finishers, and that whatever glorious power we may admit in men like Tintoret, whatever attractiveness of method in Rubens, Rembrandt, or, though in far less degree, our own Reynolds, still the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who, in a word, have never despised anything, however small, of God's making. And this is the chief fault of our English landscapists, that they have not the intense all-observing penetration of well-balanced mind; they have not, except in one or two instances, anything of that feeling which Wordsworth shows in the following lines:—

“So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive;—
 Would that the little flowers were born to live
 Conscious of half the pleasure which they give.
 That to this mountain daisy's self were known
*The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
 On the smooth surface of this naked stone.*”³

¹ [This reference was wrongly given in all previous eds.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin altered these words to “There are modern painters who . . .”]

³ [From a piece, written in 1845, entitled by the first line as quoted. Contrasting in *Præterita* (i. ch. xii. § 245) his own attitude to nature with that of Wordsworth,

That is a little bit of good, downright, foreground painting—no mistake about it; daisy, and shadow, and stone texture and all. Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty; and yet, on the other hand, let them beware of finishing, for the sake of finish, all over their picture. The ground is not to be all over daisies, nor is every daisy to have its star-shaped shadow; there is as much finish in the right concealment of things as in the right exhibition of them; and while I demand this amount of specific character where nature shows it, I demand equal fidelity to her where she conceals it. To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint nothing else rightly, but the rule is simple for all that; if the artist is painting something that he knows and loves, as he knows it, because he loves it, whether it be the fair strawberry of Cima, or the clear sky of Francia, or the blazing incomprehensible mist of Turner, he is all right; but the moment he does anything as he thinks it ought to be, because he does not care about it, he is all wrong. He has only to ask himself whether he cares for anything except himself; so far as he does he will make a good picture; so far as he thinks of himself, a vile one. This is the root of the viciousness of the whole French school. Industry they have, learning they have, power they have, feeling they have, yet not so much feeling as ever to force them to forget themselves even for a moment; the ruling motive is invariably vanity, and the picture therefore an abortion.¹

Returning to the pictures of the religious schools, we find that their open skies are also of the highest value. Their preciousness is such that no subsequent schools can by comparison be said to have painted sky at all, but only clouds, or mist,

Ruskin remarks that he “did not weary himself in writing that a daisy could see the beauty of its shadow, but in trying to draw the shadow rightly himself.” Ruskin in his copy for revision marked the rest of § 10, and wrote in the margin, “Note this as one of the important passages leading to Pre-Raphaelitism;” and similarly in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 5, he refers to it as “having been written years before Pre-Raphaelitism was thought of.”]

¹ [Ruskin in his copy for revision altered the last two sentences, thus: “This is, I think, the chief peril for the modern French school. Industry they have, learning they have, power they have, feeling they have, yet rarely so much feeling as ever to force them to forget themselves” (end).]

or blue canopies. The golden sky of Marco Basaiti in the Academy of Venice altogether overpowers and renders valueless that of Titian beside it.¹ Those of Francia in the gallery of Bologna are even more wonderful, because cooler in tone and behind figures in full light. The touches of white light in the horizon of Angelico's Last Judgment are felt and wrought with equal truth. The dignified and simple forms of cloud in repose are often by these painters sublimely expressed, but of changeful cloud form they show no examples. The architecture, mountains, and water of these distances are commonly conventional; motives are to be found in them of the highest beauty, and especially remarkable for quantity and meaning of incident; but they can only be studied or accepted in the particular feeling that produced them. It may generally be observed that whatever has been the result of strong emotion is ill seen unless through the medium of such emotion, and will lead to conclusions utterly false and perilous, if it be made a subject of cold-hearted observance, or an object of systematic imitation. One piece of genuine mountain drawing, however, occurs in the land-scape of Masaccio's Tribute Money.² It is impossible to say what strange results might have taken place in this particular

§ 11. *The open skies of the religious schools, how valuable. Mountain drawing of Masaccio. Landscape of the Bellinis and Giorgione.*

¹ [The pictures are now re-hung, and cannot therefore be identified precisely. The Basaiti is probably "The Agony in the Garden." For another reference to the open skies of Francia, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. v. § 10. For other references to Fra Angelico's "Last Judgment" (No. 38 in the Academy at Florence), see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 23, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 20.]

² [In the Brancacci Chapel of S. Maria del Carmine, Florence. Of Masaccio (1401–1428), Vasari says that "it was he who first attained the clear perception that painting is no other than the close imitation, by drawing and colouring simply, of all the forms presented by nature." Plate 13 in vol. iii. of *Modern Painters* ("First Mountain Naturalism") is from an engraving of the fresco of "The Tribute Money;" for another record, see Josiah Gilbert's *Landscape in Art*, p. 192. Ruskin had been working at Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel in 1845 (see Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. § 10). The following are extracts from his letters to his father in that year:—

FLORENCE, May 31.—I walked into the Medici Chapel for a quarter of an hour, . . . and then spent the afternoon in Or San Michele by the carved shrine of Andrea Orcagna, which I had never seen before. And my present impression is, from what I have seen of Orcagna in the Campo Santo [at Pisa] and here, that Giotto, he, and Michael Angelo are the three great pieces of an artistical Ponte della Trinita, which everybody else has been walking over ever since. But there is one man more to whom I go first thing o'Monday morning, Masaccio, of whose place I have yet no idea. But I think all other

field of art, or how suddenly a great school of landscape might have arisen, had the life of this great painter been prolonged. Of this particular fresco I shall have much to say hereafter. The two brothers Bellini gave a marked and vigorous impulse to the landscape of Venice; of Gentile's architecture I shall speak presently.¹ Giovanni's, though in style less interesting and in place less prominent, occurring chiefly as a kind of frame to his pictures, connecting them with the architecture of the churches for which they were intended, is in refinement of realization, I suppose, quite unrivalled, especially in passages requiring pure gradation, as the hollows of vaultings. That of Veronese would look ghostly beside it; that of Titian lightless. His landscape is occasionally quaint and strange like Giorgione's and as fine in colour, as that behind the Madonna in the Brera gallery at Milan; but a more truthful fragment occurs in the picture in San Francesco della Vigna at Venice; and in the picture of St. Jerome in the church of San Crisostomo, the landscape is as perfect and beautiful as any background may legitimately be, and, as far as it goes, finer than anything of Titian's. It is remarkable for the absolute truth of its sky, whose blue, clear as crystal, and, though deep in tone, bright as the open air, is gradated to the horizon with a cautiousness and finish almost inconceivable; and to obtain

art is derivative from these men, Raffaello and all, except the colourists, which is another affair altogether.

June 2.—I went to Masaccio this morning the first thing. I think there ought to be some sympathy between us, for you know he was called Masaccio from his careless habits of dress and absence of mind. And I was not disappointed. It is a strange thing to see struck out at once by a young man, younger than myself (for Masaccio died at twenty-six), that which Michael Angelo came to study reverently and as a pupil, and which Raffaello not only studied constantly, but of which in his cartoons he copied one of the figures for his St. Paul. I am going to get a sketch of Masaccio's head which is there, painted by himself. It is a kind of mixture of Osborne Gordon and Lorenzo dei Medici (the Magnifico).

For subsequent references to Masaccio, see *Modern Painters*, below, § 19; vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 14, sec. ii. ch. v. §§ 11 n., 18; vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 14; vol. iv. ch. xvii. §§ 50–51; *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 87.]

¹ [For Gentile Bellini's architecture, see below, § 28, and cf. *Guide to the Venetian Academy*. Giovanni Bellini's Madonna at Milan is No. 297 in the Brera; the sense of the passage has been obscured in all previous eds. by the comma being placed after "Giorgione's" instead of after "colour": there is no Giorgione in the Brera. Bellini's picture in the church of San Francesco della Vigna hangs in the Cappella Santa. The St. Jerome is over the first altar on the right of S. Giovanni Crisostomo (see also *Stones of Venice*, Venetian index, where the picture is called "one of the most precious in Italy, and among the most perfect in the world").]

light at the horizon without contradicting the system of chiaroscuro adopted in the figures, which are lighted from the right hand, it is barred across with some glowing white cirri, which, in their turn, are opposed by a single dark horizontal line of lower cloud; and to throw the whole further back, there is a wreath of rain cloud of warmer colour floating above the mountains, lighted on its under edge, whose faithfulness to nature, both in hue, and in its irregular and shattered form, is altogether exemplary. The wandering of the light among the hills is equally studied, and the whole is crowned by the grand realization of the leaves of the fig-tree, alluded to in sec. ii. ch. v. § 8 of the second volume, as well as of the herbage upon the rocks. Considering that with all this care and completeness in the background, there is nothing that is not of meaning and necessity in reference to the figures, and that in the figures themselves the dignity and heavenliness of the highest religious painters are combined with a force and purity of colour, greater, I think, than Titian's, it is a work which may be set before the young artist as in every respect a nearly faultless guide. Giorgione's landscape is inventive and solemn, but owing to the rarity even of his nominal works, I dare not speak of it in general terms. It is certainly conventional, and is rather, I imagine, to be studied for its colour and its motives than its details.

Of Titian and Tintoret I have spoken already.¹ The latter is every way the greater master, never indulging in the exaggerated colour of Titian, and attaining far more perfect light: his grasp of nature is more extensive, and his view of her more imaginative (incidental notices of his landscape will be found in the chapter on Imagination penetrative, of the second volume), but his impatience usually prevents him from carrying out his thoughts as clearly, or realizing with as much substantiality as Titian. In the St. Jerome of the latter in the gallery of the Brera, there

§ 12. *Land-
scape of Titian
and Tintoret.*

¹ [Above, § 6. For later references to Tintoret's landscape, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. viii. § 3, and sec. ii. ch. iii. §§ 16, 19. For other references to Titian's "St. Jerome" (No. 248 in the Brera), see *ibid.*, sec. ii. ch. ii. §§ 19, 23; vol. iv. ch. xx. § 16; vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 13.]

is a superb example of the modes in which the objects of landscape may be either suggested or elaborated according to their place and claim. The larger features of the ground, foliage, and drapery, as well as the lion in the lower angle, are executed with a slightness which admits not of close examination, and which if not in shade, would be offensive to the generality of observers. But on the rock above the lion, where it turns towards the light, and where the eye is intended to dwell, there is a wreath of ivy, of which every leaf is separately drawn with the greatest accuracy and care, and beside it a lizard, studied with equal earnestness, yet always with that right grandeur of manner to which I have alluded in the preface.¹ Tintoret seldom reaches or attempts the elaboration in substance and colour of these objects, but he is even more truth-telling and certain in his rendering of all the great characters of specific form; and as the painter of Space he stands altogether alone among dead masters; being the first who introduced the slightness and confusion of touch which are expressive of the effects of luminous objects seen through large spaces of air, and the principles of aerial colour which have been since carried out in other fields by Turner. I conceive him to be the most powerful painter whom the world has seen,² and that he was prevented from being also the most perfect, partly by untoward circumstances in his position and education, partly by the very fulness and impetuosity of his own mind, partly by the want of religious feeling and its accompanying perception of beauty; for his noble treatment of religious subjects, of which I shall give several examples in the third part, appears to be the result only of that grasp which a great and well-toned intellect necessarily takes of any subject submitted to it, and is wanting in the signs of the more withdrawn and sacred sympathies.*

But whatever advances were made by Tintoret in modes

* Vide *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. chap. i. § 14, and Appendix 11.³

¹ [Above, Preface to 2nd ed., § 26, pp. 32–33.]

² [For a passage from Ruskin's diary in 1845, describing the revelation of Tintoret, see below, p. 210 *n.*]

³ [This note was added in ed. 5.]

of artistical treatment, he cannot be considered as having enlarged the sphere of landscape conception. He took no cognizance even of the materials and motives, so singularly rich in colour, which were for ever around him in his own Venice. All portions of Venetian scenery introduced by him are treated conventionally and carelessly, the architectural characters lost altogether, the sea distinguished from the sky only by a darker green, while of the sky itself only those forms were employed by him which had been repeated again and again for centuries, though in less tangibility and completion. Of mountain scenery he has left, I believe, no example so far carried as that of John Bellini above instanced.

The Florentine and Umbrian schools supply us with no examples of landscape, except that introduced by their earliest masters, gradually overwhelmed under Renaissance architecture.

§ 13. *Schools of Florence, Milan, and Bologna.*

Leonardo's landscape has been of unfortunate effect on art, so far as it has had effect at all. In realization of detail he verges on the ornamental; in his rock outlines he has all the deficiencies and little of the feeling of the earlier men.¹ Behind the "Sacrifice for the Friends" of Giotto at Pisa,² there is a sweet piece of rock incident; a little fountain breaking out at the mountain foot, and trickling away, its course marked by branches of reeds, the latter formal enough certainly, and always in triplets, but still with a sense of nature pervading the whole which is utterly wanting to the rocks of Leonardo in the Holy Family in the Louvre. The latter are grotesque without being ideal, and extraordinary without being impressive. The sketch in the Uffizii of Florence³ has some fine foliage, and there is of course a certain virtue in all the work of a man like Leonardo which I would not depreciate, but our

¹ [For further remarks on Leonardo's landscape, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 86 and Fig. 22.]

² [The frescoes of the history of Job on the Campo Santo at Pisa, formerly ascribed to Giotto, are now identified as the work of Francesco da Volterra (1371). Ruskin was working at Pisa in the autumn of 1845 (see *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi., "The Campo Santo," and Introduction to next vol.).]

³ [No. 1252, an unfinished "Adoration of the Magi," painted on wood in black and white; the trees are the most finished part. For a discussion of this work, see *Leonardo da Vinci*, from the French of Eugène Müntz, 1898, i. 61-79.]

admiration of it in this particular field must be qualified and our following cautious.

No advances were made in landscape, so far as I know, after the time of Tintoret; the power of art ebbed gradually away from the derivative schools; various degrees of cleverness or feeling being manifested in more or less brilliant conventionalism. I once supposed there was some life in the landscape of Domenichino, but in this I must have been wrong. The man who painted the *Madonna del Rosario* and *Martyrdom of St. Agnes* in the gallery of Bologna, is palpably incapable of doing anything good, great, or right, in any field, way, or kind whatsoever.*

Though, however, at this period the general grasp of the schools was perpetually contracting, a gift was given to the world by Claude, for which we are perhaps hardly enough grateful, owing to the very frequency of our after enjoyment of it. He set the sun in

§ 14. *Claude, Salvator, and the Poussins.*

* This is no rash method of judgment, sweeping and hasty as it may appear. From the weaknesses of an artist, or failures, however numerous, we have no right to conjecture his total inability; a time may come when he may rise into sudden strength, or an instance occur when his efforts shall be successful. But there are some pictures which rank not under the head of failures, but of perpetrations or commissions; some things which a man cannot do or say without sealing for ever his character and capacity. The angel holding the cross with his finger in his eye, the roaring red-faced children about the crown of thorns, the blasphemous (I speak deliberately and determinedly) head of Christ upon the handkerchief, and the mode in which the martyrdom of the saint is exhibited (I do not choose to use the expressions which alone could characterize it), are perfect, sufficient, incontrovertible proofs that whatever appears good in any of the doings of such a painter must be deceptive, and that we may be assured that our taste is corrupted and false whenever we feel disposed to admire him. I am prepared to support this position, however uncharitable it may seem; a man may be tempted into a gross sin by passion and forgiven, and yet there are some kinds of sins into which only men of a certain kind can be tempted, and which cannot be forgiven. It should be added, however, that the artistical qualities of these pictures are in every way worthy of the conceptions they realize; I do not recollect any instance of colour or execution so coarse and feelingless.¹

¹ ["I retain unqualified this of Domenichino," wrote Ruskin in the margin of the copy of *Modern Painters* which he kept for revision in later years. For other expressions of similar opinion, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. v. § 17, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 20; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. vi. § 5. J. A. Symonds has remarked on the "clangour of emphasis" in Ruskin's depreciation of Domenichino (*Renaissance in Italy*, ed. 1898, vii. 220); it was the emphasis of an attack upon a then established reputation.]

heaven, and was, I suppose, the first who attempted anything like the realization of actual sunshine in misty air. He gives the first example of the study of nature for her own sake, and allowing for the unfortunate circumstances of his education, and for his evident inferiority of intellect, more could hardly have been expected from him. His false taste, forced composition, and ignorant rendering of detail have perhaps been of more detriment to art than the gift he gave was of advantage. The character of his own mind is singular; I know of no other instance of a man's working from nature continually with the desire of being true, and never attaining the power of drawing so much as a bough of a tree rightly.¹ Salvator, a man originally endowed with far higher power of mind than Claude, was altogether unfaithful to his mission, and has left us, I believe, no gift. Everything that he did is evidently for the sake of exhibiting his own dexterity; there is no love of any kind for any thing; his choice of landscape features is dictated by no delight in the sublime, but by mere animal restlessness or ferocity, guided by an imaginative power of which he could not altogether deprive himself. He has done nothing which others have not done better, or which it would not have been better not to have done; in nature he mistakes distortion for energy, and savageness for sublimity; in man, mendicity for sanctity, and conspiracy for heroism.²

The landscape of Nicolo Poussin shows much power, and is usually composed and elaborated on right principles (compare preface to second edition³), but I am aware of nothing that it has attained of new or peculiar excellence; it is a graceful mixture of qualities to be found in other masters in higher degrees. In finish it is inferior to Leonardo's, in invention to Giorgione's, in truth to Titian's, in grace to Raffaello's. The landscapes of Gaspar have serious feeling and often valuable and solemn colour; virtuous otherwise, they are full of the

¹ [For some general remarks on Ruskin's estimate of Claude, see above, Introduction, p. xxxiv.]

² [For Ruskin's general estimate of Salvator Rosa, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv.]

³ [Page 30, above. For Gaspar Poussin, see index volume.]

most degraded mannerism, and I believe the admiration of them to have been productive of extensive evil among recent schools.

The development of landscape north of the Alps presents us with the same general phases, under modifications dependent partly on less intensity of feeling, partly on diminished availableness of landscape material.

§ 15. *German and Flemish landscape.*

That of the religious painters is treated with the same affectionate completion; but exuberance of fancy sometimes diminishes the influence of the imagination, and the absence of the Italian force of passion admits of more patient and somewhat less intellectual elaboration. A morbid habit of mind is evident in many, seeming to lose sight of the balance and relations of things, so as to become intense in trifles, gloomily minute, as in Albert Dürer;¹ and this mingled with a feverish operation of the fancy, which appears to result from certain habitual conditions of bodily health rather than of mental culture, and of which the sickness, without the power, is eminently characteristic of the modern Germans;² but with all this there are virtues of the very highest order in those schools, and I regret that my knowledge is insufficient to admit of my giving any detailed account of them.

In the landscape of Rembrandt and Rubens, we have the northern parallel to the power of the Venetians. Among the etchings and drawings of Rembrandt, landscape thoughts may be found not unworthy of Titian, and studies from nature of sublime fidelity; but his system of chiaroscuro was inconsistent with the gladness, and his peculiar modes of feeling with the grace, of nature; nor, from my present knowledge, can I name any work on canvas in which he has carried out the dignity of his etched conceptions, or exhibited any perceptiveness of new truths.³

Not so Rubens, who perhaps furnishes us with the first

¹ [For Ruskin's numerous references to Dürer, see index volume to this edition; see, especially, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv., "Dürer and Salvator."]

² [In the copy for revision the words "and of which . . . Germans" are struck out.]

³ [For Ruskin's estimate of Rembrandt, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 16; vol. iv. ch. ii. §§ 11–19; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 10; and *The Cestus of Aglaia*, §§ 49–56.]

instances of complete, unconventional, unaffected landscape. His treatment is healthy, manly, and rational, not very affectionate, yet often condescending to minute and multitudinous detail; always, as far as it goes, pure, forcible, and refreshing, consummate in composition, and marvellous in colour. In the Pitti palace, the best of its two Rubens' landscapes has been placed near a characteristic and highly finished Titian, the Marriage of St. Catherine.¹ Were it not for the grandeur of line and solemn feeling in the flock of sheep and the figures of the latter work, I doubt if all its glow and depth of tone could support its overcharged green and blue against the open breezy sunshine of the Fleming. I do not mean to rank the art of Rubens with that of Titian; but it is always to be remembered that Titian hardly ever paints sunshine, but a certain opalescent twilight which has as much of human emotion as of imitative truth in it,* and that art of this kind must always be liable to some appearance of failure when compared with a less pathetic statement of facts.

* "The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality."²

¹ [In the Sala di Venere. The Rubens is No. 14, "Return from Field Labour;" the Titian, No. 17. There are notes of these two pictures in one of the MS. books filled with Ruskin's account of pictures seen at Florence in 1845. After discussing "La Bella" of Titian in the same gallery, he continues:—

"Beside this there is a Landscape with Holy Family called the 'Marriage of St. Catherine,' which is a far finer picture; it is simple, solemn, and glowing. Whether the white of St. Catherine's dress has been intended for white may be doubted owing to its vivid golden glow, but it is the nearest thing to white in the whole picture. The distance, though deep and beautiful, is overcharged with ultramarine, and looks artificial beside the beautiful atmospheric grey greens of Rubens' distance in the same room, but the picture is nevertheless of the highest quality."

Of the Rubens he writes:—

"The landscape on the whole, which I studied, is the finest that I saw in Florence, though its subject is simple pastoral. It is especially remarkable for the miniature care and Turner-like labour bestowed on the distance, while all the foreground is so slurred and so slightly painted, that the ground seen near looks like a sketch of hay more than anything else. It is, I consider, in every respect a faultless picture, and most instructive in all points of art."

For other references to the landscape of Rubens, see below, sec. ii. ch. iv. § 16 (eds. 1 and 2 only), and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiii. § 20, ch. xviii. §§ 12, 20; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 10.]

² [This quotation, from Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality," was placed in eds. 3 and 4 in the body of the text, after the words "imitative truth in it."]

It is to be noted, however, that the licenses taken by Rubens in particular instances are as bold as his general statements are sincere. In the landscape just instanced the horizon is an oblique line; in the *Sunset* of our own gallery many of the shadows fall at right angles to the light; in a picture in the Dulwich Gallery a rainbow is seen by the spectator at the side of the sun; and in one in the Louvre,¹ the sunbeams come from one part of the sky, and the sun appears in another.²

These bold and frank licenses are not to be considered as detracting from the rank of the painter; they are usually characteristic of those minds whose grasp of nature is so certain and extensive as to enable them fearlessly to sacrifice a truth of actuality to a truth of feeling. Yet the young artist must keep in mind that the painter's greatness consists not in his taking, but in his atoning for them.

Among the professed landscapists of the Dutch school, we find much dexterous imitation of certain kinds of nature, remarkable usually for its persevering rejection of whatever is great, valuable, or affecting in the object studied. Where, however, they show real desire to paint what they saw as far as they saw it, there is of course much in them that is instructive, as in Cuyp and in the etchings of Waterloo,³ which have even very sweet and genuine feeling; and so in some of their architectural painters. But the object of the great body of them is merely to display manual dexterities of one kind or another; and their effect on the public mind is so totally for evil, that though I do not deny the advantage an artist of real judgment may derive

§ 16. *The lower Dutch schools.*

¹ [The words "and in one in the Louvre . . . appears in another" were added in ed. 4.]

² [The picture in the National Gallery is No. 157; for another reference to it, see below, sec. iii. ch. ii. § 9. The picture in the Dulwich Gallery is No. 175, now No. 132, and catalogued as a copy after Rubens; for another reference to the picture, see below, sec. ii. ch. ii. § 12, p. 290. The picture in the Louvre is No. 463, "A Tournament"; cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 23 and Fig. 6.]

³ [Anthonie Waterloo, or Waterloo, painter and engraver, 1609–1676. His etchings had been brought to Ruskin's notice by J. D. Harding, as the following extract from Ruskin's diary shows:—

Feb. 9, 1843.—Harding showed me some etchings of a man named Waterloo which were once thought very valuable; rubbish enough, and yet a feeling of truth in them which is refreshing.]

from the study of some of them, I conceive the best patronage that any monarch could possibly bestow upon the arts, would be to collect the whole body of them into one gallery and burn it to the ground.¹

Passing to the English school, we find a connecting link between them and the Italians formed by Richard Wilson. Had this artist studied under favourable circumstances, there is evidence of his having possessed power enough to produce an original picture; but corrupted by study of the Poussins, and gathering his materials chiefly in their field, the district about Rome—a district especially unfavourable, as exhibiting no pure or healthy nature, but a diseased and overgrown flora, among half-developed volcanic rocks, loose calcareous concretions, and mouldering wrecks of buildings, and whose spirit I conceive to be especially opposed to the natural tone of the English mind,²—his originality was altogether overpowered; and, though he paints in a manly way and occasionally reaches exquisite tones of colour, as in the small and very precious picture belonging to Mr. Rogers, and sometimes manifests some freshness of feeling, as in the Villa of Mæcenæ of our National Gallery,³ yet his pictures are in general mere diluted adaptations from Poussin and Salvator, without the dignity of the one, or the fire of the other.

§ 17. *English school, Wilson and Gainsborough.*

Not so Gainsborough; a great name his, whether of the English or any other school. The greatest colourist since Rubens, and the last, I think, of legitimate colourists; that is to say, of those who were fully acquainted with the power of their material; pure in his English feeling, profound in his seriousness, graceful in his gaiety. There are nevertheless

¹ [Ruskin marked § 16 in his copy for revision, and wrote in the margin, "Retain with notice." Ed. 3 reads "a grand gallery"; this was corrected by his father (in his copy) to "one gallery," and the correction was adopted in ed. 4.]

² [*cf.* the impression of Rome and the Campagna given in a letter to the Rev. T. Dale (Dec. 31, 1840), in Vol. I. p. 382.]

³ [No. 108. The Wilson, formerly in the Rogers collection, was No. 73 in Mrs. Jameson's catalogue (*Companion to the Private Galleries of Art in London*, 1844), where it is described as "Landscape.—An evening effect of deep shadow, and rich glowing light. 16 in. by 20 in." For a later and more sympathetic reference to Wilson, see *The Art of England*, § 166.]

certain deductions to be made from his worthiness which yet I dread to make, because my knowledge of his landscape works is not extensive enough to justify me in speaking of them decisively; but this is to be noted of all that I know, that they are rather motives of feeling and colour than earnest studies; that their execution is in some degree mannered, and always hasty; that they are altogether wanting in the affectionate detail of which I have already spoken; and that their colour is in some measure dependent on a bituminous brown and conventional green, which have more of science than of truth in them. These faults may be sufficiently noted in the magnificent picture presented by him to the Royal Academy,¹ and tested by a comparison of it with the Turner (Llanberis) in the same room. Nothing can be more attractively luminous or ærial than the distance of the Gainsborough, nothing more bold or inventive than the forms of its crags and the diffusion of the broad distant light upon them, where a vulgar artist would have thrown them into dark contrast. But it will be found that the light of the distance is brought out by a violent exaggeration of the gloom in the valley; that the forms of the green trees which bear the chief light are careless and ineffective; that the markings of the crags are equally hasty; and that no object in the foreground has realization enough to enable the eye to rest upon it. The Turner, a much feebler picture in its first impression, and altogether inferior in the quality and value of its individual hues, will yet be found in the end more forcible, because unexaggerated; its gloom is moderate and ærial, its light deep in tone, its colour entirely unconventional, and the forms of its rocks studied with the most devoted care. With Gainsborough terminates the series of painters connected with the elder schools.² By whom, among those yet living or lately lost, the impulse was first given to modern landscape, I attempt not to decide. Such questions are rather invidious than interesting; the particular

¹ [Gainsborough's Diploma-picture is a landscape with sheep at a fountain; Turner's, "Dolbadern Castle, North Wales" (exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1800).]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin has here written on the margin, "Note on Gainsborough and Constable."]

tone or direction of any school seems to me always to have resulted rather from certain phases of national character, limited to particular periods, than from individual teaching, and, especially among moderns, what has been good in each master has been commonly original.

I have already alluded¹ to the simplicity and earnestness of the mind of Constable; to its vigorous rupture with § 18. *Constable,* school laws, and to its unfortunate error on the *Callcott.* opposite side. Unteachableness seems to have been a main feature of his character, and there is corresponding want of veneration in the way he approaches nature herself. His early education and associations were also against him; they induced in him a morbid preference of subjects of a low order. I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw,² and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently. His works are also eminently wanting both in rest and refinement: and Fuseli's jesting compliment³ is too true; for the showery weather, in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of storm and the loveliness of calm weather; it is great-coat weather, and nothing more. There is strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sunbeams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by the wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless and feeble. Yet, with all these deductions, his works are to be deeply respected, as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, frequently successful in cool colour, and realizing certain motives of English scenery with perhaps as much affection as such scenery, unless when regarded through media of feeling derived from higher sources, is calculated to inspire.

On the works of Callcott, high as his reputation stands, I should look with far less respect;⁴ I see not any preference or

¹ [Above, Preface to 2nd ed., § 39 *n.*, p. 45.]

² [In Ruskin's copy for revision this word is italicized. For a defence of Constable against this criticism, see C. R. Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters*, 1855, p. 275.]

³ ["I am going to see Constable; bring me mine umbrella."]

⁴ [For an earlier reference to Callcott, see *Poetry of Architecture*, § 5, in Vol. I. p. 7, and for another, see below, sec. ii. ch. i. §§ 12, 22 *n.*]

affection in the artist; there is no tendency in him with which we can sympathize, nor does there appear any sign of aspiration, effort, or enjoyment in any one of his works. He appears to have completed them methodically, to have been content with them when completed, to have thought them good, legitimate, regular pictures; perhaps in some respects better than nature. He painted everything tolerably, and nothing excellently; he has given us no gift, struck for us no light, and though he has produced one or two valuable works, of which the finest I know is the Marine in the possession of Sir J. Swinburne, they will, I believe, in future have no place among those considered representatives of the English school.

Throughout the range of elder art, it will be remembered we have found no instance of the faithful painting of mountain scenery, except in a faded background of Masaccio's; nothing more than rocky eminences, undulating hills, or fantastic crags, and even these treated altogether under typical forms. The more specific study of mountains seems to have coincided with the more dexterous practice of water-colour; but it admits of doubt whether the choice of subject has been directed by the vehicle, or whether, as I rather think, the tendency of national feeling has not been followed in the use of the most appropriate means. Something is to be attributed to the increased demand for slighter works of art, and much to the sense of the quality of objects now called picturesque, which appears to be exclusively of modern origin. From what feeling the character of middle-age architecture and costume arose, or with what kind of affection their forms were regarded by the inventors, I am utterly unable to guess; but of this I think we may be assured, that the natural instinct and childlike wisdom of those days were altogether different from the modern feeling which appears to have taken its origin in the absence of such objects, and to be based rather on the strangeness of their occurrence than on any real affection for them; and which is certainly so shallow and ineffective as to be

§ 19. *Peculiar tendency of recent landscape.*

instantly and always sacrificed by the majority to fashion, comfort, or economy. Yet I trust that there is a healthy though feeble love of nature mingled with it; nature pure, separate, felicitous, which is also peculiar to the moderns; and as signs of this feeling, or ministers to it, I look with veneration upon many works which, in a technical point of view, are of minor importance.

I have been myself indebted for much teaching and more delight to those of the late G. Robson.¹ Weaknesses there are in them manifold, much bad drawing, much forced colour, much over-finish, little of what artists call composition; but there is thorough affection for the thing drawn; they are serious and quiet in the highest degree, certain qualities of atmosphere and texture in them have never been excelled, and certain facts of mountain scenery never but by them expressed; as, for instance, the stillness and depth of the mountain tarns, with the reversed imagery of their darkness signed across by the soft lines of faintly touching winds; the solemn flush of the brown fern and glowing heath under evening light; the purple mass of mountains far removed, seen against clear still twilight. With equal gratitude I look to the drawings of David Cox,² which, in spite of their loose and seemingly careless execution, are not less serious in their meaning, nor less important in their truth. I must, however, in reviewing those modern works in which certain modes of execution are particularly manifested, insist especially on this general principle, applicable to all times of art; that what is usually called the style or manner of an artist is, in all good art, nothing but the best means of getting at the particular truth which the artist wanted; it is not a mode peculiar to himself of getting at the same truths as other men, but the *only* mode of getting

§ 20. *G. Robson, D. Cox.*
False use of the term "style."

¹ [George Fennel Robson, member of the Old Water-Colour Society, born 1790, had died in 1833. In the *Art of England*, Ruskin coupled the names of Robson and Fielding with Lecture vi. on "The Hill Side"; see §§ 176–177 for his appreciation of Robson's drawings, and cf. *Academy Notes*, 1875, and *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, pref. § 28. See also in this volume, pt. ii. sec. v. ch. ii. § 12, p. 535, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvi. § 26, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 2.]

² [For Cox, see above, pref. to 2nd ed. § 40 *n.*, p. 46.]

the particular facts he desires, and which mode, if others had desired to express those facts, they also must have adopted. All habits of execution persisted in under no such necessity, but because the artist has invented them, or desires to show his dexterity in them, are utterly base; for every good painter finds so much difficulty in reaching the end he sees and desires, that he has no time nor power left for playing tricks on the road to it; he catches at the easiest and best means he can get; it is possible that such means may be singular, and then it will be said that his *style* is strange; but it is not a style at all, it is the saying of a particular thing in the only way in which it possibly can be said.¹ Thus the reed pen outline and peculiar touch of Prout, which are frequently considered as mere manner, are in fact the only means of expressing the crumbling character of stone which the artist loves and desires. That character never has been expressed except by him, nor will it ever be expressed except by his means. And it is of the greatest importance to distinguish this kind of necessary and virtuous manner from the conventional manners very frequent in derivative schools, and always utterly to be contemned, wherein an artist, desiring nothing and feeling nothing, executes, everything in his own particular mode, and teaches emulous scholars how to do with difficulty what might have been done with ease. It is true that there are sometimes instances in which great masters have employed different means of getting at the same end, but in these cases their choice has been always of those which to them appeared the shortest and most complete: their practice has never been prescribed by affection or continued from habit, except so far as must be expected from such weakness as is common to all men; from hands that necessarily do most readily what they are most accustomed to do, and minds always liable to prescribe to the hands that which they can do most readily.²

¹ [With these remarks on *style* in art, cf. *Letters to a College Friend*, iv. § 2 (in Vol. I. p. 421), and *Catalogue of the Sketches and Drawings by Turner*, 1857–58, Introduction, § 12.]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin has marked as “very good” the paragraphs, “It is true . . . readily.” On the other hand, he notes the apology for Cox’s loose and blotted handling as “wrong,” and on the further criticisms makes the general

The recollection of this will keep us from being offended with the loose and blotted handling of David Cox. There is no other means by which his object could be attained; the looseness, coolness, and moisture of his herbage, the rustling crumpled freshness of his broad-leaved weeds, the play of pleasant light across his deep heathered moor or plashing sand, the melting of fragments of white mist into the dropping blue above; all this has not been fully recorded except by him, and what there is of accidental in his mode of reaching it, answers gracefully to the accidental part of nature herself. Yet he is capable of more than this, and if he suffers himself uniformly to paint beneath his capability, that which began in feeling must necessarily end in manner. He paints too many small pictures, and perhaps has of late permitted his peculiar execution to be more manifest than is necessary. Of this, he is himself the best judge. For almost all faults of this kind the public are answerable, not the painter. I have alluded to one of his grander works—such as I should wish always to see him paint—in the preface (p. 46 § 40 *n.*); another, I think still finer, a red Sunset on distant hills, almost unequalled for truth and power of colour, was painted by him several years ago, and remains, I believe, in his own possession.

The deserved popularity of Copley Fielding has rendered it less necessary for me to allude frequently to his works in the following pages than it would otherwise have been; more especially as my own sympathies and enjoyments are so entirely directed in the channel which his art has taken, that I am afraid of trusting them too far.¹ Yet I may, perhaps, be permitted to

§ 21. *Copley
Fielding.
Phenomena of
distant colour.*

remarks, "All drawn mild after this because the men were living." These annotations are dated by Ruskin "1864"; with them *cf.* above, Introduction, p. xlii. At a later time, looking back to these additional notices of then contemporary artists, he found, however, "the display of my new Italian information, and assertion of critical acumen, prevail sorrowfully over the expressions of gratitude with which I ought to have described the help and delight they had given me" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 174, and *cf. Lectures on Art*, § 8). But Ruskin's estimates of the art of 1840 to 1850 varied according to his standard of comparison. In *Academy Notes* for 1875 he looked back upon those years as halcyon days (see *s.* No. 265); but in a note added in 1883 to the "Addenda" in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., he found a since "incalculable advance."]

¹ [For the numerous references to Fielding in *Modern Painters* and elsewhere, consult index volume to this edition, and see especially *Art of England*, Lecture vi.

speak of myself so far as I suppose my own feelings to be representative of those of a class; and I suppose that there are many who, like myself, at some period of their life have derived more intense and healthy pleasure from the works of this painter than of any other whatsoever; healthy, because always based on his faithful and simple rendering of nature, and that of very lovely and impressive nature, altogether freed from coarseness, violence, or vulgarity. Various references to that which he has attained will be found subsequently: what I am now about to say respecting what he has *not* attained, is not in depreciation of what he has accomplished, but in regret at his suffering powers of a high order to remain in any measure dormant.

He indulges himself too much in the use of crude colour. Pure cobalt, violent rose, and purple, are of frequent occurrence in his distances; pure siennas and other browns in his foregrounds, and that not as expressive of lighted but of local colour. The reader will find in the following chapters that I am no advocate for subdued colouring; but crude colour is not bright colour, and there was never a noble or brilliant work of colour yet produced, whose real power did not depend on the subduing of its tints rather than the elevation of them.

It is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons to learn in art, that the warm colours of distance, even the most glowing, are subdued by the air so as in nowise to resemble the same colour seen on a foreground object; so that the rose of sunset on clouds or mountains has a grey in it which distinguishes it from the rose colour of the leaf of a flower; and the mingling of this grey of distance without in the slightest degree taking away the expression of the intense and perfect purity of the colour in and by itself, is perhaps the last attainment of the great landscape colourist. In the same way the blue of distance, however intense, is not the blue of a bright a blue flower; and it is not distinguished from it by different texture merely, but by a certain intermixture and undercurrent of warm colour, which are altogether wanting in many of the blues of

Fielding had been Ruskin's drawing-master (see *Præterita*, i. §§ 239, 241, 243), and was on terms of personal friendship with him and his father (*ibid.* § 238).]

Fielding's distances; and so of every bright distant colour; while in foreground, where colours may be, and ought to be, pure, they yet become expressive of light only where there is the accurate fitting of them to their relative shadows which we find in the works of Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, Veronese, Turner, and all other great colourists. Of this fitting of light to shadow Fielding is altogether regardless, so that his foregrounds are constantly assuming the aspect of overcharged local colour instead of sunshine, and his figures and cattle look transparent.

Again, the finishing of Fielding's foregrounds, as regards their drawing, is minute without accuracy, § 22. *Beauty of mountain foreground.* multitudinous without thought, and confused without mystery. Where execution is seen to be in measure accidental, as in Cox, it may be received as representative of what is accidental in nature; but there is no part of Fielding's foreground that is accidental; it is evidently worked and re-worked, dotted, rubbed, and finished with great labour. And where the virtue, playfulness, and freedom of accident are thus removed, one of two virtues must be substituted for them: either we must have the deeply studied and imaginative foreground, of which every part is necessary to every other, and whose every spark of light is essential to the wellbeing of the whole, of which the foregrounds of Turner in the *Liber Studiorum* are the most eminent examples I know; or else we must have in some measure the botanical faithfulness and realization of the early masters. Neither of these virtues is to be found in Fielding's. Its features, though grouped with feeling, are yet scattered and unessential. Any one of them might be altered in many ways without doing harm; there is no proportioned, necessary, unalterable relation among them; no evidence of invention or of careful thought; while on the other hand there is no botanical or geological accuracy, nor any point on which the eye may rest with thorough contentment in its realization.

It seems strange that to an artist of so quick feeling the details of a mountain foreground should not prove irresistibly

attractive, and entice him to greater accuracy of study. There is not a fragment of its living rock, nor a tuft of its heathery herbage, that has not adorable manifestations of God's working thereupon. The harmonies of colour among the native lichens are better than Titian's; the interwoven bells of campanula and heather are better than all the arabesques of the Vatican;¹ they need no improvement, arrangement, nor alteration, nothing but love: and every combination of them is different from every other, so that a painter need never repeat himself if he will only be true. Yet all these sources of power have been of late entirely neglected by Fielding. There is evidence through all his foregrounds of their being mere home inventions, and, like all home inventions, they exhibit perpetual resemblances and repetitions; the painter is evidently embarrassed without his rutted road in the middle, and his boggy pool at the side, which pool he has of late painted in hard lines of violent blue; there is not a stone, even of the nearest and most important, which has its real lichens upon it, or a studied form, or anything more to occupy the mind than certain variations of dark and light browns. The same faults must be found with his present painting of foliage, neither the stems nor leafage being ever studied from nature; and this is the more to be regretted, because in the earlier works of the artist there was much admirable drawing, and even yet his power is occasionally developed in his larger works, as in a Bolton Abbey on canvas, which was—I cannot say, exhibited,—but was in the rooms of the Royal Academy in 1843.* I should have made the

* It appears not to be sufficiently understood by those artists who complain acrimoniously of their position on the Academy walls, that the Academicians have in their own rooms a right to the line and the best places near it; in their taking this position there is no abuse nor injustice; but the Academicians should remember that with their rights they have their duties, and their duty is to determine, among the works of artists not belonging to their body, those which are most likely to advance public knowledge and judgment, and to give these the best places next their own; neither would it detract from their dignity if they occasionally ceded a square

¹ [Cf. above, pt. i. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 9, p. 92.]

preceding remarks with more hesitation and diffidence, but that, from a comparison of works of this kind with the slighter ornaments of the water-colour rooms, it seems evident that the painter is not unaware of the deficiencies of these latter, and concedes something of what he would himself desire to what he has found to be the feeling of a majority of his admirers. This is a dangerous modesty, and especially so in these days when the judgment of the many is palpably as artificial as their feeling is cold.

There is much that is instructive and deserving of high praise in the sketches of De Wint.¹ Yet it is to be § 23. *De Wint.* remembered that even the pursuit of truth, however determined, will have results limited and imperfect when its chief motive is the pride of being true; and I fear that these works testify more accuracy of eye and experience of colour than exercise of thought. Their truth of effect is often purchased at too great an expense by the loss of all beauty of form, and of the higher refinements of colour;

even of their own territory, as they did gracefully and rightly, and I am sorry to add, disinterestedly, to the picture of Paul de la Roche in 1844. Now the Academicians know perfectly well that the mass of portrait which encumbers their walls at half height is worse than useless, seriously harmful to the public taste; and it was highly criminal (I use the word advisedly) that the valuable and interesting work of Fielding, of which I have above spoken, should have been placed where it was, above three rows of eye-glasses and waistcoats. A very beautiful work of Harding's was treated, either in the same or the following Exhibition, with still greater injustice. Fielding's was merely put out of sight; Harding's where its faults were conspicuous and its virtues lost. It was an Alpine scene, of which the foreground, rocks, and torrents were painted with unrivalled fidelity and precision; the foliage was dexterous, the aërial gradations of the mountains tender and multitudinous, their forms carefully studied and very grand. The blemish of the picture was a buff-coloured tower with a red roof: singularly meagre in detail, and conventionally relieved from a mass of gloom. The picture was placed where nothing but this tower could be seen.²

¹ [For De Wint, see *Letters to a College Friend*, v. § 4, in Vol. I. p. 426; for minor references, see index volume to this edition.]

² [The picture of Paul de la Roche was "The Holy Family," No. 303 in the catalogue. For another reference to that painter, see *The Cestus of Aglaia*, § 2. The Harding—"The Mountain Pass"—was in the exhibition of 1845, No. 529. For later criticisms by Ruskin on the hanging at the Royal Academy, see *Academy Notes*, 1856, 1857, 1859, and 1875. Fielding's "Bolton Abbey" was No. 12 in the Academy of 1842 (not 1843); *cf.* p. 482.]

deficiencies, however, on which I shall not insist, since the value of the sketches, as far as they go, is great: they have done good service and set good example, and whatever their failings may be, there is evidence in them that the painter has always done what he believed to be right.

The influence of the masters of whom we have hitherto spoken is confined to those who have access to their actual works, since the particular qualities in which they excel are in no wise to be rendered by the engraver. Those of whom we have next to speak are known to the public in a great measure by help of the engraver; and while their influence is thus very far extended, their modes of working are perhaps, in some degree, modified by the habitual reference to the future translation into light and shade; reference which is indeed beneficial in the care it induces respecting the arrangement of the chiaroscuro and the explanation of the forms, but which is harmful, so far as it involves a dependence rather on quantity of picturesque material than on substantial colour or simple treatment, and as it admits of indolent diminution of size and slightness of execution.

We should not be just to the present works of J. D. Harding,¹ unless we took this influence into account. Some

¹ [From Harding also, Ruskin had drawing lessons: see note to *Letters to a College Friend*, v. § 3, Vol. I. p. 425. For Ruskin's many references to this painter, see index volume to this edition. Harding had been his travelling companion in Italy during part of the tour in 1845 (the year before the publication of these passages). The following extract from one of the Ruskin's letters home at that time illustrates some of the criticisms in § 24:—

BAVENO, Aug. 26.—I am very glad to have Harding with me, and we are going to Venice together; but I am in a curious position with him—being actually writing criticisms on his works for publication, while I dare not say the same things openly to his face; not because I would not, but because he does not like blame, and it does him no good. And yet on my side, it discourages me a little; for Harding does such pretty things, such desirable things to have, such desirable things to show, that when I looked at my portfolio afterwards, and saw the poor result of the immense time I have spent—the brown, laboured, melancholy, uncovetable things that I have struggled through, it vexed me mightily; and yet I am sure I am on a road that leads higher than his, but it is infernally steep, and one tumbles on it perpetually. I beat him dead, however, at a sketch of a sky this afternoon. There is one essential difference between us: his sketches are always pretty because he balances their parts together, and considers them as pictures; mine are always ugly, for I consider my sketch only as a written note of certain *facts*, and those I put down in the rudest and clearest way as many as possible.

years back none of our artists realised more laboriously, or obtained more substantial colour and texture; but¹ partly from the habit of making slight and small drawings for engravers, and partly also, I imagine, from an overstrained seeking after appearances of dexterity in execution, his drawings have of late years become both less solid and less complete; not, however, without attaining certain brilliant qualities in exchange which are very valuable in the treatment of some of the looser portions of subject. Of the extended knowledge and various powers of this painter, frequent instances will be noted in the following pages. Neither, perhaps, are rightly estimated among artists, owing to a certain coldness of sentiment in his choice of subject, and a continual preference of the picturesque to the impressive; proved perhaps in nothing so distinctly as in the little interest usually attached to his skies, which, if ærial and expressive of space and movement, content him, though destitute of story, power, or character: an exception must be made in favour of the very grand Sunrise on the Swiss Alps, exhibited in 1844,² wherein the artist's real power was in some measure displayed, though I am convinced he is still capable of doing far greater things. So also in his foliage he is apt to sacrifice the dignity of his trees to their wildness, and lose the forest in the copse; neither is he at all accurate enough in his expression of species or realization of near portions. These are deficiencies, be it observed, of sentiment, not of perception, as there are few who equal him in rapidity of seizure of material truth.

Harding's are all for impression; mine all for information. Hence my habits of copying are much more accurate than his; and when, as this afternoon, there is anything to be done which is not arrangeable nor manageable, I shall beat him. The sky of Ruskin's which "beat Harding dead" may be the "Sunset at Baveno," given in Vol. II., opposite p. 232.]

¹ [Instead of "colour and texture; but partly," eds. 3 and 4 read, "colour and texture; a large drawing in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham, is of great value as an example of his manner at the period; a manner not only careful, but earnest, and free from any kind of affectation. Partly. . . ."]

² ["Berne: Morning as it sometimes wakes among the Alps," No. 26 in the Old Water-Colour Society's Exhibition of 1845 (not 1844). The catalogue contained a long description by the artist of a stormy sunrise seen by him on Sept. 27, 1844, near Berne.]

Very extensive influence in modern art must be attributed to the works of Samuel Prout; and as there are some circumstances belonging to his treatment of architectural subjects which it does not come within the sphere of the following chapters to examine, I shall endeavour to note the more important of them here.¹

§ 25. *Samuel Prout. Early painting of architecture, how deficient.*

Let us glance back for a moment to the architectural drawing of earlier times. Before the time of the Bellinis at Venice, and of Ghirlandajo at Florence, I believe there are no examples of anything beyond conventional representation of architecture; often rich, quaint, and full of interest, as Memmi's abstract of the Duomo at Florence at S^{ta}. Maria Novella,² but not to be classed with any genuine efforts at representation. It is much to be regretted that the power and custom of introducing well-drawn architecture should have taken place only when architectural taste had been itself corrupted, and that the architecture introduced by Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Francia, and the other patient and powerful workmen of the fifteenth century, is exclusively of the Renaissance styles; while their drawing of it furnishes little that is of much interest to the architectural draughtsman as such, being always governed by a reference to its subordinate position; so that all forceful shadow and play of colour are (most justly) surrendered for quiet and uniform hues of grey, and chiaroscuro of extreme simplicity. Whatever they chose to do they did with consummate grandeur; note especially the chiaroscuro of the square window of Ghirlandajo's, which so much delighted Vasari,³ in S^{ta}. Maria Novella; and the

¹ [From here to the end of § 30 is marked by Ruskin in his copy for revision, and noted "Episode on Architectural Drawing." The episode was one result of his "new Italian information" acquired during his tour of 1845.]

² [The fresco depicting the Triumph of the Church, on the south wall of the Spanish church: see *Mornings in Florence*, ch. iv. The attribution of the frescoes to Memmi is not now maintained; they are supposed to be the design of Taddeo Gaddi, executed by some other painter, perhaps Andrea Fiorentino. Ruskin had been studying in Santa Maria Novella in 1845 (see *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 126, and Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii.).]

³ ["In the second story is the Birth of the Virgin, painted with extraordinary care, and among other remarkable parts of this work may be mentioned a window of the building which gives light to the room, and which deceives all who look at it"]

daring management of a piece of the perspective in the Salutation, opposite; where he has painted a flight of stairs, descending in front, though the picture is twelve feet above the eye. And yet this grandeur, in all these men, results rather from the general power obtained in their drawing of the figure, than from any definite knowledge respecting the things introduced in these accessory parts; so that while in some points it is impossible for any painter to equal these accessories, unless he were in all respects as great as Ghirlandajo or Bellini, in others it is possible for him, with far inferior powers, to attain a representation both more accurate and more interesting.

In order to arrive at the knowledge of these we must briefly take a note of a few of the modes in which architecture itself is agreeable to the mind, especially of the influence upon the character of the building which is to be attributed to the signs of age.¹

It is evident, first, that if the design of the building be originally bad, the only virtue it can ever possess. will be in signs of antiquity. All that in this world enlarges the sphere of affection or imagination is to be revered, and all those circumstances enlarge it which strengthen our memory or quicken our conception of the dead. Hence it is no light sin to destroy anything that is old; more especially because, even with the aid of all obtainable records of the past, we, the living, occupy a space of too large importance and interest in our own eyes; we look upon the world too much as our own, too much as if we had possessed it and should possess it for ever, and forget that it is a mere hostelry, of which we occupy the apartments for a time, which others better than we have sojourned in before, who are now where we should desire to be with them. Fortunately for mankind, as some counterbalance to that

§ 26. *Effects of age upon buildings, how far desirable.*

(*Lives of the Artists*, Bohn's ed., 1871, ii. 210). Later, Ruskin criticized severely this fresco and the others by Ghirlandajo in the apse of S. Maria Novella, in *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 17 *seqq.*]

¹ [This subject was afterwards developed in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. vi., "The Lamp of Memory": see especially §§ 9, 20.]

wretched love of novelty which originates in selfishness, shallowness, and conceit, and which especially characterizes all vulgar minds, there is set in the deeper places of the heart such affection for the signs of age that the eye is delighted even by injuries which are the work of time; not but that there is also real and absolute beauty in the forms and colours so obtained, for which the original lines of the architecture, unless they have been very grand indeed, are well exchanged; so that there is hardly any building so ugly but that it may be made an agreeable object by such appearances. It would not be easy, for instance, to find a less pleasing piece of architecture than the portion of the front of Queen's College, Oxford, which has just been restored;¹ yet I believe that few persons could have looked with total indifference on the mouldering and shattered surface of the oolite limestone, previous to its restoration. If, however, the character of the building consists in minute detail or multitudinous lines, the evil or good effect of age upon it must depend in great measure on the kind of art, the material, and the climate. The Parthenon, for instance, would be injured by any markings which interfered with the contours of its sculptures; and any lines of extreme purity, or colours of original harmony and perfection, are liable to injury, and are ill exchanged for mouldering edges or brown weatherstains.

But as all architecture is, or ought to be, meant to be durable, and to derive part of its glory from its antiquity, all art that is liable to mortal injury from effects of time is therein out of place, and this is another reason for the principle I have asserted in the second section of this part, page 337. I do not at this moment recollect a single instance of any very fine building which is not improved, up to a certain period, by all its signs of age; after which period, like all other human works, it necessarily declines; its decline being, in almost all ages and countries, accelerated

¹ [Built by Wren and his pupil, Hawksmoor, the foundation-stone being laid on Feb. 6, 1714.]

by neglect and abuse in its time of beauty, and alteration or restoration in its time of age.¹

Thus I conceive that all buildings dependent on colour, whether of mosaic or painting, have their effect improved by the richness of the subsequent tones of age; for there are few arrangements of colour so perfect but that they are capable of improvement by some softening and blending of this kind: with mosaic, the improvement may be considered as proceeding almost so long as the design can be distinctly seen: with painting, so long as the colours do not change or chip off.

Again, upon all forms of sculptural ornament the effect of time is such, that if the design be poor, it will enrich it; if overcharged, simplify it; if harsh and violent, soften it; if smooth and obscure, exhibit it; whatever faults it may have are rapidly disguised, whatever virtue it has still shines and steals out in the mellow light; and this to such an extent, that the artist is always liable to be tempted to the drawing of details in old buildings as of extreme beauty, which look cold and hard in their architectural lines; and I have never yet seen any restoration or cleaned portion of a building whose effect was not inferior to the weathered parts, even to those of which the design had in some parts almost disappeared. On the front of the Church of San Michele at

¹ [Ruskin had the subject of the destruction and restoration of works of art brought vividly home to him during his Italian tour in 1845. The following passage from a letter to his father shows his temper towards it:—

May 13, 1845.—I have just been turned out of the Campo Santo by a violent storm, and sit down in my little room in a state of embarrassment and deseperance; if one may coin a word to express not despair, but a despairful condition. For the frescoes are certainly much injured even since I was here, and some heads have totally disappeared since the description was written for Murray's guide, and while for want of glass and a good roof these wonderful monuments are rotting every day, the wretches have put scaffolding up round the baptistery, and are putting modern work of the coarsest kind instead of the fine old decayed marble. I do believe that I shall live to see the ruin of everything good and great in the world, and have nothing left to hope for but the fires of the judgment to shrivel up the cursed idiocy of mankind. . . . Why wasn't I born fifty years ago? I should have saved much and seen more, and left the world something like faithful reports of the things that have been, but it is too late now. . . . God preserve us, and give us leave to paint pictures and build churches in heaven that shan't want repairs.

Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. i. § 7 n.]

Lucca,¹ the mosaics have fallen out of half the columns, and lie in weedy ruin beneath; in many, the frost has torn large masses of the entire coating away, leaving a scarred unsightly surface. Two of the shafts of the upper star window are eaten entirely away by the sea-wind, the rest have lost their proportions; the edges of the arches are hacked into deep hollows, and cast indented shadows on the weed-grown wall. The process has gone too far, and yet I doubt not but that this building is seen to greater advantage now than when first built, always with exception of one circumstance; that the French shattered the lower wheel window, and set up in front of it an escutcheon with “Libertas” upon it, which abomination of desolation² the Lucchese have not yet had human-heartedness enough to pull down.³

Putting therefore the application of architecture as an

¹ [Ruskin was at Lucca in 1845, and there “began the course of architectural study which reduced under accurate law the vague enthusiasm of his childish taste” (see Epilogue to vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*, § 5, and *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 115). He sketched in water-colour on the spot part of the facade of San Michele. The drawing (from which the accompanying plate is reproduced) is No. 84 in the Educational Series of the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford. A portion of the upper part of the facade was drawn and etched by Ruskin for *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Plate vi.), where the architectural features of the building are discussed (ch. iii.). In 1862 the whole facade was rebuilt, as described in the *Catalogue of the Educational Series*. “The church is now only a modern architect’s copy,” says Ruskin in a note to Miss A. C. Owen’s, *The Art Schools of Mediaeval Christendom*, 1876, p. 112. Ruskin made his drawing in May 1845. In a letter to his father (May 6), of which other portions are quoted in the Introduction to Vol. IV., he describes his sitting out in the afternoons to draw the rich ornaments on the façade, and continues:—

“It is white marble, inlaid with figures cut an inch deep in green porphyry, and framed with carved, rich, hollow marble tracery. I have been up all over it and on the roof to examine it in detail. Such marvellous variety and invention in the ornaments and strange character. Hunting is the principal subject; little Nimrods with short legs and long lances, blowing *tremendous* trumpets, and with dogs which appear running up and down the round arches like flies, heads uppermost, and game of all descriptions, boars chiefly, but stags, tapirs, griffins, and dragons, and indescribably innumerable, all cut out in hard green porphyry and inlaid in the marble. The frost, where the details are fine, has got underneath the inlaid pieces, and has in many places rent them off, tearing up the intermediate marble together with them, so as to *uncoat* the building an inch thick. Fragments of the carved porphyry are lying about everywhere. I have brought away three or four and restored *all* I could to their places.]

² [Matthew, xxiv. 15; Mark, xiii. 14.]

³ [Ruskin described this barbarism in a letter to his father (May 9, 1845):—

“There is an exquisite star window at the end of the Church of St. Michele, carved like lace. The French nailed up against it, destroying all the centre for ever, a great Louis-quatorze escutcheon (which these wretches of Lucchese



J. H. H. H.

AT&S & Co. So.

San Michele, Lucca, (1845.)

accessory out of the question, and supposing our object to be the exhibition of the most impressive qualities of the building itself, it is evidently the duty of the draughtsman to represent it under those conditions, and with that amount of age-mark upon it which may best exalt and harmonize the sources of its beauty. This is no pursuit of mere picturesqueness; it is true following out of the ideal character of the building. Nay, far greater dilapidation than this may in portions be exhibited; for there are beauties of other kinds, not otherwise attainable, brought out by advanced dilapidation: but when the artist suffers the mere love of ruinousness to interfere with his perception of the *art* of the building, and substitutes rude fractures and blotting stains for all its fine chiselling and determined colour, he has lost the end of his own art.

So far of ageing; next of effects of light and colour. It is, I believe, hardly enough observed among architects, that the same decorations are of totally different effect according to their position and the time of day. A moulding which is of value on a building facing south, where it takes dark shadows from steep sun, may be utterly ineffective if placed west or east; and a moulding which is chaste and intelligible in shade on a north side may be grotesque, vulgar, or confused when it takes black shadows on the south. Farther, there is a time of day in which every architectural decoration is seen to best advantage, and certain times in which its peculiar force and character are best explained. Of these niceties the architect takes little cognizance, as he must in some sort calculate on the effect of ornament at all times: but to the artist they are of infinite importance, and especially for this reason: that there is always much detail on buildings which cannot be drawn as such, which is too far off, or too minute, and which must consequently be set down in shorthand of some kind

§ 27. Effects of light, how necessary to the understanding of detail.

haven't spirit enough to pull down) with 'Libertas' upon it, and they have mosaiced a tricolor into the middle of an inscription of the fifteenth century in the cathedral. I'm only afraid they haven't human soul enough even to be damned."]

or another; and, as it were, an abstract, more or less philosophical, made of its general heads. Of the style of this abstract, of the lightness, confusion, and mystery necessary in it, I have spoken elsewhere;¹ at present I insist only on the arrangement and matter of it. All good ornament and all good architecture are capable of being put into shorthand; that is, each has a perfect system of parts, principal and subordinate, of which, even when the complemental details vanish in distance, the system and anatomy yet remain visible, so long as anything is visible: so that the divisions of a beautiful spire shall be known as beautiful even till their last line vanishes in blue mist; and the effect of a well-designed moulding shall be visibly disciplined, harmonious, and inventive, as long as it is seen to be a moulding at all. Now the power of the artist of marking this character depends not on his complete knowledge of the design, but on his experimental knowledge of its salient and bearing parts, and of the effects of light and shadow, by which their saliency is best told. He must therefore be prepared, according to his subject, to use light steep or level, intense or feeble, and out of the resulting chiaroscuro select those peculiar and hinging points on which the rest are based, and by which all else that is essential may be explained.

The thoughtful command of all these circumstances constitutes the real architectural draughtsman; the habits of executing everything either under one kind of effect or in one manner, or of using unintelligible and meaningless abstracts of beautiful designs, are those which most commonly take the place of it and are the most extensively esteemed.*

Let us now proceed with our view of those artists who have devoted themselves more peculiarly to architectural subject.

* I have not given any examples in this place, because it is difficult to explain such circumstances of effect without diagrams; I purpose entering into fuller discussion of the subject with the aid of illustration.²

¹ [*Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iv. §§ 14 *seqq.* That volume had appeared six months before the edition of the first volume in which these passages first occurred.]

² [*Cf.* below, § 30 *n.*]

Foremost among them stand Gentile Bellini¹ and Vittor Carpaccio,² to whom we are indebted for the only existing faithful statements of the architecture of Old Venice; and who are the only authorities to whom we can trust in conjecturing the former beauty of those few desecrated fragments, the last of which are now being rapidly swept away by the idiocy of modern Venetians.

§ 28. *Architectural painting of Gentile Bellini and Vittor Carpaccio;*

Nothing can be more careful, nothing more delicately finished, or more dignified in feeling, than the works of both these men; and as architectural evidence they are the best we could have had, all the gilded parts being gilt in the picture, so that there can be no mistake or confusion of them with yellow colour on light, and all the frescoes or mosaics given with the most absolute precision and fidelity. At the same time they are by no means examples of perfect architectural drawing; there is little light and shade in them of any kind, and none whatever of the thoughtful observance of temporary effect of which we have just been speaking; so that, in rendering the character of the relieved parts, their solidity, depth, or gloom, the representation fails altogether, and it is moreover lifeless from its very completion, both the signs of age and the effects of use and habitation being utterly rejected; rightly so, indeed, in these instances (all the architecture of these painters being in background to religious subject), but wrongly so if we look to the architecture alone. Neither is there anything like aerial perspective attempted; the employment of actual gold in the decoration of all the distances, and the entire realization of their details, as far as is possible on the scale compelled by perspective, being alone sufficient to prevent this, except in the hands of painters far more practised in effect

¹ [Gentile Bellini's architectural painting came to be discussed in more detail in the *Guide to the Principal Pictures in the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice*, ed. 1891, pp. 20–25. Bellini's Church of St. Mark's is in that gallery.]

² [Ruskin's first mention of a painter whom in after years he came to regard as "faultless" and "consummate": see *Verona and its Rivers*, § 22; *Lectures on Art*, § 73; letter to Sir Edward Burne-Jones of May 13, 1869; *Guide to the Academy at Venice*; *St. Mark's Rest*; and *Fors Clavigera* for 1872, 1873, 1876, and 1877. In the *Stones of Venice* Carpaccio is referred to, as here, only for his interesting pieces of Venetian architecture.]

than either Gentile or Carpaccio. But with all these discrepancies, Gentile Bellini's Church of St. Mark's is the best Church of St. Mark's that has ever been painted, so far as I know;¹ and I believe the reconciliation of true aerial perspective and chiaroscuro with the splendour and dignity obtained by the real gilding and elaborate detail, is a problem yet to be accomplished. With the help of the daguerreotype², and the lessons of colour given by the later Venetians, we ought now to be able to accomplish it; more especially as the right use of gold has been shown us by the greatest master of effect whom Venice herself produced, Tintoret;³ who has employed

¹ [At a later time Ruskin devoted no inconsiderable portion of his energy and fortune to procuring faithful pictorial transcripts of French and Italian buildings. Among the works thus painted for him was the oil-painting of the west front of St. Mark's by J. W. Bunney, which is now at the Ruskin Museum in Sheffield; see the account of that museum in a later volume of this edition.]

² [In a letter to his father from Venice (Oct. 7, 1845) Ruskin writes:—

“I have been lucky enough to get from a poor Frenchman here, said to be in distress, some most beautiful, though very small, Daguerreotypes of the palaces I have been trying to draw; and certainly Daguerreotypes taken by this vivid sunlight are glorious things. It is very nearly the same thing as carrying off the palace itself; every chip of stone and stain is there, and of course there is no mistake about proportions. I am very much delighted with these, and am going to have some more made of pet bits. It is a noble invention—say what they will of it—and any one who has worked and blundered and stammered as I have done for four days, and then sees the thing he has been trying to do so long in vain, done perfectly and faultlessly in half a minute, won't abuse it afterwards. (Oct. 8). I am quite delighted with my Daguerreotypes; if I can get a few more, I shall regularly do the Venetians—book them in spite of their teeth.”

For his plans at this time for daguerreotype illustration of Venice, see below, § 30, p. 213. The plates referred to in this letter are still preserved at Brantwood. Ruskin mentions in another letter (Oct. 25) that they cost him twenty napoleons. In another (Padua, Oct. 15) he says: “Among all the mechanical poison that this terrible 19th century has poured upon men, it has given us at any rate one antidote—the Daguerreo-type. It's a most blessed invention; that's what it is.” In the following year Ruskin wrote from Vevay (to W. H. Harrison, Aug. 12):—

“My drawings are truth to the very letter—too literal, perhaps; so says my father, so says not the Daguerreotype, for it beats me grievously. I have allied myself with it; sith it may no better be, and have brought away some precious records from Florence. It is certainly the most marvellous invention of the century; given us, I think, just in time to save some evidence from the great public of wreckers. As regards art, I wish it had never been discovered, it will make the eye too fastidious to accept mere handling.”

His enthusiasm for the invention was somewhat modified in after years, though he still considered photographs invaluable for records of some kind of facts, and especially of buildings. See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 11; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 3 n.; *The Cestus of Aglaia*, § 103; *Lectures on Art*, § 172; *Aratra Pentelici*, preface, § 2 n.]

³ [“I never was so utterly crushed to the earth before any human intellect,” writes Ruskin to his father from Venice (Sept. 24, 1845), “as I was to-day before

it with infinite grace on the steps ascended by the young Madonna, in his large picture in the Church of the Madonna dell'Orto.¹ Perugino uses it also with singular grace, often employing it for golden light on distant trees, and continually on the high light of hair, and that without losing relative distance.

The great group of Venetian painters who brought landscape art, for that time, to its culminating point, have left, as we have already seen,² little that is instructive in architectural painting. The causes of this I cannot comprehend, for neither Titian nor Tintoret appears to despise anything that affords either variety of form or of colour, the latter especially condescending to very trivial details,—as in the magnificent carpet painting of the picture of the doge Mocenigo;³ so that it might have been expected that in the rich colours of St. Mark's, and the magnificent and fantastic masses of the Byzantine palaces, they would have found whereupon to dwell with delighted elaboration. This is, however, never the case; and although frequently compelled to introduce portions of Venetian locality in their backgrounds, such portions are always treated in a most hasty and faithless manner, missing frequently all character of the building, and never advanced to realization. In Titian's picture of Faith,⁴ the view of Venice below is laid in so rapidly and slightly, the houses all leaning this way and that, and of no colour, the sea a dead grey-green, and the ship-sails mere dashes of the brush, that the most obscure of Turner's Venices would look substantial beside it; while Tintoret, in the very picture in which he has dwelt so elaborately on the carpet, has substituted a piece of ordinary Renaissance composition for St. Mark's; and in the background has chosen the Sansovino side of the Piazzetta, treating even that so carelessly as to lose all the

Tintoret." See Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., and the further passages from Ruskin's diary given in the Introduction to that volume (Vol. IV. of this edition).]

¹ ["The Presentation of the Virgin;" see notice under "Orto" in *Stones of Venice*, Venetian index.]

² [Above, §§ 12, 25, pp. 183, 202.]

³ [No. 27 in the Venetian Academy.]

⁴ ["The Doge Grimani before Faith," in the Sala delle Quattro Porte, Ducal Palace; see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. i. § 14, and vol. iii. (Venetian index, s. Ducal Palace, No. 3.)]

§ 29. *And of the Venetians generally.*

proportion and beauty of its design, and so flimsily that the line of the distant sea, which has been first laid in, is seen through all the columns. Evidences of magnificent power of course exist in whatever he touches, but his full power is never turned in this direction. More space is allowed to his architecture by Paul Veronese, but it is still entirely suggestive, and would be utterly false except as a frame or background for figures. The same may be said with respect to Raffaello and the Roman school.

If, however, these men laid architecture little under contribution to their own art, they made their own art a glorious gift to architecture; and the walls of Venice, which before, I believe, had received colour only in arabesque patterns, were lighted with human life by Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese. Of the works of Tintoret and Titian, nothing now, I believe, remains. Two figures of Giorgione's are still traceable on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, one of which, singularly uninjured, is seen from far above and below the Rialto, flaming like the reflection of a sunset.¹ Two figures of Veronese were also traceable till lately: the head and arms of one still remain, and some glorious olive branches which were beside the other; the figure having been entirely effaced by an inscription in large black letters on a whitewash tablet, which we owe to the somewhat inopportunistly expressed enthusiasm of the inhabitants

§ 30. *Fresco painting of the Venetian exteriors. Canaletto.*

¹ [In a letter to his father from Venice (Oct. 4, 1845) Ruskin writes:—

“As to taking common loose sketches in a hackneyed place like Venice, it is utter folly. One wants just what other artists have not done, and what I am as yet nearly unable to do. The splendid feature they have always omitted . . . is the fresco painting of the exteriors. Whole houses have been covered by Titian, Giorgione, and Paul Veronese; and as all three painted brighter and better in fresco than in oil, especially the latter, imagine what Venice must have been with these hues blazing down into the sea and up again! There is a fragment or two of Giorgione left yet on one palace, purple and scarlet, more like a sunset than a painting, and I was much pleased by two or three grey figures of Veronese; Titian has perished, through ill-treatment only, salt wind and rain do nothing compared to men.”

See also *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 32 and *n.*, and Plate 79; and cf. *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. iv. § 28, vol. iii. ch. i. § 35, and Venetian index. The Fondaco de' Tedeschi, a German warehouse, was decorated with frescoes by Giorgione and Titian; a few years ago vestiges remained of Giorgione's "Hesperid Aegle" on the side facing the Grand Canal, and of a "Justice" by Titian above the door in the side lane.]



Casa Contarini Fasan, Venice.
(1841)

of the district in favour of their new pastor.* Judging, however, from the rate at which destruction is at present advancing, and seeing that in about seven or eight years more Venice will have utterly lost every external claim to interest, except that which attaches to the group of buildings immediately around St. Mark's Place, and to the larger churches, it may be conjectured that the greater part of her present degradation has taken place, at any rate, within the last forty years. Let the reader, with such scraps of evidence as may still be gleaned from under the stucco and paint of the Italian committees of taste, and from among the drawing-room innovations of English and German residents, restore Venice in his imagination to some resemblance of what she must have been before her fall. Let him, looking from Lido or Fusina, replace, in the forests of towers, those of the hundred and sixty-six churches which the French threw down;¹ let him sheet her

* The inscription is to the following effect,—a pleasant thing to see upon the walls, were it but more innocently placed:—

CAMPO DI S. MAURIZIO.

—
 DIO
 CONSERVI A NOI
 LUNGAMENTE
 LO ZELANTIS. E REVERENDIS.
 D. LUIGI PICCINI
 NOSTRO
 NOVELLO PIEVANO.

—
 GLI ESULTANTI
 PARROCCHIANI.

¹ [*i.e.* after the surrender of the Venetian Republic to Napoleon on May 16, 1797. The French occupied the city 1797–98, and again 1806–14. “No city of Italy suffered so fatally as Venice. One hundred and sixty-six noble churches were demolished; amongst these was the church of the Servi, one of the finest in Italy. The monuments were broken to pieces; the marbles sold as rubbish, and the bronzes as old metal; the libraries and galleries plundered, the archives destroyed, the subsisting buildings damaged and degraded and defaced out of mere wantonness; and the city reduced to what it now is, a mere shadow of its ancient splendour” (“Letter from a Resident,” cited in the first edition, 1842, of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*,

walls with purple and scarlet, overlay her minarets with gold,* cleanse from their pollution those choked canals which are now the drains of hovels, where they were once vestibules of palaces, and fill them with gilded barges and bannered ships; finally, let him withdraw from this scene, already so brilliant, such sadness and stain as had been set upon it by the declining energies of more than half a century, and he will see Venice as it was seen by Canaletto; whose miserable, virtueless, heartless mechanism, accepted as the representation of such various glory, is, both in its existence and acceptance, among the most striking signs of the lost sensation and deadened intellect of the nation at that time; a numbness and darkness more without hope than that of the Grave itself, holding and wearing yet the sceptre and the crown, like the corpses of the Etruscan kings, ready to sink into ashes at the first unbarring of the door of the sepulchre.

* The quantity of gold with which the decorations of Venice were once covered could not now be traced or credited without reference to the authority of Gentile Bellini. The greater part of the marble mouldings have been touched with it in lines and points, the minarets of St. Mark's, and all the florid carving of the arches entirely sheeted. The Casa d'Oro retained it on its lions until the recent commencement of its restoration.¹

p. 328). "The eight years of French rule at Venice has left very different traces on that beautiful city than those left by the eight years of Austrian rule, which immediately preceded [1798–1806]. Everywhere in Venice even now may be seen the mark of Napoleon. It was by his order that the old structures at the eastern extremity of the city were demolished, among them being a church, and the beautiful Public Gardens created" (E. Flagg: *Venice, City of the Sea*, 1853).]

¹ [In a letter to his father from Venice (Sept. 21, 1845), Ruskin writes:—

"I am sorry that you are expecting me to leave Venice so soon, and far more sorry that I cannot do so. Be assured, it is misery to me to stop here; but every hour is destructive of what I most value, and I must do what I can to save a little. On the Ca'd' Oro, the noblest palace of the Grand Canal, the stone masons are hard at work, and of all its once noble cornice there remains one fragment only. Had that gone, as in a day or two more it will, all knowledge of the contour of this noble building would have been lost for ever. . . . (Sept. 23.) You cannot imagine what an unhappy day I spent yesterday before the Casa d'Oro—vainly attempting to draw it while the workmen were hammering it down before my face. . . . Venice has never yet been painted as she should—never, and to see the thing just in one's grasp and snatched away by these—'porci battigati' as I heard a Jew call out with infinitive justice the other day, it is too bad, far too bad. The beauty of the fragments left is beyond all I conceived; and just as I am becoming able to appreciate it, and able to do something that would have kept record of it, to have it destroyed before my face! That foul son of a deal board—Canaletti—to have lived in the middle of it all and left us nothing!"

The mannerism of Canaletto is the most degraded that I know in the whole range of art. Professing the most servile and mindless imitation, it imitates nothing but the blackness of the shadows; it gives no single architectural ornament, however near, so much form as might enable us even to guess at its actual one; and this I say not rashly, for I shall prove it by placing portions of detail accurately copied from Canaletto side by side with engravings from the daguerreotype:¹ it gives the buildings neither their architectural beauty nor their ancestral dignity, for there is no texture of stone nor character of age in Canaletto's touch; which is invariably a violent, black, sharp, ruled penmanlike line, as far removed from the grace of nature as from her faintness and transparency: and for his truth of colour, let the single fact of his having omitted *all record whatsoever of the frescoes* whose wrecks are still to be found at least on one half of the unrestored palaces, and, with still less excusableness, all record of the magnificent coloured marbles, many of whose greens and purples are still undimmed upon the Casa Dario, Casa Trevisan, and multitudes besides, speak for him in this respect.²

Let it be observed that I find no fault with Canaletto for his want of poetry, of feeling, of artistical thoughtfulness in treatment, or of the various other virtues which he does not so much as profess. He professes nothing but coloured daguerreotypeism. Let us have it; most precious and to be revered it would be: let us have fresco where fresco was, and and that architecturally true. I have seen daguerreotypes³ in which every figure and rosette, and crack and stain, and fissure is given on a scale of an inch to Canaletto's three feet. What excuse is there to be offered for his omitting, on that scale, as I shall hereafter show, all statement of such ornament whatever? Among the Flemish schools, exquisite imitations

¹ [This is one of many schemes of the kind which Ruskin did not carry out; *cf.* above, § 27 *n.*]

² [See the coloured plate— "Wall Veil Decoration, Ca' Trevisan, Ca' Dario—in vol. i. of *Stones of Venice*.]

³ [See above, p. 210 *n.*]

of architecture are found constantly, and that not with Canaletto's vulgar black exaggeration of shadow, but in the most pure and silvery and luminous greys. I have little pleasure in such pictures; but I blame not those who have more; they are what they profess to be, and they are wonderful and instructive, and often graceful, and even affecting; but Canaletto possesses no virtue except that of dexterous imitation of commonplace light and shade;¹ and perhaps, with the exception of Salvator, no artist has ever fettered his unfortunate admirers more securely from all healthy or vigorous perception of truth, or been of more general detriment to all subsequent schools.

Neither, however, by the Flemings, nor by any other of the elder schools, was the effect of age or of human life upon architecture ever adequately expressed. What ruins they drew looked as if broken down on purpose; what weeds they put on seemed put on for ornament. Their domestic buildings had never any domesticity; the people looked out of their windows evidently to be drawn, or came into the street only to stand there for ever. A peculiar studiousness infected all accident; bricks fell out methodically, windows opened and shut by rule; stones were chipped at regular intervals; everything that happened seemed to have been expected before; and above all, the street had been washed and the houses dusted expressly to be painted in their best. We owe to Prout,² I

§ 31. *Expression of the effects of age on architecture* by S. Prout.

¹ [Cf. on this latter point pt. ii. sec. v. ch. i. § 12 n. (eds. 1 and 2), p. 522, and for many other references to Canaletto in *Modern Painters* and elsewhere, see index volume to this edition. In the *Stones of Venice* (Venetian index, s. "Carità") Ruskin remarks that Canaletto is "less to be trusted for renderings of details, than the rudest and most ignorant painter of the thirteenth century." Yet in after years Ruskin came to admit to Canaletto one merit—his pigments endured: "Ruskin, on one of his latest visits to the National Gallery (1887), confessed that he had found himself admiring Canaletto. 'After all,' he said to me, 'he was a good workman in oils, whereas so much of Turner's work is going to rack and ruin.' Ruskin had made a similar concession long before to Claude. Writing to Mr. Fawkes on the death of Turner, he mentions a rumour that the artist had left only his finished pictures to the nation. 'Alas! these are finished in a double sense—nothing but chilled fragments of paint on rotten canvas. The Claudites will have a triumph when they get into the National Gallery' (quoted in *The Nineteenth Century*, April 1900)." (Note in E. T. Cook's *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery*, ed. 1901, i. 165.)]

² [Samuel Prout (1783–1852) was a friend of Ruskin's father, and his drawings were among those with which Ruskin himself was first familiar, and served as the models for his own exercises in art. The admiration here expressed for them was reiterated and

believe, the first perception, and certainly the only existing expression, of precisely the characters which were wanting to old art; of that feeling which results from the influence, among the noble lines of architecture, of the rent and the rust, the fissure, the lichen, and the weed, and from the writing upon the pages of ancient walls of the confused hieroglyphics of human history. I suppose, from the deserved popularity of the artist, that the strange pleasure which I find myself in the deciphering of these is common to many. The feeling has been rashly and thoughtlessly contemned as mere love of the picturesque; there is, as I have above shown, a deeper moral in it, and we owe much, I am not prepared to say how much, to the artist by whom pre-eminently it has been excited: for, numerous as have been his imitators, extended as his influence, and simple as his means and manner, there has yet appeared nothing at all to equal him; there is *no* stone drawing, *no* vitality of architecture like Prout's. I say not this rashly: I remember Mackenzie and Haghe,¹ and many other capital imitators; and I have carefully reviewed the architectural work of the Academicians, often most accurate and elaborate. I repeat there is nothing but the work of Prout which is true, living, or right, in its general impression, and nothing, therefore, so inexhaustibly agreeable. Faults he has, manifold, easily detected, and much declaimed against by second-rate artists; but his excellence no one has ever approached, and his lithographic work (*Sketches in Flanders and Germany*),² which was, I believe, the first of the kind, still remains the most valuable of all, numerous and elaborate as its various successors

developed by Ruskin in later years; see especially the essay on Prout from the *Art Journal* (1849) and the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* (1879–80). For Prout's criticism on this first volume of *Modern Painters*, see above, Introduction, p. xlii., and a reply by Ruskin below, Appendix iii., p. 662. Cf. also the 1st edition, below, p. 256.]

¹ [For "I remember Mackenzie and Haghe," eds. 3 and 4 read, "I have Mackenzie in my eye." Frederick Mackenzie (1787–1854), member of the Old Water-Colour Society, was noted for his conscientious drawings of ancient buildings. Louis Haghe (1806–1885), president of the New Water-Colour Society and member of the Belgian Academy, received the gold medal at Paris in 1834 for his works in lithography (condemned by Ruskin below, §33); there is a collection of Roman drawings by him at the Bethnal Green Museum.]

² [This work had some influence on Ruskin's early history: see Vol. I. p. xxix. The later *Sketches in France, Switzerland, and Italy* had appeared in 1839.]

have been. The second series (in Italy and Switzerland) was of less value: the drawings seemed more laborious, and had less of the life of the original sketches, being also for the most part of subjects less adapted for the development of the artist's peculiar powers; but both are fine; and the Brussels, Louvain, Cologne, and Nuremberg subjects of the one, together with the Tours, Amboise, Geneva, and Sion of the other, exhibit substantial qualities of stone and wood drawing, together with an ideal appreciation of the present active and vital being of the cities, such as nothing else has ever approached. Their value is much increased by the circumstance of their being drawn by the artist's own hand upon the stone, and by the consequent manly recklessness of subordinate parts (in works of this kind, be it remembered, much *is* subordinate), which is of all characters of execution the most refreshing. Note the scrawled middle tint of the wall behind the Gothic well at Ratisbonne, and compare this manly piece of work with the wretched smoothness of recent lithography. Let it not be thought that there is any inconsistency between what I say here and what I have said respecting finish.¹ This piece of dead wall is as much finished in relation to its *function*, as the masonries of Ghirlandajo or Leonardo in relation to theirs; and the refreshing quality is the same in both, and manifest in *all* great masters, without exception,—that of the utter regardlessness of the means so that their end be reached. The same kind of scrawling occurs often in the shade of Raffaello.

It is not, however, only by his peculiar stone touch, nor by his perception of human character, that he is distinguished. He is the most dexterous of all our artists in a certain kind of composition.² No one can place figures as he can, except Turner. It is one thing to know where a piece of blue or white is wanted, and another to make the wearer of the blue apron or white cap come there, and not look as if it were against her will. Prout's streets are

§ 32. *His excellent composition and colour.*

¹ [In this chapter, above, § 10.]

² [Cf. on this point *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, pref. § 34, etc.]

the only streets that are accidentally crowded; his markets the only markets where one feels inclined to get out of the way. With others we feel the figures so right where they are, that we have no expectation of their going anywhere else; and approve of the position of the man with the wheelbarrow, without the slightest fear of his running it against our legs. One other merit he has, far less generally acknowledged than it should be; he is among our most sunny and substantial colourists. Much conventional colour occurs in his inferior pictures (for he is very unequal), and some in all; but portions are always of quality so luminous and pure, that I have found these works the only ones capable of bearing juxtaposition with Turner and Hunt,¹ who invariably destroy everything else that comes within range of them. His most beautiful tones occur in those drawings in which there is prevalent and powerful warm grey; his most failing ones in those of sandy red. On his deficiencies I shall not insist, because I am not prepared to say how far it is possible for him to avoid them. We have never seen the reconciliation of the peculiar characters he has obtained, with the accurate following out of architectural detail. With his present modes of execution, farther fidelity is impossible, nor has any other mode of execution yet obtained the same results; and though much is unaccomplished by him in certain subjects, and something of over-mannerism may be traced in his treatment of others, as especially in his mode of expressing the decorative parts of Greek or Roman architecture, yet in his own peculiar Gothic territory, where the spirit of the subject itself is somewhat rude and grotesque, his abstract of decoration has more of the spirit of the reality than far more laborious imitation.* The spirit of the Flemish Hôtel de Ville and decorated street architecture has never been, even in the slightest degree, felt or conveyed except by him, and by him, to my mind, faultlessly and absolutely; and though his interpretation of

* Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. chap. xxiii. § v.²

¹ [For William Hunt, see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*.]

² [This note was added in ed. 5.]

architecture that contains more refined art in its details is far less satisfactory, still it is impossible, while walking on his favourite angle of the Piazza at Venice, either to think of any other artist than Prout or *not* to think of *him*.

Many other dexterous and agreeable architectural artists we have, of various degrees of merit, but of all of whom, it may be generally said, that they draw hats, faces, cloaks, and caps much better than Prout, but *figures* not so well: that they draw walls and windows, but not cities; mouldings and buttresses, but not cathedrals. Joseph Nash's work on the architecture of the Middle Ages¹ is, however, valuable, and I suppose that Haghe's works may be depended on for fidelity. But it appears very strange that a workman capable of producing the clever drawings he has, from time to time, sent to the New Society of Painters in Water Colours, should publish lithographs so conventional, forced, and lifeless.

It is not without hesitation, that I mention a name respecting which the reader may already have been surprised at my silence, that of G. Cattermole.² There are signs in his works of very peculiar gifts, and perhaps also of powerful genius; their deficiencies I should willingly attribute to the advice of ill-judging friends, and to the applause of a public satisfied with shallow efforts, if brilliant; yet I cannot but think it one necessary characteristic of all true genius to be misled by no such false fires. The antiquarian feeling of Cattermole is pure, earnest, and natural; and I think his imagination originally vigorous, certainly his fancy, his grasp of momentary passion considerable, his sense of action in the human body vivid and ready. But no original talent, however brilliant, can sustain its energy when the demands upon it are constant, and all legitimate support and food withdrawn. I do not recollect in any, even of the most important of Cattermole's works, so much as a fold of drapery studied out

¹ [*Architecture of the Middle Ages, drawn from Nature and on Stone*, by Joseph Nash, 1838.]

² [*Cf. above, pref. to 2nd ed., § 40 n., p. 46.*]

from nature. Violent conventionalism of light and shade, sketchy forms continually less and less developed, the walls and the faces drawn with the same stucco colour, alike opaque, and all the shades on flesh, dress, or stone, laid in with the same arbitrary brown, for ever tell the same tale of a mind wasting its strength and substance in the production of emptiness, and seeking, by more and more blindly hazarded handling, to conceal the weakness which the attempt at finish would betray.

This tendency has of late been painfully visible in his architecture. Some drawings made several years ago for an Annual, illustrative of Scott's works,¹ were, for the most part, pure and finely felt,—though irrelevant to our present subject, a fall of the Clyde should be noticed, admirable for breadth and grace of foliage, and for the bold sweeping of the water; and another subject of which I regret that I can only judge by the engraving, Glendearg, at twilight (the monk Eustace chased by Christie of the Clint hill), which I think must have been one of the sweetest pieces of simple Border hill feeling ever painted;—and about that time, his architecture, though always conventionally brown in the shadows, was generally well drawn, and always powerfully conceived.

Since then, he has been tending gradually through exaggeration to caricature, and vainly endeavouring to attain, by inordinate bulk of decorated parts, that dignity which is only to be reached by purity of proportion and majesty of line.

It has pained me deeply, to see an artist of so great original power indulging in childish fantasticism and exaggeration, substituting for the serious and subdued work of legitimate imagination monster machicolations, and colossal cusps and crockets. While there is so much beautiful architecture daily in process of destruction around us, I cannot but think it treason to *imagine* anything; at least, if we must

§ 34. *The evil, from an archaeological point of view, of misapplied invention, in architectural subject.*

¹ [*Health's Picturesque Annual* for 1835, also entitled *Scott and Scotland* (by Leith Ritchie), contained twenty-one plates by Cattermole. The subject of the drawing of Glendearg would specially have interested Ruskin: see his *Poems*, Vol. II. p. 260 n.]

have composition, let the design of the artist be such as the architect would applaud. But it is surely very grievous, that while our idle artists are helping their vain inventions by the fall of sponges on soiled paper, glorious buildings with the whole intellect and history of centuries concentrated in them are suffered to fall into unrecorded ruin. A day does not now pass in Italy without the destruction of some mighty monument; the streets of all her cities echo to the hammer; half of her fair buildings lie in separate stones about the places of their foundation: would not time be better spent in telling us the truth about these perishing remnants of majestic thought, than in perpetuating the ill-digested fancies of idle hours? It is, I repeat, treason to the cause of art, for any man to invent, unless he invents something better than has been invented before, or something differing in kind. There is room enough for invention in the pictorial treatment of what exists. There is no more honourable exhibition of imaginative power, than in the selection of such place, choice of such treatment, introduction of such incident, as may produce a noble picture without deviation from one line of the actual truth: and such I believe to be, indeed, in the end the most advantageous, as well as the most modest direction of the invention; for I recollect no single instance of architectural composition by any men except such as Leonardo or Veronese (who could design their architecture thoroughly before they painted it),¹ which has not a look of inanity and absurdity. The best landscapes and the best architectural studies have been views; and I would have the artist take shame to himself in the exact degree in which he finds himself obliged in the production of his picture to lose any, even of the smallest parts or most trivial hues which bear a part in the great impression made by the reality. The difference between the drawing of the architect and artist* ought never to be, as it now commonly

* Indeed there should be no such difference at all. Every architect ought to be an artist; every very great artist is necessarily an architect.²

¹ [The brackets here are inserted from Ruskin's copy for revision.]

² [Cf. *Poetry of Architecture*, § 1, where it is said that every architect must also be a metaphysician, and see note thereon, Vol. I. p. 5.]

is, the difference between lifeless formality and witless license; it ought to be between giving the mere lines and measures of a building, and giving those lines and measures with the impression and soul of it besides. All artists should be ashamed of themselves when they find they have not the power of being true; the right wit of drawing is like the right wit of conversation, not hyperbole, not violence, not frivolity, only well expressed, laconic truth.

Among the members of the Academy, we have at present only one professedly architectural draughtsman of note, David Roberts;¹ whose reputation is probably farther extended on the continent than that of any other of our artists, except Landseer. I am not certain, however, that I have any reason to congratulate either of my countrymen upon this their European estimation; for I think it exceedingly probable that in both instances it is exclusively based on their defects; and in the case of Mr. Roberts in particular, there has of late appeared more ground for it than is altogether desirable, in a smoothness and overfinish of texture which bear dangerous fellowship with the work of our Gallic neighbours.

The fidelity of intention and honesty of system of Roberts have, however, always been meritorious; his drawing of architecture is dependent on no unintelligible lines or blots, or substituted types; the main lines of the real design are always there, and its hollowness and undercuttings given with exquisite feeling; his sense of solidity of form is very peculiar, leading him to dwell with great delight on the roundings of edges and angles; his execution is dexterous and delicate, singularly so in oil, and his sense of chiaroscuro refined. But he has never done himself justice, and suffers his pictures to

¹ [David Roberts (1796–1864), A.R.A. 1839, R.A. 1841, was a friend of the family, and sometimes joined the dinner-party with which Ruskin's father celebrated his son's birthday (Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. §§ 1, 14). In the spring of 1840, Roberts had brought home and exhibited the sketches in the Holy Land referred to in the text; for their influence on Ruskin's own practice, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii. § 20. Elsewhere in that book (ii. ch. ix. § 175) Ruskin characterizes Roberts' work in the phrase: "He was like a kind of grey mirror." For other criticisms of Roberts, see *Academy Notes*, 1855–59, where his later work is contrasted unfavourably with his earlier.]

§ 35. *Works of David Roberts: their fidelity and grace.*

fall below the rank they should assume, by the presence of several marring characters, which I shall name, because it is perfectly in his power to avoid them. In looking over the valuable series of drawings of the Holy Land, which we owe to Mr. Roberts, we cannot but be amazed to find how frequently it has happened that there was something very black exactly immediately in the foreground, and something very black exactly behind it. The same thing happens perpetually with Mr. Roberts's pictures; a white column is always coming out of a blue mist, or a white stone out of a green pool, or a white monument out of a brown recess, and the artifice is not always concealed with dexterity. This is unworthy of so skilful a composer, and it has destroyed the impressiveness as well as the colour of some of his finest works. It shows a poverty of conception, which appears to me to arise from a deficient habit of study. It will be remembered that of the sketches for this work, several times exhibited in London, every one was executed in the same manner, and with about the same degree of completion; being all of them accurate records of the main architectural lines, the shapes of the shadows, and the remnants of artificial colour, obtained by means of the same greys throughout, and of the same yellow (a singularly false and cold though convenient colour) touched upon the lights. As far as they went, nothing could be more valuable than these sketches; and the public, glancing rapidly at their general and graceful effects, could hardly form anything like an estimate of the endurance and determination which must have been necessary in such a climate to obtain records so patient, entire, and clear, of details so multitudinous as, especially, the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian temples; an endurance which perhaps only artists can estimate, and for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Roberts, most difficult to discharge.¹ But if these sketches were all that the artist brought home, whatever value is to be attached to them as

¹ [Roberts was in the East, 1838–40. His diary of his adventures is in chs. v.—viii. of the *Life* of him by James Ballantine (1866). His sketches were exhibited on his return, in 1841, preparatory to their publication (see below, p. 598 *n.*).]

statements of facts, they are altogether insufficient for the producing of pictures. I saw among them no single instance of a downright study; of a study in which the real hues and shades of sky and earth had been honestly realized or attempted; nor were there, on the other hand, any of those invaluable blotted five-minutes works which record the unity of some single and magnificent impressions. Hence the pictures which have been painted from these sketches have been as much alike in their want of impressiveness as the sketches themselves, and have never borne the living aspect of the Egyptian light; it has always been impossible to say whether the red in them (not a pleasant one) was meant for hot sunshine or for red sandstone: their power has been farther destroyed by the necessity the artist seems to feel himself under of eking out their effect by points of bright foreground colour; and thus we have been encumbered with caftans, pipes, scimitars, and black hair, when all that we wanted was a lizard, or an ibis. It is perhaps owing to this want of earnestness in study rather than to deficiency of perception, that the colouring of this artist is commonly untrue. Some time ago when he was painting Spanish subjects, his habit was to bring out his whites in relief from transparent bituminous browns, which though not exactly right in colour, were at any rate warm and agreeable; but of late his colour has become cold, waxy, and opaque, and in his deep shades he sometimes permits himself the use of a violent black which is altogether unjustifiable. A picture of Roslin Chapel, exhibited in 1844,¹ showed his defect in the recess to which the stairs descend, in an extravagant degree; and another, exhibited in the British Institution, instead of showing the exquisite crumbling and lichenous texture of the Roslin stone, was polished to as vapid smoothness as ever recess to which the stairs, descend, in an extravagant degree; and another, exhibited in the British Institution, instead of showing the exquisite crumbling and lichenous texture of the Roslin stone, was polished to as vapid smoothness as ever French historical picture. The general feebleness of the effect is increased by the insertion of the figures as violent pieces of

¹ [Roberts painted several pictures of Roslin Chapel in 1843 and 1844: see the list in his *Life* by Ballantine. One of them was No. 78 in the Royal Academy of 1843. Another is now in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum (Sheepshanks collection, No. 174).]

local colour unaffected by the light and unblended with the hues around them, and bearing evidence of having been painted from models or draperies in the dead light of a room instead of sunshine. On these deficiencies I should not have remarked, but that by honest and determined painting from and of nature, it is perfectly in the power of the artist to supply them; and it is bitterly to be regretted that the accuracy and elegance of his work should not be aided by that genuineness of hue and effect which can only be given by the uncompromising effort to paint, not a fine picture, but an impressive and known *verity*.

The two artists, whose works it remains for us to review, are § 36. *Clarkson Stanfield.* men who have presented us with examples of the treatment of every kind of subject, and among the rest with portions of architecture which the best of our exclusively architectural draughtsmen could not excel.

The frequent references made to the works of Clarkson Stanfield¹ throughout the subsequent pages render it less necessary for me to speak of him here at any length. He is the leader of the English Realists, and perhaps among the more remarkable of his characteristics is the look of common sense and rationality which his compositions will always bear, when opposed to any kind of affectation. He appears to think of no other artist. What he has learned, has been from his own acquaintance with, and affection for, the steep hills and the deep sea; and his modes of treatment are alike removed from sketchiness or incompleteness, and from exaggeration or effort. The somewhat over-prosaic tone of his subjects is rather a condescension to what he supposes to be public feeling, than a sign of want of feeling in himself; for, in some of his sketches from nature or from fancy, I have seen powers and perceptions manifested of a far higher order than any that

¹ [William Clarkson Stanfield (1793–1867), A.R.A. 1832, R.A. 1835. The correctness of his painting of the sea was based on personal knowledge; he was born at Sunderland, and was for some years a sailor. For later references to him, see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. iii. § 27, sec. v. ch. ii. §§ 10, 11; vol. iv. ch. iv. § 2 *n.*; and *Academy Notes*, 1855–59. Stanfield was another guest at Ruskin's birthday parties: see Epilogue to *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. § 14.]

are traceable in his Academy works, powers which I think him much to be blamed for checking. The portion of his pictures usually most defective in this respect is the sky, which is apt to be cold and uninventive, always well drawn, but with a kind of hesitation in the clouds whether it is to be fair or foul weather; they having neither the joyfulness of rest, nor the majesty of storm. Their colour is apt also to verge on a morbid purple, as was eminently the case in the large picture of the wreck on the coast of Holland exhibited in 1844;¹ a work in which both his powers and faults were prominently manifested, the picture being full of good painting, but wanting in its entire appeal. There was no feeling of wreck about it; and, but for the damage about her bowsprit, it would have been impossible for a landsman to say whether the hull was meant for a wreck or a guardship. Nevertheless, it is always to be recollected, that in subjects of this kind it is probable that much escapes us in consequence of our want of knowledge, and that to the eye of the seaman much may be of interest and value which to us appears cold. At all events, this healthy and rational regard of things is incomparably preferable to the dramatic absurdities which weaker artists commit in matters marine; and from copper-coloured sunsets on green waves sixty feet high, with cauliflower breakers, and ninepin rocks; from drowning on planks, and starving on rafts, and lying naked on beaches, it is really refreshing to turn to a surge of Stanfield's true salt, serviceable, unsentimental sea. It would be well, however, if he would sometimes take a higher flight. The Castle of Ischia² gave him a grand subject, and a little more invention in the sky, a little less muddiness in the rocks, and a little more savageness in the sea, would have made it an impressive picture; it just misses the sublime, yet is a fine work, and better engraved than usual by the Art Union.

One fault we cannot but venture to find, even in our own

¹ [No. 187 in the Academy: "The Day after the Wreck—A Dutch East Indiaman on shore in the Ooster Schelde."]

² [Stanfield exhibited at the Academy two pictures of this subject:—"Castello d'Ischia," No. 9 in 1841; "The Castle of Ischia," No. 192 in 1843.]

extreme ignorance, with Mr. Stanfield's boats; they never look weatherbeaten. There is something peculiarly precious in the rusty, dusty, tar-trickled, fishy, phosphorescent brown of an old boat;¹ and when this has just dipped under a wave, and rises to the sunshine, it is enough to drive Giorgione² to despair. I have never seen any effort at this by Stanfield; his boats always look newly painted and clean; witness especially the one before the ship, in the wreck picture above noticed: and there is some such absence of a right sense of colour in other portions of his subject; even his fishermen have always clean jackets and unsoiled caps, and his very rocks are lichenless. And, by-the-bye, this ought to be noted respecting modern painters in general, that they have not a proper sense of the value of Dirt;³ cottage children never appear but in freshly got-up caps and aprons, and white-handed beggars excite compassion in unexceptionable rags. In reality, almost all the colours of things associated with human life derive something of their expression and value from the tones of impurity, and so enhance the value of the entirely pure tints of nature herself. Of Stanfield's rock and mountain drawing enough will be said hereafter.⁴ His foliage is inferior; his architecture admirably drawn, but commonly wanting in colour. His picture of the Doge's Palace at Venice⁵ was quite clay-cold and untrue. Of late he has shown a marvellous predilection for the realization, even to actually relieved texture, of old worm-eaten wood; we trust he will not allow such fancies to carry him too far.

The name I have last to mention is that of J. M. W.

¹ [Cf. the description of a fishing-boat in Ruskin's introduction to *The Harbours of England*.]

² [See below, pt. ii. sec. v. ch. i. § 19, p. 515.]

³ [Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. ix. § 6. In a letter to his father from the Italian Riviera (Oneglia, April 24, 1845), Ruskin writes:—

“What fools our artists are, to be able to do nothing better with such noble studies lying on every step, than their contemptible vendemias and tarantulas, with every gown clean and every coat whole. What a glorious thing is dirt! it tones colour down so, and yet our idiots of painters sketch in Italy as if they were studying models and dolls fresh washed in the Soho bazaar.”]

⁴ [For rocks, see below, sec. iv. ch. iv. § 8, p. 477; for mountains, sec. iv. ch. iii. § 25, p. 469.]

⁵ [No. 281 in the Academy of 1843.]

Turner.¹ I do not intend to speak of this artist at present in general terms, because my constant practice throughout this work is to say, when I speak of an artist at all, the very truth of what I believe and feel respecting him; and the truth of what I believe and feel respecting Turner would appear in this place, unsupported by any proof, mere rhapsody.* I shall therefore here confine myself to a rapid glance at the relations of his past and present works, and to some notice of what he has failed of accomplishing: the greater part of the subsequent chapters will be exclusively devoted to the examination of the new fields over which he has extended the range of landscape art.

§ 37. J. M. W.
Turner. Force
of national feel-
ing in all great
painters.

It is a fact more universally acknowledged than enforced or acted upon, that all great painters, of whatever school, have been great only in their rendering of what they had seen and felt from early childhood; and that the greatest among them have been the most frank in acknowledging this their inability to treat anything successfully but that with which they had been familiar. The Madonna of Raffaello was born on the Urbino mountains, Ghirlandajo's is a Florentine, Bellini's a Venetian; there is not the slightest effort on the part of any one of these great men to paint her as a Jewess. It is not the place here to insist farther on a point so simple and so universally demonstrable. Expression, character, types of countenance, costume, colour, and accessories are, with all great painters whatsoever, those of their native land; and that frankly and entirely, without the slightest attempt at modification; and I assert fearlessly that it is impossible that it should ever be otherwise, and that no man ever painted, or ever will paint, well, anything but what he has early and long seen, early and long felt, and early and long loved. How far it is possible for the mind of one nation or generation to be

* Vide *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. Appendix 11.²

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin notes here: "Hence, all, to end of chapter."]

² [Note added in ed. 5.]

healthily modified and taught by the work of another, I presume not to determine; but it depends upon whether the energy of the mind which receives the instruction be sufficient, while it takes out of what it feeds upon that which is universal and common to all nature, to resist all warping from national or temporary peculiarities. Nicolo Pisano got nothing but good, the modern French nothing but evil, from the study of the antique; but Nicolo Pisano had a God and a character. All artists who have attempted to assume, or in their weakness have been affected by, the national peculiarities of other times and countries, have instantly, whatever their original power, fallen to third-rate rank, or fallen altogether; and have invariably lost their birthright and blessing, lost their power over the human heart, lost all capability of teaching or benefiting others. Compare the hybrid classicalism¹ of Wilson with the rich English purity of Gainsborough; compare the recent exhibition of middle-age cartoons for the Houses of Parliament with the works of Hogarth;² compare the sickly modern German imitations of the great Italians with Albert Dürer and Holbein;³ compare the vile classicality of Canova⁴ and the modern Italians with Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia, and Andrea del Verrocchio. The manner of Nicolo Poussin is said to be Greek—it may be so; this only I know, that it is heartless and profitless. The severity of the rule, however, extends not in full force to the nationality, but only to the visibility, of things; for it is very possible for an artist of powerful mind to throw himself well into the feeling of foreign nations of his own time; thus John Lewis has been eminently successful in his

¹ [In ed. 3 misprinted “classification”; see above, p. lii. *n.*]

² [In 1841 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the question of “taking advantage of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the fine arts of the United Kingdom.” The Commission decided to invite artists to enter into “a competition by cartoons.” This took place in May 1843. The Commission then decided to hold a second competition, in which artists were invited “to exhibit specimens of fresco-painting.” An exhibition of the works sent in took place in Westminster Hall in the summer of 1844. Next, a limited competition was held, six of the artists being invited to furnish cartoon-designs, specimens of fresco-painting, etc.]

³ [For other references to the German school, see index volume; and *cf.* Introduction, above, p. xxxiii.]

⁴ [Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii. § 27.]

seizing of Spanish character.¹ Yet it may be doubted if the seizure be such as Spaniards themselves would acknowledge; it is probably of the habits of the people more than their hearts; continued efforts of this kind, especially if their subjects be varied, assuredly end in failure. Lewis, who seemed so eminently penetrative in Spain, sent nothing from Italy but complexions and costumes, and I expect no good from his stay in Egypt. English artists are usually entirely ruined by residence in Italy; but for this there are collateral causes which it is not here the place to examine. Be this as it may, and whatever success may be attained in pictures of slight and unpretending aim, of genre, as they are called, in the rendering of foreign character, of this I am certain, that whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land. Not a law this, but a necessity, from the intense hold on their country of the affections of all truly great men. All classicality, all middle-aged patent-reviving, is utterly vain and absurd; if we are now to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be got out of our own little island, and out of these very times, railroads and all; if a British painter, I say this in earnest seriousness, cannot make historical characters out of the British House of Peers, he cannot paint history; and if he cannot make a Madonna of a British girl of the nineteenth century, he cannot paint one at all.²

The rule, of course, holds in landscape; yet so far less

¹ [For other references to Lewis, see above, p. 120 *n.* Lewis went to Egypt in 1843, and remained in the East eight years. Ruskin, as it turned out, intensely admired some of his Eastern work (see, *e.g.*, *Academy Notes*, 1856), but asked regretfully, "Are we never to get out of Egypt any more? . . . Is there nothing paintable in England . . . ?" (*Academy Notes*, 1859, *s.* No. 135).]

² [With this section *cf.* a similar passage in *Academy Notes*, 1875: "English girls by an English painter. Whether you call them Madonnas, or saints, or what not, it is the law of art-life—your own people, as they live, are the only ones you can understand," etc. *Cf.* also *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vii. §§ 19, 20. James Smetham has recorded a characteristic conversation (1855) with Ruskin on this point:—

"Over the chimney-piece of the study (at Denmark Hill) was a copy he (Ruskin) had made from Tintoret, a Doge in his robes adoring the infant Saviour.

"J. S. According to your principle that men should represent all subjects in the costume of their own time, and we were to paint the subject, it

authoritatively, that the material nature of all countries and times is in many points actually, and in all, in principle, the same; so that feelings educated in Cumberland may find their food in Switzerland.¹ and impression first received amongst the rocks of Cornwall be recalled upon the precipices of Genoa. Add to this actual sameness, the power of every great mind to possess itself of the spirit of things once presented to it, and it is evident, that little limitation can be set to the landscape painter as to the choice of his field; and that the law of nationality will hold with him only so far as a certain joyfulness and completion will be by preference found in those parts of his subject which remind him of his own land. But if he attempt to impress on his landscapes any other spirit than that he has felt, and to make them landscapes of other times, it is all over with him, at least, in the degree in which such reflected moonshine takes the place of the genuine light of the present day.

The reader will at once perceive how much trouble this simple principle will save both the painter and the critic; it at once sets aside the whole school of common composition, and

would be well to substitute Lord John Russell for the Doge in a surtout, and place his hat on the pedestal here.

“J. R. (knowingly). I don’t flinch from it; yes, if it would not look well, the times are wrong and their modes must be altered.

“J. S. It would be a great deal easier (it is a backward, lame action of the mind to fish up costume and forms we never saw), but I could not do it for laughing.

“J. R. Ha! but we *must* do it nevertheless.”

(*Letters of James Smetham*, 1891, p. 56.) Smetham’s point of view was that also of Millais: “The painter,” he said, as explaining the difficulty of historical pictures in these days, “might laugh at his own work” (interview in the *Daily News*, Dec. 13, 1884). Cf. what Ruskin says, in his half-ironical way, about the reproduction of the Parthenon frieze on the Athenæum Club: its members “being therein Attic in no wise, but essentially barbarous; for a truly Attic mind would have induced them to portray *themselves*,” etc. (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter xxiii.)]

¹ [Very true of Ruskin himself; see note on his recollections of the Lakes in Vol. II. p. xxx. So, again, in a letter from Vogogna (July 22, 1845), Ruskin writes to his father:—

“I wished for you sadly yesterday as I was driving from the Lake of Varese down to Laveno opposite Baveno. You cannot *conceive* anything so beautiful as the winding of the lakes, five or six seen at once among the mulberry woods and tufted crags. But as I said to myself at the time, it was only the more beautiful because it was more like Windermere, or rather, like many Windermeres.”]

exonerates us from the labour of minutely examining any landscape which has nymphs or philosophers in it.

It is hardly necessary for us to illustrate this principle by any reference to the works of early landscape painters, as I suppose it is universally acknowledged with respect to them; Titian being the most remarkable instance of the influence of the native air on a strong mind, and Claude of that of the classical poison on a weak one; but it is very necessary to keep it in mind in reviewing the works of our great modern landscape painter.

I do not know in what district of England Turner first or longest studied, but the scenery whose influence I can trace most definitely throughout his works, varied as they are, is that of Yorkshire. Of all his drawings, I think, those of the Yorkshire series¹ have the most heart in them, the most affectionate, simple, unwearied, serious finishing of truth. There is in them little seeking after effect, but a strong love of place; little exhibition of the artist's own powers or peculiarities, but intense appreciation of the smallest local minutiae. These drawings have unfortunately changed hands frequently, and have been abused and ill-treated by picture dealers and cleaners; the greater number of them are now mere wrecks. I name them not as instances, but as proofs, of the artist's study in this district, for the affection to which they owe their excellence must have been grounded long years before. It is to be traced, not only in these drawings of the places themselves, but in the peculiar love of the painter for rounded forms of hills; not but that he is right in this on general principles, for I doubt not, that with his peculiar feeling for beauty of line, his hills would have been rounded still, even if he had studied first among the peaks of Cadore; but rounded to the same extent, and with the same delight in their roundness, they would not have been. It is, I believe, to those broad wooded steeps and swells

¹ [See for the Yorkshire series Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, Fourth Group. They appeared partly in Dr. T. D. Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire* (1823), and partly in the "England and Wales." "Richmond" was in Ruskin's collection (see Plate 61 in vol. v. of *Modern Painters*).]

§ 39. *Its peculiar manifestation in Turner.*

of the Yorkshire downs that we in part owe the singular massiveness that prevails in Turner's mountain drawing, and gives it one of its chief elements of grandeur. Let the reader open the *Liber Studiorum*, and compare the painter's enjoyment of the lines in the Ben Arthur, with his comparative uncomfortableness among those of the aiguilles about the Mer de Glace. Great as he is, those peaks would have been touched very differently by a Savoyard as great as he.

I am in the habit of looking to the Yorkshire drawings, as indicating one of the culminating points in Turner's career. In these he attained the highest degree of what he had up to that time attained the highest degree of what he had up to that time attempted, namely, finish and quantity of form united with expression of atmosphere, and light without colour. His early drawings are singularly instructive in this definiteness and simplicity of aim. No complicated or brilliant colour is ever thought of in them; they are little more than exquisite studies in light and shade, very green blues being used for the shadows, and golden browns for the lights. The difficulty and treachery of colour being thus avoided, the artist was able to bend his whole mind upon the drawing, and thus to attain such decision, delicacy, and completeness as have never in any wise been equalled, and as might serve him for a secure foundation in all after experiments. Of the quantity and precision of his details, the drawings made for Hakewill's Italy¹ are singular examples, as well as some of the drawings of Swiss scenery in the possession of F. H. Fawkes, Esq., of Farnley.²

¹ [*A Picturesque Tour of Italy, from Drawings made by J. Hakewill* (1820). Turner's drawings in that book were not made on the spot, but from sketches by Hakewill, who was an architect. Nos. 16–22 in Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* belong to the Hakewill series.]

² [For Mr. Fawkes and his collection, see below, § 41 *n*. For "examples, as well as some of the drawings . . . of Farnley," eds. 3 and 4 read:—

"examples. The most perfect gem in execution is a little bit on the Rhine, with reeds in the foreground, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham; but the Yorkshire drawings seem to be, on the whole, the most noble representatives of his art at this period."

Mr. B. Godfrey Windus, a retired coachmaker, had a large collection of Turner's drawings, and also several of his oil-pictures. Ruskin "had the run of his rooms at any time," and this, he says, was "for me the means of writing *Modern Painters*. . . .

About the time of their production, the artist seems to have felt that he had done either all that could be done, or all that was necessary, in that manner, and began to reach after something beyond it. The element of colour begins to mingle with his work, and in the first efforts to reconcile his intense feeling for it with his careful form, several anomalies begin to be visible, and some unfortunate or uninteresting works necessarily belong to the period. The England drawings,¹ which are very characteristic of it, are exceedingly unequal,—some, as the Oakhampton, Kilgarren, Alnwick, and Llanthony, being among his finest works; others, as the Windsor from Eton, the Eton College, and the Bedford, showing coarseness and conventionality.

I do not know at what time the painter first went abroad,² but some of the Swiss drawings above named were made in 1804 or 1806; and among the earliest of the series of the *Liber Studiorum* (dates 1808, 1809), occur the magnificent Mont St. Gothard, and Little Devil's Bridge. Now it is remarkable that after his acquaintance with this scenery, so congenial in almost all respects with the energy of his mind, and supplying him with

§ 40. *The domestic subjects of the Liber Studiorum.*

Nobody, in all England, at that time,—and Turner was already sixty,—*cared*, in the true sense of the word, for Turner, but the retired coachmaker of Tottenham, and P^r (*Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 11; cf. *Deucalion*, Appendix, *n.*) Windus was also one of the earliest buyers of the Pre-Raphaelites' work (see *Letters of D. G. Rossetti to William Allingham*, 1897, p. 91). Among Turner's oil-pictures in the Windus collection were "Glaucus and Scylla" (R.A. 1841), "The Dawn of Christianity" (R.A. 1841), "The Approach to Venice" (R.A. 1844), "Venice: going to the Ball" (R.A. 1846), and "Venice: returning from the Ball" (R.A. 1846). Among the drawings, "Tynemouth," "A Ruined Abbey," "The West Font of Wells Cathedral," "The Bridge of Sighs" (Byron vignette), "The Lake of Zug," "Bellinzona," "Cologne," "Devonport" and "Salisbury" (both afterwards in the Ruskin collection), and "Nemi" and "Oberwesel." Mr. Windus was liberal in allowing strangers to visit his collection. One of the reviewers of the first volume of *Modern Painters* was conscientious enough to prepare himself for the task by studying Mr. Windus' Turners, "and we are glad to record our sense of the patient kindness with which he accompanied a stranger during the inspection of upwards of two hundred of Turner's finest productions" (*Church of England Quarterly*, Jan. 1844).]

¹ [*Picturesque Views in England and Wales*, from drawings by J. M. W. Turner, Esq., R.A., engraved under the superintendence of Mr. Charles Heath. With descriptive and historical illustrations by H. E. Lloyd: 2 vols., 1838. The engravings had previously been published in twenty-four numbers, 1827–1838.]

² [Probably 1802; see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 7, and *Catalogue of the Drawings and Sketches by Turner in the National Gallery*, Group viii., for remarks on Turner's first Continental tour.]

materials of which in these two subjects, and in the Chartreuse, and several others afterwards, he showed both his entire appreciation and command, the proportion of English to foreign subjects should in the rest of the work be more than two to one; and that those English subjects should be, many of them, of a kind peculiarly simple, and of every-day occurrence; such as the Pembury Mill, the Farm-Yard composition with the white horse, that with the cocks and pigs, Hedging and Ditching, Watercress Gatherers (scene at Twickenham), and the beautiful and solemn rustic subject called "A Watermill:" and that the architectural subjects, instead of being taken, as might have been expected of an artist so fond of treating effects of extended space, from some of the enormous continental masses, are almost exclusively British; Rivaulx, Holy Island, Dumblain, Dunstanborough, Chepstow, St. Katherine's, Greenwich Hospital, an English Parish Church, a Saxon ruin, and an exquisite reminiscence of the English lowland castle in the pastoral with the brook, wooden bridge, and wild duck; to all of which we have nothing foreign to oppose but three slight, ill-considered, and unsatisfactory subjects, from Basle, Lauffenbourg, and Thun: and, farther, not only is the preponderance of subject British, but of affection also; for it is strange with what fulness and completion the home subjects are treated in comparison with the greater part of the foreign ones. Compare the figures and sheep in the Hedging and Ditching, and the East Gate, Winchelsea, together with the near leafage, with the puzzled foreground and inappropriate figures of the Lake of Thun; or the cattle and road of the St. Catherine's Hill, with the foreground of the Bonneville; or the exquisite figure with the sheaf of corn in the Watermill, with the vintagers of the Grenoble subject.

In his foliage the same predilections are remarkable. Reminiscences of English willows by the brooks, and English forest glades, mingle even with the heroic foliage of the *Æsacus* and *Hesperie*, and the *Cephalus*; into the pine, whether of Switzerland or the glorious Stone, he cannot enter,

or enters at his peril, like Ariel.¹ Those of the Valley of Chamounix are fine masses, better pines than other people's, but not a bit like pines for all that; he feels his weakness, and tears them off the distant mountains with the mercilessness of an avalanche. The Stone pines of the two Italian compositions are fine in their arrangement, but they are very pitiful pines; the glory of the Alpine rose he never touches; he mounches chestnuts with no relish; never has learned to like olives; and, in the foreground of the Grenoble Alps, is, like many other great men, overthrown by the vine.²

I adduce these evidences of Turner's nationality (and innumerable others might be given if need were), not as proofs of weakness, but of power; not so much as testifying want of perception in foreign lands, as strong hold on his own; for I am sure that no artist who has not this hold upon his own will ever get good out of any other. Keeping this principle in mind, it is instructive to observe the depth and solemnity which Turner's feeling acquired from the scenery of the continent, the keen appreciation up to a certain point of all that is locally characteristic, and the ready seizure for future use of all valuable material.

Of all foreign countries he has most entirely entered into the spirit of France; partly because here he found more fellowship of scene with his own England; partly because an amount of thought which will miss of Italy or Switzerland will fathom France; partly because there is in the French foliage and forms of ground much that is especially congenial with his own peculiar choice of form. To what cause it is owing

§ 41. *Turner's painting of French and Swiss landscape. The latter deficient.*

¹ [*The Tempest*, Act i. Sc. ii. line 277. For other remarks on Turner's painting of pines, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. ix. § 7; *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, Nos. 505, 516; *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, 26 R.; *Mornings in Florence*, § 108. The "Valley of Chamounix" referred to in the text is the plate in the Liber Studiorum, not the one in the Farnley collection (see below, § 41 n).]

² [The original drawings for most of the plates mentioned above are in the National Gallery. Rivaulx is No. 483; Holy Island, No. 481; Dumblane, No. 497; Dunstanborough, No. 485; Chepstow, No. 494; St. Catherine's Hill, Guildford, No. 491; Greenwich Hospital, No. 493; "An English Parish Church" is the "Interior of a Church" in *Liber*, No. 14; "An English Lowland Castle," etc., is the "Pastoral," No. 467 in the National Gallery; Basle, No. 521; Lauffenburg, No. 473; Thun,

I cannot tell, nor is it generally allowed or felt; but of the fact I am certain, that for grace of stem and perfection of form in their transparent foliage, the French trees are altogether unmatched; and their modes of grouping and massing are so perfectly and constantly beautiful, that I think, of all countries for educating an artist to the perception of grace, France bears the bell; and that not romantic nor mountainous France, not the Vosges, nor Auvergne, nor Provence, but lowland France, Picardy and Normandy, the valleys of the Loire and Seine, and even the district, so thoughtlessly and mindlessly abused by English travellers as uninteresting, traversed between Calais and Dijon;¹ of which there is not a single valley but is full of the most lovely pictures, nor a mile from which the artist may not receive instruction; the district immediately about Sens being perhaps the most valuable, from the grandeur of its lines of poplars, and the unimaginable finish and beauty of the tree forms in the two great avenues without the walls. Of this kind of beauty Turner was the first to take cognizance, and he still remains the only, but in himself the sufficient, painter of French landscape. One of the most beautiful examples is the drawing of trees engraved for the Keepsake, now in the possession of

Nos. 474, 475; Hedging and Ditching, No. 508; East Gate, Winchelsea, No. 488; Bonneville, No. 478; Watermill, No. 505; Alps from Grenoble, No. 479; Cephalus and Procris, No. 465. The "Valley of Chamounix" is "Source of the Arveron," No. 879. The *Æsacus* and *Hesperie* is not in the National Gallery; it, and the *Cephalus*, are described and reproduced in *Lectures on Landscape*.]

¹ [Ruskin had now made this journey repeatedly, by posting stages and stopping on the road to sketch. With the scenery around Sens in particular he had been much impressed on his tour of 1845. In a letter from Sens (April 7) he writes to his father:—

"Such an exquisite morning as I had to leave Paris. Notre Dame and the Pont Neuf misty in the eastern light, and the Seine blazing beside the road all the way to Charenton till it nearly blinded me. I started from Meurice's at 7 precisely and got in here at 10 minutes before 5. Ordered dinner at ¼ to 7 and ran out and made a sketch in the market-place, and then down to the river side (Yonne) to see the sun set. Such an avenue! Every tree a new perfection! Turners, and better than Turner, at every step; I never saw anything so wonderful, so finished, so refined in vegetable form. It is a lovely place this: we came upon it in the afternoon light, after a thunderstorm had just fallen on *it*, not on us, and brought out all the colours into the subject, and the sweet spring smells out of the ground. The rows of poplars beside the Yonne, and the slopes covered with vineyards opposite, are both exquisite in their way."]



J.M.W. Turner R.A.

Allen & Co. Es.

The Valley of Chamouni.

From the Drawing in possession of F.H. Pawkes, Esquire.

B. G. Windus, Esq.; the drawings made to illustrate the scenery of the Rivers of France supply instances of the most varied character.¹

The artist appears, until very lately, rather to have taken from Switzerland thoughts and general conceptions of size and of grand form and effect to be used in his after compositions, than to have attempted the seizing of its local character. This was beforehand to be expected from the utter physical impossibility of rendering certain effects of Swiss scenery, and the monotony and unmanageableness of others. Of the drawings above alluded to in the possession of F. H. Fawkes, Esq., I shall give account hereafter; they are not altogether successful, but the manner of their deficiency cannot be described in my present space.² The Hannibal passing the Alps,³ in its present state, exhibits nothing but a heavy shower, and a crowd of people getting wet; another picture in the artist's gallery, of a Bergfall,⁴ is most masterly and interesting, but more daring than agreeable. The "Snow-storm, avalanche, and inundation,"⁵ is one of his mightiest works, but the amount of mountain drawing in it is less than of cloud and effect;

¹ [The drawing of trees is "The Palace of La Belle Gabrielle," engraved in the *Keepsake* for 1834 (for another reference to it, see below, p. 587); the drawings for the "Rivers of France" are now mostly in public collections—either (by Turner's bequest) in the National Gallery, or (by Ruskin's gift) in the University Galleries at Oxford and the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.]

² [Of Mr. Fawkes and Farnley Hall in relation to Turner and to Ruskin, an account is given in a later volume of this edition. Of the Farnley collection of Turners, as it existed in the time of Mr. F. H. Hawkes, Turner's friend, who died in 1820, a list is given in Thornbury's *Life*, 1877 ed., pp. 589–592. The greater part of the collection was exhibited in 1902 in London. The Swiss drawings were exhibited in 1815, but many of them were painted ten or more years earlier, and the first sketches for them were made in 1802 (see C. F. Bell's *Exhibited Works of Turner*, 1901, p. 19, and Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Sketches and Drawings by Turner in Marlborough House*, 1857–58, s. No. 72, now No. 554). For "Of the drawings above alluded to . . . my present space," eds. 3 and 4 read, "The Valley of Chamounix, in the collection of Walter Fawkes, Esq., I have never seen; it has a high reputation." And lower down, for "Berg," the same eds. read, "land."

³ [The drawing of Chamouni is here reproduced; with it compare Ruskin's drawing (facing p. 240), and see Introduction, above, p. liv. Ruskin's promise to give account hereafter of the Farnley drawings was partially fulfilled in *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), where a few of them are described.]

⁴ [No. 490 in the National Gallery, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812.]

⁵ [No. 489 in the National Gallery, "Cottage destroyed by an Avalanche"; for a description of it, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*.]

⁶ [Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1837: see below, p. 462.]

the subjects in the *Liber Studiorum* are on the whole the most intensely felt, and next to them the vignettes to Rogers's Poems, and Italy. Of some recent drawings of Swiss subjects I shall speak presently.¹

The effect of Italy upon his mind is very puzzling.² On the one hand it gave him the solemnity and power which are manifested in the historical compositions of the *Liber Studiorum*, more especially the Rizpah, the Cephalus, the scene from the Fairy Queen,³ and the Æsacus and Hesperie; on the other, he seems never to have entered thoroughly into the spirit of Italy, and the materials he obtained there were afterwards but awkwardly introduced in his large compositions.

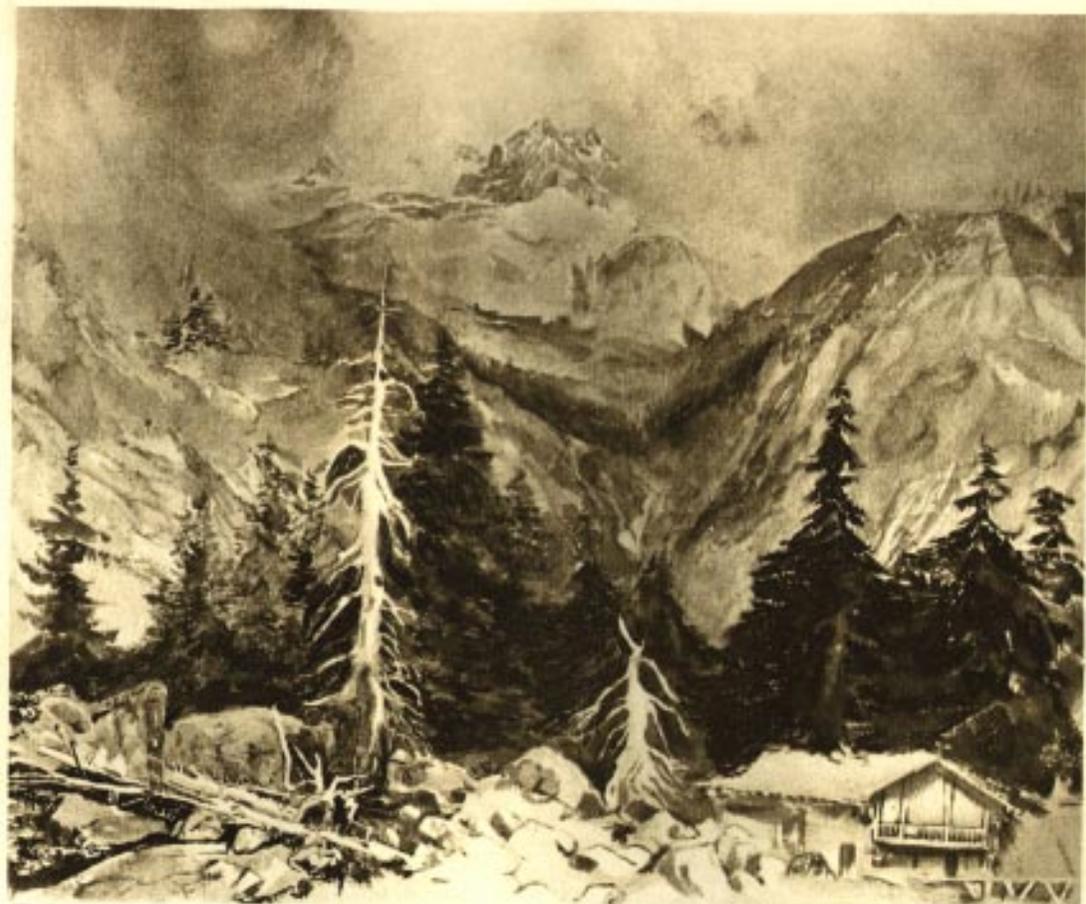
Of these there are very few at all worthy of him; none but the *Liber Studiorum* subjects are thoroughly great, and these are great because there is in them the seriousness, without the materials, of other countries and times. There is nothing particularly indicative of Palestine in the Barley Harvest of the Rizpah, nor in those round and awful trees; only the solemnity of the south in the lifting of the near burning moon. The rocks of the Jason may be seen in any quarry of Warwickshire sandstone. Jason himself has not a bit of Greek about him; he is a simple warrior of no period in particular, nay, I think there is something of the nineteenth century about his legs. When local character of this classical kind is attempted, the painter is visibly cramped; awkward resemblances to Claude testify the want of his usual forceful originality: in the Tenth Plague of Egypt, he makes us think of Belzoni⁴ rather than of Moses; the Fifth is a total failure; the pyramids look like brick-kilns, and the fire running along the ground like the burning of manure. The realization of

¹ [See below, § 46, p. 250.]

² [Turner first visited Italy in 1819.]

³ [No. 884 of the National Gallery drawings. Rizpah is No. 864; Jason, No. 461; the Tenth Plague, No. 469; the Fifth, No. 865. The "Realization of the Tenth Plague" is No. 470 of the oil-pictures; it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1802.]

⁴ [Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823), a "strong man" performer at Astley's and afterwards explorer in Egypt.]



J. Bushin.

The Valley of Chamouni.

From the watercolor drawing in possession of Pinchard Gordon, Esquire.

Allen & Co. Inc.

the Tenth Plague, now in his gallery, is finer than the study, but still uninteresting; and of the large compositions which have much of Italy in them, the greater part are overwhelmed with quantity, and deficient in emotion. The Crossing the Brook¹ is one of the best of these hybrid pictures; incomparable in its tree drawing, it yet leaves us doubtful where we are to look and what we are to feel; it is northern in its colour, southern in its foliage, Italy in its details, and England in its sensations, without the grandeur of the one or the cheerfulness of the other.

The two Carthages² are mere rationalizations of Claude; one of them excessively bad in colour, the other a grand thought, and yet one of the kind which does no one any good, because everything in it is reciprocally sacrificed; the foliage is sacrificed to the architecture, the architecture to the water, the water is neither sea, nor river, nor lake, nor brook, nor canal, and savours of Regent's Park; the foreground is uncomfortable ground—let on building leases. So, the Caligula's Bridge, Temple of Jupiter, Departure of Regulus, Ancient Italy, Cicero's Villa, and such others, come they from whose hand they may, I class under the general head of "nonsense pictures."³ There never can be any wholesome feeling developed in these preposterous accumulations, and where the artist's feeling fails, his art follows; so that the worst possible examples of Turner's colour are found in pictures of this

¹ [No. 497 in the National Gallery, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1815. A study for the tree is No. 401 of the National Gallery drawings. For other references to the picture, see below, sec. ii. ch. ii. § 18, sec. vi. ch. i. § 15, pp. 297, 587; and *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 33.]

² [The two companion pictures, "The Rise of the Carthaginian Empire" or "Dido building Carthage" (exhibited 1815, No. 498 in the National Gallery), and the "Decline of the Carthaginian Empire" (exhibited 1817, No. 499 in the National Gallery collection, now exhibited at Manchester). For the "epic thought" in the earlier picture, see above, p. 113; for the later picture, see next note.]

³ [Cf. *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, 1856, note on Nos. 499 and on "Characteristics of Turner's Second Period," where Ruskin cites passages from §§ 42, 43 here to show the place he had always given to pictures of the class above described. Worst of the class, he there says, is "The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire." "Caligula's Palace and Bridge" (1831) is No. 512 in the National Gallery; two pictures of the "Temple of Jupiter, Ægina" were exhibited in 1816, one of them now in the Whitworth Institute, Manchester; "Regulus leaving Rome" (1837) is No. 519 in the National Gallery collection, now exhibited at Dublin; "Ancient Italy" (1838) was in the collection of Munro of Novar, and was latterly in possession of Messrs. Sedelmeyer

class. In one or two instances he has broken through the conventional rules, and then is always fine, as in the *Hero and Leander*; but in general the picture rises in value as it approaches to a view, as the *Fountain of Fallacy*, a piece of rich Northern Italy, with some fairy waterworks;¹ this picture was unrivalled in colour once, but is now a mere wreck. So also the *Rape of Proserpine*, though it is singular that in his Academy pictures even his simplicity fails of reaching ideality: in his picture of *Proserpine* the nature is not the grand nature of all time, it is indubitably modern,* and we are perfectly electrified at anybody's being carried away in the corner except by people with spiky hats and carabines. This is traceable to several causes; partly to the want of any grand specific form, partly to the too evident middle-age character of the ruins crowning the hills, and to a multiplicity of minor causes which we cannot at present enter into.

Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers's poems. The *Villa of Galileo*, the nameless composition with stone pines, the several villa moonlights, and the convent

* This passage seems at variance with what has been said of the necessity of painting present times and objects. It is not so. A great painter makes out of that which he finds before him something which is independent of *all* time. He can only do this out of the materials ready to his hand, but that which he builds has the dignity of dateless age. A little painter is annihilated by an anachronism, and is conventionally antique, and involuntarily modern.

of Paris; "*Cicero at his Villa*" (1839), formerly in the Munro and Powerscourt collections, was afterwards in that of Mr. Edward Hermon; "*Hero and Leander*" (1837) is No. 521 in the National Gallery collection, now exhibited at Glasgow; for other references to it, see below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 5, sec. iii. ch. iii. § 26, sec. v. ch. iii. § 30, sec. vi. ch. ii. § 1, pp. 306, 390, 562, 607; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. iv. § 18 n. "*Plato carrying off Proserpine*" (1839) is in the collection of Mr. Edward Chapman.]

¹ [The "*Fountain of Fallacy*" was exhibited at the British Institution in 1839. Its subsequent history is unknown, unless the picture was identical with "*The Fountain of Indolence*" exhibited at the Academy in 1834, and now in the collection of Mr. George Vanderbilt (see for this conjecture C. F. Bell's *Exhibited Works of Turner*, 1901, p. 138). Ruskin had seen the picture in 1844 at a collection in Portland Place. He writes in his diary:—

Feb. 26.— . . . Called on Blakes in Portland Place, and saw the "*Fountain of Fallacy*," which I was bitterly vexed about—the sky entirely gone—but a nobler picture than even I imagined.

For a reference to the "*Fountain of Indolence*," see *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 242.]

compositions in the Voyage of Columbus, are altogether exquisite;¹ but this is owing chiefly to their simplicity, and perhaps in some measure to their smallness of size. None of his large pictures at all equal them; the Bay of Baiae is encumbered with material, it contains ten times as much as necessary to a good picture,² and yet is so crude in colour as to look unfinished. The Palestrina is full of raw white, and has a look of Hampton Court about its long avenue; the Modern Italy is purely English in its near foliage; it is composed from Tivoli material, enriched and arranged, most dexterously, but it has the look of a rich arrangement, and not the virtue of the real thing. The early Tivoli, a large drawing taken from below the falls, was as little true, and still less fortunate, the trees there being altogether affected and artificial. The Florence, engraved in the Keepsake, is a glorious drawing, as far as regards the passage with the bridge and sunlight on the Arno, the cascade foliage, and distant plain, and the towers of the fortress on the left; but the details of the duomo and the city are entirely missed, and with them the majesty of the whole scene. The vines and melons of the foreground are disorderly, and its cypresses conventional; in fact, I recollect no instance of Turner's drawing a cypress except in general terms.

§ 43. *His views of Italy destroyed by brilliancy and redundant quantity.*

¹ [The drawings for these are in the National Gallery. "Galileo's Villa" (for the *Italy*) is No. 221. The "nameless composition with stone pines" (at p. 168 of the *Italy*) is No. 202; *cf.* below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 5, p. 307. The "villa moonlights" are No. 217 (Verona, at p. 135 of the *Italy*) and No. 223 (Padua, at p. 223). The "convent compositions" (illustrating the *Poems*) are Nos. 246 and 250.]

² [No. 505 in the National Gallery, exhibited 1823. Ruskin enlarges on the overfulness of the picture in his discussion of it in the *Notes on the Turner Gallery*. The "Palestrina" (1830), formerly in the Bicknell collection, is now in that of Mrs. Williams. Ruskin's first impressions of the "Palestrina" were in some respects more favourable, as appears from the following note in his diary:—

March 27, 1844.—. . . Got a kind message from Turner that I might see the "Palestrina." Went in to-day on purpose; much delighted, but it is very crude in colour compared to my "Slaver"; glorious as a composition. Mr. Bicknell has bought it, and five others, which put me quite beside myself with joy yesterday.

The "Modern Italy" (1838), once in the Munro (of Novar) collection, is now in the Corporation Galleries, Glasgow. The "Early Tivoli" drawing was in the collection of Mr. Allnutt. For notices of other Tivoli drawings, see Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Turner Drawings and Sketches in the National Gallery* (1881). The "Florence" was engraved by E. Goodall in the *Keepsake* for 1828.]

The chief reason of these failures I imagine to be the effort of the artist to put joyousness and brilliancy of effect upon scenes eminently pensive, to substitute radiance for serenity of light, and to force the freedom and breadth of line which he learned to love on English downs and Highland moors, out of a country dotted by campaniles and square convents, bristled with cypresses, partitioned by walls, and gone up and down by steps.

In one of the cities of Italy he had no such difficulties to encounter. At Venice he found freedom of space, brilliancy of light, variety of colour, massive simplicity of general form; and to Venice we owe many of the motives in which his highest powers of colour have been displayed, after that change in his system of which we must now take note.

Among the earlier *paintings* of Turner, the culminating period, marked by the Yorkshire series in his § 44. *Changes introduced by him in the received system of art.* *drawings*, is distinguished by great solemnity and simplicity of subject, prevalent gloom in chiaroscuro, and brown in the hue, the drawing manly but careful, the minutiae sometimes exquisitely delicate. All the finest works of this period are, I believe, without exception, views, or quiet single thoughts. The Calder Bridge, belonging to E. Bicknell, Esq., is a most pure and beautiful example.¹ The Ivy Bridge I imagine to be later, but its rock foreground is altogether unrivalled, and remarkable for its delicacy of detail; a butterfly is seen settled on one of the large brown stones in the midst of the torrent, a bird is about to seize it, while its companion, crimson-winged, flits idly on

¹ [Mr. Bicknell was a neighbour of Ruskin at Herne Hill, and had a collection of ten pictures and fourteen drawings by Turner. For a list of its contents, see Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, ed. 1877, p. 599. Among the pictures were "Port Ruysdael" and "Venice, Campo Santo"; for these, see below, sec. v. ch. iii. § 37, p. 568, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. ii. § 15 n. Among the drawings were two of the late Swiss series (the "Blue Righi" and Lucerne Lake); for these, see Epilogue to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*. The "Calder Bridge, Cumberland" (not exhibited) was painted about 1810; it is now in the possession of Mrs. Ashton. The "Ivy Bridge" (also in Mr. Bicknell's collection, and likewise not exhibited) was painted about 1812; it is now in the collection of Mr. Pandeli Ralli. A sketch from nature for it is in the National Gallery (No. 407), where also there is a drawing of the same subject (No. 556, and study in frame, No. 407); for these, see *Catalogue of the Sketches and Drawings by Turner in Marlborough House*, 1857-58, under No. 43.]

the surface of one of the pools of the stream, within half an inch of the surface of the water, thus telling us its extreme stillness. Two paintings of Bonneville,¹ in Savoy, one in the possession of Abel Allnutt, Esq., the other, and I think the finer, in a collection at Birmingham, show more variety of colour than is usual with him at the period, and are in every respect magnificent examples.* Pictures of this class are of peculiar value, for the larger compositions of the same period are all poor in colour, and most of them much damaged; but the smaller works have been far finer originally, and their colour seems secure. There is nothing in the range of landscape art equal to them in their way, but the full character and capacity of the painter are not in them. Grand as they are in their sobriety, they still leave much to be desired; there is great heaviness in their shadows, the material is never thoroughly vanquished (though this partly for a very noble reason, that the painter is always thinking of and referring to nature, and indulges in no artistical conventionalities), and sometimes the handling appears feeble. In warmth, lightness, and transparency, they have no chance against Gainsborough; in clear skies and air tone they are alike unfortunate when they provoke comparison with Claude; and in force and solemnity they can in no wise stand with the landscape of the Venetians.

The painter evidently felt that he had farther powers, and pressed forward into the field where alone they could be brought into play. It was impossible for him, with all his keen and long disciplined perceptions, not to feel that the real

* The worst picture I ever saw of this period, "The Trossachs" [*sic*], has been for some time exhibited at Mr. Grundy's in Regent Street; and it has been much praised by the public press, on the ground, I suppose, that it exhibits so little of Turner's power or manner as to be hardly recognizable for one of his works.²

¹ [Bonneville was a favourite subject of Turner's. He painted several pictures of it, and exhibited three (see C. F. Bell's *Exhibited Works of Turner*, Nos. 100 (1803), 104 (1803), and 124 (1812)). For drawings, see National Gallery, Nos. 323, 478, and 854; and Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 10.]

² [Note added in ed. 5. "The Trossachs," formerly in the Munro collection, is now in that of Mr. Humphrey Roberts; it was painted about 1810.]

colour of nature had never been attempted by any school; and that though conventional representations had been given by the Venetians of sunlight and twilight by invariably rendering the whites golden and the blues green, yet of the actual, joyous, pure, roseate hues of the external world no record had ever been given. He saw also that the finish and specific grandeur of nature had been given, but her fulness, space, and mystery never; and he saw that the great landscape painters had always sunk the lower middle tints of nature in extreme shade, bringing the entire melody of colour as many degrees down as their possible light was inferior to nature's; and that in so doing a gloomy principle had influenced them even in their choice of subject.

For the conventional colour he substituted a pure straightforward rendering of fact, as far as was in his power; and that not of such fact as had been before even suggested, but of all that is *most* brilliant, beautiful, and inimitable; he went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, asked of the sea its intensest azure, of the sky its clearest gold. For the limited space and defined forms of elder landscape he substituted the quantity and the mystery of the vastest scenes of earth; and for the subdued chiaroscuro he substituted first a balanced diminution of opposition throughout the scale, and afterwards, in one or two instances, attempted the reverse of the old principle, taking the lowest portion of the scale truly, and merging the upper part in high light.¹

Innovations so daring and so various could not be introduced without corresponding peril: the difficulties that lay in his way were more than any human intellect could altogether surmount. In his time there has been no one system of colour generally approved; every artist has his own method and his own vehicle; how to do what Gainsborough did, we know not; much less what Titian; to invent a new system of colour can

§ 45. *Difficulties of his later manner. Resultant deficiencies.*

¹ [The account of Turner's successive periods, given in this chapter, should be compared, in the case of his paintings, with Ruskin's *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House* (1856); in the case of his drawings, with Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (1878).]

hardly be expected of those who cannot recover the old. To obtain perfectly satisfactory results in colour under the new conditions introduced by Turner would at least have required the exertion of all his energies in that sole direction. But colour has always, been only his second object. The effects of space and form, in which he delights, often require the employment of means and method totally at variance with those necessary for the obtaining of pure colour. It is physically impossible, for instance, rightly to draw certain forms of the upper clouds with the brush; nothing will do it but the pallet knife with loaded white after the blue ground is prepared. Now it is impossible that a cloud so drawn, however glazed afterwards, should have the virtue of a thin warm tint of Titian's, showing the canvas throughout. So it happens continually. Add to these difficulties, those of the peculiar subjects attempted, and to these again, all that belong to the altered system of chiaroscuro, and it is evident that we must not be surprised at finding many deficiencies or faults in such works, especially in the earlier of them, nor even suffer ourselves to be withdrawn by the pursuit of what seems censurable from our devotion to what is mighty.

Notwithstanding, in some chosen examples of pictures of this kind (I will name three: Juliet and her Nurse; the Old Téméraire; and the Slave Ship¹), I do not admit that there are at the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy, any demonstrably avoidable faults; I do not deny that there may be, nay, that it is likely there are: but there is no living artist in Europe whose judgment might safely be taken on the subject, or who could without arrogance affirm of any part of such a picture, that it was *wrong*. I am perfectly willing to allow, that the lemon yellow is not properly representative of the yellow of the sky, that the loading of the

¹ [For "Juliet and her Nurse" (1836), see below, pp. 636–640. The "Old Téméraire" (1839) is No. 524 in the National Gallery; see below, § 46 *n.*; sec. ii. ch. i. § 21; *Harbours of England*, § 32; and *Notes on the Turner Gallery*. The "Slave Ship" (1840) is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (U.S.A); it was formerly in Ruskin's collection (see Introduction, above, p. lv.). Lower down, sec. v. ch. iii. § 39, Ruskin describes it and characterizes it as "the noblest sea ever painted by man;" for other references to it, see note on p. 571.]

colour is in many places disagreeable, that many of the details are drawn with a kind of imperfection different from what they would have in nature, and that many of the parts fail of imitation, especially to an uneducated eye. But no living authority is of weight enough to prove that the virtues of the picture could have been obtained at a less sacrifice, or that they are not worth the sacrifice: and though it is perfectly possible that such may be the case, and that what Turner has done may hereafter in some respects be done better, I believe myself that these works are at the time of their first appearing as perfect as those of Phidias or Leonardo; that is to say, incapable, in their way, of any improvement conceivable by human mind.

Also, it is only by comparison with such that we are authorized to affirm definite faults in any of his others, for we should have been bound to speak, at least for the present, with the same modesty respecting even his worst pictures of this class, had not his more noble efforts given us canons of criticism.

But, as was beforehand to be expected from the difficulties he grappled with, Turner is exceedingly unequal; he appears always as a champion in the thick of fight, sometimes with his foot on his enemies' necks, sometimes staggered or struck to his knee; once or twice altogether down. He has failed most frequently, as before noticed, in elaborate compositions, from redundant quantity;¹ sometimes, like most other men, from over-care, as very signally in a large and most laboured drawing of Bamborough; sometimes, unaccountably, his eye for colour seeming to fail him for a time, as in a large painting of Rome from the Forum, and in the Cicero's Villa, and Building of Carthage;² and sometimes, I am sorry to say, criminally, from taking licenses which he must know to be illegitimate, or indulging in conventionalities which he does not require.

¹ [See above, § 43.]

² [The "Bamborough" may be the drawing sold from the collection of Mr. J. Heugh in 1860 (see Thornbury, p. 608). The "Rome" may be the picture in the National Gallery collection, No. 504, now exhibited at Chester. For "Cicero at his Villa," see above, p. 242 *n.* For the "Building of Carthage" (No. 498 in the National Gallery), see above, p. 241 *n.*]

On such instances I shall not insist, for the finding fault with Turner is not, I think, either decorous in myself or likely to be beneficial to the reader.* The greater number of failures took place in the period of transition, when the artist was feeling for the new qualities, and endeavouring to reconcile them with more careful elaboration of form than was properly consistent with them. Gradually his hand became more free, his perception and grasp of the new truths more certain, and his

§ 46. *Reflection on his very recent works.*

* One point, however, it is incumbent upon me to notice, being no question of art but of material. The reader will have observed that I strictly limited the perfection of Turner's works to the time of their first appearing on the walls of the Royal Academy. It bitterly grieves me to have to do this, but the fact is indeed so. No *picture* of Turner's is seen in perfection a month after it is painted. The *Walhalla* cracked before it had been eight days in the Academy rooms; the *vermilions* frequently lose lustre long before the Exhibition is over; and when all the colours begin to get hard a year or two after the picture is painted, a painful deadness and opacity come over them, the whites especially becoming lifeless, and many of the warmer passages settling into a hard valueless brown, even if the paint remains perfectly firm, which is far from being always the case. I believe that in some measure these results are unavoidable, the colours being so peculiarly blended and mingled in Turner's present manner, as almost to necessitate their irregular drying; but that they are not necessary to the extent in which they sometimes take place, is proved by the comparative safety of some even of the more brilliant works. Thus the *Old Téméraire* is nearly safe in colour, and quite firm; while the *Juliet and her Nurse* is now the ghost of what it was; the *Slaver* shows no cracks, though it is chilled in some of the darker passages, while the *Walhalla* and several of the recent *Venices* cracked in the Royal Academy. It is true that the damage makes no farther progress after the first year or two, and that even in its altered state the picture is always valuable and records its intention; but how are we enough to regret that so great a painter should not leave a single work by which in succeeding ages he might be entirely estimated? The fact of his using means so imperfect, together with that of his utter neglect of the pictures in his own gallery, are a phenomenon in human mind which appears to me utterly inexplicable; and both are without excuse. If the effects he desires cannot be to their full extent produced except by these treacherous means, one picture only should be painted each year as an exhibition of immediate power, and the rest should be carried out, whatever the expense of labour and time, in safe materials, even at the risk of some deterioration of immediate effect. That which is greatest in him is entirely independent of means; much of what he now accomplishes illegitimately might without doubt be attained in securer modes—what cannot, should without hesitation be abandoned. Fortunately the drawings appear subject to no such deterioration. Many of them are now almost destroyed, but this has been I think always through ill treatment, or has been the case only with very early works. I have myself

choice of subject more adapted to the exhibition of them.¹ In the year 1842, he made some drawings from recent sketches in Switzerland, peculiarly fine in colour; and among the Academy pictures of that period, examples of the same power were not wanting, more especially in the smaller Venetian subjects. The Sun of Venice; the San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina; and a view of Murano with the cemetery, were all faultless: another of Venice, seen from near Fusina, with sunlight and moonlight mixed (1844), was, I think, when I first saw it, the most perfectly *beautiful* piece of colour of all that I have seen produced by human hands, by any means, or at any period. Of the Exhibition of 1845, I have only seen a small Venice (still, I believe, in the artist's possession), and the

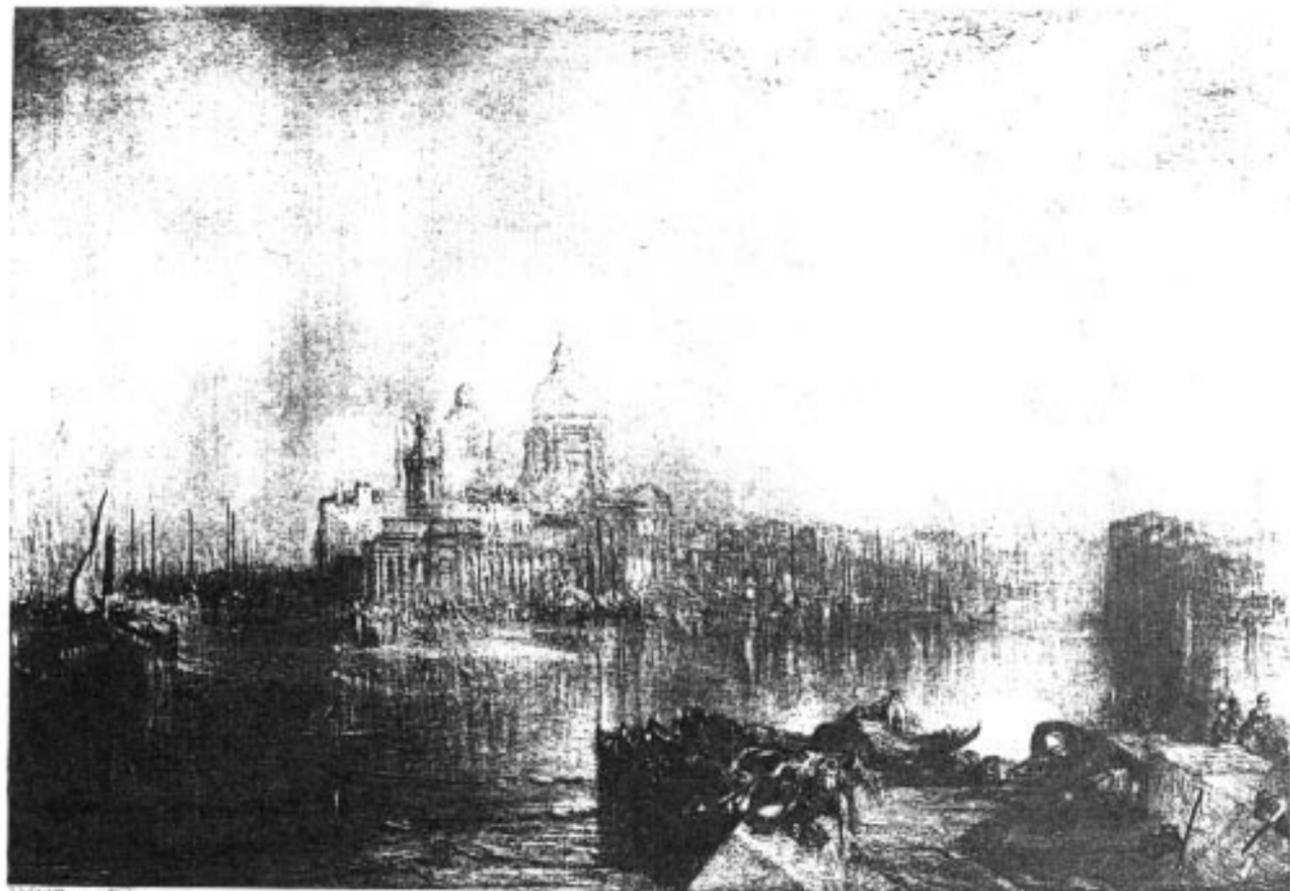
known no instance of a drawing properly protected, and not rashly exposed to light, suffering the slightest change. The great foes of Turner, as of all other great colourists especially, are the sun, the picture cleaner, and the mounter.²

¹ [Here eds. 3 and 4 read, at greater length:—

“ . . . exhibition of them, but his powers did not attain their highest result till towards the year 1840, about which period they did so suddenly, and with a vigour and concentration which rendered his pictures at that time almost incomparable with those which had preceded them. The drawings of Nemi, and Oberwesel, in the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., were among the first evidences of this sudden advance; only the foliage in both these is inferior; and it is remarkable that in this phase of his art, Turner has drawn little foliage, and that little badly—the great characteristic of it being its power, beauty, and majesty of colour, and its abandonment of all littleness and division of thought to a single impression. In the year 1842 he made some drawings from recent sketches in Switzerland; these, with some produced in the following years, all of Swiss subjects, I consider to be, on the whole, the most characteristic and perfect works he has ever produced. The Academy pictures were far inferior to them, but among these, examples of the same power were not wanting, more especially in the smaller pictures of Venice. The Sun of Venice, going to Sea, the San Benedetto, looking towards . . .”

For the drawings and sketches of 1842, see Epilogue to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*.]

² [The Walhalla is “The Opening of the Walhalla” (1842), No. 533 in the National Gallery collection (now exhibited at Dublin). For the cracking and fading of Turner's paintings, see further, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 14, ch. xii. § 31; *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, s. No. 516; and *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, s. No. 62. For “the utter neglect of the pictures” in Turner's gallery, see Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, 1877, ch. xxv., and cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pref. § 2. For the question of the fading of Turner's drawings, see Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Turner Sketches in the National Gallery* (1857), and his letters to the *Times* reprinted in the *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Water-Colour Drawings by Deceased Masters of the British School* (Royal Institute, 1886). Ruskin, in a letter from Venice (Sept. 10, 1845), says to his father, “I am very glad you are not disappointed with your Turners, but I am frightened lest Foord should have persuaded you to mount them; he is always trying at that—confound him! and they may be half spoiled if you let them go.”]



J.M.W. Turner R.A.

The Dogana, and Santa Maria della Salute, Venice.

From the Picture in possession of James Dore, Esq.

Allen & Co. Ed.

two whaling subjects. The Venice is a second-rate work, and the two others altogether unworthy of him.¹

In conclusion of our present sketch of the course of

¹ ["The 'Sun of Venice' going to sea" (1843) is No. 535 in the National Gallery; see *Notes on the Turner Gallery* for a description of it, and, for other references, below, pt. ii. sec. v. ch. iii. § ii, p. 545; *Harbours of England*, ed. 1895, p. 49; *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. App. 2. The fidelity to the spirit of Venice shown in this and other Turners of the period had greatly impressed Ruskin, in 1845. In a letter to his father (Sept. 14) Ruskin deprecates the progress of "restoration" and "improvements," but continues:—

"One only consolation I have—the finding, among the wrecks of Venice, authority for all that Turner has done of her. I am not indeed surprised to find with what care he has noted, and with what dexterity he has used, every atom of material—to find his baskets in the water, his heads of boats out of it, his oranges and vines hanging over their loaded sides; but I was a little taken aback when yesterday at six in the morning—with the early sunlight just flushing its folds—out came a fishing-boat with its painted sail full to the wind—the most gorgeous oranges and red:—in everything, form, colour, and feeling—the very counterpart of the 'Sol di Venezia': it is impossible that any model could be more rigidly exact than the painting, even to the height of the sail above the deck. All his skies are here too, or would be, if man would let them alone; but yesterday, as I was trying to note some morning clouds, a volume of smoke from a manufactory on the Rialto blotted everything as black as the Thames."

The "Sol di Venezia" was already a great favourite with Ruskin. In his diary he writes:—

April 29, 1844.—Yesterday, when I called with my father on Turner, he was kinder than I ever remember. He shook hands most cordially with my father, wanted us to have a glass of wine, asked us to go upstairs into the gallery. When there, I went immediately in search of the "Sol di Venezia," saying it was my favourite. "I thought," said Turner, "it was 'St. Benedetto.' " It was flattering that he remembered I had told him this. I said the worst of his pictures was one could never see enough of them. "That's part of their quality," said Turner.

The "San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina" (1843) is No. 534 in the National Gallery; see *Notes on the Turner Gallery* for a description of it, and, for another reference, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. ii. § 16. Turner's title for this picture was inaccurate (the church of San Benedetto being in a different part of Venice); it is now called "Approach to Venice," etc. Ruskin (as we learn from his diary of Feb. 8, 1844) had made an oil-study from this picture.

The picture which Ruskin here and in the *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (No. 62 and 11 R. (b) calls "Murano and Cemetery" is the "Campo Santo" (1842) formerly in the possession of Ruskin's friend and neighbour at Herne Hill, Mr. E. Bicknell (for whom it was painted). He lent it to Ruskin, who made from its sky the drawing engraved in Plate 67 of *Modern Painters* (see vol. v. pt. vii. ch. ii. § 15). "It was," says Ruskin, in his *Turner Notes*, "the most perfect of all the late Venices." It is so still; at the Guildhall Exhibition in 1899 (lent by Mrs. Keiller), it was seen to be in better condition than the National Gallery pictures above mentioned.

The other "picture of Venice, seen from near Fusina," etc., is the "Approach to Venice" (1844), formerly in the possession of Mr. B. G. Windus, now in that of Mrs. Moir; for other references to it, see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, Introduction, and s. No. 62.

Turner's pictures at the Royal Academy in 1845 were "Whalers" (two pictures), "Venice: Evening, going to the Ball" (N.G., No. 543), "Venice: Morning, returning from the Ball" (N.G., No. 544), "Venice: Noon" (N. G., No. 541), and "Venice: Sunset" (N. G., No. 542). As these Venices are all of the same size, it is impossible

landscape art,¹ it may be generally stated that Turner is the only painter, so far as I know, who has ever drawn the sky, not the clear sky, which we before saw belonged exclusively to the religious schools, but the various forms and phenomena of the cloudy heavens; all previous artists having only represented it typically or partially, but he absolutely and universally. He is the only painter who has ever drawn a mountain, or a stone;² no other man ever having learned their organization, or possessed himself of their spirit, except in part and obscurely (the one or two stones noted of Tintoret's, in vol. ii. (sec. ii. ch. iii. § 28 *n.*), are perhaps hardly enough on which to found an exception in his favour). He is the only painter who ever drew the stem of a tree, Titian having come the nearest before him, and excelling him, in the muscular development of the larger trunks (though sometimes losing the woody strength in a serpent-like flaccidity), but missing the grace and character of the ramifications. He is the only painter who has ever represented the surface of calm, or the force of agitated water; who has represented the effects of space on distant objects, or who has rendered the abstract beauty of natural colour. These assertions I make deliberately, after careful weighing and consideration, in no spirit of dispute, or momentary zeal; but from strong and convinced feeling, and with the consciousness of being able to prove them.

This proof is only partially and incidentally attempted in the present portion of this work, which was originally written, as before explained,³ for a temporary purpose, and which, therefore, I should have gladly cancelled, but that, relating as it does only to simple matters of fact and not to those of feeling, it may still, perhaps, be of service to some readers who would be unwilling to enter into the more speculative fields with which the succeeding sections are concerned. I leave,

to distinguish the one referred to above. None of them is mentioned in the *Notes on the Turner Gallery*. Of the two Whalers, one is No. 545 in the National Gallery; the other is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.]

¹ [Ruskin in his copy for revision has marked this passage, "In conclusion . . . prove them," as if in special approval.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 5, where Ruskin refers to this statement, and reaffirms it.]

³ [Above, prefaces to 1st and 3rd eds.]

therefore, nearly as it was originally written, the following examination of the relative truthfulness of elder and of recent art; always, requesting the reader to remember, as some excuse for the inadequate execution, even of what I have here attempted, how difficult it is to express or explain, by language only, those delicate qualities of the object of sense, on the seizing of which all refined truth of representation depends. Try, for instance, to explain in language the exact qualities of the lines on which depend the whole truth and beauty of expression about the half-opened lips of Raffaello's St. Catherine.¹ There is indeed nothing in landscape so ineffable as this; but there is no part nor portion of God's works in which the delicacy appreciable by a cultivated eye, and necessary to be rendered in art, is not beyond all expression and explanation; I cannot tell it you, if you do not see it. And thus I have been entirely unable, in the following pages, to demonstrate clearly anything of really deep and perfect truth; nothing but what is coarse and commonplace, in matters to be judged of by the senses, is within the reach of argument. How much or how little I have done must be judged of by the reader: how much it is impossible to do I have more fully shown in the concluding section.

§ 47. *Difficulty of demonstration in such subjects.*

I shall first take into consideration those general truths, common to all the objects of nature, which are productive of what is usually called "effect," that is to say, truths of tone, general colour, space, and light. I shall then investigate the truths of specific form and colour, in the four great component parts of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation.

[The following is the conclusion of this chapter as it stood in eds. 1 and 2 (see above, p. 169)]:—

Who, that has one spark of feeling for what is beautiful or true, would not turn to be refreshed by the pure and extended realizations of modern art! How many have we—how various in their aim and sphere—embracing one by one every feeling and lesson of the creation! David Cox, whose pencil never falls but in dew—simple-minded as a child, gentle, and loving all things that are pure and

§ 6. *And with the feeling of modern artists.*

¹ [See above, p. 31, n. 2.]

lowly—content to lie quiet among the rustling leaves, and sparkling grass, and purple-cushioned heather, only to watch the soft white clouds melting with their own motion, and the dewy blue dropping through them like rain, so that he may but cast from him as pollution all that is proud, and artificial, and unquiet, and worldly, and possess his spirit in humility and peace. Copley Fielding, casting his whole soul into space—exciting like a wild deer in the motion of the swift mists, and the free far surfaces of the untrodden hills—now wandering with the quick, pale, fitful sun-gleams over the dim swells and sweeps of grey downs and shadowy dingles, until, lost half in light and half in vapour, they melt into the blue of the plain as the cloud does into the sky—now climbing with the purple sunset along the aerial slopes of the quiet mountains, only known from the red clouds by their stillness—now flying with the wild wind and sifted spray along the white, driving, desolate sea; but always with the passion for nature’s freedom burning in his heart, so that every leaf in his foreground is a wild one, and every line of his hills is limitless. J. D. Harding, brilliant and vigorous, and clear in light as nature’s own sunshine—deep in knowledge, exquisite in feeling of every form that nature falls into—following with his quick, keen dash the sunlight into the crannies of the rocks, and the wind into the tangling of the grass, and the bright colour into the fall of the sea-foam—various, universal in his aim—master alike of all from and feature of crage, or torrent, or forest, or cloud; but English, all English at his heart, returning still to rest under the shade of some spreading elm, where the fallow deer butt among the bending fern, and the quiet river glides noiselessly by its reedy shore, and the yellow corn sheaves glow along the flanks of the sloping hills. Clarkson Stanfield, firm and fearless, and unerring in his knowledge—stern and decisive in his truth—perfect and certain in composition—shunning nothing, concealing nothing, and falsifying nothing—never affected, never morbid, never, failing—conscious of his strength, but never ostentatious of it—acquainted with every line and hue of the *deep* sea—chiselling his waves with unhesitating knowledge of every curve of their anatomy, and every moment of their motion—building his mountains rock by rock, with wind in every fissure and weight in every stone—and modelling the masses of his sky with the strength of tempest in their every fold. And Turner—glorious in conception—unfathomable in knowledge—solitary in power—with the elements waiting upon his will, and the night and the morning obedient to his call, sent as a prophet of God to reveal to men the mysteries of His universe, standing, like the great angel of the Apocalypse, clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon his head, and with the sun and stars given into his hand.¹

¹ [This passage was quoted by *Blackwood* as “somewhat blaspheming the Divine attributes,” and the following remarks were added:—“Little as we are disposed to laugh at any such aberrations, we must, to remove from our minds the greater, the more serious offence, indulge in a small degree of justifiable ridicule; and ask what will sculptor or painter make of this description, should the reluctant public be convinced by the Graduate, and in their penitential reverence order statue or painting of Mr. Turner for the Temple of Fame, which it is presumed Parliament, in their artistic zeal, mean to erect? How will they venture to represent Mr. Turner looking like an angel—in that dress which would make any man look a fool—his cloud nightcap tied with a rainbow riband round his head, calling to night and morning, and little caring which comes, making ducks and drakes of the sun and stars, put into his hand for that

But I must not anticipate my subject—what I have asserted must be proved by deliberate investigation of facts, and in no way left dependent upon feeling or imagination. Yet I may, perhaps, before proceeding into detail, illustrate my meaning more completely by a comparison of the kind of truths impressed upon us in the painting of Venice by Canaletti, Prout, Stanfield, and Turner.

§ 7. *The character of Venice as given by Canaletti.*¹

The effect of a fine Canaletti is, in its first impression, dioramic. We fancy we are in our beloved Venice again, with one foot, by mistake, in the clear, invisible film of water lapping over the marble steps of the foreground. Every house has its proper relief against the sky—every brick and stone its proper hue of sunlight and shade—and every degree of distance its proper tone, of retiring air. Presently, however, we begin to feel that it is lurid and gloomy, and that, the painter, compelled by the lowness of the utmost light at his disposal to deepen the shadows, in order to get the right relation, has lost the flashing, *dazzling*, exulting light, which was one of our chief sources of Venetian happiness. But we pardon this, knowing it to be unavoidable, and begin to look for something of that in which Venice differs from Rotterdam, or any other city built beside canals. We know that house, certainly; we never passed it without stopping our gondolier, for its arabesques were as rich as a bank of flowers in spring, and as beautiful as a dream. What has Canaletti given us for them? Five black dots. Well; take the next house. We remember that too; it was mouldering inch by inch into the canal, and the bricks had fallen away from its shattered marble shafts, and left them white and skeleton-like; yet, with their fretwork of cold flowers wreathed about them still, untouched by time, and through the rents of the wall behind them there used to come long sunbeams, greened by the weeds through which they pierced, which flitted and fell, one by one, round those grey and quiet shafts, catching here a leaf and there a leaf and gliding over the illumined edges and delicate fissures, until they sank into the deep dark hollow between the marble blocks of the sunk foundation, lighting every other moment one isolated emerald lamp on the crest of the intermittent waves, when the wild sea-weeds and crimson lichens drifted and crawled with their thousand colours and fine branches over its decay, and the black, clogging, accumulated limpets hung in ropy clusters from the dripping and tinkling stone. What has Canaletti given us for this? One square red mass, composed of—let me count—five-and-fifty, no; six-and-fifty, no; I was right at first—five-and-fifty bricks, of precisely the same size, shape, and colour, one great black line for the shadow of the roof at the top, and six similar ripples in a row at the bottom! And this is what people call “painting nature”! It is, indeed, painting nature—as she appears to the most unfeeling and untaught of mankind. The bargeman and the bricklayer probably see no more in Venice than Canaletti gives—heaps of earth and mortar, with water between—and are just as capable of appreciating the facts of sunlight and shadow, by which he deceives us, as the most educated of us all. But what more there is in Venice than brick and stone—what there is

purpose?” (Oct. 1843, p. 492). Ruskin’s father, in a letter to W. H. Harrison commenting on this review, described it as “heartless, inasmuch as there were pure and young effusions in the book that might have touched a man of feeling.”]

¹ [For Ruskin’s early spelling of this artist’s name, see Vol. I. p. 223 *n.*]

of mystery and death, and memory and beauty—what there is to be learned or lamented, to be loved or wept—we look for to Canaletti in vain.

Let us pass to Prout.¹ The imitation is lost at once. The buildings have nothing resembling their real relief against the sky; there are multitudes of false distances; the shadows in many places have a great deal more Vandyke-brown than darkness in them; and the lights very often more yellow-ochre than sunshine. But yet the effect on our eye is that very brilliancy and cheerfulness which delighted us in Venice itself, and there is none of that oppressive and lurid gloom which was cast upon our feelings by Canaletti.* And now we feel there is something in the subject worth drawing, and different from other subjects and architecture. That house is rich, and strange, and full of grotesque carving and character— that one next to it is shattered and infirm, and varied with picturesque rents and hues of decay—that farther off is beautiful in proportion, and strong in its purity of marble. Now we begin to feel that we are in Venice; this is what we could not get elsewhere; it is worth seeing, and drawing, and talking and thinking of,—not an exhibition of common daylight or brick walls. But let us look a little closer; we know those capitals very well; their design was most original and perfect, and so delicate that it seemed to have been cut in ivory;—what have we got for them here? Five straight strokes of a reed pen! No, Mr. Prout, it is not quite Venice yet.²

Let us take Stanfield then. Now we are farther still from anything like Venetian tone; all is cold and comfortless, but there is air and good daylight, and we will not complain. And now let us look into the buildings, and all is perfection and fidelity; every shade and line full of feeling and truth, rich and solid, and fidelity; every every leaf and arabesque marked to its minutest curve and angle,—the marble crumbling, the wood mouldering, and the waves splashing and lapping before our eyes. But it is all drawn hard and sharp, there is nothing, to hope for or find out, nothing to dream of or discover; we can measure and see it from base to battlement, there is nothing too fine for us to follow, nothing too full for us to fathom. This cannot be nature, for it is not infinity. No, Mr. Stanfield, it is scarcely Venice yet.

* It will be observed how completely I cast aside all mere *mechanical* excellence as unworthy of praise. Canaletti's *mechanism* is wonderful,—Prout's, the rudest possible; but there is not a grain of feeling in the one, and there is much in the other. In spite of all that can be alleged of the mannerism and imperfections of Prout as an artist, there is that in his drawings which will bring us back to them again and again, even after we have been rendered most fastidious by the exquisite drawing and perfect composition of the accomplished Roberts. There is an appreciation and realization of continental character in his works—at locality and life which have never yet been reached by any other of our architectural draughtsmen—and they are the sign of deep feeling and high genius, by whatever faults of manner they may be attained or accompanied; and we shall think ourselves in danger of losing our right feeling for art, and for nature too, when we find ourselves unable to turn occasionally from the refined grace of Roberts, and the absolute truth of Stanfield, to linger with Prout on the sunny side of a Flemish street, watching the fantastic peaks of its gables in the sky, and listening for the clatter of the sabot.

¹ [It will be seen from the facsimile here given, that in the early MS. draft of this passage the references to Prout were differently expressed.]

² [On the subject of this paragraph on Prout, see the letter to him in Appendix iii p. 662.]

what more there is in Venice ^{than} of brick and stone - what there is of
mystery - of death - of memory - of beauty - what there is to be learned
or lamented - to be wowed - or wept - you look for to Canaletto in
vain.

Let us pass to Prout - Then, note. ~~I would not~~

Of course nothing of mere mechanical difficulty in art is here
taken into consideration; and ~~the rank assigned to Prout has~~
~~been~~ I am fully aware of all the maxims and errors of opinion
which put Prout - as an artist, into an exceedingly low rank. But
there is behind all this - something in his feeling, which had it
been rightly cultivated, ~~and~~ ^{if} ~~of fortune had given him~~ ^{had he had} strength
and opportunity for legitimate study, would have raised him to an
equal position among the landscape painters of England. There is
an appreciation and realization of continental character in his work,
a locality & life, ~~or distinguished from the which is of itself~~
~~the work rather and~~ ^{of a more} on the signs of deeper & finer truth than
~~when~~ ^{distinct} & vivid, ~~and~~ ^{soft} could be imagined to be couched under
the mere outline and unregarded treatment. There is something
in his drawings which will bring us back to them again and
again in spite of every conviction that they are unartistic & wrong.
The eye will be more & more offended every time we turn to them

But let us take, with Turner, the last and greatest step of all. Thank heaven, we are in sunshine again,—and what sunshine! Not the lurid, gloomy, plague-like oppression of Canaletti, but white, flashing fulness of dazzling light, which the waves drink and the clouds breathe, bounding and burning in intensity of joy. That sky,—it is a very visible infinity,—liquid, measureless, unfathomable, panting and melting through the chasms in the long fields of snow-white, flaked, slow-moving vapour, that guide the eye along their multitudinous waves down to the islanded rest of the Euganean hills. Do we dream, or does the white forked sail drift nearer, and nearer yet, diminishing the blue sea between us with the fulness of its wings? It pauses now; but the quivering of its bright reflection troubles the shadows of the sea, those azure, fathomless depths of crystal mystery, on which the swiftness of the poised gondola floats double, its black beak lifted like the crest of a dark ocean bird, its scarlet draperies flashed back from the kindling surface, and its bent oar breaking the radiant water into a dust of gold. Dreamlike and dim, but glorious, the unnumbered palaces lift their shafts out of the hollow sea,—pale ranks of motionless flame,—their mighty towers sent up to heaven like tongues of more eager fire,—their grey domes looming vast and dark, like eclipsed worlds,—their sculptured arabesques and purple marble fading farther and fainter, league beyond league, lost in the light of distance. Detail after detail, thought beyond thought, you find and feel them through the radiant mystery, inexhaustible as indistinct, beautiful, but never all revealed; secret in fulness, confused in symmetry, as nature herself is to the bewildered and foiled glance, giving out of that indistinctness, and through that confusion, the perpetual newness of the infinite, and the beautiful.

Yes, Mr. Turner, we are in Venice now.

I think the above example may, at least, illustrate my meaning, and render clear the distinction which I wish the reader always to keep in mind, between those truths which are selected as a means of deception, and those which are selected for their own sake. How few of the latter are usually given by the old masters, I shall proceed to show; but in so doing I shall not take particular instances of local character like the above, but shall confine myself to those general truths of nature which are common to all countries and times, and which are independent of local or national character, partly because the works of the old masters are for the most part intended not to be particular portraiture, but ideal or general nature; and partly because the representation of the local character of scenery will more properly be considered under the head of ideas of relation, as it necessarily bears the same relation to ideal landscape which the representation of individual character does to that of the ideal human form, animated by its perfect and generic mind. At present, therefore, I leave out of the question all consideration of peculiar and local character, though, in doing so, I omit one of the chief and most essential qualities of truth in at least one-half of the works of our greatest modern master, and I am content to take that which is universal in the moderns, and compare it with that which is suffered to be universal in the ancients. And when we have investigated the nature and desirableness of ideas of relation, we will take up those parts of the works of both schools which are local, and observe how the

§ 10. *By Turner.*

§ 11. *The system to be observed in comparing works with reference to truth.*

III. R

knowledge of specific character is used to awaken and direct the current of particular thought. In the execution of our immediate task, we shall be compelled to notice only a few of the most striking and demonstrable facts of nature. To trace out the actual sum of truth or falsehood in any one work, touch by touch, would require an essay on every department of physical science, and then a chapter to every inch of canvass. All that can be done is to take the broad principles and laws of nature, and show, in one or two conspicuous instances, where they have been observed, and where violated, and so to leave the reader to find out for himself how the observation and violation have been continued in every part, and down to the most delicate touches. I can do little more than suggest the right train of thought and mode of observation; to carry it fully out must be left to the feeling and the industry of the observer. And as some

§ 12. *Difficulty of demonstration in such subjects.*

apology for the most inadequate execution even of what I have attempted, it should be considered how difficult it is to express or explain, by language only, those delicate qualities of the object of sense, on the seizing of which all refined truth of representation depends. Try, for instance, . . . in the concluding section [as in the text

above, § 47, p. 253].

It would be needless, after having explained a given truth, to repeat the same phrases, "observe it here" or "trace it there," with respect to all the works in which it may happen to occur. I shall illustrate each truth from the works of the artist by whom I find it most completely and constantly given; commonly, therefore, from those of the father of modern art, J. M. W. Turner, and I shall then name the other artists in whom its faithful rendering is also deserving of praise.

"I shall first . . . vegetation" [as in the text above, § 47, p. 253. Then followed a concluding sentence: "Architecture will be slightly noticed in the concluding section of the present part; more fully in the following parts of the work." The scheme, however, was subsequently altered. Architectural drawing was noticed in the third edition in this chapter (§§ 25–35, pp. 202–226 above); the principles of architecture itself were reserved for a separate treatise, *The Seven Lamps*.]

§ 13. *General plan of investigation.*

SECTION II

OF GENERAL TRUTHS

CHAPTER I

OF TRUTH OF TONE

As I have already allowed, that in effects of tone, the old masters have never yet been equalled; and as this is the first, and nearly the last, concession I shall have to make to them, I wish it at once to be thoroughly understood how far it extends.

§ 1. Meanings of the "word tone":—First, the right relation of objects in shadow to the principal light.

I understand two things by the word Tone: first, the exact relief and relation of objects against and to each other in substance and darkness, as they are nearer or more distant, and the perfect relation of the shades of all of them to the chief light of the picture, whether that be sky, water, or anything else; secondly, the exact relation of the colours of the shadows to the colours of the lights, so that they may be at once felt to be merely different degrees of the same light; and the accurate relation among the illuminated parts themselves, with respect to the degree in which they are influenced by the colour of the light itself, whether warm or cold; so that the whole of the picture (or, where several tones are united, those parts of it which are under each) may be felt to be in one climate, under one kind of light, and in one kind of atmosphere; this being chiefly dependent on that peculiar and inexplicable quality of each colour laid on, which makes the eye feel both what is the actual colour of the object represented, and that it is raised to its apparent

§ 2. Secondly, the quality of colour by which it is felt to owe part of its brightness to the hue of light upon it.

pitch by illumination. A very bright brown, for instance, out of sunshine, may be precisely of the same shade of colour as a very dead or cold brown in sunshine, but it will be totally different in *quality*; and that quality by which the illuminated dead colour would be felt in nature different from the unilluminated bright one, is what artists are perpetually aiming at, and connoisseurs talking nonsense about, under the name of "tone." The want of tone in pictures is caused by objects looking bright in their own positive hue, and not by illumination, and by the consequent want of sensation of the raising of their hues by light.

The first of these meanings of the word Tone is liable to be § 3. *Difference between tone in its first sense and aerial perspective.* confounded with what is commonly called "aërial perspective." But aërial perspective is the expression of space by any means whatsoever, sharpness of edge, vividness of colour, etc., assisted by greater pitch of shadow, and requires only that objects should be detached from each other by degrees of intensity in *proportion* to their distance, without requiring that the difference between the farthest and nearest should be in positive quantity the same that nature has put. But what I have called "tone" requires that there should be the same sum of difference, as well as the same division of differences.

Now the finely-toned pictures of the old masters are, in this § 4. *The pictures of the old masters perfect in relation of middle tints to light.* respect, some of the notes of nature played two or three octaves below her key; the dark objects in the middle distance having precisely the same relation to the light of the sky which they have in nature, but the light being necessarily infinitely lowered, and the mass of the shadow deepened in the same degree. I have often been struck, when looking at the image in a camera-obscura on a dark day, with the exact resemblance it bore to one of the finest pictures of the old masters; all the foliage coming dark against the sky, and nothing being seen in its mass but here and there the isolated light of a silvery stem or an unusually illumined cluster of leafage.

Now if this could be done consistently, and all the notes of nature given in this way an octave or two down, it would be right and necessary so to do: but be it observed, not only does nature surpass us in power of obtaining light as much as the sun surpasses white paper,¹ but she also infinitely surpasses us in her power of shade. Her deepest shades are void spaces from which no light whatever is reflected to the eye; ours are black surfaces from which, paint as black as we may, a great deal of light is still reflected, and which, placed against one of nature's deep bits of gloom, would tell as distinct light. Here we are, then, with white paper for our highest light, and visible illumined surface for our deepest shadow, set to run the gauntlet against nature, with the sun for her light, and vacuity for her gloom. It is evident that *she* can well afford to throw her material objects dark against the brilliant aërial tone of her sky, and yet give in those objects themselves a thousand intermediate distances and tones before she comes to black, or to anything like it—all the illumined surfaces of her objects being as distinctly and vividly brighter than her nearest and darkest shadows, as the sky is brighter than those illumined surfaces. But if we, against our poor dull obscurity of yellow paint, instead of sky, insist on having the same relation of shade in material objects, we go down to the bottom of our scale at once; and what in the world are we to do then? Where are all our intermediate distances to come from?—how are we to express the aërial relations among the parts themselves; for instance, of foliage, whose most distant boughs are already almost black?—how are we to come up from this to the foreground; and when we have done so, how are we to express the distinction between its solid parts, already as dark as we can make them, and its vacant hollows, which nature has marked sharp and clear and black, among its lighted surfaces? It cannot but be evident at a glance, that if to any one of the steps from one distance to another, we give the same

§ 5. And consequently totally false in relation of middle tints to darkness.

¹ [Ruskin returned to this point, and illustrated it further, in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, ch. iii. § 1.]

quantity of difference in pitch of shade which nature does, we must pay for this expenditure of our means by totally missing half a dozen distances, not a whit less important or marked, and so sacrifice a multitude of truths, to obtain one. And this accordingly was the means by which the old masters obtained their truth (?) of tone. They chose those steps of distance which are the most conspicuous and noticeable, that for instance from sky to foliage, or from clouds to hills; and they gave these their precise pitch of difference in shade with exquisite accuracy of imitation. Their means were then exhausted, and they were obliged to leave their trees flat masses of mere filled-up outline, and to omit the truths of space in every individual part of their picture by the thousand. But this they did not care for; it saved them trouble; they reached their grand end, imitative effect; they thrust home just at the places where the common and careless eye looks for imitation, and they attained the broadest and most faithful appearance of truth of tone which art can exhibit.

But they are prodigals, and foolish prodigals in art; they lavish their whole means to get one truth, and leave themselves powerless when they should seize a thousand. And is it indeed worthy of being called a truth, when we have a vast history given us to relate, to the fulness of which neither our limits nor our language are adequate, instead of giving all its parts abridged in the order of their importance, to omit or deny the greater part of them, that we may dwell with verbal fidelity on two or three? Nay, the very truth to which the rest are sacrificed, is rendered falsehood by their absence; the relation of the tree to the sky is marked as an impossibility by the want of relation of its parts to each other.

Turner starts from the beginning with a totally different principle. He boldly takes pure white (and justly, for it is the sign of the most intense sunbeams) for his highest light, and lampblack for his deepest shade; and between these he makes every degree of shade

§ 6. *General falsehood of such a system.*

§ 7. *The principle of Turner in this respect.*

indicative of a separate degree of distance,* giving each step of approach, not the exact difference in pitch which it would have in nature, but a difference bearing the same proportion to that which his sum of possible shade bears to the sum of nature's shade; so that an object half-way between his horizon and his foreground, will be exactly in half tint of force, and every minute division of intermediate space will have just its proportionate share of the lesser sum, and no more. Hence where the old masters expressed one distance, he expresses a hundred, and where they said furlongs, he says leagues. Which of these modes of procedure be the more agreeable with truth, I think I may safely leave the reader to decide for himself. He will see, in this very first instance, one proof of what we above asserted, that the deceptive imitation of nature is inconsistent with real truth; for the very means by which the old masters attained the apparent accuracy of tone which is so satisfying to the eye, compelled them to give up all idea of real relations of retirement, and to represent a few successive and marked stages of distance, like the scenes of a theatre, instead of the imperceptible, multitudinous, symmetrical retirement of nature, who is not more careful to separate her nearest bush from her farthest one, than to separate the nearest bough of that bush from the one next to it.

Take, for instance, one of the finest landscapes that ancient art has produced—the work of a really great and intellectual mind, the quiet Nicolas Poussin in our own National Gallery, with the traveller washing his feet.¹ The first idea we receive from this picture is that it is evening, and all the light coming from the horizon. Not so. It is full noon, the light coming steep from the left,

§ 8. *Comparison of N. Poussins "Phocion,"*

* Of course I am not speaking here of treatment of chiaroscuro, but of that quantity of depth of shade by which, *cæteris paribus*, a near object will exceed a distant one. For the truth of the systems of Turner and the old masters, as regards chiaroscuro, *vide* Chapter III. of this section, § 8.

¹ [No. 40. For other references, see below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 4, sec. iii. ch. iv. § 23, pp. 305, 410. Constable, who made some studies from this picture, was of the same opinion with regard to the feeling of it. In a letter to Fisher he describes it as "a noble Poussin: a solemn, deep, still summer's noon, with large umbrageous trees, and

as is shown by the shadow of the stick on the right-hand pedestal; for if the sun were not very high, that shadow could not lose itself half-way down, and if it were not lateral, the shadow would slope, instead of being vertical. Now ask yourself, and answer candidly, if those black masses of foliage, in which scarcely any form is seen but the outline, be a true representation of trees under noon-day sunlight, sloping from the left, bringing out, as it necessarily would do, their masses into golden green, and marking every leaf and bough with sharp shadow and sparkling light. The only truth in the picture is the exact pitch of relief against the sky of both trees and hills; and to this the organization of the hills, the intricacy of the foliage, and everything indicative either of the nature of the light, or the character of the objects, are unhesitatingly sacrificed. So much falsehood does it cost to obtain two apparent truths of tone! Or take, as a still more glaring instance, No. 260 in the Dulwich Gallery,¹ where the trunks of the trees, even of those farthest off, on the left, are as black as paint can make them; and there is not, and cannot be, the slightest increase of force, or any marking whatsoever of distance, by colour, or any other means, between them and the foreground.

Compare with these, Turner's treatment of his materials in the Mercury and Argus.² He has here his light actually coming from the distance, the sun being nearly in the centre of the picture, and a violent relief of objects against it would be far more justifiable than in Poussin's case. But this dark relief is used in its full force only with the nearest *leaves* of the nearest group of foliage overhanging the foreground from the

§ 9. With
Turner's
"Mercury and
Argus,"

a man washing his feet at a fountain near them. Through the breaks in the trees are mountains, and the clouds collecting about them with the most enchanting effects possible. It cannot be too much to say that this landscape is full of religious and moral feeling" (Leslie's *Life of Constable*, p. 90.)

¹ [Now No. 203, "A Roman Road," and attributed in the catalogue of the Gallery (by J. P. Richter and J. C. L. Sparkes, 1880) to an "unknown scholar or imitator of N. Poussin." For another reference to the picture, see below, sec. ii. ch. v. § 6, p. 330.]

² [One of the pictures of 1836, in defence of which the first germ of *Modern Painters* originated; see below, p. 638; and for other references to the picture, pp. 292, 300 n., 364, 422, 485, 492, 558, 587 n., 594, 596 n.]

left; and between these and the more distant members of the same group, though only three or four yards separate, distinct aerial perspective and intervening mist and light are shown; while the large tree in the centre, though very dark, as being very near, compared with all the distance, is much diminished in intensity of shade from this nearest group of leaves, and is faint compared with all the foreground. It is true that this tree has not, in consequence, the actual pitch of shade against the sky which it would have in nature; but it has precisely as much as it possibly can have, to leave it the same proportionate relation to the objects near at hand. And it cannot but be evident to the thoughtful reader, that whatever trickery or deception may be the result of a contrary mode of treatment, this is the only scientific or essentially truthful system, and that what it loses in tone it gains in aerial perspective.

Compare again the last vignette in Rogers's Poems, the "Datur Hora Quietæ," where everything, even the darkest parts of the trees, is kept pale and full of gradation; even the bridge, where it crosses the descending stream of sunshine, rather lost in the light than relieved against it, until we come up to the foreground, and then the vigorous local black of the plough throws the whole picture into distance and sunshine. I do not know anything in art which can for a moment be set beside this drawing, for united intensity of light and repose.¹

Observe, I am not at present speaking of the beauty or desirableness of the system of the old masters; it may be sublime, and affecting, and ideal, and intellectual, and a great deal more; but all I am concerned with at present is, that it is not *true*; while Turner's is the closest and most studied approach to truth of which the materials of art admit.

It was not, therefore, with reference to this division of the subject that I admitted inferiority in our great modern master

¹ [The original drawing for the vignette is No. 397 in the National Gallery; for other references to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. ii. § 5, and *Elements of Drawing*, § 242.]

§ 10. *And with the "Datur Hora Quietæ"*

§ 11. *The second sense of the word "tone."*

to Claude or Poussin; but with reference to the second and more usual meaning of the word Tone,—the exact relation and fitness of shadow and light, and of the hues of all objects under them; and more especially that precious quality of each colour laid on, which makes it appear a quiet colour illuminated, not a bright colour in shade. But I allow this inferiority only with respect to

§ 12. Remarkable difference in this respect between the paintings and drawings of Turner.

the paintings of Turner, not to his drawings. I could select from among the works named in Chap. V. of the next section, pieces of tone absolutely faultless and perfect, from the coolest greys of wintry dawn to the intense fire of summer noon.¹ And the difference between the prevailing character of these and that of nearly all the paintings (for the early oil pictures of Turner are far less perfect in tone than the most recent), it is difficult to account for, but on the supposition that there is something in the material which modern artists in general are incapable of mastering, and which compels Turner himself to think less of tone in oil colour than of other and more important qualities. The total failures of Callcott,² whose struggles after tone ended so invariably in shivering winter or brown paint, the misfortune of Landseer with his evening sky in 1842,³ the frigidity of Stanfield, and the earthiness and opacity which all the magnificent power and admirable science of Etty⁴ are

¹ [After "intense fire of summer noon," eds. 1 and 2 add :—

"The Cowes, Devonport with the Dockyard, Colchester, Okehampton, Folkestone, Cologne, Kenilworth, Durham, and Dudley might be instanced as cases of every effect of the most refined and precious tone, which we might fearlessly, if not triumphantly, compare with the very finest works of the old masters. And the difference," etc.

The drawings mentioned in this note are, with the exception of the Cologne, in the "England and Wales" series. The Dudley (in Ruskin's collection, No. 32 in his *Notes*) is reproduced in colour in *Lectures on Landscape*. Cologne was often drawn by Turner, e.g. two drawings in the Farnley collection, and the drawing in vol. xvi. in the *Works of Byron* (1834).]

² [See above, p. 191, and below, p. 275 n.]

³ ["The Sanctuary," No. 431 in the Academy of 1842, bought by Queen Victoria.]

⁴ [Ruskin's views of Etty varied in expression, according with the standard applied at the time. He is praised in the review of Eastlake's *History of Oil-Painting* (reprinted from the *Quarterly*, § 38), and in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. §§ 20–24; but in a footnote added to that passage in the 1883 ed. the praise is taken back. See also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 129.]

unable entirely to conquer, are too fatal and convincing proofs of the want of knowledge of means, rather than of the absence of aim, in modern artists as a body. Yet, with respect to Turner, however much the want of tone in his early paintings (the Fall of Carthage, for instance, and others painted at a time when he was producing the most exquisite hues of light in water-colour) might seem to favour such a supposition, there are passages in his recent works (such, for instance, as the sunlight along the sea, in the Slaver) which directly contradict it, and which prove to us that where he now errs in tone (as in the Cicero's Villa), it is less owing to want of power to reach it, than to the pursuit of some different and nobler end. I shall therefore glance at the particular modes in which Turner manages his tone in his present Academy pictures; the early ones must be given up at once. Place a genuine untouched Claude beside the Crossing the Brook, and the difference in value and tenderness of tone will be felt in an instant, and felt the more painfully because all the cool and transparent qualities of Claude would have been here desirable, and in their place, and appear to have been aimed at. The foreground of the Building of Carthage, and the greater part of the architecture of the Fall, are equally heavy and evidently paint, if we compare them with genuine passages of Claude's sunshine. There is a very grand and simple piece of tone in the possession of J. Allnutt, Esq., a Sunset behind willows; but even this is wanting in refinement of shadow, and is crude in its extreme distance. Not so with the recent Academy pictures; many of their passages are absolutely faultless; all are refined and marvellous, and with the exception of the Cicero's Villa, we shall find few pictures¹ painted within the last ten years which do not either present us with perfect tone, or with some higher beauty to which it is necessarily sacrificed. If we glance at the requirements of nature, and her

§ 13. *Not
owing to want
of power over
the material.*

¹ [For "shall find few pictures . . . which do," eds. 1 and 2 read, "shall not find a single . . . which does."]

superiority of means to ours, we shall see why and how it is sacrificed.¹

Light, with reference to the tone it induces on objects, is either to be considered as neutral and white, bringing out local colours with fidelity; or coloured, and consequently modifying these local tints with its own. But the power of pure white light to exhibit local colour is strangely variable. The morning light of about nine or ten is usually very pure; but the difference of its effect on different days, independently of mere brilliancy, is as inconceivable as inexplicable. Every one knows how capriciously the colours of a fine opal vary from day to day, and how rare the lights are which bring them fully out. Now the expression of the strange, penetrating, deep, neutral light, which, while it *alters* no colour, brings every colour up to the highest possible pitch and key of pure harmonious intensity, is the chief attribute of finely toned pictures by the great *colourists*, as opposed to pictures of equally high tone, by masters who, careless of colour, are content, like Cuyp, to lose local tints in the golden blaze of absorbing light.

Falsehood, in this neutral tone, if it may be so called, is a matter far more of feeling than of proof, for any colour is *possible* under such lights; it is meagreness and feebleness only which are to be avoided; and these are rather matters of sensation than of reasoning. But it is yet easy enough to prove by what exaggerated and false means the pictures most celebrated for this quality are endowed with their richness and solemnity of colour. In the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian,² it is difficult to imagine anything more magnificently

§ 14. *The two distinct qualities of light to be considered.*

§ 15. *Falsehoods by which Titian attains the appearance of quality in light.*

¹ [For the "Fall of Carthage" see above, p. 241; for the "Slaver," below, p. 571; "Cicero's Villa," above, p. 241; "Crossing the Brook," p. 241; the "Building of Carthage," pp. 113, 241. The "Sunset behind Willows" is probably the picture of "Newark Abbey," painted in 1815, now in the collection of Sir Charles Tennant, and formerly in that of Mr. Allnutt, of Clapham.]

² [No. 35 in the National Gallery. For a later reference to this passage and to the unimpaired condition of the picture after cleaning, see Ruskin's letter to the *Times* of Jan. 7, 1847, on "Danger to the National Gallery," in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 58. For other references to the picture, see above, pref. to 2nd ed., §§ 23, 26, pp. 29, 33; *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ix. § 18, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iii. § 31; *Academy Notes*, 1855; *Elements of Drawing*, §§ 71 n., 77.]

impossible than the blue of the distant landscape; impossible, not from its vividness, but because it is not faint and ærial enough to account for its purity of colour; it is too dark and blue at the same time; and there is indeed so total a want of atmosphere in it, that, but for the difference of form, it would be impossible to tell the mountains intended to be ten miles off, from the robe of Ariadne close to the spectator. Yet make this blue faint, ærial, and distant; make it in the slightest degree to resemble the truth of nature's colour; and all the tone of the picture, all its intensity and splendour, will vanish on the instant. So again, in the exquisite and inimitable little bit of colour, the Europa in the Dulwich Gallery;¹ the blue of the dark promontory on the left is thoroughly absurd and impossible, and the warm tones of the clouds equally so, unless it were sunset; but the blue especially, because it is nearer than several points of land which are equally in shadow, and yet are rendered in warm grey. But the whole value and tone of the picture would be destroyed if this blue were altered.

Now, as much of this kind of richness of tone is always given by Turner as is compatible with truth of ærial effect; but he will not sacrifice the higher truths of his landscape to mere pitch of colour, as Titian does. He infinitely prefers having the power of giving extension of space, and fulness of form, to that of giving deep melodies of tone; he feels too much the incapacity of art, with its feeble means of light, to give the abundance of nature's gradations; and therefore it is, that taking pure white for his highest expression of light, that even pure yellow may give him one more step in the scale of shade, he becomes necessarily inferior in richness of effect to the old masters of tone who always used a golden highest light, but gains by the sacrifice a thousand more essential truths. For, though we all know how much more like light, in the abstract, a finely toned warm hue

§ 16. *Turner will not use such means.*

§ 17. *But gains in essential truth by the sacrifice.*

¹ [No. 273 (formerly No. 230), "Europa on the Bull" (after Titian); the original picture, painted for the King of Spain, is in the Darnley collection at Cobham Hall.]

will be to the feelings than white, yet it is utterly impossible to mark the same number of gradations between such a sobered high light and the deepest shadow, which we can between this and white; and as these gradations are absolutely necessary to give the facts of form and distance, which, as we have above shown, are more important than any truths of tone,* Turner sacrifices the richness of his picture to its completeness, the manner of the statement to its matter. And not only is he right in doing this for the sake of space, but he is right also in the abstract question of colour; for as we observed above (§ 14), it is only the white light, the perfect unmodified group of rays, which will bring out local colour perfectly; and if the picture, therefore, is to be complete in its system of colour, that is, if it is to have each of the three primitives in their purity, it *must* have white for its highest light, otherwise the purity of one of them at least will be impossible. And this leads us to notice the second and more frequent quality of light (which is assumed if we make our highest representation of it yellow), the positive hue, namely, which it may itself possess, of course modifying whatever local tints it exhibits, and thereby rendering certain colours necessary, and certain colours impossible. Under the direct yellow light of a descending sun, for instance, pure white and pure blue are both impossible; because the purest whites and blues that nature could produce would be turned in some degree into gold or green by it; and when the sun is within half a degree of the horizon, if the sky be clear, a rose light supersedes the golden one, still more overwhelming in its effect on local colour. I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice, on the Lido side, turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind,

§ 18. *The second quality of light.*

* More important, observe, *as matters of truth or fact*. It may often chance that, as a matter of feeling, the tone is the more important of the two; but with this we have here no concern.¹

¹ [The above footnote did not appear in eds. 1 and 2.]

every particle of green colour being absolutely annihilated.¹ And so under all coloured lights (and there are few, from dawn to twilight, which are not slightly tinted by some accident of atmosphere), there is a change of local colour, which, when in a picture it is so exactly proportioned that we feel at once both what the local colours are in themselves, and what are the colour and strength of the light upon them, gives us truth of tone.

For expression of effects of yellow sunlight, parts might be chosen out of the good pictures of Cuyp, which have never been equalled in art.² But I much doubt if there be a single *bright* Cuyp in the world, which, taken as a whole, does not present many glaring solecisms in tone. I have not seen many fine pictures of his, which were not utterly spoiled by the vermilion dress of some principal figure, a vermilion totally unaffected and unwarmed by the golden hue of the rest of the picture; and, what is worse, with little distinction between its own illumined and shaded parts, so that it appears altogether out of sunshine, the colour of a bright vermilion in dead cold daylight. It is possible that the original colour may have

§ 19. *The perfection of Cuyp in this respect interfered with by numerous solecisms.*

¹ [This was the effect noted by Ruskin in his diary at Venice on May 12, 1841; see the citation in Vol. I. p. xl. In the first draft of this passage (see below, p. 682) the recollection is given at greater length:—

“There are two qualities of light most carefully to be distinguished in speaking of the tone of a picture. 1st. Its own actual colour, which falls more or less on everything which it touches—neutralizing the colours existing in the objects themselves. Such is the well-known pure rose-colour which the rays of the sun assume five minutes before sunset. This colour is scarcely ever seen except on mountains and clouds, for the sun is too low before the tint is taken to permit its falling clear upon objects on a level with it, but sometimes, with a sea horizon, and a perfectly clear sky, it may be seen low. I adduce it as the most positive and overpowering tint of light I know, for no colour stands before it—green or blue or whatever it may be, all are turned nearly pure rose by it. It is of course seen in its greatest purity on the Alps, but often occurs very pure on the *highest* clouds, not the cumuli, but the streaky uppermost bars at sunset. I have seen it once at Venice, of extraordinary intensity—so totally overwhelming every local tint within its reach, as to admit of nothing like a guess at their actual colour, the rose appearing inherent and positive in them. The trees in the Botanic Gardens, especially, which were of a pure pale green—(it was May)—became not merely russet but pure red.”]

² [For Ruskin’s numerous references to Cuyp, see index volume to this edition; and cf. especially *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi.]

gone down in all cases, or that these parts may have been villainously repainted; but I am the rather disposed to believe them genuine, because even throughout the best of his pictures there are evident recurrences of the same kind of solecism in other colours; greens, for instance, as in the steep bank on the right of the largest picture in the Dulwich Gallery;¹ and browns, as in the lying cow in the same picture, which is in most visible and painful contrast with the one standing beside it; the flank of the standing one being bathed in breathing sunshine, and the reposing one laid in with as dead, opaque, and lifeless brown as ever came raw from a novice's pallet. And again, in that marked 83,² while the figures on the right are walking in the most precious light, and those just beyond them in the distance leave a furlong or two of pure visible sunbeams between us and them, the cows in the centre are entirely deprived, poor things, of both light and air. And these failing parts, though they often escape the eye when we are near the picture and able to dwell upon what is beautiful in it, yet so injure its whole effect, that I question if there be many Cuyp's in which vivid colours occur, which will not lose their effect and become cold and flat at a distance of ten or twelve paces, retaining their influence only when the eye is close enough to rest on the right parts without including the whole. Take, for instance, the large one in our National Gallery,³ seen from the opposite door, where the black cow appears a great deal nearer than the dogs, and the golden tones of the distance look like a sepia drawing rather than like sunshine, owing chiefly to the utter want of aerial greys indicated through them.

Now, there is no instance in the works of Turner of anything so faithful and imitative of sunshine as the best parts of Cuyp; but, at the same time, there is not a single

¹ ["Landscape with Cattle and Figures," No. 169 (now No. 128). For other references to the same picture, see pp. 350, 370.]

² ["Landscape with Cattle and Figures," now No. 245. For other references, see below, pp. 511, 524.]

³ [No. 53, "An Evening Landscape." For another reference, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 7.]

vestige of the same kind of solecism. It is true, that in his fondness for colour, Turner is in the habit of allowing excessively cold fragments in his warmest pictures; but these are never, observe, warm colours with no light upon them, useless as contrasts, while they are discords in the tone; but they are bits of the very coolest tints, partially removed from the general influence, and exquisitely valuable as colour, though, with all deference be it spoken, I think them sometimes slightly destructive of what would otherwise be perfect tone. For instance, the two blue and white stripes on the drifting flag of the *Slave Ship*, are, I think, the least degree too purely cool. I think both the blue and white would be impossible under such a light; and in the same way the white parts of the dress of the *Napoleon* interfere, by their coolness, with the perfectly managed warmth of all the rest of the picture.¹ But both these lights are reflexes, and it is nearly impossible to say what tones may be assumed even by the warmest light reflected from a cool surface; so that we cannot actually convict these parts of falsehood, and though we should have liked the *tone* of the picture better had they been slightly warmer, we cannot but like the *colour* of the picture better with them as they are; while, Cuyp's failing portions are not only evidently and demonstrably false, being in direct light, but are as disagreeable in colour as false in tone, and injurious to everything near them. And the best proof of the grammatical accuracy of the tones of Turner is in the perfect and unchanging influence of all his pictures at any distance. We approach only to follow the sunshine into every cranny of the leafage, and retire only to feel it diffused over the scene, the whole picture glowing like a sun or star at whatever distance we stand, and lighting the air between us and it; while many even of the best pictures of Claude must be looked close into to be felt, and lose light

¹ [The *Napoleon* is "War: the Exile and the Rock-Limpet" (1842), No. 529 in the National Gallery; for a description of the picture, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, and below, ch. ii. § 9, p. 288. For other references, see in this vol., pp. 297, 364, 422, 474; and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xviii. § 24; vol. v. pt. vii. ch. ii. § 16, pt. ix. ch. xi. §§ 30, 31 *nn.*]

§ 20. Turner is
not so perfect
in parts—far
more so in the
whole.

every foot that we retire. The smallest of the three sea-ports in the National Gallery¹ is valuable and right in tone, when we are close to it; but ten yards off, it is all brickdust, offensively and evidently false in its whole hue.

The comparison² of Turner with Cuyp and Claude may sound strange in most ears; but this is chiefly because we are not in the habit of analysing and dwelling upon those difficult and daring passages of the modern master which do not at first appeal to our ordinary notions of truth, owing to his habit of uniting two, three, or even more separate tones in the same composition. In this also he strictly follows nature, for wherever climate changes, tone changes, and the climate changes with every 200 feet of elevation, so that the upper clouds are always different in tone from the lower ones; these from the rest of the landscape, and in all probability, some part of the horizon from the rest. And when nature allows this in a high degree, as in her most gorgeous effects she always will, she does not herself impress at once with intensity of tone, as in the deep and quiet yellows of a July evening, but rather with the magnificence and variety of associated colour, in which, if we give time and attention to it, we shall gradually find the solemnity and the depth of twenty tones instead of one. Now, in Turner's power of associating cold with warm light no one has ever approached or even ventured into the same field with him. The old masters, content with one simple tone, sacrificed to its unity all the exquisite gradations and varied touches of relief and change by which nature unites her hours with each other. They give the warmth of the sinking sun, overwhelming all things in its gold, but they did not give those grey passages about the horizon where, seen through its dying light, the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory. Whether it was in them impotence or judgment, it is not for me to decide. I have only

¹ [No. 5, "A Seaport at Sunset." For another reference, see below, sec. iii. ch. iii. § 8, p. 375.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 begin this section, "I do not doubt the comparison," etc.]

to point to the daring of Turner in this respect as something to which art affords no matter of comparison, as that in which the mere attempt is, in itself, superiority. Take the evening effect with the *Téméraire*.¹ That picture will not, at the first glance, deceive as a piece of actual sunlight; but this is because there is in it more than sunlight, because under the blazing veil of vaulted fire which lights the vessel on her last path, there is a blue, deep, desolate hollow of darkness, out of which you can hear the voice of the night wind, and the dull boom of the disturbed sea; because the cold deadly shadows of the twilight are gathering through every sunbeam, and moment by moment as you look, you will fancy some new film and faintness of the night has risen over the vastness of the departing form.

And if, in effects of this kind, time be taken to dwell upon the individual tones, and to study the laws of their § 22. *Recapitulation.* reconciliation, there will be found, in the recent

Academy pictures of this great artist, a mass of various truth to which nothing can be brought for comparison; which stands not only unrivalled, but uncontended with, and which, when in carrying out it may be inferior to some of the picked passages of the old masters, is so through deliberate choice rather to suggest a multitude of truths than to imitate one, and through a strife with difficulties of effect of which art can afford no parallel example. Nay, in the next chapter, respecting colour, we shall see farther reason for doubting the truth of Claude, Cuyp, and Poussin, in tone,—reason so palpable that if these were all that were to be contended with, I should scarcely have allowed any inferiority in Turner whatsoever;*

* We must not leave the subject of tone without alluding to the works of the late George Barrett, which afford glorious and exalted passages of light; and of John Varley, who, though less truthful in his aim, was frequently deep in his feeling. Some of the sketches of De Wint are also admirable in this respect. As for our oil pictures, the less that is said about them the better. Callcott had the truest aim; but not having any eye for colour, it was impossible for him to succeed in tone.²

¹ [For this picture, see above, p. 247 *n.*]

² [George Barret, the eminent landscape-painter, 1728–1784. His son, George Barret the younger, one of the first members of the Old Water-Colour Society, 1774–1842. Ruskin refers presumably to the elder; for other references, see below,

but I allow it, not so much with reference to the deceptive imitations of sunlight, wrought out with desperate exaggerations of shade of the professed landscape painters, as with reference to the glory of Rubens, the glow of Titian, the silver tenderness of Cagliari, and perhaps more than all to the precious and pure passages of intense feeling and heavenly light, holy and undefiled, and glorious with the changeless passion of eternity, which sanctify with their shadeless peace the deep and noble conceptions of the early school of Italy,—of Fra Bartolomeo, Perugino, and the early mind of Raffaelle.

pp. 614, 624, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 15. For other references to Varley (1778–1842), see below, pp. 472 *n.*, 529 *n.*, 625. For Callcott, see above, pp. 191, 266.]

CHAPTER II¹

OF TRUTH OF COLOUR

THERE is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin, called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers.² Whether it can be supposed to resemble the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia, close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another; but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two-and-thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish towards the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would

§ 1. *Observations on the colour of G. Poussin's La Riccia.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 had an earlier paragraph at the beginning of this chapter, as follows:

“There is nothing so high in art but that a scurrile jest can reach it, and often, the greater the work, the easier it is to turn it into ridicule. To appreciate the science of Turner's colour would require the study of a life, but to laugh at it requires little more than the knowledge that yolk of egg is yellow and spinage green—a fund of critical information on which the remarks of most of our leading periodicals have been of late years exclusively based. We shall, however, in spite of the sulphur and treacle criticisms of our Scotch connoisseurs, and the eggs and spinage of our English ones, endeavour to test the works of this great colourist by a knowledge of nature somewhat more extensive than is to be gained by an acquaintance, however, familiar, with the apothecary's shop, or the dinnertable.”

§ 1. *Incompetence of the later critics of Turner's colour.*

The references here are to passage in the critiques of Turner's pictures of 1842 in *Blackwood* and the *Athenæum*; see above, pp. xxiv., 17. Turner, it may be remarked, sometimes laughed good-naturedly at himself, and used culinary comparisons. “At a dinner when I was present,” says Mr. W. P. Frith, “a salad was offered to Turner, who called the attention of his neighbour at the table (Jones Lloyd, afterwards Lord Overstone) to it in the following words: ‘Nice cool green that lettuce, isn't it? and the beetroot pretty red—not quite strong enough; and the mixture, delicate tint of yellow that. Add some mustard, and then you have one of my pictures’” (*My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, 1887, vol. i. p. 131).]

² [No. 98. For other references to the picture, see below, pp. 577, 588 n., and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 18.]

in nature have been cool and grey beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick red, the only thing like colour in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road which, in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in light, and it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green grey; and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.¹

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano,² not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.* It had been wild weather when I left

* "Cæcus adulator
Dignus Aricinos qui mendicaret ad axes,
Blandaue devexæ jactaret basia rhedæ."³

¹ [It should be remembered by readers now visiting the National Gallery that this picture has been cleaned and varnished (1880) since Ruskin wrote. A similar remark applies to other "old masters" in the Gallery referred to in this book.]

² [Ruskin was there on Jan. 6, and again on March 20, 1841. In *Præterita* (ii. ch. iii. § 48), in describing the tour of that year, he refers to this—"perhaps the oftenest quoted"—passage in *Modern Painters*, and cites a few lines from his diary, to show that while at this time he "never drew anything but in pencil outline," he "saw everything first in colour, as it ought to be seen." The full passage in the diary is as follows:—

"Just beyond [Albano] descended into a hollow with another village on the hill opposite, a most elegant and finished group of church towers and roof, infinitely varied outline against sky, descending by delicious colour and delicate upright leafless springs of tree, into a dark rich toned depth of ravine, out of which rose, nearer, and clear against its shade, a grey wall of rock—an absolute miracle for blending of bright lichenous colour; our descending road bordered by bright yellow stumpy trees, leaning over it in heavy masses (with thick trunks covered with ivy and feathery leafage), giving a symmetry to the foreground; their trunks rising, from bold fragments of projecting tiers loaded with vegetation of the richest possible tone, the whole thing for about three minutes of rapidly changing composition absolutely unparalleled in my experience, especially for its total independence of *all* atmospheric effect, being under a grey and unbroken sky with rain as bright as a first-rate Turner. I got quite sick with delight."

(The word "sprigs" was inserted by Ruskin in *Præterita*, for a sketch in the original.) On March 20, on the return journey from Naples, Ruskin again stopped at the spot, and made the drawing (in the collection of Mrs. Cunliffe) which was No. 66 in the Ruskin Exhibition of 1901. "Not quite so fine," he notes this time, "as it seems at the passing glance. . . . Still it is the finest thing I ever saw put together by Nature."]

³ [Juvenal, iv. 116. But it is a certain Catullus, and not Veiento, who is there

Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban Mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano, and graceful darkness of its ilex grove, rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber; the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noonday sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and their masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it colour, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen, casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound; and over all, the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that

§ 2. As compared with the actual scene.

described as "a blind sycophant, only fit to beg alms at the wheel's side on the Arician road, and throw coaxing kisses after the chariot as it goes down hill." Aricia was on the Appian road (Horace, *Sat.* i. 5, 1), and beggars were accustomed to take their stand on the hill leading from Albano to Aricia (see notes in Mayor's Juvenal, *l.c.*.)]

have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.¹

Tell me who is likest this, Poussin or Turner? Not in his most daring and dazzling efforts could Turner himself come near it; but you could not at the time have thought of or remembered the work of any other man as having the remotest hue or resemblance of what you saw. Nor am I speaking of what is uncommon or unnatural; there is no climate, no place, and scarcely an hour, in which nature does not exhibit colour which no mortal effort can imitate or approach. For all our artificial pigments are, even when seen under the same circumstances, dead and lightless beside her living colour; the green of a growing leaf, the scarlet of a fresh flower, no art nor expedient can reach; but in addition to this, nature exhibits her hues under an intensity of sunlight which trebles their brilliancy; while the painter, deprived of this splendid aid, works still with what is actually a grey shadow compared with the force of nature's colour. Take a blade of grass and a scarlet flower, and place them so as to receive sunlight beside the brightest canvas that ever left Turner's easel, and the picture will be extinguished. So far from outfacing nature, he does not, as far as mere vividness of colour goes, one half reach her. But does he use this brilliancy of colour on objects to which it does not properly belong? Let us compare his works in this respect with a few instances from the old masters.

There is, on the left-hand side of Salvator's Mercury and the Woodman in our National Gallery,² something without doubt intended for a rocky mountain, in the middle distance, near enough for all its fissures and crags to be distinctly visible, or, rather, for a great many awkward scratches of the brush over it to be

§ 3. *Turner himself is inferior in brilliancy to nature.*

§ 4. *Impossible colours, of Salvator, Titian;*

¹ [§ 2, from "It had been wild weather" to the end, is § 49 in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

² [No. 84.]

visible, which, though not particularly representative either of one thing or another, are without doubt intended to be symbolical of rocks. Now no mountain in full light, and near enough for its details of crag to be seen, is without great variety of delicate colour. Salvator has painted it throughout without one instant of variation; but this, I suppose, is simplicity and generalization;—let it pass: but what is the colour? *Pure sky blue*, without one grain of grey or any modifying hue whatsoever;¹ the same brush which had just given the bluest parts of the sky has been more loaded at the same part of the pallet, and the whole mountain thrown in with unmitigated ultramarine. Now mountains only can become pure blue when there is so much air between us and them that they become mere flat dark shades, every detail being totally lost: they become blue when they become air, and not till then. Consequently this part of Salvator's painting, being of hills perfectly clear and near, with all their details visible, is, as far as colour is concerned, broad bold falsehood, the direct assertion of direct impossibility.

In the whole range of Turner's works, recent or of old date, you will not find an instance of anything near enough to have details visible, painted in sky blue. Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea; so does nature;—blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance; so does nature;—blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills; so does nature; but blue he gives *not*,² where detail and illumined surface are visible; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue: nor is there in one of his works—and I speak of the Academy pictures especially—one touch of cold colour which is not to be accounted for, and proved right and full of meaning.

I do not say that Salvator's distance is not artist-like; both in that, and in the yet more glaringly false distances of Titian

¹ [For Ruskin's reply to a criticism of this passage, see below, Appendix ii., p. 642.]

² [In ed. 1 this passage was differently phrased: "Blue he is, in his sea; so is nature;—blue he is, as a sapphire, in his extreme distance; so is nature;—blue he is, in the misty shadows and hollows of his hills; so is nature; but blue he is *not*," etc.]

above alluded to,¹ and in hundreds of others of equal boldness of exaggeration, I can take delight, and perhaps should be sorry to see them other than they are; but it is somewhat singular to hear people talking of Turner's exquisite care and watchfulness in colour as false, while they receive such cases of preposterous and audacious fiction with the most generous and simple credulity.

Again, in the upper sky of the picture of Nicholas Poussin, § 5. *Poussin, and Claude.* before noticed,² the clouds are of a very fine clear olive green, about the same tint as the brightest parts of the trees beneath them. They cannot have altered (or else the trees must have been painted in grey), for the hue is harmonious and well united with the rest of the picture, and the blue and white in the centre of the sky are still fresh and pure. Now a green sky in open and illumined distance is very frequent, and very beautiful; but rich olive-green clouds, as far as I am acquainted with nature, are a piece of colour in which she is not apt to indulge. You will be puzzled to show me such a thing in the recent works of Turner.* Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose—Claude's, Salvator's, or Poussin's—with lateral light (that in the *Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*, or *Gaspar's Sacrifice of Isaac*, for instance):³ can it be seriously supposed that those murky

* There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of a great colourist than his power of using greens in strange places without their being felt as such, or at least than a constant preference of green grey to purple grey. And this hue of Poussin's clouds would have been perfectly agreeable and allowable, had there been gold or crimson enough in the rest of the picture to have thrown it into grey. It is only because the lower clouds are pure white and blue, and because the trees are of the same colour as the clouds, that the cloud colour becomes false. There is a fine instance of a sky, green in itself, but turned grey by the opposition of warm colour, in Turner's *Devonport with the Dockyards*.⁴

¹ [In the preceding chapter, § 15, p. 268.]

² [In the preceding chapter, § 8, p. 263. The picture is "Phocion," No. 40 in the National Gallery. In the 1888 and subsequent eds. "Nicholas" was altered to "Gaspar," apparently under the idea that the picture here referred to is the "La Riccia" (above, § 1); but the "olive green" clouds, etc., are in the "Phocion," not in the "La Riccia."]

³ [For Claude's "Isaac and Rebecca" (or, "The Mill"), see above, p. 41 *n.*; for Gaspard Poussin's "Sacrifice of Isaac" (N.G., No. 31), see below, pp. 332, 348, 376.]

⁴ [In "England and Wales," No. 8; *cf.* above, p. 266, *n.*, and below, p. 545.]

browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noonday sun?¹ I know that you cannot help looking upon all these pictures as pieces of dark relief against a light wholly proceeding from the distances; but they are nothing of the kind, they are noon and morning effects with full lateral light. Be so kind as to match the colour of a leaf in the sun (the darkest you like) as nearly as you can, and bring your matched colour and set it beside one of these groups of trees, and take a blade of common grass, and set it beside any part of the fullest light of their foregrounds, and then talk about the truth of colour of the old masters!

And let not arguments respecting the sublimity or fidelity of *impression* be brought forward here. I have nothing whatever to do with this at present. I am not talking about what is sublime, but about what is true. People attack Turner on this ground; they never speak of beauty or sublimity with respect to him, but of nature and truth, and let them support their own favourite masters on the same grounds. Perhaps I may have the very deepest veneration for the *feeling* of the old masters; but I must not let it influence me now,—my business is to match colours, not to talk sentiment. Neither let it be said that I am going too much into details, and that general truth may be obtained by local falsehood.² Truth is only to be measured by close comparison of actual facts; we may talk for ever about it in generals, and prove nothing. We cannot tell what effect falsehood may produce on this or that person, but we can very well tell what is false and what is not; and if it produce on our senses the effect of truth, that only demonstrates their imperfection and inaccuracy, and need of cultivation. Turner's colour is glaring to one person's

¹ [For Ruskin's reply to a criticism on this passage, see below, Appendix ii., p. 641.]

² [After "by local falsehood" ed. 1 continues:—

"It is quite true that in this particular department of art, colour, one error may often be concealed by another, and one falsehood made to look right, by cleverly matching another to it; but that only enables us to be certain, that when we have proved one colour to be false, if it looks right, there must be something else to keep it in countenance, and so we have proved two falsehoods instead of one. And indeed truth is only," etc.]

sensations, and beautiful to another's. This proves nothing. Poussin's colour is right to one, soot to another. This proves nothing. There is no means of arriving at any conclusion but by close comparison of both with the known and demonstrable hues of nature, and this comparison will invariably turn Claude or Poussin into blackness, and even Turner into grey.

Whatever depth of gloom may seem to invest the objects of a real landscape, yet a window with that landscape seen through it will invariably appear a broad space of light as compared with the shade of the room walls; and this single circumstance may prove to us both the intensity and the diffusion of daylight in open air, and the necessity, if a picture is to be truthful in effect of colour, that it should tell as a broad space of graduated illumination,—not, as do those of the old masters, as a patchwork of black shades. Their works are nature in mourning weeds,—ond en hliw kaqarw leqrammenol, all qpo oqmmgei okia.¹

It is true that there are, here and there, in the Academy § 6. *Turner's* pictures, passages in which Turner has translated the unattainable intensity of one tone of colour, into the attainable pitch of a higher one: the golden green, for instance, of intense sunshine on verdure, into pure yellow, because he knows it to be impossible, with any mixture of blue whatsoever, to give faithfully its relative intensity of light; and Turner always will have his light and shade right, whatever it costs him in colour. But he does this in rare cases, and even then over very small spaces; and I should be obliged to his critics if they would go out to some warm mossy green bank in full summer sunshine, and try to reach its tone; and when they find, as find they will, Indian yellow and chrome look dark beside it, let them tell me candidly which is nearer truth,—the gold of Turner, or the mourning and murky olive browns and verdigris greens in which Claude, with the industry and intelligence of a Sèvres

¹ [Plato, *Phaedrus*, 239 C: "brought up not in the clear sunlight, but in a blended shade." Ruskin elsewhere applies the same phrase to the twilight of Sir L. Alma-Tadema's pictures (*Art of England*, § 79). The paragraph, "Whatever depth of gloom . . . aia" did not appear in the first ed.]

china painter, drags the laborious bramble leaves over his childish foreground.

But it is singular enough that the chief attacks on Turner for overcharged brilliancy are made, not when there could by any possibility be any chance of his outstepping nature, but when he has taken subjects which no colours of earth could ever vie with or reach, such, for instance, as his sunsets among the high clouds. When I come to speak of skies, I shall point out what divisions, proportioned to their elevation, exist in the character of clouds. It is the highest region, that exclusively characterized by white, filmy, multitudinous, and quiet clouds, arranged in bars, or streaks, or flakes, of which I speak at present; a region which no landscape painters have ever made one effort to represent, except Rubens and Turner, the latter taking it for his most favourite and frequent study. Now we have been speaking hitherto of what is constant and necessary in nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colours, and we repeat again, that no gorgeousness of the pallet can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when nature herself takes a colouring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of colour are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-colour, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapour, which would in common daylight be pure snowwhite, and which give therefore fair field to the tone of light. There is then no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity, of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one molten mantling sea of colour and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied shadowless crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colours for which there are no words in

§ 7. Notice of effects in which no brilliancy of art can even approach that of reality.

language, and no ideas in the mind,—things which can only be conceived while they are visible; the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all, showing here deep, and pure, and lightless; there, modulated by the filmy formless body of the transparent vapour, till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold. Now there is no connection, no one link of association or resemblance, between those skies and the work of any mortal hand but Turner's. He alone has followed nature in these her highest efforts; he follows her faithfully, but far behind; follows at such a distance below her intensity that the Napoleon of last year's Exhibition, and the *Téméraire* of the year before, would look colourless and cold if the eye came upon them after one of nature's sunsets among the high clouds. But

§ 8. *Reasons for the usual incredulity of the observer with respect to their respect to their representation.*

there are a thousand reasons why this should not be believed. The concurrence of circumstances necessary to produce the sunsets of which I speak does not take place above five or six times in a summer, and then only for a space of from five to ten minutes, just as the sun reaches the horizon.

Considering how seldom people think of looking for a sunset at all, and how seldom, if they do, they are in a position from which it can be fully seen, the chances that their attention should be awake, and their position favourable, during these few flying instants of the year, are almost as nothing.¹ What can the citizen, who can see

¹ [The story is well known of the lady who said to Turner that she had never seen the effect recorded in one of his pictures. "No, ma'am," he replied, "but don't you wish you had?" An interesting anecdote in this connection, which would have pleased Ruskin, is told by Sir William Napier's daughter. When Admiral Sir Edward Codrington was once in the Channel Islands, he went with Napier, then Governor of Guernsey, in an open boat to Sark. "There was a beautiful golden sunset on a calm summer sea, just crisped with the ripple of an evening breeze. Sir Edward was criticising Turner as extravagant and unnatural, and Napier said that was thought so because few had observed Nature so closely under so many aspects and tried to paint some of the rarer ones—yet not so rare either, were observation keener. Sir Edward said, 'Well, General, but now those reds, those blazing reds—you must allow those are overdone. ' My father looked round, and, pointing with his hand to the sea towards the east, said, 'Look there! ' As every little ripple rose, it was a triangle of burning crimson sheen from the red sunset-light upon it, of a brilliancy not even Turner himself could equal in his most highly coloured picture. The whole broad sea was a blaze of those burning crimson triangles, all playing into each other, and just parting and showing their forms again as the miniature billows rose and fell. 'Well, well, ' said Sir Edward, 'I suppose I must give up the reds, but what will you say to his yellows? Surely

only the red light on the canvas of the waggon at the end of the street, and the crimson colour of the bricks of his neighbour's chimney, know of the flood of fire which deluges the sky from the horizon to the zenith? What can even the quiet inhabitant of the English lowlands, whose scene for the manifestation of the fire of heaven is limited to the tops of hayricks, and the rooks' nests in the old elm trees, know of the mighty passages of splendour which are tossed from Alp to Alp over the azure of a thousand miles of champaign? Even granting the constant vigour of observation, and supposing the possession of such impossible knowledge, it needs but a moment's reflection to prove how incapable the memory is of retaining for any time the distinct image of the sources even of its most vivid impressions. What recollection have we of the sunsets which delighted us last year? We may know that they were magnificent, or glowing, but no distinct image of colour or form is retained—nothing of whose *degree* (for the great difficulty with the memory is to retain, not facts, but *degrees* of fact) we could be so certain as to say of anything now presented to us, that it is like it. If we did say so, we should be wrong; for we may be quite certain that the energy of an impression fades from the memory, and becomes more and more indistinct every day; and thus we compare a faded and indistinct image with the decision and certainty of one present to the senses. How constantly do we affirm that the thunderstorm of last week was the most terrible one we ever saw in our lives, because

they are beyond everything! ‘Look there!’ said my father, pointing to the sea on the western side of our boat, between us and the setting sun; every triangular wave there, as the ripples rose, was in a yellow flame, as bright as the other was red, and glittering like millions of topaz lights. Sir Edward Codrington laughed kindly and admiringly, and said, ‘Well! I must give in—I’ve no more to say; you and Turner have observed Nature more closely than I have.’” (*Life of Sir William Napier*, ii. 489). Ruskin in one of his MS. books has noted a similar remark in Johnston's *Travels in Southern Abyssinia* (i. 74: “all the azure and gold of . . . Turner was realized, and I silently acknowledged the injustice of my . . . judgment in considering his pictures . . . not natural”). These anecdotes may be paralleled by another which is within the recollection of one of the editors, when paying his first visit to Brantwood in 1875. On his arrival Ruskin took him up on to the hillside behind the house to see the view over the lake. The day was brilliant, and across the lake came a boat rowed by a soldier in his red jacket. “There,” said Ruskin, calling attention to the point of colour, “if it had been Turner, they would have said it was absurd.”]

we compare it, not with the thunderstorm of last year, but with the faded and feeble recollection of it! And so, when we enter an Exhibition, as we have no definite standard of truth before us, our feelings are toned down and subdued to the quietness of colour, which is all that human power can ordinarily attain to; and when we turn to a piece of higher and closer truth, approaching the pitch of the colour of nature, but to which we are not guided, as we should be in nature, by corresponding gradations of light everywhere around us, but which is isolated and cut off suddenly by a frame and a wall, and surrounded by darkness and coldness, what can we expect but that it should surprise and shock the feelings? Suppose where the § 9. *Colour of the "Napoleon."* "Napoleon"¹ hung in the Academy, there could have been left, instead, an opening in the wall, and through that opening, in the midst of the obscurity of the dim room and the smoke-laden atmosphere, there could suddenly have been poured the full glory of a tropical sunset, reverberated from the sea; how would you have shrunk, blinded, from its scarlet and intolerable lightnings! What picture in the room would not have been blackness after it? And why then do you blame Turner because he dazzles you? Does not the falsehood rest with those who do *not*? There was not one hue in this whole picture which was not far below what nature would have used in the same circumstances, nor was there one inharmonious or at variance with the rest. The stormy blood-red of the horizon, the scarlet of the breaking sunlight, the rich crimson browns of the wet and illumined sea-weed, the pure gold and purple of the upper sky, and, shed through it all, the deep passage of solemn blue, where the cold moonlight fell on one pensive spot of the limitless shore,—all were given with harmony as perfect as their colour was intense; and if, instead of passing, as I doubt not you did, in the hurry of your unreflecting prejudice, you had paused but so much as one quarter of an hour before the picture, you would have found the sense of air and space blended with every line,

¹ [See above, preceding chapter, § 20, p. 273.]

and breathing in every cloud, and every colour instinct and radiant with visible, glowing, absorbing light.

It is to be observed, however, in general, that wherever in brilliant effects of this kind, we approach to anything like a true statement of nature's colour, there must yet be a distinct difference in the impression we convey, because we cannot approach her *light*. All such hues are usually given by her with an accompanying intensity of sunbeams which dazzles and overpowers the eye, so that it cannot rest on the actual colour, nor understand what they are; and hence in art, in rendering all effects of this kind, there must be a want of the ideas of *imitation*, which are the great source of enjoyment to the ordinary observer; because we can only give one series of truths, those of colour, and are unable to give the accompanying truths of light; so that the more true we are in colour, the greater, ordinarily, will be the discrepancy felt between the intensity of hue and the feebleness of light.¹ But the painter who really loves nature will not, on this account, give you a faded and feeble image, which indeed may appear to you to be right, because your feelings can detect no discrepancy in its parts, but which he knows to derive its apparent truth from a systematized falsehood. No; he will make you understand and feel that art *cannot* imitate nature; that where it appears to do so, it must malign her and mock her. He will give you, or state to you, such truths as are in his power, completely and perfectly; and those which he cannot give, he will leave to your imagination. If you are acquainted with nature, you will know all he has given to be true, and you will supply from your memory and from your heart that light which he cannot give. If you are unacquainted with nature, seek elsewhere for whatever may happen to satisfy your feelings; but do not ask for the truth which you would not acknowledge and could not enjoy.²

Nevertheless the aim and struggle of the artist must

¹ [Doubly marked by Ruskin in his copy for revision.]

² [For "do not ask . . . enjoy," eds. 1 and 2 read, "do not talk about truth."]

always be to do away with this discrepancy as far as the powers of art admit, not by lowering his colour, but by increasing his light. And it is indeed by this that the works of Turner are peculiarly distinguished from those of all other colourists, by the dazzling

§ 11. *The discrepancy less in Turner than in other colourists.*

intensity, namely, of the light which he sheds through every hue, and which, far more than their brilliant colour, is the real source of their overpowering effect upon the eye, an effect so *reasonably* made the subject of perpetual animadversion; as if the sun which they represent, were quite a quiet, and subdued, and gentle, and manageable luminary, and never dazzled anybody, under any circumstances whatsoever. I am fond of standing by a bright Turner in the Academy, to listen to the unintentional compliments of the crowd—"What a glaring thing!" "I declare I can't look at it!" "Don't it hurt your eyes?"—expressed as if they were in the constant habit of looking the sun full in the face with the most perfect comfort and

§ 12. *Its great extent in a landscape attributed to Rubens.*

entire facility of vision. It is curious after hearing people malign some of Turner's noble passages of light, to pass to some really ungrammatical and false picture of the old masters, in which we have colour given *without* light. Take, for instance, the landscape attributed to Rubens, No. 175, in the Dulwich Gallery.¹ I never have spoken, and I never will speak, of Rubens but with the most reverential feelings;² and whatever imperfections in his art may have resulted from his unfortunate want of seriousness and incapability of true passion, his calibre of mind was originally such that I believe the world may see another Titian and another Raffaele, before it sees another Rubens. But I have before alluded to the violent license he occasionally assumes; and there is an instance of it in this picture apposite to the immediate question.³ The sudden streak and circle of yellow

¹ [Now No. 132, "Landscape with a Shepherd and his Flock."]

² [But see above, Introduction, p. xxi.]

³ [For "But I have . . . sudden streak," eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"Whenever, therefore, I see anything attributed to him artistically wrong, or testifying a want of knowledge of nature, or of feeling for colour, I become

and crimson in the middle of the sky of that picture, being the occurrence of a fragment of a sunset colour in pure daylight, and in perfect isolation, while at the same time it is rather darker, when translated into light and shade, than brighter than the rest of the sky, is a case of such bold absurdity, come from whose pencil it may, that if every error which Turner has fallen into in the whole course of his life were concentrated into one, that one would not equal it; and as our connoisseurs gaze upon this with never-ending approbation, we must not be surprised that the accurate perceptions which thus take delight in pure fiction, should consistently be disgusted by Turner's fidelity and truth.

Hitherto, however, we have been speaking of vividness of pure colour, and showing that it is used by Turner only where nature uses it, and in less degree. But we have hitherto, therefore, been speaking of a most limited and uncharacteristic portion of his works; for Turner, like all great colourists, is distinguished not more for his power of dazzling and overwhelming the eye with intensity of effect, than for his power of doing so by the use of subdued and gentle means. There is no man living more cautious and sparing in the use of pure colour than Turner. To say that he never perpetrates anything like the blue excrescences of foreground, or hills *shot* like a house-keeper's best silk gown, with blue and red, which certain of our celebrated artists consider the essence of the sublime, would be but a poor compliment; I might as well praise the portraits of Titian because they have not the grimace and paint of a clown in a pantomime: but I do say,¹ and say with confidence, that there is scarcely a landscape artist of the present day, however sober and lightless their effects may look, who

instantly incredulous; and if I ever advance anything affirmed to be his as such, it is not so much under the idea that it can be his, as to show what a great name can impose upon the public. The landscape I speak of has, beyond a doubt, high qualities in it; I can scarcely make up my mind whether to like it or not, but at any rate it is something which the public are in the habit of admiring and taking upon trust to any extent. Now the sudden streak . . .”]

¹ [From here down to Cotytto is doubly marked by Ruskin in his copy for revision.]

§ 13. *Turner
scarcely ever
uses pure or
vivid colour.*

does not employ more pure and raw colour than Turner; and that the ordinary tinsel and trash, or rather vicious and perilous stuff,¹ according to the power of the mind producing it, with which the walls of our Academy are half covered, disgracing in weak hands, or in more powerful degrading and corrupting, our whole school of art, is based on a system of colour beside which Turner's is as Vesta to Cotyto—the chastity of fire to the foulness of earth. Every picture of this great colourist has, in one or two parts of it (keynotes of the whole), points where the system of each individual colour is concentrated by a single stroke, as pure as it can come from the pallet; but throughout the great space and extent of even the most brilliant of his works, there will not be found a raw colour; that is to say, there is no warmth which has not grey in it, and no blue which has not warmth in it; and the tints in which he most excels and distances all other men, the most cherished and inimitable portions of his colour, are, as with all perfect colourists they must be, his greys.²

It is instructive in this respect, to compare the sky of the *Mercury and Argus*³ with the various illustrations of the serenity, space, and sublimity naturally inherent in blue and pink, of which every year's Exhibition brings forward enough, and to spare. In the *Mercury and Argus*, the pale and vaporous blue of the heated sky is broken with grey and pearly white, the gold colour of the light warming it more or less as it approaches or retires from the sun; but, throughout, there is not a grain of pure blue; all is subdued and warmed at the same time by the mingling grey and gold, up to the very zenith, where, breaking through the flaky mist, the transparent and deep azure of the sky is expressed with a single crumbling

¹ [*Macbeth*, v. 3. For Cotyto, the goddess of debauchery, see Juvenal, ii. 91.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 number the following paragraph “[§ 15. His great tenderness in all large spaces of colour],” and begin it as follows:—

“And it is, perhaps, herein that the chief beauty, excellence, and truth of Turner's colour, as distinguished from the absurd, futile, and fatal efforts which have been made to imitate it, chiefly lies. For Nature, in the same way, never uses raw colour; there is a tenderness and subdued tone about her purest hues, and a warmth, glow, and light in her soberest. It is instructive . . .”]

³ [For other references to this picture, see above, p. 264 *n.*]

touch; the keynote of the whole is given, and every part of it passes at once far into glowing and aërial space. The reader can scarcely fail to remember at once sundry works, in contradistinction to this, with great names attached to them, in which the sky is a sheer piece of plumber's and glazier's work, and should be valued per yard, with heavy extra charge for ultramarine.¹

Throughout the works of Turner, the same truthful principle of delicate and subdued colour is carried out with a care and labour of which it is difficult to form a conception. He gives a dash of pure white for his highest light; but all the other whites of his picture are pearled down with grey or gold. He gives a fold of pure crimson to the drapery of his nearest figure, but all his other crimsons will be deepened with black, or warmed with yellow. In one deep reflection of his distant sea, we catch a trace of the purest blue, but all the rest is palpitating with a varied and delicate gradation of harmonized tint, which indeed looks vivid blue as a mass, but is only so by opposition. It is the most difficult, the most rare thing, to find in his works a definite space, however small, of unconnected colour; that is, either of a blue which has nothing to connect it with the warmth, or of a warm colour, which has nothing to connect it with the greys of the whole; and the result is, that there is a general system and under-current of grey pervading the whole of his colour, out of which his highest lights, and those local touches of pure colour, which are, as I said before, the keynotes of the picture, flash with the peculiar brilliancy and intensity in which he stands alone.

Intimately associated with this toning down and connection of the colours actually used, is his inimitable power of varying and blending them, so as never to give a quarter of an

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 conclude this paragraph thus:—

“ultramarine; skies, in which the raw, meaningless colour is shaded steadily and perseveringly down, passing through the pink into the yellow as a young lady shades her worsted, to the successful production of a very handsome oilcloth, but certainly not of a picture.

“But throughout . . .”]

§ 14. *The basis of grey, under all his vivid hues.*

inch of canvas without a change in it, a melody as well as a harmony of one kind or another. Observe, I am not at present speaking of this as artistical or desirable in itself, not as a characteristic of the great colourist, but as the aim of the simple follower of nature. For it is strange to see how marvellously nature varies the most general and simple of her tones. A mass of mountain seen against the light, may at first appear all of one blue; and so it is, blue as a whole, by comparison with other parts of the landscape. But look how that blue is made up. There are black shadows in it under the crags, there are green shadows along the turf, there are grey half-lights upon the rocks, there are faint touches of stealthy warmth and cautious light along their edges; every bush, every stone, every tuft of moss has its voice in the matter, and joins with individual character in the universal will. Who is there who can do this as Turner will? The old masters would have settled the matter at once with a transparent, agreeable, but monotonous grey. Many among the moderns would probably be equally monotonous with absurd and false colours. Turner only would give the uncertainty; the palpitating, perpetual change; the subjection of all to a great influence, without one part or portion being lost or merged in it; the unity of action with infinity of agent. And I wish to insist on this the more particularly, because it is one of the eternal principles of nature, that she will not have one line or colour, nor one portion or atom of space, without a change in it. There is not one of her shadows, tints, or lines that is not in a state of perpetual variation: I do not mean in time, but in space. There is not a leaf in the world which has the *same colour* visible over its whole surface; it has a white high light somewhere; and in proportion as it curves to or from that focus, the colour is brighter or greyer. Pick up a common flint from the roadside, and count, if you can, its changes and hues of colour. Every bit of bare ground under your feet has in it a thousand such; the grey pebbles, the warm ochre, the green of incipient vegetation, the greys

§ 15. *The variety and fulness even of his most simple tones.*

§ 16. *Following the infinite and unapproachable variety of nature.*

and blacks of its reflexes and shadows, might keep a painter at work for a month, if he were obliged to follow them touch for touch: how much more when the same infinity of change is carried out with vastness of object and space. The extreme of distance may appear at first monotonous; but the least examination will show it to be full of every kind of change; that its outlines are perpetually melting and appearing again,—sharp here, vague there,—now lost altogether, now just hinted and still confused among each other; and so for ever in a state and necessity of change. Hence, wherever in a painting we have unvaried colour extended even over a small space, there is falsehood. Nothing can be natural which is monotonous; nothing true which only tells one story. The brown foreground and rocks of Claude's *Sinon before Priam*¹ are as false as colour can be: first, because there never was such a brown under sunlight, for even the sand and cinders (volcanic tufa) about Naples, granting that he had studied from these ugliest of all formations, are, where they are fresh fractured, golden and lustrous in full light, compared to these ideals of crag, and become, like all other rocks, quiet and grey when weathered; and secondly, because no rock that ever nature stained is without its countless breaking tints of varied vegetation. And even Stanfield, master as he is of rock form, is apt in the same way to give us here and there a little bit of mud, instead of stone.²

What I am next about to say with respect to Turner's colour, I should wish to be received with caution, as it admits

¹ [Called also "David at the Cave of Adullam," No. 6 in the National Gallery; for other references to the picture, see below, pp. 437, 581, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 27.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 conclude this paragraph thus:—

" . . . stone; while no artist, dead or living, except Turner, has ever attained the constant and perfect realization of the great principle of nature—that there shall be nothing without change: with him, and with him only, every individual stroke of the brush has in itself graduation and degrees of colour; and a visible space of monotony is a physical impossibility. Every part is abundant and perfect in itself, though still a member of the great whole; and every square inch contains in itself a system of colour and light, as complete, as studied, and as wonderful as the great arrangement of that to which it is subordinate.

"What I am next about," etc.]

of dispute. I think that the first approach to viciousness of colour in any master is commonly indicated chiefly by a prevalence of purple, and an absence of yellow. I think nature mixes yellow with almost every one of her hues, never, or very rarely, using red without it, but frequently using yellow with scarcely and red; and I believe it will be in consequence found that her favourite opposition, that which generally characterizes and gives tone to her colour, is yellow and black, passing, as it retires, into white and blue. It is beyond dispute that the great fundamental opposition of Rubens is yellow and black; and, that on this, concentrated in one part of the picture, and modified in various greys throughout, chiefly depend the tones of all his finest works. And in Titian, though there is a far greater tendency to the purple than in Rubens, I believe no red is ever mixed with the pure blue, or glazed over it, which has not in it a modifying quantity of yellow. At all events, I am nearly certain that whatever rich and pure purples are introduced locally, by the great colourists, nothing is so destructive of all fine colour as the slightest tendency to purple in general tone; and I am equally certain that Turner is distinguished from all the vicious colourists of the present day, by the foundation of all his tones being black, yellow, and the intermediate greys, while the tendency of our common glare-seekers is invariably to pure, cold, impossible purples. So fond, indeed, is Turner of black and yellow, that he has given us more than one composition, both drawings and paintings, based on these two colours alone, of which the magnificent *Quillebœuf*, which I consider one of the most perfect pieces of simple colour existing, is a most striking example;¹ and I think that where, as in some of the late Venices, there has been something like a marked appearance of purple tones, even though exquisitely corrected by vivid orange and warm green in the foreground, the general colour has not been so perfect or truthful: my

¹ [Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833; now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.]

own feelings would always guide me rather to the warm greys of such pictures as the Snow Storm, or the glowing scarlet and gold of the Napoleon and Slave Ship.¹ But I do not insist at present on this part of the subject, as being perhaps more proper for future examination, when we are considering the ideal of colour.

The above remarks have been made entirely with reference to the recent Academy pictures, which have been chiefly attacked for their colour. I by no means intend them to apply to the early works of Turner, those which the enlightened newspaper critics are perpetually talking about as characteristic of a time when Turner was “really great.” He is, and was, really great, from the time when he first could hold a brush, but he never was so great as he is now.² The Crossing the Brook³, glorious as it is as a composition, and perfect in all that is most desirable and most ennobling in art, is scarcely to be looked upon as a piece of colour; it is an agreeable, cool, grey rendering of space and form, but it is not colour; if it be regarded as such, it is thoroughly false andapid, and very far inferior to the tones of the same kind given by Claude. The reddish brown in the foreground of the Fall of Carthage is, as far as I am competent to judge, crude, sunless, and in every way wrong; and both this picture, and the Building of Carthage, though this latter is far the finer of the two, are quite unworthy of Turner as a colourist.⁴

Not so with the drawings; these, countless as they are, from the earliest to the latest, though presenting an unbroken chain of increasing difficulty overcome and truth illustrated, are all, according to their aim, equally faultless as to colour. Whatever we have hitherto said, applies to them in its fullest extent; though each, being generally the realization of some effect actually

¹ [For various, “late Venice,” see above, pp. 250–251; for the “Snow Storm,” p. 571 n.; “Napoleon,” p. 273; the “Slave Ship,” p. 571.]

² [Cf. above, pp. xxxiii. n., 53, and below, p. 654 n.]

³ [Cf. above, p. 241.]

⁴ [For the two Carthages, see above, p. 241.]

§ 18. *His early works are false in colour.*

§ 19. *His drawings invariably perfect.*

seen, and realized but once, requires almost a separate essay. As a class, they are far quieter and chaster than the Academy pictures,¹ and, were they better known, might enable our connoisseurs to form a somewhat more accurate judgment of the intense study of nature on which all Turner's colour is based.²

One point only remains to be noted respecting his system of colour generally—its entire subordination to light and

¹ [See also *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (preface and notes on 2nd and 3rd periods), where the same opinion is expressed.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 here proceed with a considerable additional passage as follows:—

“... colour is based, but it would be absurd at present to occupy more time with so inexhaustible a subject; the colour of these inimitable drawings must be considered when we examine them individually, not separated from what it illustrates. Taken generally, the chief characteristics of Turner's colour, whether in drawings or paintings, considered only with respect to truth, and without reference to composition or beauty, of which at present we can take no cognizance, are those above pointed out, which we shall briefly recapitulate.

“1. Prevalence, variety, value, and exquisite composition of greys. The grey tones are, in the drawings especially, the most wonderful as well as the most valuable portions of the whole picture. Some of the very first-rate drawings are merely harmonies of different kinds of grey: ‘Long Ships lighthouse, Land's End,’ for instance. Several appear to have been drawn entirely with modulated greys first, and then sparingly heightened with colour on the lights; but whatever the subject, and however brilliant the effect, the grey tones are the foundation of all its beauty.

“2. Refinement, delicacy, and uncertainty in all colours whatsoever. Positive colour is, as I before said, the rarest thing imaginable in Turner's works, and the exquisite refinement with which variety of hue is carried into his feeblest tints is altogether unparalled in art. The drawing of Colchester, in the England series, is an example of this delicacy and fulness of tint together, with which nothing but nature can be compared. But I have before me while I write a drawing of the most vigorous and powerful colour, with concentrated aerial blue opposed to orange and crimson. I should have fancied at a little distance, that a cake of ultramarine had been used pure upon it. But, when I look close, I discover that all which looks blue in effect is in reality a changeful grey, with black and green in it, and blue tones breaking through here and there more or less decisively, but without one grain or touch of pure blue in the whole picture, except on a figure in the foreground, nor one grain nor touch of any colour whatsoever, of which it is possible to say what it is, or how many are united in it. Such will invariably be found the case, even with the most brilliant and daring of Turner's systems of colour.

“3. Dislike of purple, and fondness for opposition of yellow and black, or clear blue and white.

“4. Entire subjection of the whole system of colour to that of chiaroscuro. I have not before noticed this, because I wished to show how true and faithful Turner's colour is, as such, without reference to any associated principles. But the perfection and consummation of its truth rests in its subordination to light and shade—a subordination. . .”]

§ 23 (*the same as*
§ 20 *in the later*
editions.)

shade—a subordination which there is no need to prove here, as every engraving from his works (and few are unengraved) is sufficient demonstration of it. I have before shown the inferiority and unimportance in nature of colour, as a truth, compared with light and shade. That inferiority is maintained and asserted by all really great works of colour; but most by Turner's, as their colour is most intense. Whatever brilliancy he may choose to assume, is subjected to an inviolable law of chiaroscuro, from which there is no appeal. No richness nor depth of tint is considered of value enough to atone for the loss of one particle of arranged light. No brilliancy of hue is permitted to interfere with the depth of a determined shadow. And hence it is, that while engravings from works far less splendid in colour are often vapid and cold, because the little colour employed has not been rightly based on light and shade, an engraving from Turner is always beautiful and forcible in proportion as the colour of the original has been intense, and never in a single instance has failed to express the picture as a perfect composition.* Powerful and captivating

§ 20. *The sub-
jection of his
system of colour
to that of
chiaroscuro.*

* This is saying too much; for it not unfrequently happens that the light and shade of the original is lost in the engraving, the effect of which is afterwards partially recovered, with the aid of the artist himself, by introductions of new features. Sometimes, when a drawing depends chiefly on colour, the engraver gets unavoidably embarrassed, and must be assisted by some change or exaggeration of the effect: but the more frequent case is, that the engraver's difficulties result merely from his inattention to, or wilful deviations from, his original; and that the artist is obliged to assist him by such expedients as the error itself suggests. Not unfrequently in reviewing a plate, as very constantly in reviewing a picture after some time has elapsed since its completion, even the painter is liable to make unnecessary or hurtful changes. In the plate of the *Old Téméraire*, lately published in Finden's Gallery,¹ I do not know whether it was Turner or the engraver who broke up the water into sparkling ripple, but it was a grievous mistake, and has destroyed the whole dignity and value of the conception. The flash of lightning in the *Winchelsea of the England series*² does not exist in the original; it is put in to withdraw the attention of the spectator from the sky, which the engraver destroyed.

There is an unfortunate persuasion among modern engravers that colour

¹ [Finden's *Royal Gallery of British Art* (1838–40) did not, however, contain "Old Téméraire." The plate of this picture, engraved by J. T. Willmore, was published by T. Hogarth in 1845.]

² [Engraved by J. Henshall, part 10.]

and faithful as his colour is, it is the least important of all his excellences, because it is the least important feature of

can be expressed by particular characters of line, and in the endeavour to distinguish by different lines different colours of equal depth, they frequently lose the whole system of light and shade. It will hardly be credited that the piece of foreground on the left of Turner's *Modern Italy*, represented in the *Art Union* engraving¹ as nearly coal black, is, in the original, of a pale warm grey, hardly darker than the sky. All attempt to record colour in engraving is heraldry out of its place; the engraver has no power beyond that of expressing transparency of opacity by greater or less openness of line, for the same depth of tint is producible by lines with very different intervals.

Texture of surface is only in a measure in the power of the steel, and ought not to be laboriously sought after; nature's surfaces are distinguished more by form than texture; a stone is often smoother than a leaf; but if texture is to be given, let the engraver at least be sure that he knows what the texture of the object actually is, and how to represent it. The leaves in the foreground of the engraved *Mercury and Argus* have all of them three or four black lines across them. What sort of leaf texture is supposed to be represented by these? The stones in the foreground of Turner's *Llanthony* received from the artist the powdery texture of sandstone; the engraver covered them with contorted lines and turned them into old timber.²

A still more fatal cause of failure is the practice of making out or finishing what the artist left incomplete. In the *England* plate of Dudley,³ there are two offensive blank windows in the large building with the chimney on the left. These are engraver's improvements; in the original they are barely traceable, their lines being excessively faint and tremulous as with the movement of heated air between them and the spectator: their vulgarity is thus taken away, and the whole building left in one grand unbroken mass. It is almost impossible to break engravers of this unfortunate habit. I have even heard of their taking journeys of some distance in order to obtain knowledge of the details which the artist intentionally omitted; and the evil will necessarily continue until they receive something like legitimate artistic education. In one or two instances, however, particularly in small plates, they have shown great feeling; the plates of Miller (especially those of the *Turner* illustrations to *Scott*) are in most instances perfect and beautiful interpretations of the originals; so those of Goodall in *Rogers's* works, and Cousens's in the *River of France*; those of the *Yorkshire* series are also very valuable, though singularly inferior to the drawings. But none, even of these men, appear capable of producing a large plate. They have no knowledge of the means of rendering their lines vital or valuable; cross-hatching stands for everything; and inexcusably, for though we cannot expect every engraver to etch like Rembrandt or Albert Dürer, or every woodcutter to draw like Titian, at least something of the system and power of the grand works of

¹ [Engraved by J. T. Willmore.]

² ["*England and Wales*," part 20; engraved by J. T. Willmore.]

³ [Engraved by R. Wallis; *cf.* above, p. 266.]

nature. Were it necessary,¹ rather than lose one line of his forms, or one ray of his sunshine, he would, I apprehend, be content to paint in black and white to the end of his life. It is by mistaking the shadow for the substance, and aiming at the brilliancy and the fire, without perceiving of what deep-studied shade and inimitable form it is at once the result and the illustration, that the host of his imitators sink into deserved disgrace.² With him, the hue is a beautiful auxiliary in working out the great impression to be conveyed, but is not the chief source³ of that impression; it is little more than a visible melody, given to raise and assist the mind in the reception of nobler ideas,—as sacred passages of sweet sound, to prepare the feelings for the reading of the mysteries of God.

those men might be preserved, and some mind and meaning stolen into the reticulation of the restless modern lines.⁴

¹ [For “Were it necessary,” eds. 1, 2, 3, and 4 read, “He paints in colour, but he thinks in light and shade; and were it necessary . . .”]

² [Here eds. 1 and 2 continue:—

“For no colour *can* be beautiful, unless it is subordinate; it cannot take the lead without perishing—in superseding the claims of other excellences, it annihilates its own. To say that the chief excellence of a picture is its colour, is to say that its colour is imperfect. In all truly great painters, and in Turner’s more than all, the hue . . .”]

Eds. 3 and 4 reads, “deserved. With him, as with all the greatest painters, and in the Turner’s [*sic*] more than all, the hue. . .”]

³ [For “the chief source,” eds. 1–4 read, “the source nor the essence.”]

⁴ [This footnote was not in eds. 1 and 2. For some interesting remarks on Turner and his engravers, see appendix by Marcus B. Huish to the illustrated edition of Ruskin’s *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*; and on the same subject, Ruskin’s own “Notes respecting Future Uses of Engravings” in that catalogue. Ruskin’s appreciation (or otherwise) of several engravers of the time has been given in Vol. II. p. xlii. *n.*]

CHAPTER III

OF TRUTH OF CHIAROSCURO¹

¹ [In one of the drafts of this chapter, Ruskin prefixed “a few plain facts” and definitions, which may be useful to some readers:—

“That part of any object which fronts the light fully, receiving it at right angles, is the most luminous part of that object, and whether it be, as in a sphere, a mere point, or as it may be in a cube, a whole side, it is called by artists the High Light. Of the other parts of the object—those which are turned towards the light—those are the more luminous which are more turned towards it, and the less luminous which receive it more obliquely. And the degree of light is in exact proportion to the greatness of the angle at which it meets the plane of the object. And the space of any object which is thus indirectly turned towards the light, whether more or less (and there is every degree of luminousness in it), is generally called by artists the Half Light.

“That part of an object which is turned away from the light, whether more or less, is, as far as the direct light is concerned, equal in it everywhere in its degree of shade, and is called by artists the Dark Side.

“That part of an object from which the light is intercepted by some intermediate object—whether a part of itself, or of any other object, is the darkest part of an object, and is called by artists the Shadow.

“Be so kind, on the first bright, sunny day after you have read this, as to look for a white [washed?] cottage, on one side of which the sun falls as directly as may be—but so as yet to get slightly and obliquely at another side. On the high light you will find that you cannot see the projecting granulation, but in the oblique light you can see every pebble separately. Whatever detail or projections are on the high light, as the sun penetrates into every chink and cranny of them, can cast no shadows, and have no dark sides—and, therefore, are indistinctly and imperfectly seen, and indeed, unless very large and important, are not seen at all; whence arises the general rule. There can be no detail on the high light. It is all blaze. But whatever projections and details exist on the surface turned obliquely to the light, each, however small, has its dark side and shadow, and every one is seen, more and more distinctly as the object is turned more and more from the light. The result of this is, that as every object not polished has more or less of texture on its surface, and nearly all have roughness and projections, and detail in some degree, a general tone of shadow is obtained on these oblique surfaces far deeper than could be accounted for by the mere fact of the oblique fall of the light, and they sink, practically, into what artists call Middle Tint. Again, the Dark Side—though entirely inaccessible to the direct light—is very strongly affected by the reflected light, which as it were fills the whole atmosphere, and illuminates every object open and exposed to it; and it is also very often so energetically illumined by accidental lights that its mass is broken up, and it usually becomes also merged in what artists call Middle Tint. But that part of it which is accidentally Shadow is usually, by its position, inaccessible even to the reflected light, and always more inaccessible than the Dark Side. It is therefore, in near objects, and in sunlight, so dark in comparison with the high lights, that their relative degrees of

It is not my intention to enter, in the present portion of the work, upon any examination of Turner's particular effects of light. We must know something about what is beautiful before we speak of these.¹

§ 1. *We are not at present to examine particular effects of light.*

At present I wish only to insist upon two great principles of chiaroscuro, which are observed throughout the works of the great modern master, and set at defiance by the ancients; great general laws, which may, or may not, be sources of beauty, but whose observance is indisputably necessary to truth.

Go out some bright sunny day in winter, and look for a tree with a broad trunk, having rather delicate boughs hanging down on the sunny side, near the trunk. Stand four or five yards from it, with your back to the sun. You will find that the boughs between you and the trunk of the tree are very indistinct, that you confound them in places with the trunk itself, and cannot possibly trace one of them from its insertion to its extremity. But the shadows which they cast upon the trunk, you will find clear, dark, and distinct, perfectly traceable through their whole course, except when they are interrupted by the crossing boughs. And if you retire backwards, you will come to a point where you cannot see the intervening

intensity can be scarcely expressed with real truth, except by the jet black of chalk on white paper.

"The effect of objects, then, arranges itself into three distinct masses: the High Light—the Middle Tint—and the Shadow, it being always remembered that the Middle Tint embraces both parts exposed obliquely to the direct light and touched by accidental shadows—and parts turned away from the direct light—exposed to accidental reflected lights, and that the Shadow, whether it occur, as it constantly does, in pieces on the Dark Side, or on luminous parts of other objects, is that part of anything which receives neither direct nor reflected light."

¹ [For "we speak of these. At present," eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"we speak of them—we must not bring their poetry and their religion down to optics. I cannot watch the sun descending on Sinai, or stand in the starry twilight by the gates of Bethlehem, and begin talking of refraction and polarization. It is your heart that must be the judge here—if you do not *feel* the light, you will not see it. When, therefore, I have proved to you what is beautiful, and what God intended to give pleasure to your spirit in its purity, we will come to Turner as the painter of light—for so emphatically he should be called—and, picture by picture, we will trace at once the truth and the intention.

"But at present . . ."]

boughs at all, or only a fragment of them here and there, but can still see their shadows perfectly plain. Now, this may serve to show you the immense prominence and importance of shadows where there is anything like bright light. They are, in fact, commonly far more conspicuous than the thing which casts them; for being as large as the casting object, and altogether made up of a blackness deeper than the darkest part of the casting object, while that object is also broken up with positive and reflected lights, their large, broad, unbroken spaces tell strongly on the eye, especially as all form is rendered partially, often totally, invisible within them, and as they are suddenly terminated by the sharpest lines which nature ever shows. For no outline of objects whatsoever is so sharp as the edge of a close shadow. Put your finger over a piece of white paper in the sun, and observe the difference between the softness of the outline of the finger itself and the decision of the edge of the shadow. And note also the excessive gloom of the latter. A piece of black cloth, laid in the light, will not attain one fourth of the blackness of the paper under the shadow.

Hence shadows are in reality, when the sun is shining, the most conspicuous things in a landscape, next to the highest lights. All forms are understood and explained chiefly by their agency: the roughness of the bark of a tree, for instance, is not seen in the light, nor in the shade; it is only seen between the two, where the shadows of the ridges explain it. And hence, if we have to express vivid light, our very first aim must be to get the shadows sharp and visible; and this is not to be done by blackness (though indeed chalk on white paper is the only thing which comes up to the intensity of real shadows), but by keeping them perfectly flat, keen, and even. A very pale shadow, if it be quite flat, if it conceal the details of the objects it crosses, if it be grey and cold compared with their colour, and very sharp-edged, will be far more conspicuous, and make everything out of it look a great deal more like sunlight, than a shadow ten times its depth, shaded off at

§ 2. And
therefore the
distinctness of
shadows is the
chief means of
expressing
vividness of
light.

the edge, and confounded with the colour of the objects on which it falls. Now the old masters of the Italian school, in almost all their works, directly reverse this principle; they blacken their shadows till the picture becomes quite appalling, and everything in it invisible; but they make a point of losing their edges, and carrying them off by gradation, in consequence utterly destroying every appearance of sunlight. All their shadows are the faint, secondary darkness of mere *daylight*; the sun has nothing whatever to do with them. The shadow between the pages of the book which you hold in your hand is distinct and visible enough, though you are, I suppose, reading it by the ordinary daylight of your room, out of the sun; and this weak and secondary shadow is all that we ever find in the Italian masters, as indicative of sunshine. Even Cuyp and Berghem, though they know thoroughly well what they are about in their foregrounds, forget the principle in their distances; and though in Claude's seaports, where he has plain architecture to deal with, he gives us something like real shadows along the stones, the moment we come to ground and foliage with lateral light away go the shadows and the sun together. In the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, in our own gallery,¹ the trunks of the trees between the water-wheel and the white figure in the middle distance, are dark and visible; but their shadows are scarcely discernible on the ground, and are quite vague and lost in the building. In nature, every bit of the shadow, both on the ground and building, would have been defined and conspicuous; while the trunks themselves would have been faint, confused, and indistinguishable, in their illumined parts, from the grass or distance. So in Poussin's Phocion,² the shadow of the stick on the stone in the right-hand corner is shaded off and lost, while you see the stick plainly all the way. In nature's sunlight it would have been the direct reverse: you would have seen the shadow black and sharp all the way down; but you would have

§ 3. *Total absence of such distinctness in the works of the Italian school.*

§ 4. *And partial absence in the Dutch.*

¹ [See above, p. 41 n.]

² [See above, p. 263 n.]

had to look for the stick, which in all probability would in several places have been confused with the stone behind it.

And so throughout the works of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator, we shall find, especially in their conventional foliage, and unarticulated barbarisms of rock, that their whole sum and substance of chiaroscuro are merely the gradation and variation which nature gives in the *body* of her shadows, and that all which they do to express sunshine, she does to vary shade. They take only one step, while she always takes two; marking, in the first place, with violent decision, the great transition from sun to shade, and then varying the shade itself with a thousand gentle gradations and double shadows, in themselves equivalent, and more than equivalent, to all that the old masters did for their entire chiaroscuro.

Now, if there be one principle or secret more than another on which Turner depends for attaining brilliancy of light, it is his clear and exquisite drawing of the *shadows*. Whatever is obscure, misty, or underfined, in his objects or his atmosphere, he takes care that the shadows be sharp and clear; and then he knows that the light will take care of itself, and he makes them clear, not by blackness, but by excessive evenness, unity, and sharpness of edge. He will keep them clear and distinct, and make them felt as shadows, though they are so faint that, but for their decisive forms, we should not have observed them for darkness at all. He will throw them one after another like transparent veils along the earth and upon the air, till the whole picture palpitates with them, and yet the darkest of them will be a faint grey, imbued and penetrated with light. The pavement on the left of the Hero and Leander,¹ is about the most thorough piece of this kind of sorcery that I remember in art; but of the general principle, not one of his works is without constant evidence. Take the vignette of the garden opposite the title-page of Rogers's Poems,² and note the

§ 5. *The perfection of Turner's works in this respect.*

¹ [See above, p. 242 *n.*]

² [The drawing for this vignette, "The Garden," is No. 220 in the National Gallery.]

drawing of the nearest balustrade on the right. The balusters themselves are faint and misty, and the light through them feeble; but the shadows of them are sharp and dark, and the intervening light as intense as it can be left. And see how much more distinct the shadow of the running figure is on the pavement, than the chequers of the pavement itself. Observe the shadows on the trunk of the tree at page 91,¹ how they conquer all the details of the trunk itself, and become darker and more conspicuous than any part of the boughs or limbs, and so in the vignette to Campbell's Beech-tree's Petition.² Take the beautiful concentration of all that is most characteristic of Italy as she is, at page 168 of Rogers's Italy,³ where we have the long shadows of the trunks made by far the most conspicuous thing in the whole foreground, and hear how Wordsworth, the keenest-eyed of all modern poets for what is deep and essential in nature, illustrates Turner here, as we shall find him doing in all other points:⁴—

“At the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches towards me like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward.”

—*Excursion*, book vi.⁵

So again in the Rhymers' Glen (Illustrations to Scott),⁶ note the intertwining of the shadows across the path, and the chequering of the trunks by them; and again on the bridge in the Armstrong's Tower; and yet more in the long avenue of Brienne, where we have a length of two or three miles

¹ [Of Rogers's *Poems*; the subject is "St. Anne's Hill" (front view); the drawing is No. 228 in the National Gallery.]

² [*In the Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell*, Moxon, 1837.]

³ [The subject is the "Italian Composition" (Perugia?); the drawing is No. 202 in the National Gallery; *cf.* above, p. 242.]

⁴ [For other illustrations of Turner by Wordsworth, see pp. 347, 353, 363, 405.]

⁵ [So in the text; the lines are, however, from book vii.]

⁶ [Turner's illustrations to Scott appeared in three publications:—(1) *The Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott*, 28 vols., Cadell, 1834; (2) *The Poetical Works*, 12 vols., Cadell, 1834; (3) *Illustrations to the Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, Tilt, 1834. Of those here mentioned, the "Rhymers' Glen" and "Brienne" appeared in (1), vols. xxi. and ix. respectively; and "Johnny Armstrong's Tower," in (2), vol. ii. "Hampton Court Palace," in No. 7 of "England and Wales."]

expressed by the playing shadows alone, and the whole picture filled with sunshine by the long lines of darkness cast by the figures on the snow. The Hampton Court, in the England series, is another very striking instance. In fact, the general system of execution observable in all Turner's drawings is, to work his ground richly and fully, sometimes stippling, and giving infinity of delicate, mysterious, and ceaseless detail; and on the ground so prepared to cast his shadows with one dash of the brush, leaving an excessively sharp edge of watery colour. Such at least is commonly the case in such coarse and broad instances as those I have above given. Words are not accurate enough, nor delicate

§ 6. *The effect of his shadows upon the light.*

enough, to express or trace the constant, all-pervading influence of the finer and vaguer shadows throughout his works, that thrilling influence which gives to the light they leave its passion and its power. There is not a stone, not a leaf, not a cloud, over which light is not felt to be actually passing and palpitating before our eyes. There is the motion, the actual wave and radiation of the darted beam: not the dull universal daylight, which falls on the landscape without life, or direction, or speculation, equal on all things and dead on all things; but the breathing, animated, exulting light, which feels, and receives, and rejoices, and acts,—which chooses one thing, and rejects another,—which seeks, and finds, and loses again,—leaping from rock to rock, from leaf to leaf, from wave to wave—glowing, or flashing, or scintillating, according to what it strikes; or, in its holier moods, absorbing and enfolding all things in the deep fulness of its repose, and then again losing itself in bewilderment, and doubt, and dimness,— or perishing and passing away, entangled in drifting mist, or melted into melancholy air, but still,—kindling or declining, sparkling or serene,—it is the living light, which breathes in its deepest, most entranced rest, which sleeps, but never dies.

I need scarcely insist farther on the marked distinction between the works of the old masters and those of the great modern landscape painters in this respect. It is one which the

reader can perfectly well out for himself, by the slightest systematic attention; one which he will find existing, not merely between this work and that, but throughout the whole body of their productions, and down to every leaf and line. And a little careful watching of nature, especially in her foliage and foregrounds, and comparison of her with Claude, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator, will soon show him that those artists worked entirely on conventional principles, not representing what they saw, but what they thought would make a handsome picture; and even when they went to nature, which I believe to have been a very much rarer practice with them than their biographers would have us suppose,¹ they copied her like children, drawing what they knew to be there, but not what they saw there.* I believe you may search the foregrounds of Claude, from one end of Europe to another, and you will not find the shadow of one leaf cast upon another. You will find leaf after leaf painted more or less boldly or brightly out of the black ground, and you will find dark leaves defined in perfect form upon the light; but you will not find the form of a single leaf disguised or interrupted by the shadow of another. And Poussin and Salvator are still farther from anything like genuine truth. There is nothing in their pictures

§ 7. *The distinction holds good between almost all the works of the ancient and modern schools.*

* Compare sec. ii. chap. ii. § 6.

¹ [Of Claude's open-air studies, a pleasant account is given by his friend Sandrart, a German painter, who was for some years his companion. "In order," says Sandrart, "that he might be able to study closely the innermost secrets of nature, he used to linger in the open air from before daybreak even to nightfall, so that he might learn to depict with a scrupulous adherence to nature's model the changing phases of dawn, the rising and setting sun, as well as the hours of twilight. . . . In this most difficult and toilsome mode of study he spent many years; making excursions into the country every day, and returning even after a long journey without finding it irksome. Sometimes I have chanced to meet him amongst the steepest cliffs at Tivoli, handling the brush before those well-known waterfalls, and painting the actual scene, not by the aid of imagination or invention, but according to the very objects which nature placed before him" (*Claude Gellée Le Lorrain*, by Owen J. Dullea, 1887, p. 16). In his will, Claude mentions two pictures which he bequeathed as "painted from nature" and "executed in the country." Of Gaspard Poussin (Dughet), we are told that he had studios at Frascati and Tivoli, and that he painted many of his pictures out of doors. A little ass, that he cared for himself, his only servant, bore his entire apparatus, provisions and a tent, under which, protected from the sun and wind, he made his landscapes (see *Nicolas Poussin*, by Elizabeth H. Denio, 1899, pp. 147-148).]

which might not be manufactured in their painting-room, with a branch or two of brambles and a bunch or two of weeds before them, to give them the form of the leaves. And it is refreshing to turn from their ignorant and impotent repetitions of childish conception, to the clear, close, genuine studies of modern artists; for it is not Turner only (though here, as in all other points, the first) who is remarkable for fine and expressive decision of chiaroscuro. Some passages by J. D. Harding are thoroughly admirable in this respect, though this master is getting a little too much into a habit of general keen execution, which prevents the parts which ought to be especially decisive from being felt as such, and which makes his pictures, especially the large ones, look a little thin.¹ But some of his later passages of rock foreground have been very remarkable for the exquisite forms and firm expressiveness of their shadows. And the chiaroscuro of Stanfield is equally deserving of the most attentive study.

The second point to which I wish at present to direct attention has reference to the *arrangement* of light and shade. It is the constant habit of nature to use both her highest lights and deepest shadows in exceedingly small quantity; always in points, never in masses. She will give a large mass of tender light in sky or water, impressive by its quantity, and a large mass of tender shadow relieved against it, in foliage, or hill, or building; but the light is always subdued if it be extensive, the shadow always feeble if it be broad. She will then fill up all the rest of her picture with middle tints and pale greys of some sort or another, and on this quiet and harmonious whole she will touch her high lights in spots: the foam of an isolated wave, the sail of a solitary vessel, the flash of the sun from a wet roof, the gleam of a single white-washed cottage, or some such sources of local brilliancy, she will use so vividly and delicately as to throw everything else into definite shade by comparison. And then

§ 8. *Second great principle of chiaroscuro. Both high light and deep shadow are used in equal quantity, and only in points.*

¹ [Cf. above, p. 201.]

taking up the gloom, she will use the black hollows of some overhanging bank, or the black dress of some shaded figure, or the depth of some sunless chink of wall or window, so sharply as to throw everything else into definite light by comparison; thus reducing the whole mass of her picture to a delicate middle tint, approaching, of course, here to light, and there to gloom; but yet sharply separated from the utmost degrees either of the one or the other.

Now it is a curious thing that none of our writers on art seem to have noticed the great principle of nature in this respect. They all talk of deep shadow as a thing that may be given in quantity; one fourth of the picture, or, in certain effects, much more. Barry, for instance, says that the practice of the great painters, who “best understood the effects of chiaroscuro,” was, for the most part, to make the mass of middle tint larger than the light, and the mass of dark larger than the masses of light and middle tint together, *i.e.* occupying more than one half of the picture.¹ Now I do not know what we are to suppose is meant by “understanding chiaroscuro.” If it means being able to manufacture² agreeable patterns in the shape of pyramids, and crosses, and zigzags, into which arms and legs are to be persuaded, and passion and motion arranged, for the promotion and encouragement of the cant of criticism, such a principle may be productive of the most advantageous results. But if it means, being acquainted with the deep, perpetual, systematic, unintrusive simplicity and unwearied variety of nature’s chiaroscuro; if it means the perception that blackness and sublimity are not synonymous, and that space and light may possibly be coadjutors; then no man,

§ 9. Neglect or contradiction of this principle by writers on art;

¹ [“With respect to the proportionate magnitude of these masses of light, middle tint, and dark as relative to each other, it cannot properly be determined. The nature of the subject, whether gay, majestic, or melancholy, affords the best rule to proceed by in each particular case. But an ingenious French writer has many years since observed, that for the most part the practice of those great painters, who best understood the fine effects of *chiaroscuro*, was to make the mass of middle tint larger than that of the light, and the mass of dark still larger than the masses of light and middle tints united together” (*The Works of James Barry*, 1809, i. 496).]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read, “able to paint lanterns and candles, the principle here laid down is exceedingly correct; or if it means being able to manufacture . . .”]

who ever advocated or dreamed of such a principle, is anything more than a novice, blunderer, and trickster in chiaroscuro. And my firm belief is, that though colour is inveighed against by all artists, as the great Circe of art, the great transformer of mind into sensuality, no fondness for it, no study of it, is half so great a peril and stumbling-block to the young student, as the admiration he hears bestowed on such artificial, false, and juggling chiaroscuro, and the instruction he receives, based on such principles as that given us by Fuseli,—that “mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate chiaroscuro in art.”¹ It may not always be *agreeable* to a sophisticated, unfeeling, and perverted mind; but the student had better throw up his art at once, than proceed on the conviction that any other can ever be *legitimate*. I believe I shall be perfectly well able to prove, in following parts of the work, that “mere natural light and shade” is the only fit and faithful attendant of the highest art; and that all tricks, all visible intended arrangement, all extended shadows and narrow lights, everything, in fact, in the least degree artificial, or tending to make the mind dwell upon light and shade as such, is an injury, instead of an aid, to conceptions of high ideal dignity. I believe I shall be able also to show, that nature manages her chiaroscuro a great deal more neatly and cleverly than people fancy; that “mere natural light and shade” is a very much finer thing than most artists can put together, and that none think they can improve upon it but those who never understood it.

But however this may be, it is beyond dispute that every permission given to the student to amuse himself with painting one figure all black, and the next all white, and throwing them out with a background of nothing, every permission given to him to spoil his pocket-book with sixths of sunshine and sevenths of shade, and other such fractional sublimites, is so much more difficulty

§ 10. *And consequent misguiding of the student.*

§ 11. *The great value of a simple chiaroscuro.*

¹ [Lecture vi. in *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, 1831, ii. 278.]

laid in the way of his ever becoming a master; and that none are in the right road to real excellence, but those who are struggling to render the simplicity, purity, and inexhaustible variety of nature's own chiaroscuro in open cloudless daylight, giving the expanse of harmonious light, the speaking decisive shadow, and the exquisite grace, tenderness, and grandeur of aërial opposition of local colour and equally illuminated lines. No chiaroscuro is so difficult as this; and none so noble, chaste, or impressive. On this part of the subject, however, I must not enlarge at present. I wish now only to speak of those great principles of chiaroscuro, which nature observes, even when she is most working for effect; when she is playing with thunderclouds and sunbeams, and throwing one thing out and obscuring another, with the most marked artistical feeling and intention: even then, she never forgets her great rule, to give both the deepest shade and highest light in small quantities:¹ points of the one answering to points of the other, and both vividly conspicuous, and separated from the rest of the landscape.

And it is most singular that this separation, which is the great source of brilliancy in nature, should not only be unobserved, but absolutely forbidden, by our great writers on art, who are always talking about connecting the light with the shade by *imperceptible gradations*. Now so surely as this is done, all sunshine is lost, for imperceptible gradation from light to dark is the characteristic of objects seen out of sunshine, in what is, in landscape, shadow. Nature's principle of getting light is the direct reverse. She will cover her whole landscape with middle tint, in which she will have as many gradations as you please, and a great many more than you can paint; but on this middle tint she touches her extreme lights, and extreme darks, isolated and sharp, so that the eye goes to them directly, and feels them to be keynotes of the whole composition. And although the dark touches are less attractive than the light

§ 12. *The sharp separation of nature's lights from her middle tint.*

¹ [Eds. 1-4 read, "her great rule, to give precisely the same quantity of deepest shade which she does of highest light, and no more; points . . ."]

ones, it is not because they are less distinct, but because they exhibit nothing; while the bright touches are in parts where everything is seen, and where in consequence the eye goes to rest. But yet the high lights do not exhibit anything in themselves, they are too bright and dazzle the eye; and having no shadows in them, cannot exhibit form, for form can only be seen by shadow of some kind or another. Hence the highest lights and deepest darks agree in this, that nothing is seen in either of them; that both are in exceedingly small quantity, and both are marked and distinct from the middle tones of the landscape, the one by their brilliancy, the other by their sharp edges, even though many of the more energetic middle tints may approach their intensity very closely.¹

I need scarcely do more than tell you to glance at any one of the works of Turner, and you will perceive in a moment the exquisite observation of all these principles; the sharpness, decision, conspicuousness, and excessively small quantity, both of extreme light and extreme shade, all the mass of the picture being graduated and delicate middle tint. Take up the Rivers of France, for instance, and turn over a few of the plates in succession.²

1. Château Gaillard (vignette).—Black figures and boats, points of shade; sun-touches on castle, and wake of boat, of light. See how the eye rests on both, and observe how sharp and separate all the lights are, falling in spots, edged by shadow, but not melting off into it.

2. Orleans.—The crowded figures supply both points of shade and light. Observe the delicate middle tint of both in the whole mass of buildings, and compare this with the blackness of Canaletto's shadows, against which neither figures nor anything else can ever tell, as points of shade.

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 here contained additional matter, for which see end of the chapter.]

² [Now most readily accessible in *The Seine and The Loire*, ed. by M. B. Huish, 1890. The plates here mentioned are in that publication Nos. 22 (drawing in the National Gallery, No. 151), 41 (drawing in the University Galleries, Oxford), 44 (Oxford), 43 (Oxford), 42 (Oxford), 45 (Oxford), 46 (Oxford), 49 (Oxford). The church in the drawing last named is that described by Ruskin in a Letter to a College Friend (Vol. I. p. 430).]

3. Blois.—White figures in boats, buttresses of bridge, dome of church on the right, for light; women on horseback, heads of boats, for shadow. Note especially the isolation of the light on the church dome.

4. Château de Blois.—Torches and white figures for light, roof of chapel and monks' dresses for shade.

5. Beaugency.—Sails and spire opposed to buoy and boats. An exquisite instance of brilliant, sparkling, isolated touches of morning light.

6. Amboise.—White sail and clouds; cypresses under castle.

7. Château d'Amboise.—The boat in the centre, with its reflections, needs no comment. Note the glancing lights under the bridge. This is a very glorious and perfect instance.

8. St. Julien, Tours.—Especially remarkable for its preservation of deep points of gloom, because the whole picture is one of extended shade.

I need scarcely go on. The above instances are taken as they happen to come, without selection. The reader can proceed for himself. I may, however, name a few cases of chiaroscuro more especially deserving of his study:—Scene between Quillebœuf and Villequier, Honfleur, Light Towers of the Héve, On the Seine between Mantes and Vernon, The Lantern at St. Cloud, Confluence of Seine and Marne, Troyes;¹ the first and last vignette, and those at pages 36, 63, 95, 184, 192, 203, of Rogers's Poems;² the first and second in Campbell;³ St. Maurice in the Italy, where note the black stork;⁴ Brienne, Skiddaw, Mayburgh, Melrose, Jedburgh, in the illustrations to

1 [The plates above mentioned are, in *The Seine and The Loire*, Nos. 18 (drawing, National Gallery, No. 128), 20 (N.G., No. 159); the plate of the "Light Towers of the Héve" has disappeared (see Huish, l.c., p. vii.), the drawing is National Gallery, No. 160; 25 (N.G., 138), 31 (N.G., 156), 38 and 40 (N.G., 150).]

2 [The vignettes referred to are "The Garden" (drawing No. 220 in the National Gallery), "Datur Hora Quietis" (N.G., 397), "Lodore" (N.G., 239), "The English Manor House" (N.G., 399), "The Rialto" (N.G., 394), "The Boy of Egremont" (N.G., 236), "The Alps at Daybreak" (N.G., 242), and "Loch Lomond" (N.G., 240).]

3 ["Summer Eve: Rainbow" and "Andes Coast."]

4 [The "St. Maurice" is at p. 9 of the *Italy*; the drawing, National Gallery, 205.]

Scott;¹ and the vignettes to Milton;²—not because these are one whit superior to others of his works, but because the laws of which we have been speaking are more strikingly developed in them, and because they have been well engraved. It is impossible to reason from the larger plates, in which half the chiaroscuro is totally destroyed by the haggling, blackening, and “making out” of the engravers.

[Eds. 1 and 2 contain between § 12 and § 13 of the later editions the following passages:—]

“Now observe how totally the old masters lost truth in this respect by their vicious trickery in trying to gain tone. They were glad enough to isolate their lights, indeed; but they did even this artificially, joining them imperceptibly, as Reynolds says,³ with the shadows, and so representing, not a point of illuminated objects on which light strikes and is gone, but a lantern in the picture, spreading rays around it, and out of it. And then to gain the deceptive relief of material objects against extended lights, as noticed in Chapter I. of this section, § 4, they were compelled to give vast spaces of deep shadow, and so entirely lost the power of giving the points of darkness. Thus the whole balance of every one of their pictures is totally destroyed, and their composition as thoroughly false in chiaroscuro, as if they had given us no shade at all, because one member, and that the most important of the shadows of the landscape, is totally omitted. Take the Berghem, No. 132, Dulwich Gallery,⁴ which is a most studied piece of chiaroscuro. Here we have the light isolated with a vengeance! Looking at it from the opposite side of the room, we fancy it must be the representation of some experiment with the oxy-hydrogen microscope; and it is with no small astonishment that we find on closer approach, that all the radiance proceeds from a cow’s head! Mithra may well be inimical to Taurus, if his occupation is to be taken out of his hands in this way!⁵ If cattle heads are to be thus phosphorescent, we shall be able to do without the sun altogether!

“But even supposing that this were a true representation of a point of light, where are our points of darkness? The whole picture, wall, figures, and ground, is one mass of deep shade, through which the details are, indeed,

1 [For Brienne, see above, § 5 n.; Skiddaw and Mayburgh, vol. xi. of the *Poetical Works*; Jedburgh, vol. ii. Poems; Melrose, vol. vi.]

2 [Turner’s illustrations to Milton appeared in (1) *The Works of Milton*, 7 vols., Macrone, 1835; (2) *The Poetical Works*, 1 vol., Tegg, 1841.]

3 [Discourses, viii.]

4 [Now No. 88, “A Farrier and Peasants near Roman Ruins:” for another reference to the picture, see above, pt. i. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 7.]

5 [An allusion to the subject, so often treated by the ancient sculptors, of Mithra, the sun-god, slaying a bull (see, e.g., E. T. Cook’s *Handbook to the Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum*, 1903, p. 14). Ruskin refers to the rites of Mithra in “Salsette and Elephanta”; see Vol. II. p. 96.]

marvellously given when we look close, but which totally precludes all possibility of giving a single point or keynote of shade. Now nature, just as far as she raised the white cow's head above all the middle tint in light, would have put some black cow's head, or hole in the wall, or dark piece of dress, something, it matters not what—below all the middle tint in darkness,—just as violent and just as conspicuous in shade, as the head is violent and conspicuous in light. Consequently, Berghem has given us only two members of the system of chiaroscuro, of which nature has appointed that there shall always be three.

"I have chosen this picture for illustration, because it is a very clever and careful work by a master, not, in his ordinary works, viciously disposed to tricks of chiaroscuro. But it must be evident to the reader, that in the same way, and in a far greater degree, those masters are false who are commonly held up as the great examples of management of chiaroscuro. All erred, exactly in proportion as they plunged with greater ardour into the jack-a-lantern chase. Rembrandt¹ most fatally and constantly; and (of course I speak of quantity, not of quality, of shade) next to him, Correggio; while the Florentines and Romans kept right just because they cared little about the matter, and kept their light and shade in due subordination to higher truths of art. Thus Michael Angelo's chiaroscuro is, perhaps, the most just, perfect, unaffected, and impressive existing. Raffaello's early works are often very truthful in quantity, though not in management,—the Transfiguration totally wrong. The frescos of the Vatican, before their blues gave way, must have been very perfect. But Cagliari, and Rubens in his finest works, are the only two examples of the unison of perfect chiaroscuro with perfect colour. We have no lantern-lights in their works, all is kept chaste and shed equally from the sky, not radiating from the object; and we have invariably some energetic bit of black, or intense point of gloom, commonly opposed to yellow to make it more conspicuous, as far below all the rest of the picture as the most brilliant lights are above it.

"Among the landscape painters, Cuyp is very often right; Claude, sometimes, by accident, as in the Seaport, No. 14 in our own Gallery,² where the blue stooping figure is a beautifully placed key-note of gloom. Both the Poussins, Salvator, and our own Wilson, are always wrong, except in such few effects of twilight as would, even in reality, reduce the earth and sky to two broad equalized masses of shade and light. I do not name particular works, because if the facts I have above stated be once believed, or proved, as they may be, by the slightest observation, their application is easy, and the error or truth of works self-evident."

§ 16. [This was identical with § 13 in the text, above, pp. 314–6.]

"Such, then, are the two great principles by which the chiaroscuro of our greatest modern master differs from that of the more celebrated of the ancients. I need scarcely again point out the farther confirmation resulting from the examination of them, of my assertion that ideas of imitation were incompatible with those of truth.

¹ [Cf. vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*, ch. iii., and *The Cestus of Aglaia*, § 76.]

² ["Seaport: the Queen of Sheba," for which picture see above, p. 169.]

§ 14. *Excellence of the chiaroscuro of M. Angelo, P. Veronese, and Rubens.*

§ 15. *Errors of the landscape painters.*

§ 17. *Recapitulation.*

We have now seen that to obtain *one* truth of tone necessary for the purposes of imitation, the old masters were compelled to sacrifice, first, real relation of distances, then truth of colour, and finally, all legitimate chiaroscuro,—sacrifices which, however little they may be felt by superficial observers, will yet prevent the real lover of nature from having the slightest pleasure in their works, while our great modern landscape painter, scorning all deceptive imitation, states boldly the truths which are in his power, and trusts for admiration, not to the ill-regulated feelings, which are offended because his statement must be imperfect, but to the disciplined intellect, which rejoices in it for being true.”

CHAPTER IV

OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—FIRST AS DEPENDENT ON THE FOCUS OF THE EYE*

IN the first chapter of this section,¹ I noticed the distinction between real aërial perspective, and that over-charged contrast of light and shade by which the old masters obtained their deceptive effect; and I showed that, though inferior to them in the precise quality or tone of aërial colour, our great modern master is altogether more truthful in the expression of the proportionate relation of all his distances to one another. I am now about to examine those modes of expressing space, both in nature and art by far the most important, which are dependent, not on the relative hues of objects, but on the *drawing* of them: by far the most important, I say, because the most constant and certain; for nature herself is not always aërial. Local effects are frequent which interrupt and violate the laws of aërial tone, and induce strange deception in our ideas of distance. I have often seen the summit of a snowy mountain look nearer than its base, owing to the perfect clearness of the upper air. But the *drawing* of objects, that is to say, the degree in which their details and parts are

§ 1. *Space is more clearly indicated by the drawing of objects than by their hue.*

* I have left this chapter in its original place, because I am more than ever convinced of the truth of the position advanced in the 8th paragraph; nor can I at present assign any other cause, than that here given, for what is there asserted; and yet I cannot but think that I have allowed far too much influence to a change so slight as that which we insensibly make in the focus of the eye; and that the real justification of Turner's practice, with respect to some of his foregrounds, is to be elsewhere sought. I leave the subject, for the present, to the reader's consideration.²

¹ [Above, ch. i. §§ 3, 4, pp. 260–1.]

² [This footnote was added in ed. 3. See note on § 8 below.]

distinct or confused, is an unfailling and certain criterion of their distance; and if this be rightly rendered in a painting, we shall have genuine truth of space, in spite of many errors in aërial tone; while, if this be neglected, all space will be destroyed, whatever dexterity of tint may be employed to conceal the defective drawing.

First, then, it is to be noticed, that the eye, like any other lens, must have its focus altered, in order to convey a distinct image of objects at different distances; so that it is totally impossible to see distinctly, at the same moment, two objects, one of which is much farther off than another. Of this, any one may convince himself in an instant. Look at the bars of your window-frame, so as to get a clear image of their lines and form, and you cannot, while your eye is fixed on them, perceive anything but the most indistinct and shadowy images of whatever objects may be visible beyond. But fix your eyes on those objects, so as to see them clearly, and though they are just beyond and apparently beside the window-frame, that frame will only be felt or seen as a vague, flitting, obscure interruption to whatever is perceived beyond it. A little attention directed to this fact will convince every one of its universality, and prove beyond dispute that objects at unequal distances cannot be seen together, not from the intervention of air or mist, but from the impossibility of the rays proceedings from both converging to the same focus, so that the whole impression, either of one or the other, must necessarily be confused, indistinct, and inadequate.

But, be it observed (and I have only to request that whatever I say may be tested by immediate experiment), the difference of focus necessary is greatest within the first five hundred yards; and therefore, though it is totally impossible to see an object ten yards from the eye, and one a quarter of a mile beyond it, at the same moment, it is perfectly possible to see one a quarter of a mile off, and one five miles beyond it, at the same moment. The consequence of this is, practically, that in a

§ 2. *It is impossible to see objects at unequal distances distinctly at one moment.*

§ 3. *Especially such as are both comparatively near.*

real landscape, we can see the whole of what would be called the middle distance and distance together, with facility and clearness; but while we do so, we can see nothing in the foreground beyond a vague and indistinct arrangement of lines and colours; and that if, on the contrary, we look at any foreground object, so as to receive a distinct impression of it, the distance and middle distance become all disorder and mystery.

And therefore, if in a painting our foreground is anything, our distance must be nothing, and *vice versâ*; for if we represent our near and distant objects as giving both at once that distinct image to the eye, which we receive in nature from each when we look at them separately;* and if we distinguish them from each other only by the air-tone and indistinctness dependent on positive distance, we violate one of the most essential principles of nature; we represent that as seen at once which can only be seen by two separate acts of seeing, and tell a falsehood as gross as if we had represented four sides of a cubic object visible together.

§ 4. In painting, therefore, either the foreground or distance must be partially sacrificed.

Now, to this fact and principle, no landscape painter of the old school, as far as I remember, ever paid the slightest

* This incapacity of the eye must not be confounded with its incapability to comprehend a large portion of *lateral* space at once. We indeed can see, at any one moment, little more than one point, the objects beside it being confused and indistinct; but we need pay no attention to this in art, because we can see just as little of the picture as we can of the landscape without turning the eye; and hence any slurring or confusing of one part of it, laterally, more than another, is not founded on any truth of nature, but is an expedient of the artist—and often an excellent and desirable one—to make the eye rest where he wishes it. But as the touch expressive of a distant object is as near upon the canvas as that expressive of a near one, both are seen distinctly and with the same focus of the eye; and hence an immediate contradiction of nature results, unless one or other be given with an artificial or increased indistinctness, expressive of the appearance peculiar to the unadapted focus. On the other hand, it must be noted that the greater part of the effect above described is consequent, not on variation of focus, but on the different angle at which near objects are seen by each of the two eyes, when both are directed towards the distance.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 do not contain the last sentence, “On the other hand . . . towards the distance.”]

attention. Finishing their foregrounds clearly and sharply, and with vigorous impression on the eye, giving even the leaves of their bushes and grass with perfect edge and shape, they proceeded into the distance with equal attention to what they could see of its details—they gave all that the eye can perceive in a distance, when it is fully and entirely devoted to it; and therefore, though masters of aërial tone, though employing every expedient that art could supply to conceal the intersection of lines, though caricaturing the force and shadow of near objects to throw them close upon the eye, they *never* succeeded in truly representing space.¹ Turner introduced a new era in landscape art, by showing that the foreground might be sunk for the distance, and that it was possible to express immediate proximity to the spectator, without giving anything like completeness to the forms of the near objects.

§ 5. *Which not being done by the old masters, they could not express space.*

§ 6. *But modern artists have succeeded in fully carrying out this principle.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 proceed as follows:—

“And that they did not, must be felt by every observer in cases where varied forms of sky or distance join with near foliage or foreground, when, though the near leaves may be made almost black for force, and the encountering sky or hills toned into the most exquisite purity of atmosphere, nothing can prevent the eye from feeling the intersection and junction of the lines, and an inextricable confusion of parts, which I have sometimes heard critics expatiating upon as harmony of composition and unity of arrangement, when, in fact, it is destruction of space. Some exceptions occur when the background has been considered of small importance, and has been laid in merely to set off near objects; and often very beautiful exceptions in the bits of landscape, thrown in by great masters as the backgrounds to their historical pictures, usually a thousand times better than the laboured efforts of the real landscape painters.² But only Rubens affords us instances of anything like complete observation of the principle in entire landscape. The distance of his picture of his own villa, in the National Gallery, is no small nor unimportant part of the composition; the chief light and colour of the picture are dedicated to it. But Rubens felt that, after giving the very botany and ornithology of his foreground, he could not maintain equal decision, nor truthfully give one determined outline in the distance. Nor is there one; all is indistinct, and confused, and mingling, though every thing, and an infinity of things, too, is told; and if any person will take the trouble

§ 6. *Exception in the landscapes of Rubens.*

²“It is particularly interesting to observe the difference between the landscape of Nicholas Poussin when it is a background and when it is a picture, not with reference to the point at present under discussion, but to general grandeur and truth of conception. When it is a background, it almost draws us away from the figures; when it is a picture, we should be glad of some figures to draw us away from it. His backgrounds are full of light, pure in conception, majestic in outline, graceful in detail, and in every way instructive and delightful—take No. 295 in the Dulwich Gallery, for instance. But his landscapes sometimes sink almost as low as Gaspar’s and are lightless, conventional, false, and feeble—only just less so than those of the professed landscape painters, and that is saying little enough for them.”

This, observe, is not done by slurred or soft lines (always the sign of vice in art),¹ but by a decisive imperfection, a firm, but partial assertion of form, which the eye feels indeed to be close home to it, and yet cannot rest upon, nor cling to, nor entirely understand, and from which it is driven away of necessity to those parts of distance on which it is intended to repose.² And this principle, originated by Turner, and fully carried out by him only, has yet been acted on with judgment and success by several less powerful artists of the English school. Some six years ago, the brown moorland foregrounds of Copley Fielding were very instructive in this respect.³ Not a line in them was made out, not a single object clearly distinguishable. Wet broad sweeps of the brush, sparkling, careless, and accidental as nature herself, always truthful as

to keep his eye on this distance for ten minutes, and then turn to any other landscape in the room, he will feel them flat, crude, cutting, and destitute of space and light. Titian, Claude, or Poussin, it matters not, however scientifically opposed in colour, however exquisitely mellowed and removed in tone, however vigorously relieved with violent shade, all will look flat canvas beside this truthful, melting, abundant, limitless distance of Rubens. But it was reserved for modern art to take even a bolder step in the pursuit of truth. To sink the distance for the foreground was comparatively easy; but it implied the partial destruction of exactly that part of the landscape which is most interesting, most dignified, and most varied; of all, in fact, except the mere leafage and stone under the spectator's feet. Turner introduced a new era," etc.

§ 7. *But modern artists, etc. [as in text.]*

The Rubens in the National Gallery, referred to above, is No. 66; for other references to it, see *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 193 (Vol. I. p. 146), and below, p. 362. The Poussin, No. 229 (formerly No. 295) in the Dulwich Gallery, is "The Inspiration of Anacreon"; for another reference to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 17.]

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add this footnote here:—

"That is to say, if they are systematically and constantly used. Soft and melting lines are necessary in some places, as, for instance, in the important and striking parts of the outline of an object which turns gradually, so as to have a large flat surface under the eye just when it becomes relieved against space, and so wherever thick mist is to be expressed, or very intense light; but in general, and as a principle of art, lines ought to be made tender by graduation and change as they proceed, not by slurring. The hardest line in the world will not be painful if it be managed as nature manages it, by pronouncing one part and losing another, and keeping the whole in a perpetual state of transition. Michael Angelo's lines are as near perfection as mortal work can be; distinguished, on the one hand, from the hardness and sharpness of Perugino and the early Italians, but far more, on the other, from the vicious slurring and softness which Murillo falls into when he wishes to be fine. A hard line is only an imperfection, but a slurred one is commonly a falsehood. The artist whose fault is hardness may be on the road to excellence—he whose fault is softness must be on the road to ruin."]

² [For Ruskin's reply to a criticism on this passage, see below, Appendix ii., p. 642.]

³ [Cf. *The Art of England*, ch. vi.]

far as they went, implying knowledge, though not expressing it, suggested everything, while they represented nothing. But far off into the mountain distance came the sharp edge and the delicate form; the whole intention and execution of the picture being guided and exerted where the great impression of space and size was to be given. The spectator was compelled to go forward into the waste of hills; there, where the sun broke wide upon the moor, he must walk and wander; he could not stumble and hesitate over the near rocks, nor stop to botanize on the first inches of his path.* And the impression of these pictures was always great and enduring, as it was simple and truthful. I do not know anything in art which has expressed more completely the force and feeling of nature in these particular scenes. And it is a farther illustration† of the principle we are insisting upon, that where, as in some of his later works, he has bestowed more labour on the foreground, the picture has lost both in space and sublimity. And among artists in general, who are either not aware of the principle, or fear to act upon it (for it requires no small courage as well as skill, to treat a foreground with that indistinctness and mystery which they have been accustomed to consider as characteristic of distance), the foreground is not only felt, as every landscape painter will confess, to be the most embarrassing and unmanageable part of the picture, but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will go near to destroy the effect of the rest of the composition. Thus Callcott's Trent¹ is severely injured by the harsh group of foreground

* There is no inconsistency, observe, between this passage and what was before asserted respecting the necessity of botanical fidelity where the foreground is the object of attention. Compare Part II. sec. i. chap. vii. § 10: — "To paint mist rightly, space rightly, and light rightly, it may be often necessary to paint *nothing else* rightly."

† Hardly. It would have been so only had the recently finished foregrounds been as accurate in detail as they are abundant: they are painful, I believe, not from their finish, but their falseness.²

¹ [For "Thus Callcott's Trent is," eds. 1 and 2 read, "Thus Callcott's magnificent Trent (perhaps the best picture, on the whole, he has ever painted) is." The "Trent in the Tyrol" was exhibited at the Academy in 1836 (No. 130); and engraved in Finden's *Royal Gallery of British Art*.]

² [The two footnotes* and † were first added in ed. 3.]

figures; and Stanfield very rarely gets through an Academy picture without destroying much of its space, by too much determination of near form; while Harding constantly sacrifices his distance, and compels the spectator to dwell on the foreground altogether, though indeed, with such foregrounds as he gives us, we are most happy so to do. But it is in Turner only that we see a bold and decisive choice of the distance and middle distance, as his great objects of attention; and by him only that the foreground is united and adapted to it, not by any want of drawing, or coarseness, or carelessness of execution, but by the most precise and beautiful indication or suggestion of just so much of even the minutest forms as the eye can see when its focus is not adapted to them. And herein is another reason for the vigour and wholeness of the effect of Turner's works at any distance; while those of almost all other artists are sure to lose space as soon as we lose sight of the details.

And now we see the reason for the singular, and to the ignorant in art the offensive, execution of Turner's figures.¹ I do not mean to assert that there is any reason whatsoever for *bad* drawing (though in landscape it matters exceedingly little); but that there are both reason and necessity for that *want* of drawing which gives even the nearest figures round balls with four pink spots in them instead of faces, and four dashes of the brush instead of hands and feet; for it is totally impossible that if the eye be adapted to receive the rays proceeding from the utmost distance, and some partial impression from all the distances, it should be capable of perceiving more of the forms and features of near figures than Turner gives. And how absolutely necessary to the faithful representation of space this indecision really is, might be proved with the utmost ease by any one who had veneration enough for the artist to sacrifice one of his pictures to his fame; who would take some one of his works in which the figures were most incomplete, and have

§ 7. Especially of Turner.

§ 8. Justification of the want of drawing in Turner's figures.

¹ [Ruskin returned to this subject and treated it at length in *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, s. No. 522.]

them painted in by¹ any of our delicate and first-rate figure painters, absolutely preserving every colour and shade of Turner's group, so as not to lose one atom of the composition, but giving eyes for the pink spots and feet for the white ones. Let the picture be so exhibited in the Academy, and even novices in art would feel at a glance that its truth of space was gone, that every one of its beauties and harmonies had undergone decomposition, that it was now a grammatical solecism, a painting of impossibilities, a thing to torture the eye and offend the mind.²

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read "by Goodall or any, etc." Mr. Frederick Goodall, R.A., had begun to exhibit figure-subjects in the Academy as early as 1839.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add the following paragraph at the end of the chapter:—

"The laborious completeness of the figures and foregrounds of the old masters, then, far from being a source of distance and space, is evidently destructive of both. It may, perhaps, be desirable on other grounds; it may be beautiful and necessary to the ideal of landscape. I assert at present nothing to the contrary; I assert merely that it is mathematically demonstrable to be untrue."]

CHAPTER V
OF TRUTH OF SPACE:—SECONDLY, AS ITS
APPEARANCE IS DEPENDENT ON THE POWER OF THE
EYE

IN the last chapter, we have seen how indistinctness of individual distances becomes necessary in order to express the adaptation of the eye to one or other of them; we have now to examine that kind of indistinctness which is dependent on real retirement of the object, even when the focus of the eye is fully concentrated upon it. The first kind of indecision is that which belongs to all objects which the eye is not adapted to, whether near or far off: the second is that consequent upon the want of power in the eye to receive a clear image of objects at a great distance from it, however attentively it may regard them.

§ 1. The peculiar indistinctness dependent on the retirement of objects from the eye.

Draw on a piece of white paper a square and a circle, each about a twelfth or eighth of an inch in diameter, and blacken them so that their forms may be very distinct; place your paper against the wall at the end of the room, and retire from it a greater or less distance accordingly as you have drawn the figures larger or smaller. You will come to a point where, though you can see both the spots with perfect plainness, you cannot tell which is the square and which the circle.

Now this takes place of course with every object in a landscape, in proportion to its distance and size. The definite forms of the leaves of a tree, however sharply and separately they may appear to come against the sky, are quite indistinguishable at fifty yards off, and the form of everything becomes confused before we finally lose sight of it. Now if the character of an object, say the front of a house, be explained by a variety of forms in

§ 2. Causes confusion, but not annihilation of details.

it, as the shadows in the tops of the windows, the lines of the architraves, the seams of the masonry, etc.; these lesser details, as the object falls into distance, become confused and undecided, each of them losing its definite form, but all being perfectly visible as something, a white or a dark spot or stroke, not lost sight of, observe, but yet so seen that we cannot tell what they are. As the distance increases, the confusion becomes greater, until at last the whole front of the house becomes merely a flat pale space, in which, however, there is still observable a kind of richness and chequering, caused by the details in it, which, though totally merged and lost in the mass, have still an influence on the texture of that mass; until at last the whole house itself becomes a mere light or dark spot which we can plainly see, but cannot tell what it is, nor distinguish it from a stone or any other object.

Now what I particularly wish to insist upon, is the state of
 § 3. *Instances* vision in which all the details of an object are seen,
in various and yet seen in such confusion and disorder that we
objects. cannot in the least tell what they are, or what they
 mean. It is not mist between us and the object, still less is it
 shade, still less is it want of character; it is a confusion, a
 mystery, an interfering of undecided lines with each other, not a
 diminution of their number; window and door, architrave and
 frieze, all are there: it is no cold and vacant mass, it is full and
 rich and abundant, and yet you cannot see a single form so as to
 know what it is. Observe your friend's face as he is coming up to
 you. First it is nothing more than a white spot; now it is a face,
 but you cannot see the two eyes, nor the mouth, even as spots;
 you see a confusion of lines, a something which you know from
 experience to be indicative of a face, and yet you cannot tell how
 it is so. Now he is nearer, and you can see the spots for the eyes
 and mouth, but they are not blank spots neither; there is detail in
 them; you cannot see the lips, nor the teeth, nor the brows, and
 yet you see more than mere spots; it is a mouth and an eye, and
 there is light and sparkle and expression in them, but nothing
 distinct. Now he is nearer still, and you can see that

he is like your friend, but you cannot tell whether he is, or not; there is a vagueness and indecision of line still. Now you are sure, but even yet there are a thousand things in his face which have their effect in inducing the recognition, but which you cannot see so as to know what they are.

Changes like these, and states of vision corresponding to them, take place with each and all of the objects of nature, and two great principles of truth are deducible from their observation. First, place an object as close to the eye as you like, there is always something in it which you *cannot* see, except in the hinted and mysterious manner above described. You can see the texture of a piece of dress, but you cannot see the individual threads which compose it, though they are all felt, and have each of them influence on the eye. Secondly, place an object as far from the eye as you like, and until it becomes itself a mere spot, there is always something in it which you *can* see, though only in the hinted manner above described. Its shadows and lines and local colours are not lost sight of as it retires; they get mixed and indistinguishable, but they are still there, and there is a difference always perceivable between an object possessing such details and a flat or vacant space. The grass blades of a meadow a mile off, are so far discernible that there will be a marked difference between its appearance and that of a piece of wood painted green. And thus nature is never distinct and never vacant, she is always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all.

§ 4. Two great resultant truths: that nature is never distinct and never vacant.

And thus arise that exquisite finish and fulness which God has appointed to be the perpetual source of fresh pleasure to the cultivated and observant eye; a finish which no distance can render invisible, and no nearness comprehensible; which in every stone, every bough, every cloud, and every wave is multiplied around us, for ever presented, and for ever exhaustless. And hence in art, every space or touch in which we can see everything, or in which we can see nothing, is false. Nothing can be true which is either complete or

vacant; every touch is false which does not suggest more than it represents, and every space is false which represents nothing.

Now, I would not wish for any more illustrative or marked examples of the total contradiction of these two great principles, than the landscape works of the old masters, taken as a body; the Dutch masters furnishing the cases of seeing everything, and the Italians of seeing nothing. The rule with both is indeed the same, differently applied—"You shall see the bricks in the wall, and be able to count them, or you shall see nothing but a dead flat:" but the Dutch give you the bricks, and the Italians the flat. Nature's rule being the precise reverse—"You shall never be able to count the bricks, but you shall never see a dead space."

§ 5. *Complete violation of both these principles by the old masters. They are either distinct or vacant.*

Take, for instance, the street in the centre of the really great landscape of Poussin (great in feeling at least) marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery.¹ The houses are dead square masses with a light side and a dark side, and black touches for windows.² There is no suggestion of anything in any of the spaces; the light wall is dead grey, the dark wall dead grey, and the windows dead black. How differently would nature have treated us! She would have let us see the Indian corn hanging on the walls, and the image of the Virgin at the angles, and the sharp, broken, broad shadows of the tiled eaves, and the deep-ribbed tiles with the doves upon them, and the carved Roman capital built into the wall, and the white and blue stripes of the mattresses stuffed out of the windows, and the flapping corners of the mat blinds. All would have been there; not as such, not like the corn, or blinds or tiles, not to be comprehended or understood, but a confusion of yellow and black spots and strokes, carried far too fine for the eye to follow, microscopic in its minuteness,

§ 6. *Instances from Nicholas Poussin.*

¹ [By Nicolas Poussin (or an imitator), "A Roman Road," now No. 203; see above, p. 264.]

² [For "windows. There is no suggestion," eds. 1 and 2 read, "windows. The light side is blank, No. 1; the dark side is blank, No. 2; and the windows are blanks, Nos. 3, 4, 5. There is not a shadow of a suggestion . . ."]

and filling every atom and part of space with mystery, out of which would have arranged itself the general impression of truth and life.

Again, take the distant city of the right bank of the river in Claude's *Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*, in the National Gallery.¹ I have seen many cities in my life, and drawn not a few; and I have seen many fortifications, fancy ones included, which frequently supply us with very new ideas indeed, especially in matters of proportion; but I do not remember ever having met with either a city or a fortress *entirely* composed of round towers of various heights and sizes, all facsimiles of each other, and absolutely agreeing in the number of battlements. I have, indeed, some faint recollection of having delineated such a one in the first page of a spelling book when I was four years old; but, somehow or other, the dignity and perfection of the ideal were not appreciated, and the volume was not considered to be increased in value by the frontispiece. Without, however, venturing to doubt the entire sublimity of the same ideal as it occurs in Claude, let us consider how nature, if she had been fortunate enough to originate so perfect a conception, would have managed it in its details. Claude has permitted us to see every battlement, and the first impulse we feel upon looking at the picture is to count how many there are. Nature would have given us a peculiar confused roughness of the upper lines, a multitude of intersections and spots, which we should have known from experience was indicative of battlements, but which we might as well have thought of creating as of counting. Claude has given you the walls below in one dead void of uniform grey. There is nothing to be seen, or felt, or guessed at in it; it is grey paint or grey shade, whichever you may choose to call it, but it is nothing more. Nature would have let you see, nay, would have compelled you to see, thousands of spots and lines, not one to be absolutely understood or accounted for, but yet all characteristic and different from each other; breaking lights on shattered

¹ [No. 12; for other references to the picture, see above, p. 41 *n.*]

stones, vague shadows from waving vegetation, irregular stains of time and weather, mouldering hollows, sparkling casements; all would have been there; none indeed, seen as such, none comprehensible or like themselves, but all visible; little shadows and sparkles, and scratches, making that whole space of colour a transparent, palpitating, various infinity.

Or take one of Poussin's extreme distances, such as that in § 8. *And* the Sacrifice of Isaac.¹ It is luminous, retiring, *G. Poussin.* delicate and perfect in tone, and is quite complete enough to deceive and delight the careless eye to which all distances are alike; nay, it is perfect and masterly, and absolutely right, if we consider it as a sketch,—as a first plan of a distance, afterwards to be carried out in detail. But we must remember that all these alternate spaces of grey and gold are not the landscape itself, but the treatment of it; not its substance, but its light and shade. They are just what nature would cast over it, and write upon it with every cloud, but which she would cast in play, and without carefulness, as matters of the very smallest possible importance. All her work and her attention would be given to bring out from underneath this, and through this, the forms and the material character which this can only be valuable to illustrate, not to conceal. Every one of those broad spaces she would linger over in protracted delight, teaching you fresh lessons in every hair's breadth of it, and pouring her fulness of invention into it, until the mind lost herself in following her: now fringing the dark edge of the shadow with a tufted line of level forest; now losing it for an instant in a breath of mist; then breaking it with the white gleaming angle of a narrow brook; then dwelling upon it again in a gentle, mounded, melting undulation, over the other side of which she would carry you down into a dusty space of soft crowded light, with the hedges and the paths and the sprinkled cottages and scattered trees mixed up and mingled together in one beautiful, delicate,

¹ [No. 31 in the National Gallery, by G. Poussin. For other references to the picture, see above, p. 282; and below, pp. 348, 376.]

impenetrable mystery, sparkling and melting, and passing away into the sky, without one line of distinctness, or one instant of vacancy.

Now it is, indeed, impossible for the painter to follow all this; he cannot come up to the same degree and order of infinity, but he can give us a lesser kind of infinity. He has not one thousandth part of the space to occupy which nature has; but he can, at least, leave no part of that space vacant and unprofitable.

§ 9. *The imperative necessity, in landscape painting, of fulness and finish.*

If nature carries out her minutiae over miles, he has no excuse for generalizing in inches. And if he will only give us all he can, if he will give us a fulness as complete and as mysterious as nature's, we will pardon him for its being the fulness of a cup instead of an ocean. But we will not pardon him, if, because he has not the mile to occupy, he will not occupy the inch, and because he has fewer means at his command, will leave half of those in his power unexerted. Still less will we pardon him for mistaking the sport of nature for her labour, and for following her only in her hour of rest, without observing how she has worked for it. After spending centuries in raising the forest, and guiding the river, and modelling the mountain, she exults over her work in buoyancy of spirit, with playful sunbeam and flying cloud; but the painter must go through the same labour, or he must not have the same recreation. Let him chisel his rock faithfully, and tuft his forest delicately, and then we will allow him his freaks of light and shade, and thank him for them; but we will not be put off with the play before the lesson, with the adjunct instead of the essence, with the illustration instead of the fact.

I am somewhat anticipating my subject here, because I can scarcely help answering the objections which I know must arise in the minds of most readers, especially of those who are *partially* artistical, respecting "generalization," "breadth," "effect," etc. It were to be wished that our writers on art would not dwell so frequently on the necessity of breath, without explaining what it means; and that we had more constant reference made to the principle

§ 10. *Breadth is not vacancy.*

which I can only remember having seen once clearly explained and insisted on, that breadth is not vacancy. Generalization is unity, not destruction of parts; and composition is not annihilation, but arrangement of materials. The breadth which unites the truths of nature with her harmonies is meritorious and beautiful; but the breadth which annihilates those truths by the million is not painting nature, but painting over her. And so the masses which result from right concords and relations of details are sublime and impressive; but the masses which result from the eclipse of details are contemptible and painful.* And we shall show, in following parts of the work, that distances like those of Poussin are mere meaningless tricks of clever execution, which, when once discovered, the artist may repeat over and over again, with mechanical contentment and perfect satisfaction, both to himself and to his superficial admirers, with no more exertion of intellect nor awakening of feeling than any tradesman has in multiplying some ornamental pattern of furniture. Be this as it may, however, (for we cannot enter upon the discussion of the question here,) the falsity and imperfection of such distances admit of no dispute. Beautiful and ideal they may be; true they are not: and in the same way we might go through every part and portion of the works of the old masters, showing throughout, either that you have every leaf and blade of grass staring defiance at the mystery of nature, or that you have dead spaces of absolute vacuity, equally determined in their denial of her fulness. And even if we ever find (as here and there, in their better pictures, we do) changeful passages of agreeable playing colour, or mellow and transparent modulations of mysterious atmosphere, even here the touches, though satisfactory to the eye, are suggestive of nothing; they are characterless; they have none of the peculiar expressiveness

* Of course much depends upon the kind of detail so lost. An artist may generalize the trunk of a tree, where he only loses lines of bark, and do us a kindness; but he must not generalize the details of a champaign, in which there is a history of creation. The full discussion of the subject belongs to a future part of our investigation.

and meaning by which nature maintains the variety and interest even of what she most conceals. She always tells a story, however hintedly and vaguely; each of her touches is different from all the others; and we feel with every one, that though we cannot tell what it is, it cannot be *any* thing; while even the most dexterous distances of the old masters pretend to secrecy without having anything to conceal, and are ambiguous, not from the concentration of meaning, but from the want of it.

And now, take up one of Turner's distances, it matters not which or of what kind, drawing or painting, small or great, done thirty years ago or for last year's Academy, as you like; say that of the Mercury and Argus;¹ and look if every fact which I have just been pointing out in nature be not carried out in it. Abundant beyond the power of the eye to embrace or follow, vast and various beyond the power of the mind to comprehend, there is yet not one atom in its whole extent and mass which does not suggest more than it represents; nor does it suggest vaguely, but in such a manner as to prove that the conception of each individual inch of that distance is absolutely clear and complete in the master's mind, a separate picture fully worked out: but yet, clearly and fully as the idea is formed, just so much of it is given, and no more, as nature would have allowed us to feel or see; just so much as would enable a spectator of experience and knowledge to understand almost every minute fragment of separate detail, but appears, to the unpractised and careless eye, just what a distance of nature's own would appear, an unintelligible mass. Not one line out of the millions there is without meaning, yet there is not one which is not affected and disguised by the dazzle and indecision of distance. No form is made out, and yet no form is unknown.

Perhaps the truth of this system of drawing is better to be understood by observing the distant character of rich

¹ [For other references to this picture, see p. 264 *n.*]

§ 11. *The
fulness and
mystery of
Turner's dis-
tances.*

architecture, than of any other object. Go to the top of Highgate Hill on a clear summer morning at five o'clock, and look at Westminster Abbey. You will receive an impression of a building enriched with multitudinous vertical lines. Try to distinguish one of those lines all the way down from the one next to it: You cannot. Try to count them: You cannot. Try to make out the beginning or end of any one of them: You cannot. Look at it generally, and it is all symmetry and arrangement. Look at it in its parts, and it is all inextricable confusion. Am not I, at this moment, describing a piece of Turner's drawing, with the same words by which I describe nature? And what would one of the old masters have done with such a building as this in the distance? Either he would only have given the shadows of the buttresses, and the light and dark sides of the two towers, and two dots for the windows; or if, more ignorant and more ambitious, he had attempted to render some of the detail, it would have been done by distinct lines, would have been broad caricature of the delicate building, felt at once to be false, ridiculous, and offensive. His most successful effort would only have given us, through his carefully toned atmosphere, the effect of a colossal parish church, without one line of carving on its economic sides. Turner, and Turner only, would follow and render on the canvas that mystery of decided line, that distinct, sharp, visible, but unintelligible and inextricable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat, which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry, and truth.*

* *Vide*, for illustration, Fontainebleau, in the Illustrations to Scott; Vignette at opening of Human Life, in Rogers's Poems; Venice, in the Italy; Château de Blois; the Rouen, and Pont Neuf, Paris, in the Rivers of France. The distances of all the Academy pictures of Venice, especially the Shylock, are most instructive.¹

¹ [The "Fontainebleau" is in vol. xv. of the *Prose Works*; the Rogers' vignette at p. 63 of the *Poems* (drawing, N.G., 399); "Venice," p. 47 of the *Italy* (drawing, N.G., 391). The French subjects are in *The Seine and the Loire*, Nos. 43, 14 (N.G., 133), or 15, and 34 (N.G., 142). For the "Shylock," see below, p. 364 *n.*]

Nor is this mode of representation true only with respect to distances. Every object, however near the eye, has something about it which you cannot see, and which brings the mystery of distance even into every part and portion of what we suppose ourselves to see most distinctly. Stand in the Piazza di San Marco, at Venice, as close to the church as you can, without losing sight of the top of it. Look at the capitals of the columns on the second story. You see that they are exquisitely rich, carved all over. Tell me their patterns: You cannot. Tell me the direction of a single line in them: You cannot. Yet you see a multitude of lines, and you have so much feeling of a certain tendency and arrangement in those lines, that you are quite sure the capitals are beautiful, and that they are all different from each other. But I defy you to make out one single line in any one of them. Now go to Canaletto's painting of this church, in the Palazzo Manfrini,¹ taken from the very spot on which you stood. How much has he represented of all this? A black dot under each capital for the shadow, and a yellow one above it for the light. There is not a vestige nor indication of carving or decoration of any sort or kind.

§ 13. *In near objects as well as distances.*

§ 14. *Vacancy and falsehood of Canaletto.*

Very different from this, but erring on the other side, is the ordinary drawing of the architect, who gives the principal lines of the design with delicate clearness and precision, but with no uncertainty or mystery about them; which mystery being removed, all space and size are destroyed with it, and we have a drawing of a model, not of a building. But in the capital lying on the foreground in Turner's Daphne hunting with Leucippus,² we have the perfect truth. Not one jag of the acanthus leaves is absolutely visible, the lines are all disorder, but you feel in an instant that all are there. And

¹ [The best pictures in this palace were dispersed in 1856 (see *Stones of Venice*, Venetian index, s. Manfrini).]

² ["Apollo and Daphne" (1837), No. 520 in the National Gallery; see *Notes on the Turner Gallery* for a description of the picture, and for other references to it see below, pp. 453, 461; *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. §§ 42, 48; vol. v. pt. vi. ch. x. § 20.]

so it will invariably be found through every portion of detail in his late and most perfect works.

But if there be this mystery and inexhaustible finish merely in the more delicate instances of architectural decoration, how much more in the ceaseless and incomparable decoration of nature. The detail of a single weedy bank laughs the carving of ages to scorn. Every leaf and stalk has a design and tracery upon it; every knot of grass an intricacy of shade which the labour of years could never imitate, and which, if such labour could follow it out even to the last fibres of the leaflets, would yet be falsely represented, for, as in all other cases brought forward, it is not clearly seen, but confusedly and mysteriously. That which is nearness for the bank, is distance for its details; and however near it may be, the greater part of those details are still a beautiful incomprehensibility.*

§ 15. *Still greater fulness and finish in landscape foregrounds.*

* It is to be remembered, however, that these truths present themselves in all probability under very different phases to individuals of different powers of vision. Many artists who appear to generalize rudely or rashly are perhaps faithfully endeavouring to render the appearance which nature bears to sight of limited range. Others may be led by their singular keenness of sight into inexpedient detail. Works which are painted for effect at a certain distance must be always seen at disadvantage by those whose sight is of different range from the painter's. Another circumstance to which I ought above to have alluded is the scale of the picture; for there are different degrees of generalization, and different necessities of symbolism, belonging to every scale: the stipple of the miniature painter would be offensive on features of the life size, and the leaves which Tintoret may articulate on a canvas of sixty feet by twenty-five, must be generalized by Turner on one of four by three. Another circumstance of some importance is the assumed distance of the foreground; many landscape painters seem to think their nearest foreground is always equally near, whereas its distance from the spectator varies not a little, being always at least its own calculable breadth from side to side as estimated by figures or any other object of known size at the nearest part of it. With Claude almost always; with Turner often, as in the *Daphne and Leucippus*, this breadth is forty or fifty yards; and as the nearest foreground object *must* then be at least that distance removed, and *may* be much more, it is evident that no completion of close detail is in such cases allowable (see here another proof of Claude's erroneous practice); with Titian and Tintoret, on the contrary, the foreground is rarely more than five or six yards broad, and its objects therefore being only five or six yards distant are entirely detailed.

None of these circumstances, however, in any wise affect the great principle,



J. Ruskin

J.C. Keppeler

Foreground Study.

Hence, throughout the picture, the expression of space and size is dependent upon obscurity, united with, or rather resultant from, exceeding fulness. We destroy both space and size, either by the vacancy which affords us no measure of space, or by the distinctness which gives us a false one. The distance of Poussin, having no indication of trees, nor of meadows, nor of character of any kind, may be fifty miles off, or may be five: we cannot tell; we have no measure, and in consequence, no vivid impression. But a middle distance of Hobbima's involves a contradiction in terms; it states a distance by perspective, which it contradicts by distinctness of detail.

§ 16. *Space and size are destroyed alike by distinctness and by vacancy.*

A single dusty roll of Turner's brush is more truly expressive of the infinity of foliage, than the niggling of Hobbima¹ could have rendered his canvas, if he had worked on it till doomsday.² What Sir J. Reynolds says of the misplaced

the confusion of detail taking place sooner or later in all cases. I ought to have noted, however, that many of the pictures of Turner in which the confused drawing has been least understood, have been luminous *twilights*; and that the uncertainty of twilight is therefore added to that of general distance. In the evenings of the south it not unfrequently happens that objects touched with the reflected light of the western sky continue, even for the space of half an hour after sunset, glowing, ruddy, and intense in colour, and almost as bright as if they were still beneath actual sunshine, even till the moon begins to cast a shadow: but, in spite of this brilliancy of colour, all the details

¹ [Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. §§ 7, 8, where this passage is cited and the subject returned to.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 here read as follows:—

“Of all errors, therefore, too much making out is the most vicious; because it in fact involves every other kind of error, denying one-half of the truths to be stated, while it misrepresents those which it pretends to state. He who pretends to draw all the leaves of an oak, denies five while he expresses three, and expresses those three falsely. He alone who defines none, can suggest all. [§ 17. Swift execution, etc. (as in text).] We shall see, hereafter, in examining the qualities of execution, that one of its chiefest attractions is the power of rightly expressing *infinity*; and that the pleasure which we take in the swift strokes of a great master is not so much dependent on the swiftness or decision of them, as on the expression of infinite mystery by the mere breaking, crumbling, or dividing of the touch, which the labour of months could not have reached, if devoted to separate details. One of Landseer's breaking, scratchy touches of light is far more truly expressive of the infinity of hair, than a week's work could make a painting of particular hairs; and a single dusty roll . . . doomsday. And thus while the mind is kept intent upon wholeness of effect, the hand is far more likely to give faithful images of details, than if the mind and hand be both intent on the minutiae. What Sir J. Reynolds . . .”]

labour of his Roman acquaintance on separate leaves of foliage, and the certainty he expresses that a man who attended to general character would in five minutes produce a more faithful representation of a tree, than the unfortunate mechanist in as many years, is thus perfectly true and well founded;¹ but this is not because details are undesirable, but because they are best given by swift execution, and because, individually, they cannot be given to all. But it should be observed (though we shall be better able to insist upon this point in future) that much of harm and error has arisen from the supposition and assertions of swift and brilliant historical painters, that the same principles of execution are entirely applicable to landscape, which are right for the figure. The artist who falls into extreme detail in drawing the human form, is apt to become disgusting rather than pleasing. It is more agreeable that² the general outline and soft hues of flesh should alone be given, than its hairs, and veins, and lines of intersection. And even the most rapid

become ghostly and ill-defined. This is a favourite moment of Turner's, and he invariably characterizes it, not by gloom, but by uncertainty of detail. I have never seen the effect of clear twilight thoroughly rendered by art; that effect in which all details are lost, while intense clearness and light are still felt in the atmosphere, in which nothing is distinctly seen; and yet it is not darkness, far less mist, that is the cause of concealment. Turner's efforts at rendering this effect (as the Wilderness of Engedi, Assos, Château de Blois, Caer-laverock, and others innumerable) have always some slight appearance of mistiness, owing to the indistinctness of details; but it remains to be shown that any closer approximation to the effect is possible.³

¹ ["I remember a landscape painter in Rome, who was known by the name of Studio, from his patience in high finishing, in which he thought the whole excellence of art consisted; so that he once endeavoured, as he said, to represent every individual leaf of a tree. This picture I never saw; but I am very sure that an artist, who looked only at the general character of the species, the order of the branches, and the masses of the foliage, would in a few minutes produce a more true resemblance of trees, than this painter in as many months" (*Discourses*, xi.).]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"It is more agreeable that a nostril or an ear should be suggested by a single dash of the pencil than that they should be made out with microscopic accuracy,—more agreeable that . . ."]

³ [This footnote was added in the 3rd ed. "Engedi" and "Assos" were engraved in Finden's *Bible*; "Caer-laverock," in vol. iv. of Scott's *Poetical Works*; for "Château de Blois," see plate 85 in vol. v. of *Modern Painters*, and in this vol. *cf.* pp. 315, 336 *n.*, 423.]

and generalizing expression of the human body, if directed by perfect knowledge, and rigidly faithful in drawing, will commonly omit very little of what is agreeable or impressive.¹ But the exclusively generalizing landscape painter omits the whole of what is valuable in his subject; omits thoughts, designs, and beauties by the million, everything indeed, which can furnish him with variety or expression. A distance in Lincolnshire, or in Lombardy, might both be generalized into such blue and yellow stripes as we see in Poussin; but whatever there is of beauty or character in either, depends altogether on our understanding the details, and feeling the difference between the morasses and ditches of the one, and the rolling sea of mulberry trees of the other. And so in every part of the subject, I have no hesitation in asserting that it is *impossible* to go too finely, or think too much about details in landscape, so that they be rightly arranged and rightly massed; but that it is equally impossible to render anything like the fulness or the space of nature, except by that mystery or obscurity of execution which she herself uses, and in which Turner only has followed her.²

We have now rapidly glanced at such general truths of nature as can be investigated without much knowledge of what is beautiful. Questions of arrangement, § 19. *Recapitulation of the section.* massing, and generalization, I prefer leaving untouched, until we know something about details, and something about what is beautiful. All that is desirable, even in these mere technical and artificial points, is based upon truths and habits of nature; but we cannot understand those truths until we are acquainted with the specific forms and

¹ [For “impressive,” eds. 1 and 2 read, “impressive; it will lose only what is monotonous and uninteresting, if not disagreeable.”]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 continue thus:—

“And thus we have two great classes of error in landscape painting: the first, the attempting to give all details distinctly, which is the error of children, mechanics, and the Dutch school; the second, the omitting details altogether, which is commonly the error of an impetuous, intellectual, but uncultivated mind, and is found in whatever is best of the Italian school. (Claude’s foregrounds come under the same category with the Dutch.) Both destroy space and beauty, but the first error is a falsehood, the second only an imperfection.”]

minor details which they affect, or out of which they arise. I shall, therefore, proceed to examine the invaluable and essential truths of specific character and form; briefly and imperfectly, indeed, as needs must be, but yet at length sufficient to enable the reader to pursue, if he will, the subject for himself.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add the following:—

“Let me, however, point back for a moment to the result of our present examination of general truths. We have found the old masters excel us in one particular quality of colour—probably the result merely of some technical secret, and in one deceptive effect of tone, gained at the expense of a thousand falsehoods and omissions. We have found them false in aërial perspective, false in colour, false in chiaroscuro, false in space, false in detail; and we have found one of our modern artists faithful in every point, and victorious in every struggle, and all of them aiming at the highest class of truths. For which is the most important truth in a painting—for instance, of St. Mark’s at Venice,—the exact quality of relief against the sky, which it shares with every hovel and brick-kiln in Italy, or the intricacy of detail and brilliancy of colour which distinguish it from every other building in the world? Or with respect to the street of Poussin, is it of more importance that we should be told the exact pitch of blackness which its chimneys assume against the sky, or that we should perceive the thousands of intricate and various incidents which in nature would have covered every cottage with history of Italian life and character? Our feelings might answer for us in an instant; but let us use our determined tests. The one truth is uncharacteristic, unhistorical, and of the secondary class; the others are characteristic, historical, and of the primary class. How incalculably is the balance already in favour of modern art!”]

SECTION III

OF TRUTH OF SKIES¹

CHAPTER 1

OF THE OPEN SKY

IT is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure.² And every

§ 1. *The peculiar adaptation of the sky to the pleasing and teaching of man.*

¹ [§§ 1, 2, and 3 of this chapter are § 21 in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

² [In a footnote here to *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), Ruskin wrote:—

“At least, I thought so, when I was four-and-twenty. At five-and-fifty, I fancy that it is just possible there may be other creatures in the universe to be pleased, or,—it may be,—displeased, by the weather.”]

man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them: but the sky is for all; bright as it is, it is not

“Too bright or good
For human nature’s daily food;”¹

it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us

is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential.² And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations: we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet; and another, it has been windy; and another, it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall

§ 2. *The care-
lessness with
which its lessons
are received.*

¹ [For another reference to this piece by Wordsworth (“She was a phantom of delight”), see *Sesame and Lilies*, § 71.]

² [For “its appeal to what is immortal . . . mortal is essential,” eds. 1 and 2 read, “it is surely meant for the chief teacher of what is immortal in us, as it is the chief minister of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal.”]

white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted as unseen; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary;¹ and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lamp-black and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual; that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood; things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally: which are never wanting, and never repeated; which are to be found always, yet each found but once; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given. These are what the artist of highest aim must study; it is these, by the combination of which his ideal is to be created; these, of which so little notice is ordinarily taken by common observers, that I fully believe, little as people in general are concerned with art, more of their ideas of sky are derived from pictures than from reality; and that if we could examine the conception formed in the minds of most educated persons when we talk of clouds, it would frequently be

§ 3. *The most essential of these lessons are the gentlest.*

§ 4. *Many of our ideas of sky altogether conventional.*

¹ [For "extraordinary; and yet it is not," eds. 1 and 2 read:—
"extraordinary, when the heavens force themselves on our attention with some blaze of fire, or blackness of thunder, or awaken the curiosity of idleness, because the sun looks like a frying-pan, or the moon like a fool.
"But it is not . . ."]

found composed of fragments of blue and white reminiscences of the old masters.¹

I shall enter upon the examination of what is true in sky at greater length, because it is the only part of a picture of which all, if they will, may be competent judges. What I may have to assert respecting the rocks of Salvator, or the boughs of Claude, I can scarcely prove, except to those whom I can immure for a month or two in the fastnesses of the Apennines, or guide in their summer walks again and again through the ravines of Sorrento. But what I say of the sky can be brought to an immediate test by all, and I write the more decisively, in the hope that it may be so.

Let us begin then with the simple open blue of the sky. This is of course the colour of the pure atmospheric air, not the aqueous vapour, but the pure azote and oxygen, and it is the total colour of the whole mass of that air between us and the void of space. It is modified by the varying quantity of aqueous vapour suspended in it, whose colour, in its most imperfect and therefore most visible state of solution, is pure white (as in steam); which receives, like any other white, the warm hues of the rays of the sun, and, according to its quantity and imperfect solution, makes the sky paler, and at the same time more or less grey, by mixing warm tones with its blue. This grey aqueous vapour, when very decided, becomes mist, and when local, cloud. Hence the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which, at various elevations, clouds are suspended, those clouds being themselves only particular visible spaces of a substance with which the whole mass of this liquid is more or less impregnated. Now, we all know this

§ 5. *Nature and essential qualities of the open blue.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 continue:—

“representative of round, cushion-like swellings and protuberances associated in a very anomalous and unintelligible manner, with legs, arms, and cart-wheels; or if this be saying too much, at least the beauty of the natural forms is so little studied, that such representations are received either for truth, or for something better than truth. Whatever there may be in them of the poetical, I believe I shall be able to show that there is a slight violation of the true.

“And I shall enter . . . judges. Its other component parts of subject can be open to the criticism of comparatively but few. What I may . . .”]

perfectly well, and yet we so far forget it in practice, that we little notice the constant connection kept up by nature between her blue and her clouds; and we are not offended by the constant habit of the old masters, of considering the blue sky as totally distinct in its nature, and far separated from the vapours which float in it. With them, cloud is cloud, and blue is blue, and no kind of connection between them is ever hinted at. The sky is thought of as a clear, high, material dome, the clouds as separate bodies suspended beneath it; and in consequence, however delicate and exquisitely removed in tone their skies may be, you always look *at* them, not *through* them. Now if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second¹ book of the Excursion:

“The chasm of sky above my head
Is Heaven’s profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds, to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an *abyss*
In which the everlasting stars abide,
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.”

And in his American Notes, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky.² And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fulness in its very repose. It is not flat dead colour, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint veiled vestiges of dark vapour; and it is this trembling transparency which our great modern master has especially aimed at and given. His blue is never laid on in smooth coats, but in breaking, mingling, melting hues, a

¹ [So in all the eds.; the passage comes, however, from the *third* book.]

² [“The exquisite beauty of the opening day, when light came gleaming off everything; the lazy motion of the boat, when one lay idly on the deck, looking through, rather than at, the deep blue sky . . .” (*American Notes*, 1842, vol. ii. p. 62).]

§ 6. *Its connection with clouds.*

§ 7. *Its exceeding depth.*

§ 8. *These qualities are especially given by Turner.*

quarter of an inch of which, cut off from all the rest of the picture, is still *spacious*, still infinite and immeasurable in depth. It is a painting of the air, something into which you can see, through the parts which are near you, into those which are far off; something which has no surface and through which we can plunge far and farther, and without stay or end, into the profundity of space;—whereas, with all the old landscape painters except Claude, you may indeed go a long way before you come to the sky, but you will strike hard against it at last. A perfectly genuine and untouched sky of Claude is indeed most perfect, and beyond praise, in all qualities of air; though even with him, I often feel rather that there is a great deal of pleasant air between me and the firmament, than that the firmament itself is only air. I do not mean, however, to say a word against such skies as that of the Enchanted Castle, or that marked 30 in the National Gallery,¹ or one or two which I remember at Rome; but how little and by how few these fine passages of Claude are appreciated, is sufficiently proved by the sufferance of such villainous and unpalliated copies as we meet with all over Europe, like the Marriage of Isaac, in our own Gallery, to remain under his name. In fact, I do not remember above ten pictures of Claude's, in which the skies, whether repainted or altogether copies, or perhaps from Claude's hand, but carelessly laid in, like that marked 241, Dulwich Gallery,² were not fully as feelingless and false as those of other masters; while, with the Poussins, there are no favourable exceptions. Their skies are systematically wrong; take, for instance, the sky of the Sacrifice of Isaac.³ It is here high

§ 9. *And by Claude.*

§ 10. *Total absence of them in Poussin.*

Physical errors in his general treatment of open sky.

¹ [The "Enchanted Castle" (Liber Veritatis, 162) is in the collection of Lady Wantage ("Old Masters" at the Royal Academy, 1888). The lines of Keats in a letter to his friend, J. R. Reynolds ("Teignmouth")—"You know the enchanted castle,—it doth stand," etc., were suggested by the picture. No. 30 in the National Gallery is "Seaport: St. Ursula." For the "Marriage of Isaac" (No. 12), see above, p. 41 *n.*]

² [No. 241 in the Dulwich Gallery is not a Claude. The number was probably a misprint for No. 244 (now No. 205), for which see below, p. 443.]

³ [No. 31 in the National Gallery, by G. Poussin. For other references to the picture, see above, pp. 282, 332; and below, p. 376.]

noon, as is shown by the shadow of the figures; and what sort of colour is the sky at the top of the picture? Is it pale and grey with heat, full of sunshine, and unfathomable in depth? On the contrary, it is of a pitch of darkness which, except on Mont Blanc or Chimborazo, is as purely impossible as colour can be. He might as well have painted it coal black; and it is laid on with a dead coat of flat paint, having no one quality or resemblance of sky about it. It cannot have altered, because the land horizon is as delicate and tender in tone as possible, and is evidently unchanged; and to complete the absurdity of the whole thing, this colour holds its own, without graduation or alteration, to within three or four degrees of the horizon, where it suddenly becomes bold and unmixed yellow. Now the horizon at noon may be yellow when the whole sky is covered with dark clouds, and only *one* open streak of light left in the distance from which the whole light proceeds; but with a clear open sky, and opposite the sun, at noon, such a yellow horizon as this is physically impossible. Even supposing that the upper part of the sky were pale and warm, and that the transition from the one hue to the other were effected imperceptibly and gradually, as is invariably the case in reality, instead of taking place within a space of two or three degrees; even then, this gold yellow would be altogether absurd: but as it is, we have in this sky (and it is a fine picture, one of the best of Gaspar's that I know) a notable example of the truth of the old masters, two impossible colours impossibly united! Find such a colour in Turner's noon-day zenith as the blue at the top, or such a colour at a noon-day horizon as the yellow at the bottom, or such a connection of any colours whatsoever as that in the centre, and then you may talk about his being false to nature if you will. Nor is this a solitary instance; it is Gaspar Poussin's favourite and characteristic effect. I remember twenty such, most of them worse than this, in the downright surface and opacity of blue. Again,¹ look at the large Cuyp in the

¹ [For "Again, look," eds. 1 and 2 read, "And, by-the-bye, while we are talking of graduations of colour, look at . . ."]

Dulwich Gallery, which Mr. Hazlitt considers the “finest in the world,” and of which he very complimentarily say, “The tender green of the valleys, the gleaming lake, the purple light of the hills, have an effect like the *down* on an unripe nectarine”!¹ I ought to have apologized before now, for not having studied sufficiently in Covent Garden to be provided with terms of correct and classical criticism. One of my friends begged me to observe the other day, that Claude was “pulpy;” another added the yet more gratifying information that he was “juicy;” and it is now happily discovered that Cuyp is “downy.” Now I dare say that the sky of this first-rate Cuyp is very like an unripe nectarine: all that I have to say about it is, that it is exceedingly unlike a sky. The blue remains unchanged and ungraduated over three-fourths of it, down to the horizon; while the sun, in the left-hand corner, is surrounded with a halo, first of yellow, and then of crude pink, both being separated from each other, and the last from the blue, as sharply as the belts of a rainbow, and both together not ascending ten degrees in the sky. Now it is difficult to conceive how any man calling himself a painter could impose such a thing on the public, and still more how the public can receive it, as a representation of that sunset purple which invariably extends its influence to the zenith, so that there is no pure blue anywhere, but a purple increasing in purity gradually down to its point of greatest intensity (about forty-five degrees from the horizon), and then melting imperceptibly into the gold, the three colours extending their influence over the whole sky; so that throughout the whole sweep of the heaven, there is no one spot where the colour is not in an equal state of transition, passing from gold into orange, from that into rose, from that into purple, from that into blue, with absolute equality of change, so that in no place can it be said, “Here it changes,” and in no place, “Here it is unchanging.” This is invariably the case.

¹ [No. 169 (now No. 128), “Cattle and Figures near a River, with Mountains.” See *Criticisms on Art*, by William Hazlitt, 1843, p. 24 (where the picture is erroneously called No. 9).]

There is no such thing—there never was, and never will be such a thing, while God's heaven remains as it is made—as a serene, sunset sky, with its purple and rose in *belts* about the sun.¹

Such bold broad examples of ignorance as these would soon set aside all the claims of the professed landscape painters to truth, with whatever delicacy of colour or manipulation they may be disguised. But there are some skies, of the Dutch school, in which clearness and coolness have been aimed at, instead of depth; and some introduced merely as backgrounds to the historical subjects of the older Italians, which there is no matching in modern times; one would think angels had painted them, for all is now clay and oil in comparison. It seems as if we had totally lost the art, for surely otherwise, however little our painters might aim at it or feel it, they would touch the chord sometimes by accident; but they never do, and the mechanical incapacity is still more strongly evidenced by the muddy struggles of the unhappy Germans,² who have the feeling, partially strained, artificial, and diseased, indeed, but still genuine enough to bring out the tone, if they had the mechanical means and technical knowledge. But, however they were obtained, the clear tones of this kind of the older Italians are glorious and enviable in the highest degree; and we shall show, when we come to speak of the beautiful, that they are one of the most just grounds of the fame of the old masters.

But there is a series of phenomena connected with the open blue of the sky, which we must take especial notice of, as it is of constant occurrence in the works of Turner and Claude, the effects, namely, of visible sunbeams. It will be necessary for us

§ 12. *The exceeding value of the skies of the early Italian and Dutch schools. Their qualities are unattainable in modern times.*

§ 13. *Phenomena of visible sunbeams. Their nature and cause.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“Yet people call such an absurdity as this ‘truth;’ and laugh at Turner, because he paints crimson clouds.”]

² [Elsewhere Ruskin refers to modern German art as “the school of Mud”; see letter to E. S. Dallas (1860).]

throughly to understand the circumstances under which such effects take place.¹

Aqueous vapour or mist, suspended in the atmosphere, becomes visible exactly as dust in the air of a room. In the shadows you not only cannot see the dust itself, because unilluminated, but you can see other objects through the dust without obscurity, the air being thus actually rendered more transparent by a deprivation of light. Where a sunbeam enters, every particle of dust becomes visible, and a palpable interruption to the sight; so that a transverse sunbeam is a real obstacle to the vision, you cannot see things clearly through it.

In the same way, wherever vapour is illuminated by transverse rays, there it becomes visible as a whiteness more or less affecting the purity of the blue, and destroying it exactly in proportion to the degree of illumination. But where vapour is in shade, it has very little effect on the sky, perhaps making it a little deeper and greyer than it otherwise would be, but not itself, unless very dense, distinguishable or felt as mist.²

The appearance of mist or whiteness in the blue of the sky is thus a circumstance which more or less accompanies sunshine, and which, supposing the quantity of vapour constant, is greatest in the brightest sunlight. When there are no clouds in the sky, the whiteness, as it affects the whole sky equally, is not particularly noticeable. But when there are clouds between us and the sun, the sun being low, those clouds cast shadows along and through the mass of suspended vapour.

Within the space

§ 14. *They are only illuminated mist, and cannot appear when the sky is free from vapour, nor when it is without clouds.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add a footnote:—

“I shall often be obliged, in the present portion of the work, to enter somewhat tediously into the examination of the physical causes of phenomena, in order that in the future, when speaking of the beautiful, I may not be obliged to run every now and then into physics, but may be able to assert a thing fearlessly to be right or wrong, false or true, with reference for proof to principles before developed. I must be allowed, therefore, at present, to spend sometimes almost more time in the investigation of nature than in the criticism of art.”]

² [The two paragraphs, “Aqueous vapour . . . felt as mist,” are § 23 of *Fronde Agrestes*.]

of these shadows, the vapour, as above stated, becomes transparent and invisible, and the sky appears of a pure blue. But where the sunbeams strike, the vapour becomes visible in the form of the beams, occasioning those radiating shafts of light which are one of the most valuable and constant accompaniments of a low sun. The denser the mist, the more distinct and sharp-edged will these rays be; when the air is very clear, they are mere vague, flushing, gradated passages of light; when it is very thick, they are keen-edged and decisive in a high degree.

We see then, first, that a quantity of mist dispersed through the whole space of the sky is necessary to this phenomenon; and secondly, that what we usually think of as beams of greater brightness than the rest of the sky are, in reality, only a part of that sky in its natural state of illumination, cut off and rendered brilliant by the shadows from the clouds, these shadows being in reality the source of the appearance of beams, so that, therefore, no part of the sky can present such an appearance, except when there are broken clouds between it and the sun; and lastly, that the shadows cast from such clouds are not necessarily grey or dark, but very nearly of the natural pure blue of a sky destitute of vapour.

Now, as it has been proved that the appearance of beams can only take place in a part of the sky which has clouds between it and the sun, it is evident that no appearance of beams can ever begin from the orb itself, except when there is a cloud or solid body of some kind between us and it; but that such appearances will almost invariably begin on the dark side of some of the clouds around it, the orb itself remaining the centre of a broad blaze of united light. Wordsworth has given us, in two lines, the only circumstances under which rays can ever appear to originate in the orb itself:

“But rays of light,
Now *suddenly* diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled
By the dense air, shot upwards.”

—*Excursion*, book ix.

§ 15. *Erroneous tendency in the representation of such phenomena by the old masters.*

And Turner has given us the effect magnificently in the Dartmouth of the River Scenery.¹ It is frequent among the old masters, and constant in Claude; though the latter, from drawing his beams too fine, represents the effect upon the dazzled eye rather than the light which actually exists, and approximates very closely to the ideal which we see in the sign of the Rising Sun; nay, I am nearly sure that I remember cases in which he has given us the diverging beam without any cloud or hill interfering with the orb. It may, perhaps, be somewhat difficult to say how

§ 16. *The rays which appear in the dazzled eye should not be represented.*

far it is allowable to represent that kind of ray which is seen by the dazzled eye. It is very certain that we never look towards a bright sun without seeing glancing rays issue from it; but it is equally certain that those rays are no more real existences than the

red and blue circles which we see after having been so dazzled, and that if we are to represent the rays we ought also to cover our sky with pink and blue circles. I should on the whole consider it utterly false in principle to represent the visionary beam, and that we ought only to show that which has actual existence. Such we find to be the constant practice of Turner. Even where, owing to interposed clouds, he has beams appearing to issue from the orb itself, they are broad bursts of light, not spiky rays; and his more usual practice is to keep all near the sun in one simple blaze of

§ 17. *The practice of Turner. His keen perception of the more delicate phenomena of rays.*

intense light, and from the first clouds to throw beams to the zenith, though the often does not permit any appearance of rays until close to the zenith itself. Open at the 80th page of the Illustrated edition of Rogers's Poems. You have there a sky blazing with sunbeams; but they all begin a long way from the sun, and they are accounted for by a mass of dense clouds surrounding the orb itself. Turn to the 7th page. Behind the old oak, where the sun is supposed to be, you have only a blaze of undistinguished light;

¹ [In the *Rivers of England* (1824). The drawing of Dartmouth is No. 163 in the National Gallery.]

but up on the left, over the edge of the cloud, on its dark side, the sunbeam. Turn to page 192,—blazing rays again, but all beginning where the clouds do, not one can you trace to the sun; and observe how carefully the long shadow on the mountain is accounted for by the dim dark promontory projecting out near the sun.¹ I need not multiply examples: you will find various modifications and uses of these effects throughout his works. But you will not find a single trace of them in the old masters. They give you the rays issuing from behind black clouds, because they are a coarse and common effect which could not possibly escape their observation, and because they are easily imitated. They give you the spiky shafts issuing from the orb itself, because these are partially symbolical of light, and assist a tardy imagination, as two or three rays scratched round the sun with a pen would, though they would be rays of darkness instead of light.* But of the most beautiful phenomenon of all, the appearance of the delicate ray far in the sky, threading its way among the thin,

§ 18. *The total absence of any evidence of such perception in the works of the old masters.*

* I have left this passage as it stood originally, because it is right as far as it goes; yet it speaks with too little respect of symbolism, which is often of the highest use in religious art, and in some measure is allowable in all art. In the works of almost all the greatest masters there are portions which are explanatory rather than representative, and typical rather than imitative; nor could these be parted with but at infinite loss. Note, with respect to the present question, the daring black sunbeams of Titian, in his woodcut of St. Francis receiving the Stigmata; and compare here Part III. sec. ii. chap. iv. § 18, chap. v. § 13. And though I believe that I am right in considering all such symbolism as out of place in pure landscape, and in attributing that of Claude to ignorance or inability, and not to feeling, yet I praise Turner not so much for his absolute refusal to represent the spiky rays about the sun, as for his perceiving and rendering that which Claude never perceived, the multitudinous presence of radiating light in the upper sky, and on all its countless ranks of subtle cloud.²

¹ [The original drawings for the vignettes referred to are in the National Gallery—No. 230, “Tornaro” (p. 80); for this, *cf.* below, p. 364, and see *Catalogue of the Drawings and Sketches by Turner in the National Gallery* (Group ix.). No. 226, “Twilight” (p. 7). No. 242, “The Alps at Daybreak” (p. 194, not 192); for this, *cf.* next chapter, p. 366, and p. 433.]

² [This note was added in the 3rd ed. For other references to the place of symbolism in art, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. viii. § 6, and *Lectures on Art*, § 63.]

transparent clouds, while all around the sun is unshadowed fire, there is no record nor example whatsoever in their works. It was too delicate and spiritual for them; probably their blunt and feelingless eyes never perceived it in nature, and their untaught imaginations were not likely to originate it in the study.¹

Little is to be said of the skies of our other landscapes artists.

§ 19. *Truth of the skies of modern drawings.*

In paintings, they are commonly toneless, crude, and wanting in depth and transparency; but in drawings, some very perfect and delicate examples have been produced by various members of the old Water-Colour Society, and one or two others: but with respect to the qualities of which we are at present speaking, it is not right to compare drawings with paintings, as the wash or sponging, or other artifices peculiar to water colour, are capable of producing an appearance of quality which it needs much higher art to produce in oils.

§ 20. *Recapitulation. The best skies of the ancients are, in quality, inimitable, but in rendering of various truth, childish.*

Taken generally, the open skies of the moderns are inferior in quality to picked and untouched skies of the greatest of the ancients, but far superior to the average class of pictures which we have every day fathered upon their reputation. Nine or ten skies of Claude might be named which are not to be contended with in their way, and as many of Cuyp. Teniers has given some very wonderful passages, and the clearness of the early Italian and Dutch schools is beyond all imitation. But the common blue daubing which we hear every day in our best galleries attributed to Claude and Cuyp, and the genuine skies of Salvator, and of both the Poussins, are not to be compared for an instant with the best works of modern times, even in quality and transparency; while in all matters requiring delicate observation or accurate science,—in all which

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“Of the perfect and deeply-based knowledge of such phenomena which is traceable in all works of Turner, we shall see farther instances in the following chapter.”]

was not attainable by technicalities of art, and which depended upon the artist's knowledge and understanding of nature,—all the works of the ancients are alike the productions of mere children, sometimes manifesting great sensibility, but proving at the same time feebly developed intelligence, and ill regulated observation.

CHAPTER II

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—FIRST OF THE REGION OF THE CIRRUS

Our next subject of investigation must be the specific character of clouds, a species of truth which is especially neglected by artists; first, because as it is within the limits of possibility that a cloud may assume almost any form, it is difficult to point out, and not always easy to feel, wherein error consists; and secondly, because it is totally impossible to study the forms of clouds from nature with care and accuracy, as a change in the subject takes place between every touch of the following pencil, and parts of an outline sketched at different instants cannot harmonize, nature never having intended them to come together. Still if artists were more in the habit of sketching clouds rapidly, and as accurately as possible in the outline, from nature, instead of daubing down what they call “effects” with the brush, they would soon find there is more beauty about their forms than can be arrived at by any random felicity of invention, however brilliant, and more essential character than can be violated without incurring the charge of falsehood,—falsehood as direct and definite, though not as traceable, as error in the less varied features of organic form.

§ 1. *Difficulty of ascertaining wherein the truth of clouds consists.* of clouds, a species of truth which is especially neglected by artists; first, because as it is within the limits of possibility that a cloud may assume almost any form, it is difficult to point out, and not always easy to feel, wherein error consists; and secondly, because it is totally impossible to study the forms of clouds from nature with care and accuracy, as a change in the subject takes place between every touch of the following pencil, and parts of an outline sketched at different instants cannot harmonize, nature never having intended them to come together. Still if artists were more in the habit of sketching clouds rapidly, and as accurately as possible in the outline, from nature, instead of daubing down what they call “effects” with the brush, they would soon find there is more beauty about their forms than can be arrived at by any random felicity of invention, however brilliant, and more essential character than can be violated without incurring the charge of falsehood,—falsehood as direct and definite, though not as traceable, as error in the less varied features of organic form.

§ 2. *Variation of their character at different elevations. The three regions to which they may conveniently be considered as belonging.* The first and most important character of clouds is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking, according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an

infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider the sky as divided into three regions: the upper region, or region of the cirrus; the central region, or region of the stratus; the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

The clouds which I wish to consider as included in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe, and may therefore be looked upon as never formed below an elevation of at least 15,000 feet; they are the motionless multitudinous lines of delicate vapour with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. I must be pardoned for giving a detailed description of their specific characters, as they are of constant occurrence in the works of modern artists, and I shall have occasion to speak frequently of them in future parts of the work. Their chief characters are:

First, Symmetry. They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right angles to it; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. Frequently two systems of this kind, indicative of two currents of wind, at different altitudes, intersect each other, forming a network. Another frequent arrangement is in groups of excessively fine, silky, parallel fibres, commonly radiating, or having a tendency to radiate, from one of their extremities, and terminating in a plummy sweep at the other; these are vulgarly known as “mares’ tails.”¹

¹ [An expression common in nautical literature: see, e.g., W. C. Russell’s *Jack’s Courtship*, ch. 22 (“a light blue sky and a crescent of mares’ tails over the mastheads”).]

§ 3. *Extent of the upper region.*

§ 4. *The symmetrical arrangement of its clouds.*

The plummy and expanded extremity of these is often bent upwards, sometimes back and up again, giving an appearance of great flexibility and unity at the same time; as if the clouds were tough, and would hold together however bent. The narrow extremity is invariably turned to the wind, and the fibres are parallel with its direction. The upper clouds always fall into some modification of one or other of these arrangements. They thus differ from all other clouds, in having a plan and system; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude: no men walk on their heads or their hands, and so there are certain laws which no clouds violate; but there is nothing, except in the upper clouds, resembling symmetrical discipline.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge. The edges of the bars of the upper clouds which are turned to the wind, are often the sharpest which the sky shows; no outline whatever of any other kind of cloud, however marked and energetic, ever approaches the delicate decision of these edges. The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the colour or shade of the general mass; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. On the other hand, the edge of the bar turned away from the wind is always soft, often imperceptible, melting into the blue interstice between it and its next neighbour. Commonly, the sharper one edge is, the softer is the other; and the clouds look flat, and as if they slipped over each other like the scales of a fish. When both edges are soft, as is always the case when the sky is clear and windless, the cloud looks solid, round, and fleecy.

Thirdly, Multitude. The delicacy of these vapours is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. Number is always most

§ 5. *Their exceeding delicacy.*

§ 6. *Their number.*

felt when it is symmetrical (*vide* Burke on “Sublime,” part ii. sect. 8), and, therefore, no sea-waves nor fresh leaves make their number so evident or so impressive as these vapours. Nor is nature content with an infinity of bars or lines alone; each bar is in its turn severed into a number of small undulatory masses, more or less connected according to the violence of the wind. When this division is merely affected by undulation, the cloud exactly resembles sea-sand ribbed by the tide; but when the division amounts to real separation we have the mottled or mackerel skies. Commonly, the greater the division of its bars, the broader and more shapeless is the rank or field, so that in the mottled sky it is lost altogether, and we have large irregular fields of equal size, masses like flocks of sheep; such clouds are three or four thousand feet below the legitimate cirrus. I have seen them cast a shadow on Mont Blanc at sunset, so that they must descend nearly to within fifteen thousand feet of the earth.

Fourthly, Purity of Colour. The nearest of these clouds, those over the observer’s head, being at least three miles above him, and the greater number of those which enter the ordinary sphere of vision, farther from him still, their dark sides are much greyer and cooler than those of other clouds, owing to their distance. They are composed of the purest aqueous vapour, free from all foulness of earthy gases, and of this in the lightest and most ethereal state in which it can be, to be visible. Farther, they receive the light of the sun in a state of far greater intensity than lower objects, the beams being transmitted to them through atmospheric air far less dense, and wholly unaffected by mist, smoke, or any other impurity. Hence their colours are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

§ 7. Causes of their peculiarly delicate colouring.

Lastly, Variety. Variety is never so conspicuous, as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds crossing half

§ 8. Their variety of form.

the heaven, all governed by the same forces and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between each member of the great mass,—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent, each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups,—the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. Hence, the importance of the truth, that nature never lets one of the members of even her most disciplined groups of cloud be like another; but though each is adapted for the same function, and in its great features resembles all the others, not one, out of the millions with which the sky is chequered, is without a separate beauty and character, appearing to have had distinct thought occupied in its conception, and distinct forces in its production; and in addition to this perpetual invention, visible in each member of each system, we find systems of separate cloud intersecting each other, the sweeping lines mingled and interwoven with the rigid bars, these in their turn melting into banks of sandlike like ripple and flakes of drifted and irregular foam; under all, perhaps the massy outline of some lower cloud moves heavily across the motionless buoyancy of the upper lines, and indicates at once their elevation and their repose.

Such are the great attributes of the upper cloud region; whether they are beautiful, valuable, or impressive, it is not our present business to decide, nor to endeavour to discover the reason of the somewhat remarkable fact, that the whole field of ancient landscape art affords, as far as we remember, but one instance of any effort whatever to represent the character of this cloud region. That one instance is the landscape of Rubens in our own Gallery,¹ in which the mottled or fleecy sky is given with perfect truth and exquisite beauty. To this should perhaps be added, some of the backgrounds of the historical painters, where horizontal lines were required,

§ 9. *Total absence of even the slightest effort at their representation in ancient landscape.*

¹ [No. 66, "A Landscape: Autumn Morning," with the Castle of Stein in the background; see above, p. 323 n.]

and a few level bars of white or warm colour cross the serenity of the blue. These, as far as they go, are often very perfect, and the elevation and repose of their effect might, we should have thought, have pointed out to the landscape painters that there was something to be made out of the high clouds. Not one of them, however, took the hint. To whom, among them all, can we look for the slightest realization of the fine and faithful descriptive passage of the *Excursion*, already alluded to?¹—

“But rays of light,
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops, or veiled
By the dense air, shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide:
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious—had become
Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,—
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half of the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens displayed the liquid deep
Repeated; but with unity sublime.”

There is but one master whose works we can think of while we read this, one alone has taken notice of the neglected upper sky; it is his peculiar and favourite field; he has watched its every modification, and given its every phase and feature; at all hours, in all seasons, he has followed its passions and its changes, and has brought down and laid open to the world another apocalypse of Heaven.

§ 10. *The intense and constant study of them by Turner.*

There is scarcely a painting of Turner's in which serenity of sky and intensity of light are aimed at together, in which these clouds are not used, though there are not two cases in which they are used altogether alike. Sometimes they are crowded together in masses of mingling light, as in the

¹ [Above, sec. iii. ch. i. § 15; from the *Excursion*, book ix.]

Shylock;¹ every part and atom sympathizing in that continuous expression of slow movement which Shelley has so beautifully touched:

“Underneath the young grey dawn
A multitude of dense, white, fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind.”²

At other times they are blended with the sky itself, felt only here and there by a ray of light calling them into existence out of its misty shade, as in the Mercury and Argus; sometimes, where great repose is to be given, they appear in a few detached, equal, rounded flakes, which seem to hang motionless, each like the shadow of the other, in the deep blue of the zenith, as in the Acro-Corinth;³ sometimes they are scattered in fiery flying fragments, each burning with separate energy, as in the Téméraire; sometimes woven together with fine threads of intermediate darkness, melting into the blue, as in the Napoleon. But in all cases the exquisite manipulation of the master gives to each atom of the multitude its own character and expression. Though they be countless as leaves, each has its portion of light, its shadow, its reflex, its peculiar and separating form.

Take, for instance, the illustrated edition of Rogers’s
§ 11. *His* Poems,* and open it at the 80th page,⁴ and observe
vignette, Sunrise on the Sea. how every attribute which I have pointed out in the
upper sky is there rendered with the faithfulness of
a mirror; the long lines of parallel bars, the delicate

* I use this work frequently for illustration, because it is the only one I know in which the engraver has worked with delicacy enough to give the real forms and touches of Turner. I can reason from these plates (in questions of form only) nearly as well as I could from the drawings.⁵

¹ [Otherwise known as “The Grand Canal, Venice” (R. A., 1837); in the collection of Mr. Ralph Brocklebank; engraved in *Turner and Ruskin*. For other references to the picture, see above, p. 336 *n.*, and below, sec. iii. ch. v. (list) p. 422.]

² [*Prometheus Unbound*, ii. 1, 147.]

³ [One of the drawings for Finden’s *Illustrations of the Bible* (1836). It was in the Ruskin collection; see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 50.]

⁴ [The drawing is No. 230 in the National Gallery; *cf.* above, preceding chapter, p. 354.]

⁵ [Turner did not exhibit the drawings; they passed with his otherworks to the nation on his death. Ruskin may have seen the drawings at Turner’s house; with the

curvature from the wind, which the inclination of the sail shows you to be from the west; the excessive sharpness of every edge which is turned to the wind, the faintness of every opposite one, the breaking up of each bar into rounded masses; and finally, the inconceivable variety with which individual form has been given to every member of the multitude, and not only individual form, but roundness and substance even where there is scarcely a hair's-breadth of cloud to express them in. Observe above everything the varying indication of space and depth in the whole, so that you may look through and through from one cloud to another, feeling not merely how they retire to the horizon, but how they melt back into the recesses of the sky; every interval being filled with absolute air, and all its spaces so melting and fluctuating, and fraught with change as with repose, that as you look, you will fancy that the rays shoot higher and higher into the vault of light, and that the pale streak of horizontal vapour is melting away from the cloud that it crosses. Now watch for the next barred sunrise, and take this vignette to the window, and test it by nature's own clouds, among which you will find forms and passages, I do not say merely *like*, but apparently the actual originals of parts of this very drawing. And with whom will you do this, except with Turner? Will you do it with Claude, and set that blank square yard of blue, with its round, white, flat fixtures of similar cloud, beside the purple infinity of nature, with her countless multitudes of shadowy lines, and flaky waves, and folded veils of variable

engravings he had been familiar since childhood, and he had copied them (Præterita, i. ch. iv. § 87). The plates are in a sense better to reason from than the drawings. In the case of the *Poems* Turner did, indeed, finish the drawings carefully for the engravers; the drawings for Roger's *Italy*, on the other hand, were not thus finished, and the skies in many cases were added by the engravers, under Turner's close, superintendence. In some MS. notes by the Rev. Alexander Dyce to his copy of Rogers' *Italy*, now in the South Kensington Museum, he says that Rogers told him, "I paid Turner £5 for each of the illustrations to my two volumes, with the stipulation that the drawings should be returned to him after they had been engraved; and the truth is, they were of little value as drawings. The engravers understand Turner perfectly, and make out his slight sketches; besides, they always submit to him the plates, which he touches and retouches, till the most beautiful effect is produced." Rogers' opinion of the little value of the drawings cannot be endorsed; but it is true in the case of the *Italy* vignettes that the drawings alone do not disclose the full intention of Turner.]

mist? Will you do it with Poussin, and set those massy steps of unyielding solidity, with the chariot and four driving up them, by the side of the delicate forms which terminate in threads too fine for the eye to follow them, and of texture so thin woven that the earliest stars shine through them? Will you do it with Salvator, and set that volume of violent and restless manufactory smoke beside those calm and quiet bars, which pause in the heaven as if they would never leave it more?¹

Now we have just seen how Turner uses the sharp-edged cirri, when he aims at giving great transparency of air. But it was shown in the preceding chapter that sunbeams, or the appearance of them, are always sharper in their edge in proportion as the air is more misty, as they are most defined in a room where there is most dust flying about in it. Consequently, in the vignette we have been just noticing, where transparency is to be given, though there is a blaze of light, its beams are never edged; a tendency to rays is visible, but you cannot in any part find a single marked edge of a rising sunbeam; the sky is merely more flushed in one place than another. Now let us see what Turner does when he wants mist. Turn to the Alps at Daybreak, page 193 in the same book.² Here we have the cirri used again, but now they have no sharp edges; they are all fleecy and mingling with each other, though every one of them has the most exquisite indication of individual form, and they melt back, not till they are lost in exceeding light, as in the other plate, but into a mysterious, fluctuating, shadowy sky, of which, though the light penetrates through it all, you perceive every part to be charged with vapour. Notice particularly the half-indicated forms even where it is most serene, behind the snowy mountains. And now, how are the sunbeams drawn? No longer indecisive, flushing, palpitating,

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“And yet you will say that these men painted nature, and that Turner did not!”]

² [Really p. 194; see above, preceding chapter, § 17.]

every one is sharp and clear, and terminated by definite shadow; note especially the marked lines on the upper clouds; finally, observe the difference in the mode of indicating the figures, which are here misty and undistinguishable, telling only as shadows, though they are near and large, while those in the former vignette came clear upon the eye, though they were so far off as to appear mere points.

Now is this perpetual consistency in all points, this concentration of every fact which can possibly bear upon what we are to be told, this watchfulness of the entire meaning and system of nature, which fills every part and space of the picture with coincidences of witness, which come out upon us, as they would from the reality, more fully and deeply in proportion to the knowledge we possess and the attention we give, admirable or not? I could go on writing page after page on every sky of Turner's and pointing out fresh truths in every one. In the Havre, for instance, of the Rivers of France,¹ we have a new fact pointed out to us with respect to these cirri, namely, their being so faint and transparent as not to be distinguishable from the blue of the sky (a frequent case), except in the course of a sunbeam, which, however, does not illumine their edges, they being not solid enough to reflect light, but penetrates their whole substance, and renders them flat luminous forms in its path, instantly and totally lost at its edge. And thus a separate essay would be required by every picture, to make fully understood the new phenomena which it treated and illustrated. But after once showing what are the prevailing characteristics of these clouds, we can only leave it to the reader to trace them wherever they occur. There are some fine and characteristic passages of this kind of cloud given by Stanfield, though he dares not use them in multitude, and is wanting in those refined qualities of form which it is totally impossible to explain in words, but which,

§ 13. *His consistency in every minor feature.*

¹ [One of the drawings engraved in *Turner's Annual Tour: Wanderings by the Seine* (1834–35); Plate 3 in *The Seine and the Loire* (1890). It is in the National Gallery, No. 158 (“Twilight outside the Port”).]

perhaps, by simple outlines, on a large scale, selected from the cloud forms of various artists, I may in following portions of the work illustrate with the pencil.

Of the colours of these clouds I have spoken before (§ 7 of this chapter); but though I then alluded to their purity and vividness, I scarcely took proper notice of their variety; there is indeed in nature variety in all things, and it would be absurd to insist on it in each case, yet the colours of these clouds are so marvellous in their changefulness, that they require particular notice. If you watch for the next sunset when there are a considerable number of these cirri in the sky, you will see, especially at the zenith, that the sky does not remain of the same colour for two inches together. One cloud has a dark side of cold blue, and a fringe of milky white; another, above it, has a dark side of purple and an edge of red; another, nearer the sun, has an under side of orange and an edge of gold: these you will find mingled with, and passing into, the blue of the sky, which in places you will not be able to distinguish from the cool grey of the darker clouds, and which will be itself full of gradation, now pure and deep, now faint and feeble. And all this is done, not in large pieces, nor on a large scale, but over and over again in every square yard, so that there is no single part nor portion of the whole sky which has not in itself variety of colour enough for a separate picture, and yet no single part which is like another, or which has not some peculiar source of beauty, and some peculiar arrangement of colour of its own. Now instead of this you get in the old masters,—Cuyp, or Claude, or whoever, they may be,—a field of blue, delicately, beautifully, and uniformly shaded down to the yellow sun, with a certain number of similar clouds, each with a dark side of the same grey, and an edge of the same yellow. I do not say that nature never does anything like this, but I say that her *principle* is to do a great deal more; and that what she does more than this,—what I have above described, and what you may see in nine sunsets out of ten,—has been observed, attempted, and rendered by Turner only,

§ 14. *The colour of the upper clouds.*

and by him with a fidelity and force which present us with more essential truth, and more clear expression and illustration of natural laws, in every wreath of vapour, than composed the whole stock of heavenly information which lasted Cuyper and Claude their lives.

We close then our present consideration of the upper clouds, to return to them when we know what is beautiful: § 15. *Recapitulation.* we have at present only to remember that of these clouds, and the truths connected with them, none before Turner had taken any notice whatsoever, that had they therefore been even feebly and imperfectly represented by him, they would yet have given him a claim to be considered more extended and universal in his statement of truths than any of his predecessors. How much more when we find that deep fidelity in his studied and perfect skies which opens new sources of delight to every advancement of our knowledge, and to every added moment of our contemplation!

CHAPTER III

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—SECONDLY, OF THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION

WE have next to investigate the character of the Central Cloud Region, which I consider as including all clouds which are the usual characteristic of ordinary serene weather, and which touch and envelope the mountains of Switzerland, but never affect those of our own island; they may therefore be considered as occupying a space of air ten thousand feet in height, extending from five to fifteen thousand feet above the sea.

§ 1. *Extent and typical character of the central cloud region.*

These clouds, according to their elevation, appear with great variety of form, often partaking of the streaked or mottled character of the higher region, and as often, when the precursors of storm, manifesting forms closely connected with the lowest rain-clouds; but the species especially characteristic of the central region is a white, ragged, irregular, and scattered vapour, which has little form and less colour, and of which a good example may be seen in the largest landscape of Cuyp in the Dulwich Gallery.¹ When this vapour collects into masses, it is partially rounded, clumsy, and ponderous, as if it would tumble out of the sky, shaded with a dull grey, and totally devoid of any appearance of energy or motion. Even in nature, these clouds are comparatively uninteresting, scarcely worth raising our heads to look at; and, on canvas, valuable only as a means of introducing light, and breaking the monotony of blue; yet they are, perhaps, beyond all others the favourite clouds of the Dutch masters. Whether they had any motive for the adoption of such materials beyond

¹ [No. 128 (formerly No. 169); cf. pp. 272, 350.]

the extreme facility with which acres of canvas might thus be covered without any troublesome exertion of thought; or any temptation to such selections beyond the impossibility of error where nature shows no form, and the impossibility of deficiency where she shows no beauty, it is not here the place to determine. Such skies are happily beyond the reach of criticism, for he who tells you nothing cannot tell you a falsehood. A little flake-white, touched with a light brush over the carefully toned blue, permitted to fall into whatever forms chance might determine, with the single precaution that their edges should be tolerably irregular, supplied in hundreds of instances a sky quite good enough for all ordinary purposes, quite good enough for cattle to graze, or boors to play at nine-pins under, and equally devoid of all that could gratify, inform, or offend.

§ 2. *Its characteristic clouds, requiring no attention nor thought for their representation, are therefore favourite subjects with the old masters.*

But although this kind of cloud is, as I have said, typical of the central region, it is not one which nature is fond of. She scarcely ever lets an hour pass without some manifestation of finer forms, sometimes approaching the upper cirri, sometimes the lower cumulus. And then, in the lower outlines we have the nearest approximation which nature ever presents to the clouds of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin, to the characters of which I must request especial attention, as it is here only that we shall have a fair opportunity of comparing their skies with those of the modern school. I shall, as before, glance rapidly at the great laws of specific form, and so put it in the power of the reader to judge for himself of the truth of representation.

§ 3. *The clouds of Salvator and Poussin.*

Clouds, it is to be remembered, are not so much local vapour, as vapour rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature.¹ Thus a cloud, whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet

§ 4. *Their essential characters.*

¹ [For "local vapour, as vapour rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature," eds. 1 and 2 read, "solid bodies borne irregularly before the wind, as they are the wind itself, rendered visible in parts of its progress by a fall of temperature in the moisture

remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together. No matter how violent or how capricious the wind may be, the instant it approaches the spot where the chilly influence of the snow extends, the moisture it carries becomes visible, and then and there the cloud forms on the instant, apparently maintaining its shape against the wind, though the careful and keen eye can see all its parts in the most rapid motion across the mountain. The outlines of such a cloud are of course not determined by the irregular impulses of the wind, but by the fixed lines of radiant heat which regulate the temperature of the atmosphere of the mountain. It is terminated, therefore, not by changing curves, but by steady right lines of more or less decision, often exactly correspondent with the outline of the mountain on which it is formed, and falling therefore into grotesque peaks and precipices. I have seen the marked and angular outline of the Grandes Jorasses, at Chamonix, mimicked in its every jag by a line of clouds above it. Another resultant phenomenon is the formation of cloud in the calm air to leeward of a steep summit; cloud whose edges are in rapid motion, where they are affected by the current of the wind above, and stream from the peak like the smoke of a volcano, yet always vanish at a certain distance from it as steam issuing from a chimney. When wet weather of some duration is approaching, a small white spot of cloud will sometimes appear low on the hill flanks; it will not move, but will increase gradually for some little time, then diminish, still without moving; disappear altogether, reappear ten minutes afterwards, exactly in the same spot: increase to a greater extent than before, again disappear, again return, and at last permanently; other similar spots of cloud forming simultaneously, with various fluctuations, each in its own spot, and at the same level on the hill-side, until all expand, join together, and form an unbroken veil of threatening

it contains." The explanation of the phenomena of drifting mountain clouds here given was adopted by Ruskin from Saussure. It is re-examined and its fallacy shown in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iii. § 4; and cf. *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, note 10.]



The Aiguille du Dru.

grey, which darkens gradually into storm.¹ What in such cases takes place palpably and remarkably, is more or less a law of formation in all clouds whatsoever; they being bounded rather by lines expressive of changes of temperature in the atmosphere, than by the impulses of the currents of wind in which those changes take place. Even when in rapid and visible motion across the sky, the variations which take place in their outlines are not so much alterations of position and arrangement of parts, as they are the alternate formation and disappearance of parts. There is, therefore, usually a parallelism and consistency in their great outlines, which give system to the smaller curves of which they are composed; and if these great lines be taken, rejecting the minutiae of variation, the resultant form will almost always be angular, and full of character and decision. In the flock-like fields of equal masses, each individual mass has the effect, not of an ellipse or circle, but of a rhomboid; the sky is crossed and chequered, not honeycombed; in the lower cumuli, even though the most rounded of all clouds, the groups are not like balloons or bubbles, but like towers or mountains. And the result of this arrangement in masses more or less angular, varied with, and chiefly constructed of, curves of the utmost freedom and beauty, is that appearance of exhaustless and fantastic energy which gives every cloud a marked character of its own, suggesting resemblances to the specific outlines of organic objects. I do not say that such accidental resemblances are a character to be imitated; but merely that they bear witness to the originality and vigour of separate conception in cloud forms, which give to the scenery of the sky a force and variety no less delightful than that of the changes of mountain outline in a hill district of a great elevation; and that there is added to this a spirit-like feeling, a capricious mocking imagery of passion and life, totally different from any effects of inanimate form that the earth can show.

§ 5. *Their angular forms and general decision of outline.*

¹ [The passage, "Another resultant phenomenon," to "gradually into storm," was first added in ed. 3]

The minor contours, out of which the larger outlines are composed, are indeed beautifully curvilinear; but they are never monotonous in their curves. First comes a concave line, then a convex one, then an angular jag breaking off into spray, then a downright straight line, then a curve again, then a deep gap, and a place where all is lost and melted away, and so on; displaying in every inch of the form renewed and ceaseless invention, setting off grace with rigidity, and relieving flexibility with force, in a manner scarcely less admirable, and far more changeful, than even in the muscular forms of the human frame. Nay, such is the exquisite composition of all this, that you may take any single fragment of any cloud in the sky, and you will find it put together as if there had been a year's thought over the plan of it, arranged with the most studied inequality, with the most delicate symmetry, with the most elaborate contrast, a picture in itself. You may try every other piece of cloud in the heaven, and you will find them every one as perfect, and yet not one in the least like another.

Now it may, perhaps, for anything we know, or have yet proved, be highly expedient and proper, in art, that this variety, individuality, and angular character should be changed into a mass of convex curves, each precisely like its neighbour in all respects, and unbroken from beginning to end; it may be highly original, masterly, bold, whatever you choose to call it; but it is *false*.¹ I do not take upon me to assert that the clouds which in ancient Germany were more especially and peculiarly devoted to the business of catching princesses off desert islands, and carrying

§ 6. *The composition of their minor curves.*

§ 7. *Their characters, as given by S. Rosa.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“I do not intend at present to dispute that circular sweeps of the brush, leaving concentric lines distinctly indicative of every separate horse-hair of its constitution, may be highly indicative of masterly handling. I do not dispute that the result may be graceful and sublime in the highest degree, especially when I consider the authority of those vaporescent flourishes, precisely similar in character, with which the more sentimental of the cherubs are adorned and encompassed in models of modern penmanship; nay, I do not take . . .”]

them to enchanted castles,¹ might not have possessed something of the pillowy organization which we may suppose best adapted for functions of such delicacy and despatch: but I do mean to say that the clouds which God sends

upon His earth as the ministers of dew, and rain, and shade, and with which He adorns His heaven, setting them in its vault for the thrones of His spirits, have not, in one instant or atom of their existence, one feature in common with such conceptions and creations. And there are, beyond dispute, more direct and unmitigated falsehoods told, and more laws of nature set at open defiance, in *one* of the “rolling” skies of Salvator, such as that marked 159 in the Dulwich Gallery,² than were ever attributed, even by the ignorant and unfeeling, to all the wildest flights of Turner put together.

And it is not as if the error were only occasional. It is systematic and constant in all the Italian masters of the seventeenth century,³ and in most of the Dutch. They looked at clouds, as at everything else which did not particularly help them in their great end of deception, with utter carelessness and bluntness of feeling; saw that there were a great many rounded passages in them; found it much easier to sweep circles than to design beauties, and sat down in their studies, contented with perpetual repetitions of the same spherical conceptions, having about the same relation to the clouds of nature, that a child’s carving of a turnip has to the head of the Apollo. Look at the round things about the sun in the bricky Claude, the smallest of the three Sea-ports in the National Gallery.⁴ They are a great deal more like halfcrowns than clouds. Take the ropy tough-looking wreath

§ 8. *Monotony and falsehood of the clouds of the Italian school generally.*

¹ [Perhaps a reference to Grimm’s *German Popular Stories*; see *e.g.* those entitled “The Lady and the Lion” and “The Salad”—the former, a story of an enchanted castle, the latter, of the cloud ministry in question.]

² [Now No. 137, “A Pool with Friars Fishing,” mentioned by Waagen (*Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, ii. 347). For other references to the picture, see pp. 406, 477.]

³ [The words “of the seventeenth century” were added in ed. 3.]

⁴ [No. 5, “A Seaport at Sunset”; for another reference, see above, p. 274.]

in the Sacrifice of Isaac,¹ and find one part of it, if you can, which is not the repetition of every other part of it, all together being as round and vapid as the brush could draw them; or take the two cauliflower-like protuberances in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery,² and admire the studied similarity between them; you cannot tell which is which; or take the so-called Nicolas Poussin, No. 212 Dulwich Gallery,³ in which, from the brown trees to the right-hand side of the picture, there is not one line which is not physically impossible.

But it is not the outline only which is thus systematically false. The drawing of the solid form is worse still, for it is to be remembered that although clouds of course arrange themselves more or less into broad masses, with a light side and dark side, both their light and shade are invariably composed of a series of divided masses, each of which has in its outline as much variety and character as the great outline of the cloud; presenting therefore, a thousand times repeated, all that I have described as characteristic of the general form. Nor are these multitudinous divisions a truth of slight importance in the character of sky, for they are dependent on, and illustrative of, a quality which is usually in a great degree overlooked,—the enormous retiring spaces of solid clouds. Between the illumined edge of a heaped cloud, and that part of its body which turns into shadow, there will generally be a clear distance of several miles, more or less, of course, according to the general size of the cloud; but, in such large masses as in Poussin and others of the old masters occupy the fourth or fifth of the visible sky, the clear illumined breadth of vapour, from the edge to the shadow, involves at least a distance of five or six miles. We are little apt, in watching the changes of a mountainous range

¹ [By Gaspard Poussin, No. 31 in the National Gallery; see above, pp. 282, 332, 348. For Ruskin's defence of his phrase, "ropy tough-looking wreath," against a critic's objection, see below, Appendix ii. p. 644.]

² ["Mountainous Landscape with a River," now attributed to the school of Salvator Rosa; no longer exhibited in the Gallery. For other references, see below, p. 387.]

³ [Now No. 30, "A Castle in a Wood," by Gaspar, not Nicholas, Poussin.]

of cloud, to reflect that the masses of vapour which compose it are huger and higher than any mountain range of the earth; and the distances between mass and mass are not yards of air traversed in an instant by the flying form, but valleys of changing atmosphere leagues over; that the slow motion of ascending curves, which we can scarcely trace, is a boiling energy of exulting vapour, rushing into the heaven a thousand feet in a minute; and that the toppling angle, whose sharp edge almost escapes notice in the multitudinous forms around it, is a nodding precipice of storms 3000 feet from base to summit. It is not until we have actually compared the forms of the sky with the hill ranges of the earth, and seen the soaring Alp overtopped and buried in one surge of the sky, that we begin to conceive or appreciate the colossal scale of the phenomena of the latter. But of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any one accustomed to trace the forms of clouds among hill ranges, as it is there a demonstrable and evident fact, that the space of vapour visibly extended over an ordinarily clouded sky is not less, from the point nearest to the observer to the horizon, than twenty leagues; that the size of every mass of separate form, if it be at all largely divided, is to be expressed in terms of *miles*; and that every boiling heap of illuminated mist in the nearer sky is an enormous mountain, fifteen or twenty thousand feet in height, six or seven miles over in illuminated surface, furrowed by a thousand colossal ravines, torn by local tempests into peaks and promontories, and changing its features with the majestic velocity of the volcano.

§ 10. *Demonstrable by comparison with mountain ranges.*

To those who have once convinced themselves of these proportions of the heaven, it will be immediately evident, that though we might, without much violation of truth, omit the minor divisions of a cloud four yards over, it is the veriest audacity of falsehood to omit those of masses where for yards we have to read miles; first, because it is physically impossible that such a space should be without many and vast divisions;

§ 11. *And consequent division and varieties of feature.*

secondly, because divisions at such distances must be sharply and forcibly marked by aerial perspective, so that not only they must be there, but they must be visible and evident to the eye; and thirdly, because these multitudinous divisions are absolutely necessary, in order to express this space and distance, which cannot but be feebly and imperfectly felt, even with every aid and evidence that art can give of it.

Now if an artist, taking for his subject a chain of vast mountains several leagues long, were to unite all their varieties of ravine, crage, chasm, and precipice, into one solid unbroken mass, with one light side and one dark side, looking like a white ball or paralleloiped two yards broad, the words "breadth," "boldness," "generalization," would scarcely be received as a sufficient apology for a proceeding so glaringly false, and so painfully degrading. But when, instead of the really large and simple forms of mountains, united, as they commonly are, by some, great principle of common organization, and so closely resembling each other as often to correspond in line and join in effect; when, instead of this, we have to do with spaces of cloud twice as vast, broken up into a multiplicity of forms necessary to, and characteristic of, their very nature, those forms, subject to a thousand local changes, having no association with each other, and rendered visible in a thousand places by their own transparency or cavities, where the mountain forms would be lost in shade; that this far greater space, and this far more complicated arrangement, should be all summed up into one round mass, with one swell of white, and one flat side of unbroken grey, is considered an evidence of the sublimest powers in the artist of generalization and breadth. Now it may be broad, it may be grand, it may be beautiful, artistical, and in every way desirable. I don't say it is not: I merely say it is a concentration of every kind of falsehood; it is depriving heaven of its space, clouds of their buoyancy, winds of their motion, and distance of its blue.

This is done, more or less, by all the old masters, without

§ 12. *Not
lightly to be
omitted.*

an exception.* Their idea of clouds was altogether similar; more or less perfectly carried out, according to their power of hand and accuracy of eye, but universally the same in conception. It was the idea of a comparatively small, round, puffed-up white body, irregularly associated with other round and puffed-up white bodies, each with a white light side, and a grey dark side, and a soft reflected light, floating a great way below a blue dome. Such is the idea of a cloud formed by most people; it is the first, general, uncultivated notion of what we see every day. People think of the clouds as about as large as they look; forty yards over, perhaps; they see generally that they are solid bodies subject to the same laws as other solid bodies, roundish, whitish, and apparently suspended a great way under a high blue concavity. So that these ideas be tolerably given with smooth paint, they are content, and call it nature. How different it is from anything that nature ever did, or ever will do, I have endeavoured to show; but I cannot, and do not, expect the contrast to be fully felt, unless the reader will actually go out on days when, either before or after rain, the clouds arrange themselves into vigorous masses, and, after arriving at something like a conception of their distance and size, from the mode in which they retire over the horizon, will, for himself, trace and watch their varieties of form and outline, as mass rises over mass in their illuminated bodies. Let him climb from step to step over their craggy and broken slopes, let him plunge into the long vistas of immeasurable perspective, that guide back to the blue sky; and when he finds his imagination lost in their immensity, and his senses confused with their multitude, let him go to Claude, to Salvator,¹ or to Poussin, and ask them for a like space, or like infinity.

* Here I include even the great ones, even Titian and Veronese.²

¹ [For "to Salvator," eds. 1 and 2 read, "to Berghem, to Cuyp."]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 do not contain this footnote; eds. 3 and 4 add, "excepting only Tintoret and the religious schools."]

But perhaps the most grievous fault of all, in the clouds of these painters, is the utter want of transparency. Not in her most ponderous and lightless masses will nature ever leave us without some evidence of transmitted sunshine; and she perpetually gives us passages in which the vapour becomes visible only by the sunshine which it arrests and holds within itself, not caught on its surface, but entangled in its mass,—floating fleeces, precious with the gold of heaven; and this translucency is especially indicated on the dark sides even of her heaviest wreaths, which possess opalescent and delicate hues of partial illumination, far more dependent upon the beams which pass through them than on those which are reflected upon them. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more painfully and ponderously opaque than the clouds of the old masters universally. However far removed in aërial distance, and however brilliant in light, they never appear filmy or evanescent, and their light is always *on* them, not *in* them. And this effect is much increased by the positive and perservering determination on the part of their outlines not to be broken in upon, nor interfered with in the slightest degree, by any presumptuous blue, or impertinent winds.¹ There is no inequality, no variation, no losing or disguising of line, no melting into nothingness, no shattering into spray; edge succeeds edge with imperturbable equanimity, and nothing short of the most decided interference on the part of tree tops, or the edge of the picture, prevents us from being able to follow them all the way round, like the coast of an island.

And be it remembered that all these faults and deficiencies are to be found in their drawing merely of the separate masses of the solid cumulus, the easiest drawn of all clouds.

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read—
“impertinent winds. Stulz could not be more averse to the idea of being ragged.
There is no . . .”]

Stulz was the tailor of the time. Ruskin in a reply to his father, who had asked for details of his first appearance on the lecture-platform (Edinburgh, 1st December 1853), says, “Coat by Stulz.”]

But nature scarcely ever confines herself to such masses; they form but the thousandth part of her variety of effect. She builds up a pyramid of their boiling volumes, bars this across like a mountain with the grey cirrus, envelopes it in black, ragged, drifting vapour, covers the open part of the sky with mottled horizontal fields, breaks through these with sudden and long sunbeams, tears up their edges with local winds, scatters over the gaps of blue the infinity of multitude of the high cirri, and melts even the unoccupied azure into palpitating shades. And all this is done over and over again in every quarter of a mile. Where Poussin or Claude has three similar masses, nature has fifty pictures, made up each of millions of minor thoughts; fifty aisles, penetrating through angelic chapels to the Shechinah of the blue;¹ fifty hollow ways among bewildered hills, each with its own nodding rocks, and cloven precipices, and radiant summits, and robing vapours, but all unlike each other, except in beauty, all bearing witness to the unwearied, exhaustless operation of the Infinite Mind. Now, in cases like these especially, as we observed before of general nature, though it is altogether hopeless to follow out in the space of any one picture this incalculable and inconceivable glory, yet the painter can at least see that the space he has at his command, narrow and confined as it is, is made complete use of, and that no part of it shall be without entertainment and food for thought. If he could subdivide it by millionths of inches, he could not reach the multitudinous majesty of nature; but it is at least incumbent upon him to make the most of what he has, and not, by exaggerating the proportions, banishing the variety, and repeating the forms of his clouds, to set at defiance the eternal principles of the heavens—fitfulness and infinity. And now let us, keeping in

§ 15. *Farther proof of their deficiency in space.*

¹ [Shekinah, or Shechinah, a term applied by the Jews to that visible symbol (whether material or immaterial) of the divine glory which dwelt in the tabernacle and temple. The word, though nowhere met with in this form in the Bible, is a direct derivation from the Hebrew root *shachan*, to dwell; it denoted a concentrated glowing brightness, a preternatural splendour, an effulgent something which was expressed by the term "glory."]

memory what we have seen of Poussin and Salvator, take up one

§ 16. *Instance of perfect truth in the sky of Turner's Babylon.* of Turner's skies, and see whether *he* is as narrow in his conception, or as niggardly in his space. It does not matter which we take; his sublime Babylon* is a fair example for our present purpose.

Ten miles away, down the Euphrates, where it gleams last along the plain, he gives us a drift of dark elongated vapour, melting beneath into a dim haze which embraces the hills on the horizon. It is exhausted with its own motion, and broken up by the wind in its own mass into numberless groups of billowy and tossing fragments, which, beaten by the weight of storm down to the earth, are just lifting themselves again on wearied wings, and perishing in the effort. Above these, and far beyond them, the eye goes back to a broad sea of white illuminated mist, or rather cloud melted into rain, and absorbed again before that rain has fallen, but penetrated throughout, whether it be vapour or whether it be dew, with soft sunshine, turning it as white as snow. Gradually, as it rises, the rainy fusion ceases. You cannot tell where the film of blue on the left begins, but it is deepening, deepening still; and the cloud, with its edge first invisible, then all but imaginary, then just felt when the eye is *not* fixed on it, and lost when it is, at least rises, keen from excessive distance, but soft and mantling in its body as a swan's bosom fretted by faint wind; heaving fitfully against the delicate deep blue, with white waves, whose forms are traced by the pale lines of opalescent shadow, shade only because the light is within it, and not upon it, and which break with their own swiftness into a driven line of level spray, winnowed into threads by the wind, and flung before the following vapour like those swift shafts of arrowy water which a great cataract shoots into the air beside it, trying to find the earth. Beyond these, again, rises a colossal mountain of grey cumulus, through whose shadowed sides the sunbeams penetrate in dim, sloping, rain-like shafts; and over which

* Engraved in Finden's Bible Illustrations.

they fall in a broad burst of streaming light, sinking to the earth, and showing through their own visible radiance the three successive ranges of hills which connect its desolate plain with space. Above, the edgy summit of the cumulus, broken into fragments, recedes into the sky, which is peopled in its serenity with quiet multitudes of the white, soft, silent cirrus; and, under these, again, drift near the zenith disturbed and impatient shadows of a darker spirit, seeking rest and finding none.

Now this is nature! It is the exhaustless living energy with which the universe is filled; and what will you set beside it of the works of other men? Show me a single picture, in the whole compass of ancient art, in which I can pass from cloud to cloud, from region to region, from first to second and third heaven, as I can here, and you may talk of Turner's want of truth. Turn to the Pools of Solomon,¹ and walk through the passages of mist as they melt on the one hand into those stormy fragments of fiery cloud, or on the other into the cold solitary shadows that compass the sweeping hill; and when you find an inch without air and transparency, and a hair's breadth without changefulness and thought; and when you can count the torn waves of tossing radiance that gush from the sun, as you can count the fixed, white, insipidities of Claude; or when you can measure the modulation and the depth of that hollow mist, as you can the flourishes of the brush upon the canvas of Salvator, talk of Turner's want of truth!

But let us take up simpler and less elaborate works, for there is too much in these to admit of being analyzed.

In the vignette of the Lake of Como, in Roger's Italy,² the space is so small that the details have been partially lost by the engraver; but enough remain to illustrate the great principles

¹ [Also one of the drawings for Finden's *Illustrations of the Bible*. For an anecdote about the drawing, see Rev. W. Kingsley's Notes added to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*.]

² [The drawing is No. 215 in the National Gallery.]

of cloud form, which we have endeavoured to explain. Observe first the general angular outline of the volumes on the left of the sun. If you mark the points where the direction of their outline changes, and connect those points by right lines, the cloud will touch, but will not cut, those lines throughout. Yet its contour is as graceful as it is full of character, toppling, ready to change, fragile as enormous, evanescent as colossal. Observe how, where it crosses the line of the sun, it becomes luminous, illustrating what has been observed of the visibility of mist in sunlight. Observe, above all, the multiplicity of its solid form, the depth of its shadows in perpetual transition; it is not round and swelled, half light and half dark, but full of breaking irregular shadow and transparency, variable as the wind, and melting imperceptibly above into the haziness of the sun-lighted atmosphere, contrasted in all its vast forms with the delicacy and the multitude of the brightly touched cirri. Nothing can surpass the truth of this; the cloud is as gigantic in its simplicity as the Alp which it opposes; but how various, how transparent, how infinite in its organization!

I would draw especial attention, both here and in all other works of Turner, to the beautiful use of the low horizontal bars or fields of cloud (cirrostratus), which associate themselves so frequently, more especially before storms, with the true cumulus, floating on its flanks, or capping it, as if it were a mountain, and seldom mingling with its substance, unless in the very formation of rain. They supply us withone of those beautiful instances of natural composition, by which the artist is superseded and excelled; for, by the occurrence of these horizontal flakes, the rolling form of the cumulus is both opposed in its principal lines, and gifted with an apparent solidity and vastness which no other expedient could have exhibited, and which far exceed in awfulness the impression of the noblest mountains of the earth. I have seen in the evening light of Italy, the Alps themselves out-towered by ranges of these mighty

§ 18. *Truths of outline and character in his Como.*

§ 19. *Association of the cirrostratus with the cumulus.*

clouds, alternately white in the starlight, and inhabited by fire.¹

Turn back to the first vignette in the Italy.² The angular outlines and variety of modulation in the clouds above the sail, and the delicate atmosphere of morning into which they are dissolved about the breathing hills, require no comment; but one part of this vignette demands especial notice; it is the repetition of the outline of the snowy mountain by the light cloud above it. The cause of this I have already explained (*vide* page 372), and its occurrence here is especially valuable as bearing witness to the thorough and scientific knowledge thrown by Turner into his slightest works. The thing cannot be seen once in six months; it would not have been noticed, much less introduced, by an ordinary artist, and to the public it is a dead letter, or an offence. Ninety-nine persons in a hundred would not have observed this pale wreath of parallel cloud above the hill, and the hundredth in all probability says it is unnatural. It requires the most intimate and accurate knowledge of the Alps before such a piece of refined truth can be understood.

§ 20. *The deep-based knowledge of the Alps in Turner's Lake of Geneva.*

At the 216th page³ we have another and a new case, in

¹ [The whole of this § ("I would draw . . . inhabited by fire") was entirely different in ed. 1 (only), where it ran thus:—

"It is instructive to compare with this such a sky as that of Backhuysen, No.

75, Dulwich Gallery, where we have perfectly spherical clusters of grape-like, smooth, opaque bodies, which are evidently the results of the artist's imaginative powers, strained to their highest pitch in his study, perhaps, however, modified and rendered more classical and ideal

§ 19. *Compared with the clouds of Backhuysen.*

by his feeling of the beautiful in the human form, at least in that part of it which is in Dutchmen most peculiarly developed. There are few pictures which are so evidently indoor work as this, so completely in every part bearing witness to the habit of the artist of shutting his eyes and soul to every impression from without, and repeating for ever and ever without a sensation of imperfection, a hope or desire of improvement, or a single thought of truth or nature, the same childish, contemptible, and impossible conception. It is a valuable piece of work, as teaching us the abasement into which the human mind may fall when it trusts to its own strength, and delights in its own imaginations."

The subject of the picture is "Boats in a Storm, now No. 327."]

² [The drawing for the vignette in Rogers' *Italy*—"The Lake of Geneva"—is No. 210 in the National Gallery. The sky was a good deal elaborated in the engraving.]

³ [Of Rogers' *Italy*. The drawing—"Amalfi"—is No. 225 in the National Gallery. The sky-effects were added in the engraving.]

which clouds in perfect repose, unaffected by wind, or any influence but that of their own elastic force, boil, rise, and melt in the heaven with more approach to globular form than under any other circumstances is possible.¹ I name this vignette, not only because it is most remarkable for the buoyancy and elasticity of inward energy indicated through the most ponderous forms, and affords us a beautiful instance of the junction of the cirrostratus with the cumulus of which we have just been speaking (§ 19), but because it is a characteristic example of Turner's use of one of the facts of nature not hitherto noticed, that the edge of a partially transparent body is often darker than its central surface, because at the edge the light penetrates and passes through, which from the centre is reflected to the eye. The sharp cutting edge of a wave, if not broken into foam, frequently appears for an instant almost black; and the outlines of these massy clouds, where their projecting forms rise in relief against the light of their bodies, are almost always marked, clearly and firmly, by very dark edges. Hence we have frequently, if not constantly, multitudinous forms indicated only by outline, giving character and solidity to the great masses of light without taking away from their breadth. And Turner avails himself of these boldly and constantly, outlining forms with the brush of which no other indication is given. All the grace and solidity of the white cloud on the right-hand side of the vignette before us depends upon such outlines.

As I before observed of mere execution, that one of the best tests of its excellence was the expression of *infinity*;² so it may be noticed with respect to the painting of details generally, that more difference lies between one artist and another,

¹ [Ed. 1 (only) reads here as follows:—

“But even here the great outline of the mass is terminated by severe right lines, four sides of an irregular hexagon, and the lesser cloud is peaked like a cliff. But I name this vignette not only because . . . aetherial elasticity of inward energy indicated in spite of the most ponderous forms, and because it is as faithful as it is bold in the junction of those weighty masses with the delicate, horizontal lines of the lower air, but because it is a characteristic example,” etc.]

² [Above, pp. 123 (§ 4), 339; and *cf.* sec. i. ch. v. in next volume.]

in the attainment of this quality, than in any other of the efforts of art; and that if we wish, without reference to beauty of composition, or any other interfering circumstances, to form a judgment of the truth of painting, perhaps the very first thing we should look for, whether in one thing or another,—foliage, or clouds, or waves,—should be the expression of *infinity* always and everywhere, in all parts and divisions of parts. For we may be quite sure that what is not infinite cannot be true. It does not, indeed, follow that what is infinite is always true, but it cannot be altogether false; for this simple reason, that it is impossible for mortal mind to compose an infinity of any kind for itself, or to form an idea of perpetual variation, and to avoid all repetition, merely by its own combining resources. The moment that we trust to ourselves, we repeat ourselves, and therefore the moment we see in a work of any kind whatsoever the expression of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has gone to nature for it; while, on the other hand, the moment we see repetition, or want of infinity, we may be certain that the workman has *not* gone to nature for it.

§ 22. *Reasons for insisting on the infinity of Turner's works. Infinity is almost an unerring test of all truth.*

For instance, in the picture of Salvator before noticed, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery,¹ as we see at once that the two masses of cloud absolutely repeat each other in every one of their forms, and that each is composed of about twelve white sweeps of the brush, all forming the same curve, and all of the same length; and as we can count these, and measure their common diameter, and, by stating the same to anybody else, convey to him a full and perfect idea and knowledge of that sky in all its parts and proportions,—as we can do this, we may be absolutely certain, without reference to the real sky, or to any other part of nature, without even knowing what the white things were intended for, that they cannot possibly resemble *anything*; that whatever they were meant for, they

§ 23. *Instances of the total want of it in the works of Salvator;*

¹ [See above, p. 376 *n.* 2, and below, pp. 454, 476.]

can be nothing but a violent contradiction of all nature's principles and forms. When, on the other hand, we take up such a sky as that of Turner's Rouen seen from St. Catherine's Hill, in the Rivers of France,¹ and find, in the first place, that he has given us a distance over the hills in the horizon, into which when we are tired of penetrating, we must turn and come back again, there being not the remotest chance of getting to the end of it; and when we see that from this measureless distance up to the zenith, the whole sky is one ocean of alternate waves of cloud and light, so blended together that the eye cannot rest on any one without being guided to the next, and so to a hundred more, till it is lost over and over again in every wreath; that if it divides the sky into quarters of inches, and tries to count or comprehend the component parts of any single one of those divisions, it is still as utterly defied and defeated by the part as by the whole; that there is not one line out of the millions there which repeats another, not one which is unconnected with another, not one which does not in itself convey histories of distance and space, and suggest new and changeful form; then we may be all but certain, though these forms are too mysterious and too delicate for us to analyze, though all is so crowded and so connected that it is impossible to test any single part by particular laws, yet without any such tests we may be sure that this infinity can only be based on truth, that it *must* be nature, because man could not have originated it, and that every form must be faithful, because none is like another. And therefore it is that I insist so constantly on this great quality of landscape painting, as it appears in Turner: because it is not merely a constant and most important truth in itself, but it almost amounts to a demonstration of every other truth. And it will be found a far rarer

§ 24. *And of the universal presence of it in those of Turner. The conclusions which may be arrived at from it.*

¹ [Formerly in the Ruskin collection; see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 50. The drawing is now in the collection of Mr. Henry Yates Thompson; it is engraved in *Ruskin and Turner*. Turner's first sketch from nature for the drawing is No. 566 in the National Gallery.]

attainment in the works of other men than is commonly supposed, and the sign, wherever it is really found, of the very highest art. For we are apt to forget that the greatest *number* is no nearer infinity than the least, if it be definite number; and the vastest bulk is no nearer infinity than the most minute, if it be definite bulk; so that a man may multiply his objects for ever and ever, and be no nearer infinity than he had reached with one, if he do not vary them and confuse them; and a man may reach infinity in every touch and line, and part, and unit, if in these he be truthfully various and obscure. And we shall find, the more we examine the works of the old masters, that always, and in all parts, they are totally wanting in every feeling of infinity, and therefore in *all* truth: and even in the works of the moderns, though the aim is far more just, we shall frequently perceive an erroneous choice of means, and a substitution of mere number or bulk for real infinity.¹

§ 25. *The multiplication of objects, or increase of their size, will not give the impression of infinity, but is the resource of novices.*

And, therefore, in concluding our notice of the central cloud region, I should wish to dwell particularly on those skies of Turner's in which we have the whole space of the heaven covered with the delicate dim flakes of gathering vapour, which are the intermediate link between the central region and that of the rain-cloud, and which assemble and grow out of the air; shutting up the heaven with a grey interwoven veil, before the approach of storm, faint but universal, letting the light of the upper sky pass pallidly through their body, but never rending a passage for the ray. We have the first approach and gathering of this kind of sky most gloriously given in the vignette at p. 115 of Rogers's *Italy*,² which is one of the most

§ 26. *Farther instances of infinity in the grey skies of Turner.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“real infinity, ending, as in the works of one of our artists most celebrated for *sublimity* of conception (the general admiration of whose works, however ill-founded, I can perfectly understand, for I once admired them myself.) in morbid and meaningless tautology.”

The reference is perhaps to Martin; see above, pp. 36, 38.]

² [“Galileo's Villa”; the drawing is No. 221 in the National Gallery.]

perfect pieces of feeling (if I may transgress, my usual rules for an instant) extant in art, owing to the extreme grandeur and stern simplicity of the strange and ominous forms of level cloud behind the building. In that at p. 223 there are passages of the same kind, of exceeding perfection. The sky through which the dawn is breaking in the Voyage of Columbus, and that with the moonlight under the Rialto in Rogers's Poems, the skies of the Bethlehem and the Pyramids in Finden's Bible series, and among the Academy pictures those of the Hero and Leander and the Flight into Egypt, are characteristic and noble examples, as far as any individual works can be characteristic of the universality of this mighty mind. I ought not to forget the magnificent solemnity and fulness of the wreaths of gathering darkness in the Folkestone.¹

We must not pass from the consideration of the central cloud region, without noticing the general high quality of the cloud-drawing of Stanfield. He is limited in his range, and is apt in extensive compositions to repeat himself, neither is he ever very refined; but his cloud form is firmly and fearlessly chiselled, with perfect knowledge, though usually with some want of feeling. As far as it goes, it is very grand and very tasteful, beautifully developed in the space of its solid parts and full of action. Next to Turner, he is incomparably the noblest master of cloud-form of all our artists; in fact, he is the only one among them who really can *draw* a cloud. For it is a very different thing to rub out an irregular white space neatly with the handkerchief, or to leave a bright little bit of paper in the middle of a wash, and to give the real anatomy of

¹ [The vignette at p. 223 of the *Italy* is "Padua: Moonlight"; the drawing is No. 223 in the National Gallery. The dawn in the "Voyage of Columbus" (p. 261 of the *Poems*) is No. 249 in the National Gallery. The "Rialto" (p. 95 of the *Poems*) is No. 394 (see, for another reference to it, *Catalogue of the Drawings and Sketches by Turner in the National Gallery* (Group xiii.). For "Hero and Leander," see above, p. 242 *n.* The "Flight into Egypt" (otherwise called "Dawn of Christianity") was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1841, and was formerly in the Windus collection. The Folkestone drawing was first published in Cooke's *Southern Coast*, No. 15 (1826); it is Plate 8 in M. B. Huish's ed. of 1892.]

cloud-form with perfect articulation of chiaroscuro. We have multitudes of painters who can throw a light bit of straggling vapour across their sky, or leave in it delicate and tender passages of breaking light; but this is a very different thing from taking up each of those bits or passages, and giving it structure, and parts, and solidity. The eye is satisfied with exceedingly little, as an indication of cloud, and a few clever sweeps with the brush on wet paper may give all that it requires; but this is not *drawing* clouds; nor will it ever appeal fully and deeply to the mind, except when it occurs only as a part of a higher system. And there is not one of our modern artists, except Stanfield, who can do much more than this. As soon as they attempt to lay detail upon their clouds, they appear to get bewildered, forget that they are dealing with forms regulated by precisely the same simple laws of light and shade as more substantial matter, overcharge their colour, confuse their shadows and dark sides, and end in mere ragged confusion. I believe the evil arises from their never attempting to render clouds except with the brush; other objects, at some period of study, they take up with the chalk or lead, and so learn something of their form; but they appear to consider clouds as altogether dependent on cobalt and camel's hair, and so never understand anything of their real anatomy. But, whatever the cause, I cannot point to any central clouds of the moderns,* except those of Turner and Stanfield, as really showing much knowledge of, or feeling for, nature, though *all* are superior to the conventional and narrow conceptions of the

§ 28. *The average standing of the English school.*

* I had forgotten, or little observed, when I wrote this, the elaborate cumuli in many of Linnell's best pictures; and I think that among our rising artists there may now (1851) be traced signs of rapidly increasing care in studies of skies. There was a very beautiful group of cirri in a picture by a Mr. Dawson, in the British Institution of this year, a study on the River Trent at sunset.¹

¹ [The footnote was, as its date (1851) implies, added in ed. 5. To John Linnell (1792–1882) Ruskin pays a further tribute below, p. 604 *n.*, and in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. Addenda. Henry Dawson (1811–1878) was a Nottingham artist, originally employed in a lace factory there.]

ancients. We are all right as far as we go; our work may be incomplete, but it is not false; and it is far better, far less injurious to the mind, that we should be little attracted to the sky, and taught to be satisfied with a light suggestion of truthful form, than that we should be drawn to it by violently pronounced outline and intense colour, to find in its finished falsehood everything to displease or to mislead, to hurt our feelings if we have foundation for them, and corrupt them if we have none.

CHAPTER IV

OF TRUTH OF CLOUDS:—THIRDLY, OF THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD

THE clouds which I wish to consider as characteristic of the lower, or rainy region, differ not so much in their real nature from those of the central and uppermost regions, as in appearance, owing to their greater nearness. For the central clouds, and perhaps even the high cirri, deposit moisture, if not distinctly rain, as is sufficiently proved by the existence of snow on the highest peaks of the Himalaya; and when, on any such mountains, we are brought into close contact with the central clouds,* we find them little differing from the ordinary rain-cloud of the plains, except by being slightly less dense and dark. But the apparent differences, dependent on proximity, are most marked and important.

§ 1. *The apparent difference in character between the lower and central clouds is dependent chiefly on proximity.*

In the first place, the clouds of the central region have, as has been before observed, pure and aerial greys for their dark sides, owing to their necessary distance from the observer; and as this distance permits a multitude of local phenomena capable of influencing colour, such as accidental sunbeams, refractions, transparencies, or local mists and showers, to be collected into a space apparently small, the colours of these clouds are always changeful and palpitating; and whatever degree of grey or of gloom

§ 2. *Their marked differences in colour.*

* I am unable to say to what height the real rain-cloud may extend; perhaps there are no mountains which rise altogether above storm. I have never been in a violent storm at a greater height than between 8000 and 9000 feet above the level of the sea. There the rain-cloud is exceedingly light, compared with the ponderous darkness of the lower air.

may be mixed with them is invariably pure and ærial. But the nearness of the rain-cloud rendering it impossible for a number of phenomena to be at once visible, makes its hue of grey monotonous, and (by losing the blue of distance) warm and brown compared with that of the upper clouds. This is especially remarkable on any part of it which may happen to be illumined, such part being of a brown, bricky, ochreous tone, never bright, always coming in dark outline on the lights of the central clouds. But it is seldom that this takes place, and when it does, never over large spaces, little being usually seen of the rain-cloud but its under and dark side. This, when the cloud above is dense, becomes of an inky and cold grey, and sulphurous and lurid if there be thunder in the air.

With these striking differences in colour, it presents no fewer
 § 3. *And in- nor less important in form, chiefly from losing*
definiteness of almost all definiteness of character and outline. It is
form. sometimes nothing more than a thin mist, whose
 outline cannot be traced, rendering the landscape locally indistinct or dark; if its outline be visible, it is ragged and torn, rather a spray of cloud, taken off its edge and sifted by the wind, than an edge of the cloud itself. In fact, it rather partakes of the nature, and assumes the appearance, of real water in the state of spray, than of elastic vapour. This appearance is enhanced by the usual presence of formed rain, carried along with it in a columnar form, ordinarily of course reaching the ground like a veil, but very often suspended with the cloud, and hanging from it like a jagged fringe, or over it, in light, rain being always lighter than the cloud it falls from. These columns or fringes of rain are often waved and bent by the wind, or twisted, sometimes even swept upwards from the clouds. The velocity of these vapours, though not necessarily in reality greater than that of the central clouds, appears greater, owing to their proximity, and, of course, also to the usual presence of a more violent wind. They are also apparently much more in the power of the wind, having less elastic force in themselves; but they are precisely subject to the same great laws of form which

regulate the upper clouds. They are not solid bodies borne about with the wind, but they carry the wind with them, and cause it. Every one knows, who has ever been out in a storm, that the time when it rains heaviest is precisely the time when he cannot hold up his umbrella; that the wind is carried with the cloud, and lulls when it has passed. Every one who has ever seen rain in a hill country knows that a rain-cloud, like any other, may have all its parts in rapid motion, and yet, as a whole, remain in one spot. I remember once, when in crossing the Tête Noire, I had turned up the valley towards Trient, I noticed a rain-cloud forming on the Glacier de Trient. With a west wind, it proceeded towards the Col de Balme, being followed by a prolonged wreath of vapour, always forming exactly at the same spot over the glacier. This long, serpent-like line of cloud went on at a great rate till it reached the valley leading down from the Col de Balme, under the slate rocks of the Croix de Fer. There it turned sharp round, and came down this valley, at right angles to its former progress, and finally directly contrary to it, till it came down within five hundred feet of the village, where it disappeared; the line behind always advancing, and always disappearing, at the same spot. This continued for half an hour, the long line describing the curve of a horse-shoe; always coming into existence and always vanishing at exactly the same places; traversing the space between with enormous swiftness. This cloud, ten miles off, would have looked like a perfectly motionless wreath, in the form of a horse-shoe, hanging over the hills.

§ 4. They are subject to precisely the same great laws.

To the region of the rain-cloud belong also all the phenomena of drifted smoke, heat-haze, local mists in the morning or evening, in valleys or over water, mirage, white steaming vapour rising in evaporation from moist and open surfaces, and everything which visibly affects the condition of the atmosphere without actually assuming the form of cloud. These phenomena are as perpetual in all countries as they are beautiful, and afford by

§ 5. Value, to the painter, of the rain-cloud.

far the most effective and valuable means which the painter possesses, for modification of the forms of fixed objects. The upper clouds are distinct and comparatively opaque, they do not modify, but conceal; but, through the rain-cloud and its accessory phenomena, all that is beautiful may be made manifest, and all that is hurtful concealed; what is paltry may be made to look vast, and what is ponderous, aërial; mystery may be obtained without obscurity, and decoration without disguise. And, accordingly, nature herself uses it constantly, as one of her chief means of most perfect effect; not in one country, nor another, but wherever there is anything worth calling landscape. I cannot answer for the desert of the Sahara, but I know that there cannot be a greater mistake than supposing that delicate and variable effects of mist and rain-cloud are peculiar to northern climates. I have never seen, in any place or country, effects of mists more perfect than in the Campagna of Rome, and among

§ 6. *The old masters have not left a single instance of the painting of the rain-cloud, and very few efforts at it. Gaspar Poussin's storms.*

the hills of Sorrento. It is therefore matter of no little marvel to me, and I conceive that it can scarcely be otherwise to any reflecting person, that throughout the whole range of ancient landscape art there occurs no instance of the painting of a real rain-cloud, still less of any of the more delicate phenomena characteristic of the region. "Storms" indeed, as the innocent public persist in calling such abuses of nature and abortions of art as the two windy Gaspars in our National Gallery,¹ are common enough; massive concretions of ink and indigo, wrung and twisted very hard, apparently in a vain effort to get some moisture out of them; bearing up courageously and successfully against a wind whose effects on the trees in the foreground can be accounted for only on the supposition that they are all of the India-rubber species. Enough of this, in all conscience, we have, and to spare; but for the legitimate rain-cloud, with its ragged and

¹ [No. 36, "A Land Storm," and No. 95, "Dido and Æneas." For further remarks on the "India-rubber boughs" of the tree in the former picture, see below, sec. vi. ch. i. §§ 12, 13, pp. 583-4. For other references to No. 95, see below, p. 409; and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 18.]

spray-like edge, its veily transparency, and its columnar burden of blessing, neither it, nor anything like it or approaching it, occurs in any painting of the old masters that I have ever seen; and I have seen enough to warrant my affirming that if it occur anywhere, it must be through accident rather than intention. Nor is there stronger evidence of any perception, on the part of these much respected artists, that there were such things in the world as mists or vapours. If a cloud under their direction ever touches a mountain, it does it effectually and as if it meant to do it. There is no mystifying the matter; here is a cloud, and there is a hill; if it is to come on at all, it comes on to some purpose, and there is no hope of its ever going off again. We have, therefore, little to say of the efforts of the old masters, in any scenes which might naturally have been connected with the clouds of the lowest region, except that the faults of form specified in considering the central clouds are, by way of being energetic or sublime, more glaringly and audaciously committed in their “storms;” and that what is a wrong form among clouds possessing form, is there given with increased generosity of fiction to clouds which have no form at all.¹

Supposing that we had nothing to show in modern art, of the region of the rain-cloud, but the dash of Cox, the blot of De Wint,² or even the ordinary stormy skies of the body of our inferior water-colour painters, we might yet laugh all efforts of the old masters to utter scorn.³ But one, among our water-colour artists, deserves, especial notice, before we ascend the

§ 7. *The great power of the moderns in this respect.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 conclude the section thus:—

“no form at all, and that the result, however, admirable or desirable it may perhaps, on principles hitherto undeveloped, be hereafter proved, is in all cases and from all hands, as far as the representation of nature is concerned, something which only ought not to amuse by its absurdity, because it ought to disgust by its falsehood.”]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read, “De Wint, the spongy breadth of Cattermole, or even . . .”]

³ [For, “utter scorn. But one,” eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“utter scorn. The works of Stanfield, here, as in all other points, based on perfect knowledge, would enable us to illustrate almost every circumstances of storm, and should be our text-book, were it not that all he has done has been farther carried by a mightier hand. But one . . .”]

steps of the solitary throne, as having done in his peculiar walk, what for faithful and pure truth, truth indeed of a limited range and unstudied application, but yet most faithful and most pure, will remain unsurpassed if not unrivalled—Copley Fielding. We § 8. *Works of Copley Fielding.* are well aware how much of what he has done depends in a great degree upon particular tricks of execution, or on a labour somewhat too mechanical to be meritorious; that it is rather the *texture* than the *plan* of his sky which is to be admired, and that the greater part of what is pleasurable in it will fall rather under the head of dexterous imitation than of definite thought. But whatever detractions from his merit we may be compelled to make on these grounds, in considering art as the embodying of beauty, or the channel of mind, it is impossible, when we are speaking of truth only, to pass by his down scenes and moorland showers, of some years ago, in which he produced¹ some of the most perfect and faultless passages of² mist and rain-cloud which art has ever seen. Wet, transparent, formless, full of motion, felt rather by their shadows on the hills than by their presence in the sky, becoming dark only through increased depth of space, most § 9. *His peculiar truth.* translucent where most sombre, and light only through increased buoyancy of motion, letting the blue through their interstices, and the sunlight through their chasms, with the irregular playfulness and traceless gradation of nature herself, his skies will remain,³ as long as their colours stand, among the most simple, unadulterated, and complete transcripts of a particular nature which art can point to. Had he painted five instead of five hundred such, and gone on to

¹ [For “some years ago . . . produced,” eds. 1 and 2 read:—
“five or six years ago. Since that time, we fear, he has been thinking of himself instead of nature, and has partly lost both nature and himself; but he then produced . . .”]

Cf. a similar passage above, p. 323.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 here insert, “the extremely obvious and lower truths of the mist,” etc. And to the word “lower” a footnote was attached, as follows: “External and obvious, as being truths of mere imitation—statements of the materials and means of nature, not of her mind.”]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—
“his skies left nothing to be desired, but an umbrella, and must remain . . .”]

other sources of beauty, he might, there can be little doubt, have been one of our greatest artists. But it often grieves us to see how his power is limited to a particular moment, to § 10. *His weakest*—that easiest moment for imitation, when *ness, and its* knowledge of form may be superseded by *probable cause*. management of the brush, and the judgment of the colourist by the manufacture of a colour; the moment when all form is melted down and drifted away in the descending veil of rain, and when the variable and fitful colours of the heaven are lost in the monotonous grey of its storm tones.* We can only account for this by supposing that there is something radically wrong in his method of study; for a man of his evident depth of feeling and pure love of truth ought not to be, cannot be, except from some strange error in his mode of out-of-door practice, thus limited in his range, and liable to decline of power. We have little doubt that almost all such failures arise from the artist's neglecting the use of the chalk,¹ and supposing that either the power of drawing forms, or the sense of their beauty, can be maintained unweakened or unblunted, without constant and laborious studies in simple

* I ought here, however, to have noted another effect of the rain-cloud, which, so far as I know, has been rendered only by Copley Fielding. It is seen chiefly in clouds gathering for rain, when the sky is entirely covered with a grey veil rippled or waved with pendent swells of soft texture, but excessively hard and liny in their edges. I am not sure that this is an agreeable or impressive form of the rain-cloud, but it is a frequent one, and it is often most faithfully given by Fielding; only in some cases the edges becoming a little doubled and harsh have given a look of failure or misadventure to some even of the best-studied passages; and something of the same hardness of line is occasionally visible in his drawing of clouds by whose nature it is not warranted.²

¹ [*cf.* below, sec. iv. ch. iii. § 27.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 did not contain the footnote, and read in the text after the words "storm tones":—

"so surely as Copley Fielding attempts the slightest hint at cloud form, beyond the edgeless rag, which is tossed and twisted in the drift of the rain, does he become liny, hard, and expressionless,—so surely as he leaves the particular greys and browns whose harmony can scarcely be imperfect, and attempts the slightest passage of real colour, much more when he plunges into the difficulties of elaborate and elevated composition, does he become affected, false, and feeble. We can . . ."

With the passages here on Copley Fielding's fondness for rain-clouds, *cf. Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 1, and *Art of England*, § 169.]

light and shade, of form only. The brush is at once the artist's greatest aid and enemy; it enables him to make his power available, but at the same time, it undermines his power, and unless it be constantly rejected for the pencil, never can be rightly used. But whatever the obstacle be, we do not doubt that it is one which, once seen, may be overcome or removed; and we are in the constant hope of seeing this finely minded artist shake off his lethargy, break the shackles of habit, seek in extended and right study the sources of real power, and become, what we have full faith in his capability of being, one of the leading artists of his time.

In passing to the works of our greatest modern master, it must be premised that the qualities which constitute a most essential part of the truth of the rain-cloud are in no degree to be rendered by engraving. Its indefiniteness of torn and transparent form is far beyond the power of even our best engravers: I do not say beyond their *possible* power, if they would make themselves artists as well as workmen, but far beyond the power they actually possess: while the depth and delicacy of the greys which Turner employs or produces, as well as the refinement of his execution, are, in the nature of things, utterly beyond all imitation by the opaque and lifeless darkness of the steel. What we say of his works, therefore, must be understood as referring only to the original drawings; though we may name one or two instances in which the engraver has, to a certain degree, succeeded in distantly following the intention of the master.

Jumièges, in the Rivers of France,¹ ought, perhaps, after what we have said of Fielding, to be our first object of attention, because it is a rendering by Turner of Fielding's particular moment, and the only one existing, for Turner never repeats himself. One picture is allotted to one truth; the statement is perfectly

§ 11. *Impossibility of reasoning on the rain-clouds of Turner from engravings.*

§ 12. *His rendering of Fielding's particular moment in the Jumièges.*

¹ [Plate No. 11 in *The Seine and the Loire*; the drawing is No. 155 in the National Gallery.]

and gloriously made, and he passes on to speak of a fresh portion of God's revelation.* The haze of sunlit rain of this most magnificent picture, the gradual retirement of the dark wood into its depth, and the sparkling and evanescent light which sends its variable flashes on the abbey, figures, foliage, and foam, require no comment; they speak home at once.¹

From this picture we should pass to the Llanthony,† which

* Compare [part ii.] sec. i. chap. iv. § 5 [p. 157].

† No conception can be formed of this picture from the engraving. It is perhaps the most marvellous piece of execution and of grey colour existing, except perhaps the drawing presently to be noticed, Land's End. Nothing else can be set beside it, even of Turner's own works, much less of any other man's.²

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 continue:—

“But let it be especially observed how we have, added to all this, just where the rainbow melts away, the wreath of swift and delicate cloud-form, left in decisive light, which Fielding could only have rendered in darkness, and even then with little more than the bare suggestion of imperfect outline; while Turner has given us in every flake a separate study of beautiful and substantial form.”

Between § 12 and § 13 eds. 1–4 insert an additional section as follows:—

“But there is yet added to this noble composition an incident which may serve us at once for a farther illustration of the nature and forms of cloud, and for a final proof how deeply and philosophically Turner has studied them.

“We have, on the right of the picture, the steam and the smoke of a passing steamboat. Now steam is nothing but an artificial cloud in the process of dissipation; it is as much a cloud as those of the sky itself, that is, a quantity of moisture rendered visible in the air by imperfect solution. Accordingly, observe how exquisitely irregular and broken are its forms, how sharp and spray-like, but with all the facts observed which were pointed out in chap. ii. of this section, the convex side to the wind, the sharp edge on that side, the other soft and lost. Smoke, on the contrary, is an actual substance, existing independently in the air; a solid, opaque body, subject to no absorption or dissipation but that of tenuity. Observe its volumes; there is no breaking up nor disappearing here; the wind carries its elastic globes before it, but does not dissolve nor break them.‡ Equally convex and void of angles on all sides, they are the exact representatives of the clouds of the old masters, and serve at once to show the ignorance and falsehood of these latter, and the accuracy of study which has guided Turner to the truth. ‘ ”

‡ “It does not do so until the volumes lose their density by inequality of motion, and by the expansion of the warm air which conveys them. They are then, of course, broken into forms resembling those of clouds.”]

² [For the “Llanthony,” cf. below, p. 489. Elsewhere Ruskin refers to the “Llanthony” as one of the very noblest of Turner's second period (*Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 50). § 50). He there compares it with an early sketch of the same scene (about 1795) as an instance of the painter's tenacity of memory and recurrence to early impressions. For the drawing of Land's End, see below, § 15.]

is the rendering of the moment immediately following that given in the Jumièges. The shower is here half exhausted, half passed by, the last drops are rattling faintly through the glimmering hazel boughs, the white torrent, swelled by the sudden storm, flings up its hasty jets of springing spray to meet the returning light; and these, as if the heaven regretted what it had given, and were taking it back, pass as they leap, into vapour, and fall not again, but vanish in the shafts of the sunlight;* hurrying, fitful, wind-woven sunlight, which glides through the thick leaves, and paces along the pale rocks like rain; half conquering, half quenched by the very mists which it summons itself from the lighted pastures as it passes, and gathers out of the drooping herbage and from the streaming crags; sending them with messages of peace to the far summits of the yet unveiled mountains, whose silence is still broken by the sound of the rushing rain.

With this noble work we should compare one of which we can better judge by the engraving, the Loch Coriskin, in the illustrations to Scott,¹ because it introduces us to another and a most remarkable instance of the artist's vast and varied knowledge. When rain falls on a mountain composed chiefly of barren rocks, their surfaces, being violently heated by the sun, whose most intense warmth always precedes rain, occasion sudden and violent evaporation, actually converting the first shower into steam. Consequently, upon all such hills, on the commencement of rain, white volumes of vapour are

* I know no effect more strikingly characteristic of the departure of a storm than the *smoking* of the mountain torrents. The exhausted air is so thirsty of moisture, that every jet of spray is seized upon by it, and converted into vapour as it springs; and this vapour rises so densely from the surface of the steam as to give it the exact appearance of boiling water. I have seen the whole course of the Arve at Chamonix one line of dense cloud, dissipating as soon as it had risen ten or twelve feet from the surface, but entirely concealing the water from an observer placed above it.

¹ [Loch Coriskin was engraved in vol. x. of Scott's *Poetical Works* (1834).]



J.M.V. Turner R.A.

Allen & Co. St.

Llanthony Abbey.

From the Drawing in possession of Lord Strathcona & Mount Royal.

instantaneously and universally formed, which rise, are absorbed by the atmosphere, and again descend in rain to rise in fresh volumes until the surfaces of the hills are cooled. Where there is grass or vegetation, this effect is diminished; where there is foliage it scarcely takes place at all. Now this effect has evidently been especially chosen by Turner for Loch Coriskin, not only because it enabled him to relieve its jagged forms with veiling vapour, but to tell the tale which no pencilling could, the story of its utter absolute barrenness of unlichened, dead, desolated rock:

“The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of nature’s genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencoe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
But here,—above, around, below,
On mountain, or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The weary eye may ken;
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone.”
—*Lord of the Isles*, Canto III.¹

Here, again, we see the absolute necessity of scientific and entire acquaintance with nature, before this great artist can be understood. That which, to the ignorant, is little more than an unnatural and meaningless confusion of steam-like vapour, is to the experienced such a full and perfect expression of the character of the spot, as no means of art could have otherwise given.

In the Long Ships Lighthouse, Land’s End, we have clouds²

¹ [St. xiv. See Appendix, vi., p. 686.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“The ‘Long Ships Lighthouse, Land’s End, ‘ is, perhaps, a finer instance of the painting of the rain-cloud than any yet given. Taken as a whole, it is, perhaps, the noblest drawing of Turner’s existing. The engraving is good, as a plate, but conveys not the slightest idea of the original. We have here clouds . . .”]

Turner’s drawing of the Long Ships Lighthouse (a mile from the shore of Land’s End) was published in No. 20 of *England and Wales*. The drawing (now in the

without rain, at twilight, enveloping the cliffs of the coast, but concealing nothing, every outline being visible through their gloom; and not only the outline, for it is easy to do this, but the *surface*. The bank of rocky coast approaches the spectator inch by inch, felt clearer and clearer as it withdraws from the garment of cloud; not by edges more and more defined, but by a surface more and more unveiled. We have thus the painting, not of a mere transparent veil,¹ but of a solid body of cloud, every inch of whose increasing distance is marked and felt. But the great wonder of the picture is the intensity of gloom which is attained in pure warm grey, without either blackness or blueness. It is a gloom dependent rather on the enormous space and depth indicated, than on actual pitch of colour; distant by real drawing, without a grain of blue; dark by real substance, without a stroke of blackness: and with all this, it is not formless, but full of indications of character, wild, irregular, shattered, and indefinite; full of the energy of storm, fiery in haste, and yet flinging back out of its motion the fitful swirls of bounding drift, of tortured vapour tossed up like men's hands, as in defiance of the tempest, the jets of resulting whirlwind, hurled back from the rocks into the face of the coming darkness, which, beyond all other characters, mark the raised passion of the elements. It is this untraceable,² unconnected, yet perpetual form, this fulness of character absorbed in universal energy, which distinguishes nature and Turner from all their imitators. To roll a volume of smoke before the wind, to indicate motion or violence by monotonous similarity of line and direction, is for the multitude; but to mark the independent passion, the tumultuous separate existence, of every wreath of writhing vapour, yet swept away

collection of Mr. John E. Taylor) is engraved by photogravure in vol. ii. of *Turner and Ruskin*. A portion of the foreground, engraved by Armytage from a drawing by Ruskin, is here given (plate facing p. 566, see note above, on p. liv.).]

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 here insert, "like Fielding's rain."]

² [In eds. 1-4 a marginal note was added here:—§ 17: "The individual character of its parts."]

and overpowered by one omnipotence of storm, and thus to bid us

“Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth,
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument,”—¹

this belongs only to nature and to him.

The drawing of Coventry may be particularized as a farther example of this fine suggestion of irregularity and fitfulness, through very constant parallelism of direction, both in rain and clouds. The great mass of cloud which traverses the whole picture is characterized throughout by severe right lines, nearly parallel with each other, into which every one of its wreaths has a tendency to range itself; but no one of these right lines is actually and entirely parallel to any other, though all have a certain tendency, more or less defined in each, which impresses the mind with the most distinct *idea* of parallelism. Neither are any of the lines actually straight and unbroken; on the contrary, they are all made up of the most exquisite and varied curves, and it is the imagined line which joins the apices of these, a tangent to them all, which is in reality straight.* They are suggested, not represented, right lines: but the whole volume of cloud is visibly and totally bounded by them; and, in consequence, its whole body is felt to be dragged out and elongated by the force of the tempest which it carries with it, and every one of its wreaths to be (as was before explained) not so much something borne *before* or *by* the wind, as the visible form and presence of the wind itself. We could not possibly point out a more magnificent piece of drawing as a contrast to such works

§ 16. *Swift rain-cloud in the Coventry.*²

§ 17. *Compared with forms given by Salvator.*

* Note especially the dark uppermost outline of the mass.

¹ [Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book iv.]

² [In eds. 1–4 the marginal notes runs, “Deep studied form of swift rain-cloud in the ‘Coventry.’” The drawing of Coventry was published in No. 17 of *England and Wales*.]

of Salvator as that before alluded to (159 Dulwich Gallery).¹ Both are rolling masses of connected cloud; but in Turner's there is not one curve that repeats another, nor one curve in itself monotonous, or without character, and yet every part and portion of the cloud is rigidly subjected to the same forward, fierce, inevitable influence of storm. In Salvator's every curve repeats its neighbour, every curve is monotonous in itself, and yet the whole cloud is curling about hither and thither, evidently without the slightest notion where it is going to, and unregulated by any general influence whatsoever. I could not bring together two finer or more instructive examples, the one of everything that is perfect, the other of everything that is childish or abominable, in the representation of the same facts.

But there is yet more to be noticed in this noble sky of Turner's. Not only are the lines of the rolling cloud thus irregular in their parallelism, but those of the falling rain are equally varied in their direction, indicating the gusty changefulness of the wind, and yet kept so straight and stern in their individual descent, that we are not suffered to forget its strength. This impression is still farther enhanced by the drawing of the smoke, which blows every way at once, yet turning perpetually in each of its swirls back in the direction of the wind, but so suddenly and violently as almost to assume the angular lines of lightning. Farther, to complete the impression, be it observed that all the cattle, both upon the near and distant hill-side, have left off grazing, and are standing stock still and stiff, with their heads down and their backs to the wind; and finally, that we may be told not only what the storm is, but what it has been, the gutter at the side of the road is gushing in a complete torrent, and particular attention is directed to it by the full burst of light in the sky being brought just above it, so that all its waves are bright with the reflection.

§ 18. *Entire expression of tempest by minute touches and circumstances in the Coventry.*

¹ [Now No. 137. See also pp. 375, 477.]

But I have not quite done with this noble picture yet.¹ Impetuous clouds, twisted rain, flickering sunshine, fleeting shadow, gushing water, and oppressed cattle, all speak the same story of tumult, fitfulness, power, and velocity. Only one thing is wanted, a passage of repose to contrast with it all; and it is given. High and far above the dark volumes of the swift rain-cloud, are seen on the left, through their opening, the quiet, horizontal, silent flakes of the highest cirrus, resting in the repose of the deep sky. Of all else that we have noticed in this drawing, some faint idea can be formed from the engraving; but of the delicate and soft forms of these pausing vapours not the slightest, and still less of the exquisite depth and palpitating tenderness of the blue with which they are islanded. Engravers, indeed, invariably lose the effect of all passages of cold colour, under the mistaken idea that it is to be kept *pale* in order to indicate distance; whereas it ought commonly to be darker than the rest of the sky.²

§ 19. *Especially by contrast with a passage of extreme repose.*

To appreciate the full truth of this passage, we must understand another effect peculiar to the raincloud, that its openings exhibit the purest³ blue which the sky ever shows. For as we saw, in the first chapter in this section, that aqueous vapour always turns the sky more or less grey, it follows that we never can see the azure so intense as when the greater part of this vapour has just fallen in rain. Then, and then only, pure blue sky becomes visible in the first openings, distinguished especially by the manner in which the clouds melt into it; their edges passing off in faint white threads and fringes, through which the blue shines more and more intensely, till the last trace of vapour is lost in its perfect colour. It is only the upper

§ 20. *The truth of this particular passage. Perfectly pure blue sky only seen after rain, and how seen.*

¹ [Ed. 1 (only) opens this section thus:—

“Find me such a magnificent statement of all truth as this among the old masters, and I will say their works are worth something. But I have not quite done,” etc.]

² [The sentence, “Engravers . . . rest of the sky,” was first added in ed. 2.]

³ [For “purest,” ed. 1 (only) reads, “purest and most perfect.”]

white clouds, however, which do this, or the last fragments of rain-clouds becoming white as they disappear, so that the blue is never *corrupted* by the cloud, but only paled and broken with pure white, the purest white which the sky ever shows. Thus we have a melting and palpitating colour, never the same for two inches together, deepending and broadending here and there into intensity of perfect azure, then drifting and dying away, through every tone of pure pale sky, into the snow white of the filmy cloud. Over this roll the determined edges of the rain-clouds, throwing it all far back, as a retired scene, into the upper sky. Of this effect¹ the old masters, as far as I remember, have taken no cognizance whatsoever; all with them is, as we partially noticed before, either white cloud or pure blue: they have no notion of any double dealing or middle measures. They bore a hole in the sky, and let you up into a pool of deep stagnant blue, marked off by the clear round edges of imperturbable impenetrable cloud on all sides; beautiful in positive colour, but totally destitute of that exquisite gradation and change, that fleeting, panting, hesitating effort, with which the first glance of the natural sky is shed through the turbulence of the earth-storm.

They have some excuse, however, for not attempting this, in the nature of their material, as one accidental dash of the brush with water-colour, on a piece of wet or damp paper, will come nearer the truth and transparency of this rain-blue than the labour of a day in oils; and the purity and felicity of some of the careless, melting, water-colour skies of Cox and Tayler² may well make us fastidious in all effects of this kind. It is, however, only in the drawings of Turner that we have this perfect transparency and variation of blue given, in association with the perfection of considered form. In Tayler and Cox the forms are always partially accidental and

§ 21. *Success of our water-colour artists in its rendering. Use of it by Turner.*

¹ [Opposite "of this effect," etc., eds. 1-4 have a marginal note, "§ (23). Absence of this effect in the works of the old masters."]

² [For Cox, see above, p. 46 n.; for Tayler, p. 120 n.]

unconsidered, often essentially bad, and always incomplete: in Turner the dash of the brush is as completely under the rule of thought and feeling as its slowest line; all that it does is perfect, and could not be altered even in a hair's-breadth without injury; in addition to this, peculiar management and execution are used in obtaining quality in the colour itself, totally different from the manipulation of any other artist; and none, who have ever spent so much as one hour of their lives over his drawing, can forget those dim passages of dreamy blue, barred and severed with a thousand delicate and soft and snowy forms, which, gleaming in their patience of hope between the troubled rushings of the racked earth-cloud, melt farther and farther back into the height of heaven until the eye is bewildered and the heart lost in the intensity of their peace. I do not say that this is beautiful, I do not say it is ideal or refined, I only ask you to watch for the first opening of the clouds after the next south rain, and tell me if it be not *true*.

The Gosport¹ affords us an instance more exquisite even than the passage above named in the Coventry, of the use of this melting and dewy blue, accompanied by two distances of rain-cloud; one towering over the horizon, seen blue with excessive distance through crystal atmosphere; the other breaking overhead in the warm sulphurous fragments of spray, whose loose and shattering transparency, being the most essential characteristic of the near rain-cloud, is precisely that which the old masters are sure to contradict. Look, for instance, at the wreaths of *cloud* (?) in the Dido and Æneas of Gaspar Poussin,² with their unpleasant edges cut as hard and solid and opaque and smooth as thick black paint can make them, rolled up over one another like a dirty sail badly

§ 22. *Expression of near rain-cloud in the Gosport, and other works.*

§ 23. *Contrasted with Gaspar Poussin's rain-cloud in the Dido and Æneas.*

¹ [*England and Wales*, No. 11. The drawing was in the Ruskin collection: "the second drawing of his I ever possessed." See, for another description of it, *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 37; for its acquisition, *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 12; and for a reference to the figure-drawing in it, *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, s. No. 522. It is engraved in vol. i. of *Turner and Ruskin*.]

² [*cf.* above, p. 396.]

reefed. Or look at the agreeable transparency and variety of the cloud-edge where it cuts the mountain in N. Poussin's Phocion;¹ and compare this with the wreaths which float across the precipice in the second vignette in Campbell, or which gather around the Ben Lomond, the white rain gleaming beneath their dark transparent shadows; or which drift up along the flanks of the wooded hills, called from the river by the morning light in the Oakhampton; or which island the crags of Snowdon in the Llanberis, or melt along the Cumberland hills, while Turner leads us across the sands of Morecambe Bay.² This last drawing deserves especial notice. It is of an evening in spring, when the south rain has ceased at sunset; and, through the lulled and golden air, the confused and fantastic mists float up along the hollows of the mountains, white and pure, the resurrection in spirit of the new fallen rain, catching shadows from the precipices, and mocking the dark peaks with their own mountain-like but melting forms till the solid mountains seem in motion like those waves of cloud, emerging and vanishing as the weak wind passes by their summits; while the blue level night advances along the sea, and the surging breakers leap up to catch the last light from the path of the sunset.

I need not, however, insist upon Turner's peculiar power of rendering *mist*, and all those passages of confusion between earth and air, when the mountain is melting into the cloud, or the horizon into the twilight; because his supremacy in these points is altogether undisputed, except by persons to whom it would be impossible to prove anything which did not fall under the form of

§ 24. *Turner's power of rendering mist.*

¹ [National Gallery, No. 40. See above, pp. 263 *n.*, 305.]

² [The second vignette in Campbell (1837) is the "Andes Coast" (*cf.* below, pp. 417, 434). The "Ben Lomond" is "Loch Lomond" (vignette for Rogers' *Poems*), drawing No. 240 in the National Gallery (*cf.* below, p. 550). The "Oakhampton" (properly Okehampton) was published in No. 5 of *England and Wales* (*cf.* above, p. 235). "Llanberis" was in No. 18 of the same; see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 8 *n.*, where a portion of the drawing is engraved, Plate 80). The drawing in which "Turner leads us across the sands of Morecambe Bay" is the "Heysham," in the Ruskin collection; see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 25, and, for another description of it, *Elements of Drawing*, § 244. It is engraved in *Turner and Ruskin*.]



J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

Allen & Co. So.

Okehampton Castle.

From the Drawing in possession of James Orrock, Esquire.

a Rule of Three. Nothing is more natural than that the studied form and colour of this great artist should be little understood, because they require, for the full perception of their meaning and truth, such knowledge and such time as not one in a thousand possesses, or can bestow; but yet the truth of them for that very reason is capable of demonstration, and there is hope of our being able to make it in some degree felt and comprehended even by those to whom it is now a dead letter, or an offence. But the aërial¹ and misty effects of landscape, being matters of which the eye should be simply cognizant, and without effort of thought, as it is of light, must, where they are exquisitely rendered, either be felt at once, or prove that degree of blindness and bluntness in the feelings of the observer which there is little hope of ever conquering. Of course, for persons who have never seen in their lives a cloud vanishing on a mountain side, and whose conceptions of mist or vapour are limited to ambiguous outlines of spectral hackney-coaches and bodiless lamp-posts, discerned through a brown combination of sulphur, soot, and gas-light, there is yet some hope; we cannot indeed tell them what the morning mist is like in mountain air, but far be it from us to tell them that they are incapable of feeling its beauty if they will seek it for themselves. But if you have ever in your life had one opportunity, with your eyes and heart open, of seeing the dew rise from a hill pasture, or the storm gather on a sea-cliff, and if you yet have no feeling for the glorious passages of mingled earth and heaven which Turner calls up before you into breathing tangible being, there is indeed no hope for your apathy, art will never touch you, nor nature inform.²

¹ [Opposite "But the aërial," etc., eds. 1-4 have a marginal note: "§ 28. His effects of mist so perfect that, if not at once understood, they can no more be explained or reasoned on than nature herself."]

² [Eds. 1-4 here insert a further paragraph:—

"It would be utterly absurd, among the innumerable passages of the kind given throughout his works, to point to one as more characteristic or more perfect than another. The 'Simmer § 29. *Various*
Lake, near Askrig, ' for expression of mist pervaded with *instances.*
sunlight,—the 'Lake Lucerne, ' a recent and unengraved
drawing, for the recession of near mountain form, not into dark, but into
luminous cloud,

One word respecting Turner's more violent storms; for we have hitherto been speaking only of the softer rain-clouds, associated with gusty tempests, but not of the thunder-cloud and the whirlwind. If there be any one point in which engravers disgrace themselves more than in another, it is in their rendering of dark and furious storm. It appears to be utterly impossible to force it into their heads that an artist does *not* leave his colour with a sharp edge and an angular form by accident, or in order that they may have the pleasure of altering it and improving upon it; and equally impossible to persuade them that energy and gloom may in *some* circumstances be arrived at without any extraordinary expenditure of ink. I am aware of no engraver of the present day whose ideas of a storm-cloud are not comprised under two heads, roundness and blackness; and, indeed, their general principles of translation (as may be distinctly gathered from their larger works) are the following:—1. Where the drawing is grey, make the paper black. 2. Where the drawing is white, cover the paper with zigzag lines. 3. Where the drawing has particularly tender tones, cross-hatch them. 4. Where any outline is particularly angular, make it round. 5. Where there are vertical reflections in water, express them with very distinct horizontal lines. 6. Where there is a passage of particular simplicity, treat it in sections. 7. Where there is anything intentionally concealed, make it out. Yet, in spite of the necessity which

§ 25. *Turner's more violent effects of tempest are never rendered by engravers.*

§ 26. *General system of landscape engraving.*

the most difficult thing to do in art,—the 'Harlech' for expression of the same phenomena, shown over vast spaces in distant ranges of hills,—the 'Ehrenbreitstein,' a recent drawing, for expression of mist rising from the surface of water at sunset, and, finally, the glorious 'Oberwesel' and 'Nemi,'* for passages of all united, may, however, be named, as noble instances, though in naming five works I insult five hundred."

* In the possession of B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham.

The "Simmer (Semer) Lake, near Askrig" was engraved in *Richmondshire*. The "Lake Lucerne" must be one of the drawings of that subject referred to in the Epilogue to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*. The "Harlech" was in No. 21 of *England and Wales*. The "Ehrenbreitstein" was in Ruskin's collection; see No. 62 in the *Notes*. It is engraved in *Turner and Ruskin*. "Oberwesel" and "Nemi," in the Windus Collection, were engraved in Finden's *Royal Gallery of British Art*.]

all engravers impose upon themselves of rigidly observing this code of general laws, it is difficult to conceive how such pieces of work as the plates of Stonehenge and Winchelsea could ever have been presented to the public, as in any way resembling, or possessing even the most fanciful relation to, the Turner drawings of the same subjects.¹ The original of the Stonehenge is perhaps the standard of stormdrawing, both for the overwhelming power and gigantic proportions and spaces of its cloud forms, and for the tremendous qualities of lurid and sulphurous colours which are gained in them. All its forms are marked with violent angles, as if the whole muscular energy, so to speak, of the cloud were writhing in every fold: and their fantastic and fiery volumes have a peculiar horror, an awful life, shadowed out in their strange, swift, fearful outlines which oppress the mind more than even the threatening of their gigantic gloom. The white lightning, not as it is drawn by less observant or less capable painters, in zigzag fortifications, but in its own dreadful irregularity of streaming fire, is brought down, not merely over the dark clouds, but through the full light of an illumined opening to the blue, which yet cannot abate the brilliancy of its white line; and the track of the last flash along the ground is fearfully marked by the dog howling over the fallen shepherd, and the ewe pressing her head upon the body of her dead lamb.²

¹ [The "Winchelsea" was in Ruskin's collection; see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 34. His father gave it him for a birthday present in 1840; see *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 13. The plate was published in No. 10 of *England and Wales*. The engraver was J. Henshall. "Stonehenge," in No. 7 of the same, was engraved by R. Wallis.]

² [The truth to nature of Turner's representations of lightning flashes is the subject of a paper by Mr. Ralph Inwards in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, vol. xxii., No. 98, April 1896 (reprinted in pamphlet form). Mr. Inwards reproduced Turner's representation (in his drawing of the Bass Rock) with a photograph of a real flash of lightning. "It will be seen," he says, "that Turner has caught the general form and character of the rapid contortions and abrupt curves of the lightning with a most amazing fidelity." After noticing various other representations of lightning in Turner's drawings, Mr. Inwards says that "any one of them would be found to convey faithfully to the mind all that the highest powers of sight can discover in the phenomena. One is inclined to take literally the eulogium passed by John Ruskin on this great master: 'Unfathomable in knowledge, solitary in power . . . sent as a prophet to reveal to men the mysteries of the universe.'"]

§ 27. *The storm in the Stonehenge.*

I have not space, however, to enter into examination of Turner's storm-drawing; I can only warn the public against supposing that its effect is ever rendered by engravers. The great principles of Turner are, angular outline, vastness and energy of form, infinity of gradation, and depth without blackness. The great principles of the engravers (*vide* Pæstum, in Rogers's Italy,¹ and the Stonehenge above alluded to) are, rounded outline, no edges, want of character, equality of strength, and blackness without depth.

§ 28. *General character of such effects as given by Turner. His expression of falling rain.*

I have scarcely, I see, on referring to what I have written, sufficiently insisted on Turner's rendering of the rainy *fringe*; whether in distances, admitting or concealing more or less of the extended plain, as in the Waterloo, and Richmond (with the girl and dog in the foreground); or, as in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, St. Michael's Mount, and Slave-ship,² not reaching the earth, but suspended in waving and twisted lines from the darkness of the zenith. But I have no time for farther development of particular points; I must defer discussion of them until we take up each picture to be viewed as a whole; for the division of the sky which I have been obliged to make, in order to render fully understood the peculiarities of character in the separate cloud regions, prevents my speaking of any one work with justice to its concentration of various truth. Be it always remembered that we pretend not, at present, to give any account or idea of the sum of the works of any painter, much less of the universality of Turner's; but only to explain in what real truth, as far as it is explicable, consists, and to illustrate it by those pictures in which it most distinctly

§ 29. *Recapitulation of the section.*

¹ [At p. 207. The drawing is No. 206 in the National Gallery; the lightning, which is a feature in the plate, was, however, not given in the drawing.]

² [A picture of "Waterloo" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1818; a drawing was engraved as an illustration to vol. xiv. of Byron's *Works* (1834), and to vol. xvi. of Scott's *Prose Works*. It is the last which is here referred to. For the "Richmond," see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 9, where a portion of the foreground is engraved (Plate 55). "Dunstaffnage" was engraved in vol. xxiv. of Scott's *Works*; "Glencoe" in vol. xxv. of the same; "St. Michael's Mount" in No. 24 of *England and Wales*. For other references to the "Slave-ship," see below, p. 571. *n.*]

occurs, or from which it is most visibly absent. And it will only be in the full and separate discussion of individual works, when we are acquainted also with what is beautiful, that we shall be completely able to prove or disprove the presence of the truth of nature.

The conclusion, then, to which we are led by our present examination of the truth of clouds is, that the old masters attempted the representation of only one among the thousands of their systems of scenery, and were altogether false in the little they attempted; while we can find records in modern art of every form or phenomenon of the heavens from the highest film that glorifies the æther to the wildest vapour that darkens the dust, and in all these records, we find the most clear language and close thought, firm words and true message, unstinted fulness and unflinching faith.

And indeed it is difficult for us to conceive how, even without such laborious investigation as we have gone through, any person can go to nature for a single day or hour, when she is really at work in any of her nobler spheres of action, and yet retain respect for the old masters; finding, as find he will, that every scene which rises, rests, or departs before him, bears with it a thousand glories of which there is not one shadow, one image, one trace or line, in any of their works; but which will illustrate to him, at every new instant, some passage which he had not before understood in the high works of modern art. Stand upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak,² when the night mists first rise from off the plains,

§ 30. *Sketch of a few of the skies of nature taken as a whole, compared with the works of Turner and of the old masters.*¹

§ 31. *Morning on the plains.*

¹ [Eds. 1–4 read, “old masters. Morning on the plains,” and omit marginal note to § 31.]

² [§§ 31–34 are § 25 in *Fronde Agrestes*, but in that book the refrain, “Has Claude given this?” is omitted. At this point Ruskin added the following note in *Fronde Agrestes*:—

“I forget now what all this is about. It seems to be a recollection of the Rigi, with assumption that the enthusiastic spectator is to stand for a day and night in observation; to suffer the effects of a severe thunder-storm, and to get neither breakfast nor dinner. I have seen such a storm on the Rigi, however, and more than one such sunrise; and I much doubt if its present visitors by rail will see more.”

The description in the text was a reminiscence of a thing seen and recorded at the

and watch their white and lake-like fields, as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away, and down under their depths the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis,¹ between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their grey shadows upon the plains.² Has Claude given this?

§ 32. *Noon with gathering storms.* Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they crouch in

quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light,* upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below. Has Claude given this? Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher

* I have often seen the white, thin, morning cloud, edged with the seven colours of the prism. I am not aware of the cause of this phenomenon, for it takes place not when we stand with our backs to the sun, but in clouds near the sun itself, irregularly and over indefinite spaces, sometimes taking place in the body of the cloud. The colours are distinct and vivid, but have a kind of metallic lustre upon them.

† Lake Lucerne.

time—namely, in the middle of August 1835. Ruskin made his record in a rhyming letter to a friend: see “A Letter from Abroad” and the note thereon, in Vol. II. pp. 435–436.]

¹ [See Plato’s description of the mythical island, in *Critias*, 113–120.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add note, “Vignette to Milton: ‘Temptation on the Mountain.’ ”]

into the sky,* and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapours,† which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their grey network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves, together; and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey.‡ Has Claude given this? And then you will here the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapour swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black bending fringes,§ or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the holls, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white, torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapour, now gone, now gathered again; || while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away,

§ 33. *Sunset in
tempest. Serene
midnight.*

* St. Maurice (Rogers's Italy).

† Vignette, the Great St. Bernard.

‡ Vignette of the Andes.

§ St. Michael's Mount (England Series).

|| Illustration to the Antiquary. Goldau, a recent drawing of the highest order.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 omit words, "Goldau . . . order." For the "Andes," see pp. 410, 434; for "St. Michael's Mount," cf. § 28, above, p. 414; the illustration to the *Antiquary* is of Ballyburgh Ness in Scott's *Novels* (1836). The Goldau was in Ruskin's collection (No. 65 in the *Notes*); it is engraved in vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*, see pt. v. ch. xviii. § 20 (Plate 50). "The Last Man" is Plate 12 in Campbell's *Poetical Works* (1837). For "Caerlaverock," in vol. iv. of Scott's *Poetical Works*, cf. above, p. 340. "St. Denis" is Plate 29 in *The Seine and the Loire* (the drawing, No. 145 in the National Gallery). For the "Alps at Daybreak," see above, p. 355. "Delphi" the editors are unable to identify.]

but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood.* Has Claude given this? And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills,† brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds,‡ step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion, that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. Ask Claude, or his brethren, for that. And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple,§ and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning: watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire: watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altarsmoke, up to the heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven, one scarlet canopy, is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels: and

* Vignette to Campbell's Last Man.

† Caerlaverock.

‡ St. Denis.

§ Alps at Daybreak (Rogers's Poems): Delphi, and various vignettes.

then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!¹

¹ [In the last volume of *Modern Painters* (pt. vii. ch. iv. § 1), Ruskin refers to the account of the rain-cloud in this chapter as “perhaps the best and truest piece of work done in the first volume.”]

CHAPTER V

EFFECTS OF LIGHT RENDERED BY TURNER

I HAVE before given my reasons (Sect. II. Chap. III.) for not wishing at present to enter upon the discussion of particular effects of light. Not only are we incapable of rightly viewing them, or reasoning upon them, until we are acquainted with the principles of the beautiful; but, as I distinctly limited myself, in the present portion of the work, to the examination of *general* truths, it would be out of place to take

§ 1. *Reasons for merely, at present, naming, without examining, the particular effects of light rendered by Turner.*

cognizance of the particular phases of light, even if it were possible to do so, before we have some more definite knowledge of the material objects which they illustrate. I shall therefore, at present, merely set down a rough catalogue of the effects of light at different hours of the day, which Turner has represented; naming a picture or two, as an example of each, which we will hereafter take up one by one, and consider the physical science and the feeling together. And I do this, in the hope that in the meantime some admirer of the old masters will be kind enough

§ 2. *Hopes of the author for assistance in the future investigation of them.*

to select from the works of any one of them, a series of examples of the same effects, and to give me a reference to the pictures, so that I may be able to compare each with each; for, as my limited knowledge of the works of Claude and Poussin does not supply me with the requisite variety of effect, I shall be grateful for assistance.

The following list, of course, does not name the hundredth part of the effects of light given by Turner; it only names those which are distinctly and markedly separate from each other, and representative each of an entire class. Ten or twelve examples, often many more, might be given of each; every one of which would display the effects of the same hour and light,

modified by different circumstances of weather, situation, and character of objects subjected to them, and especially by the management of the sky; but it will be generally sufficient for our purposes to examine thoroughly one good example of each.

The prefixed letters express the direction of the light. F. front light, the sun in the centre, or near the top of the picture; L. lateral light, the sun out of the picture, on the right or left of the spectator; L. F. the light partly lateral, partly fronting the spectator, as when he is looking south, with the sun in the south-west; L. B. light partly lateral, partly behind the spectator, as when he is looking north, with the sun in the south-west.

MORNING

EFFECTS	NAMES OF PICTURES
L.An hour before sunrise in winter. Violent storm, with rain, on the sea. Lighthouses seen through it.	Lowestoft, Suffolk.
F.An hour before sunrise. Serene sky, with light clouds. Dawn in the distance.	Vignette to Voyage of Columbus.
L.Ten minutes before sunrise. Violent storm. Torchlight.	Fowey Harbour.
F.Sunrise. Sun only half above the horizon. Clear sky with light cirri.	Vignette to Human Life.
F.Sun just disengaged from horizon. Misty, with light cirri.	Alps at Daybreak.
F.Sun a quarter of an hour risen. Sky covered with scarlet clouds.	Castle Upnor.
L.F. . . .Serene sky. Sun emerging from a bank of cloud on horizon, a quarter of an hour risen.	Orford, Suffolk.
L.F. . . .Same hour. Light mists in flakes on hill sides. Clear air.	Skiddaw.
L.F. . . .Same hour. Light flying rain-clouds gathering in valleys.	Oakhampton.
L.B. . . .Same hour. A night storm rising off the mountains. Dead calm.	Lake of Geneva.
L.Sun half an hour risen. Cloudless sky.	Beaugency.
L.Same hour. Light mists lying in the valleys.	Kirkby Lonsdale.
F.Same hour. Bright cirri. Sun dimly seen through battle smoke, with conflagration.	Hohenlinden.
L.Sun an hour risen, cloudless and clear.	Buckfastleigh.

NOON AND AFTERNOON

EFFECTS

- L.B. . . . Mid-day. Dead calm, with heat.
Cloudless.
- L Same hour. Serene and bright,
with streaky clouds.
- L Same hour. Serene with
multitudes of the high cirrus.
- L Bright sun, with light wind and
clouds.
- F Two o'clock. Clouds gathering
for rain, with heat.
- F Rain beginning, with light
clouds and wind..
- L Soft rain, with heat.
- L.F. . . Great heat. Thunder gathering.
- L Thunder breaking down, after
intense heat, with furious winds.
- L Violent rain and wind, but cool.
- L.F. . . Furious storm, with thunder.
- L.B. . . Thunder retiring, with rainbow.
Dead calm, with heat.
- L About three o'clock, summer.
Air very cool and clear.
Exhausted thunderclouds low on
hills.
- F Descending sunbeams through
soft clouds, after rain.
- L Afternoon, very clear, after rain.
A few clouds still on horizon.
Dead calm..
- F Afternoon of cloudless day, with
heat.

NAMES OF PICTURES

- Corinth.
- Lantern at St. Cloud.
- Shylock, and other Venices.
- Richmond, Middlesex.
- Warwick. Blenheim.
- Piacenza.
- Caldron Snout Fall.
Malvern.
Winchelsea.
- Llanberis, Coventry, etc.
Stonehenge, Pæstum, etc.
Nottingham.
- Bingen.
- Carew Castle.
- Saltash
- Mercury and Argus. Oberwesel.
Nemi.

EVENING

- L An hour before sunset.
Cloudless.
- F Half an hour before sunset.
Light clouds. Misty air.
- F Within a quarter of an hour of
sunset. Mists rising. Light cirri.
- L.F. . . Ten minutes before sunset.
Quite cloudless.
- F Same hour. Tumultuous spray
of illumined rain-cloud.
- F Five minutes before sunset.
Sky covered with illumined cirri

- Trematon Castle.
- Lake Albano. Florence.
- Datur Hora Quieti.
- Durham.
- Solomon's Pools. Slave-ship.
- Téméraire. Napoleon. Various.
vignettes.

EFFECTS	NAMES OF PICTURES
L.B. . . . Same hour. Serene sky. Full moon rising.	Kenilworth.
F. Sun setting. Detached light cirri and clear air.	Amboise.
L. Same hour. Cloudless. New moon.	Troyes.
F.L. Same hour. Heavy storm-clouds. Moon-rise	First vignette, Pleasures of Memory.
L.B. Sun just set. Sky covered with clouds. New moon setting.	Céudebec.
L.B. Sun five minutes set. Strong twilight, with storm-clouds. Full moon-rise..	Wilderness of Engedi.
L.B. Same hour. Serene, with light clouds.	Assos.
L.B. Same hour. Serene. New moon.	Montjean.
L.B. Sun a quarter of an hour set. Cloudless.	Pyramid of Caius Cestius.
L.F. Sun half an hour set. Light cirri.	Château de Blois.
F. Same hour. Dead calm at sea. New moon and evening star.	Clairmont.
F. Sun three quarters of an hour set. Moon struggling through storm-clouds, over heavy sea.	Cowes.
	Folkestone.
NIGHT	
F. An hour after sunset. No moon. Torch-light.	St. Julien, Tours.
F. Same hour. Moon rising. Fire from furnaces.	Dudley.
L.F. Same hour, with storm-clouds. Moon rising.	Mantes.
L. Same hour, with light of rockets and fire.	Juliet and her Nurse.
F. Midnight. Moonless, with light-houses.	Calais.
F. Same hour, with firelight.	Burning of Parliament Houses.
F. Same hour. Full moon. Clear air, with delicate clouds. Light-houses.	Towers of the Héve.
F. Same hour, with conflagration, battle smoke, and storm.	Waterloo.
F. Same hour. Moonlight through mist . Buildings illuminated in interior.	Vignette; St. Herbert's Isle.
F. Same hour. Full moon, with halo. Light rain-clouds.	St. Denis.
F. Full moon. Perfectly serene. Sky covered with white cirri	Alnwick. Vignette of Rialto and Bridge of Sighs. ¹

¹ [The drawings and pictures mentioned in the above lists are to be found in the following publications, etc:—

England and Wales:—Lowestoft, Fowey, Castle Upnor, Orford, Okehampton, Buckfastleigh, Richmond (Surrey, not Middlesex), Warwick, Blenheim, Malvern,

Winchelsea, Llanberis, Coventry, Stonehenge, Nottingham, Carew Castle, Saltash, Trematon, Durham, Kenilworth, Cowes, Folkestone, Dudley, Alnwick.

Caldron Snout Fall (see *Rokeby*, "Where Tees in tumult leaves his source, Thundering o'er Caldron and High Force") is the first, or upper, fall on the Tees, over which there is a bridge. The drawing (in *Richmondshire and England and Wales*) is elsewhere referred to by Ruskin as "Chain-Bridge over the Tees" (see pp. 489, 554, 587 *n.*). The drawing of High Force, on the other hand,—the fall of the Tees five miles below Caldron Snout—is called by Ruskin "The Upper Fall of the Tees" (see pp. 486, 491, 553).

Richmondshire:—Kirkby Lonsdale.

Rogers' *Italy*:—Lake of Geneva, Paestum.

Rogers' *Poems*:—Voyage of Columbus, Human Life (*i.e.* vignette of "Tornaro," at p. 80, drawing, N.G. 230), Alps at Daybreak, "Datur Hora Quieti," pleasures of Memory (*i.e.* "Twilight," drawing, N.G. 226), St. Herbert's Isle, Rialto.

Illustrations to *Scott*:—Skiddaw, Piacenza.

Illustrations to *Campbell*:—Hohenlinden.

Illustrations to *Byron*:—Pyramid of Caius Cestius; Bridge of Sighs.

Finden's *Bible*:—Corinth, Solomon's Pools, Wilderness of Engedi, Assos.

The Seine and the Loire:—Beaugency, Lantern at St. Cloud, Amboise, Troyes, Caudebec, Montjean, Châteaux de Blois, Clairmont, St. Julien (Tours), Mantes, Towers of the Héve, St. Denis.

Academy Pictures:—Shylock (1837, engraved in *Turner and Ruskin*), Mercury and Argus (1836), Téméraire (N.G. 524), Napoleon (N.G. 529), Juliet and her Nurse (1836), Burning of the Houses of Parliament (1835), Waterloo (1818), The Slave Ship.

Bingen (drawing) is in the Farnley collection; Calais is probably the vignette in Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, the drawing for which is in the collection of Mr. J. E. Taylor.

Keepsake:—Lake of Albano, Florence.

Windus collection (engraved in Finden's *Royal Gallery of British Art*):—Oberwesel, Nemi.]

SECTION IV

OF TRUTH OF EARTH

CHAPTER I

OF GENERAL STRUCTURE

By truth of earth, we mean the faithful representation of the facts and forms of the bare ground, considered as entirely divested of vegetation, through whatever disguise, or under whatever modification the clothing of the landscape may occasion. Ground is to the landscape painter what the naked human body is to the historical. The growth of vegetation, the action of water and even of clouds upon it and around it, are so far subject and subordinate to its forms, as the folds of the dress and the fall of the hair are to the modulation of the animal anatomy. Nor is this anatomy always so concealed, but in all sublime compositions, whether of nature or art, it must be seen in its naked purity. The laws of the organization of the earth are distinct and fixed as those of the animal frame, simpler and broader, but equally authoritative and inviolable. Their results may be arrived at without knowledge of the interior mechanism; but for that very reason ignorance of them is the more disgraceful, and violation of them more unpardonable. They are in the landscape the foundation of all other truths, the most necessary, therefore, even if they were not in themselves attractive; but they are as beautiful as they are essential, and every abandonment of them by the artist must end in deformity as it begins in falsehood.

§ 1. First laws of the organization of the earth, and their importance in art.

That such abandonment is constant and total in the works

of the old masters has escaped detection, only because, of persons generally cognizant of art, few have spent time enough in hill countries to perceive the certainty of the laws of hill anatomy; and because few, even of those who possess such opportunities, ever think of the common earth beneath their feet, as anything possessing specific form, or governed by stead-fast principles. That such abandonment should have taken place cannot be surprising, after what we have seen of their fidelity to skies. Those artists who, day after day, could so falsely represent what was for ever before their eyes, when it was to be one of the most important and attractive parts of their picture, can scarcely be expected to give with truth what they could see only partially and at intervals, and what was only to be in their picture a blue line in the horizon, or a bright spot under the feet of their figures.

§ 2. *The slight attention ordinarily paid to them. Their careful study by modern artists.*

That such should be all the space allotted by the old landscape painters to the most magnificent phenomena of nature; that the only traces of those Apennines, which in Claude's walks along the brow of the Pincian¹ for ever bounded his horizon with their azure wall, should, in his pictures, be a cold white outline in the extreme of his tame distance; and that Salvator's sojourns among their fastnesses² should only have taught him to shelter his banditti with such paltry morsels of crag as an Alpine stream would toss down before it like a foam-globe; though it may indeed excite our surprise, will, perhaps, when we have seen how these slight passages are executed, be rather a subject of congratulation than of regret.

¹ [Tradition ascribes to Claude as his domicile the "Tempietto" on the Trinità de' Monti, and to Poussin a neighbouring house, No. 9 of the same piazza. But it appears, from a census return, that they lived in the modern Via Paola, in the lower town. "Traditions, however, die hard. Harder in Rome, perhaps, where they have wound their roots in and out among the stones, than elsewhere. No one nurtured in the belief that Claude and Poussin lived on the Trinità de' Monti, and looked out daily over that wonderful view of Rome, will willingly surrender the belief" (*Claude Lorraine*, by George Grahame, 1895, p. 42). Poussin's morning walks on the Pincian with his friends are related by his biographer, Bellori, and Claude must often have joined him. For Claude's wanderings further afield, see above, p. 309 *n.*].

² [For some account of Salvator Rosa's wild life in Southern Italy, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv.]

It might, indeed, have shortened our labour in the investigation of mountain truth, had not modern artists been so vast, comprehensive, and multitudinous in their mountain drawings, as to compel us, in order to form the slightest estimate of their knowledge, to enter into some examination of every variety of hill scenery. We shall first gain some general notion of the broad organization of large masses, and then take those masses to pieces, until we come down to the crumbling soil of the foreground.

Mountains are to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man.

The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with force and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion, and strength; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action, that of the lowlands repose; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest, from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to heaven, saying, "I live for ever!"¹

§ 3. *General structure of the earth. The hills are its action, the plains its rest.*

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature; that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain

§ 4. *Mountains come out from underneath the plains, and are their support.*

¹ [§ 3 is § 33 in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skelton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge: and, finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all; and that everything else must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Opposed to this truth is every appearance of the hills being laid upon the plains, or built upon them. Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever, whether it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss or the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water; some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges; others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge, with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta, and there is one at the

§ 5. *Structure of the plains themselves. Their perfect level, when deposited by quiet water.*

head of every lake in every hill district, supplies an instance of this. The rocks at Altorf plunge beneath the plain which the lake has left, at as sharp an angle as they do into the lake itself beside the chapel of Tell. The plain of the Arve, at Sallenche, is terminated so sharply by the hills to the south-east,¹ that I have seen a man sleeping with his back supported against the mountain, and his legs stretched on the plain; the slope which supported his back rising 5000 feet above him, and the couch of his legs stretched for five miles before him. In distant effect these champaigns lie like deep, blue, undisturbed water, while the mighty hills around them burst out from beneath, raging and tossing like a tumultuous sea. The valleys of Meyringen, Interlachen, Altorf, Sallenche, St. Jean de Maurienne; the great plain of Lombardy itself, as seen from Milan or Padua, under the Alps, the Euganeans, and the Apennines; and the Campo Felice under Vesuvius, are a few, out of the thousand instances which must occur at once to the mind of every traveller.

Let the reader now open² Rogers's Italy, at the seventeenth page, and look at the vignette which heads it of the Battle of Marengo.³ It needs no comment. It cannot but carry with it, after what has been said, the instant conviction that Turner is as much of a geologist as he is of a painter.⁴ It is a summary of all we have been saying, and a summary so distinct and clear, that without any

§ 6. *Illustrated
by Turner's
Marengo.*

¹ [For "hills to the south-east," ed. 1 reads, "hills of the Voza," and ed. 2, "hills of the Pavillon." The pass from Les Houches to Contamines across the chain of Mont Lachat goes by the Col de Voza, or by the Pavillon Bellevue.]

² [For "Let the reader now open," eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"If what I have said has been well understood, I need only bid the reader open . . ."]

³ [The drawing is No. 204 in the National Gallery.]

⁴ [Not—as Ruskin elsewhere explains—because Turner made any professed study of geology, but because of his faculty of seeing into the heart of things, and seizing their essential form and character; see *e.g.* below, p. 465, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xv. §§ 32 and 33, ch. xiv. § 22. ch. xvii. § 46, and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. § 11. See also *Deucalion*, ch. i. § 2, where Ruskin says of Turner's drawings of the Alps, that he "made them before geology existed; but it is only by help of geology that I can prove their power." But though Turner never studied geology, he was interested in the science, and Dr. M'Culloch, the geologist, after conversing with him, said, "That man would have been great in any and everything he chose to take up; he has such a clear, intelligent, piercing intellect" (Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, ed. 1877, p. 236).]

such explanation it must have forced upon the mind the impression of such facts; of the plunging of the hills underneath the plain, of the perfect level and repose of this latter laid in their arms, and of the tumultuous action of the emergent summits.

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary: the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary: the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary: the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man. We shall find it convenient, in examining the truth of art, to adopt, with a little modification, the geological arrangement, considering, first, the formation and character of the highest or central peaks; next, the general structure of the lower mountains, including in this division those composed of the various slates which a geologist would call primary; and, lastly, the minutiae and most delicate characters of the beds of these hills, when they are so near as to become foreground objects, and the structure of the common soil which usually forms the greater space of an artist's foreground. Hence our task will arrange itself into three divisions: the investigation of the central mountains, of the inferior mountains, and of the foreground.

§ 7. *General divisions of formation resulting from this arrangement. Plan of investigation.*

CHAPTER II

OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINS

IT does not always follow, because a mountain is the highest of its group, that it is in reality one of the central range. The Jungfrau is only surpassed in elevation, in the chain of which it is a member, by the Schreckhorn and Finster-Aarhorn,¹ but it is entirely a secondary mountain. But the central peaks are usually the highest, and may be considered as the chief components of all mountain scenery in the snowy regions. Being composed of the same rocks in all countries, their external character is the same everywhere. Its chief essential points are the following:

§ 1. Similar character of the central peaks in all parts of the world.

Their summits are almost invariably either pyramids or wedges. Domes may be formed by superincumbent snow, or appear to be formed by the continuous outline of a sharp ridge seen transversely, with its precipice to the spectator; but wherever a rock appears, the uppermost termination of that rock will be a steep edgy ridge, or a sharp point, very rarely presenting even a gentle slope on any of its sides, but usually inaccessible unless encumbered with snow.

§ 2. Their arrangements in pyramids or wedges, divided by vertical fissures;

These pyramids and wedges split vertically, or nearly so, giving smooth faces of rock, either perpendicular, or very steeply inclined, which appear to be laid against the central wedge or peak, like planks upright against a wall. The surfaces of these show close parallelism; their fissures are vertical, and cut them smoothly, like the edges of shaped

¹ [The Jungfrau (13, 669 ft.) is higher than the Schreckhorn (13,386 ft.); the Finster-Aarhorn is 14,026 ft.]

planks. Often groups of these planks, if I may so call them, rise higher than those between them and the central ridge, forming detached ridges inclining towards the central one. The planks are cut transversely, sometimes by graceful curvilinear fissures, sometimes by straight fissures,¹ which are commonly parallel to the slope of one of the sides of the peak, while the main direction of the planks or leaves is parallel to that of its other side, or points directly to its summit. But the *universal* law of fracture is, first, that it is clean and sharp, having a perfectly smooth surface, and a perfectly sharp edge to all the fissures; secondly, that every fissure is steeply inclined, and that a horizontal line, or one approaching to it, is an impossibility except in some turn of a curve.

Hence, however the light may fall, these peaks are seen marked with sharp and defined shadows, § 3. *Causing groups of rock resembling an artichoke or rose.* indicating the square edges of the planks of which they are made up; which shadow, sometimes are vertical, pointing to the summit, but are oftener parallel to one of the sides of the peak, and intersected by a second series, parallel to the other side. Where there has been much disintegration, the peak is often surrounded with groups of lower ridges or peaks, like the leaves of an artichoke or a rose, all evidently part and parcel of the great peak; but falling back from it, as if it were a budding flower, expanding its leaves one by one; and this last condition is in most cases the indication of the true geological structure; most of the central peaks being fanshaped in the arrangement of their beds. But this singular organization is usually concealed by the pyramidal cross-cleavages. It was discovered first, I believe, by De Saussure, and has of late been carefully examined and verified, though not accounted for, by the Swiss geologists.²

¹ [For some modification of this statement as the result of ten years of subsequent study, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 18.]

² [The end of this paragraph, “; and this last condition . . . Swiss geologists,” was first added in ed. 5.]

Now, if I were lecturing on geology, and were searching for some means of giving the most faithful idea possible of the external appearance caused by this structure of the primary hills, I should throw my geological outlines aside, and take up Turner's vignette of the Alps at Daybreak.¹ After what has been said, a single glance at it will be enough. Observe the exquisite decision with which the edge of the uppermost plank of the great peak is indicated by its clear dark side and sharp shadow; then the rise of the second low ridge on its side, only to descend again precisely in the same line; the two fissures of this peak, one pointing to its summit, the other rigidly parallel to the great slope which descends towards the sun; then the sharp white *aiguille* on the right, with the great fissure from its summit, rigidly and severely square, as marked below, where another edge of rock is laid upon it. But this is not all; the black rock in the foreground is equally a member of the mass, its chief slope parallel with that of the mountain, and all its fissures and lines inclined in the same direction; and, to complete the mass of evidence more forcibly still, we have the dark mass on the left articulated with absolute right lines, as parallel as if they had been drawn with a rule, indicating the tops of two of these huge plates or planks, pointing, with the universal tendency, to the great ridge, and intersected by fissures parallel to it. Throughout the extent of mountain, not one horizontal line, nor an approach to it, is discernible. This cannot be chance, it cannot be composition, it may not be beautiful; perhaps nature is very wrong to be so parallel, and very disagreeable in being so straight; but this is nature, whether we admire it or not.²

§ 4. *The faithful statement of these facts by Turner in his Alps at Daybreak.*

In the vignette illustration to Jacqueline, we have another series of peaks, whose structure is less developed, owing to

¹ [Rogers' *Poems*, p. 194; the drawing is No. 242 in the National Gallery: see above, pp. 355, 366.]

² [At the end of this paragraph eds. 1 and 2 have a further sentence:—

“It is such a concentration of Alpine truth as could only have been put together by one as familiar with these snowy solitudes as their own eagles.”]

their distance, but equally clear and faithful in all points, as far as it is given. But the vignette of Aosta, in the Italy, is perhaps more striking than any that could be named, for its rendering of the perfect parallelism of the lower and smaller peaks with the great lines of the mass they compose; and that of the Andes, the second in Campbell, for its indication of the multitudes of the vertical and plank-like beds arranged almost like the leaves of a flower. This last especially, one of the very noblest, most faithful, most scientific statements of mountain form which even Turner has ever made, can leave little more to be said or doubted.¹

Now, whenever these vast peaks, rising from 12,000 to 24,000 feet above the sea, form part of anything like a landscape; that is to say, whenever the spectator beholds them from the region of vegetation, or even from any distance at which it is possible to get something like a view of their whole mass, they must be at so great a distance from him as to become aërial and faint in all their details. Their summits, and all those higher masses of whose character we have been speaking, can by no possibility be nearer to him than twelve or fifteen miles; to approach them nearer he must climb, must leave the region of vegetation, and must confine his view to a part, and that a very limited one, of the mountain he is ascending. Whenever, therefore, these mountains are seen over anything like vegetation, or are seen in mass, they *must* be in the far distance. Most artists would treat a horizon fifteen miles off very much as if it were mere air; and though the greater clearness of the upper air permits the high summits to be seen with extraordinary distinctness, yet they never can by any possibility have dark or deep shadows, or intense dark relief against a

¹ [The vignette illustration to "Jacqueline" is at p. 147 (not 145, as stated opposite) of Rogers' *Poems*; the drawing, No. 241 in the National Gallery. The "Aosta" is at p. 25 of the *Italy*; No. 203 in the National Gallery. For other references to the "Andes," see pp. 410, 417.]

light. Clear they may be, but faint they must be; and their great and prevailing characteristic, as distinguished from other mountains, is want of apparent solidity. They rise in the morning light rather like sharp shades, cast up into the sky, than solid earth. Their lights are pure, roseate, and cloudlike; their shadows transparent, pale and opalescent, and often undistinguishable from the air around them, so that the mountain-top is seen in the heaven only by its flakes of motionless fire.

Now, let me once more ask, though I am sufficiently tired of asking, what record have we of anything like this in the works of the old masters? There is no vestige, in any existing picture, of the slightest effort to represent the high hill ranges; and as for such drawing of their forms as we have found in Turner, we might as well look for them among the Chinese. Very possibly it may be all quite right; very probably these men showed the most cultivated taste, and most unerring judgment, in filling their pictures with mole-hills and sand-heaps. Very probably the withered and poisonous banks of Avernus, and the sand and cinders of the Campagna, are much more sublime things than the Alps; but still what limited truth it is, if truth it be, when through the last fifty pages we have been pointing out fact after fact, scene after scene, in clouds and hills (and not individual facts or scenes, but great and important classes of them), and still we have nothing to say when we come to the old masters; but “they are not here.” Yet this is what we hear so constantly called painting “general” nature.¹

¹ [Between §§ 7 and 8 eds. 1 and 2 insert the following:—

“But open at the 145th page of Rogers’ Poems. I said little of this vignette just now, when talking of structure, that I might insist upon it more forcibly as a piece of effect. Of all the pieces of mountain elevation that ever were put upon paper, perhaps this is the most soaring and impressive. The dreamy faintness of their mighty strength, the perfect stillness and silence of their distant sleep, and the fulness of sunlight in which they are bathed and lost, bear away the mind with them like a deep melody; and through all this,—through the aerial dimness out of which they rise like spectres, are told the facts and forms which speak

§ 7. *Total want of any rendering of their phenomena in ancient art.*

§ 8. *The Perfection of Turner’s vignette ‘Jacqueline.’*

Although, however, there is no vestige among the old masters of any effort to represent the attributes of the higher mountains seen in comparative proximity, we are not altogether left without evidence of their having thought of them as sources of light in the extreme distance; as for example, in that of the reputed Claude in our National Gallery, called the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca.¹ I have not the slightest doubt of its being a most execrable copy; for there is not one touch or line of even decent painting in the whole picture; but as connoisseurs have considered it a Claude, as it has been put in our Gallery for a Claude, and as people admire it every day for a Claude, I may at least presume it has those qualities of Claude in it which are wont to excite the public admiration, though it possesses none of

§ 8. *Character of the representations of Alps, in the distances of Claude.*

of their reality like their own echoes. For instance, the highest range of rock on the extreme left is precisely the place where, in nature, there would be a little plateau or level, retiring back to the foot of the supreme summit; and as surely as there would be such a level, a kind of breathing time in the mountain before it made its last spring, so surely would that little plain be loaded with a glacier, so surely would that glacier advance to the brow of the precipice, and so surely would it hang over it, in the white tongue which in the vignette descends over the precipice exactly under the highest snowy peak. Now they are these little touches of exquisite, deep, and finished truth, which mark the vastness of Turner's intellect; they are just those which never can be generally appreciated, owing to the unavoidable want of the knowledge required to meet them. Observe how much this single bit of white tells us. It tells us that there is a glacier above those cliffs, of consistence and size; it tells us, therefore, that there is a comparatively level space on which the fallen snow can accumulate; and it tells us, therefore, that the white summits are a mile or two farther back than the rocks below them; and to make all this doubly clear, the black moraine invariably left by the falling snow at the edge of such a plain, where it first alights, is marked by the dark line crossing, nearly horizontally, under the central peak. All this speaks home at once, if we have but knowledge enough to understand it; and, be it remembered, this same white and dark touch would be equally a dead letter to us in nature herself, if we had not. A person among the Alps for the first time in his life would probably not even notice the little tongue of ice hanging over the precipice, much less would he comprehend how much it told. It could only be some one long acquainted with mountains who could tell you the width of the plateau, and how many chamois were likely to be upon it. I might name many other works of Turner, in which the same deep Alpine truth is carried out; but this alone would be sufficient to prove his unapproached superiority, at least over the ancients. What the moderns have done we shall see presently."

§ 9. *Its peculiar expression of Alpine facts.*

Eds. 1 and 2 then continue, "Although, however," etc.]

¹ [No. 12; see above, p. 41 n.]

those which sometimes give him claim to it; and I have so reasoned, and shall continue to reason upon it, especially with respect to facts of form, which cannot have been much altered by the copyist. In the distance of that picture (as well as in that of the Sinon before Priam,¹ which I have little doubt is at least partially original, and whose central group of trees is a very noble piece of painting) is something white, which I believe must be intended for a snowy mountain, because I do not see that it can well be intended for anything else. Now no mountain of elevation sufficient to be so sheeted with perpetual snow can, by any possibility, sink so low on the horizon as this something of Claude's, unless it be at a distance of from fifty to seventy miles. At such distances, though the outline is invariably sharp and edgy to an excess, yet all the circumstances of aërial perspective, faintness of shadow, and isolation of light, which I have described as characteristic of the Alps fifteen miles off, take place, of course, in a threefold degree; the mountains rise from the horizon like transparent films, only distinguishable from mist by their excessively keen edges, and their brilliant flashes of sudden light; they are as unsubstantial as the air itself, and impress their enormous size by means of this aërialness, in a far greater degree at these vast distances, than even when towering above the spectator's head. Now, I ask of the candid observer, if there be the smallest vestige of an effort to attain, if there be the most miserable, the most contemptible, shadow of attainment of such an effect by Claude. Does that white thing on the horizon look seventy miles off? Is it faint, or fading, or to be looked for by the eye before it can be found out? Does it look high? does it look large? does it look impressive? You cannot but feel that there is not a vestige of any kind or species of truth in that horizon; and that, however artistical it may be, as giving brilliancy to the distance (though, as far as I have any feeling in the matter, it only gives coldness),

§ 9. *Their total want of magnitude and aërial distance.*

¹ [No. 6, also in the National Gallery, otherwise called "David at the Cave of Adullam"; see above, p. 295, and below, p. 581.]

it is, in the very branch of art on which Claude's reputation chiefly rests, aërial perspective, hurling defiance to nature in her very teeth.

But there are worse failures yet in this unlucky distance.

§ 10. *And violation of specific form.*

Aërial perspective is not a matter of paramount importance, because nature infringes its laws herself, and boldly, too, though never in a case like this before us; but there are some laws which nature never violates, her laws of form. No mountain was ever raised to the level of perpetual snow, without an infinite multiplicity of form. Its foundation is built of a hundred minor mountains, and, from these, great buttresses run in converging ridges to the central peak. There is no exception of this rule; no mountain 15,000 feet high is ever raised without such preparation and variety of outwork. Consequently, in distant effect, when chains of such peaks are visible at once, the multiplicity of form is absolutely oceanic; and though it is possible in near scenes to find vast and simple masses composed of lines which run unbroken for a thousand feet or more, it is physically impossible when these masses are thrown seventy miles back to have simple outlines, for then these large features become mere jags and hillocks, and are heaped and huddled together in endless confusion. To get a simple form seventy miles away, mountain lines would be required unbroken for leagues; and this, I repeat, is physically impossible. Hence these mountains of Claude, having no indication of the steep vertical summits which we have shown to be the characteristic of the central ridges, having soft edges instead of decisive ones, simple forms (one line to the plain on each side) instead of varied and broken ones, and being painted with a crude raw white, having no transparency, nor filminess, nor air in it, instead of rising in the opalescent mystery which invariably characterizes the distant snows, have the forms and the colours of heaps of chalk in a lime-kiln, not of Alps. They are destitute of energy, of height, of distance, of splendour, and of variety, and are the work of a man, whether Claude or not, who had neither feeling for nature, nor knowledge of art.

I should not, however, insist upon the faults of this picture, believing it to be a copy, if I had ever seen, even in his most genuine works, an extreme distance of Claude with any of the essential characters of nature. But although in his better pictures we have always beautiful rendering of the *air*, which in the copy before us is entirely wanting, the real features of the extreme mountain distance are equally neglected or maligned in all. There is, indeed, air between us and it; but ten miles, not seventy miles, of space. Let us observe a little more closely the practice of nature in such cases.

The multiplicity of form which I have shown to be necessary in the outline, is not less felt in the body of the mass. For, in all extensive hill ranges, there are five or six lateral chains separated by deep valleys, which rise between the spectator and the central ridge, showing their tops one over another, wave beyond wave, until the eye is carried back to the faintest and highest forms of the principal chain. These successive ridges, and I speak now not merely of the Alps, but of mountains generally, even as low as 3000 feet above the sea, show themselves, in extreme distance, merely as vertical shades, with very sharp outlines, detached from one another by greater intensity, according to their nearness. It is with the utmost difficulty that the eye can discern any solidity or roundness in them; the lights and shades of solid form are both equally lost in the blue of the atmosphere, and the mountain tells only as a flat sharp-edged film, of which multitudes intersect and overtop each other, separated by the greater faintness of the retiring masses. This is the most simple and easily imitated arrangement possible, and yet, both in nature and art, it expresses distance and size in a way otherwise quite unattainable. For thus, the whole mass of one mountain being of one shade only, the smallest possible difference in shade will serve completely to detach it from another, and thus ten or twelve distances may be made evident, when the darkest and nearest is an aërial grey as

§ 11. *Even in his best works.*

§ 12. *Farther illustration of the distant character of mountain chains.*

faint as the sky; and the beauty of such arrangements carried out as nature carries them, to their highest degree, is, perhaps, the most striking feature connected with hill scenery. You will never, by any chance, perceive in extreme distance anything like solid form or projection of the hills. Each is a dead, flat, perpendicular film or shade, with a sharp edge darkest at the summit, and lost as it descends, and about equally dark whether turned towards the light or from it. And of these successive films of mountain you will probably have half a dozen, one behind another, all showing with perfect clearness their every chasm and peak in the outline, and not one of them showing the slightest vestige of solidity; but, on the contrary, looking so thoroughly transparent, that if it so happens, as I have seen frequently, that a conical near hill meets with its summit the separation of two distant ones, so that the right-hand slope of the nearer hill forms an apparent continuation of the righthand slope of the left-hand farther hill, and *vice versâ*, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that one of the more distant peaks is seen *through* the other.

I may point out, in illustration of these facts, the engravings of two drawings of precisely the same chain of distant hills; Stanfield's Borromean Islands, with the St. Gothard in the distance; and Turner's Arona, also with the St. Gothard in the distance.¹ Far be it from me to indicate the former of these plates as in any way exemplifying the power of Stanfield, or affecting his reputation; it is an unlucky drawing, murdered by the engraver, and as far from being characteristic of Stanfield as it is from being like nature: but it is just what I want, to illustrate the particular error of which I speak; and I prefer showing this error where it accidentally exists in the works of a really great artist,

¹ [Stanfield's drawing of the Isola Bella and the St. Gothard was the vignette on the title-page of Heath's *Picturesque Annual* for 1832 ("Travelling Sketches in North Italy, Tyrol, and the Rhine," with twenty-six plates after drawings by Stanfield). Turner's "Arona" (published in the *Keepsake* for 1829) was in the Ruskin collection; see No. 67 in *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*.]

§ 13. *Their excessive appearance of transparency.*

§ 14. *Illustrated from the works of Turner and Stanfield. The Borromean Islands of the latter.*

standing there alone, to pointing it out where it is confused with other faults and falsehoods in the works of inferior hands. The former of these plates is an example of everything which a hill distance is not, and the latter of everything which it is. In the former, we have the mountains covered with patchy lights, which being of equal intensity, whether near or distant, confuse all the distances together; while the eye, perceiving that the light falls so as to give details of solid form, yet finding nothing but insipid and formless spaces displayed by it, is compelled to suppose that the whole body of the hills is equally monotonous and devoid of character; and the effect upon it is not one whit more impressive and agreeable than might be received from a group of sand-heaps, washed into uniformity by recent rain.

Compare with this the distance of Turner in Arona. It is totally impossible here to say which way the light falls on the distant hills, except by the slightly increased decision of their edges turned towards it, but the greatest attention is paid to get these edges decisive, yet full of gradation, and perfectly true in character of form. All the rest of the mountain is then undistinguishable haze; and by the bringing of these edges more and more decisively over one another, Turner has given us, between the right-hand side of the picture and the snow, fifteen distinct distances, yet every one of these distances in itself palpitating, changeful, and suggesting subdivision into countless multitude. Something of this is traceable even in the engraving, and all the essential characters are perfectly well marked. I think even the least experienced eye can scarcely but feel the truth of this distance as compared with Stanfield's. In the latter, the eye gets something of the form, and so wonders it sees no more; the impression on it, therefore, is of hills within distinctly visible distance, indiscernible through want of light or dim atmosphere, and the effect is, of course, smallness of space, with obscurity of light and thickness of air. In Turner's, the eye gets nothing of the substance, and wonders it sees so much of the outline; the impression is, therefore, of

mountains too far off to be ever distinctly seen, rendered clear by brilliancy of light and purity of atmosphere; and the effect, consequently, vastness of space, with intensity of light and crystalline transparency of air.

These truths are invariably given in every one of Turner's distances, that is to say, we have always in them two principal facts forced on our notice: transparency, or filminess of mass, and excessive sharpness of edge. And I wish particularly to insist upon this sharpness of edge, because it is not a casual or changeful habit of nature; it is the unfailing characteristic of all very great distances. It is quite a mistake to suppose that slurred or melting lines are characteristic of distant *large* objects; they may be so, as before observed, Sec. II. Chap. IV. § 4, when the focus of the eye is not adapted to them; but, when the eye is really directly to the distance, melting lines are characteristic only of thick mist and vapour between us and the object, not of the removal of the object. If a thing has character upon its outline, as a tree, for instance, or a mossy stone, the farther it is removed from us, the sharper the outline of the whole mass will become, though in doing so the particular details which make up the character will become confused in the manner described in the same chapter. A tree fifty yards from us, taken as a mass, has a soft outline, because the leaves and interstices have some effect on the eye; but put it ten miles off against the sky, and its outline will be so sharp that you cannot tell it from a rock.¹ So in a mountain five or six miles off, bushes, and heather, and roughnesses of knotty ground, and rock, have still some effect on the eye, and, by becoming confused and mingled as before described, soften the outline. But let the mountain be thirty miles off, and its edge will be as sharp as a knife. Let it, as in the case of the Alps, be seventy or

§ 16. *Extreme distance of large objects always characterized by very sharp outline.*

¹ [Eds. 1-4 here insert two sentences:—

“There are three trees on the Mont Salève, about eight miles from Geneva, which from the city, as they stand on the ridge of the hill, are seen defined against the sky. The keenest eye in the world could not tell them from stones.”]

eighty miles off, and though it has become so faint that the morning mist is not so transparent, its outline will be beyond all imitation for excessive sharpness. Thus, then, the character of extreme distance is always excessive keenness of edge. If you soften your outline, you either put mist between you and the object, and in doing so diminish your distance, for it is impossible you should see so far through mist as through clear air; or, if you keep an impression of clear air, you bring the object close to the observer, diminish its size in proportion, and if the aërial colours, excessive blues, etc., be retained, represent an impossibility.

Take Claude's distance, in No. 244 Dulwich Gallery,* on the right of the picture.¹ It is as pure blue as ever came from the palette, laid on thick; you cannot see through it; there is not the slightest vestige of transparency or filminess about it, and its edge is soft and blunt. Hence, if it be meant for near hills, the blue is impossible, and the want of details impossible, in the clear atmosphere indicated through the whole picture. If it be meant for extreme distance, the blunt edge is impossible, and the opacity is impossible. I do not know a single distance of the Italian school to which the same observation is not entirely applicable, except, perhaps, one or two of Nicolas Poussin's. They always involve, under any supposition whatsoever, at least two impossibilities.

I need scarcely mention in particular any more of the works of Turner, because there is not of his mountain distances in which these facts are not fully exemplified. Look at the last vignette, the Farewell, in Rogers's Italy;² observe the excessive sharpness of all the edges, almost amounting to lines, in the

§ 17. *Want of this decision in Claude.*

§ 18. *The perpetual rendering of it by Turner.*

* One of the most genuine Claudes I know.

¹ ["Jacob and Laban with his Daughters, in a Landscape," now No. 205.]

² [The drawing for the "Farewell" (of Isola Bella, Lago Maggiore) is No. 208 in the National Gallery. For "Dunstaffnage" and "Glencoe," see above, p. 414; "Loch Achray" is in vol. 8 of Scott's *Poetical Works*; "Battle of Marengo," in Rogers' *Italy* (drawing, No. 204 in the National Gallery).]

distance, while there is scarcely one decisive edge in the foreground. Look at the hills of the distance in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, and Loch Achray (Illustrations to Scott), in the latter of which the left-hand side of the Ben Venue is actually marked with a dark line. In fact, Turner's usual mode of executing these passages is perfectly evident in all his drawings; it is not often that we meet with a very broad dash of wet colour in his finished works, but in these distances, as we before saw of his shadows, all the effect has been evidently given by a dash of very moist pale colour, the paper probably being turned upside down, so that a very firm edge may be left at the top of the mountain as the colour dries. And in the Battle of Marengo we find the principle carried so far as to give nothing more than actual outline for the representation of the extreme distance, while all the other hills in the picture are distinctly darkest at the edge. This plate, though coarsely executed, is yet one of the noblest illustrations of mountain character and magnitude existing.

§ 19. *Effects of snow, how imperfectly studied.*

Such, then, are the chief characteristics of the highest peaks and extreme distances of all hills,¹ as far as the forms of the rocks themselves, and the aërial appearances especially belonging to them, are alone concerned. There is, however, yet another point

¹ [§§ 19 and 20 were substituted in ed. 3 for the following in eds. 1 and 2:—

“Such, then, are the chief characteristics of the highest peaks and extreme distances of all hills, which we see that the old masters, taken as a body, usually neglected, and, if they touched, maligned. They fortunately did little, as whatever they did was wrong; and prudently affirmed little, as whatever they affirmed was false. The moderns have generally done all that they have done, well; but, owing to the extreme difficulty of managing or expressing the brilliancy of snow, and the peculiar character of the vertical and severe lines, which are not, under ordinary circumstances, attractive to an artist's eye, we cannot point to so many or so various examples of truth as in other cases. But nothing can be more accurate than the knowledge, or more just than the feelings of J. D. Harding, whenever he touches Alpine scenery; and he takes the bull by the horns far more frequently than any other of our artists. His magnificent ‘Wengern Alp,’ and his ‘Chamouni,’ engraved in the illustrations to Byron, are quite unequalled, even by Stanfield. The latter artist, indeed, we know not from what cause, fails, or at least falls short of what we should expect from him, more frequently in subjects of this

§ 21. *Review of the Alpine drawings of modern artists generally. The great excellence of J. D. Harding.*

to be considered, the modification of their form caused by incumbent snow.

Pictures of winter scenery are nearly as common as moonlights, and are usually executed by the same order of artists, that is to say, the most incapable; it being remarkably easy to represent the moon as a white wafer on a black ground, or to scratch out white branches on a cloudy sky. Nevertheless, among Flemish paintings several valuable representations of winter are to be found, and some clever pieces of effect among the moderns, as Hunt's for instance, and De Wint's. But all such efforts end in effect alone, nor have I ever in any single instance seen a snow *wreath*, I do not say thoroughly, but even decently drawn.*

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can

* The best snow scenes (with this only exception, that the wreaths are not drawn) which I have ever seen are those of an almost unknown painter, Mr. Wallis (8, Cottage Grove, West Lane, Walworth). I am obliged to give his address, for his works have been again and again rejected from our exhibitions. In general, these rejections are very just; but I have known several exceptions, and this is one of the most painful.¹

kind than in anything else he touches. He usually makes the snowy summits a subordinate part of his picture, and does not appear to dwell upon them with fondness or delight, but to get over them as a matter of necessity. We should almost imagine that he had never made careful studies of them, for even in the few touches he gives, the intelligent drawing for which he is usually distinguished is altogether wanting. No man, however, in such subjects has suffered more from engravers; the plate of 'Inspruck' [*sic*], in the Picturesque Annual, might have been opposed to Turner's work as an instance of want of size and dignity in Alpine masses, and want of intelligence in the drawing of the snow, the dark touches on which are altogether inexpressive; and, as there is no distinction in them of dark side from shadow, might be taken for rocks, or stains, rather than for shades indicative of form. But these parts, in the original, are delicately and justly drawn, though slightly, and have very high qualities of size and distance. We shall, moreover, in speaking of the lower mountains, have better grounds for dwelling on the works of this master, as well as on those of Copley Fielding, who has most genuine feeling for hill character, but has never grappled with the central summits."

§ 22. *The apparent carelessness of Stanfield in such subjects. Fine feeling of Copley Fielding.*

Stanfield's "Innsbruck" was engraved by W. R. Smith in Heath's *Picturesque Annual* for 1832.]

¹ [This note was added in ed. 5 (1851). Joshua Wallis (1789–1862) was not a member of any art society, but exhibited occasionally at the Academy from 1809 to 1820. Ruskin's favourable notice did not secure for him any general popularity, but two of his snow scenes were brought for the "National Gallery of British Art" at the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow drift, seen under warm light.* Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness; its surface and transparency alike exquisite; its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light.¹ No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible, by care and skill, at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate the nature of its light and shade; but this has never been attempted; it could not be done except by artists of a rank exceedingly high, and there is something about the feeling of snow in ordinary scenery which such men do not like. But when the same qualities are exhibited on a magnificent Alpine scale, and in a position where they interfere with no feeling of life, I see not why they should be neglected, as they have hitherto been, unless that the difficulty of reconciling the brilliancy of snow with a picturesque light and shade is so great that most good artists disguise or avoid the greater part of upper Alpine scenery, and hint at the glacier so slightly that they do not feel the necessity of careful study of its forms. Habits of exaggeration increase the evil. I have seen a sketch from nature, by one of the most able of our landscape painters, in which a cloud had been mistaken for a snowy summit, and the hint thus taken exaggerated, as was likely, into an enormous mass of impossible height and unintelligible form, when the mountain itself for which the cloud had been mistaken, though subtending an angle of about eighteen or twenty degrees, instead of the fifty attributed to it, was of a form so exquisite that it might have been a lesson to Phidias. Nothing but failure can result from such methods of sketching, nor

* Compare Part III. sec. i. ch. ix. § 5.

¹ [For a further reference to the "typical" beauty of "the lines and gradations of unsullied snow," see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xii. § 1, where it is compared with the "vital" beauty of the flowers emerging from the snow. The two passages—"In the range . . . transmitted light," here, and the first portion of the section just referred to—are combined to form § 54 of *Fronde Agrestes*.]

have I ever seen a single instance of an earnest study of snowy mountains by any one. Hence, wherever they are introduced, their drawing is utterly unintelligible, the forms being those of white rocks, or of rocks lightly powdered with snow, showing sufficiently that not only the painters have never studied the mountain carefully from below, but that they have never climbed into the snowy region. Harding's rendering of the high Alps (*vide* the engraving of Chamonix, and of the Wengern Alp, in the illustrations to Byron) is best; but even he shows no perception of the real anatomy. Turner invariably avoids the difficulty, though he has shown himself capable of grappling with it in the ice of the Liber Studiorum (Mer de Glace), which is very cold and slippery; but of the crusts and wreaths of the higher snow he has taken no cognizance. Even the vignettes to Rogers's Poems fail in this respect. It would be vain to attempt in this place to give any detailed account of the phenomena of the upper snows; but it may be well to note those general principles which every artist ought to keep in mind when he has to paint an Alp.

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterwards.

§ 20. *General principles of its forms on the Alps.*

*Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can carry.*¹ It is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow;

¹ [Ruskin, as he explained thirty years later, was here following "the mathematical method of science as opposed to the artistic. Thinking of a thing, and demonstrating,—instead of looking at it. . . . If I had only *looked* at the snow carefully, I should have seen that it wasn't anywhere as thick as it could stand or lie—or, at least, as a hard substance, though deposited in powder, could stand." For his demonstration of the "great error" here made, see *Deucalion*, ch. iii. "Of Ice-Cream."]

it falls in the first mild day of spring in enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy the capacious valleys and less inclined superficies of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take, nor indicate, the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold, with vast and unbroken domes: these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violent and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

We have, therefore, every variety of indication of the under mountain form: first the mere coating which is soon to be withdrawn, and which shows as a mere sprinkling or powdering, after a storm on the higher peaks; then the shallow incrustation on the steep sides, glazed by the running down of its frequent meltings, frozen again in the night; then the deeper snow, more or less cramped or modified by sudden eminences of emergent rock, or hanging in fractured festoons and huge blue irregular cliffs on the mountain flanks, and over the edges and summits of their precipices in nodding drifts, far overhanging, like a cornice (perilous things to approach the edge of, from above); finally, the pure accumulation of overwhelming depth, smooth, sweeping, and almost cleftless, and modified only by its lines of drifting. Countless phenomena of exquisite beauty belong to each of these conditions, not to speak of the transition of the snow into ice at lower levels; but all on which I shall at present insist is, that the artist should not think of his Alp merely as a white mountain, but conceive it as a group of peaks loaded with an accumulation of snow, and that especially he should avail himself of the exquisite curvatures, never failing, by which the snow unites and opposes the harsh and broken lines of the rock. I shall enter into farther detail on this subject

hereafter;¹ at present it is useless to do so, as I have no examples to refer to, either in ancient or modern art. No statement of these facts has hitherto been made, nor any evidence given even of their observation, except by the most inferior painters.*

Various works in green and white appear from time to time on the walls of the Academy, *like* the Alps indeed, but so frightfully like, that we shudder and sicken at the sight of them, as we do when our best friend shows us into his dining-room, to see a portrait of himself, which “everybody thinks very like.” We should be glad to see fewer of these, for Switzerland is quite beyond the power of any but first-rate men, and is exceedingly bad practice for a rising artist: but let us express a hope that Alpine scenery will not continue to be neglected as it has been, by those who alone are capable of treating it. We love Italy, but we have had rather a surfeit of it lately; too many peaked caps and flat-headed pines. We should be very grateful to Harding and Stanfield if they would refresh us a little among the snow, and give us, what we believe them to be capable of giving us, a faithful expression of Alpine ideal. We are well aware of the pain inflicted on an artist’s mind by the preponderance of black, and white, and green, over more available colours; but there is nevertheless, in generic Alpine scenery, a fountain of feeling yet unopened, a chord of harmony yet untouched by art. It will be struck by the first man who can separate what is national, in Switzerland, from what is ideal. We do not want châteaux and three-legged stools, cow-bells and buttermilk. We want the pure and holy hills, treated as a link between heaven and earth.

§ 21. *Average paintings of Switzerland. Its real spirit has scarcely yet been caught.*

* I hear of some study of Alpine scenery among the professors at Geneva; but all foreign landscape that I have ever met with has been so utterly ignorant that I hope for nothing except from our own painters.²

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chs. xiv.—xviii.]

² [Perhaps an allusion to Alexandre Calame, of Geneva—a pioneer in the discovery of Switzerland for artistic purposes—whose Swiss views were at this time beginning to attract attention. There is a collection of his drawings at the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

CHAPTER III

OF THE INFERIOR MOUNTAINS

WE have next to investigate the character of those intermediate masses which constitute the greater part of all hill scenery, forming the outworks of the high ranges, and being almost the sole constituents of such lower groups as those of Cumberland, Scotland, or South Italy.

§ 1. *The inferior mountains are distinguished from the central, by being divided into beds.*

All mountains whatsoever, not composed of the granite or gneiss rocks described in the preceding chapter, nor volcanic (these latter being comparatively rare), are composed of beds, not of homogeneous, heaped materials, but of accumulated layers, whether of rock or soil. It may be slate, sandstone, limestone, gravel, or clay; but whatever the substance, it is laid in layers, not in a mass. These layers are scarcely ever horizontal, and may slope to any degree, often occurring vertical, the boldness of the hill outline commonly depending in a great degree on their inclination. In consequence of this division into beds, every mountain will have two great sets of lines more or less prevailing in its contours: one indicative of the surfaces of the beds, where they come out from under each other; and the other indicative of the extremities or edges of the beds, where their continuity has been interrupted. And these two great sets of lines will commonly be at right angles to each other, or nearly so. If the surface of the bed approach a horizontal line, its termination will approach the vertical, and this is the most usual and ordinary way in which a precipice is produced.

Farther, in almost all rocks there is a third division of substance, which gives to their beds a tendency to split transversely in some directions rather than others, giving rise to

what geologists call “joints,” and throwing the whole rock into blocks more or less rhomboidal; so that the beds are not terminated by torn or ragged edges, but by faces comparatively smooth and even, usually inclined to each other at some definite angle. The whole arrangement may be tolerably represented by the bricks of a wall, whose tiers may be considered as strata, and whose sides and extremities will represent the joints by which those strata are divided, varying, however, their direction in different rocks, and in the same rock under differing circumstances.

§ 2. *Farther division of these beds by joints,*

Finally, in the slates, grauwackes,¹ and some calcareous beds, in the greater number, indeed, of *mountain* rocks, we find another most conspicuous feature of general structure, the lines of lamination, which divide the whole rock into an infinite number of delicate plates or layers, sometimes parallel to the direction or “strike” of the strata, oftener obliquely crossing it, and sometimes, apparently, altogether independent of it, maintaining a consistent and unvarying slope through a series of beds contorted and undulating in every conceivable direction. These lines of lamination extend their influence to the smallest fragment, causing it (as, for example, common roofing slate) to break smooth in one direction and with a ragged edge in another, and marking the faces of the beds and joints with distinct and numberless lines, commonly far more conspicuous in a near view than the larger and more important divisions.

§ 3. *And by lines of lamination.*

Now, it cannot be too carefully held in mind, in examining the principles of mountain structure, that nearly all the laws of nature with respect to external form are rather universal tendencies, evidenced by a plurality of instances, than imperative necessities complied with by all. For instance, it may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees, that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the

§ 4. *Variety and seeming uncertainty under which these laws are manifested.*

¹ [Grauwacke (or in Anglicized form, greywacke), “a conglomerate or grit rock consisting of rounded pebbles and sand firmly united together.”]

higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exceptions to the rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination, than their neighbours. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority. Now, though the laws of mountain form are more rigid and constant than those of vegetation, they are subject to the same species of exception in carrying out. Though every mountain has these great tendencies in its lines, not one in a thousand of those lines is absolutely consistent with, and obedient to, this universal tendency. There are lines in every direction, and of almost every kind, but the sum and aggregate of those lines will invariably indicate the *universal* force and influence to which they are all subjected; and of these lines there will, I repeat, be two principal sets or classes, pretty nearly at right angles with each other. When both are inclined, they give rise to peaks or ridges; when one is nearly horizontal and the other vertical, to table-lands and precipices.

This then is the broad organization of all hills, modified afterwards by time and weather, concealed by superincumbent soil and vegetation, and ramified into minor and more delicate details in a way presently to be considered, but nevertheless universal in its great first influence, and giving to all mountains a particular cast and inclination; like the exertion of voluntary power in a definite direction, an internal spirit, manifesting itself in every crag, and breathing in every slope, flinging and forcing the mighty mass towards the heaven with an expression and an energy like that of life.

Now, as in the case of the structure of the central peaks described above, so also here, if I had to give a clear idea of this organization of the lower hills, where it is seen in its greatest perfection, with a mere view to geological truth, I should not refer to any geological drawings, but I should take the Loch Coriskin of Turner.¹ It has been admirably engraved, and for all purposes of reasoning on form, is nearly as effective in the print as in the drawing. Looking at any group of the multitudinous lines which make up this mass of mountain, they appear to be running anywhere and everywhere; there are none parallel to each other, none resembling each other for a moment; yet the whole mass is felt at once to be composed with the most rigid parallelism, the surfaces of the beds towards the left, their edges or escarpments towards the right. In the centre, near the top of the ridge, the edge of a bed is beautifully defined, casting its shadow on the surface of the one beneath it; this shadow marking, by three jags, the chasms caused in the inferior one by three of its parallel joints. Every peak in the distance is evidently subject to the same great influence, and the evidence is completed by the flatness and evenness of the steep surfaces of the beds which rise out of the lake on the extreme right, parallel with those in the centre.

Turn to Glencoe,² in the same series (the Illustrations to Scott). We have, in the mass of mountain on the left, the most beautiful indication of vertical beds of a finely laminated rock, terminated by even joints towards the precipice: while the whole sweep of the landscape, as far as the most distant peaks, is evidently governed by one great and simple tendency upwards to the left, those most distant peaks themselves lying over one another in the same direction. In the Daphne hunting with Leucippus,³ the mountains on the left descend in two precipices to the plain, each of which is formed by a vast escarpment of

¹ [In vol. x. of Scott's *Poetical Works*, engraved by Le Keux: *cf.* above, p. 402.]

² [*Cf.* above, pp. 414, 444.]

³ [No. 520 in the National Gallery (oils); see above, p. 337 *n.*]

§ 5. *The perfect expression of them in Turner's Loch Coriskin.*

§ 6. *Glencoe, and other works;*

the beds whose upper surfaces are shown between the two cliffs, sinking with an even slope from the summit of the lowest to the base of the highest, under which they evidently descend, being exposed in this manner for a length of five or six miles. The same structure is shown, though with more complicated development, on the left of the Loch Katrine.¹ But perhaps the finest instance, or at least the most marked of all, will be found in the exquisite Mount Lebanon, with the convent of St. Antonio, engraved in Finden's Bible. There is not one shade nor touch on the rock which is not indicative of the lines of stratification; and every fracture is marked with a straightforward simplicity which makes you feel that the artist has nothing in his heart but a keen love of the pure unmodified truth. There is no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, no apparent aim at artificial arrangement or scientific grouping; the rocks are laid one above another with unhesitating decision; every shade is understood in a moment, felt as a dark side, or a shadow, or a fissure, and you may step from one block or bed to another until you reach the mountain summit. And yet, though there seems no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, see how it *is* disguised, just as nature would have done it, by the perpetual play and changefulness of the very lines which appear so parallel; now bending a little up, or down, or losing themselves, or running into each other, the old story over and over again,—infinity. For here is still the great distinction between Turner's work and that of a common artist. Hundreds could have given the parallelism of blocks, but none but himself could have done so without the actual repetition of a single line or feature.

Now compare with this the second mountain from the left in the picture of Salvator, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery.² The whole is first laid in with a very delicate and masterly grey, right in tone, agreeable in colour, quite unobjectionable

¹ [In vol. viii. of the *Poetical Works of Scott* (1834); "Mount Lebanon," in Finden's *Illustrations of the Bible*.]

² ["Mountainous Landscape, with a River," now ascribed to the school of Salvator Rosa; see above, p. 376, n. 2.]

for a beginning. But how is this made into rock? On the light side Salvator gives us a multitude of touches, all exactly like one another, and therefore, it is to be hoped, quite patterns of perfection in rock drawing, since they are too good to be even varied. Every touch is a dash of the brush, as nearly as possible in the shape of a comma, round and bright at the top, convex on its right side, concave on its left, and melting off at the bottom into the grey. These are laid in confusion one above another, some paler, some brighter, some scarcely discernible, but all alike in shape. Now, I am not aware myself of any particular object, either in earth or heaven, which these said touches do at all resemble or portray. I do not, however, assert that they may not resemble something; feathers, perhaps; but I do say, and say with perfect confidence, that they may be Chinese for rocks, or Sanscrit for rocks, or symbolical of rocks in some mysterious and undeveloped character; but that they are no more *like* rocks than the brush that made them. The dark sides appear to embrace and overhang the lights; they cast no shadows, are broken by no fissures, and furnish, as food for contemplation, nothing but a series of concave curves.¹

Yet if we go on to No. 269² we shall find something a great deal worse. I can believe Gaspar Poussin capable of committing as much sin against nature as most people; but I certainly do not suspect him of having had any hand in this thing, at least after he was ten years old. Nevertheless, it shows what he is supposed capable of by his admirers, and will serve for a broad illustration of all those absurdities which he himself in a less degree, and with feeling and thought to atone for them, perpetually commits. Take the white bit of rock on the opposite side of the river, just above the right arm of the Niobe, and tell me of what the

¹ [For "series of concave curves. Yet if we go on," eds. 1 and 2 read:—
"series of concave curves, like those of a heap of broken plates and dishes, exhibiting on the whole as complete a piece of absurdity as ever human fingers disgraced themselves by producing.

"And yet not quite, neither, for if we go on . . ."]

²[Also in the Dulwich Gallery, now No. 213: "The Destruction of Niobe and her Children."]

§ 8. Compared
with the work of
Salvator,

§ 9. And of
Poussin.

square green daubs of the brush at its base can be conjectured to be typical. There is no cast shadow,¹ no appearance of reflected light, of substance, or of character on the edge; nothing, in short, but pure staring green paint, scratched heavily on a white ground. Nor is there a touch in the picture more expressive. All are the mere dragging of the brush here and there and everywhere, without meaning or intention; winding, twisting, zigzagging, doing anything in fact which may serve to break up the light and destroy its breadth, without bestowing in return one hint or shadow of anything like form. This picture is, indeed, an extraordinary case, but the Salvator above mentioned is a characteristic and exceedingly favourable example of the usual mode of mountain drawing among the old landscape painters.* Their admirers may be challenged to bring forward a single instance of their

* I have above exhausted all terms of vituperation, and probably disgusted the reader; and yet I have not spoken with enough severity: I know not any terms of blame that are bitter enough to chastise justly the mountain drawing of Salvator in the pictures of the Pitti Palace.²

¹ [Here, eds. 1–4 read, at greater length, as follows:—

“Rocks with pale-brown light sides, and rich green dark sides, are a phenomenon perhaps occurring in some of the improved passages of nature among our Cumberland lakes; where I remember once having seen a bed of roses, of peculiar magnificence, tastefully and artistically assisted in effect by the rocks above it being painted pink to match; but I do not think that they are a kind of thing which the clumsiness and false taste of nature can be supposed frequently to produce, even granting that these same sweeps of the brush could, by any exercise of imagination, be conceived representative of a dark, or any other side, which is far more than I am inclined to grant, seeing that there is no cast shadow . . .”]

² [This footnote was added in ed. 3. For some further “vituperation” of Salvator’s pictures in the Pitti Palace, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 29. In a letter to his father from Florence (June 8, 1845) Ruskin says:—

“I wasn’t fit for anything else, so I sauntered into the Palazzo Pitti to look at the Salvators, which I was rather curious about. I was disappointed exceedingly as I walked through the rooms. After the frescoes I have been among, the pictures looked like rubbish, and most of them, thanks to the cleaners, I find are so. Nothing is left of Titian’s ‘Magdalen’ but a lock or two of curly hair—and her box. But for Salvator, I was so thoroughly disgusted that I could hardly bring myself to stand before the pictures. I could not, by-the-bye, have come from a more unfortunate school for him [*i.e.* Angelico’s frescoes]; but I never thought he was such a mindless charlatan, such a sanguinary ruffian; his battle pieces are fit for nothing but signs over a butcher’s shop; it is pollution to look at them, and his two celebrated marines!! But you see if I don’t give it him; I’ll settle his hash for him this time.”]

expressing, or even appearing to have noted, the great laws of structure above explained. Their hills are, without exception, irregular earthy heaps, without energy or direction of any kind, marked with shapeless shadows and meaningless lines; sometimes, indeed, where great sublimity has been aimed at, approximating to the pure and exalted ideal of rocks, which, in the most artistical specimens of China cups and plates, we see suspended from aërial pagodas, or balanced upon peacocks' tails, but never warranting even the wildest theorist in the conjecture that their perpetrators had ever seen a mountain in their lives. Let us, however, look farther into the modifications of character by which nature conceals the regularity of her first plan; for although all mountains are organized as we have seen, their organization is always modified, and often nearly concealed, by changes wrought upon them by external influence.

We ought, when speaking of their stratification, to have noticed another great law, which must, however, be understood with greater latitude of application than any of the others, as very far from imperative or constant in particular cases, though universal in its influence on the aggregate of all. It is that the lines by which rocks are terminated, are always steeper and more inclined to the vertical as we approach the summit of the mountain. Thousands of cases are to be found in every group, of rocks and lines horizontal at the top of the mountain and vertical at the bottom; but they are still the exceptions, and the average out of a given number of lines in any rock formation whatsoever will be found increasing in perpendicularity as they rise. Consequently the great skeleton lines of rock outline are always concave; that is to say, all distant ranges of rocky mountain approximate more or less to a series of concave curves, meeting in peaks, like a range of posts with chains hanging between. I do not say that convex forms will not perpetually occur, but that the tendency of the groups will always be to fall into sweeping curved valleys, with angular peaks; not rounded convex summits, with angular valleys.

§ 10. Effects of external influence on mountain form.

This structure is admirably exemplified in the second vignette in Rogers's Italy and in "Piacenza."¹

But, although this is the primary form of all hills, and that
 § 11. *The gentle* which will always cut against the sky in every
convexity distant range, there are two great influences whose
caused by tendency is directly the reverse, and which modify,
aqueous to a great degree, both the evidences of
erosion, stratification and this external form. These are aqueous erosion
 and disintegration. The latter only is to be taken into
 consideration when we have to do with minor features of crag:
 but the former is a force in constant action, of the very utmost
 importance; a force to which one half of the great outlines of all
 mountains is entirely owing, and which has much influence upon
 every one of their details.

Now the tendency of aqueous action over a large elevated
 surface is *always* to make that surface symmetrically and evenly
 convex and dome-like, sloping gradually more and more as it
 descends, until it reaches an inclination of about 40°, at which
 slope it will descend perfectly straight to the valley; for at that
 slope the soil washed from above will accumulate upon the
 hill-side, as it cannot lie in steeper beds. This influence, then, is
 exercised more or less on all mountains, with greater or less
 effect in proportion as the rock is harder or softer, more or less
 liable to decomposition, more or less recent in date of elevation,
 and more or less characteristic in its original forms; but it
 universally induces, in the lower parts of mountains, a series of
 the most exquisitely symmetrical convex curves, terminating, as
 they descend to the valley, in uniform and uninterrupted slopes;
 this symmetrical structure being perpetually interrupted by cliffs
 and projecting masses, which give evidence of the interior
 parallelism of the mountain anatomy, but which interrupt the
 convex forms more frequently by rising out of them, than by
 indentation.

There remains but one fact more to be noticed. All
 mountains, in some degree, but especially those which are

¹ [The second vignette is at p. 8 of the *Italy*, "Tell's Chapel"; the drawing is No. 213
 in the National Gallery. "Piacenza" is in vol. x. of Scott's *Prose Works*.]

composed of soft or decomposing substance, are delicately and symmetrically furrowed by the descent of streams. The traces of their action commence at the very summits, fine as threads, and multitudinous, like the uppermost branches of a delicate tree. They unite in groups as they descend, concentrating gradually into dark undulating ravines, into which the body of the mountain descends on each side, at first in a convex curve, but at the bottom with the same uniform slope on each side which it assumes in its final descent to the plain, unless the rock be very hard, when the stream will cut itself a vertical chasm at the bottom of the curves, and there will be no even slope.* If, on the other hand, the rock be very soft, the slopes will increase rapidly in height and depth from day to day; washed away at the bottom and crumbling at the top, until, by their reaching the summit of the masses of rock which separate the active torrents, the whole mountain is divided into a series of pent-house-like ridges, all guiding to its summit, and becoming steeper and narrower as they ascend; these in their turn being divided by similar but smaller ravines, caused in the same manner, into the same kind of ridges; and these again by another series, the arrangement being carried finer and farther according to the softness of the rock. The south side of Saddleback,¹ in Cumberland, is a characteristic example; and the Montagne de Taconay, in Chamonix, a noble instance of one of these ridges or buttresses, with all its subdivisions, on a colossal scale.

§ 12. *And the effect of the action of torrents.*

* Some terrific cuts and chasms of this kind occur on the north side of the Valais, between Sion and Brieg. The torrent from the great Aletsch glacier descends through one of them. Elsewhere chasms may be found as narrow, but few so narrow and deep.²

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read, "Glamara." Ruskin made the same confusion, between Glamara and Saddleback (or Blencathra), in *Letters to a College Friend*, iii. § 1 (see Vol. I. p. 417 *n.*). For "Montagne de Taconay," eds. 1 and 2 read "Montagne du Coté"; ed. 3, "Montagne du Tacondy"; eds. 4 and 5, "Montagne de Taconaz." The Montagne de la Côte divides the Glacier des Bossons from the Glacier de Taconnaz; the Montagne de Taconnaz is the next ridge; for the topography, see Fig. 22 in ch. xiii. of vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*.]

² [Footnote first added in ed. 3.]

Now we wish to draw especial attention to the broad and bold simplicity of mass, and the excessive complication of details, which influences like these, acting on an enormous scale, must inevitably produce in all mountain groups: because each individual part and promontory, being compelled to assume the same symmetrical curves as its neighbours, and to descend at precisely the same slope to the valley, falls in with their prevailing lines, and becomes a part of a great and harmonious whole, instead of an unconnected and discordant individual. It is true that each of these members has its own touches of specific character, its own projecting crags, and peculiar hollows; but by far the greater portion of its lines will be such as unite with, though they do not repeat, those of its neighbours, and carry out the evidence of one great influence and spirit to the limits of the scene. This effort is farther aided by the original unity and connection of the rocks themselves, which, though it often may be violently interrupted, is never without evidence of its existence; for the very interruption itself forces the eye to feel that there is something to be interrupted, a sympathy and similarity of lines and fractures, which, however, full of variety and change of direction, never lose the appearance of symmetry of one kind or another. But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that these great sympathizing masses are not one mountain, but a thousand mountains; that they are originally composed of a multitude of separate eminences, hewn and chiselled indeed into associating form, but each retaining still its marked points and features of character; that each of these individual, members has, by the very process which assimilated it to the rest, been divided and subdivided into equally multitudinous groups of minor mountains; finally, that the whole complicated system is interrupted for ever and ever by daring manifestations of the inward mountain will, by the precipice which has submitted to no modulation of the torrent, and the peak which has bowed itself to no terror of the storm. Hence we see that the same imperative laws which require

§ 13. *The exceeding simplicity of contour caused by these influences,*

§ 14. *And multiplicity of feature.*

perfect simplicity of mass, require infinite and termless complication of detail; that there will not be an inch nor a hair's-breadth of the gigantic heap which has not its touch of separate character, its own peculiar curve, stealing out for an instant and then melting into the common line; felt for a moment by the blue mist of the hollow beyond, then lost when it crosses the enlightened slope; that all this multiplicity will be grouped into larger divisions, each felt by its increasing aërial perspective, and its instants of individual form, these into larger, and these into larger still, until all are merged in the great impression and prevailing energy of the two or three vast dynasties which divide the kingdom of the scene.

There is no vestige nor shadow of approach to such treatment as this in the whole compass of ancient art. Whoever the master, his hills, wherever he has attempted them, have not the slightest trace of association or connection; they are separate, conflicting, confused, petty and paltry heaps of earth; there is no marking of distances or divisions in their body; they may have holes in them, but no valleys,—protuberances and excrescences, but no parts; and, in consequence, are invariably diminutive and contemptible in their whole appearance and impression.

But look at the mass of mountain on the right in Turner's Daphne hunting with Leucippus.¹ It is simple, broad, and united as one surge of a swelling sea; it rises in an unbroken line along the valley, and lifts its promontories with an equal slope. But it contains in its body ten thousand hills. There is not a quarter of an inch of its surface without its suggestion of increasing distance and individual form. First, on the right, you have a range of tower-like precipices, the clinging wood climbing along their ledges and cresting their summits, white waterfalls gleaming through its leaves; not, as in

§ 15. Both
utterly neg-
lected in
ancient art.

§ 16. The
fidelity of treat-
ment in
Turner's
Daphne and
Leucippus.

¹ [No. 520 in the National Gallery; see above, p. 337 *n.*, and in this chapter, p. 453.]

Claude's scientific ideals, poured in vast torrents over the top, and carefully keeping all the way down on the most projecting parts of the sides; but stealing down, traced from point to point, through shadow after shadow, by their evanescent foam and flashing light,—here a wreath, and there a ray,—through the deep chasms and hollow ravines, out of which rise the soft rounded slopes of mightier mountain, surge beyond surge, immense and numberless, of delicate and gradual curve, accumulating in the sky until their garment of forest is exchanged for the shadowy fold of slumbrous morning cloud, above which the utmost silver peak shines islanded and alone. Put what mountain painting you will beside this, of any other artist, and its heights will look like mole-hills in comparison, because it will not have the unity and the multiplicity which are in nature, and with Turner, the signs of size.

Again, in the *Avalanche and Inundation*,¹ we have for the whole subject nothing but one vast bank of united mountain, and one stretch of uninterrupted valley. Though the bank is broken into promontory beyond promontory, peak above peak, each the abode of a new tempest, the arbiter of a separate desolation, divided from each other by the rushing of the snow, by the motion of the storm, by the thunder of the torrent; the mighty unison of their dark and lofty line, the brotherhood of ages, is preserved unbroken: and the broad valley at their feet, though measured league after league away by a thousand passages of sun and darkness, and marked with fate beyond fate of hamlet and of inhabitant, lies yet but as a straight and narrow channel, a filling furrow before the flood. Whose work will you compare with this? Salvator's grey heaps of earth, seven yards high, covered with bunchy brambles that we may be under no mistake about the size, thrown about at random in a little plain, beside a zigzagging river just wide

¹ ["Snowstorm: Avalanche and Inundation," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1837, formerly in the Munro of Novar collection (see Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, ed. 1877, p. 104). For another reference to the picture, see above, p. 239.]

enough to admit of the possibility of there being fish in it, and with banks just broad enough to allow the respectable angler or hermit to sit upon them conveniently in the foreground? Is there more of nature in such paltriness, think you, than in the valley and the mountain which bend to each other like the trough of the sea; with the flank of the one swept in one surge into the height of heaven, until the pine forests lie on its immensity like the shadows of narrow clouds, and the hollow of the other laid league by league into the blue of the air, until its white villages flash in the distance only like the fall of a sunbeam?

But let us examine by what management of the details themselves this wholeness and vastness of effect are given. We have just seen (§ 11) that it is impossible for the slope of a mountain, not actually a precipice of rock, to exceed 35° or 40° , and that by far the greater part of all hill-surface is composed of graceful curves of much less degree than this, reaching 40° only as their ultimate and utmost inclination. It must be farther observed that the interruptions to such curves, by precipices or steps, are always small in proportion to the slopes themselves. Precipices rising vertically more than 100 feet are very rare among the secondary hills of which we are speaking. I am not aware of any cliff in England or Wales where a plumb-line can swing clear for 200 feet; and even although sometimes, with intervals, breaks, and steps, we get perhaps 800 feet of a slope of 60° or 70° , yet not only are these cases very rare, but even these have little influence on the great contours of a mountain 4000 or 5000 feet in elevation, being commonly balanced by intervals of ascent not exceeding 6° or 8° . The result of which is, first, that the peaks and precipices of a mountain appear as little more than jags or steps emerging from its great curves; and, secondly, that the bases of all hills are enormously extensive as compared with their elevation, so that there must be always a horizontal distance between the observer and the summit five or six times exceeding the perpendicular one.

§ 18. *The rarity among secondary hills of steep slopes or high precipices,*

Now it is evident, that, whatever the actual angle of elevation of the mountain may be, every exhibition of this horizontal distance between us and the summit is an addition to its height, and of course to its impressiveness; while every endeavour to exhibit its slope as steep and sudden is diminution at once of its distance and elevation. In consequence, nature is constantly endeavouring to impress upon us this horizontal distance, which, even in spite of all her means of manifesting it, we are apt to forget or under-estimate; and all her noblest effects depend on the full measurement and feeling of it. And it is to the abundant and marvellous expression of it by Turner that I would direct especial attention, as being that which is in itself demonstrative of the highest knowledge and power; knowledge, in the constant use of lines of subdued slope in preference to steep or violent ascents, and in the perfect subjection of all such features, when they necessarily occur, to the larger masses; and power, in the inimitable statements of retiring space by mere painting of surface details, without the aid of crossing shadows, divided forms, or any other artifice.

The Caudebec,¹ in the Rivers of France, is a fine instance of almost every fact which we have been pointing out. We have in it, first, the clear expression of what takes place constantly among hills; that the river, as it passes through the valley, will fall backwards and forwards from side to side, lying first, if I may so speak, with all its weight against the hills on the one side, and then against those on the other; so that, as here it is exquisitely told, in each of its circular sweeps the whole force of its current is brought deep and close to the bases of the hills, while the water on the side next the plain is shallow, deepening gradually. In consequence of this, the hills are cut away at their bases by the current, so that their slopes are interrupted by precipices mouldering to the water.

¹ [Plate 10 in *The Seine and the Loire*; the drawing is No. 129 in the National Gallery.]

§ 19. *And consequent expression of horizontal distance in their ascent.*

§ 20. *Full statement of all these facts in various works of Turner,—Caudebec, etc.*

Observe, first, how nobly Turner has given us the perfect unity of the whole mass of hill, making us understand that every ravine in it has been cut gradually by streams. The first eminence, beyond the city, is not disjointed from, nor independent of, the one succeeding, but evidently part of the same whole, originally united, separated only by the action of the stream between. The association of the second and third is still more clearly told, for we see that there has been a little longitudinal valley running along the brow of their former united mass, which, after the ravine had been cut between, formed the two jags which Turner has given us at the same point in each of their curves. This great triple group has, however, been originally distinct from those beyond it; for we see that these latter are only the termination of the enormous even slope, which appears again on the extreme right, having been interrupted by the rise of the near hills. Observe how the descent of the whole series is kept gentle and subdued, never suffered to become steep except where it has been cut away by the river, the sudden precipice caused by which is exquisitely marked in the last two promontories, where they are defined against the bright horizon; and, finally, observe how, in the ascent of the nearest eminence beyond the city, without one cast shadow or any division of distances, every yard of surface is felt to be retiring by the mere painting of its details, how we are permitted to walk up it, and along its top, and are carried, before we are half-way up, a league or two forward into the picture. The difficulty of doing this, however, can scarcely be appreciated except by an artist.

I do not mean to assert that this great painter is acquainted with the geological laws and facts he has thus illustrated;¹ I am not aware whether he be or not; I merely wish to demonstrate, in points admitting of demonstration, that intense observation of, and strict adherence to, truth, which it is impossible to demonstrate in its less tangible and more delicate manifestations. However

*§ 21. The use
of considering
geological
truths.*

¹ [See above, p. 429 n.]

I may *feel* the truth of every touch and line, I cannot *prove* truth, except in large and general features; and I leave it to the arbitration of every man's reason, whether it be not likely that the painter who is thus so rigidly faithful in great things that every one of his pictures might be the illustration of a lecture on the physical science, is not likely to be faithful also in small.

Honfleur, and the scene between Clairmont and Mauves,¹ supply us with farther instances of the same grand simplicity of treatment; and the latter is especially remarkable for its expression of the furrowing of the hills by descending water, in the complete roundness and symmetry of their curves and in the delicate and sharp shadows which are cast in the undulating ravines. It is interesting to compare with either of these noble works such hills as those of Claude, on the left of the picture marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery.² There is no detail nor surface in one of them; not an inch of ground for us to stand upon; we must either sit astride upon the edge, or fall to the bottom.³ I could not point to a more complete instance of mountain calumny; nor can I oppose it more

¹ [Plates 20 and 56 in *The Seine and the Loire*. The drawing of "Honfleur" is No. 159 in the National Gallery; that of "Between Clairmont and Mauves," No. 18 in the collection presented by Ruskin to the Oxford University Galleries.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 here proceed:—

"We have here a mass of mountain intended to retire from us, but the clumsy workman, not being able to indicate this achievement upon their surfaces, is compelled to have recourse to the usual tyro's expedient of drawing edge behind edge, like the scenes of a theatre, and these same unlucky edges only multiply the exhibition of his weakness, for having evidently no power of indicating roundness or solidity in any of them, he has trusted entirely, like an awkward schoolboy, to making the outline hard and bright, and shading the body of each gradually as it comes down, which is so far from accomplishing his purpose that it has made the edges, if anything, rather nearer than any other part of the hills, and instead of promontories we have pasteboard scenes. There is no detail," etc.]

No. 260 in the Dulwich Gallery, however, is not by Claude, but by N. Poussin (or his school). Ruskin probably meant to refer to No. 264 (now No. 53), a picture now ascribed to the school of Claude.]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 here proceed:—

"Now there is no doubt nor capability of dispute about such painting as this; it is the work of a mere tyro, and a weak and childish tyro, ignorant of the common laws of light and shadow; it is what beginners always do, and always have done, but what, if they have either sense or feeling, they soon cease to do. I could not point," etc.]

completely, in every circumstance, than with the Honfleur of Turner, already mentioned; in which there is not one edge or division admitted, and yet we are permitted to climb up the hill from the town, and pass far into the mist along its top, and so descend mile after mile along the ridge to seaward, until without one break in the magnificent unity of progress, we are carried down to the utmost horizon. And contrast the brown paint of Claude, which you can only guess to be meant for rock or soil because it *is* brown, with Turner's profuse, pauseless richness of feature, carried through all the enormous space; the unmeasured wealth of exquisite detail, over which the mind can dwell, and walk, and wander, and feast for ever, without finding either one break in its vast simplicity, or one vacuity in its exhaustless splendour.

But these, and hundreds of others, which it is sin not to dwell upon, wooded hills and undulating moors of North England, rolling surges of park and forest of the South, soft and vine-clad ranges of French coteaux casting their oblique shadows on silver leagues of glancing rivers, and olive-whitened promontories of Alp and Apennine, are only instances of Turner's management of the lower and softer hills. In the bolder examples of his powers, where he is dealing with lifted masses of enormous mountain, we shall still find him as cautious in his use of violent slopes or vertical lines, and still as studied in his expression of retiring surface. We never get to the top of one of his hills without being tired with our walk; not by the steepness, observe, but by the stretch; for we are carried up towards the heaven by such delicate gradation of line, that we scarcely feel that we have left the earth before we find ourselves among the clouds. The Skiddaw, in the Illustrations to Scott, is a noble instance of this majestic moderation. The mountain lies in the morning light, like a level vapour; its gentle lines of ascent are scarcely felt by the eye; it rises without effort or exertion, by the mightiness of its mass; every slope is full of slumber; and we know not how it has been exalted, until we find it laid as a floor for the walking

§ 23. *The same moderation of slope in the contours of his higher hills.*

of the eastern clouds. So again in the Fort Augustus,¹ where the whole elevation of the hills depends on the soft lines of swelling surface which undulate back through leagues of mist, carrying us unawares higher and higher above the diminished lake, until, when we are all but exhausted with the endless distance, the mountains make their last spring, and bear us, in that instant of exertion, half-way to heaven.

I ought perhaps rather to have selected, as instances of mountain form, such elaborate works as the Oberwesel or Lake of Uri,² but I have before expressed my dislike of speaking of such magnificent pictures as they by parts. And indeed all proper consideration of the hill drawing of Turner must be deferred until we are capable of testing it by the principles of beauty; for, after all, the most essential qualities of line, those on which all right delineation of mountain character must depend, are those which are only to be explained or illustrated by appeals to our feeling of what is beautiful. There is an expression about all the hill lines of nature, which I think I shall be able hereafter to explain; but it is not to be reduced to line and rule, not to be measured by angles or described by compasses, not to be chipped out by the geologist or equated by the mathematician. It is intangible, incalculable; a thing to be felt, not understood; to be loved, not comprehended; a music of the eyes, a melody of the heart, whose truth is known only by its sweetness.³

I can scarcely, without repeating myself to tediousness,

¹ [Illustration in vol. xxvi. of Scott's *Prose Works*. "Skiddaw" is in vol. ix. of the *Poetical Works*.]

² [Oberwesel was a drawing in the Windus collection; for other references to it see pp. 250 n., 412 n., 552 n. The Lake of Uri was engraved as a companion plate to "The Lake of Nemi," and published with it; the drawing is in the collection of Mr. E. Steinkopff, of Berkeley Square.]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 conclude this paragraph as follows:—

"It will only be when we can feel as well as think, and rejoice as well as reason, that I shall be able to lead you with Turner to his favourite haunts,—to bid you walk with him along slopes of the waving hills, with their rich woods bending on their undulations like the plumage on a bird's bosom, and up the hollow paths of silent valleys, and along the rugged flanks of heaving mountains, passing like a cloud from crag to crag, and chasm to chasm, and solitude to solitude, among lifted walls of living rock, mighty surges of

enter at present into proper consideration of the mountain drawing of other modern painters. We have, fortunately, several by whom the noble truths which we have seen so fully exemplified by Turner are also deeply felt and faithfully rendered; though, for the perfect statement of them, there is a necessity of such a union of freedom of thought with perfect mastery over the greatest mechanical difficulties, as we can scarcely hope to see attained by more than one man in our age. Very nearly the same words which we used in reference to Stanfield's drawings of the central clouds,¹ might be applied to his rendering of mountain truth. He occupies exactly the same position with respect to other artists in earth as in cloud. None can be said really to *draw* the mountain as he will, to have so perfect a mastery over its organic development; but there is, nevertheless, in all his works, some want of feeling and individuality. He has studied and mastered his subject to the bottom, but he trusts too much to that past study, and rather invents his hills from his possessed stores of knowledge, than expresses in them the fresh ideas received from nature. Hence, in all that he does, we feel a little too much that the hills are his own. We cannot swear to their being the particular crags and individual promontories which break the cone of Ischia, or shadow the waves of Maggiore. We are nearly sure, on the contrary, that nothing but the outline is local, and that all the filling up has been done in the study. Now, we have already shown (Sec. I. Chap. III.) that particular truths are more important than general ones, and this is just one of the cases in which that rule especially applies. Nothing is so great a sign of truth and beauty in mountain drawing, as the appearance of individuality; nothing

§ 25. *Works of other modern artists,—Clarkson Stanfield.*

§ 26. *Importance of particular and individual truth in hill drawing.*

tempestuous earth, dim domes of heaven-girded snow, where the morning first strikes, and the sunset last lingers, and the stars pause in their setting, and the tempest and the lightning have their habitations, to bid you behold in all that perfect beauty,—which is known only to love,—that truth infinite and divine, which is revealed only to devotion.

“I can scarcely,” etc.]

¹ [See above, p. 390.]

is so great a proof of real imagination and invention, as the appearance that nothing has been imagined or invented. We ought to feel of every inch of mountain, that it *must* have existence in reality, that if we had lived near the place we should have known every crag of it, and that there must be people to whom every crevice and shadow of the picture is fraught with recollections, and coloured with associations. The moment the artist can make us feel this, the moment he can make us think that *he* has done nothing, that nature has done all, that moment he becomes ennobled, he proves himself great. As long as we remember him, we cannot respect him. We honour him most when we most forget him. He becomes great when he becomes invisible. And we may, perhaps, be permitted to express our hope that Mr. Stanfield will, our conviction that he must, if he would advance in his rank as an artist, attend more to local character, and give us generally less of the Stanfield limestone. He ought to study with greater attention the rocks which afford finer divisions and more delicate parts (slates and gneiss); and he ought to observe more fondly and faithfully those beautiful laws and lines of swell and curvature, by intervals of which nature sets off and relieves the energy of her peaked outlines. He is at present apt to be too rugged, and, in consequence, to lose size. Of his best manner of drawing hills, I believe I can scarcely give a better example than the rocks of Suli, engraved in Finden's illustrations to Byron. It is very grand and perfect in all parts and points.

Copley Fielding is peculiarly graceful and affectionate in his drawing of the inferior mountains. But as with his clouds, so with his hills; as long as he keeps¹ to silvery films of misty outline, or purple shadows mingled with the evening light, he is true and beautiful; but the moment he withdraws

¹ [For "Copley Fielding . . . as long as he keeps," eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"Copley Fielding is our next greatest artist in the drawing of the inferior mountains. His mountain *feeling* is quite perfect; nothing can be more delicate than his perception of what is graceful in the outline, or of what is valuable in the tenderness of aërial tone. But, again, as with his clouds, so with his hills; it is all feeling, and no drawing. As long as he keeps . . ."]

the mass out of his veiling mystery, he is lost. His worst drawings, therefore, are those on which he has spent most time; for he is sure to show weakness wherever he gives detail. We believe that all his errors proceed, as we observed before,¹ from his not working with the chalk or pencil; and that if he would paint half the number of pictures in the year which he usually produces, and spend his spare time in hard dry study of forms, the half he painted would be soon worth double the present value of all. For he really has deep and genuine feeling of hill character, a far higher perception of space, elevation, incorporeal colour, and all those qualities which are the poetry of mountains, than any other of our water-colour painters; and it is an infinite pity that he should not give to these delicate feelings the power of realization, which might be attained by a little labour. A few thorough studies of his favourite mountains, Ben Venue or Ben Cruachan, in clear, strong, front chiaroscuro, allowing himself neither colour nor mist, nor any means of getting over the ground but downright drawing, would, we think, open his eyes to sources of beauty of which he now takes no cognizance. He ought not, however, to repeat the same subjects so frequently, as the casting about of the mind for means of varying them blunts the feelings to truth. And he should remember that an artist who is not making progress is nearly certain to be retrograding; and that progress is not to be made by working in the study, or by mere labour bestowed on the repetition of unchanging conceptions.

§ 27. *Works of Copley Fielding. His high feeling.*

J. D. Harding would paint mountains very nobly, if he made them of more importance in his compositions, but they are usually little more than backgrounds for his foliage or buildings; and it is his present system to make his backgrounds very slight. Some of the best and most substantial renderings of the green and turfy masses of our lower hills are to be found

§ 28. *Works of J. D. Harding and others.*

¹ [Above, p. 399.]

in the drawings of Blacklock;¹ and I am sorry not to have before noticed the quiet and simple earnestness, and the tender feeling, of the mountain drawings of William Turner of Oxford.*

* It is not without indignation that I see the drawings of this patient and unassuming master deliberately insulted every year by the Old Water-Colour Society, and placed in consistent degradation at the top of the room, while the commonest affectations and trickeries of vulgar draughtsmanship are constantly hung on the line. Except the works of Hunt, Prout, Cox, Fielding, and Finch, there are generally none in the room which deserve so honourable a place as those of William Turner.²

¹ [W. J. Blacklock (1816–1858) exhibited for some years pictures and drawings of scenery in the North of England.]

² [The end of the chapter, from “Some of the best . . . William Turner of Oxford,” including the footnote, was not in eds. 1–4, where the chapter ended thus:—

“very slight. His colour is very beautiful; indeed both his and Fielding’s are far, far more refined than Stanfield’s. We wish he would oftener take up some wild subject, dependent for interest on its mountain forms alone, as we should anticipate the highest results from his perfect drawing; and we think that such an exercise, occasionally gone completely through, would counteract a tendency which we perceive in his present distances, to become a little thin and cutting, if not incomplete.

“[Callcott’s work, when he takes up a piece of hill scenery, is very perfect in all but colour.] The late G. Robson was a man most thoroughly acquainted with all the characteristics of our own island hills; and some of the outlines of John Varley showed very grand feeling of energy of form.”

Eds. 3 and 4 omit the bracketed words.

William Turner, commonly called “of Oxford,” to distinguish him from the great Turner, was a drawing-master in that city, and an exhibitor of water-colours during a long artistic career (b. 1789, d. 1862). For other references to him, see *Academy Notes*, 1856 (O.W.C.S. 1, 4), 1858 (O.W.C.S. 62), 1859 (“Water-Colour Societies”). Francis Oliver Finch (1802–1862), landscape-painter, had studied under Varley; he was a member of the Old Water-Colour Society. Several of his drawings are in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum. For references to Robson, see above, p. 193 *n.*; to Varley, p. 275 *n.*]

CHAPTER IV OF THE FOREGROUND

WE have now only to observe the close characteristics of the rocks and soils to which the large masses of which we have been speaking owe their ultimate characters.

§ 1. *What rocks were the chief components of ancient landscape foreground.*

We have already seen that there exists a marked distinction between those stratified rocks whose beds are amorphous and without subdivision, as many limestones and sandstones, and those which are divided by lines of lamination, as all slates. The last kind of rock is the more frequent in nature, and forms the greater part of all hill scenery. It has, however, been successfully grappled with by few, even of the moderns, except Turner; while there is no single example of any aim at it or thought of it among the ancients, whose foregrounds, as far as it is possible to guess at their intention through their concentrated errors, are chosen from among the tufa and travertin of the lower Apennines (the ugliest as well as the least characteristic rocks of nature), and whose larger features of rock scenery, if we look at them with a predetermination to find in them a resemblance of *something*, may be pronounced at least liker the mountain limestone than anything else. I shall glance, therefore, at the general characters of these materials first, in order that we may be able to appreciate the fidelity of rock-drawing on which Salvator's reputation has been built.

The massive limestones separate generally into irregular blocks, tending to the form of cubes or parallelopipeds, and terminated by tolerably smooth planes. The weather, acting on the edges of these blocks, rounds them off; but the frost,

which, while it cannot penetrate nor split the body of the stone, acts energetically on the angles, splits off the rounded fragments, and supplies sharp, fresh, and complicated edges. Hence the angles of such blocks are usually marked by a series of steps and fractures, in which the peculiar character of the rock is most distinctly seen; the effect being increased in many limestones by the interposition of two or three thinner beds between the large strata of which the block has been a part; these thin laminæ breaking easily, and supplying a number of fissures and lines at the edge of the detached mass. Thus, as a general principle, if a rock have character anywhere, it would be on the angle; and however even and smooth its great planes may be, it will usually break into variety where it turns a corner. In one of the most exquisite pieces of rock truth ever put on canvas, the foreground of the "Napoleon" in the Academy, 1842,¹ this principle was beautifully exemplified in the complicated fractures of the upper angle just where it turned from the light, while the planes of the rock were varied only by the modulation they owed to the waves. It follows from this structure that the edges of all rock being partially truncated, first by large fractures, and then by the rounding of the fine edges of these by the weather, perpetually present *convex* transitions from the light to the dark side, the planes of the rock almost always swelling a little *from* the angle.

Now it will be found throughout the works of Salvator, that his most usual practice was to give a *concave* sweep of the brush for his first expression of the dark side, leaving the paint darkest towards the light; by which daring and original method of procedure he has succeeded in covering his foregrounds with forms which approximate to those of drapery, of ribands, of crushed cocked hats, of locks of hair, of waves, leaves, or anything, in short, flexible or tough, but which of course are not

¹ ["War: the Exile and the Rock-Limpet," No. 235 in the National Gallery. For list of other references to it, see above, p. 273 n.]

§ 2. *Salvator's limestones. The real characters of the rock. Its fractures, and obtuseness of angles.*

§ 3. *Salvator's acute angles caused by the meeting of concave curves.*

only unlike, but directly contrary to, the forms which nature has impressed on rocks.* And the circular and sweeping strokes or stains which are dashed at random over their surfaces, only fail of destroying all resemblance whatever to rock structure from their frequent want of any meaning at all, and from the impossibility of our supposing any of them to be representative of shade. Now, if there be any part of landscape in which nature develops her principles of light and shade more clearly than another, it is rock; for the dark sides of fractured stone receive brilliant reflexes from the lighted surfaces, on which the shadows are marked with the most exquisite precision, especially because, owing to the parallelism of cleavage,

§ 4. *Peculiar distinctness of light and shade in the rocks of nature.*

* I have cut out a passage in this place¹ which insisted on the *angular* character of rocks; not because it was false, but because it was incomplete, and I cannot explain it nor complete it without example. It is not the absence of curves, but the suggestion of *hardness through curves*, and of the under tendencies of the structure, which is the true characteristic of rock form; and Salvator, whom neither here nor elsewhere I have abused enough, is not wrong because he paints curved rocks, but because his curves are the curves of ribands and not of rocks. The difference between rock curvature and other curvature I cannot explain verbally, but I hope to do it hereafter by illustration;² at present, let the reader study the rock-drawing of the Mont St. Gothard subject, in the *Liber Studiorum*,³ and compare it with any examples of Salvator to which he may happen to have access. The account of rocks here given is altogether inadequate, and I only do not add to it because I first wish to give longer study to the subject.

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 contain the afterwards omitted passage referred to in the footnote (first added in ed. 3) as follows:—

“Again, the grand outlines of rocks are all angular. Water-worn and rounded they may be, or modulated on the surface, as we shall presently see, but their prevailing lines and shadows are still rectilinear. In the ‘Napoleon’—I can illustrate by no better example, for I can reason as well from this as I could with my foot on the native rock—the great outlines of the foreground are all straight, firm, and decided; its planes nearly level, though touched with tender modulations by the washing of the waves, and the complicated fracture above spoken of, though its edges are entirely rounded off, retains all the character of the right lines of which it was originally composed. But I think it would be difficult to show any strokes of the brush on any rock painted by the old masters, by Salvator especially, not curvilinear. And the circular,” etc.]

§ 4. *The true outlines are all angular.*

§ 5. *Salvator’s are all curved.*

² [See vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*, ch. xii.]

³ [The drawing is No. 477 in the National Gallery; for other references to it, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. ii. § 16, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30 n.]

the surfaces lie usually in directions nearly parallel. Hence every crack and fissure has its shadow and reflected light separated with the most delicious distinctness, and the organization and solid form of all parts are told with a decision of language, which, to be followed with anything like fidelity, requires the most transparent colour, and the most delicate and scientific drawing. So far are the works of the old landscape painters from rendering this, that it is exceedingly rare to find a single passage in which the shadow can even be distinguished from the dark side—they scarcely seem to know the one to be darker than the other; and the strokes of the brush are not used to explain or express a form known or conveyed, but are dashed and daubed about without any aim beyond the covering of the canvas. “A rock,” the old masters appear to say to themselves, “is a great, irregular, formless, characterless lump; but it must have shade upon it, and any grey marks will do for that shade.”

§ 5. *Peculiar confusion of both in the rocks of Salvator.*

Finally, while few, if any, of the rocks of nature are untraversed by delicate and slender fissures, whose black sharp lines are the only means by which the peculiar quality in which rocks most differ from the other objects of the landscape, brittleness, can be effectually suggested, we look in vain among the blots and stains with which the rocks of ancient art are loaded, for any vestige or appearance of fissure or splintering. Toughness and malleability appear to be the qualities whose expression is most aimed at; sometimes sponginess, softness, flexibility, tenuity, and occasionally transparency. Take, for instance, the foreground of Salvator, in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery.¹

§ 6. *And total want of any expression of hardness or brittleness.*

There is, on the right-hand side of it, an object which I never walk through the room without contemplating for a minute or two with renewed solicitude and anxiety of mind, indulging in a series of very wild and imaginative conjectures as to its probable or

§ 7. *Instances in particular pictures.*

¹ [“Mountainous Landscape, with a River” (school of S. Rosa); see above, pp. 376, n. 2; 387, 454.]

possible meaning. I think there is reason to suppose that the artist intended it either for a very large stone, or for the trunk of a tree; but any decision as to its being either one or the other of these must, I conceive, be the extreme of rashness. It melts into the ground on one side, and might reasonably be conjectured to form a part of it, having no trace of woody structure or colour; but on the other side it presents a series of concave curves, interrupted by cogs like those of a water-wheel, which the boldest theorist would certainly not feel himself warranted in supposing symbolical of rock.¹ The forms which this substance, whatever it be, assumes, will be found repeated, though in a less degree, in the foreground of No. 159,² where they are evidently meant for rock.

Let us contrast with this system of rock-drawing the faithful, scientific, and dexterous studies of nature which we find in the works of Clarkson Stanfield. He is a man especially to be opposed to the old masters, because he usually confines himself to the same rock subjects as they, the mouldering and furrowed crags of the secondary formation, which arrange themselves more or less into broad and simple masses; and in the rendering of these it is impossible to go beyond him. Nothing can surpass his care, his firmness, or his success, in marking the distinct and sharp light and shade by which the form is explained, never confusing it with local colour, however richly his surface texture may be given; while the wonderful play of line with which he will vary, and through which he will indicate, the regularity of stratification, is almost as instructive as that of nature herself. I cannot point to any of his works as better

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 here read to the end of the paragraph as follows:—

“symbolical of rock. I should be glad of other opinions on the subject; but, on the whole, I believe that much more is to be said against it botanically than geologically, and that the hypothesis most favourable to Salvator would furnish us, in this piece of drawing, with one of the finest examples existing of concentrated geological falsehood. The forms . . . meant for rock; not to speak of the blocks on the other side of the river in the same picture, whose shapeless, daubed, shadowless concavities are to the full as offensive and absurd, though not quite so ambiguous.”]

² [Now No. 137, “A Pool with Friars Fishing.” For other references to this picture, see above, pp. 375, 406.]

§ 8. Compared
with the works of
Stanfield.

or more characteristic than others;¹ but among small and easily accessible engravings, the Botallack Mine, Cornwall, engraved in the *Coast Scenery*,² gives us a very finished and generic representation of rock, whose primal organization has been violently affected by external influences. We have the stratification and cleavage indicated at its base, every fissure being sharp, angular, and decisive, disguised gradually as it rises by the rounding of the surface, and the successive furrows caused by the descent of streams. But the exquisite drawing of the foreground is especially worthy of notice. No huge concave sweeps of the brush, no daubing or splashing here. Every inch of it is brittle and splintery, and the fissures are explained to the eye by the most perfect, speaking light and shade; we can stumble over the edges of them. The East Cliff, Hastings, is another very fine example, from the exquisite irregularity with which its squareness of general structure is varied and disguised. Observe how totally contrary every one of its lines is to the absurdities of Salvator.

§ 9. *Their absolute opposition in every particular.*

Stanfield's are all angular and straight, every apparent curve made up of right lines, while Salvator's are all sweeping and flourishing like so much penmanship. Stanfield's lines pass away into delicate splintery fissures, Salvator's are broad daubs throughout. Not one of Stanfield's lines is like another. Every one of Salvator's mocks all the rest. All Stanfield's curves, where his universal angular character is massed, as on the left-hand side, into large sweeping forms, are convex. Salvator's are every one concave.

The foregrounds of J. D. Harding, and the rocks of his

¹ [Eds. 1-4 read:—

“characteristic than others; [for he is a man who never fails, and who is constantly presenting us with more highly wrought example of rock truth]; but his ‘Ischia,’ in the present British Institution, may be taken as a fair average example. The ‘Bottallack Mine, Cornwall,’ etc.”

Eds. 3 and 4 omit the bracketed words. Stanfield's picture in the British Institution's Exhibition of 1843 was No. 120, “View of the islands of Ischia and Procida from the rocks called ‘Le Schiave.’”]

² [*Stanfield's Coast Scenery: a Series of Views in the British Channel*, 1836. “Botallack Mine” (engraved by W. Miller) is Plate 8; the “East Cliff, Hastings” (engraved by J. Stephenson), Plate 27.]

middle distances, are also thoroughly admirable. He is not quite so various and undulating in his line as Stanfield; and sometimes, in his middle distances, is wanting in solidity, owing to a little confusion of the dark side and shadow with each other, or with the local colour: but his work, in near passages of fresh-broken sharp-edged rock, is absolute perfection, excelling Stanfield in the perfect freedom and facility with which his fragments are splintered and scattered; true in every line without the least apparent effort. Stanfield's best works are laborious; but Harding's rocks fall from under his hand as if they had just crashed down the hill-side, flying on the instant into lovely form. In colour, also, he incomparably surpasses Stanfield, who is apt to verge upon mud, or be cold in his grey. The rich, lichenous, and changeful warmth, and delicate weathered greys of Harding's rock, illustrated as they are by the most fearless, firm, and unerring drawing, render his wild pieces of torrent shore the finest things, next to the work of Turner, in English foreground art.

J. B. Pyne has very accurate knowledge of limestone rock, and expresses it clearly and forcibly; but it is much to be regretted¹ that this clever artist appears to be losing all sense of colour, and is getting more and more mannered in execution, evidently never studying from nature except with the previous determination to Pynize everything.*

* A passage which I happened to see in an essay of Mr. Pyne's,² in the Art-Union, about nature's "foisting rubbish" upon the artist, sufficiently explains the cause of this decline. If Mr. Pyne will go to nature, as all great men have done, and as all men who mean to be great must do, that is not

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 omit the passage, "but it is much to be regretted . . . everything," and the footnote, reading instead:—

"forcibly, especially in oils, where his decision of execution is very remarkable. And, indeed, there are few of our landscape painters, who though they may not possess the intimate and scientific geological knowledge of Stanfield and Harding, are not incomparably superior in every quality of drawing to every one of the old masters, though, as it is paying them but a poor compliment to say that they do not contradict nature in every particular, I should rather say, who are not intelligent, truthful, and right in all their work, as far as it goes."

² [For some later criticism of James Baker Pyne (1800–1870), see *Academy Notes*, 1858, (s. "Society of British Artists," No. 84). Pyne contributed a series of papers

Before passing to Turner, let us take one more glance at the foregrounds of the old masters, with reference, not to their management of rock, which is comparatively a rare component part of their foregrounds, but to the common soil which they were obliged to paint constantly, and whose forms and appearances are the same all over the world. A steep bank of loose earth of any kind, that has been at all exposed to the weather, contains in it, though it may not be three feet high, features capable of giving high gratification to a careful observer. It is almost a facsimile of a mountain slope of soft and decomposing rock; it possesses nearly as much variety of character, and is governed by laws of organization no less rigid. It is furrowed in the first place by undulating lines, caused by the descent of the rain; little ravines, which are cut precisely at the same slope as those of the mountain, and leave ridges scarcely less graceful in their contour, and beautifully sharp in their chiselling. Where a harder knot of ground or a stone occurs, the earth is washed from beneath it, and accumulates above it, and there we have a little precipice connected by a sweeping curve at its summit with the great slope, and casting a sharp dark shadow; where the soil has been soft, it will probably be washed away underneath until it gives way, and leaves a

§ 11. *Characters of loose earth and soil.*

§ 12. *Its exceeding grace and fulness of feature.*

merely to be *helped*, but to be *taught* by her; he will most assuredly find—and I say this in no unkind or depreciatory feeling, for I should say the same of all artists who are in the habit of only sketching nature, and not studying her—that *her* worst is better than *his* best. I am quite sure that if Mr. Pyne, or any other painter who has hitherto been very careful in his choice of subject, will go into the next turnpike road, and taking the first four trees that he comes to in the hedge, give them a day each, drawing them leaf for leaf, as far as may be, and even their smallest boughs with as much care as if they were rivers, or an important map of a newly surveyed country, he will find, when he has brought them all home, that any one of them is better than the best he ever invented.¹ Compare Part III. sec. i. chap. iii. §§ 12, 13.

to the *Art Union Monthly Journal* during the years 1843–45. They were entitled “The Nomenclature of Pictorial Art.” In his references to landscape he took Claude as the supreme model, and dwelt on the necessity of improving upon nature.]

¹ [Ruskin is here preaching what he had himself experienced in practice. See above, Introduction, pp. xxi.–xxii.]

jagged, hanging, irregular line of fracture: and all these circumstances are explained to the eye in sunshine with the most delicious clearness; every touch of shadow being expressive of some particular truth of structure, and bearing witness to the symmetry into which the whole mass has been reduced. Where this operation has gone on long, and vegetation has assisted in softening the outlines, we have our ground brought into graceful and irregular curves, of infinite variety, but yet always so connected with each other, and guiding to each other, that the eye never feels them as *separate* things, nor feels inclined to count them, nor perceives a likeness in one to the other; they are not repetitions of each other, but are different parts of one system. Each would be imperfect without the one next to it.

Now it is all but impossible to express distinctly the particulars wherein this fine character of curve consists, and to show in definite examples what it is which makes one representation right and another wrong. The ground of Teniers, for instance, in No. 139 in the Dulwich Gallery,¹ is an example of all that is wrong. It is a representation of the forms of shaken and disturbed soil, such as we should see here and there after an earthquake, or over the ruins of fallen buildings. It has not one contour or character of the soil of nature, and yet I can scarcely tell you why, except that the curves repeat one another, and are monotonous in their flow, and are unbroken by the delicate angle and momentary pause with which the feeling of nature would have touched them; and are disunited, so that the eye leaps from this to that, and does not pass from one to the other without being able to stop, drawn on by the continuity of line; neither is there any undulation or furrowing of watermark, nor in one spot or atom of the whole surface is there distinct explanation of form to the eye by means of a determined shadow; all is mere sweeping of the brush over the surface with various

¹ [Now No. 95, "A Castle and its Proprietor."]
III.

ground colours, without a single indication of character by means of real shade.¹

Let not these points be deemed unimportant: the truths of form in common ground are quite as valuable (let me anticipate myself for a moment), quite as beautiful, as any others which nature presents; and in lowland landscape they furnish a species of line which it is quite impossible to obtain in any other way, the alternately flowing and broken line of mountain scenery, which, however small its scale, is always of inestimable value, contrasted with the repetitions of organic form which we are

§ 14. *Importance of these minor parts and points.*

¹ [Between paragraphs 13 and 14, eds. 1 and 2 insert the two followings paragraphs:—

“Now I may point, in contradistinction to this to one of Copley Fielding’s down or moor foregrounds, and I may tell you that its curves are right and true, and that it is the real ground of nature, such as she produces fresh designs and contours of with every shower; the foreground of his ‘Bolton Abbey,’ ‘in last year’s Academy, is a good instance; and yet I can scarcely tell you wherein its truth consists, except by repeating the same sentences about continuity and variety of curves, which, after all, are things only to be felt and found out for yourself, by diligent study of free nature. No words will explain it, unless you go and lie for a summer or two up to your shoulders in heather, with the purple, elastic ground about you defined against the sky like fantastic mountains. After you have done this you will feel what truth of ground is, and till then, I cannot in such fine points as these, tell it you; but the facts are not the less certain because they are inexplicable. The ground of Teniers is anatomically wrong, and that of Fielding right, however little one person may be able to feel that they are so, or another to explain why.

“It is an easier matter, however, to point out the fallacy of pieces of ground undisguised by vegetation, such as Both’s foreground in No. 41 of the Dulwich Gallery. If this were meant for rock it would come under the same category with Salvator’s above mentioned, but its evident brown colour seems to mark it for earth; and I believe that no eye can help feeling that the series of peaks with hollow curves between them which emerge from the grass in the centre, are such as could not support themselves for ten minutes against an April shower. Concave descending curves can only be obtained in loose soil when there is some knotted and strong protection of roots and leaves at the top, and even then they are generally rough and broken; but whenever earth is exposed, as here, it is reduced, either by crumbling in heat, or by being washed down in rain, to convex forms furrowed by little ravines, and always tending as they descend to something like an even slope. Hence nature’s ground never by any chance assumes such forms as those of Both, and if—which it would be most difficult to do—a piece of even the toughest clay were artificially reduced to them; with the first noon-day sun, or first summer shower, she would have it all her own way again.”

Fielding’s “Bolton Abbey” was No. 12 in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1842; for a remark on its bad hanging, see above, p. 198. No. 41 in the Dulwich Gallery (now No. 12) is “A Piece of Rough Ground with a View on a Lake,” by Jan Both.]

compelled to give in vegetation. A really great artist dwells on every inch of exposed soil with care and delight, and renders it one of the most essential, speaking, and pleasurable parts of his composition. And be it remembered, that the man who, in the most conspicuous part of his foreground, will violate truth with every stroke of the pencil, is not likely to be more careful in other parts of it; and that, in the little bits which I fix upon for animadversion, I am not pointing out solitary faults, but only the most characteristic examples of the falsehood which is everywhere, and which renders the whole foreground one mass of contradictions and absurdities. Nor do I myself see wherein the great difference lies between a master and a novice, except in the rendering of the finer truths of which I am at present speaking. To handle the brush freely, and to paint grass and weeds with accuracy enough to satisfy the eye, are accomplishments which a year or two's practice will give any man: but to trace among the grass and weeds those mysteries of invention and combination by which nature appeals to the intellect; to render the delicate fissure, and descending curve, and undulating shadow of the mouldering soil, with gentle and fine finger, like the touch of the rain itself; to find even in all that appears most trifling or contemptible, fresh evidence of the constant working of the Divine power "for glory and for beauty," and to teach it and proclaim it to the unthinking and the unregarding; this, as it is the peculiar province and faculty of the master-mind, so it is the peculiar duty which is demanded of it by the Deity.

§ 15. *The observance of them is the real distinction between the master and the novice.*

It would take me no reasonable or endurable time, if I were to point out one half of the various kinds and classes of falsehood which the inventive faculties of the old masters succeeded in originating, in the drawing of foregrounds. It is not this man nor that man, nor one school nor another; all agree in entire repudiation of everything resembling facts, and in the high degree of absurdity of what they substitute for them. Even Cuyp, who

§ 16. *Ground of Cuyp.*

evidently saw and studied a certain kind of nature, as an artist should do; not fishing for idealities, but taking what nature gave him, and thanking her for it; even he appears to have supposed that the drawing of the earth might be trusted to chance or imagination, and, in consequence, strews his banks with lumps of dough, instead of stones. Perhaps, however, the foregrounds¹

of Claude afford the most remarkable instances of childishness and incompetence of all. That of his morning landscape, with the large group of trees and high single-arched bridge, in the National Gallery,² is a fair example of the kind of error into which he constantly falls. I will not say anything of the agreeable composition of the three banks, rising one behind another from the water, except only that it amounts to a demonstration that all three were painted in the artist's study, without any reference to nature whatever. In fact, there is quite enough intrinsic evidence in each of them to prove this, seeing that what appears to be meant for vegetation upon them, amounts to nothing more than a green stain on their surfaces, the more evidently false because the leaves of the trees twenty yards farther off are all perfectly visible and distinct; and that the sharp lines with which each cuts against that beyond it are not only such as crumbling earth could never show or assume, but are maintained through their whole progress ungraduated, unchanging, and unaffected by any of the circumstances of varying shade to which every one of nature's lines

is inevitably subjected. In fact, the whole arrangement is the impotent³ struggle of a tyro to express by successive edges that approach of earth which he finds himself incapable of expressing by the drawing of the surface. Claude wished to make you understand that the edge of his pond came nearer and nearer; he had probably often tried to do this with an

¹ [For "foregrounds," eds. 1-4 read, "beautiful foregrounds" (in inverted commas).]

² [No. 2, "Cephalus and Procris"; see also below, § 27 *n.*]

³ [For "In fact . . . impotent," eds. 1 and 2 read, "In fact, the whole arrangement is precisely, in foreground, what we before saw in Claude's hills,—the impotent," etc.]

unbroken bank, or a bank only varied by the delicate and harmonized anatomy of nature; and he had found that owing to his total ignorance of the laws of perspective such efforts on his part invariably ended in his reducing his pond to the form of a round O, and making it look perpendicular. Much comfort and solace of mind, in such unpleasant circumstances, may be derived from instantly dividing the obnoxious bank into a number of successive promontories, and developing their edges with completeness and intensity. Every school-girl's drawing, as soon as her mind has arrived at so great a degree of enlightenment as to perceive that perpendicular water is objectionable, will supply us with edifying instances of this unfailing resource; and this foreground of Claude's is only one out of the thousand cases in which he has been reduced to it. And if it be asked, how the proceeding differs from that of nature, I have only to point to nature herself, as she is drawn in the foreground of Turner's Mercury and Argus,¹ a case precisely similar to Claude's, of earthy crumbling banks cut away by water. It will be found in this picture (and I am now describing nature's work and Turner's with the same words) that the whole distance is given by retirement of solid surface; and that if ever an edge is expressed, it is only felt for an instant, and then lost again; so that the eye cannot stop at it and prepare for a long jump to another like it, but is guided over it, and round it into the hollow beyond; and thus the whole receding mass of ground, going back for more than a quarter of a mile, is made completely *one*, no part of it is separated from the rest for an instant, it is all united, and its modulations are *members*, not *divisions* of its mass. But these modulations are countless; heaving here, sinking there; now swelling, now mouldering; now blending, now breaking; giving, in fact, to the foreground of this universal master precisely the same qualities which we have before seen in his hills, as Claude gave to his foreground precisely the same

¹ [For list of other references to this picture, see p. 264 *n.*]

§ 19. Compared with the work of Turner.

qualities which we had before found in *his* hills,—infinite unity in the one case, finite division in the other.

Let us, then, having now obtained some insight into the principles of the old masters in foreground drawing, contrast them throughout with those of our great modern master. The investigation of the excellence of Turner's drawing becomes shorter and easier as we proceed, because the great distinctions between his work and that of other painters are the same, whatever the object or subject may be; and after once showing the general characters of the particular specific forms under consideration, we have only to point, in the works of Turner, to the same principles of infinity and variety in carrying them out, which we have before insisted upon with reference to other subjects.

§ 20. *General features of Turner's foreground.*

The Upper Fall of the Tees, Yorkshire, engraved in the England series,¹ may be given as a standard example of rock-drawing to be opposed to the work of Salvator. We have, in the great face of rock which divides the two streams, horizontal lines which indicate the real direction of the strata, and the same lines are given in ascending perspective all along the precipice on the right. But we see also on the central precipice fissures absolutely vertical, which inform us of one series of joints dividing these horizontal strata; and the exceeding smoothness and evenness of the precipice itself inform us that it has been caused by a great separation of substance in the direction of another more important line of joints, running across the river. Accordingly we see on the left that the whole summit of the precipice is divided again and again by this great series of joints into vertical beds, which lie against each other with their sides toward us, and are traversed downwards by the same vertical lines traceable on the face of the central cliff. Now, let me direct especial attention to the way in which Turner has marked, over this general and grand unity of structure,

§ 21. *Geological structure of his rocks in the Fall of the Tees.*

¹ [No. 2 of *England and Wales*. For further references to the drawing, see below, pp. 491, 553; also vol. iv. of *Modern Painters*, ch. xviii. § 12.]

the modifying effects of the weather and the torrent. Observe how the whole surface of the hills above the precipice on the left* is brought into one smooth unbroken curvature of gentle convexity, until it comes to the edge of the precipice, and then, just on the angle (compare § 2), breaks into the multiplicity of fissure which marks its geological structure. Observe how every one of the separate blocks into which it divides is rounded and convex in its salient edges turned to the weather, and how every one of their inward angles is marked clearly and sharply by the determined shadow and transparent reflex. Observe how exquisitely graceful are all the curves of the convex surfaces, indicating that every one of them has been modelled by the winding and undulating of running water; and how gradually they become steeper as they descend, until they are torn down into the face of the precipice. Finally, observe the exquisite variety of all the touches which express fissure or shade; every one in varying direction and with new form, and yet of which one deep¹ and marked piece of shadow indicates the greatest proximity; and from this every shade becomes fainter and fainter, until all are lost in the obscurity and dimness of the hanging precipice and the shattering fall. Again, see how the same fractures just upon the edge take place with the central cliff above the right-hand fall, and how the force of the water is told us by the confusion of débris accumulated in its channel. In fact, the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth is, the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, just as if we had the actual rocks before us; for this indicates not that one truth

§ 22. *Their convex surfaces and fractured edges;*

§ 23. *And perfect unity.*

* In the light between the waterfall and the large dark mass on the extreme left.

¹ [Instead of "and yet of which one deep," eds. 1-4 read:—

"and yet throughout indicating that perfect parallelism which at once explained to us the geology of the rock, and falling into one grand mass, treated with the same simplicity of light and shade, which a great portrait painter adopts in treating the features of the human face, which, though each has its own separate chiaroscuro, never disturb the wholeness and grandeur of the head, considered as one ball or mass. So here, one deep," etc.]

is given, or another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts;¹ so that we can pick and choose our points of pleasure or of thought for ourselves, and reason upon the whole with the same certainty which we should

§ 24. *Various parts whose history is told us by the details of the drawing.*

after having climbed and hammered over the rocks bit by bit. With this drawing before him, a geologist could give a lecture upon the whole system of aqueous erosion, and speculate as safely upon the past and future states of this very spot, as if he were standing and getting wet with the spray. He would tell you at once, that the waterfall was in a state of rapid recession; that it had once formed a wide cataract just at the place where the figure is sitting on the heap of débris; and that when it was there, part of it came down by the channel on the left, its bed being still marked by the delicately chiselled lines of fissure. He would tell you that the foreground had also once been the top of the fall, and that the vertical fissures on the right of it were evidently then the channel of a side stream. He would tell you that the fall was then much lower than it is now, and that being lower, it had less force, and cut itself a narrower bed; and that the spot where it reached the higher precipice is marked by the expansion of the wide basin which its increased violence has excavated, and by the gradually increasing concavity of the rocks below, which we see have been hollowed into a complete vault by the elastic bound of the water. But neither he nor I could tell you with what exquisite and finished marking of every fragment and particle of soil or rock, both in its own structure and the evidence it bears of these great influences, the whole of this is confirmed and carried out.²

With this inimitable drawing we may compare the rocks

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 5, where Ruskin reaffirms this statement and refutes the objection of "careless readers," that it was inconsistent to admire both Turner and the "hard and distinct" Pre-Raphaelites. "Nobody," he there says, "had ever given so many hard and downright facts" as Turner.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add, "You must work and watch for this; it is not to be taught by words."]

in the foreground of the Llanthony.¹ These latter are not divided by joints, but into thin horizontal and united beds, which the torrent in its times of flood has chiselled away, leaving one exposed under another, with the sweeping marks of its eddies upon their edges. And here we have an instance of an exception to a general rule, occasioned by particular and local action. We have seen that the action of water over any surface *universally*, whether falling, as in rain, or sweeping, as a torrent, induces convexity of form. But when we have rocks *in situ*, as here, exposed at their edges to the violent action of an eddy, that eddy will cut a vault or circular space for itself (as we saw on a large scale with the high waterfall), and we have a concave curve interrupting the general contours of the rock. And thus Turner (while every edge of his masses is rounded, and, the moment we rise above the level of the water, all is convex) has interrupted the great contours of his strata with concave curves, precisely where the last waves of the torrent have swept against the exposed edges of the beds. Nothing could more strikingly prove the depth of that knowledge by which every touch of this consummate artist is regulated, that universal command of subject which never acts for a moment on anything conventional or habitual, but fills every corner and space with new evidence of knowledge, and fresh manifestation of thought.

§ 25. *Beautiful instance of an exception to general rules in the Llanthony.*

The Lower Fall of the Tees,² with the chain-bridge, might serve us for an illustration of all the properties and forms of vertical beds of rock, as the Upper Fall has of horizontal; but we pass rather to observe, in detached pieces of foreground, the particular modulation of parts which cannot be investigated in the grand combinations of general mass.

§ 26. *Turner's drawing of detached blocks of weathered stone.*

The blocks of stone which form the foreground of the

¹ [*Cf.* above, p. 401.]

² [Really the Upper Fall (see note on p. 424). In No. 24 of *England and Wales*; for other references, see below, sec. v. ch. iii. §§ 21–25, sec. vi. ch. i. § 15, pp. 553–556, 587. It is engraved in vol. i. of *Turner and Ruskin*.]

Ulleswater¹ are, I believe, the finest example in the world of the finished drawing of rocks which have been subjected to violent aqueous action. Their surfaces seem to palpitate from the fine touch of the waves, and every part of them is rising or falling, in soft swell or gentle depression, though the eye can scarcely trace the fine shadows on which this chiselling of the surface depends. And with all this, every block of them has individual character, dependent on the expression of the angular lines of which its contours were first formed, and which is retained and felt through all the modulation and melting of the water-worn surface. And what is done here in the most important part of the picture, to be especially attractive to the eye, is often done by Turner with lavish and overwhelming power in the accumulated débris of a wide foreground, strewed with the ruin of ages; as, for instance, in the Junction of the Greta and Tees,² where he has choked the torrent bed with a mass of shattered rock, thrown down with the profusion and carelessness of nature herself; and yet every separate block is a study, chiselled³ and varied in its parts, as if it were to be the chief member of a separate subject, yet without ever losing in a single instance its subordinate position, or occasioning, throughout the whole accumulated multitude, the repetition of a single line.

I consider cases like these, of perfect finish and new conception, applied and exerted in the drawing of every member of a confused and almost countless divided system, about the most wonderful, as well as the most characteristic, passages of Turner's foregrounds. It is done not less marvellously, though less distinctly, in the individual parts of all his broken ground, as in examples like these of separate blocks. The articulation of such a passage as the nearest bank, in the picture we have

§ 27. *And of complicated foreground,*

¹ [In No. 19 of *England and Wales*; cf. below, p. 541, and cf. *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 51.]

² [Engraved in Whitaker's *Richmondshire* (i. 184). The drawing, formerly in Ruskin's collection, was given by him to Oxford; it is No. 2 in the Standard Series in the Ruskin Drawing School: for his description of it, see catalogue of that collection.]

³ [Eds. 1-4 read, "study (and has evidently been drawn from nature), chiselled."]

already spoken of at so great length,¹ the Upper Fall of the Tees, might serve us for a day's study if we were to go into it part by part; but it is impossible to do this, except with the pencil; we can only repeat the same general observations about eternal change and unbroken unity, and tell you to observe how the eye is kept throughout on solid and retiring surfaces, instead of being thrown, as by Claude, on flat and equal edges. You cannot find a single edge in Turner's work; you are everywhere kept upon round surfaces, and you go back on these you cannot tell how, never taking a leap, but progressing imperceptibly along the unbroken bank, till you find yourself a quarter of a mile into the picture, beside the figure at the bottom of the waterfall.²

Finally, the bank of earth on the right of the grand drawing of Penmaen Mawr³ may be taken as the standard of the representation of soft soil modelled by descending rain; and may serve to show us how exquisite in character are the resultant lines, and how full of every species of attractive and even sublime quality, if we only are wise enough not to scorn the study of them. The higher the mind, it may be taken as a universal rule, the less it will scorn that which appears to be small or unimportant; and the rank of a painter may always be determined by observing how he uses, and with what respect he views the minutiae of nature. Greatness of mind is not shown by admitting small things, but by making small things great under its influence. He who can take no interest in what is small, will take false interest in what is great; he who cannot make a bank sublime will make a mountain ridiculous.

¹ [Above, § 21.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 here insert a further paragraph:—

“I may, perhaps, illustrate the particular qualities of modulation in ground, which are so remarkable in Turner, by a little bit of accidental truth in Claude. In the picture before spoken of, with the three banks, the little piece of ground above the cattle, between the head of the brown cow and the tail of the white one, is well articulated, just where it turns into shade. The difference between this and the hard edges of the banks on the left can scarcely but be felt.”

The picture referred to is “Cephalus and Procris,” above, p. 484 (§ 17).]

³ [In No. 17 of *England and Wales*.]

It is not until we have made ourselves acquainted with these simple facts of form as they are illustrated by the slighter works of Turner, that we can become at all competent to enjoy the combination of all, in such works as the Mercury and Argus, or Bay of Baiæ, in which the mind is at first bewildered by the abundant outpouring of the master's knowledge.¹ Often as I have paused before these noble works, I never felt on returning to them as if I had ever seen them before; for their abundance is so deep and various, that the mind, according to its own temper at the time of seeing, perceives some new series of truths rendered in them, just as it would on revisiting a natural scene; and detects new relations and associations of these truths which set the whole picture in a different light at every return to it. And this effect is especially caused by the management of the foreground: for the more marked objects of the picture may be taken one by one, and thus examined and known; but the foregrounds of Turner are so united in all their parts that the eye cannot take them by divisions, but is guided from stone to stone and bank to bank, discovering truths totally different in aspect according to the direction in which it approached them, and approaching them in a different direction, and viewing them as part of a new system every time that it begins its course at a new point.

§ 29. *The unison of all in the ideal foregrounds of the Academy pictures.* One lesson, however, we are invariably taught by all, however approached or viewed, that the work of the Great Spirit of nature is as deep and unapproachable in the lowest as in the noblest objects; that the Divine mind is as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the lifting of the pillars of

§ 30. *And the great lesson to be received from all.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“But if we once comprehend the excellence of the drawings, we shall find that these ideal works are little more than glorious combinations of the minor studies, combinations uniting the gathered thought and disciplined knowledge of years. It is impossible to go into them in writing, the mind itself is lost in the contemplation of their infinity, and how shall words express or follow that which to the eye is inexhaustible? Often as I . . .”

For another reference to the “abundance” in these works see pp. 243, 485.]

heaven, and settling the foundation of the earth; and that to the rightly perceiving mind, there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star.

SECTION V

OF TRUTH OF WATER¹

CHAPTER I

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE ANCIENTS

OF all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent, in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.²

§ 1. *Sketch of the functions and infinite agency of water.*

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water, to lay

¹ [With regard to this section, see Appendix iv., p. 678 (Preface to *In Montibus Sanctis*), where Ruskin refers to the incompleteness of his treatment of sea-painting; and cf. *The Eagle's Nest*, § 129.]

² [§ 1 is § 27 of *Fronde Agrestes*.]

on canvas as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant, is, perhaps, the easiest task of art; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But¹ to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself; to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient, so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion, with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below; to do this perfectly is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

§ 2. *The ease with which a common representation of it may be given. The impossibility of a faithful one.*

As the general laws which govern the appearances of water have equal effect on all its forms, it would be injudicious to treat the subject in divisions; for the same forces which govern the waves and foam of the torrent are equally influential on those of the sea, and it will be more convenient to glance generally at the system of water-painting of each school and artist, than to devote separate chapters to the examination of the lake, river, or sea-painting of all. We shall, therefore, vary our usual plan, and look forward at the water-painting of the ancients; then at that of the moderns generally; lastly, at that of Turner.²

§ 3. *Difficulty of properly dividing the subject.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 omit the words, "to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or . . ."]

² [From this point onwards the chapter was almost entirely different in eds. 1 and 2. The earlier version of the chapter is, therefore, printed *in extenso*, see pp. 520–527. The chapter, as it stood in eds. 1 and 2, was subjected to criticism in the *Art Union Journal* and the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, to which Ruskin replied in the latter

It is necessary in the outset to state briefly one or two of the optical conditions by which the appearance of the surface of water is affected; to describe them all would require a separate essay, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge, which I do not. The accidental modifications under which general laws come into play are innumerable, and often, in their extreme complexity, inexplicable, I suppose, even by men of the most extended optical knowledge. What I shall here state are a few only of the broadest laws verifiable by the reader's immediate observation, but of which, nevertheless, I have found artists frequently ignorant; owing to their habit of sketching from nature without thinking or reasoning, and especially of finishing at home. It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so; when it is possible, sometimes in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented. It is so easy to give something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time; and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden greys with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is that there is hardly a road-side pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky. Nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain-bars

§ 4. *Inaccuracy of study of water-effect among all painters.* magazine; see Appendix ii. in this volume, pp. 655–661. The later version, as it here stands, must have been written after May 1846; for it includes a passage from the author's diary of that date (see below, § 7); the third ed. was published in the following September, before Ruskin had returned from his foreign tour in that year.]

in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see, in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky. So it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this far-seeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter: the common man *knows* the road-side pool is muddy, and draws its mud; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common, and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly; not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way, but drawing determinedly what they *see*;—that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it; and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely as the real clouds above;—they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and every one else all trouble of writing about the matter. But now they do nothing of the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else “improve” it at home; and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in reaching the pure light of waves thrown loose. And so Canaletto is still thought to have painted canals, and Vanderveelde and Backhuysen to have painted sea; and the uninterpreted streams and maligned sea hiss shame upon us from all their rocky beds and hollow shores.

I approach this part of my subject with more despondency than any other, and that for several reasons; first, the

water-painting of all the elder landscape painters, except a few of the better passages of Claude and Ruysdael, is so execrable, so beyond all expression and explanation bad, and Claude's and Ruysdael's best so cold and valueless, that I do not know how to address those who like such painting; I do not know what their sensations are respecting sea. I can perceive nothing in Vandewelde or Backhuysen of the lowest redeeming merit: no power, no presence of intellect, or evidence of perception of any sort or kind; no resemblance, even the feeblest, of anything natural; no invention, even the most sluggish, of anything agreeable. Had they given us staring green seas with hatchet edges, such as we see Her Majesty's ships so-and-so fixed into by the heads or sterns, in the Royal Academy, the admiration of them would have been comprehensible; there being a natural predilection in the mind of man for green waves with curling tops, but not for clay and wool: so that though I can understand, in some sort, why people admire everything else in the old art, why they admire Salvator's rocks, and Claude's foregrounds, and Hobbima's trees, and Paul Potter's cattle, and Jan Steen's pans; and while I can perceive in all these likings a root which seems right and legitimate, and to be appealed to; yet when I find they can even *endure* the *sight* of a Backhuysen on their room walls (I speak seriously) it makes me hopeless at once. I may be wrong, or they may be wrong, or at least I can conceive of no principle or opinion common between us, which either can address or understand in the other; and yet I am wrong in this want of conception, for I know that Turner once liked Vandewelde,¹ and I can trace the evil influence of Vandewelde on most of his early sea-painting, but Turner certainly could not have liked Vandewelde without *some* legitimate cause. Another discouraging point is, that I cannot catch a wave, nor daguerreotype it, and so there is no coming to pure demonstration; but the forms and hues

§ 5. *Difficulty of treating this part of the subject.*

¹ [See. ch. xvii. ("Of the Teachers of Turner") in vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*, § 30.]

of water must always be in some measure a matter of dispute and feeling, and the more so because there is no perfect or even tolerably perfect sea-painting to refer to. The sea never has been, and I fancy never will be nor can be painted; it is only suggested by means of more or less spiritual and intelligent conventionalism: and though Turner has done enough to suggest the sea mightily and gloriously, after all it is by conventionalism still, and there remains so much that is unlike nature, that it is always possible for those who do not feel his power to justify their dislike, on very sufficient and reasonable grounds; and to maintain themselves obstinately unreceptant of the good, by insisting on the deficiency which no mortal hand can supply, and which commonly is most manifest on the one hand, where most has been achieved on the other.

With calm water the case is different. Facts are ascertainable and demonstrable there, and, by the notice of one or two of the simplest, we may obtain some notion of the little success and intelligence of the elder painters in this easier field, and so prove their probable failure in contending with greater difficulties.

I. Water, of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of speculum metal, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below, the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflected power of water are in inverse ratio. In looking down into it from above, we receive transmitted rays which exhibit either the bottom or the objects floating in the water; or else if the water be deep and clear, we receive very few rays, and the water looks black. In looking along water we receive reflected rays, and therefore the image of objects above it. Hence, in shallow water on a

§ 6. General laws which regulate the phenomena of water. First, the imperfection of its reflective surface.

level shore the bottom is seen at our feet, clearly; it becomes more and more obscure as it retires, even though the water do not increase in depth; and at a distance of twelve or twenty yards, more or less according to our height above the water, becomes entirely invisible, lost in the lustre of the reflected surface.

II. The brighter the objects reflected, the larger the angle at which reflection is visible. It is always to be remembered that, strictly speaking, only light objects are reflected, and that the darker ones are seen only in proportion to the number of rays of light that they can send; so that a dark object comparatively loses its power to affect the surface of water, and the water in the space of a dark reflection is seen partially with the image of the object, and partially transparent. It will be found on observation that under a bank, suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen; but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the colour of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the colour of the trees casting the dark reflection.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of colour and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. Of course, at great distances, even the darkest objects cast distinct images, and the hue of the water cannot be seen; but, in near water, the occurrence of its own colour modifying the dark reflections while it leaves light ones unaffected is of infinite value.

Take, by way of example, an extract from my own diary at Venice.¹

¹ [This is from the diary of 1846, very slightly abbreviated; Ruskin went abroad with his parents in that year from April to September. The last paragraph of the citation in the text does not appear in the diary, where, however, there is a page torn out—perhaps to be used as “copy” here.]

“May 17th, 4 P.M. Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity: the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of blue, only a little deeper; but the *vessels’ hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea green*, i.e. the natural colour of the water under sunlight; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent shower, are reflected *without change of colour*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe,” (I ought to have said, running horizontally along the gunwales,) “*of these the water takes no notice.*”

“What is curious, a boat passes across with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky.

“A boat swinging near the quay casts an apparent shadow on the rippled water. This appearance I find to be owing altogether to the increased *reflective* power of the water in the shaded space; for the farther sides of the ripples therein take the deep pure blue of the sky, coming strongly dark on the pale green, and the nearer sides take the pale grey of the cloud, hardly darker than the bright green.”

I have inserted the last two paragraphs¹ because they will be useful to us presently; all that I wish to insist upon here is the showing of the local colour (pea-green) of the water in the spaces which were occupied by dark reflections, and the unaltered colour of the bright ones.

III. Clear water takes no shadow, and that for two reasons: a perfect surface of speculum metal takes no shadow (this the reader may instantly demonstrate for himself), and a perfectly transparent body, as air, takes no shadow, hence water, whether transparent or reflective, takes no shadow.

¹ [The insertion was first made in ed. 4. In ed. 3 the passage, “A boat swinging . . . bright green,” did not appear; and instead of “I have inserted . . . because they will,” the words here were: “I have left the passage about the white and red stripe, because it will,” etc.]

§ 8. *Water takes no shadow.*

But shadows, or the forms of them, appear on water frequently and sharply: it is necessary carefully to explain the causes of these, as they form one of the most eminent sources of error in water-painting.

First, water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight. Under sunlight the local colour of the water is commonly vigorous and active, and forcibly affects, as we have seen, all the dark reflections, commonly diminishing their depth. Under shade, the reflective power is in a high degree increased,* and it will be found most frequently that the forms of shadows are expressed on the surface of water, not by actual shade, but by more genuine reflection of objects above. This is another most important and valuable circumstance, and we owe to it some phenomena of the highest beauty.

A very muddy river, as the Arno for instance at Florence, is seen during sunshine of its own yellow colour, rendering all reflections discoloured and feeble. At twilight it recovers its reflective power to the fullest extent, and the mountains of Carrara are seen reflected in it as clearly as if it were a crystalline lake. The Mediterranean, whose determined blue yields to hardly any modifying colour in day-time, receives at evening the image of its rocky shores. On our own seas, seeming shadows are seen constantly cast in purple and blue, upon pale green. These are no shadows, but the pure reflection of dark or blue sky above, seen in the shadowed space, refused by the local colour of the sea in the sunlit spaces, and turned more or less purple by the opposition of the vivid green.

We have seen however above, that the local colour of water, while it comparatively refuses dark reflections, accepts bright ones without deadening them. Hence when a shadow is thrown across a space of water of strong local colour, receiving, alternately, light and dark reflections, it has no power of increasing the

§ 9. *Modification of dark reflections by shadow.*

* I state this merely as a fact: I am unable satisfactorily to account for it on optical principles, and were it otherwise the investigation would be of little interest to the general reader, and little value to the artist.

reflectiveness of the water in the bright spaces, still less of diminishing it; hence, on all the dark reflections it is seen more or less distinctly, on all the light ones it vanishes altogether.

Let us take an instance of the exquisite complexity of effect induced by these various circumstances in co-operation.

Suppose a space of clear water showing the bottom, under a group of trees showing sky through their branches, and casting shadows on the surface of the water, which we will suppose also to possess some colour of its own. Close to us, we shall see the bottom, with the shadows of the trees clearly thrown upon it, and the colour of the water seen in its genuineness by transmitted light. Farther off, the bottom will be gradually lost sight of, but it will be seen in the dark reflections much farther than in the light ones. At last it ceases to affect even the former, and the pure surface effect takes place. The blue bright sky is reflected truly, but the dark trees are reflected imperfectly, and the colour of the water is seen instead. Where the shadow falls on these dark reflections a darkness is seen plainly, which is found to be composed of the pure clear reflection of the dark trees; when it crosses the reflection of the sky, the shadow, being thus fictitious, of necessity vanishes.

Farther, on whatever dust and other foulness may be present in water, real shadow of course falls clear and dark in proportion to the quantity of solid substance present. On very muddy rivers, real shadow falls in sunlight nearly as sharply as on land; on our own sea, the apparent shadow caused by increased reflection is much increased in depth by the chalkiness and impurity of the water.

Farther, when surface is rippled, every ripple, up to a certain variable distance on each side of the spectator, and at a certain angle between him and the sun varying with the size and shape of the ripples, reflects to him a small image of the sun. Hence those dazzling fields of expanding light so often seen upon the sea. Any object that comes

between the sun and these ripples takes from them the power of reflecting the sun, and, in consequence, all their light; hence any intervening objects cast upon such spaces seeming shadows of intense force, and of the exact shape, and in the exact place, of real shadows, and yet which are no more real shadows than the withdrawal of an image of a piece of white paper from a mirror is a shadow on the mirror.

Farther, in all shallow water, more or less in proportion to its shallowness, but in some measure, I suppose, up to depths of forty or fifty fathoms, and perhaps more, the local colour of the water depends in great measure on light reflected from the bottom. This, however, is especially manifest in clear rivers like the Rhone, where the absence of the light reflected from below forms an apparent shadow, often visibly detached some distance from the floating object which casts it.

The following extract from my own diary at Geneva,¹ with the last paragraph of that already given at Venice, § 10. *Examples on the water of the Rhone.* illustrates both this and the other points we have been stating.

“Geneva, 21st April, morning. The sunlight falls from the cypresses of Rousseau’s island straight towards the bridge. The shadows of the bridge and of the trees fall on the water in leaden purple, opposed to its general hue of aquamarine green. This green colour is caused by the light being reflected from the bottom, though the bottom is not seen; as is evident by its becoming paler towards the middle of the river, where the water shoals, on which pale part the purple shadow of the small bridge falls most forcibly; which shadow, however, is still only apparent, being the absence of this reflected light, associated with the increased reflective power of the water, which in those spaces reflects blue sky above. A boat swings in the shoal water; its reflection is cast in a transparent pea-green, which is considerably darker than the

¹ [This again is the diary of 1846.]

pale aquamarine of the surface at the spots. Its shadow is detached from it just about half the depth of the reflection, which, therefore, forms a bright green light between the keel of the boat and its shadow; where the shadow cuts the reflection, the reflection is darkest and something like the true colour of the boat; where the shadow falls out of the reflection, it is of a leaden purple, pale. Another boat, nearer, in deeper water, shows no shadow whatsoever, and the reflection is marked by its transparent green, while the surrounding water takes a lightish blue reflection from the sky.”

The above notes, after what has been said, require no comment; but one more case must be stated belonging to rough water. Every large wave of the sea is in ordinary circumstances divided into, or rather covered by, innumerable smaller waves, each of which, in all probability, from some of its edges or surfaces reflects the sunbeams; and hence result a glitter, polish, and vigorous light over the whole flank of the waves, which are, of course, instantly withdrawn within the space of a cast shadow, whose form, therefore, though it does not affect the great body or ground of the water in the least, is sufficiently traceable by the withdrawal of the high lights; also every string and wreath of foam above or within the wave takes real shadow, and thus adds to the impression.

I have not stated one half of the circumstances which produce or influence effects of shadow on water; but, lest I should confuse or weary the reader, I leave him to pursue the subject for himself; enough having been stated to establish this general principle, that whenever shadow is seen on clear water, and, in a measure, even on foul water, it is not, as on land, a dark shade subduing the sunny general hue to a lower tone, but it is a space of an entirely different colour, subject itself, by its susceptibility of reflection, to infinite varieties of depth and hue, and liable, under certain circumstances, to disappear altogether; and that, therefore, whenever we have to paint such shadows, it is not only the hue of the water itself that we have to consider, but all the circumstances by

which in the position attributed to them such shaded spaces could be affected.

IV. If water be rippled, the side of every ripple next to us reflects a piece of the sky, and the side of every ripple farthest from us reflects a piece of the opposite shore, or of whatever objects may be beyond the ripple. But as we soon lose sight of the farther sides of the ripples on the retiring surface, the whole rippled space will then be reflective of the sky only. Thus, where calm distant water receives reflections of high shores, every extent of rippled surface appears as a bright line interrupting that reflection with the colour of the sky.

V. When a ripple or swell is seen at such an angle as to afford a view of its farther side, it carries the reflection of objects farther down than calm water would. Therefore all motion in water elongates reflections, and throws them into confused vertical lines. The real amount of this elongation is not distinctly visible, except in the case of very bright objects, and especially of lights, as of the sun, moon, or lamps by a river shore, whose reflections are hardly ever seen as circles or points, which of course they are on perfectly calm water, but as long streams of tremulous light.

But it is strange that while we are constantly in the habit of seeing the reflection of the sun, which ought to be a mere circle, elongated into a stream of light, extending from the horizon to the shore, the elongation of the reflection of a sail or other object to one half of this extent is received, if represented in a picture, with incredulity by the greater number of spectators. In one of Turner's Venices the image of the white lateen sails of the principal boat is about twice as long as the sails themselves. I have heard the truth of this simple effect disputed over and over again by intelligent persons; and yet, on any water so exposed as the lagoons of Venice, the periods are few and short when there is so little motion as that the reflection of sails a mile off shall not affect the swell within ten feet of the spectator.

§ 11. *Effect of ripple on distant water.*

§ 12. *Elongation of reflections by moving water.*

There is, however, a strange arbitrariness about this elongation of reflection, which prevents it from being truly felt. If we see on an extent of lightly swelling water surface the image of a bank of white clouds, with masses of higher accumulation at intervals, the water will not usually reflect the whole bank in an elongated form, but it will commonly take the eminent parts, and reflect them in long straight columns of defined breadth, and miss the intermediate lower parts altogether; and even in doing this it will be capricious, for it will take one eminence, and miss another, with no apparent reason; and often when the sky is covered with white clouds, some of those clouds will cast long towerlike reflections, and others none, so arbitrarily that the spectator is often puzzled to find out which are the accepted and which the refused.

In many cases of this kind it will be found rather that the eye is, from want of use and care, insensible to the reflection than that the reflection is not there; and a little thought and careful observation will show us that what we commonly suppose to be a surface of uniform colour is, indeed, affected more or less by an infinite variety of hues, prolonged, like the sun image, from a great distance, and that our apprehension of its lustre, purity, and even of its surface, is in no small degree dependent on our feeling of these multitudinous hues, which the continual motion of that surface prevents us from analysing or understanding for what they are.

VI. Rippled water, of which we can see the farther side of the waves, will reflect a perpendicular line clearly, a bit of its length being given on the side of each wave, and easily joined by the eye. But if the line slope, its reflection will be excessively confused and disjointed; and if horizontal, nearly invisible. It was this circumstance which prevented the red and white stripe of the ships at Venice, noticed above, from being visible.

§ 13. Effect of rippled water on horizontal and inclined images.

VII. Every reflection is the image in reverse of just so much of the objects beside the water, as we could see if we were placed as much under the level of the water as we are

actually above it. If an object be so far back from the bank, that if we were five feet under the water level we could not see it over the bank, then, standing five feet above the water, we shall not be able to see its image under the reflected bank. Hence the reflection of all objects that have any slope back from the water is shortened, and at last disappears as we rise above it. Lakes seen from a great height appear like plates of metal set in the landscape, reflecting the sky, but none of their shores.

VIII. Any given point of the object above the water is reflected, if reflected at all, at some spot in a vertical line beneath it, so long as the plane of the water is horizontal. On rippled water a slight deflection sometimes takes place, and the image of a vertical tower will slope a little away from the wind, owing to the casting of the image on the sloping sides of the ripples. On the sloping sides of large waves the deflection is in proportion to the slope. For rough practice, after the slope of the wave is determined, let the artist turn his paper until such slope becomes horizontal, and then paint the reflections of any object upon it as on level water, and he will be right.

Such are the most common and general optical laws which are to be taken into consideration in the painting of water. Yet, in the application of them as tests of good or bad water-painting, we must be cautious in the extreme. An artist may know all these laws, and comply with them, and yet paint water execrably; and he may be ignorant of every one of them, and, in their turn, and in certain places, violate every one of them, and yet paint water gloriously. Thousands of exquisite effects take place in nature, utterly inexplicable, and which can be believed only while they are seen; the combinations and applications of the above laws are so varied and complicated that no knowledge or labour could, if applied analytically, keep pace with them. Constant and eager watchfulness, and portfolios filled with actual statements

§ 14. *To what extent reflection is visible from above.*

§ 15. *Deflection of images on agitated water.*

§ 16. *Necessity of watchfulness, as well as of science. Licenses, how taken by great men.*

of water-effect, drawn on the spot and on the instant, are worth more to the painter than the most extended optical knowledge. Without these all his knowledge will end in a pedantic falsehood; with these it does not matter how gross or how daring here and there may be his violations of this or that law; his very transgressions will be admirable.

It may be said, that this is a dangerous principle to advance in these days of idleness. I cannot help it; it is true, and must be affirmed. Of all contemptible criticism, that is most to be contemned which punishes great works of art when they fight without armour, and refuses to feel or acknowledge the great spiritual refracted sun of their truth, because it has risen at a false angle, and burst upon them before its appointed time. And yet, on the other hand, let it be observed, that it is not feeling, nor fancy, nor imagination, so called, that I have put before science, but watchfulness, experience, affection, and trust in nature; and farther let it be observed, that there is a difference between the license taken by one man and another, which makes one license admirable, and the other punishable; and that this difference is of a kind sufficiently discernible by every earnest person, though it is not so explicable as that we can beforehand say where and when, or even to whom, the license is to be forgiven. In the Paradise of Tintoret, in the Academy of Venice,¹ the angle is seen in the distance driving Adam and Eve out of the garden: not leading them to the gate with consolation or counsel; the painter's strange ardour of conception cannot suffer this.² Full speed they fly, the angel and the human creatures; the angel, wrapt in an orb of light, floats on, stooped forward in his fierce flight, and does not touch the ground; the chastised creatures rush before him in abandoned terror. All this might

¹ [This is the picture called "Adam and Eve" (now No. 43 in Room II.). Eve, sitting at the foot of the Tree of Knowledge, clasps its trunk with her right arm, while she offers Adam the apple with her left hand. The episode of the expulsion from Paradise, described by Ruskin above, is shown to the right in the background. For another reference to the "Adam and Eve," see above, p. 173.]

² [In eds. 3 and 4 this passage reads:—

"out of the garden. Not, for Tintoret, the leading to the gate with consolation or counsel; his strange ardour of conception is seen here as everywhere."]

have been invented by another, though in other hands it would assuredly have been offensive; but one circumstance, which completes the story, could have been thought of or dared by none but Tintoret. The angel casts a SHADOW before him towards Adam and Eve.

Now that a globe of light should cast a shadow is a license, as far as mere optical matters are concerned, of the most audacious kind. But how beautiful is the circumstance in its application here, showing that the angel, who is light to all else around him, is darkness to those whom he is commissioned to banish for ever!

I have before noticed the license of Rubens in making his horizon an oblique line.¹ His object is to carry the eye to a given point in the distance. The road winds to it, the clouds fly at it, the trees nod to it, a flock of sheep scamper towards it, a carter points his whip at it, his horses pull for it, the figures push for it, and the horizon slopes to it. If the horizon had been horizontal, it would have embarrassed everything and everybody.

In Turner's *Pas de Calais*² there is a buoy poised on the ridge of a near wave. It casts its reflection vertically down the flank of the wave, which slopes steeply. I cannot tell whether this is license or mistake; I suspect the latter, for the same thing occurs not unfrequently in Turner's seas; but I am almost certain that it would have been done wilfully in this case, even had the mistake been recognized, for the vertical line is necessary to the picture, and the eye is so little accustomed to catch the real bearing of the reflections on the slopes of waves that it does not feel the fault.

In one of the smaller rooms of the Uffizii at Florence, off the Tribune, there are two so-called Claudes;³ one a pretty wooded landscape, I think a copy, the other a marine with

¹ [See above, p. 188.]

² [Otherwise called "Now for the Painter: Passengers going on Board," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1827, engraved in 1830; in the collection of Mr. John Naylor. For another reference, see below, p. 568.]

³ [Now rearranged. The landscape, No. 348, is in Room VII.; the marine, "Sea-piece, with a Villa," is No. 774 in Room VI.]

architecture, very sweet and genuine. The sun is setting at the side of the picture, it casts a long stream of light upon the water. This stream of light is oblique, and comes from the horizon, where it is under the sun, to a point near the centre of the picture. If this had been done as a license, it would be an instance of most absurd and unjustifiable license, as the fault is detected by the eye in a moment, and there is no occasion nor excuse for it. But I imagine it to be an instance rather of the harm of imperfect science. Taking his impression instinctively from nature, Claude usually did what is right and put his reflection vertically under the sun; probably, however, he had read in some treatise on optics that every point in this reflection was in a vertical plane between the sun and spectator; or he might have noticed, walking on the shore, that the reflection came straight from the sun to his feet, and intending to indicate the position of the spectator, drew in his next picture the reflection sloping to this supposed point, the error being excusable enough, and plausible enough to have been lately revived and systematized.*

§ 17. Various licenses or errors in water-painting of Claude, Cuyp, Vandewelde,

In the picture of Cuyp, No. 83 in the Dulwich Gallery,¹

* Parsey's *Convergence of Perpendiculars*. I have not space here to enter into any lengthy exposure of this mistake, but reasoning is fortunately unnecessary, the appeal to experiment being easy. Every picture is the representation, as before stated, of a vertical plate of glass, with what might be seen through it drawn on its surface. Let a vertical plate of glass be taken, and wherever it be placed, whether the sun be at its side or at its centre, the reflection will always be found in a vertical line under the sun, parallel with the side of the glass. The pane of any window looking to sea is all the apparatus necessary for this experiment; and yet it is not long since this very principle was disputed with me by a man of much taste and information, who supposed Turner to be wrong in drawing the reflection straight down at the side of his picture, as in his Lancaster Sands, and innumerable other instances.²

¹ [Now No. 245, "Landscape with Cattle and Figures;" for a longer notice of the point made above, see below, pp. 524–525; for another reference to the picture, above, p. 272.]

² [For Ruskin's discussion of the theories and practice advocated in Parsey's *Convergence of Perpendiculars*, see Vol. I. pp. 215–234. Turner's drawing of Lancaster Sands (Farnley collection) is engraved in vol. ii. of *Turner and Ruskin*.]

the post at the end of the bank casts three or four radiating reflections. This is visibly neither license nor half-science, but pure ignorance. Again, in the picture attributed to Paul Potter, No. 176 Dulwich Gallery,¹ I believe most people must feel, the moment they look at it, that there is something wrong with the water, that it looks odd, and hard, and like ice or lead; and though they may not be able to tell the reason of the impression, for when they go near they will find it smooth and lustrous, and prettily painted, yet they will not be able to shake off the unpleasant sense of its being like a plate of bad mirror set in a model landscape among moss, rather than like a pond. The reason is, that while this water receives clear reflections from the fence and hedge on the left, and is everywhere smooth and evidently capable of giving true images, it yet reflects none of the cows.

In the Vandewelde² (113) there is not a line of ripple or swell in any part of the sea; it is absolutely windless, and the near boat casts its image with great fidelity, which being unprolonged downwards informs us that the calm is perfect (Rule V.), and being unshortened informs us that we are on a level with the water, or nearly so (Rule VII.). Yet underneath the vessel on the right the grey shade which stands for reflection breaks off immediately, descending like smoke a little way below the hull, then leaving the masts and sails entirely unrecorded. This I imagine to be not ignorance, but unjustifiable license. Vandewelde evidently desired to give an impression of great extent of surface, and thought that if he gave the reflection more faithfully, as the tops of the masts would come down to the nearest part of the surface, they would destroy the evidence of distance, and appear to set the ship above the boat, instead of beyond it. I doubt not in such awkward hands that such would indeed have been the case, but he is not on that account to be excused for painting his surface with grey horizontal lines, as is done by nautically

¹ [Now No. 133, "Cattle in a Pool," now attributed to Abraham von Borssom.]

² [No. 68 (formerly No. 113) in the Dulwich Gallery, "A Calm"; see also below, §§ 15-18, pp. 523-524, and sec. v. ch. iii. § 6, p. 541.]

disposed children; for no destruction of distance in the ocean is so serious a loss as that of its liquidity. It is better to feel a want of extent in the sea, than an extent which we might walk upon, or play at billiards upon.

Among all the pictures of Canaletto, which I have ever seen, and they are not a few, I remember but one or two § 18. *And* where there is any variation from one method of *Canaletto.* treatment of the water. He almost always covers the whole space of it with one monotonous ripple, composed of a coat of well chosen, but perfectly opaque and smooth sea-green, covered with a certain number, I cannot state the exact average, but it varies from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and upwards, according to the extent of canvas to be covered, of white concave touches, which are very properly symbolical of ripple.

And, as the canal retires back from the eye, he very geometrically diminishes the size of his ripples, until he arrives at an even field of apparently smooth water. By our sixth rule, this rippling water, as it retires, should show more and more of the reflection of the sky above it, and less and less of that of objects beyond it, until, at two or three hundred yards down the canal, the whole field of water should be one even grey or blue, the colour of the sky, receiving no reflections whatever of other objects. What does Canaletto do? Exactly in proportion as he retires, he displays *more* and *more* of the reflection of objects, and less and less of the sky, until, three hundred yards away, all the houses are reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake.¹

¹ [This passage was criticized by C. R. Leslie, R.A., in his *Handbook for Young Painters* (1855): "Another instance of the detection of a supposed falsehood by Mr. Ruskin, in a great painter, but which in fact is a truth, occurs in his description of Canaletti's manner of treating water. After describing, with much severity, the ripples in the open part of canal, he says (and in the way of censure), that, 'three hundred yards away, all the houses are reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake.' And most assuredly they are, because Canaletti painted what he saw, and the water as it approached the houses, being sheltered by them from the breeze that occasions the ripple in the middle of the canal, was there as calm as 'a quiet lake.' The reader will see a fine example of such treatment in the large Canaletti in the National Gallery" (p. 269). Ruskin refers to this criticism, and incidentally replies to it, in *Academy Notes*, 1859, under No. 160. For his general remarks on Leslie's criticisms, see *Academy Notes*, 1855 (Supplement), and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. App. i., and vol. iv. App. i.]

This, again, is wilful and inexcusable violation of truth, of which the reason, as in the last case, is the painter's consciousness of weakness. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to express the light reflection of the blue sky on a distant ripple, and to make the eye understand the cause of the colour, and the motion of the apparently smooth water, especially where there are buildings above to be reflected, for the eye never understands the want of the reflection. But it is the easiest and most agreeable thing in the world to give the inverted image; it occupies a vast space of otherwise trouble-some distance in the simplest way possible, and is understood by the eye at once. Hence Canaletto is glad, as any other inferior workman would be, not to say obliged, to give the reflections in the distance. But when he comes up close to the spectator, he finds the smooth surface just as troublesome near, as the ripple would have been far off. It is a very nervous thing for an ignorant artist to have a great space of vacant smooth water to deal with, close to him, too far down to take reflections from buildings, and yet which must be made to look flat and retiring and transparent. Canaletto, with his sea-green, did not at all feel himself equal to anything of this kind, and had therefore no resource but in the white touches above described, which occupy the alarming space without any troublesome necessity for knowledge or invention, and supply by their gradual diminution some means of expressing retirement of surface. It is easily understood, therefore, why he should adopt this system, which is just what any awkward workman would naturally cling to, trusting to the inaccuracy of observation of the public to secure him from detection.

Now in all these cases it is not the mistake or the license itself, it is not the infringement of this or that law, § 19. *Why unpardonable.* which condemns the picture, but it is the habit of mind in which the license is taken, the cowardice or bluntness of feeling, which infects every part alike, and deprives the whole picture of vitality. Canaletto, had he been a great painter, might have cast his reflections wherever he chose, and

rippled the water wherever he chose, and painted his sea sloping if he chose, and neither I nor any one else should have dared to say a word against him; but he is a little and a bad painter, and so continues everywhere multiplying and magnifying mistakes, and adding apathy to error, until nothing can any more be pardoned in him. If it be but remembered that every one of the surfaces of those multitudinous ripples is in nature a mirror which catches, according to its position, either the image of the sky or of the silver beaks of the gondolas, or of their black bodies and scarlet draperies, or of the white marble, or the green seaweed on the low stones, it cannot but be felt that those waves would have something more of colour upon them than that opaque dead green. Green they are by their own nature, but it is a transparent and emerald hue, mixing itself with the thousand reflected tints without overpowering the weakest of them; and thus, in every one of those individual waves, the truths of colour are contradicted by Canaletto by the thousand.

Venice is sad and silent now, to what she was in his time; the canals are choked gradually one by one, and the foul water laps more and more sluggishly against the rent foundations: but even yet, could I but place the reader at early morning on the quay below the Rialto, when the market boats, full laden, float into groups of golden colour, and let him watch the dashing of the water about their glittering steely heads, and under the shadows of the vine leaves; and show him the purple of the grapes and the figs, and the glowing of the scarlet gourds carried away in long streams upon the waves; and among them, the crimson fish baskets, plashing and sparkling, and flaming as the morning sun falls on their wet tawny sides: and above, the painted sails of the fishing-boats, orange and white, scarlet and blue; and better than all such florid colour, the naked, bronzed, burning limbs of the seamen, the last of the old Venetian race, who yet keep the right Giorgione colour on their brows and bosoms, in strange contrast with the sallow sensual degradation of the creatures that

live in the cafés of the Piazza, he would not be merciful to Canaletto any more.

Yet even Canaletto, in relation to the truths he had to paint, is § 20. *The Dutch painters of sea.* spiritual, faithful, powerful, compared with the Dutch painters of sea. It is easily understood why his green paint and concave touches should be thought expressive of the water on which the real colours are not to be discerned but by attention, which is never given; but it is not so easily understood, considering how many there are who love the sea, and look at it, that Vanderveelde and such others should be tolerated. As I before said, I feel utterly hopeless in addressing the admirers of these men, because I do not know what it is in their works which is supposed to be like nature. Foam appears to me to curdle and cream on the wave sides, and to fly flashing from their crests, and not to be set astride upon them like a peruke; and waves appear to me to fall, and plunge, and toss, and nod, and crash over, and not to curl up like shavings; and water appears to me, when it is grey, to have the grey of stormy air mixed with its own deep, heavy, thunderous, threatening blue, and not the grey of the first coat of cheap paint on a deal door; and many other such things appear to me, which, as far as I can conjecture by what is admired of marine painting, appear to few else; yet I shall have something more to say about these men presently, with respect to the effect they have had upon Turner; and something more, I hope, hereafter, with the help of illustration.¹

There is a sea-piece of Ruysdael's in the Louvre,² which, § 21. *Ruysdael, Claude, and Salvator.* though nothing very remarkable in any quality of art, is at least forceful, agreeable, and, as far as it goes, natural; the waves have much freedom of action, and power of colour; the wind blows hard over the

¹ [See ch. xvii. of vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*, "Of the Teachers of Turner." This, again, was a scheme of illustration, only partly carried out in subsequent volumes.]

² [Here, in ed. 3 only, was the following footnote:—

"In the last edition of this work was the following passage:—'I wish Ruysdael had painted one or two rough seas. I believe if he had he might have saved the unhappy public from much grievous victimizing, both in mind and pocket, for he would have shown that Vanderveelde and Backhuysen are not quite

shore, and the whole picture may be studied with profit, as a proof that the deficiency of colour and everything else, in Backhuysen's works, is no fault of the Dutch sea. There is sublimity in every field of nature from the pole to the line; and though the painters of one country are often better and greater universally than those of another, this is less because the subjects of art are wanting anywhere, than because one country or one age breeds mighty and thinking men, and another none.

Ruysdael's painting of falling water is also generally agreeable; more than agreeable it can hardly be considered. There appears no exertion of mind in any of his works; nor are they calculated to produce either harm or good by their feeble influence. They are good furniture pictures, unworthy of praise, and undeserving of blame.

The seas of Claude are the finest pieces of water-painting in ancient art. I do not say that I like them, because they appear to me selections of the particular moment when the sea is most insipid and characterless; but I think that they are exceedingly true to the forms and times selected, or at least that the fine instances of them are so, of which there are exceedingly few.

On the right hand of one of the marines of Salvator, in the Pitti palace, there is a passage of sea reflecting the sunrise, which is thoroughly good, and very like Turner; the rest of the picture, as the one opposite to it, utterly virtueless.¹ I have

sea-deities.' The writer has to thank the editor of Murray's Handbook of Painting in Italy for pointing out the oversight. He had passed many days in the Louvre before the above passage was written, but had not been in the habit of pausing long anywhere except in the last two rooms, containing the pictures of the Italian school. The conjecture, however, shows that he had not ill-estimated the power of Ruysdael; nor does he consider it as in anywise unfitting him for the task he has undertaken, that, for every hour passed in galleries he has passed many days on the sea-shore."

The sea-piece by Ruysdael in the Louvre is No. 2558. For Ruskin's early studies in that gallery see above, Introduction, p. xx. "In the last edition" should have been "in the former editions," as the passage in question occurred in eds. 1 and 2, see below, § 22 on p. 525.]

¹ [The two pictures are No. 4, "Harbour at Sunrise," and No. 15, "Marine View." In his diary of 1845 Ruskin has a longer note on the two pictures:—

"The little bit of light cast upon the water with the reflexion of the sun focussed by the round image of it is very like Turner, and the best bit certainly

not seen any other instance of Salvator's painting water with any care; it is usually as conventional as the rest of his work, yet conventionalism is perhaps more tolerable in water-painting than elsewhere; and if his trees and rocks had been good, the rivers might have been generally accepted without objection.

The merits of Poussin as a sea or water painter may, I think, § 22. *Nicolo Poussin.* be sufficiently determined by the Deluge in the Louvre,¹ where the breaking up of the fountains of the deep is typified by the capsizing of a wherry over a weir.

In the outer porch of St. Mark's, at Venice, among the mosaics on the roof, there is a representation of the Deluge. The ground is dark blue; the rain is represented in bright white undulating parallel stripes; between these stripes is seen the massy outline of the ark, a bit between each stripe, very dark and hardly distinguishable from the sky; but it has a square window with a bright golden border, which glitters out conspicuously, and leads the eye to the rest: the sea below is almost concealed with dead bodies.

On the font of the church of San Frediano at Lucca there is a representation of, possibly, the Israelites and Egyptians in the Red Sea. The sea is typified by undulating bands of stone, each band composed of three strands (almost the same type is to be seen in the glass-painting of the twelfth and

that I have ever seen from Salvator's hand. It shows that he wanted not capacity and that his powers of observation were keen, but all in vain owing to his shallow, desultory, and vulgar character. The cool light of the water is very admirable, but it is a pity that his execrable taste interferes even with this passage, which approaches very near poetry. The figures which he has put against the light are bathers in the coarsest attitudes, stripping off shirts, stockings, etc., one man naked lying on his back on the water, feet foremost, to show the painter's power of foreshortening. All the rest of the picture seems painted to spoil this passage of light, for it is all in equal cold pointless daylight, having no reference, nor relation, to the principal light, and the confused and valueless lines of the shipping are unworthy even of Salvator, who usually has some feeling for composition, if for nothing else. The stone pine may be taken as a fair example of the murder of Nature's finest forms, which is so common with him, but his murders are seldom so insipid as this.

"If this picture be bad, however, it is a master-piece compared with the other opposite. I do not believe this to be a Salvator at all, but at any rate, if it be, all the red-bottomed shipping has been repainted by some sign-painter. The hills present caricatures of all Salvator's most gross faults, and the picture possesses no merit whatsoever of any kind."

¹ [No. 739, "Winter, or the Great Flood."]

thirteenth centuries, as especially at Chartres). These bands would perhaps be hardly felt as very aqueous, but for the fish, which are interwoven with them in a complicated manner, their heads appearing at one side of every band, and their tails at the other.¹

Both of these representations of deluge, archaic and rude as they are, I consider better, more suggestive, more inventive, and more natural than Poussin's. Indeed, this is not saying anything very depreciatory, as regards the St. Mark's one; for the glittering of the golden window through the rain is wonderfully well conceived, and almost deceptive, looking as if it had just caught a gleam of sunlight on its panes, and there is something very sublime in the gleam of this light above the floating corpses. But the other instance is sufficiently grotesque and rude, and yet, I speak with perfect seriousness, it is, I think, very far preferable to Poussin's.

On the other hand, there is a just medium between the meanness and apathy of such a conception as his, and the extravagance, still more contemptible, with which the subject has been treated in modern days.* I am not aware that I can refer to any instructive example of this intermediate course; for I fear the reader is by this time wearied of hearing of Turner, and the plate of Turner's picture of the Deluge² is so rare that it is of no use to refer to it.

It seems exceedingly strange that the great Venetian painters should have left us no instance, as far as I know, of any marine effects carefully studied. As already noted (pp. 183, 211), whatever passages of sea occur in their backgrounds are merely broad extents of blue or green surface, fine in colour, and coming

* I am here, of course, speaking of the treatment of the subject as a landscape only; many mighty examples of its conception occur where the sea, and all other adjuncts, are entirely subservient to the figures, as with Raffaele and M. Angelo.

¹ [For a fuller discussion of "Ancient Representations of Water," see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. Appendix 21.]

² [Now No. 493 in the National Gallery; exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1813; engraved by J. B. Quilley.]

dark usually against the horizon, well enough to be understood as sea (yet even that not always without the help of a ship), but utterly unregarded in all questions of completion and detail. The water even in Titian's landscape is almost always violently, though grandly, conventional, and seldom forms an important feature. Among the religious schools very sweet motives occur, but nothing which for a moment can be considered as real water-painting. Perugino's sea is usually very beautifully felt; his river in the fresco of S^{ta}. Maddalena at Florence¹ is freely indicated, and looks level and clear; the reflections of the trees given with a rapid zigzag stroke of the brush. On the whole, I suppose that the best imitations of level water surface to be found in ancient art are in the clear Flemish landscapes. Cuyp's are usually very satisfactory; but even the best of these attain nothing more than the agreeable suggestion of calm pond or river. Of any tolerable representation of water in agitation, or under any circumstances that bring out its power and character, I know no instance; and the more capable of noble treatment the subject happens to be, the more manifest invariably is the painter's want of feeling in every effort, and of knowledge in every line.

[The following is the version of this chapter from § 4 to the end, as it stood in eds. 1 and 2:—]

We must first state a few of the constant and most important laws which regulate the appearance of water under all circumstances.

§ 4. *General rules which regulate the phenomena of water. First, its universality of reflection.*

I. Nothing can hinder water from being a reflecting medium, but dry dust or filth of some kind on its surface. Dirty water, if the foul matter be dissolved or suspended in the liquid, reflects just as clearly and sharply as pure water, only the image is coloured by the hue of the mixed matter, and becomes comparatively brown, or dark.²

¹ [Perugino's frescoes are in the Chapter-house of S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi. The landscape here noticed is described at greater length in the next volume, sec. ii. ch. v. § 11.]

² [(Note in ed. 2, only).—"Brown, as in the case of mountain waters coloured by morasses; or dark, as in lowland estuaries fouled with fine soluble mud. If the foul

II. If water be rippled, the side of every ripple next to us reflects a piece of the sky, and the side of every ripple farthest from us reflects a piece of the opposite shore, or of whatever objects may be beyond the ripple. But as we soon lose sight of the farther sides of the ripples on the retiring surface, the whole rippled space will then be reflective of the sky only. Thus, where calm distant water receives reflections of high shores, every extent of rippled surface appears as a bright line interrupting that reflection with the colour of the sky.

§ 5. *How modified by ripple.*

III. When a ripple or swell is seen at such an angle as to afford a view of its farther side, it carries the reflection of objects farther down than calm water would. Therefore all motion in water elongates reflections, and throws them into confused vertical lines.

§ 6. *How prolonged and broken.*

IV. Rippled water, of which we can see the farther side of the waves, will reflect a perpendicular line clearly, a bit of its length being given on the side of each wave, and easily joined by the eye. But if the line slope, its reflection will be excessively confused and disjointed, and if horizontal, nearly invisible.

V. Every reflection is the image of the reverse of just so much of the objects beside the water, as we could see if we were placed as much under the level of the water as we are actually above it. [We cannot see the reflection of the top of a flat stone, because we could not see the real top of the stone if we were under the level of the water; and]¹ if an object be so far back from the bank, that if we were five feet under the water level we could not see it over the bank, then, standing five feet above the water, we shall not be able to see its image under the reflected bank.

§ 7. *How changed in relation of parts.*

VI. But if the object subtend the proper angle for reflection it does not matter how great its distance may be. The image of a mountain fifty miles off is as clear, in proportion to the clearness of the mountain itself, as the image of a stone on the beach, in proportion to the clearness of the stone itself.

§ 8. *Not affected by distance.*

VII. There is no shadow on clean² water. Every darkness on it is reflection, not shadow. If it have rich colouring matter suspended in it, or a dusty surface, it will take a feeble shadow, and where there is even very faint and variable³ positive colour, as in the sea, it will take something like shadows in distant effect, but never near. Those parts of the sea which appear bright in sunshine, as opposed to other parts, are composed of waves of which every one conveys to the eye a little image of the sun, but which are not themselves illumined in doing so, for the light on the wave depends on your position, and moves as you move; it cannot, therefore, be positive light on the object, for you will not get the light to move off the trunk of a tree because you move away from it. The horizontal

§ 9. *Water receives no shadow.*

matter [misprinted "water" in ed. 2] be insoluble, as when streams are charged with sand or yellow alluvial soil, the reflection is paled and nearly destroyed by its prevalent colour, *beneath* the eye, while it remains clear at a distance from the eye. For full explanation of this and other phenomena of water, especially of rule vii., *vide* Ripplingille's *Artist and Amateur's Magazine* for November 1843." (Here reprinted in Appendix ii. pp. 655–661.)

¹ [Bracketed matter omitted in ed 2.]

² [*Sic* in eds. 1 and 2; the author probably wrote "clear."]

³ [Ed. 2 omits "a feeble" and reads: "where it has itself a positive," etc.]

lines, therefore, cast by clouds on the sea, are not shadows, but reflections.¹ Optical effects of great complication take place by means of refraction and mirage, but it may be taken for granted that if ever there is a real shadow, it is cast on mist, and not on water. And on clear water, near the eye, there never can be even the appearance of a shadow, except a delicate tint on the foam, or transmitted through the body of the water, as through air.²

These rules are universal and incontrovertible. Let us test by them some of the simplest effects of ancient art. Among all the pictures of Canaletti which I have ever seen, and they are not few, I remember but one or two where there is any variation from one method of treatment of the water. He almost always covers the whole space of it with one monotonous ripple, composed of a coat of well chosen, but perfectly opaque and smooth seagreen, covered with a certain number, I cannot state the exact average, but it varies from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and upwards, according to the extent of canvas to be covered, of white concave touches, which are very properly symbolical of ripple. On the water so prepared, he fixes his gondolas in very good perspective, and thus far no objection is to be made to the whole arrangement. But a gondola, as everybody knows, is a very long, shallow boat, little raised above the water, except at the extremities, but having a vertical beak, and rowed by two men, or sometimes only one, *standing*. Consequently, wherever the water is rippled, as by Canaletti, we have, by our fourth rule, only a broken and indistinct image of the horizontal and oblique lines of the gondola, but a tolerably clear one of the vertical beak, and the figures, shooting down a long way under or along the water. What does Canaletti give us? A clear, dark, unbroken reflection of the whole boat, *except* the beak and the figure, which cast none at all. A worthy beginning.

Next, as the canal retires back from the eye, Canaletti very properly and geometrically diminishes the size of his ripples, until he arrives at an even field of apparently smooth water. Now, by our second rule, this rippling water, . . . [as in the text above, § 18, p. 513] . . . reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake. Exemplary Canaletti!

Observe, I do not suppose Canaletti, frequently as he must have been afloat on these canals, to have been ignorant of their everyday appearance. I believe him to be a shameless assertor of whatever was most convenient to him; and the convenience of this, his scientific arrangement, is indisputable. For in the first place, it is one of the most difficult things in the world . . . [as in the text above, § 18, p. 514] . . . as the ripple would have been far off. It is a very nervous thing for an ignorant artist* to have a great space of vacant

* The exquisite accuracy of Canaletti's imitations of chiaroscuro in architecture in no degree prove [*sic*] him an artist. Any mechanic can imitate what is quiet and finite. It is only when we have motion and infinity, as in water, that the real powers of an artist are tried. We have already seen that Canaletti could not give the essential truths—the infinite, that is to say—even of architecture; and the moment he touches any higher subject his impotence is made manifest.

¹ [See Ruskin's reply to criticisms of this passage, Appendix ii. p. 656.]

² [Ed. 1 omits the words "or transmitted . . . through air.]"

smooth water to deal with, close to him, too far down to take reflections from buildings, and yet which must be made to look flat and retiring and transparent. Canaletti, with his sea-green . . . [as in the text above, § 18, p. 514] . . . trusting to the inaccuracy of observation of the public to secure him from detection. And he has not reckoned without his host.

Now, what possibly can be expected from any part of the works of a man who is either thus blind to the broadest facts, perpetually before his eyes, or else who sits down to try how much convenient lying the public can digest? It would be but wasted time to look in him for finer truth, when he thus starts in direct defiance of the most palpable. But if it be remembered that . . . [as in the text above, § 19, p. 515] . . . the truths of colour are contradicted by Canaletti by the thousand, not less fatally, though, of course, less demonstrably, than in the broad cases presented by his general arrangement.

I shall not insult any of the works of modern art by comparing them with this, but I may as well illustrate, from a vignette of Turner, the particular truth in the drawing of rippled water of which we have been speaking. There is a ripple in the "Venice," given among the illustrations to Scott's works,¹ on which we see that the large black gondola on the right casts but a faint reflection from its body, while the upward bend of the beak throws a long and decided one. The upright figures on the left cast white light on the water, but the boat in which they are standing has no reflection except at the beak, and there a dark one. The two behind show the same thing.

Let us next look at a piece of calm water by Vanderveelde, such as that marked 113 in the Dulwich Gallery.² There is not a line of ripple or swell in any part of this sea; it is absolutely windless. Nothing can prevent the sea, when in such a state as this, from receiving reflections, because it is too vast and too frequently agitated to admit of anything like dry dust or scum on its surface, and however foul or thick a Dutch sea may be in itself, no *internal* filth can ever take away the polish and reflective power of the surface. Nor does Vanderveelde appear to suppose it can, for the near boat casts its image with great fidelity, which being unprolonged downwards, informs us that the calm is perfect. But what is that underneath the vessel on the right? A grey shade, descending like smoke a little way below the hull, not of the colour of the hull, having no drawing nor detail in any part of it, and breaking off immediately, leaving the masts and sails totally unrecorded in the water. We have here two kinds of falsehood. First, while the ship is nearly as clear as the boats, the reflection of the ship is a mere mist. This is false by Rule VI. Had the ship been misty, its shadow might have been so; not otherwise. Secondly, the reflection of the hull would in nature have been as deep as the hull is high (or, had there been the slightest swell on the water, deeper), and the masts and sails would all have been rendered with fidelity, especially their vertical lines. Nothing could by any possibility have prevented their being so, but so much swell on the sea as would have prolonged the hull indefinitely. Hence, both the colour and the form of Vanderveelde's reflection are impossible.

§ 13. *His false-ness of colour.*

§ 14. *Illustration from Turner of the truth.*

§ 15. *The calms of Vanderveelde.*

§ 16. *Their various violations of natural law*

¹ [In vol. x. of the *Prose Works* (1834).]

² [Now No. 68, "A Calm"; see above, § 17, p. 512, and below, p. 541.]

Here again, as in the case of Canaletti, I do not suppose Vandewelde to have been ignorant of these common truths; but purposely and wilfully to have denied them, because he did not know how to manage, and was afraid of them. He evidently desired to give an impression of great extent of surface between the boat and the ship, and thought that if he gave the reflection the eye would go under the water instead of along it; and that, as the tops of the masts would come down to the nearest part of the surface, they would destroy the evidence of distance, and appear to set the ship *above* the boat instead of *beyond* it. And I doubt not, in such awkward hands, that such would indeed have been the case. I think he estimated his own powers with great accuracy and correctness, but he is not on that account to be excused for casting defiance in the teeth of nature, and painting his surface with grey horizontal lines, as is done by nautically disposed children; for no destruction of distance in the ocean is so serious a loss as that of its liquidity. It is better to feel a want of extent in the sea, than an extent which we might walk upon or play at billiards upon. And though Vandewelde's eye and feeling were too blunt to suffer much pain from his wilful libelling of nature, he ought not to have reckoned so boldly upon general blindness.

§ 17. *Also proceeded from impotence, not from ignorance.* Unobservant eyes may, indeed, receive almost any degree of error for truth, under particular circumstances; but I cannot believe that any person who has ever floated on calm sea, can stand before this picture without feeling that the whole of the water below the large ship looks like vapour or smoke. He may not know why, he may not miss the reflection, nor expect it, but he *must* feel that something is wrong, and that the image before him is indeed "a painted ship—upon a painted ocean."¹ Perhaps the best way of educating the eye for the detection of the falsehood is to stand before the mill of Hobbima, No. 131,² in which there is a bit of decently painted water, and glance from one picture to the other, when Vandewelde's will soon become by comparison a perfect slate-table, having scarcely even surface or space to recommend it; for, in his ignorance of means to express proximity, the unfortunate Dutchman has been reduced to *blacken* his sea as it comes near, until by the time he reaches the frame it looks perfectly spherical, and is of the colour of ink. What Vandewelde *ought* to have done, and how both the falsehood of his present work, and the destruction of surface which he feared, might have been avoided altogether, I shall show in the third chapter of this section.

I might thus proceed through half the pieces of water-painting of the old masters which exist, and point out some new violation of truth, some peculiar arrangement of error, in every one; sometimes, indeed, having little influence on the general effect, but always enough to show us that the painter had no real knowledge of his subject, and worked only as an imitator, liable to fall into the most ridiculous mistakes the moment he quitted his model. In the picture of Cuyp, No. 83, Dulwich Galley,³ it is exceedingly difficult to understand under what kind of moral or intellectual delusion the painter was induced to give the post at the end of the bank on the left, its

¹ [*The Ancient Mariner*, part ii.]

² [In the Dulwich Gallery, now No. 87: "Woody Landscape with a Large Watermill"; for other references, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 5, ch. viii. § 12 n.]

³ [See above, § 17, p. 511.]

numerous radiating reflections or shadows; for, in the first place, the sun is not apt to cast half-a-dozen shadows at the same time, neither is water usually disposed to reflect one line in six directions; and, in the second place, supposing that in some melancholy state of bewilderment the painter had supposed these shadows to be indicative of radiating light proceeding from the sun, it is difficult to understand how he could have cast the shadow of the ship in the distance in a line, which, if produced, would cut half of the shadows of the post at right angles. This is a slight passage, and one not likely to attract attention; but I do not know anything more perfectly demonstrative of an artist's entire ignorance. I hope, however, and think it probable—for Cuyp *had* looked at nature, and I can scarcely suppose him capable of committing anything so gross as this—that the shadows of the post may be a picture-dealer's improvement, and that only the one cast by the ship is Cuyp's.

[“§ 20. And of Paul Potter, in casting no reflections from half-a-dozen objects.” (This section was identical with lines 3–15 on p. 512 above.)]

We can scarcely expect after finding such errors as these in the painting of ordinary smooth water, to receive much instruction or pleasure from the efforts of the old masters at the more difficult forms and features of water in motion. If, however, all form and feature be abandoned, and falling water be selected at the moment, and under the circumstances when it presents nothing to the eye but a few breaking flakes of foam

§ 21. *Painting of water in motion. Ruysdael.*

on the surface of a dark and colourless current, it is then far easier to paint than when it is smooth, and accordingly we find Claude and Poussin succeeding in it well, and throwing a bit of breaking foam over their rocks with good effect; and we find Ruysdael carrying the matter farther, and rendering a low waterfall completely, with great fidelity. It is true that he divests his water of colour, and is often wanting in transparency, but still there is nothing radically wrong in his work, and this is saying much. What falling water may be, and ought to be, we shall see in the following chapter.

I wish Ruysdael had painted one or two rough seas.¹ I believe if he had, he might have saved the unhappy public from much grievous victimizing, both in mind and pocket, for he would have shown that Vandevælde and Backhuysen were not quite sea-deities. As it is, I believe there is scarcely such another instance to be found in the history of man, of the epidemic aberration of mind into which multitudes fall by infection, as is furnished by the value set upon the works of these men. All others of the ancients have real power of some kind or another, either solemnity of intention, as the Poussins, or refinement of feeling, as Claude, or high imitative accuracy, as Cuyp and Paul Potter, or rapid power of execution, as Salvator; there is something in all which ought to be admired, and of which, if exclusively contemplated, no degree of admiration, however enthusiastic, is unaccountable or unnatural. But Vandevælde and Backhuysen have *no* power, no redeeming quality of mind; their works are neither reflective, nor eclectic, nor imitative; they have neither tone, nor execution, nor colour, nor composition, nor any artistical merit to recommend them; and they present not even a deceptive, much less a real, resemblance of nature. Had they given us staring green seas, with hatchet edges, such as we see “Her Majesty's ships so-and-so” fixed into by the heads or sterns in

§ 22. *Painting of rough sea. Vandevælde and Backhuysen.*

¹ [See above, p. 516 *n.*]

the outer room of the Academy, the thing would have been comprehensible; there is a natural predilection in the mind of man for green waves with curling tops, but not for clay and wool, and the colour, we should have thought, would have been repulsive even to those least cognizant of form. Whatever may be the chilliness, or mistiness, or

§ 23. *Their errors of colour and shadow,* opacity of a Dutch climate and ocean, there is no water, which has motion in it, and air above it, which ever assumes such a grey as is attributed to sea by these painters; cold and lifeless the general effect may be, but at all times it is wrought out by variety of hue in all its parts; it is a grey caused by coldness of light, not by absence of colour. And how little the authority of these men is worthy of trust in matters of effect, is sufficiently shown by their constant habit of casting a coal-black shadow halfway across the picture on the nearest waves; for, as I have before shown, water itself *never* takes any shadow at all, and the shadow upon foam is so delicate in tint and so broken in form as to be scarcely traceable. The men who could allow themselves to lay a coal-black shadow upon what never takes any shadow at all, and whose feelings were not hurt by the sight of falsehood so distinct, and recoiled not at the shade themselves had made, can be little worthy of credit in anything that they do or assert. Then their foam is either deposited in spherical and tubular concretions, opaque and unbroken, on the surfaces of the

§ 24. *And powerless efforts in rendering spray.* waves, or else, the more common case, it is merely the whiteness of the waves shaded gradually off, as if it were the light side of a spherical object, of course representing every breaker as crested, not with spray, but with a puff of smoke. Neither let it be supposed that, in so doing, they had any intention of representing the vaporous spray taken off wild waves by violent wind. That magnificent effect only takes place on large breakers, and has no appearance of smoke except at a little distance; seen near, it is dust. But the Dutch painters cap every little cutting ripple with smoke, evidently intending it for foam, and evidently thus representing it because they had not sufficient power over the brush to produce the broken effect of real spray. Their seas, in consequence, have neither frangibility nor brilliancy; they do not break, but evaporate; their foam neither flies, nor sparkles, nor springs, nor wreathes, nor curdles, nay, it is not even white, nor has the effect of white, but of a dirty efflorescence or exhalation, and their ships are inserted into this singular sea with peculiar want of truth; for, in nature, three circumstances contribute to disguise the waterline upon the

§ 25. *Their impossible insertion of vessels,* wood;—where a wave is thin, the colour of the wood is shown a little through it—when a wave is smooth, the colour of the wood is a little reflected upon it; and when a wave is broken, its foam more or less obscures and modifies the line of junction; besides which, the wet wood itself catches some of the light and colour of the sea.

Instead of this, the waterline of the Dutch vessels is marked clear and hard all round; the water reflecting nothing, showing nothing through it, and equally defined in edge of foam as in all other parts. Finally, the curves of their waves are not curves of

§ 26. *And impossible curves of surge.* *projection*, which all sea lines are, but the undulating lines of ropes, or other tough and connected bodies. Whenever two curves, dissimilar in their nature, meet in the sea, of course they both break, and form an edge; but every kind of curve, catenary or conic, is

associated by these painters in most

admired disorder, joined indiscriminately by their extremities. This is a point, however, on which it is impossible to argue, without going into high mathematics, and even then the nature of particular curves, as given by the brush, would be scarcely demonstrable; and I am the less disposed to take much trouble about it because I think that the persons who are really fond of these works, are almost beyond the reach of argument. I can understand why people like Claude, and perceive much in their sensations which is right and legitimate, and which can be appealed to, and I can give them credit for perceiving more in him than I am at present able to perceive; but when I hear of persons *honestly* admiring Backhuysen or Vandevelde, I think there must be something physically wrong or wanting in their perceptions. At least, I can form no estimate of what their notions or feelings are, and cannot hope for anything of principle or opinion common between us, which I can address or understand.

The seas of Claude are the finest pieces of water painting in ancient art. I do not say that I like them because they appear to me selections of the particular moment when the sea is most insipid and characterless; but I think that they are exceedingly true to the forms and time selected, or at least that the fine instances of them are so, of which there are exceedingly few.¹ Anything and everything is fathered upon him, and he probably committed many mistakes himself, and was occasionally right rather by accident than by knowledge.

§ 27. *The seas of Claude. Their truthfulness.*

Claude and Ruysdael, then, may be considered as the only two men among the old masters who could paint anything like water in extended spaces or in action. The great mass of the landscape painters, though they sometimes succeeded in the imitation of a pond or a gutter, display, whenever they have space or opportunity to do so, want of feeling in every effort, and want of knowledge in every line.

¹ [The passage, "The seas . . . few," occurred also in the third and later editions; see above, § 21, p. 517.]

CHAPTER II
OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE MODERNS

THERE are few men among modern landscape painters who cannot paint quiet water at least suggestively, if not faithfully.¹

§ 1. *General power of the moderns in painting quiet water. The lakes of Fielding.*

Those who are incapable of doing this would scarcely be considered artists at all; and anything like the ripples of Canaletto, or the black shadows of Vandewelde, would be looked upon as most unpromising, even in the work of a novice. Among those who most fully appreciate and render the qualities of space and surface in calm water, perhaps Copley Fielding stands first. His expanses of windless lake are among the most perfect passages of his works; for he can give surface as well as depth, and make his lake look not only clear, but, which is far more difficult, lustrous. He is less dependent than most of our artists upon reflection; and can give substance, transparency, and extent, where another painter would be reduced to paper; and he is exquisitely refined in his expression of distant breadth, by the delicate line of ripple interrupting the reflection, and by aerial qualities of colour. Nothing, indeed, can be purer or more refined than his general feeling of lake sentiment, were it not for a want of simplicity, a fondness for pretty, rather than impressive colour, and a consequent want of some of the higher expression of repose.²

Hundreds of men might be named, whose works are highly

¹ [For "suggestively, if not faithfully," eds. 1 and 2 read, "respectably and faithfully, if not beautifully."]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

"He is a little apt to mistake the affected for the poetical. Some of his evening passages of seashore with calm sea, are very perfect; and he is peculiarly daring and successful in the treatment of extensive rippled surface."]

instructive in the management of calm water.¹ Stand for half an hour beside the Fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick, so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam-globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam;² and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering

§ 2. *The character of bright and violent falling water,*

¹ [Eds. 1–4 entitle this section, “§ 2. The calm rivers of De Wint, J. Holland,” etc., and read:—

“Hundreds . . . calm water. De Wint is singularly powerful and certain, exquisitely bright, and vigorous in colour. The late John Varley produced some noble passages. I have seen, some seven years ago, works by J. Holland, which were, I think, as near perfection as watercolour can be carried—for *bonâ fide* truth, refined and finished to the highest degree. [But he has since that time produced worse pictures every year; and his fate appears irrecoverable, unless by a very strong effort and a total change of system. I need scarcely refer to the calms of Stanfield and Callcott; of whose excellence it is better to say nothing than little. I only wish that they both, especially the latter, would be a little less cold.]*

“[§ 3. The character of bright, and violent, falling water.] But the power of modern artists is not brought out until they have greater difficulties to struggle with. Stand for half an hour,” etc.

* Eds. 3 and 4 omit the passage bracketed above. For De Wint, see above, p. 199 *n.*, and *cf.* pp. 275 *n.*, 397, 445, 535; for Varley, p. 275 *n.* James Holland (1800–1870) was a member of the Society of British Artists and also of the Old Water-Colour Society; drawings by him may be seen in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum. He also painted in oils, and two of his pictures are in the Tate Gallery. In a letter to his father (Faiddo, Aug. 15, 1845) Ruskin refers to Holland’s reception of his criticisms:—

“Poor Holland writes singularly good-humouredly, for I was very hard upon him. I hope he will enable me to treat him more kindly after this; he has the power, but he seems to me to be a little too self-taught and to want discipline.”

It will be seen that ultimately Ruskin deleted his criticisms.]

² [This section, from “Stand for half an hour” to “purple and silver,” is § 29 in *Fronde Agrestes*, where at this point Ruskin inserted the following note:—

“Well noticed. The drawing of the fall of Schaffhausen, which I made at the time of writing this study, was one of the very few, either by other draughtsmen or myself, which I have seen Turner pause at with serious attention.”

The drawing by Ruskin was No. 28 in the American exhibition arranged by Professor C. E. Norton in 1879. In the catalogue the following “extract from letter, 1874,” was given:—

“That drawing of the falls of Schaffhausen is the only one of mine I ever saw Turner interested in. He looked at it long, evidently with pleasure, and shook his finger at it one evening, standing by the fire in the old Denmark Hill drawing-room. How destiny does mock us! Fancy if I had him to shake fingers at me now!”]

chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and chequer them with purple and silver. I believe, when you have stood by this for half an hour, you will have discovered that there is something

§ 3. *As given by Nesfield.* more in nature than has been given by Ruysdael.

Probably you will not be much disposed to think of any mortal work at the time; but when you look back to what you have seen, and are inclined to compare it with art, you will remember, or ought to remember, Nesfield.¹ He has shown extraordinary feeling, both for the colour and the spirituality of a great waterfall; exquisitely delicate in his management of the changeful veil of spray or mist, just in his curves and contours, and rich in colour,² if he would remember that in all

¹ [William Andrew Nesfield (1794–1881), as a lieutenant in the army, served in the Peninsular under Wellington. In 1823 he was elected a member of the Water-Colour Society, where he exhibited till 1852, after which time he followed the profession of landscape-gardener. Many of the improvements in the London parks and at Kew were carried out under his direction. For another reference to Nesfield, see below, § 12, p. 536.]

² [Eds. 1–4 read:—

“and unequalled in colour, except by Turner. None of our water-colour painters can approach him in the management of the variable hues of clear water over weeded rocks; but his feeling for it often leads him a little too far, and, like Copley Fielding, he loses sight of simplicity and dignity for the sake of delicacy or prettiness. His water-falls are, however, unequalled in their way; and if he would,” etc.]

such scenes there is much gloom as well as much splendour, and relieve the lustre of his attractive passages of colour with more definite and prevalent greys, and give a little more substance to parts of his picture unaffected by spray, his work would be nearly perfect. His seas are also most instructive; a little confused in chiaroscuro, but refined in form and admirable in colour.

J. D. Harding is, I think, nearly unequalled in¹ the *drawing* of running water. I do not know what Stanfield would do; I have never seen an important piece of torrent drawn by him; but I believe even he could scarcely contend with the magnificent *abandon* of Harding's

§ 4. *The admirable water-drawing of J. D. Harding.*

brush. There is perhaps nothing which tells more in the drawing of water than decisive and swift execution; for, in a rapid touch the hand naturally falls into the very curve of projection which is the absolute truth; while in slow finish, all precision of curve and character is certain to be lost, except under the hand of an unusually powerful master. But Harding has both knowledge and velocity, and the fall of his torrents is beyond praise; impatient, chafing, substantial, shattering, crystalline, and capricious; full of various form, yet all apparently instantaneous and accidental; nothing conventional, nothing dependent upon parallel lines or radiating curves; all broken up and dashed to pieces over the irregular rock, and yet all in unity of motion. The colour also of his *falling* and bright water is very perfect; but in the dark and level parts of his torrents he has employed a cold grey, which has

§ 5. *His colour; and painting of sea.*

hurt some of his best pictures. His grey in shadows under rocks or dark reflections is admirable; but it is when the stream is in full light, and unaffected by reflections in distance, that he gets wrong. We believe that the fault is in want of expression of darkness in the colour, making it appear like a positive hue of the water, for which it is much too dead and cold.

¹ [Eds, 1 and 2 read:—"J. D. Harding is, I think, of all men living, and therefore, certainly, of all who have ever lived, the greatest master in," etc., adding as a footnote, "Turner is an exception to all rules; and whenever I speak generally he is to be considered as such."]

Harding seldom paints sea, and it is well for Stanfield that he does not, or the latter would have to look to his crown. All that we have seen from his hand is, as coast sea, quite faultless; we only wish he would paint it more frequently; always, however, with a veto upon French fishing-boats. In the Exhibition of 1842,¹ he spoiled one of the most superb pieces of sea-shore and sunset which modern art has produced, with the pestilent square sail of one of these clumsy craft, from which the eye could not escape.

Before passing to our great sea-painter, we must again refer to the works of Copley Fielding. It is with his sea as with his sky, he can only paint one, and that an easy one, but it is, for all that, an impressive and a true one.² No man has ever given, with the same flashing freedom, the race of a running tide under a stiff breeze; nor caught, with the same grace and precision, the curvature of the breaking wave, arrested or accelerated by the wind. The forward fling of his foam, and the impatient run of his surges, whose quick redoubling dash we can almost hear as they break in their haste upon their own bosoms, are nature itself; and his sea grey or green was, nine years ago, very right as colour, always a little wanting in transparency, but never cold or toneless. Since that time, he seems to have lost the sense of greenness in water, and has verged more and more on the purple and black, with unhappy results. His sea was always dependent for effect on its light or dark relief against the sky, even when it possessed colour; but it now has lost local colour and transparency together, and is little more than a study of chiaroscuro.³

There is indeed one point in all his seas deserving especial praise, a marked aim at *character*. He desires, especially in

¹ [No. 70 in the Old Water-Colour Society's Exhibition of that year: "Hastings Beach—Sunset."]

² [See above, pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. iv. §§ 8–10, pp. 398–9.]

³ [Eds. 1, 2, and 3 read:—

“study of chiaroscuro in an exceedingly ill-chosen grey. Besides, the perpetual repetition of the same idea is singularly weakening to the mind. Fielding, in all his life, can only be considered as having produced *one* sea

his latter works, not so much to produce an agreeable picture, a scientific piece of arrangement, or delightful melody of colour, as to make us feel the utter desolation, the cold, withering, frozen hopelessness of the continuous storm and merciless sea. And this is peculiarly remarkable in his denying himself all colour, just in the little bits which an artist of inferior mind would paint in sienna and cobalt. If a piece of broken wreck is allowed to rise for an instant through the boiling foam, though the blue stripe of a sailor's jacket, or a red rag of a flag would do all our hearts good, we are not allowed to have it; it would make us too comfortable, and prevent us from shivering and shrinking as we look; and the artist, with admirable intention and most meritorious self-denial, expresses his piece of wreck with a dark cold brown. Now we think this aim and effort worthy of the very highest praise, and we only wish the lesson were taken up and acted on by our other artists; but Mr. Fielding should remember that nothing of this kind can be done with success unless by the most studied management of the general tones of the picture; for the eye, deprived of all means of enjoying the grey hues, merely as a contrast to bright points, becomes painfully fastidious in the quality of the hues themselves, and demands for its satisfaction such melodies and richness of grey, as may in some degree atone to it for the loss of points of stimulus. That grey which would be taken frankly and freely for an expression of gloom, if it came behind a yellow sail or a red cap, is examined with invidious and merciless intentness when there is nothing to relieve it; and, if not able to bear the investigation, if neither agreeable nor variable in its hue, renders the picture weak instead of impressive, and unpleasant instead of awful. And indeed the management of nature might teach him this; for though, when using violent contrasts,

§ 7. *Its high aim at character;*

§ 8. *But deficiency in the requisite quality of greys.*

picture. The others are duplicates. He ought to go to some sea of perfect clearness and brilliant colour, as that on the coast of Cornwall or of the Gulf of Geneva, and study it sternly in broad daylight, with no black clouds or drifting rain to help him out of his difficulties. He would then both learn his strength and add to it."

"[§ 8. Its high aim at character.] But there is one point," etc.]

she frequently makes her gloom somewhat monotonous, the moment she gives up her vivid colour, and depends upon her desolation, that moment she begins to steal the greens into her sea-grey, and the browns and yellows into her cloud-grey, and the expression of variously tinted light through all. The Land's End,¹ and Lowestoft, and Snowstorm (in the Academy, 1842)² of Turner are nothing more than passages of the most hopeless, desolate, uncontrasted greys, and yet are three of the very finest pieces of colour that have come from his hand. And we sincerely hope that Mr. Fielding will gradually perceive the necessity of such studied melodies of quiet colour, and will neither fall back into the old tricks of contrast, nor continue to paint with purple and ink. If he would only make a few careful studies of grey from the mixed atmosphere of spray, rain, and mist of a gale that has been three days hard at work; not of a rainy squall, but of a persevering and powerful storm, and not where the sea is turned into milk and magnesia by a chalk coast, but where it breaks pure and green on grey slate or white granite, as along the cliffs of Cornwall; we think his pictures would present some of the finest examples of high intention and feeling to be found in modern art.

The works of Stanfield evidently, and at all times, proceed from the hand of a man who has both thorough knowledge of his subject, and thorough acquaintance with all the means and principles of art. We never criticise them; because we feel, the moment we look carefully at the drawing of any single wave, that the knowledge possessed by the master is much greater than our own; and therefore believe that if anything offends us in any part of the work, it is nearly certain to be our fault, and not the painter's. The local colour of Stanfield's sea is singularly true and powerful, and entirely independent of any tricks of

¹ [Eds. 1, 2, and 3 read: "Nor is Mr. Fielding without a model in art, for the 'Land's End' . . ."]

² [The "Land's End" (drawing) is the "Longships Lighthouse, Land's End": see below, p. 566. "Lowestoft" is engraved in No. 22 of *England and Wales*. The "Snowstorm" is No. 530 in the National Gallery: see below, p. 571 n.]

chiaroscuro. He will carry a mighty wave up against the sky, and make its whole body dark and substantial against the distant light, using all the while nothing more than chaste and unexaggerated local colour to gain the relief. His surface is at once lustrous, transparent, and accurate to a hair's-breadth in every curve; and he is entirely independent of dark skies, deep blues, driving spray, or any other means of concealing want of form, or atoning for it. He fears no difficulty, desires no assistance, takes his sea in open daylight, under general sunshine, and paints the *element* in its pure colour and complete forms. But we wish that he were less powerful, and more interesting; or that he were a little less

§ 11. *But want of feeling.*

Diogenes-like, and did not scorn all that he does not want. Now that he has shown us what he can do without such aids, we wish he would show us what he can do with them. He is, as we have already said, wanting in what we have just been praising in Fielding, impressiveness. We should like him to be less clever, and more affecting; less wonderful, and more terrible; and, as the very first step towards such an end, to learn how to conceal.¹ We are, however, trenching upon matters with which we have at present nothing to do; our concern is now only with truth, and one work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky, as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life. And let it be especially observed, how extensive and how various is the truth of our modern masters; how it comprises a complete history of that nature, of which, from the ancients, you only here and there can catch a stammering descriptive syllable; how Fielding has given us every character of the quiet lake, Robson* of the mountain tarn, De Wint

§ 12. *General sum of truth presented by modern art.*

* I ought before to have alluded to the works of the late G. Robson. They are somewhat feeble² in execution, but there is a feeling of the character of *deep* calm water in them quite unequalled, and different from the works and thoughts of all other men.

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read: "to learn what is now in *his* art the one thing wanting—how to conceal."]

² [Eds. 1–4, "a little disagreeable." For Robson, see above, p. 193 *n.*]

of the lowland river, Nesfield of the radiant cataract, Harding of the roaring torrent, Fielding of the desolated sea, Stanfield of the blue, open, boundless ocean. Arrange all this in your mind, observe the perfect truth of it in all its parts, compare it with the fragmentary falsities of the ancients, and then come with me to Turner.

CHAPTER III

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY TURNER

I BELIEVE it is a result of the experience of all artists, that it is the easiest thing in the world to give a certain degree of depth and transparency to water; but that it is next to impossible, to give a full impression of surface.

§ 1. *The difficulty of giving surface to smooth water.*

If no reflection be given, a ripple being supposed, the water looks like lead: if reflection be given, it, in nine cases out of ten, looks *morbidly* clear and deep, so that we always go down *into* it, even when the artist most wishes us to glide *over* it. Now, this difficulty arises from the very same circumstance which occasions the frequent failure in effect of the best-drawn foregrounds, noticed in Section II. Chapter IV.,¹ the change, namely, of focus necessary in the eye in order to receive rays of light coming from different distances. Go to the edge of a pond in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duckweed floating on the surface, not thick, but a leaf here and there. Now, you may either see in the water the reflection of the sky, or you may see the duckweed; but you cannot, by any effort, see both together. If you look for the reflection, you will be sensible of a sudden change or effort in the eye, by which it adapts itself to the reception of the rays which have come all the way from the clouds, have struck on the water, and so been sent up again to the eye. The focus you adopt is one fit for great distance; and, accordingly, you will feel that you are looking down a great way under the water, while the leaves of the duckweed, though they lie upon the water at the very spot on which you are gazing so intently, are

§ 2. *Is dependent on the structure of the eye, and the focus by which the reflected rays are perceived.*

¹ [Pp. 320–321.]

felt only as a vague uncertain interruption, causing a little confusion in the image below, but entirely undistinguishable as leaves, and even their colour unknown and unperceived. Unless you think of them, you will not even feel that anything interrupts your sight, so excessively slight is their effect. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind to look for the leaves of the duckweed, you will perceive an instantaneous change in the effort of the eye, by which it becomes adapted to receive near rays, those which have only come from the surface of the pond. You will then see the delicate leaves of the duckweed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green; but, while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float, nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which to investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duckweed, and plunge down.

Hence it appears, that whenever we see plain reflections of comparatively distant objects, in near water, we cannot possibly see the surface, and *vice versâ*; so that when in a painting we give the reflections with the same clearness with which they are visible in nature, we presuppose the effort of the eye to look under the surface, and, of course, destroy the surface, and induce an effect of clearness¹ which, perhaps, the artist has not particularly wished to attain, but which he has found himself forced into, by his reflections, in spite of himself. And the reason of this effect of clearness appearing preternatural is, that people are not in the habit of looking at water with the distant focus adapted to the reflections, unless by particular effort. We invariably, under ordinary circumstances, use the surface focus; and, in consequence, receive nothing more than a vague and confused impression of the reflected colours and lines, however clearly,

§ 3. *Morbid clearness occasioned in painting of water by distinctness of reflections.*

¹ [For "induce an effect of clearness which, perhaps, the artist," eds. 1 and 2 read:—"make everybody inclined to cry out—the moment they come before the picture—'Dear me, what excessively *clear* water!' when, perhaps, in a lowland study, clearness is not a quality which the artist," etc.]

calmly, and vigorously all may be defined underneath, if we choose to look for them. We do not look for them, but glide along over the surface, catching only playing light and capricious colour for evidence of reflection, except where we come to images of objects close to the surface, which the surface focus is of course adapted to receive; and these we see clearly, as of the weeds on the shore, or of sticks rising out of the water, etc. Hence, the ordinary¹ effect of water is only to be rendered by giving the reflections of the *margin* clear and distinct (so clear they usually are in nature, that it is impossible to tell where the water begins); but the moment we touch the reflection of distant objects, as of high trees or clouds, that instant we must become vague and uncertain in drawing, and, though vivid in colour and light as the object itself, quite indistinct in form and feature. If we take such a piece of water as that in the foreground of Turner's Château of Prince Albert,² the first impression from it is, "What a wide *surface*!" We glide over it a quarter of a mile into the picture before we know where we are, and yet the water is as calm and crystalline as a mirror; but we are not allowed to tumble into it, and gasp for breath as we go down, we are kept upon the surface, though that surface is flashing and radiant with every hue of cloud, and sun, and sky, and foliage. But the secret is in the drawing of these reflections.* We cannot tell, when we look

§ 4. *How avoided by Turner.*

* Not altogether. I believe here, as in a former case, I have attributed far too much influence to this change of focus. In Turner's earlier works the principle is not found. In the rivers of the Yorkshire drawings, every reflection is given clearly, even to the farthest depth, and yet the surface is not lost, and it would deprive the painter of much power if he were not sometimes so to represent them, especially when his object is repose; it being, of course, as lawful for him to choose one adaptation of the sight as another. I have, however, left the above paragraphs as first written, because they are true, although I think they make too much of an unimportant matter. The reader may attribute to them such weight as he thinks fit. He is referred to § 11 of this chapter, and to § 4 of the first chapter of this section.³

¹ [For "ordinary," eds. 1 and 2 read, "right and natural."]

² ["Rosenau: seat of H.R.H. Prince Albert, near Coburg, Germany," exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1841; now in the collection of Mrs. George Holt; engraved in vol. ii. of *Turner and Ruskin*.]

³ [Note first added in the 3rd ed.]

at them and *for* them, what they mean. They have all character, and are evidently reflections of something definite and determined; but yet they are all uncertain and inexplicable; playing colour and palpitating shade, which, though we recognize them in an instant for images of something, and feel that the water is bright, and lovely, and calm, we cannot penetrate nor interpret; we are not allowed to go down to them, and we repose, as we should in nature, upon the lustre of the level surface. It is in this power of saying everything, and yet saying nothing too plainly, that the perfection of art here, as in all other cases, consists. But, as it was before shown in Sec. II. Chap. IV. that the focus of the eye required little alteration after the first half-mile of distance, it is evident that on the *distant* surface of water, *all* reflections will be seen plainly; for the same focus adapted to a moderate distance of surface will receive with distinctness rays coming from the sky, or from any other distance, however great. Thus we always see the reflection of Mont Blanc on the Lake of Geneva, whether we take pains to look for it or not, because the water upon which it is cast is itself a mile off; but if we would see the reflection of Mont Blanc in the Lac de Chède, which is close to us,¹ we must take some trouble about the matter, leave the green snakes swimming upon the surface, and plunge for it. Hence reflections, if viewed collectively, are always clear in

§ 5. *All reflections on distant water are distinct.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add a footnote:—

“The ‘Lac de Chède’ was (alas for the word! it was destroyed by an éboulement three years ago), to my mind, the loveliest thing in Switzerland; a pool of emerald water, clearer than the mountain air around it, and yet greener than the pine boughs whose gloom it imaged, full of bright, forestlike weeds, and peopled by multitudes of lustrous, gliding, innocent serpents, unearthly creatures, which gave it more of the Greek feeling of divinity than is now perhaps left in the whole wide world. It was probably the ground-work of many of Shelley’s noblest descriptive passages.”

Ruskin was perhaps thinking of passages in *Alastor*, which much resemble this description of the Lac de Chède; but the poem was written in 1815, and Shelley did not visit Chamouni till the following year. He does not mention the lake in his *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour* (reprinted in Mrs. Shelley’s edition of his *Essays, Letters from Abroad, &c.* (1840): see in that book, vol. ii. p. 82). Ruskin wrote a description in verse of the lake in his “Journal of a Tour through France to Chamouni, 1835,” canto ii. stanzas 21 and 22: see Vol. II. pp. 424–425, and cf. *Ethics of the Dust*, ch. x., and *Deucalion*, i. ch. ii. § 13, where he again refers to the filling up of the lake.]

proportion to the distance of the water on which they are cast. And now look at Turner's Ulleswater,¹ or any of his distant lake expanses, and you will find every crag and line of the hills rendered in them with absolute fidelity, while the near surface shows nothing but a vague confusion of exquisite and lustrous tint. The reflections even of the clouds will be given far off, while those of near boats and figures will be confused and mixed among each other, except just at the water-line.

And now we see what Vandeveldé *ought* to have done with the shadow of his ship spoken of in the first chapter § 6. *The error of Vandeveldé.*² In such a calm, we should in nature, if we had looked for the reflection, have seen it clear from the water-line to the flag on the mainmast; but, in so doing, we should have appeared to ourselves to be looking under the water, and should have lost all feeling of surface. When we looked at the surface of the sea, we should have seen the image of the hull absolutely clear and perfect, because that image is cast on distant water;³ but we should have seen the image of the masts and sails gradually more confused as they descended, and the water close to us would have borne only upon its surface a maze of flashing colour and indefinite hue. Had Vandeveldé, therefore, given the perfect image of his ship, he would have represented a truth dependent on a particular effort of the eye, and destroyed his surface. But his business was to give, not a distinct reflection, but the colours of the reflection in mystery and disorder upon his near water, all perfectly vivid, but none intelligible: and had he done so, the eye would not have troubled itself to search them out; it would not have cared whence or how the colours came, but it would have felt them to be true and right, and rested satisfied upon the polished surface of the clear sea. Of the

¹ [*England and Wales*, No. 19. For another reference to the drawing, see above, p. 490. The word "Turner's," which is here required, was in eds. 1-4, but omitted in ed. 5 and the 1873 ed.]

² [§ 17, p. 512.]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 add a footnote:—

"In all this reasoning, I suppose knowledge in the reader of the optical mode in which reflections are produced; otherwise it can scarcely be understood."]

perfect truth, the best examples I can give are Turner's Saltash, and Castle Upnor.¹

Be it next observed, that the reflection of all near objects is, by our fifth rule,² not an exact copy of the parts of them which we see above the water, but a totally different view and arrangement of them, that which we should get if we were looking at them from beneath. Hence we see the dark sides of leaves hanging over a stream, in their reflection, though we see the light sides above; and all objects and groups of objects are thus seen in the reflection under different lights, and in different positions with respect to each other, from those which they assume above; some which we see on the bank being entirely lost in their reflection, and others which we cannot see on the bank brought into view. Hence nature contrives never to repeat herself, and the surface of water is not a mockery, but a new view of what is above it. And this difference in what is represented, as well as the obscurity of the representation, is one of the chief sources by which the sensation of surface is kept up in the reality. The reflection is not so remarkable, it does not attract the eye in the same degree when it is entirely different from the images above, as when it mocks them and repeats them, and we feel that the space and surface have colour and character of their own, and that the bank is one thing and the water another. It is by not making this change manifest, and giving underneath a mere duplicate of what is seen above, that artists are apt to destroy the essence and substance of water, and to drop us through it.

Now one instance will be sufficient to show the exquisite care of Turner in this respect. On the left-hand side of his Nottingham,³ the water (a smooth canal) is terminated by a

¹ [In Nos. 3 and 16 of *England and Wales*. For another reference to them, see above, pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. v. § 2 (list).]

² [See above, p. 506.]

³ [*England and Wales*, No. 17. The drawing is figured in vol. iv. ch. ii. of *Modern Painters* (Plate 23), to illustrate "Turnerian Topography." For another reference to it, see above, pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. v. § 2.]

bank fenced up with wood, on which, just at the edge of the water, stands a white sign-post. A quarter of a mile back, the hill on which Nottingham Castle stands rises steeply nearly to the top of the picture. The upper part of this hill is in bright golden light, and the lower in very deep grey shadow, against which the white board of the sign-post is seen entirely in light relief, though, being turned from the light, it is itself in delicate middle tint, illumined only on the edge. But the image of all this in the canal is very different. First, we have the reflection of the piles of the bank sharp and clear, but under this we have not what we see above it, the dark *base* of the hill (for this being a quarter of a mile back, we could not see it over the fence if we were looking from below), but the golden summit of the hill, the shadow of the under part having no record nor place in the reflection. Now this summit, being very distant, cannot be seen clearly by the eye while its focus is adapted to the surface of the water, and accordingly its reflection is entirely vague and confused; you cannot tell what it is meant for, it is mere playing golden light. But the sign-post, being on the bank close to us, will be reflected clearly, and accordingly its distinct image is seen in the midst of this confusion; relieved, however, not now against the dark base, but against the illumined summit of the hill, and appearing therefore, instead of a white space thrown out from blue shade, a dark grey space thrown out from golden light. I do not know that any more magnificent example could be given of concentrated knowledge, or of the daring statement of most difficult truth. For who but this consummate artist would have had courage, even if he had perceived the laws which required it, to undertake, in a single small space of water, the painting of an entirely new picture, with all its tones and arrangements altered,—what was made above bright by opposition to blue, being underneath made cool and dark by opposition to gold; or would have dared to contradict so boldly the ordinary expectation of the uncultivated eye, to find in the reflection a mockery of the reality? But

§ 8. *Illustrated from the works of Turner.*

§ 9. *The boldness and judgment shown in the observance of it.*

the reward is immediate, for not only is the change most grateful to the eye, and most exquisite as composition, but the surface of the water in consequence of it is felt to be as spacious as it is clear, and the eye rests not on the inverted image of the material objects, but on the element which receives them. And we have a farther instance in this passage of the close study which is required to enjoy the works of Turner, for another artist might have altered the reflection or confused it, but he would not have reasoned upon it so as to find out *what the exact alteration must be*; and if we had tried to account for the reflection, we should have found it false or inaccurate. But the master mind of Turner, without effort, showers its knowledge into every touch, and we have only to trace out even his slightest passages, part by part, to find in them the universal working of the deepest thought, that consistency of every minor truth which admits of and invites the same ceaseless study as the work of nature herself.

There is, however, yet another peculiarity in Turner's painting of smooth water, which, though less deserving of admiration, as being merely a mechanical excellence, is not less wonderful than its other qualities, nor less unique; a peculiar texture, namely, given to the most delicate tints of the surface, when there is little reflection from anything except sky or atmosphere, and which, just at the points where other painters are reduced to paper, gives to the surface of Turner the greatest appearance of substantial liquidity. It is impossible to say how it is produced; it looks like some modification of body colour; but it certainly is not body colour used as by other men, for I have seen this expedient tried over and over again without success; and it is often accompanied by crumbling touches of a dry brush, which never could have been put upon body colour, and which could not have shown through underneath it. As a piece of mechanical excellence, it is one of the most remarkable things in the works of the master; and it brings the truth of his water-painting up to the last degree of perfection; often rendering those passages of it the

§ 10. *The texture of surface in Turner's painting of calm water.*

most attractive and delightful, which, from their delicacy and paleness of tint, would have been weak and papery in the hands of any other man. The best instance of it I can give is, I think, the distance of the Devonport with the Dockyards.¹

After all, however, there is more in Turner's painting of water surface than any philosophy of reflection, or any peculiarity of means can account for or accomplish; there is a might and wonder about it which will not admit of our whys and hows. Take, for instance, the picture of the Sun of Venice going to Sea, of 1843;² respecting which, however, there are one or two circumstances which may as well be noted besides its water-painting. The reader, if he has not been at Venice, ought to be made aware that the Venetian fishing-boats, almost without exception, carry canvas painted with bright colours; the favourite design for the centre being either a cross or a large sun with many rays, the favourite colours being red, orange, and black, blue occurring occasionally. The radiance of these sails and of the bright and grotesque vanes at the mast-heads under sunlight is beyond all painting; but it is strange that, of constant occurrence as these boats are on all the lagoons, Turner alone should have availed himself of them. Nothing could be more faithful than the boat, which was the principal object in this picture, in the cut of the sail, the filling of it, the exact height of the boom above the deck, the quartering of it with colour; finally and especially, the hanging of the fish-baskets about the bows. All these, however, are comparatively minor merits (though not the blaze of colour which the artist elicited from the right use of these circumstances); but the peculiar power of the picture was the painting of the sea surface, where there were no reflections to assist it. A stream of splendid colour fell from the boat, but that occupied the centre only; in the distance the city and crowded boats threw down some playing

¹ [*England and Wales*, No. 8. For other references to the drawing, see above, pp. 266 n., 282 n.]

² [See above, note, p. 251, for Ruskin's reference to this picture in a letter from Venice (1845). § 11, as it now stands in the text, was added in the 1846 ed., and embodies Ruskin's impressions of 1845.]

lines, but these still left on each side of the boat a large space of water reflecting nothing but the morning sky. This was divided by an eddying swell, on whose continuous sides the local colour of the water was seen, pure aquamarine (a beautiful occurrence of closely observed truth); but still there remained a large blank space of pale water to be treated, the sky above had no distinct details, and was pure faint grey, with broken white vestiges of cloud; it gave no help therefore. But there the water lay, no dead grey flat paint, but downright clear, playing, palpable surface, full of indefinite hue, and retiring as regularly and visibly back and far away, as if there had been objects all over it to tell the story by perspective. Now it is the doing of this which tries the painter, and it is his having done this which made me say above that “no man had ever painted the surface of calm water but Turner.” The *San Benedetto*, looking towards Fusina, contained a similar passage, equally fine; in one of the *Canale della Giudecca*¹ the specific green colour of the water is seen in front, with the shadows of the boats thrown on it in purple; all, as it retires, passing into the pure reflective blue.²

But Turner is not satisfied with this. He is never altogether content unless he can, at the same time that he takes advantage of all the placidity of repose, tell us something either about the past commotion of the water, or of some

¹ [For the “*San Benedetto*,” see above, note on pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 46. “*Venice from the Canale della Giudecca*,” exhibited at the Academy in 1840, is now in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum, Sheepshanks’ Gift, No 208.]

² [This section (§ 11) is shorter and quite different in eds. 1 and 2, which read:—
 “If, then, we consider what will be the effect of the constant observation of all natural laws, down to the most intricate and least apparently important—an observation carried out not merely in large or broad cases, but in every spot or shade of the slightest passages of reflection; if we add to this all that attainment of intricacy and infinity which we have generally described as characteristic of Turner’s execution universally; if we suppose, added to this, all that radiance and refinement which we observed to be constant in his colour, brought by the nature of the subject up to their utmost brilliancy and most delicate states of perpetual transition and mystery; if we suppose all this, aided by every mechanical means of giving lustre and light that art can supply, used with the most consummate skill, and if we suppose all this thought, beauty and power applied, manifested and exerted to produce the utmost possible degree of fullness and finish that can be concentrated into given space, we shall have some idea of Turner’s painting of calm water universally.”]

present stirring of tide or current which its stillness does not show; or give us something or other to think about and reason upon, as well as to look at. Take a few instances. His *Cowes, Isle of Wight*,¹ is a summer twilight, about half an hour, or more, after sunset. Intensity of repose is the great aim throughout, and the unity of tone of the picture is one of the finest things that Turner has ever done. But there is not only quietness, there is the very deepest solemnity in the whole of the light, as well as in the stillness of the vessels; and Turner wishes to enhance this feeling by representing not only repose, but *power* in repose, the emblem, in the sea, of the quiet ships of war. Accordingly, he takes the greatest possible pains to get his surface polished, calm, and smooth; but he indicates the reflection of a buoy floating a full quarter of a mile off by three black strokes with wide intervals between them, the last of which touches the water within twenty yards of the spectator. Now these three reflections can only indicate the farther sides of three rises of an enormous swell, and give by their intervals of separation, a space of from twelve to twenty yards for the breadth of each wave, including the sweep between them; and this swell is farther indicated by the reflection of the new moon falling in a wide zigzag line. The exceeding majesty which this single circumstance gives to the whole picture, the sublime sensation of power and knowledge of former exertion which we instantly receive from it, if we have but acquaintance with nature enough to understand its language, render this work not only a piece of the most refined truth (as which I have at present named it), but, to my mind, one of the highest pieces of intellectual art existing.

§ 12. *Relation of various circumstances of past agitation, etc., by the most trifling incidents, as in the Cowes;*

Again, in the scene on the Loire, with the square precipice and fiery sunset, in the *Rivers of France*², repose has been

¹ [*England and Wales*, No. 8. For other references to it, see above, pt. ii. sec. ii. ch. i. § 12 (eds. 1 and 2), p. 266, and below, § 15.]

² ["Scene on the Loire," Plate No. 61 in *The Seine and the Loire* (ed. M. B. Huish), 1890. The drawing is among those given by Ruskin to his Drawing School at Oxford (see *Catalogue of the Standard Series*, No. 3).]

aimed at in the same way, and most thoroughly given; but the immense width of the river at this spot makes it look like a lake or sea, and it was therefore necessary that we should be made thoroughly to understand and feel that this is not the calm of still water, but the tranquillity of a majestic current. Accordingly, a boat swings at anchor on the right; and the stream, dividing at its bow, flows towards us in two long, dark waves, especial attention to which is enforced by the one on the left being brought across the reflected stream of sunshine, which is separated and broken by the general undulation and agitation of the water in the boat's wake; a wake caused by the water's passing it, not by *its* going through the water.

Again, in the Confluence of the Seine and Marne¹, we have the repose of the wide river stirred by the paddles of the steam-boat, whose plashing we can almost hear; for we are especially compelled to look at them by their being made the central note of the composition—the blackest object in it, opposed to the strongest light. And this disturbance is not merely caused by the two lines of surge from the boat's wake, for any other painter must have given these; but Turner never rests satisfied till he has told you *all* in his power; and he has not only given the receding surges, but these have gone on to the shore, have struck upon it, and been beaten back from it in another line of weaker contrary surges, whose point of intersection with those of the wake itself is marked by the sudden subdivision and disorder of the waves of the wake on the extreme left; and whose reverted direction is exquisitely given where their lines cross the calm water, close to the spectator, and marked also by the sudden vertical spring of the spray just where they intersect the swell from the boat; and in order that we may fully be able to account for these reverted waves, we are allowed, just at the extreme right-hand limit of the picture, to see the point where the swell from the

¹ [Plate No. 38 in *The Seine and the Loire*. "The original drawing was sold at Christie's in 1852 for £42."]

§ 13. *In scenes on the Loire and Seine.*

§ 14. *Expression of contrary waves caused by recoil from shore.*

boat meets the shore.¹ In the Chaise de Gargantua² we have the still water, lulled by the dead calm which usually precedes the most violent storms, suddenly broken upon by a tremendous burst of wind from the gathered thunder-clouds, scattering the boats, and raising³ the water into rage, except where it is sheltered by the hills. In the Jumièges and Vernon⁴ we have farther instances of local agitation, caused, in the § 15. *Various* one case, by a steamer, in the other, by the large *other instances.* water-wheels under the bridge; not, observe, a mere splashing about the wheel itself, this is too far off to be noticeable, so that we should not have ever known that the objects beneath the bridge were water-wheels, but for the agitation recorded a quarter of a mile down the river, where its current crosses the sunlight. And thus there will scarcely ever be found a piece of quiet water by Turner, without some story in it of one kind or another; sometimes a slight but beautiful incident; oftener, as in the Cowes⁵, something on which the whole sentiment and intention of the picture in a great degree depends; but invariably presenting some new instance of varied knowledge and observation, some fresh appeal to the highest faculties of the mind.⁶

Of extended surfaces of water, as rendered by Turner, the Loch Katrine and Derwentwater of the Illustrations to Scott, and the Loch Lomond vignette in Rogers's Poems⁷, are

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“meets the shore. But it is only by persons who have not carefully watched the effect of a steamer's wake when she is running close by shore that the exquisite accuracy with which all this is told and represented is at all appreciable. In the . . .”]

² [Plate No. 12 in *The Seine and the Loire*. The original drawing is No. 130 in the National Gallery.]

³ [Misprinted “razing” in previous eds.]

⁴ [Jumièges, Plate No. 11 in *The Seine and the Loire*. The original drawing is No. 155 in the National Gallery; for another reference to it, see above, p. 400. “Vernon,” Plate 24 in *The Seine and the Loire*; original drawing, No. 153 in the National Gallery.]

⁵ [See above, § 12.]

⁶ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“There is always a deep truth, which must be reasoned upon and comprehended in them before their beauty can be felt.”]

⁷ [At p. 205 of the *Poems*; the original drawing is No. 240 in the National Gallery. Loch Katrine is in vol. viii. of Scott's *Poetical Works*; “Derwentwater” (“Skiddaw”) in vol. ii.; for other references, see pp. 315, 421, 467.]

characteristic instances. The first of these gives us the most distant part of the lake entirely under the influence of a light breeze, and therefore entirely without reflections of the objects on its borders; but the whole near half is untouched by the wind, and on that is cast the image of the upper part of Ben Venue and of the islands. The second gives us the surface, with just so much motion upon it as to prolong, but not to destroy, the reflections of the dark woods, reflections only interrupted by the ripple of the boat's wake. And the third gives us an example of the whole surface so much affected by ripple as to bring into exercise all those laws which we have seen so grossly violated by Canaletto. We see in the nearest boat that though the lines of the gunwale are much blacker and more conspicuous than that of the cutwater, yet the gunwale lines, being nearly horizontal, have no reflection whatsoever; while the line of the cutwater, being vertical, has a distinct reflection of three times its own length. But even these tremulous reflections are only visible as far as the islands; beyond them, as the lake retires into distance, we find it receives only the reflection of the grey light from the clouds, and runs in one flat white field up between the hills; and besides all this, we have another phenomenon, quite new, given to us,—the brilliant gleam of light along the centre of the lake. This is not caused by ripple, for it is cast on a surface rippled all over; but it is what we could not have without ripple,—the light of a passage of sunshine. I have already (Chap. I. § 9) explained the cause of this phenomenon, which never can by any possibility take place on calm water, being the multitudinous reflection of the sun from the sides of the ripples, causing an appearance of local light and shadow; and being dependent, like real light and shadow, on the passage of the clouds, though the dark parts of the water are the reflections of the clouds, not the shadows of them, and the bright parts are the reflections of the sun, and not the light of it. This little vignette, then, will

§ 16. *Turner's painting of distant expanses of water.—Calm, interrupted by ripple;*

§ 17. *And rippled, crossed by sunshine.*

entirely complete the system of Turner's universal truth in quiet water. We have seen every phenomenon given by him,—the clear reflection, the prolonged reflection, the reflection broken by ripple, and, finally, the ripple broken by light and shade; and it is especially to be observed how careful he is, in this last case, when he uses the apparent light and shade, to account for it by showing us in the whiteness of the lake beyond, its universal subjection to ripple.

We have not spoken of Turner's magnificent drawing of distant rivers, which, however, is dependent only on § 18. *His drawing of distant rivers;* more complicated application of the same laws, with exquisite perspective. The sweeps of river in the Dryburgh (Illustrations to Scott) and Melrose are bold and characteristic examples, as well as the Rouen from St. Catharine's Hill, and the Caudebec, in the Rivers of France.¹ The only thing which in these works requires particular attention is, the care with which the height of the observer above the river is indicated by the loss of the reflections of its banks. This is, perhaps, shown most clearly in the Caudebec. If we had been on a level with the river, its whole surface would have been darkened by the reflection of the steep and high banks; but, being far above it, we can see no more of the image than we could of the hill itself, if it were actually reversed under the water; and therefore we see that Turner gives us a narrow line of dark water, immediately under the precipice, the broad surface reflecting only the sky. This is also finely shown on the left-hand side of the Dryburgh.

But all these early works of the artist have been eclipsed by some recent drawings of Switzerland. These latter § 19. *And of surface associated with mist.* are not to be described by any words; but they must be noted here, not only as presenting records of lake effect on a grander scale, and of more imaginative character, than any other of his works, but

¹ [For the "Rouen," see above, note, p. 388; for "Caudebec," p. 464. "Dryburgh Abbey" is in vol. v. of Scott's *Poetical Works*; "Melrose," in vol. vi.; for another reference to the latter, see p. 315.]

as combining effects of the surface of mist with the surface of water. Two or three of the Lake of Lucerne, seen from above, give the melting of the mountain promontories beneath into the clear depth, and above into the clouds; one of Constance shows the vast lake at evening, seen not as water, but its surface covered with low white mist, lying, league beyond league, in the twilight, like a fallen space of moony cloud; one of Goldau shows the Lake of Zug appearing through the chasm of a thunder-cloud under sunset, its whole surface one blaze of fire, and the promontories of the hills thrown out against it like spectres; another of Zurich gives the playing of the green waves of the river among white streams of moonlight; a purple sunset on the Lake of Zug is distinguished for the glow obtained without positive colour, the rose and purple tints being in great measure brought by opposition out of brown; finally, a drawing executed in 1845, of the town of Lucerne from the lake, is unique for its expression of water surface reflecting the clear green hue of sky at twilight.¹

It will be remembered² that it was said above, that Turner was the only painter who had ever represented the surface of calm or the *force* of agitated water. He obtains this

¹ [This section (§ 19), as will be seen from the date 1845, was added in the ed. of 1846. It is shorter and quite different in eds. 1 and 2, which read:—

“Of Turner’s more difficult effects of calm surface associated with rising mist, it is impossible to speak partially, we must consider them as associated with effects of light, and many other matters difficult of investigation, only, to be judged of by contemplating each picture as a whole. The ‘Nemi,’ ‘Oberwesel,’ and ‘Ehrenbreitstein’ have been already instanced (sec. iii. chap. iv.), the latter being especially remarkable for its expression of water surface, seen not through, but *under* mist. The ‘Constance’ is a more marvellous example than all, giving the vast lake, with its surface white with level mist, lying league beyond league in the wan twilight, like a fallen space of moony sky.”

The “recent drawings of Switzerland” (1842) are described more particularly in the Epilogue to Ruskin’s *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*; for other references to them in this volume, see pp. 240, 250; and cf. *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 59. Constance, Zug, and Goldau were in Ruskin’s collection (Nos. 63–65) in the *Notes*. For Goldau and Zug, see also *Modern Painters*, vols. iv. and v. (Plates 50 and 87).]

² [The first two sentences of this section (“It will be remembered . . . its forms”) run as follows in eds. 1 and 2:—

“But we must pause to observe Turner’s victory over greater difficulties. The chief peculiarity about his drawing of falling or running water, is his fearless and full rendering of its *forms*.”]

expression of force in falling or running water by fearless and full rendering of its forms. He never loses himself and his subject in the splash of the fall, his presence of mind never fails as he goes down; he does not blind us with the spray, or veil the countenance of his fall with its own drapery. A little crumbling white, or lightly rubbed paper, will soon give the effect of indiscriminate foam; but nature gives more than foam, she shows beneath it, and through it, a peculiar character of exquisitely studied form bestowed on every wave and line of fall; and it is this variety of definite character which Turner always aims at, rejecting, as much as possible, everything that conceals or overwhelms it. Thus, in the Upper Fall of the Tees,¹ though the whole basin of the fall is blue and dim with the rising vapour, yet the attention of the spectator is chiefly directed to the concentric zones and delicate curves of the falling water itself; and it is impossible to express with what exquisite accuracy these are given. They are the characteristic of a powerful stream descending without impediment or break, but from a narrow channel, so as to expand as it falls. They are the constant form which such a stream assumes as it descends; and yet I think it would be difficult to point to another instance of their being rendered in art. You will find nothing in the waterfalls even of our best painters, but springing lines of parabolic descent, and splashing shapeless foam; and, in consequence, though they may make you understand the swiftness of the water, they never let you feel the weight of it; the stream in their hands looks *active*, not *supine*, as if it leaped, not as if it fell. Now water will leap a little way, it will leap down a weir or over a stone, but it *tumbles* over a high fall like this; and it is when we have lost the parabolic line, and arrived at the catenary, when we have lost the *spring* of the fall, and arrived at the *plunge* of it, that we begin really to feel its weight and wildness. Where water takes its first leap from the top, it is cool,

§ 20. *His drawing of falling water, with peculiar expression of weight.*

§ 21. *The abandonment and plunge of great cataracts, how given by him.*

¹ [See above, p. 486.]

and collected, and uninteresting, and mathematical; but it is when it finds that it has got into a scrape, and has farther to go than it thought, that its character comes out: it is then that it begins to writhe, and twist, and sweep out, zone after zone, in wilder stretching as it falls; and to send down the rocket-like, lance-pointed, whizzing shafts at its sides, sounding for the bottom. And it is this prostration, this hopeless abandonment of its ponderous power to the air, which is always peculiarly expressed by Turner, and especially in the case before us; while our other artists, keeping to the parabolic line, where they do not lose themselves in smoke and foam, make their cataract look muscular and wiry, and may consider themselves fortunate if they can keep it from stopping. I believe the majesty of motion which Turner has given by these concentric catenary lines must be felt even by those who have never seen a high waterfall, and therefore cannot appreciate their exquisite fidelity to nature.

In the Chain Bridge over the Tees¹, this passiveness and swinging of the water to and fro are yet more remarkable; while we have another characteristic of a great waterfall given to us, that the wind, in this instance coming up the valley against the current, takes the spray up off the edges, and carries it back it little torn, reverted rags and threads, seen in delicate form against the darkness on the left. But we must understand a little more about the nature of running water before we can appreciate the drawing either of this, or any other of Turner's torrents.

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little and then goes on again; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with any obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam,

§ 22. *Difference in the action of water, when continuous and when interrupted. The interrupted stream fills the hollows of its bed;*

¹ [England and Wales, No. 24; cf. above, p. 489, and below, p. 587.]

and goes round; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little splashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs;¹ the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools; the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pools; then we have a space of quiet curdling water and another similar leap below. But the stream when it has gained an impetus, *takes the shape* of its bed, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will often neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference,

§ 23. *But the continuous stream takes the shape of its bed.*

¹ [In Ruskin's copy for revision, § 22 down to this point is marked at the side; the following sentence, "the impetus . . . leap below," is omitted; and the passages are connected, thus:—"with every yard that it runs; and the stream when it has gained an impetus," etc.]

that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards.¹ Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versâ*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace², and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which nature can possibly produce; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line.³

We see, therefore, why Turner seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as being among the most beautiful forms⁴ of nature, but because they are an instant expression of the utmost power and velocity, and tell us how the torrent has been flowing before we see it. For the leap and splash might be seen in the sudden freakishness of a quiet stream, or the fall of a rivulet over a mill-dam; but the undulating line is the

¹ [The passage, "leopard; if it meet . . . sea-waves forwards," in eds. 1 and 2 runs thus:—

"leopard. The finest instance that I know, of this state of water, is the course of the Dranse near Martigny. That river has just descended a fall of six thousand feet in twenty miles, without, as far as I know, one break, stop, or resting-place in the whole distance; and its velocity and power are at last so tremendous that, if it meets a rock seven or eight feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clears it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side, the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but quite foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea."]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add, "little broken by foam."]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"modifications of the line of beauty, quite unbroken by edges, except here and there where a rock rises too high to be cleared and causes a breaker."]

⁴ [For "We see, therefore . . . most beautiful forms," eds. 1 and 2 read:—

"And now we can understand the peculiar excellence of Turner's torrent drawing. With his usual keen perception of all that is most essential in nature; of those qualities and truths which tell us most about the past as well as the present, he seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as the most beautiful forms . . ."]

attribute¹ of the mountain-torrent,* whose fall and fury have made the valleys echo for miles; and thus the moment we see one of its curves over a stone in the foreground, we know it has come far and fiercely. And in the drawing we have been speaking of, the Lower Fall of the Tees², in the foreground of the Killiecrankie and Rhymer's Glen, and of the St. Maurice in Rogers's Italy, we shall find the most exquisite instances of the use of such lines; but the most perfect of all in the Llanthony Abbey³, which may be considered as the standard of torrent-drawing. The chief light of the picture here falls upon the surface of the stream, swelled by recent rain; and its mighty waves come rolling down close to the spectator, green and clear, but pale with anger, in broad, unbroken, oceanic curves, bending into each other without break, though jets of fiery spray are cast into the air along the rocky shore, and

§ 26. *His exquisite drawing of the continuous torrent in the Llanthony Abbey;*

* On a large scale it is exclusively so, but the same lines are to be seen, for the moment, whenever water becomes exceedingly rapid, and yet feels the bottom as it passes, being not thrown up or cast clear of it. In general, the drawing of water fails from being too interrupted, the forms flung hither and thither, and broken up and covered with bright touches, instead of being wrought out in their real unities of curvature. It is difficult enough to draw a curved surface, even when it is rough and has texture; but to indicate the varied and sweeping forms of a crystalline and polished substance, requires far more skill and patience than most artists possess. In some respects, it is impossible. I do not suppose any means of art are capable of rightly expressing the smooth multitudinous rippling of a rapid rivulet of shallow water, giving transparency, lustre, and fully developed form; and the greater number of the lines and actions of torrent-waves are equally inimitable. The effort should, nevertheless, always be made; and whatever is sacrificed in colour, freedom, or brightness, the real contours ought always in some measure to be drawn, as a careful draughtsman secures those of flesh, or any other finely modelled surface. It is better, in many respects, the drawing should miss of being *like* water, than that it should miss in this one respect the grandeur of water. Many tricks of scratching and dashing will bring out a deceptive resemblance; the determined and laborious rendering of contour alone secures sublimity.⁴

¹ [For "attribute," eds. 1-4 read, "exclusive attribute."]

² [Above, § 21. "Killiecrankie" and "Rhymer's Glen" are in the *Prose Works* of Scott (vols. xxv. xxi.). "St. Maurice" is at p. 9 of the *Italy* (drawing, N.G. 205).]

³ [See above, p. 402.]

⁴ [Note first added in ed. 3. Eds. 3 and 4 omit the word "exclusively" in the first line of it.]

rise in the sunshine in dusty vapour.¹ The whole surface is one united race of mad motion; all the waves dragged, as I have described, into lines and furrows by their swiftness; and every one of those fine forms is drawn with the most studied chiaroscuro of delicate colour, greys and greens, as silvery and pure as the finest passages of Paul Veronese, and with a refinement of execution which the eye strains itself in looking into. The rapidity and gigantic force of this torrent, the exquisite refinement of its colour, and the vividness of foam which is obtained through a general middle tint, render it about the most perfect piece of painting of running water in existence.

Now this picture is, as was noticed in our former reference to it, full of expression of every kind of motion: the clouds are in wild haste; the sun is gleaming fast and fitfully through the leaves; the rain drifting away along the hill-side; and the torrent, the principal object, to complete the impression, is made the wildest thing of all; and not only wild before us, and with us, but bearing with it in its every motion, from its long course, the record of its rage. Observe how differently Turner uses his torrent when the spirit of the picture is repose. In the *Mercury and Argus*², we have also a stream in the foreground; but, in coming down to us, we see it stopping twice in two quiet and glassy pools, upon which the drinking cattle cast an unstirred image. From the nearest of these, the water leaps in three cascades into another basin close to us; it trickles in silver threads through the leaves at its edge, and falls tinkling and splashing (though in considerable body) into the pool, stirring its quiet surface, at which a bird is stooping to drink, with concentric and curdling ripples, which divide round the stone at its farthest border, and descend in sparkling foam over the lip of the basin.³ Thus we find, in every case,

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add a footnote: "Compare note, sec. iii. chap. iv. § 13."]

² [For list of other references to this picture see p. 264 *n.*]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—

“presenting us, in the rest of their progress, with that most difficult of all appearances for a painter to render,—a torrent descending steeply as it retires from us.”]

the system of Turner's truth entirely unbroken, each phase and phenomenon of nature being recorded exactly¹ where it is most valuable and impressive.

We have not, however, space to follow out the variety of his torrent-drawing. The above two examples are § 28. *Various characteristic of the two great divisions or classes of cases.* torrents, that whose motion is continuous, and that whose motion is interrupted; all drawing of running water will resolve itself into the representation of one or other of these. The descent of the distant stream in the vignette to the Boy of Egremont is slight, but very striking; and the Junction of the Greta and Tees, a singular instance of the bold drawing of the complicated forms of a shallow stream among multitudinous rocks.² A still finer example³ occurs in a recent drawing of Dazio Grande on the St. Gothard⁴, the waves of the Toccia, clear and blue, fretting among the granite débris which were brought down by the storm that destroyed the whole road. In the Ivy Bridge the subject is the rest of the torrent in a pool among fallen rocks, the forms of the stones are seen through the clear brown water, and their reflections mingle with those of the foliage.

More determined efforts have at all periods been made in sea-painting than in torrent-painting, yet less § 29. *Sea-painting. Im-possible of truly represent- ing foam.* successful. As above stated, it is easy to obtain a resemblance of broken running water by tricks and dexterities, but the sea *must* be legitimately drawn; it cannot be given as utterly disorganised and confused, its weight and mass must be expressed, and the efforts at expression of it end in failure with all but the most powerful

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read, "recorded, each recorded with unequalled fidelity, and each recorded exactly . . ."]

² ["The Boy of Egremont" is at p. 186 of Rogers' *Poems* (drawing, N.G. 236). "The Junction of the Greta and Tees" drawing was given by Ruskin to his Drawing School at Oxford (see *Catalogue of the Standard Series*, No. 2); it was engraved in vol. ix. of Scott's *Poetical Works*.]

³ [From here to the end of § 30 (p. 562) is not contained in eds. 1 and 2, which read, "But it is time for us to pass to the contemplation of Turner's drawing of the sea," and then continue as shown on p. 562 *n.*]

⁴ [The "Dazio Grande" was in Ruskin's collection, No. 58 in his *Notes*; see also *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. Epilogue, § 3. For the "Ivy Bridge," see above, p. 244.]

men; even with these few a partial success must be considered worthy of the highest praise.

As the right rendering of the Alps depends on power of drawing snow, so the right painting of the sea must depend, at least in all coast scenery, in no small measure on the power of drawing foam. Yet there are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which I have never seen the slightest record attempted; first, the thick, creamy, curdling, overlapping, massy foam, which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach; and, secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.¹

It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling foam is difficult enough to catch, even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light, and a dark cast shadow: to draw all this requires labour and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impressions of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam, in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw, even if they could be seen on a flat surface; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy. Now it is not easy to express the fall of a pattern with oval openings on the folds of drapery. I do not know that any

¹ [On the failure, even of Turner, in the painting of foam, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, 1856, s. Nos. 476 and 530.]

one under the mark of Veronese or Titian could even do this as it ought to be done, yet in drapery much stiffness and error may be overlooked: not so in sea; the slightest inaccuracy, the slightest want of flow and freedom in the line, is attached by the eye, in a moment, of high treason, and I believe success to be impossible.

Yet there is not a wave, nor any violently agitated sea, on which both these forms do not appear; the latter especially, after some time of storm, extends over their whole surfaces: the reader sees, therefore, why I said that sea could only be painted by means of more or less dexterous conventionalism, since two of its most enduring phenomena cannot be represented at all.

Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore, there is difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome. Then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which "shape has none,"¹ of the great crash where it touches the beach?

I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it. I have seen Copley

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, ii. 666.]
III.

§ 30. *Character of shore-breakers also inexpressible.*

Fielding come very close to the jerk and nod of the lifted threatening edge, curl it very successfully, and without any look of its having been in papers, down nearly to the beach, but the final fall has no thunder in it. Turner has tried hard for it once or twice, but it will not do. The moment is given in the Sidon of the Bible Illustrations, and more elaborately in a painting of Bamborough:¹ in both these cases there is little foam at the bottom, and the fallen breaker looks like a wall; yet grand always, and in the latter picture very beautifully assisted in expression by the tossing of a piece of cable, which some figures are dragging ashore, and which the breaker flings into the air as it rises. Perhaps the most successful rendering of the forms was in the Hero and Leander,² but there the drawing was rendered easier by the powerful effect of light which disguised the foam.

It is not, however, from the shore that Turner usually studies his sea.³ Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous; the size of the waves out at sea is uncomprehended; and those nearer the eye

§ 31. *Their effect, how injured when seen from the shore.*

¹ [The painting of Bamborough was sold from the Gillott collection in 1872 for £3309. It is now in the collection of Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt.]

² [See above, p. 242.]

³ [In eds. 1 and 2 this section reads as follows:—

“The idea of the sea which an unobservant landsman obtains by standing on the beach is a peculiarly limited and imperfect one. The curl of the breakers under ordinary circumstances is uniform and monotonous, both in its own form, and in its periodical repetition. The size of the waves out at sea is neither seen nor comprehended; and the image carried away is little more than that of an extensive field of large waves, all much resembling each other, moving gradually to the beach, and breaking in the same lines and forms.

“But such is not the real nor essential character of the sea. Afloat . . . all the rest—and the breakers, whose curl, seen from the land, had something of smallness and meanness in its contours, present . . . velocity and power. If, in such a position, whether in a boat, or on some isolated rock (the last by far the

best) on a rocky coast, we abandon ourselves for hours to the passive reception of the great and essential impressions of that which is around us, the only way of arriving at a true feeling of its spirit, the three great ideas which we shall carry away with us will be those of recklessness, power, and breadth;—recklessness manifested in the . . . falling. When we see the waves successively . . .”]

§ 30. *Are recklessness, power, and breadth.*

seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast, every one different from all the rest; and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water, constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearied rage. The sensation of power is also trebled; for not only is the vastness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different; it is not a passive wave, rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach; but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore; which never perishes but recoils and recovers.¹

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“recoils and recovers. Finally, the sensation of *breadth* is peculiarly impressed, not by the extent of sea itself, but by the enormous sweep and hollow of every wave, of which no idea whatever can be formed from the beach, and by the grand unity of the curves of the breakers, which now appear to fall, not in curls, but in precipices.

“Now they are these grand characters of the sea which Turner invariably aims at, and never rests satisfied unless he has given; and, in consequence, even in his coast seas, he almost always . . . as in the ‘Laugharne,’ ‘Land’s End,’ ‘Fowey,’ and ‘Dunbar.’ But never failing to give at least *one* example of every truth, he has presented us with one most studied representation of a rolling sea, as seen from the shore, in the ‘Hero

§ 31. *How Turner renders them in the “Hero and Leander.”*

Aiming at these grand characters of the sea, Turner almost always places the spectator, not on the shore, but twenty or thirty yards from it, beyond the first range of the breakers, as in the Land's End, Fowey, Dunbar, and Laugharne.¹ The latter has been well engraved, and may be taken as a standard of the expression of fitfulness and power. The grand division of the whole space of the sea by a few dark continuous furrows of tremendous swell (the breaking of one of which alone has strewn the rocks in front with ruin) furnishes us with an estimate of space and strength, which at once reduces the men upon the shore to insects; and yet through this terrific simplicity there are indicated a fitfulness and fury in the tossing of the individual lines, which give to the whole sea a wild, unwearied, reckless incoherency, like that of an enraged multitude, whose masses act together in phrensy, while not one individual feels as another. Especial attention is to be directed to the flatness of all the lines, for the same principle holds in sea which we have seen in mountains. All the size and sublimity of nature are given, not by the height, but by the breadth, of her masses; and Turner, by following her in her sweeping lines, while he does not lose the elevation of its surges, adds in a tenfold degree to their power. Farther, observe the peculiar expression of *weight* which there is in Turner's waves, precisely of the same kind which we saw in his waterfall. We have not a cutting, springing, elastic line; no jumping or leaping in the waves: *that* is the characteristic of Chelsea Reach or Hampstead Ponds in a storm. But the surges roll

§ 32. *Turner's expression of heavy rolling sea,*

§ 33. *With peculiar expression of weight.*

and Leander.' The drawing of the approaching and falling breakers, under the moonlight, in this picture, must, I believe, remain, like the memory of some of the mighty scenes of nature herself, impressed for ever on the minds of all who have once seen it.

§ 32. *In the "Laugharne."* "But it is on such wild coast seas as those of the 'Land's End' and 'Laugharne' that Turner's power is chiefly concentrated. The latter . . ."]

¹ ["Fowey" in the *Southern Coast* (No. 10). "Land's End" (*i.e.*, "Longships Lighthouse, Land's End") in *England and Wales* (No. 20); see p. 404 *n.* "Laugharne Castle" (engraved by J. Horsburgh) in *England and Wales* (No. 16). "Dunbar" was engraved in *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland, with descriptive illustrations by Sir Walter Scott* (1826).]

and plunge with such prostration and hurling of their mass against the shore, that we feel the rocks are shaking under them. And, to add yet more to this impression, observe how little, comparatively, they are broken by the wind: above the floating wood, and along the shore, we have indication of a line of torn spray; but it is a mere fringe along the ridge of the surge, no interference with its gigantic body. The wind has no power over its tremendous unity of force and weight. Finally, observe how, on the rocks on the left, the violence and swiftness of the rising wave are indicated by precisely the same lines which we saw were indicative of fury in the torrent. The water on these rocks is the body of the wave which has just broken, rushing up over them; and in doing so, like the torrent, it does not break, nor foam, nor part upon the rock, but accommodates itself to every one of its swells and hollows with undulating lines, whose grace and variety might alone serve us for a day's study; and it is only where two streams of this rushing water meet in the hollow of the rock, that their force is shown by the vertical bound of the spray.

In the distance of this grand picture there are two waves which entirely depart from the principle observed by all the rest, and spring high into the air. They have a message for us which it is important that we should understand. Their leap is not a preparation for breaking, neither is it caused by their meeting with a rock. It is caused by their encounter with the recoil of the preceding wave. When a large surge, in the act of breaking, just as it curls over, is hurled against the face either of a wall or of a vertical rock, the sound of the blow is not a crash, nor a roar, it is a report as loud as, and in every respect similar to, that of a great gun, and the wave is dashed back from the rock with force scarcely diminished, but reversed in direction; it now recedes from the shore, and at the instant that it encounters the following breaker, the result is the vertical bound of both which is here rendered by Turner. Such a recoiling wave will proceed out to sea through ten or twelve ranges of following

§ 34. *Peculiar
action of recoil-
ing waves;*

breakers, before it is overpowered. The effect of the encounter is more completely and palpably given in the Quillebœuf, in the Rivers of France.¹ It is peculiarly instructive here, as informing us of the nature of the coast, and the force of the waves, far more clearly than any spray about the rocks themselves could have done. But the effect of the blow at the shore itself is given in the Land's End, and Tantallon Castle.²

§ 35. *And of the stroke of a breaker on the shore.*

Under favourable circumstances with an advancing tide under a heavy gale, where the breakers feel the shore underneath them a moment before they touch the rock, so as to nod over when they strike, the effect is nearly incredible except to an eye-witness. I have seen the whole body of the wave rise in one white vertical broad fountain, eighty feet above the sea, half of it beaten so fine as to be borne away by the wind, the rest turning in the air when exhausted, and falling back with a weight and crash like that of an enormous waterfall. This is given in the vignette to "Lycidas,"³ and the blow of a less violent wave among broken rocks, not meeting it with an absolute wall, along the shore of the Land's End. This last picture is a study of

§ 36. *General character of sea on a rocky coast given by Turner in the Land's End.*

sea whose whole organization has been broken up by constant recoils from a rocky coast. The Laugharne gives the surge and weight of the ocean in a gale, on a comparatively level shore; but the Land's End, the entire disorder of the surges when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls in, and beaten back part by part from walls of rock on this side and that side, recoils like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it into disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon the shore, retire in more hopeless confusion; until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage,

¹ [Plate 19 in *The Seine and the Loire* (drawing, N. G. 127).]

² [The "Land's End" here described is the "Longships Lighthouse" (see plate opposite, and note on pp. 403–404). "Tantallon Castle" is in *Illustrations to the Poetical Works of Scott* (London, 1834).]

³ [The "Shipwreck of Lycidas" is in the *Poetical Works of Milton* (1841).]



Study from "The Longships Lighthouse."

bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power; subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by internal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and swiftness of a sheet of lambent fire. And throughout the rendering of all this there is not one false curve given, not one which is not the perfect expression of visible motion; and the forms of the infinite sea are drawn throughout with that utmost mastery of art which, through the deepest study of every line, makes every line appear the wildest child of chance, while yet each is in itself a subject and a picture different from all else around. Of the colour of this magnificent sea I have before spoken; it is a solemn green grey (with its foam seen dimly through the darkness of twilight), modulated with the fulness, changefulness, and sadness of a deep wild melody.

The greater number of Turner's paintings¹ of open sea belong to a somewhat earlier period than these drawings; nor, generally speaking, are they of equal value. It appears to me that the artist had at that time either less knowledge of, or less delight in, the characteristics of deep water than of coast sea; and that, in consequence, he suffered himself to be influenced by some of the qualities of the Dutch sea-painters. In particular, he borrowed from them the habit of casting a dark shadow on the near waves, so as to bring out a stream of light behind; and though he did this in a more legitimate way than they, that is to say, expressing the light by touches on the foam, and indicating the shadow as cast on foamy surface, still the habit has induced much feebleness and conventionality in the pictures of the period. His drawing of the waves was also somewhat petty and divided, small forms covered with white flat spray, a condition which I doubt not the artist has seen on some of the shallow Dutch seas, but which I have never met

¹ [This section (§ 37) was not contained in eds. 1 and 2.]

§ 37. *Open seas of Turner's earlier time.*

with myself, and of the rendering of which therefore I cannot speak. Yet even in these, which I think among the poorest works of the painter, the expressions of breeze, motion, and light, are very marvellous; and it is instructive to compare them either with the lifeless works of the Dutch themselves, or with any modern imitations of them; as for instance with the seas of Callcott, where all the light is white, and all the shadows grey, where no distinction is made between water and foam, or between real and reflective shadow, and which are generally without evidence of the artist's having ever seen the sea.

Some pictures, however, belonging to this period of Turner, are free from the Dutch infection, and show the real power of the artist. A very important one is in the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere, somewhat heavy in its forms, but remarkable for the grandeur of distance obtained at the horizon; a much smaller, but more powerful example is the Port Ruysdael in the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq.,¹ with which I know of no work at all comparable for the expression of the white, wild, cold, comfortless waves of northern sea, even though the sea is almost subordinate to the awful rolling clouds. Both these pictures are very grey. The Pas de Calais² has more colour, and shows more art than either, yet is less impressive. Recently (1843), two marine subjects of the same subdued colour have appeared in the midst of more radiant works.³ One, Ostend, somewhat forced and affected, but the other, also called Port Ruysdael, is among the most perfect sea pictures he has produced, and especially remarkable as being painted without one marked opposition either of colour or of shade, all quiet and simple even to an extreme, so that

¹ [The sea-piece in the Ellesmere Gallery (Bridgewater House)—“Dutch Boats in a Gale: Fishermen endeavouring to put their Fish on Board”—was exhibited at the Academy in 1801. It was painted as a rival to a Vanderveelde (see Thornbury, p. 325). The “Port Ruysdael,” formerly in the Bicknell collection (for which see above, p. 244 *n.*), was exhibited at the Academy in 1827; it is now in that of Mr. Drummond of Montreal; it is engraved in *Turner and Ruskin*.]

² [See above, p. 510.]

³ [“Ostend” (R. A. 1844) was formerly in the Munro (of Novar) collection; now in that of Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt. The “Port Ruysdael” (R. A. 1844) is No. 536 in the National Gallery.]



J.M.W. Turner, R.A.

Allen & Co. So.

Port Ruysdael.

From the Picture in possession of the Hon^{ble} J.A. Drummond.

the picture was exceedingly unattractive at first sight. The shadow of the pier-head on the near waves is marked solely by touches indicative of reflected light, and so mysteriously that when the picture is seen near, it is quite untraceable, and comes into existence as the spectator retires. It is instructive as a contrast to the dark shadows of his earlier time.¹

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights; and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginal, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast,* which

§ 38. *Effect of sea after prolonged storm.*

* The “yesty waves” of Shakespeare have made the likeness familiar, and probably most readers take the expression as merely equivalent to “foamy;” but Shakespeare knew better. Sea-foam does not, under ordinary circumstances, last a moment after it is formed, but disappears, as above described, in a mere white film. But the foam of a prolonged tempest is altogether different; it is “whipped” foam, thick, permanent, and, in a foul or discoloured sea, very ugly, especially in the way it hangs about the tops of the waves, and gathers into clotted concretions before the driving wind. The sea looks truly working or fermenting. The following passage from Fenimore Cooper is an interesting confirmation of the rest of the above description, which may be depended upon as entirely free from exaggeration:—“For the first time I now witnessed a tempest at sea. Gales, and pretty hard ones, I had often seen, but the force of the wind on this occasion, as much exceeded that in ordinary gales of wind, as the force of these had exceeded that of a wholesail breeze. The seas seemed crushed; the pressure of the swooping atmosphere, as the currents of the air went howling over the surface of the ocean, fairly preventing them from rising; or where a mound of water did appear, it was scooped up and borne off in spray, as the axe dubs inequalities from the log. When the day returned, a species of lurid sombre light was diffused over the watery waste, though nothing was visible but the ocean and the ship. Even the sea-birds seemed to have taken refuge in the caverns of the adjacent coast, none reappearing with the dawn. The air was full of spray, and it was with difficulty that the eye could penetrate as far into the humid atmosphere as half a mile.”—*Miles Wallingford*. Half a mile is an over-estimate on coast sea.²

¹ [Eds. 3 and 4 read: “It is thus of peculiar truth and value; and is instructive,” etc.]

² [Note first added in ed. 3. Eds. 1 and 2 had this one:—

“The yesty waves

Confound and swallow navigation up.”—*Macbeth*, Act iv. Sc. 1.”

For Ruskin’s reading of Fenimore Cooper, see *Præterita*, i. ch. v. § 118.]

hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and, where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery from its edge; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each: the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above (Section III. Chapter IV. § 13), and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air; that no object, nor horizon, nor any land-mark or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract.¹ Suppose the effect of the first sunbeam

¹ [§ 38, from the beginning down to "cataract," is § 31 of *Fronde Agrestes*. Ruskin there added the following note:—

"The whole of this was written merely to show the meaning of Turner's picture of the steamer in distress, throwing up signals. It is a good study of wild weather; but, separate from its aim, utterly feeble in comparison to the few words by which any of the great poets will describe sea, when they have got to do it. I am rather proud of the short sentence in the *Harbours of England*, describing a great breaker against rock,—'One moment, a flint cave,—the next, a marble pillar,—the next, a fading cloud.' But there is nothing in sea-description, detailed, like Dickens's storm at the death of Ham, in *David Copperfield*" [ch. lv.].

The actual passage in the *Harbours* is:—"One moment, a flint cave; the next, a marble pillar; the next, a mere white fleece thickening the thundery rain." Ruskin elsewhere refers his readers to Dickens for the best description of a thunder-shower.

sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842, the Snowstorm, one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light, that has ever been put on canvas, even by Turner. Of course it was not understood; his finest works never are: but there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.¹

But, I think,² the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the *Slave Ship*, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840.³ It is a sunset on the Atlantic, after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the through of the sea, dyeing it with an

§ 39. *Turner's noblest work, the painting of the deep open sea in the Slave Ship.*

"If you look at Charles Dickens's letter about the rain in Glencoe, in Mr. Forster's Life of him, it will give you a better idea of the kind of thing than I can, for my forte is really not description, but political economy" (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter xix). For another reference to Dickens's close observation of natural phenomena, see above, p. 347, and for Ruskin's early reading of him, Vol. I. p. xlix. The picture of "the steamer," etc., is the "Snowstorm," referred to below.]

¹ ["Snowstorm: Steamboat off a harbour's mouth making signals, in shallow water, and going by the lead," No. 530 in the National Gallery. See *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, for another description of the picture and for some anecdotes with regard to it. See also above, pp. 297, 534, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xii. § 4 n.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read "beyond dispute" for "I think."]

³ ["Slavers throwing overboard the dead and dying—Typhon coming on." For other references to the picture, see above, pp. 247, 249, 273, 297, 414, 422, and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iv. § 20; vol. iv. ch. xviii. § 24; vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iv. § 15, pt. ix. ch. xi. § 31 n. See also above, Introduction, p. lv. The following note in Ruskin's diary refers to the present passage:—

Nov. 24, 1843. Griffith [the picture-dealer] told me Prout had been to look at the "Slaver," and after standing some time before it, exclaimed that "by heaven all that Mr. R. said of it is true!"

awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold, and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the undistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty* ship as it labours amidst the lightening of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight, and, cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.¹

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception, ideal in the highest sense of the word, is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its colour is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full

* She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

¹ [This my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green, one red.—*Macbeth*, ii. 2, 62.]



J.M.W. Turner, R.A.

A. Day & Co. So.

The Slave Ship.

From the Picture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A.

of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful;* and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions (completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea.

* There is a piece of tone of the same kind, equal in one part, but not so united with the rest of the picture, in the storm scene illustrative of the *Antiquary*,¹—a sunset light on polished sea. I ought to have particularly mentioned the sea in the *Lowestoft*, as a piece of the cutting motion of shallow water under storm, altogether in grey, which should be especially contrasted, as a piece of colour, with the greys of *Vandevelde*. And the sea in the *Great Yarmouth* should have been noticed for its expression of water under a fresh gale, seen in enormous extent from a great elevation. There is almost every form of sea in it: rolling waves dashing on the pier; successive breakers rolling to the shore; a vast horizon of multitudinous waves;² and winding canals of calm water along the sands, bringing fragments of bright sky down into their yellow waste. There is hardly one of the views of the Southern Coast which does not give some new condition or circumstances of sea.

¹ [The illustration to the *Antiquary* is of Ballyburgh Ness, and was engraved by E. Finden in Scott's *Novels* (1836); for another reference, see above, p. 417. For the "Lowestoft," see preceding chapter, § 9, p. 534. The "Great Yarmouth" is in *England and Wales*, No. 7.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 add, "the pontiwn knmatwn anhriqmon gelasma," and for the last sentence of the note, "There is hardly . . . of sea," read, "You may tire yourself by walking over the extent of that shore." For the quotation from Æschylus, see Vol. II. p. 36.]

SECTION VI

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.—CONCLUSION

CHAPTER I

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION

We have now arrived at the consideration of what was, with the old masters, the subject of most serious and perpetual study. If they do not give us truth here, they cannot have the faculty of truth in them: for foliage is the chief component part of all their pictures, and is finished by them with a care and labour which, if bestowed without attaining truth, must prove either their total bluntness of perception, or total powerlessness of hand. With the Italian school, I can scarcely recollect a single instance in which foliage does not form the collect a single instance in which foliage does not form the greater part of the picture; in fact, they are rather painters of tree-portrait than landscape painters; for rocks, and sky, and architecture are usually mere accessories and backgrounds to the dark masses of laborious foliage, of which the composition principally consists.² Yet we shall be less detained by the examination of foliage than by our former subjects; since

§ 1. *Frequent occurrence of foliage in the works of the old masters.*¹

¹ [In eds. 1 and 2 this section is entitled, "Extreme difficulty of representing foliage, and ease with which the truth of its representation may be determined."]

² [Here eds. 1 and 2 read thus:—

"principally consists. And it is a daring choice; for of all objects that defeat and defy the utmost efforts of the painter to approach their beauty, a noble tree is the most inimitable; and I scarcely know a more hopeless state of discouragement—a more freezing and fettering sensation of absolute impotence, than that which comes over the artist in his forest walks, as he sees the floor, and the pillars, and the roof of the great temple, one labyrinth of loveliness, one wilderness of perfection, with the chequering sunbeams dancing before him like mocking spirits; and the merry leaves laughing and

where specific form is organized and complete, and the occurrence of the object universal, it is easy, without requiring any laborious attention in the reader, to demonstrate to him quite as much of the truth or falsehood of various representations of it, as may serve to determine the character and rank of the painter.

It will be best to begin as nature does, with the stems and branches, and then to put the leaves on. And in speaking of trees generally, be it observed, when I say *all* trees, I mean only those ordinary forest or copse trees of Europe, which are the chief subjects of the landscape painter. I do not mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe: oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech, poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carob, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough to observe the laws common to all. First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork. Wherever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem of the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and without exception; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower towards its extremity by a hair's-breadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they

§ 2. *Laws common to all forest trees. Their branches do not taper, but only divide.*

whispering about him in the pride of their beauty, as knowing that he cannot catch nor imitate one ray, nor one form of their hues and their multitude.

“Although, however, there is insuperable difficulty in the painting of foliage, there is, fortunately, little difficulty in ascertaining the comparative truth of the representation; for wherever specific form and character is organized and complete, it is easy, without requiring any laborious attention or extraordinary knowledge in the reader, to demonstrate,” etc.]

would form a round log of at least the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under-foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering caused in the trunk itself; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches; it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support; which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight that if we select a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye; and if we select a portion without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

Hence we see that although boughs may and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at

§ 3. *Appearance of tapering caused by frequent buds.*

§ 4. *And care of nature to conceal the parallelism.*

such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye; and farther, even in such circumstances, the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramification, and must take place by steps, at each fork.

§ 5. *The degree of tapering which may be represented as continuous.*

And therefore we see at once that the stem of Gaspar Poussin's tall tree, on the right of the La Riccia, in the National Gallery,¹ is a painting of a carrot or a parsnip, not of the trunk of a tree. For, being so near that every individual leaf is visible, we should not have seen, in nature, one branch or stem actually tapering. We should have received an *impression* of graceful diminution; but we should have been able, on examination, to trace it joint by joint, fork by fork, into the thousand minor supports of the leaves. Gaspar Poussin's stem, on the contrary, only sends off four or five minor branches altogether, and both it and they taper violently, and without showing why or wherefore; without parting with a single twig, without showing one vestige of roughness or excrescence; and leaving, therefore, their unfortunate leaves to hold on as best they may. The latter, however, are clever leaves, and support themselves as swarming bees do, hanging on by each other.

§ 6. *The trees of Gaspar Poussin.*

But even this piece² of work is a jest to the perpetration of the bough at the left-hand upper corner of the picture opposite to it, the View near Albano.³ This latter is a representation⁴ of an ornamental group of elephants' tusks, with feathers tied to the ends of them. Not the wildest imagination could ever

§ 7. *And of the Italian school generally, defy this law.*

¹ [See above, pp. 277, 588 *n.*]

² [For "this piece," eds. 1 and 2 read, "this precious piece."]

³ [No. 68 in the National Gallery; the scene depicted is the "Galleria di Sopra," which skirts the upper margin of the Lake of Albano. For further criticisms, see below, §§ 16–19.]

⁴ [For "This latter is a representation," eds. 1 and 2 read, "This is a fine example of the general system of bough-drawing of the Italian school. It is a representation . . ."]

conjure up in it the remotest resemblance to the bough of a tree. It might be the claws of a witch, the talons of an eagle, the horns of a fiend; but it is a full assemblage of every conceivable falsehood which can be told respecting foliage, a piece of work so barbarous in every way, that one glance at it ought to prove the complete charlatanism and trickery of the whole system of the old landscape painters. For I will depart for once from my usual plan, of abstaining from all assertion of a thing's being beautiful or otherwise; I will say here, at once, that such drawing as this is as ugly as it is childish, and as painful as it is false; and that the man who could tolerate, much more, who could deliberately set down such a thing on his canvas, had neither eye nor feeling for one single attribute or excellence of God's works. He might have drawn the other stem in excusable ignorance, or under some false impression of being able to improve upon nature; but *this* is conclusive and unpardonable. Again, take the stem of the chief tree in Claude's Narcissus.¹ It is a very faithful portrait of a large boa constrictor, with a handsome tail; the kind of trunk which young ladies at fashionable boarding-schools represent with nosegays at the top of them by way of forest scenery.

Let us refresh ourselves for a moment, by looking at the truth. We need not go to Turner,² we will go to the man who next to him is unquestionably the greatest master of foliage in Europe, J. D. Harding.³ Take the trunk of the largest stone-pine, plate 25 in "The Park and the Forest."⁴ For the first nine or ten feet from the ground it does not lose one hair's-breadth of its diameter. But the shoot broken off just under the crossing

§ 8. *The truth,
as it is given by
J. D. Harding.*

¹ [No. 19 in the National Gallery; see also below, § 9.]

² [At "Turner" eds. 1 and 2 add a note, "Compare § 12" (§ 13 in later eds.).]

³ [With this passage should be read *The Elements of Drawing* (1857), §§ 128–137, where, though Ruskin reaffirms his praise of Harding's tree-drawing, he makes some qualifications. His "are the only works by a modern draughtsman which express in any wise the energy of trees, and the laws of growth;" but they fail because they "cannot rightly render any one individual detail or incident of foliage." See also below, § 29.]

⁴ [*The Park and the Forest*, by J. D. Harding, 1841 (a volume of lithographic plates.)]

part of the distant tree is followed by an instant diminution of the trunk, perfectly appreciable both by the eye and the compasses. Again, the stem maintains undiminished thickness up to the two shoots on the left, from the loss of which it suffers again perceptibly. On the right, immediately above, is the stump of a very large bough, whose loss reduces the trunk suddenly to about two thirds of what it was at the root. Diminished again, less considerably, by the minor branch close to this stump, it now retains its diameter up to the three branches broken off just under the head, where it once more loses in diameter; and finally branches into the multitude of head-boughs, of which not one will be found tapering in any part, but losing itself gradually by division among its off-shoots and spray. This is nature, and beauty too.

But the old masters are not satisfied with drawing carrots for boughs. Nature can be violated in more ways than one, and the industry with which they seek out and adopt every conceivable mode of contradicting her is matter of no small interest. It is evident from what we have above stated of the structure of all trees, that as no boughs diminish where they do not fork, so they cannot fork without diminishing. It is impossible that the smallest shoot can be sent out of the bough without a diminution of the diameter above it; and wherever a branch goes off it must not only be less in diameter than the bough from which it springs, but the bough beyond the fork must be less by precisely the quantity of the branch it has sent off.* Now observe the

§ 9. Boughs, in consequence of this law, must diminish where they divide. Those of the old masters often do not.

* It sometimes happens that a morbid direction of growth will cause an exception here and there to this rule, the bough swelling beyond its legitimate size: knots and excrescences, of course, sometimes interfere with the effect of diminution. I believe that in the laurel, when it grows large and old, singular instances may be found of thick upper boughs and over-quantity of wood at the extremities. All these accidents or exceptions are felt as such by the eye. They may occasionally be used by the painter in savage or grotesque scenery, or as points of contrast, but are no excuse for his ever losing sight of the general law.¹

¹ [Note first added in ed. 3.]

bough underneath the first bend of the great stem in Claude's Narcissus;¹ it sends off four branches like the ribs of a leaf. The two lowest of these are both quite as thick as the parent stem, and the stem itself is much thicker after it has sent off the first one than it was before. The top boughs of the central tree, in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca,² ramify in the same scientific way.

But there are farther conclusions to be drawn from this great principle in trees. As they only diminish where they divide, their increase of number is in precise proportion to their diminution of size; so that whenever we come to the extremities of boughs, we must have a multitude of sprays sufficient to make up, if they were united, the bulk of that from which they spring.³ Precision in representing this is neither desirable nor possible. All that is required is just so much observance of the general principle as may make the eye feel satisfied that there is something like the same quantity of wood in the sprays which there is in the stem. But to do this there must be, what there always is in nature, an exceeding complexity of the outer sprays. This complexity gradually increases towards their extremities, of course exactly in proportion to the slenderness of the twigs. The slenderer they become, the more there are of them, until at last, at the extremities of the tree, they form a mass of intricacy, which in winter, when it can be seen, is scarcely distinguishable from fine herbage, and is beyond all power of definite representation; it can only be expressed by a mass of involved strokes. Also,

§ 10. *Boughs must multiply as they diminish. Those of the old masters do not.*

¹ [See above, § 7.]

² [See above, p. 41 *n.*]

³ [Eds. 1-4 here read thus:—

“from which they spring. Where a bough divides into two equal ramifications, the diameter of each of the two is about two-thirds that of the single one, and the sum of these diameters, therefore, one-fourth greater than the diameter of the single one. Hence, if no boughs died or were lost, the quantity of wood in the sprays would appear one-fourth greater than would be necessary to make up the thickness of the trunk. But the lost boughs remove the excess, and therefore, speaking broadly, the diameters of the outer boughs put together would generally just make up the diameter of the trunk. Now mathematical precision . . .”]

as they shoot out in every direction, some are nearer, some more distant; some distinct, some faint; and their intersections and relations of distance are marked with the most exquisite gradations of aërial perspective. Now it will be found universally,¹ in the works of Claude, Gaspar, and Salvator, that the boughs do *not* get in the least complex or multiplied towards the extremities; that each large limb forks only into two or three smaller ones, each of which vanishes into the air without any cause or reason for such unaccountable conduct, unless that the mass of leaves transfixed upon it or tied to it, entirely dependent on its single strength, have been too much, as well they may be, for its powers of solitary endurance. This total ignorance of tree-structure is shown throughout their works. The Sinon before Priam² is an instance of it in a really fine work of Claude's, but the most gross examples are in the works of Salvator.³ It appears that this latter artist was hardly in the habit of studying from nature at all, after his boyish ramble among the Calabrian hills; and I do not recollect any instance of a piece of his bough - drawing which is not palpably and demonstrably a made up phantasm of the studio, the proof derivable from this illegitimate tapering being one of the most convincing. The painter is always visibly embarrassed to reduce the thick boughs to spray, and *feeling* (for Salvator naturally had acute feeling for truth) that the bough was wrong when it tapered suddenly, he accomplishes its diminution by an impossible protraction; throwing out shoot after shoot until his branches straggle all across the picture, and at last disappear unwillingly where there is no room for them to stretch any farther. The consequence is, that whatever leaves are put upon such boughs have evidently no adequate support, their power of leverage is enough to uproot the tree; or, if the boughs are left bare,

¹ [This passage, down to "wings of a pterodactyle" in § 11, is marked in Ruskin's copy.]

² [Otherwise called "David at the Cave of Adullam"; see above, pp. 295, 437.]

³ [The passage, from "but the most gross examples. . . . Not so with Claude" (inclusive), is not contained in eds. 1 and 2, in which § 12 appears as § 11: "But it is only by looking over the sketches of Claude . . ."]

they have the look of the long tentacula of some complicated marine monster, or of the waving endless threads of bunchy sea-weed, instead of the firm, upholding, braced, and bending grace of natural boughs. I grant that this is in a measure done by Salvator from a love of ghastriness, and is in a measure scenes it is in a sort allowable: but it is in a far greater degree done from pure ignorance of tree-structure, as is sufficiently proved by the landscape of the Pitti Palace, Peace burning the arms of War;¹ where the spirit of the scene is intended to be quite other than ghastly, and yet the tree branches show the usual errors in an extraordinary degree; every one of their arrangements is impossible, and the trunk of the tree could not for a moment support the foliage it is loaded with. So also in the pictures of the Guadagni Palace.² And even where the skeleton look of branches is justifiable or desirable, there is no occasion for any violation of natural laws. I have seen more spectral character in the real limbs of a blasted oak, than ever in Salvator's best monstrosities; more horror is to be obtained by right combination of inventive line, than by drawing tree branches as if they were wing-bones of a pterodactyle. All departure from natural forms to give fearfulness is mere Germanism; it is the work of fancy, not of imagination,* and instantly degrades whatever it affects to a third-rate level. There is nothing more marked in truly great

* Compare Part III. sec. ii. chap. iv §§6, 7.

¹ [No. 453, painted for Cardinal Carlo de' Medici. This passage was added in the 1846 ed.; in his Florentine diary of 1845 Ruskin made the following note on the picture:—

“It struck me at first as fine from its simple treatment—a single dark tree against afternoon sun, which melts the distance down into light. This light is well painted, transparent, and softly blended, Cuypp-like, but the treatment is exactly the opposite of Rubens' and Turner's. The details of the foreground are here carefully painted, while the distance is all slurred into nothing, so that the picture has no attractiveness on looking close. It is farther vulgarized by the tree being put against it in coarse violent black, like a tyro's work, no middle tint, and the trunk of the tree is far too small for its mass of foliage. I am wrong in saying the distance is slurred; if it were, it would be more right than it is, but it is painted in coarse, large masses, without any details—not indistinct, but vacant, and therefore every way painful.”]

² [In the Piazza di S. Spirito, Florence. Salvator Rosa's pictures there are again referred to in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 19, ch. iii. § 18 n.]

men, than their power of being dreadful without being false or licentious.¹ In Tintoret's *Murder of Abel*,² the head of the sacrificed firstling lies in the corner of the foreground obscurely sketched in, and with the light gleaming upon its glazed eyes. There is nothing exaggerated about the head, but there is more horror got out of it, and more of death suggested by its treatment, than if he had turned all the trees of his picture into skeletons, and raised a host of demons to drive the club.

It is curious that in Salvator's sketches or etchings there is less that is wrong than in his paintings; there seems a fresher remembrance of nature about them. Not so with Claude. It is only by looking over his sketches in the British Museum, that a complete and just idea is to be formed of his capacities of error; for the feeling and arrangement of many of them are those of an advanced age, so that we can scarcely set them down for what they resemble, the work of a boy ten years old; and the drawing, being seen without any aids of tone or colour to set it off, shows in its naked falsehood.³ The landscape of Poussin with the storm,⁴ the companion to the *Dido and Æneas*, in the National Gallery, presents us, in the foreground tree, with a piece of atrocity which I think, to any person who candidly considers it, may save me all further trouble of demonstrating the errors of ancient art. I do not in the least suspect the picture; the tones of it, and much of the handling, are masterly;⁵ yet that foreground tree comprises every conceivable violation of truth which the human hand can commit, or head invent, in drawing

§ 12. *All these errors especially shown in Claude's sketches, and concentrated in a work of G. Poussin's.*

¹ [*Cf. Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iii.]

² [*cf. above*, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 7, p. 173, and below, § 23 *n.*]

³ [In his diary for Jan. 12, 1844, Ruskin writes, with reference to this passage:—

“. . . Went into town, and met Liddell at the Brit. Mus. Looked over Elgins and Claude's sketches with him. He does not doubt them—so much the better—confirms me in my theory.]

⁴ [“*A Land Storm*,” No. 36 in the National Gallery, by G. Poussin. For another criticism of the picture, see above, p. 396.]

⁵ [For “are masterly; yet that,” eds. 1 and 2 read:—

“are masterly. I believe it will, some time or another, if people ever begin to think with their own heads, and see with their own eyes, be the deathwarrant of Gaspar's reputation, signed with his own hand. That foreground . . .”]

a tree, except only that it is not drawn root uppermost. It has no bark, no roughness nor character of stem; its boughs do not grow out of each other, but are stuck into each other; they ramify without diminishing, diminish without ramifying, are terminated by no complicated sprays, have their leaves tied to their ends, like the heads of Dutch brooms; and finally, and chiefly, they are evidently not made of wood, but of some soft elastic substance, which the wind can stretch out as it pleases, for there is not a

vestige of an angle in any one of them. *Now the fiercest wind that ever blew upon the earth could not take the angles out of the bough of a tree an inch thick.*¹ The whole bough bends together, retaining its elbows, and angles, and natural form, but

§ 13. *Impossibility of the angles of boughs being taken out of them by wind.*

affected throughout with curvature in each of its parts and joints. That part of it which was before perpendicular being bent aside, and that which was before sloping being bent into still greater inclination, the angle at which the two parts meet remains the same; or, if the strain be put in the opposite direction, the bough will break long before it loses its angle. You will find it difficult to bend the angles out of the youngest sapling, if they be marked; and absolutely impossible, with a strong bough. You may break it, but you will not destroy its angles. And if you watch a tree in the wildest storm, you will find that though all its boughs are bending, none lose their character, but the utmost shoots and sapling spray. Hence Gaspar Poussin, by his bad drawing, does not make his storm strong, but his tree weak; he does not make his gust violent, but his boughs of India-rubber.

These laws respecting vegetation are so far more imperative than those which were stated respecting water, that the greatest artist cannot violate them without danger, because they are laws resulting from organic structure which it is always painful to see interrupted; on the other hand, they have this in common with all

§ 14. *Bough-drawing of Titian.*

¹ [The italics were introduced in ed. 5.]

laws, that they may be observed with mathematical precision, yet with no right result; the disciplined eye and the life in the woods are worth more than all botanical knowledge. For there is that about the growing of the tree trunk, and that grace in its upper ramification, which cannot be taught, and which cannot even be seen but by eager watchfulness. There is not an exhibition passes, but there appear in it hundreds of elaborate paintings of trees, many of them executed from nature. For three hundred years back, trees have been drawn with affection by all the civilized nations of Europe, and yet I repeat boldly, what I before asserted,¹ that no men but Titian and Turner ever drew the stem of a tree.

Generally, I think the perception of the muscular qualities of the tree trunk incomplete, except in men who have studied the human figure; and in loose expression of those characters, the painter who can draw the living muscle seldom fails; but the thoroughly peculiar lines belonging to woody fibre can only be learned by patient forest study. And hence in all the trees of the merely historical painters, there is fault of some kind or another; commonly exaggeration of the muscular swellings, or insipidity and want of spring in curvature, or fantasticism and unnaturalness of arrangement, and especially a want of the peculiar characters of bark which express the growth and age of the tree; for bark is no mere excrescence, lifeless and external, it is a skin of especial significance in its indications of the organic form beneath; in places under the arms of the tree it wrinkles up and forms fine lines *round* the trunk, inestimable in their indication of the direction of its surface; in others, it bursts or peels longitudinally, and the rending and bursting of it are influenced in direction and degree by the undergrowth and swelling of the woody fibre, and are not a mere roughness and granulated pattern of the hide. Where there are so many points to be observed, some are almost always exaggerated, and others missed, according to the predilections of the painter. Albert Dürer² has given some

¹ [Above, p. 252.]

² [Eds. 3 and 4 read: "Rembrandt and Albert Dürer have . . . but both miss . . ."]

splendid examples of woody structure, but misses the grace of the great lines. Titian took a larger view, yet (as before noticed), from the habit of drawing the figure, he admits too much flaccidity and bend, and sometimes makes his tree trunks look flexible like sea-weed. There is a peculiar stiffness about the curves of the wood, which separates them completely from animal curves, and which especially defies recollection or invention; it is so subtle that it escapes but too often, even in the most patient study from nature; it lies within the thickness of a pencil line. Farther, the modes of ramification of the upper branches are so varied, inventive, and graceful, that the least alteration of them, even the measure of a hair's-breadth, spoils them; and though it is sometimes possible to get rid of a troublesome bough, accidentally awkward, or in some minor respects to assist the arrangement, yet so far as the real branches are copied, the hand libels their lovely curvatures even in its best attempts to follow them.

These two characters, the woody stiffness hinted through muscular line, and the inventive grace of the upper boughs, have never been rendered except by Turner; he does not merely draw them better than others, but he is the only man who has ever drawn them at all. Of the woody character, the tree subjects of the *Liber Studiorum* afford marked examples; the *Cephalus and Procris*,¹ scenes near the Grand Chartreuse and Blair Athol, *Juvenile Tricks*, and *Hedging and Ditching*, may be particularized: in the *England* series, the *Bolton Abbey* is perhaps a more characteristic and thoroughly Turner-esque example than any.

Of the arrangement of the upper boughs, the *Æsacus and Hesperie*² is perhaps the most consummate example; the absolute truth and simplicity, and freedom from everything like fantasticism or animal form, being as marked on the one hand, as the exquisite imaginativeness of the lines on the other. Among the *Yorkshire* subjects, the *Aske Hall, Kirkby*

¹ [Engraved in *Lectures on Landscape*. The drawings for these *Liber Studiorum* subjects are all in the National Gallery. For *Bolton Abbey*, cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ix. §§ 13–15.]

² [Engraved in *Lectures on Landscape*.]

Lonsdale Churchyard, and Brignall Church are the most characteristic: among the England subjects, the Warwick, Dartmouth Cove, Durham, and Chain Bridge over the Tees,¹ where the piece of thicket on the right has been well rendered by the engraver, and is peculiarly expressive of the aerial relations and play of light among complex boughs. The vignette at the opening of Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*, that of Chiefswood cottage in the *Illustrations to Scott's works*, and the *Château de la belle Gabrielle* engraved for the *Keep-sake*, are among the most graceful examples accessible to every one: the *Crossing the Brook* will occur at once to those acquainted with the artist's gallery. The drawing of the stems in all these instances, and indeed in all the various and frequent minor occurrences of such subject throughout the painter's works, is entirely unique; there is nothing of the same kind in art.²

¹ [The Yorkshire subjects here mentioned are all in Whitaker's *Richmondshire*. Of the "England" subjects, Warwick is in No. 15; Dartmouth Cove, No. 1; Durham, No. 23; Chain Bridge (engraved by W. R. Smith), No. 24. The "vignette at the opening of Rogers's 'Pleasures of Memory'" (p. 7 of the *Poems*) is "Twilight" (No. 226 N.G.). The "Chiefswood Cottage" is in vol. xviii. of Scott's *Prose Works*. For another reference to the tree-drawing in the "Gabrielle" (*Keepsake*, 1834), see above, p. 239. For "Crossing the Brook" (N.G. 497), see above, note p. 241.]

² [In place of §§ 14, 15, and the beginning of § 16, eds. 1 and 2 read as follows:—

"In passing to the works of Turner I have little more to do than to name the most characteristic pictures, for the truths I have been pointing out are so palpable and evident that the reader can decide for himself in a moment where they exist, and where they are wanting. The 'Crossing of the Brook' will probably be the first which will occur to the minds of those best acquainted with Turner's works, and indeed the stems on the extreme left of the picture, especially the fainter ones entangled behind the dark tree, and the vistas of interwoven boughs which retire in the centre, are above all praise for grace and truth. These, and the light branches on the left in the 'Mercury and Argus,' may be given as standards of the utmost possible refinement and fidelity in tree-drawing, carried out to the last fibres of the leaflets. I am desirous, however, when it is possible, to give references to engravings as well as to original works, and neither of these have been so well rendered by the engraver as a little passage of thicket on the right in the 'Chain-bridge over the Tees,' of the England series. This piece of drawing is peculiarly expressive of the complexity, entanglement, and aerial relation of which we have just been speaking. The eye is lost in its exquisite multiplicity, yet you can go through among the boughs, in and out, catching a leaf here and a sunbeam there,—now a shadow and now a stem, until you come out at the cliff on the other side, and there is not one of those countless stems at the same distance with another, not one that you do not leave behind you before you get to the next, however confused

§ 13. *Unity of all truth in the works of Turner.*
"Crossing the Brook."

Let us, however, pass to the leafage of the elder landscape-painters, and see if it atones for the deficiencies of the stems. One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still

and entangled you may be with their intersections and their multitude. Compare this with Gaspar's tree in 'La Riccia,' and decide for yourself which is truth. One, infinite, graceful, penetrable, interwoven, sun-lighted, alive; the other, three brown strokes of paint, at precisely the same distance from the eye, without one intersection, without one cast shadow, and without one ramification to carry the foliage.

§ 14. *"Chiefswood Cottage," "Château de la Belle Gabrielle," etc.* The vignette of 'Chiefswood Cottage,' in the illustrations to Scott, is peculiarly interesting as an illustration of all that we have been saying of the tapering of trunks. One stem, on the left, is made to taper in perspective, by receding from the eye, as well as by sending off quantities of brushwood at its base, and observe how it contrasts with and sets off the forms of all the others. Look at the stems of the dark trees on the right, how they rise without the least diminution, although so tall, till they fork; note the exquisite observance of proportion in the diminution of every spray at the very instant of dividing, the inconceivable and countless complexity, depth, aerial recession, and grace of the sprays themselves. This vignette and the 'Château de la Belle Gabrielle' always appear to me about the two most finished pieces of bough-drawing that Turner has produced. We should, however, associate with them the group of waving willows in the 'Warwick' (England series), the 'Dartmouth Cove,' with its dark, gnarled trunk and delicate springing stems above the flag (also a picture to be closely studied with reference to bough-anatomy); the branching stems above the river in the 'Durham,' the noble group of full-grown trees in the 'Kelso,' and, perhaps grander than all, the tall mass of foliage in the 'Bolton Abbey.'

§ 15. *Character of leafage. Its singular irregularity.* "Such being the truth of the stems and branches, as represented by modern painters, let us see whether they are equally faithful in foliage, and whether the old masters atone by the leaves for the errors of the stems. Nature's great aim, in arranging her leaves, as in everything else, is to get symmetry and variety together, to make the symmetry be *felt*, but only the variety *seen*. Consequently, though she ranges her leaves on their individual sprays with exquisite regularity, she always contrives to disguise that regularity in their united effect. For as in every group of leaves," etc.

For "Mercury and Argus," see p. 264 *n*. For the "Chain-bridge over the Tees," above, p. 544. For Gaspar Poussin's "La Riccia," pp. 277, 577. "Kelso" is in vol. iii. of Scott's *Poetical Works*.]



Drawn & Engraved by J. Ruskin.

Study of Foliage.

farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another, never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however, regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another. Now go to Gaspar Poussin and take one of his sprays where they come against the sky; you may count it all round: one, two, three, four, one bunch; five, six, seven, eight, two bunches; nine, ten, eleven, twelve, three bunches; with four leaves each; and such leaves! every one precisely the same as its neighbour, blunt and round at the end (where every forest leaf is sharp, except that of the fig-tree), tied together by the stalks,¹ and so fastened on to the demoniacal claws above described, one bunch to each claw.

But if nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a

¹ [For "stalks," eds. 1 and 2 read, "roots"; and after "each claw" they add, "and behold a tree!"]

confusion which, you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque; it is always transparent with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky: then out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities: then, under these, you get deep passages of broken irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under-sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in grey network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet chequers upon the glittering earth; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

Now, with thus much of nature in your mind, go to Gaspar Poussin's view near Albano, in the National Gallery.¹ It is the very subject to unite all these effects, a sloping bank shaded with intertwined forest. And what has Gaspar given us? A mass of smooth, opaque, varnished brown, without one interstice, one change of hue, or any vestige of leafy structure, in its interior, or in those parts of it, I should say, which are intended to represent interior; but out of it, over it rather, at regular intervals, we have circular groups of greenish touches, always the same in size, shape, and distance from each other,

§ 18. *Exceeding intricacy of nature's foliage.*

§ 19. *How contradicted by the tree-patterns of G. Poussin.*

¹ [See above, § 7, p. 577.]

containing so exactly the same number of touches each, that you cannot tell one from another. There are eight or nine and thirty of them, laid over each other like fish-scales; the shade being most carefully made darker and darker as it recedes from each until it comes to the edge of the next, against which it cuts in the same sharp circular line, and then begins to decline again, until the canvas is covered, with about as much intelligence or feeling of art as a house-painter has in marbling a wainscot, or a weaver in repeating an ornamental pattern. What is there in this, which the most determined prejudice in favour of the old masters can for a moment suppose to resemble trees? It is exactly what the most ignorant beginner, trying to make a complete drawing, would lay down; exactly the conception of trees which we have in the works of our worst drawing-masters, where the shade is laid on with the black lead and stump, and every human power exerted to make it look like a kitchen-grate well polished.

Oppose to this the drawing even of our somewhat inferior tree-painters. I will not insult Harding by mentioning his work after it, but take Creswick,¹ for instance, and match one of his sparkling bits of green leafage with this tree-pattern of Poussin's. I do not say there is not a dignity and impressiveness about the old landscape, owing to its simplicity; and I am very far from calling Creswick's good tree-painting; it is false in colour and deficient in mass and freedom, and has many other defects, but it is the work of a man who has sought earnestly for truth: and who, with one thought or memory of nature in his heart, could look at the two landscapes, and receive Poussin's with ordinary patience? Take Creswick in black and white, where he is unembarrassed by his fondness for peagreen, the illustrations, for instance, to the Nut-brown Maid, in the Book of English Ballads.² Look at the intricacy and

¹ [Thomas Creswick, R. A. (1811–1869). *cf.* below, § 34, and *Academy Notes*, 1855 (s. Nos. 94, 240); 1857 (s. No. 219). In these later references, Ruskin was less appreciative of Creswick's work.]

² [*The Book of British Ballads*, edited by S. C. Hall, 1842. Creswick's design for the Nut Brown Maid is on p. 39.]

fulness of the dark oak foliage where it bends over the brook; see how you can go through it, and into it, and come out behind it to the quiet bit of sky. Observe the grey aërial transparency of the stunted copse on the left, and the entangling of the boughs where the light near foliage detaches itself. Above all, note the forms of the masses of light. Not things like scales or shells, sharp at the edge and flat in the middle, but irregular and rounded, stealing in and out accidentally from the shadow, and presenting in general outline, as the masses of all trees do, a resemblance to the specific forms of the leaves of which they are composed. Turn over the page, and look into the weaving of the foliage and sprays against the dark night-sky, how near they are, yet how untraceable; see how the moonlight creeps up underneath them, trembling and shivering on the silver boughs above; note, also, the descending bit of ivy on the left, of which only two leaves are made out, and the rest is confusion, or tells only in the moonlight like faint flakes of snow.

But nature observes another principle in her foliage more important even than its intricacy. She always secures an exceeding harmony and repose. She is so intricate that her minuteness of parts becomes to the eye, at a little distance, one united veil or cloud of leaves, to destroy the evenness of which is perhaps a greater fault than to destroy its transparency. Look at Creswick's oak again, in its dark parts. Intricate as it is, all is blended into a cloud-like harmony of shade, which becomes fainter and fainter, as it retires, with the most delicate flatness and unity of tone. And it is by this kind of vaporescence, so to speak, by this flat misty unison of parts, that nature, and her faithful followers, are enabled to keep the eye in perfect repose in the midst of profusion, and to display beauty of form, wherever they choose, to the greatest possible advantage, by throwing it across some quiet visionary passage of dimness and rest.

It is here that Hobbima and Both fail.¹ They can paint

¹ [For Hobbima, *cf.* above, pp. 339, 498, 524, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. ii. § 4, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 8; for Both, *cf.* above, p. 482 *n.*]

oak leafage faithfully, but do not know where to stop, and by doing too much, lose the truth of all, lose the very truth of detail at which they aim, for all their minute work only gives two leaves to nature's twenty. They are evidently incapable of even thinking of a tree, much more of drawing it, except leaf by leaf; they have no notion nor sense of simplicity, mass, or obscurity, and when they come to distance, where it is totally impossible that leaves should be separately seen, being incapable of conceiving or rendering the grand and quiet forms of truth, they are reduced to paint their bushes with dots and touches expressive of leaves three feet broad each.¹ Nevertheless there is a genuine aim in their works, and their failure is rather to be attributed to ignorance of art, than to such want of sense for nature as we find in Claude or Poussin: and when they come close home, we sometimes receive from them fine passages of mechanical truth.

But let us oppose to their works the group of trees on the left in Turner's *Marly*.^{*} We have there perfect and ceaseless intricacy to oppose to Poussin, perfect and unbroken repose to oppose to Hobbima; and in the unity of these the perfection of truth. This group may be taken as a fair standard of Turner's tree-painting. We have in it the admirably drawn stems, instead of the claws or the serpents; full, transparent, boundless intricacy, instead of the shell pattern; and misty depth of intermingled light and leafage, instead of perpetual repetition of one mechanical touch.

I have already spoken (Section II. Chapter V. § 15) of the way in which mystery and intricacy are carried even into the nearest leaves of the foreground, and noticed the want of

^{*} This group I have before noticed as singularly (but, I doubt not, accidentally, and in consequence of the love of the two great painters for the same grand forms) resembling that introduced by Tintoret in the background of his *Cain and Abel*.²

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 here add note, "Compare sec. ii. ch. iv. § 16."]

² [See above, p. 173. The footnote was first added in ed. 3.]

such intricacy even in the best works of the old masters.

§ 24. *The near leafage of Claude. His middle distances are good.*

Claude's are particularly deficient, for by representing every particular leaf of them, or trying to do so, he makes nature finite; and even his nearest bits of leafage are utterly false, for they have neither shadows modifying their form (compare Section II. Chapter III. § 7) nor sparkling lights, nor confused intersections of their own forms and lines; and the perpetual repetition of the same shape of leaves and the same arrangement, relieved from a black ground, is more like an ornamental pattern for dress than the painting of a foreground. Nevertheless, the foliage of Claude, in his middle distances, is the finest and truest part of his pictures, and on the whole, affords the best example of good drawing to be found in ancient art. It is always false in colour, and has not boughs enough amongst it, and the stems commonly look a great deal nearer than any part of it, but it is still graceful, flexible, abundant, intricate; and, in all but colour and connection with stems, very nearly right. Of the perfect painting of thick leafy foreground, Turner's Mercury and Argus, and Oakhampton, are the standards.*

The last and most important truth to be observed respecting trees is, that their boughs always, in finely grown individuals, bear among themselves such a ratio of length as to describe with their extremities a symmetrical curve, constant for each species; and within this curve all the irregularities, segments, and divisions of the tree are included, each bough reaching the

§ 25. *Universal termination of trees in symmetrical curves.*

* The above paragraphs I have left as originally written, because they are quite true as far as they reach; but, like many other portions of this essay, they take in a very small segment of the truth. I shall not add to them at present, because I can explain my meaning better in our consideration of the laws of beauty; but the reader must bear in mind that what is above stated refers, throughout, to large masses of foliage seen under broad sunshine, and it has especial reference to Turner's enormous scale of scene, and intense desire of light. In twilight, when tree forms are seen against sky, other laws come into operation, as well as in subject of narrow limits and near fore-

limit with its extremity, but not passing it. When a tree is perfectly grown, each bough starts from the trunk with just so much wood as, allowing for constant ramification, will enable it to reach the terminal line; or if, by mistake, it start with too little, it will proceed without ramifying till within a distance where it may safely divide; if on the contrary it start with too much, it will ramify quickly and constantly; or, to express the real operation more accurately, each bough growing on so as to keep even with its neighbours, takes so much wood from the trunk as is sufficient to enable it to do so, more or less in proportion as it ramifies fast or slowly. In badly grown trees the boughs are apt to fall short of the curve, or at least there are so many jags and openings that its symmetry is interrupted; and in young trees, the impatience of the upper shoots frequently breaks the line: but, in perfect and mature trees, every bough does its duty completely, and the line of curve is quite filled up, and the mass within it unbroken, so that the tree assumes the shape of a dome as in the oak, or, in tall trees, of a pear with the stalk downmost. The old masters paid no attention whatsoever to this great principle. They swing their boughs about, anywhere and everywhere; each stops or goes on just as it likes; nor will it be possible, in any of their works, to find a single

§ 26. *Altogether unobserved by the old masters. Always given by Turner.*

ground. It is, I think, to be regretted that Turner does not in his Academy pictures sometimes take more confined and gloomy subjects, like that grand one, near the Chartreuse, of the Liber Studiorum, wherein his magnificent power of elaborating close foliage might be developed; but, for the present, let the reader, with respect to what has been here said of close foliage, note the drawing of the leaves in that plate, in the *Æsacus* and *Hesperie*, in the *Cephalus*, and the elaboration of the foregrounds in the *Yorkshire* drawings; let him compare what is said of Turner's foliage painting above in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII. §§ 40, 41, and of Titian's previously, as well as Part III. Sect. I. Chap. VIII., and Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 21. I shall hereafter endeavour to arrange the subject in a more systematic manner, but what additional observations I may have to make will none of them be in any wise more favourable to Gaspar, Salvator, or Hobbima, than the above paragraphs.¹

¹ [Note first added in ed. 3. See vol. v. pt. vi., "Of Leaf Beauty."]

example in which any symmetrical curve is indicated by the extremities.*

But I need scarcely tell any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the works of Turner, how rigidly and constantly he adheres to this principle of nature; taking in his highest compositions the perfect ideal form, every spray being graceful and varied in itself, but inevitably terminating at the assigned limit, and filling up the curve without break or gap; in his lower works, taking less perfect form but invariably hinting the constant tendency in all; and thus, in spite of his abundant complexity, he arranges his trees under simpler and grander forms than any other artist, even among the moderns.¹

It was above asserted that J. D. Harding is, after Turner, the greatest master of foliage in Europe; I ought, however, to state that my knowledge of the modern landscape of Germany is very limited, and that, even with respect to France and Italy, I judge rather from the general tendency of study and character of mind visible in the annual Exhibition of the Louvre, and in some galleries of modern paintings at Milan, Venice, and Florence, than from any detailed acquaintance with the works of their celebrated painters. Yet I think I can hardly be mistaken. I have seen nothing to induce me to take a closer survey; no life, knowledge, or emotion in any quarter; nothing but the meanest and most ignorant copyism of vulgar details, coupled

* Perhaps, in some instances, this may be the case with the trees of Nicolas Poussin; but even with him the boughs only touch the line of limit with their central *points* of extremity, and are not *sectors* of the great curve, forming a part of it with expanded extremities, as in nature. Draw a few straight lines from the centre to the circumference of a circle. The forms included between them are the forms of the individual boughs of a fine tree, with all their ramifications; only the external curve is not a circle, but more frequently two parabolas (which, I believe, it is in the oak), or an ellipse. But each bough of the old masters is club-shaped, and broadest, not at the outside of the tree, but a little way towards its centre.

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add:—
“The tree in the ‘Mercury and Argus’ is the most perfect example I remember of the pure ideal form.”]

with a style of conception resembling that of the various lithographic ideals on the first leaves of the music of pastoral ballads. An exception ought, however, to be made in favour of French etching; some studies in black and white may be seen in the narrow passages of the Louvre of very high merit, showing great skill and delicacy of execution, and most determined industry (in fact, I think when the French artist fails, it is never through fear of labour); nay, more than this, some of them exhibit acute perception of landscape character and great power of reaching simple impressions of gloom, wildness, sound, and motion. Some of their illustrated works also exhibit these powers in a high degree; there are a spirit, fire, and sense of reality about some of the wood-cuts to the large edition of *Paul and Virginia*,¹ and a determined rendering of separate feeling in each, such as we look for in vain in our own ornamental works.* But the French appear to have no teaching such as might carry them beyond this; their entire ignorance of colour renders the assumption of the brush instantly fatal, and the false, forced, and impious sentiment of the nation renders anything like grand composition altogether impossible.²

It is therefore only among good artists of our own school

* On the other hand, nothing can be more exquisitely ridiculous than the French illustrations of a second or third rate order, as those to the *Harmonies of Lamartine*.³

¹ [*Paul et Virginie*, par J. H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Paris: L. Curmer, 1838.]

² [From here to the end of the chapter is omitted in eds. 1 and 2, which contain instead the two following sections and footnote:—

“Let me then close the investigation of the truth of nature with this link between the true and the beautiful, for we may always assume that the ideal or perfect form of any object is the most beautiful it can possibly assume, and that it can be only diseased taste in us, which dislikes it, if we ever find ourselves doing so. And I shall prove hereafter that this perfect form of trees is not only the most beautiful which they can assume, but one of the most perfect which can be presented to the eye by any means or object. And especially in foliage, nothing can be true which is not beautiful, so that we shall be far better able to trace the essential qualities of truth in tree-drawing, and especially the particular power of Turner, when we are able to speak of grace as well as advocacy.

§ 26. *Connection in foliage between truth and beauty*

“We have before expressed our admiration of the works of J. D. Harding

³ [The reference is apparently to the illustration (by Alfred Johannot) on the title-page of *Harmoniés Poétiques et Religieuses*, par Alphonse de Lamartine, Paris 1830.]

that I think any fair comparison can be instituted, and I wish to assert Harding's knowledge of foliage more distinctly, because he neither does justice to himself, nor is, I think, rightly estimated by his fellow artists. I shall not make any invidious remarks respecting individuals, but I think it necessary to state generally, that the style of foliage-painting chiefly characteristic of the pictures on the line of the Royal Academy is of the most degraded kind;* and that, except Turner and Mulready, we have, as far as I know, *no Royal Academician* capable of painting even the smallest portion of foliage in

* Of Stanfield's foliage I remember too little to enable me to form any definite judgment; it is a pity that he so much neglects this noble element of landscape.

for general drawing of trees, and we may once again refer to them as an illustration of every truth we have been pointing out in foliage. We only wish they were carried a little farther and finer. We should enjoy a little more of the marking out which we find in Claude's foreground, to give greater value to his brilliant execution; and we should like a little more attention paid to specific character of trees, and to the designing of the boughs. Harding's boughs are always *right*, always flexible and growing; but they are not always so put together that we wonder how anything so beautiful could ever have been conceived. There is not a distinct design of perfect beauty in every spray, which there always is in nature.

"Callcott's foliage is very refined and ideal, very faultless, though apt to be dreadfully cold in colour. Stanfield is sometimes awkward, though not exactly wrong; he inserted his stone-pine into the road at Pozzuoli like a sign-post. Copley Fielding is very wild, intricate, and graceful, wanting only in dignity; he should also remember that leaves, here and there, both have and show sharp edges. Creswick I have already noticed. Cattermole is very grand in his conception of form; and many others of our water-colour painters have produced instructive passages."*

*"It may not, perhaps, be out of place to protest against the mode in which the foliage is executed in Mr. Moon's publication of Roberts' Eastern Sketches. So magnificent a work should have been put only into first-rate hands, and there is much about it unsatisfactory in every way; partly from attempting too much, but chiefly from the incapability of the hands employed on the landscape. No one but Harding should have executed the foliage; and, at any rate, a good draughtsman should have been secured for the foregrounds. I know not whose work they are; but they are a libel on Mr. Roberts, whose foliage is always beautiful and artistical, if not very carefully studied."

The book referred to is *The Holy Land . . . from drawings made on the spot by David Roberts, R.A., with historical description by Rev. G. Croly*. London: F.G. Moon, Threadneedle Street, 2 vols., 1842. Ruskin's name appears in the list of subscribers to the work. The lithographs were by Louis Haghe. Roberts' adventures are described in a preliminary "Notice of Mr. Roberts's Journey in the East" (see above, pp. 223, 224 *nn.*.)]

a dignified or correct manner;* all is lost in green shadows with glittering yellow lights, white trunks with black patches on them, and leaves of no species in particular. Much laborious and clever foliage-drawing is to be found in the rooms of the New Water-Colour Society; † but we have no one in any wise comparable to Harding for power of expression in a sketch from nature, or for natural and unaffected conception in the study.

Maintaining for him this high position, it is necessary that I should also state those deficiencies which appear to me to conceal his real power, and in no small degree to prevent his progress.¹

§ 29. *His brilliancy of execution too manifest.*

His over-fondness for brilliant execution I have already noticed. He is fonder of seeing something tolerably like a tree produced with few touches, than something very like a tree produced with many. Now, it is quite allowable that occasionally, and in portions of his picture, a great artist should indulge himself in this luxury of sketching; yet it is a perilous luxury, it blunts the feeling and weakens the hand. I have said enough in various places respecting the virtues of negligence and of finish (compare above the Chapter on Ideas of Power in Part I. Sect. II., and Part III. Sect. I. Ch. X. § 4), and I need only say here, therefore, that Harding's foliage

* The Pre-Raphaelite brethren, as they unfortunately call themselves (I heartily wish they would be content to paint well without calling themselves names), are not, I think, as yet any of them Academicians. Their foliage, like the rest of the accessories in their paintings, is inimitable in its parts, but as yet imperfectly generalized.²

† I ought especially to name the quiet and correct studies of Mr. Davidson and Mr. Bennett.³

¹ [See above, note on § 8, and for Harding's "over-fondness for brilliant execution," p. 201.]

² [Note first added in ed. 5 (1851). For another reference to the name "Pre-Raphaelite," see below, p. 621; and cf. *Arrows of the Chace*, ed. 1880, i. 89. It was in this year (1851) that Ruskin took up the defence of their work, in his letters to the *Times* and in the pamphlet entitled *Pre-Raphaelitism*.]

³ [Note first added in ed. 5. For another reference to the "true and modest" drawings of Charles Davidson, see *Academy Notes*, 1857; there are several examples in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum. William Bennett (1811–1871) was a constant exhibitor at the New Water-Colour Society; there is a reference to him in the notice of that Society (s. No. 114) in *Academy Notes*, 1858. There is a drawing by him in the Tate Gallery, No. 1722.]

is never sufficiently finished, and has at its best the look of a rapid sketch from nature touched upon at home. In 1843 (I think), there was a pretty drawing in the rooms of the Water-Colour Society,¹ the clear green water of a torrent resting among stones, with copse-like wood on each side, a bridge in the distance, a white flower (water-lily?) catching the eye in front; the tops of the trees on the left of this picture were mere broad blots of colour dashed upon the sky and connected by stems. I allow the power necessary to attain any look of foliage by such means, but it is power abused: by no such means can the higher virtue and impressiveness of foliage be rendered. In the use of body colour for near leaves, his execution is also too hasty; often the touches are mere square or round dots, which can be understood only for foliage by their arrangement. This fault was especially marked in the trees of his picture painted for the Academy two years ago;² they were very nearly shapeless, and could not stand even by courtesy for walnut leaves, for which, judging by the make of the tree, they must have been intended.

His drawing of boughs is, in all points of demonstrable law, right, and very frequently easy and graceful also; yet it has two eminent faults; the first, that the flow of the bough is sacrificed to its texture, the pencil checking itself and hesitating at dots, and stripes, and knots, instead of following the grand and unbroken tendency of growth; the second, that however good the arrangement may be as far as regards the mere flexibility, intricacy, and freedom, there are none of those composed groups of line which are unfailing in nature. Harding's work is not grand enough to be natural. The drawings in the Park and the Forest³ are, I believe, almost facsimiles of sketches made from nature; yet it is evident at once that in all of them nothing but the general line and disposition of the boughs has been taken from the tree, and

§ 30. *His
bough-drawing
and choice of
form.*

¹ [No. 353 in the Society's exhibition of that year: "Killin, Scotland."]

² [Probably No. 539 in the Academy of 1883: "Pont d' Ai (? Ael), Val d' Aosta."]

³ [See above, p. 578 *n.*]

that no single branch or spray has been faithfully copied or patiently studied.

This want of close study necessarily causes several deficiencies of feeling respecting general form. Harding's choice is always of tree forms comparatively imperfect, leaning this way and that, and unequal in the lateral arrangements of foliage. Such forms are often graceful, always picturesque, but rarely grand; and, when systematically adopted, untrue. It requires more patient study than any he has lately gone through, to attain just feeling of the dignity and character of a purely formed tree with all its symmetries perfect.

One more cause of incorrectness I may note, though it is not peculiar to the artist's tree-drawing, but attaches to his general system of sketching. In Harding's valuable work on the use of the Lead Pencil,¹ there is one principle advanced which I believe to be false and dangerous; namely, that the local colour of objects is not to be rendered by the pencil. I think the instance given is that of some baskets, whose dark colour is rendered solely by the touches indicating the wicker-work. Now I believe that an essential difference between the sketch of a great and of a comparatively inferior master is, that the former is conceived entirely in shade and colour, and its masses are blocked out with reference to both, while the inferior draughtsman checks at textures and petty characters of object. If had Rembrandt had to sketch such baskets, he would have troubled himself very little about the wickerwork; but he would have looked to see where they came dark or light on the sand, and where there were any sparkling points of light on the wet osiers. These darks and lights he would have scratched in with the fastest lines he could, leaving no white paper but at the wet points of lustre; if he had had

§ 31. *Local colour, how far expressible in black and white, and with what advantage.*

¹ [For another reference to this work, see *Letters to a College Friend*, v. § 5, Vol. I. p. 428. The passage here referred to is at p. 72 of the book: "The Lead Pencil does not imitate local colour well without much labour; and unless done with judgment, it should never be attempted. The student may find through the various drawings in this book . . . that the *light* parts of all objects are left *white* . . . So with the Baskets, in Pl. 26, which are darker than the Fish, from the greater number of strokes required to give the meshes on the light shade."]

time, the wickerwork would have come afterwards.* And I think that the first thing to be taught to any pupil is, neither how to manage the pencil, nor how to attain the character of outline, but rather to see where things are light and where they are dark, and to draw them as he sees them, never caring whether his lines be dexterous or slovenly. The result of such study is the immediate substitution of downright drawing for symbolism, and afterwards a judicious moderation in the use of extreme lights and darks; for where local colours are really drawn, so much of what seems violently dark is found to come light against something else, and so much of what seems high light against something else, and so much of draughtsman trembles at finding himself plunged either into blackness or whiteness, and seeks, as he should, for means of obtaining force without either.

It is in consequence of his evident habit of sketching more with a view to detail and character than to the great masses, that Harding's chiaroscuro is frequently crude, scattered, and petty. Black shadows occur under his distant trees, white high lights on his foreground rocks, the foliage and trunks are divided by violent opposition into separate masses, and the branches lose, in spots of moss and furrowings of bark, their soft roundings of delicate form and their grand relations to each other and the sky.

It is owing to my respect for the artist, and my belief in his power and conscientious desire to do what is best, that I have thus extended these somewhat unkind remarks. On the other hand, it is to be remembered, that his knowledge of nature is most extensive, and his dexterity of drawing most instructive, especially considering his range of subjects; for whether in water, rock, or foliage, he is equally skilful in attaining whatever

§ 32. *Opposition
between great
manner and
great know-
ledge.*

* It is true that many of Rembrandt's etchings are merely in line, but it may be observed that the subject is universally *conceived* in light and shade, and that the lines are either merely guides in the arrangement, or an exquisite indication of the keynotes of shade, on which the after system of it is to be based, portions of fragmentary finish showing the completeness of the conception.

he desires (though he does not always desire all that he ought); and artists should keep in mind, that neither grandeur of manner nor truth of system can atone for the want of this knowledge and this skill. Constable's manner was good and great, but being unable to *draw* even a log of wood,¹ much more a trunk of a tree or a stone, he left his works destitute of substance, mere studies of effect without any expression of specific knowledge; and thus even what is great in them has been productive, I believe, of much injury, in its encouragement of the most superficial qualities of the English school.

The foliage of David Cox has been already noticed (preface to second edition).² It is altogether exquisite in colour, and in its impressions of coolness, shade, and mass; of its drawing I cannot say anything, but that I should be sorry to see it better. Copley Fielding's is remarkable for its intricacy and elegance; it is, however, not free from affectation, and, as it has been before remarked, is always evidently composed in the study. The execution is too rough and woolly; it is wanting in simplicity, sharpness, and freshness, above all in specific character; not, however, in his middle distances, where the rounded masses of forest and detached blasted trunks of fir are usually very admirable. Cattermole has very grand conceptions of general form, but wild and without substance, and therefore incapable of long maintaining their attractiveness, especially lately, the execution having become in the last degree coarse and affected.³

Hunt, I think, fails in foliage, and in foliage only; fails, as the daguerreotype does, from over-fidelity; for foliage will *not* be imitated, it must be reasoned out and suggested: yet Hunt is the only man we have who can paint the real

¹ [See above, p. 191.]

² [§ 40 *n.*, p. 46.]

³ [Eds. 3 and 4 add:—

“This is bitterly to be regretted, for few of our artists would paint foliage better, if he would paint it from nature, and with reverence.”

For other references to Cattermole, see above, pp. 46, 220, 397 *n.*]

leaf-green under sunlight, and in this respect his trees are delicious, summer itself.¹ Creswick has sweet feeling, and tries for the real green too, but, from want of science in his shadows, ends in green paint instead of green light; in mere local colour, instead of colour raised by sunshine. One example is enough to show where the fault lies. In his picture of the Weald of Kent, exhibited some years ago in the British Institution, there was a cottage in the middle distance with white walls and a red roof. The dark sides of the white walls and of the roof were of the same colour, a dark purple; wrong for both. Repeated inaccuracies of this kind necessarily deprive even the most brilliant colour of all appearance of sunshine, and they are much to be deprecated in Creswick, as he is one of the very few artists who *do* draw from nature, and try for nature. Some of his thickets and torrent-beds are most painfully studied, and yet he cannot draw a bow nor a stone. I suspect he is too much in the habit of studying only large views on the spot, and not of drawing small portions thoroughly. I trust it will be seen that these, as all other remarks that I have made throughout this volume on particular works, are not in depreciation of, or unthankfulness for, what the artist has done, but in the desire that he should do himself more justice and more honour.²

¹ [For William Hunt, see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, and *cf.* below, ch. iii. § 5, p. 616.]

² [Eds. 3 and 4 add a further sentence and paragraph thus:—

“I have much pleasure in Creswick’s works, and I am always glad to see them admired by others.

“I shall conclude this sketch of the foliage art of England, by mention of two artists, whom I believe to be representative of a considerable class, admirable in their reverence and patience of study, yet unappreciated by the public, because they do what is unrecommended by dexterities of handling. The forest studies of J. Linnell are peculiarly elaborate, and, in many points, most skilful: they fail, perhaps, of interest, owing to the over fulness of detail and a want of generalization in the effect; but even a little more of the Harding sharpness of touch would set off their sterling qualities, and make them felt. A less known artist, S. Palmer, lately admitted a member of the Old Water-Colour Society, is deserving of the very highest place among faithful followers of nature. His studies of foreign foliage especially are beyond all praise for care and fulness. I have never seen a stone-pine or a cypress drawn except by him; and his feeling is as pure and grand as his

§ 35 *Conclusion. Works of J. Linnell and S. Palmer.*

fidelity is exemplary. He has not, however, yet, I think, discovered what is necessary and unnecessary in a great picture; and his works, sent to the Society's rooms, have been most unfavourable examples of his power, and have been generally, as yet, in places where all that is best in them is out of sight. I look to him, nevertheless, unless he lose himself in over reverence for certain conventionalisms of the older schools, as one of the probable renovators, and correctors of whatever is failing or erroneous in the practice of English art."

To John Linnell (1792–1882) Ruskin paid a fuller tribute in vol. ii. of *Modern Painters* (Addenda); and *cf.* above, p. 391 *n.* Samuel Palmer (1805–1881) was Linnell's son-in-law. He was elected a member of the Etching Club, 1853; of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1855. For a reference to a drawing of his exhibited there in 1858, see *Academy Notes* for that year.]

CHAPTER II

GENERAL REMARKS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF TURNER

WE have now arrived at some general conception of the extent of Turner's knowledge, and the truth of his practice, by the deliberate examination of the characteristics of the four great elements of landscape,—sky, earth, water, and vegetation. I have not thought it necessary to devote a chapter to architecture, because enough¹ has been said on this subject in Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII.; and its general truths, which are those with which the landscape painter, as such, is chiefly concerned, require only a simple and straightforward application of those

§ 1. *No necessity of entering into discussion of architectural truth.*

¹ [“Because enough . . . disgraceful,” eds. 1 and 2 here read thus (the “architectural episode” at pp. 202–226 was added in the 3rd ed.):—

“because there is nothing in the nature of the thing itself, with which the ordinary observer is not sufficiently acquainted to be capable of forming a pretty accurate judgement of the truth of its representation; and the difference between one artist and another, in architectural drawing, does not depend so much upon knowledge of actual form, in which it is here impossible grossly to err, as on the representation of that form with more able application of the general laws of chiaroscuro and colour, or with greater precision and delicacy of execution. The difference between Roberts and Turner, as architectural draughtsmen, does not depend on any greater knowledge in one or another of the channelling of triglyphs, or the curvature of volutes, but on the application of general principles of art to develop and adorn such truths. The execution which is good and desirable in drawing a stone on the ground channelled by frost is equally good and desirable in drawing a stone in a building channelled by the chisel. He who can do the one can far more easily do the other, for architecture requires only a simple and straightforward application of those rules of which every other material object of a landscape has required a most difficult and complicated application. Consequently its general truths are within the reach of even the most inferior draughtsmen, and are at the fingers' ends of every engineer's apprentice. It is disgraceful to misrepresent them, but it is no honour to draw them well. It is disgraceful,” etc.]

§ 2. *Because dependent only on the artist's mode of execution, and knowledge of general principles.*

rules of which every other material object of a landscape has required a most difficult and complicated application. Turner's knowledge of perspective probably adds to his power in the arrangement of every order of subject; but ignorance on this head is rather disgraceful than knowledge meritorious. It is disgraceful, for instance, that any man should commit such palpable and atrocious errors in ordinary perspective as are seen in the quay in Claude's sea-piece, No. 14 National Gallery, or in the curved portico of No. 30;¹ but still these are not points to be taken into consideration as having anything to do with artistical rank, just as, though we should say it was disgraceful if a great poet could not spell, we should not consider such a defect as in any way taking from his poetical rank. Neither is there anything particularly belonging to architecture, as such, which it is any credit to an artist to observe or represent; it is only a simple and clear field for the manifestation of his knowledge of general laws. Any surveyor or engineer could have drawn the steps and balustrade in the Hero and Leander,² as well as Turner has; but there is no man living but himself who could have thrown the accidental shadows upon them.³ I may, however, refer, for general illustration of Turner's power as an architectural draughtsman, to the front of Rousen Cathedral, engraved in the Rivers of France,⁴ and to the Ely in the England. I know nothing in art which can be set beside the former of these

¹ [No. 14, "Seaport: the Queen of Sheba," for which see above, pp. 106, 317; No. 30, "Seaport: St. Ursula," for which see above, p. 348.]

² [See above, p. 242 n.]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 here begin a new paragraph, and read thus:—

"I may, however, refer to what has been already said upon the subject in sec. ii. ch. iv. §§ 6, 12, 13 (and note), and 14, and I may point for . . . intricacy of parts. The 'Modern Italy' may be adduced as a standard of the drawing of architectural distance. But so much of the excellence of all these pictures depends, partly on considerations of principles of beauty, not yet developed, partly on expression of local character, and yet systematized illustration of part by part, of which we cannot yet take cognizance, that we should only do harm by entering on close criticism of their works at present. I have, then, only . . ."

§ 3. *Notice of a few characteristic examples of Turner's architecture.*

For the "Modern Italy," see above p. 243.]

⁴ [Plate 14 in *The Seine and the Loire*; the original drawing is No. 133 in the National Gallery. Ely Cathedral was in No. 16 of *England and Wales*.]

for overwhelming grandeur and simplicity of effect, and inexhaustible intricacy of parts. I have then only a few remarks farther to offer respecting the general character of all those truths which we have been hitherto endeavouring to explain and illustrate.

The difference in accuracy between the lines of the Torso of the Vatican (the "Master" of M. Angelo),¹ and those in one of M. Angelo's finest works, could perhaps scarcely be appreciated by any eye or feeling undisciplined by the most perfect and practical anatomical knowledge. It rests on points of so traceless and refined delicacy, that though we feel them in the result, we cannot follow them in the details. Yet they are such and so great as to place the Torso alone in art, solitary and supreme; while the alone, are said to be only on a level with antiques of the second class, under the Apollo and Venus, that is, two classes or grades below the Torso. But suppose the best sculptor in the world, possessing the most entire appreciation of the excellence of the Torso, were to sit down, pen in hand, to try and tell us wherein the peculiar truth of each line consisted. Could any words that he could use make us feel the hair's-breadth of depth and curve on which all depends; or end in anything more than, bare assertions of the inferiority of this line to that, which, if we did not perceive for ourselves, no explanation could ever illustrate to us? He might as well endeavour to explain to us by words some scent or flavour, or other subject of sense, of which we had no experience. And so it is with all truths of the highest order; they are separated from those of average precision by points of extreme delicacy, which none but the

¹ [The Torso of Heracles, known as the "Belvedere Torso," by Apollonius, son of Nestor of Athens, as we learn by a Greek inscription on the rock on which the figure sits. It was the subject of Michael Angelo's constant study, and of enthusiastic rhapsody by Winckelmann. Modern criticism hardly sustains the note of supreme admiration, here echoed by Ruskin. He cites it again, as a standard of "supreme qualities" in sculpture, in *Deucalion*, ch. i. § 2. The torso is No. 126 in W. Helbig's *Guide to the Collections of Classical Antiquities in Rome*, 1895.]

cultivated eye can in the least feel, and to express which, all words are absolutely meaningless and useless. Consequently, in all that I have been saying of the truth of artists, I have been able to point out only coarse, broad, and explicable matters; I have been perfectly unable to express (and indeed I have made no endeavour to express) the finely drawn and distinguished truth in which all the real excellence of art consists. All those truths which I have been able to explain and demonstrate in Turner, are such as any artist of ordinary powers of observation ought to be capable of rendering. It is disgraceful to omit them; but it is not very great credit to observe them. I have indeed proved that they have been neglected, and disgracefully so, by those men who are commonly considered the Fathers of Art; but in showing that they have been observed by Turner, I have only proved him to be *above* other men in knowledge of truth, I have not given any conception of his own positive rank as a Painter of Nature. But it stands to reason, that the men, who in broad, simple, and demonstrable matters are perpetually violating truth, will not be particularly accurate or careful in carrying out delicate and refined and undemonstrable matters; and it stands equally to reason that the man, who, as far as argument or demonstration can go, is found invariably truthful, will, in all probability, be truthful to the last line, and shadow of a line. And such is, indeed, the case with every touch of this consummate artist; the essential excellence, all that constitutes the real and exceeding value of his works, is beyond and above expression: it is a truth inherent in every line, and breathing in every hue, too delicate and exquisite to admit of any kind of proof, nor to be ascertained except by the highest of tests, the keen feeling attained by extended knowledge and long study. Two lines are laid on canvas; one is right and another wrong. There is no difference between them appreciable by the compasses, none appreciable by the ordinary eye, none which can be pointed out, if it is not seen.

§ 3. *The positive rank of Turner is in no degree shown in the foregoing pages, but only his relative rank.*

§ 4. *The exceeding refinement of his truth.*

One person feels it, another does not; but the feeling or slight of the one can by no words be communicated to the other:—that feeling¹ and sight have been the reward of years of labour.² There is no test of our acquaintance with nature so absolute and unailing, as the degree of admiration we feel for Turner's painting. Precisely as we are shallow in our knowledge, vulgar in our feeling, and contracted in our views of principles, will the works of this artist be stumbling-blocks or foolishness to us: precisely in the degree in which we are familiar with nature, constant in our observation of her, and enlarged in our understanding of her, will they expend before our eyes into glory and beauty. In every new insight which we obtain into the works of God, in every new idea which we receive from His creation, we shall find ourselves possessed of an interpretation and a guide to something in Turner's works which we had not before understood. We may range over Europe, from shore to shore; and from every rock that we tread upon, every sky that passes over our heads, every local form of vegetation or of soil, we shall receive fresh illustration of his principles, fresh confirmation of his facts. We shall feel, wherever we go, that he has been there before us: whatever we see, that he has seen and seized before us: and we shall at last cease the investigation, with a well-grounded trust, that whatever we have been unable to account for,

¹ [For "that feeling," eds. 1 and 2 read, 'it would be unjust if it could, for that feeling,' etc.]

² [Eds. 1-4 have a further passage thus:—

"years of labour. And there is, indeed, nothing in Turner,—not one dot nor line, § 7. *There is nothing in his works which can enjoyed without knowledge.* whose meaning can be understood without knowledge; because he never aims at sensual impressions, but at the deep final truth, which only meditation can discover, and only experience recognize. There is nothing done or omitted by him which does not imply such a comparison of ends, such rejection of the least worthy (as far as they are incompatible with the rest), such careful selection and arrangement of all that can be united, as can only be enjoyed by minds capable of going through the same process and discovering the reasons for the choice. And, as there is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge, so there is nothing in them which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy. There is no test . . ."

§ 8. *And nothing which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy.*

These paragraphs are 7 and 8 in eds. 1 and 2; 5 and 6 in eds. 3 and 4.]

and what we still dislike in his works, has reason for it, and foundation like the rest; and that even where he has failed or erred, there is a beauty in the failure which none are able to equal, and a dignity in the error which none are worthy to reprove.

There has been marked and constant progress in his mind; he has not, like some few artists, been without childhood; his course of study has been as evidently, as it has been swiftly, progressive; and in different stages of the struggle, sometimes one order of truth, sometimes another, has been aimed at or omitted. But, from the beginning to the height of his career, he never sacrificed a greater truth to a less. As he advanced, the previous knowledge or attainment was absorbed in what succeeded, or abandoned only if incompatible, and never abandoned without a gain; and his last works presented the sum and perfection of his accumulated knowledge, delivered with the impatience and passion of one who feels too much, and knows too much, and has too little time to say it in, to pause for expression, or ponder over his syllables. There was in them the obscurity, but the truth, of prophecy; the instinctive and burning language which would express less if it uttered more, which is indistinct only by its fulness, and dark with its abundant meaning. He felt now, with long-trained vividness and keenness of sense, too bitterly the importance of the hand, and the vainness of the colour, to catch one shadow or one image of the glory which God had revealed to him. "I cannot gather the sunbeams out of the east, or I would make *them* tell you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us remember together. I cannot gather the gloom out of the night-sky, or I would make that teach you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us feel together. And if you have not that within you which I can summon to my aid, if you have not the sun in your spirit, and the passion in your heart, which my words may awaken,

§ 5. *His former ranks and progress.*

§ 6. *Standing of his last works. Their mystery is the consequence of their fulness.*

though they be indistinct and swift, leave me; for I will give you no patient mockery, no laborious insult of that glorious nature, whose I am and whom I serve. Let other servants imitate the voice and the gesture of their master, while they forget his message. Hear that message from me; but remember that the teaching of Divine truth must still be a mystery.”

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION.—MODERN ART AND MODERN CRITICISM

WE have only, in conclusion, to offer a few general remarks respecting modern art and modern criticism.

We wish, in the first place, to remove the appearance of invidiousness and partiality which the constant prominence given in the present portion of the work to the productions of one artist, can scarcely fail of bearing in the minds of most readers. When we pass to the examination of what is beautiful and expressive in art, we shall frequently find distinctive qualities in the minds even of inferior artists, which have led them to the pursuit and embodying of particular trains of thought, altogether different from those which direct the compositions of other men, and incapable of comparison with them. Now, when this is the case, we should consider it in the highest degree both invidious and illogical, to say of such different modes of exertion of the intellect, that one is in all points greater or nobler than another. We shall probably find something in the working of all minds which has an end and a power peculiar to itself, and which is deserving of free and full admiration, without any reference whatsoever to what has, in other fields, been accomplished by other modes of thought, and directions of aim. We shall, indeed, find a wider range and grasp in one man than in another; but yet it will be our own fault if we do not discover something in the most limited range of mind which is different from, and in its way better than, anything presented to us by the more grasping intellect. We all know that the nightingale sings more nobly than the lark; but who, therefore, would wish the

§ 1. The entire prominence hitherto given to the works of one artist caused only by our not being able to take cognizance of character.

lark not to sing, or would deny that it had a character of its own, which bore a part among the melodies of creation no less essential than that of the more richly gifted bird? And thus we

shall find and feel that whatever difference may exist between the intellectual powers of one artist and another, yet wherever there is any true genius, there will be some peculiar lesson which even the humblest will teach us more sweetly and perfectly than those far above them in prouder attributes of mind; and we should be as mistaken as we should be unjust and invidious, if we refused to receive this their peculiar message with gratitude and veneration, merely because it was a sentence and not a volume.

§ 2. *The feelings of different artists are incapable of full comparison.*

But the case is different when we examine their relative fidelity to given facts. That fidelity depends on no peculiar modes of thought or habits of character; it is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association. These qualities, as such, are the same in all men; character or feeling may direct their choice to this or that object, but the fidelity with which they treat either the one or the other, is dependent on those simple powers of sense and intellect which are like and comparable in all, and of which we can always say that they are greater in this man, or less in that, without reference to the character of the individual. Those feelings which direct Cox to the painting of wild weedy banks and cool melting skies, and those which directed Barret¹ to the painting of glowing foliage and melancholy twilight, are both just and beautiful in their way, and are both worthy of high praise and gratitude, without necessity, nay, without *proper* possibility of comparing one with the other. But the degree of fidelity with which the leaves of the one and the light of the other are rendered, depends upon faculties of sight, sense, and memory common to both, and perfectly comparable; and we may say fearlessly, and without injustice, that one or the other, as the case may be, is more faithful in that

¹ [For Cox, see above, p. 46 n.; for Barret, p. 275 n.]

which he has chosen to represent. It is also to be remembered that these faculties of sense and memory are not partial in their effect; they will not induce fidelity in the rendering of one class of object, and fail of doing so in another. They act equally, and with equal results, whatever may be the matter subjected to them. The same delicate sense which perceives the utmost grace of the fibres of a tree, will be equally unerring in tracing the character of cloud; and the quick memory which seizes and retains the circumstances of a flying effect of shadow or colour, will be equally effectual in fixing the impression of the instantaneous form of a moving figure or a breaking wave. There are indeed one or two broad distinctions in the nature of the senses, a sensibility to colour, for instance, being very different from a sensibility to form; so that a man may possess one without the other, and an artist may succeed in mere imitation of what is before him, of air, sunlight, etc., without possessing sensibility at all. But wherever we have, in the drawing of any one object, sufficient evidence of real intellectual power, of the sense which perceives the essential qualities of a thing, and the judgment which arranges them so as to illustrate each other, we may be quite certain that the same sense and judgment will operate equally on whatever is subjected to them, and that the artist will be equally great and masterly in his drawing of all that he attempts. Hence we may be quite sure that wherever an artist appears to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in another, the apparent truth is either owing to some trickery of imitation, or is not so great as we suppose it to be. In nine cases out of ten, people who are celebrated for drawing only one thing, and *can* only draw one thing, draw that one thing worse than anybody else. An artist may indeed confine himself to a limited range of subject, but if he be really true in his rendering of this, his power of doing more will be perpetually showing itself in accessories and minor points. There are few men, for instance, more

§ 4. Especially because they are equally manifested in the treatment of all subjects.

§ 5. No man draws one thing well, if he can draw nothing else.

limited in subject than Haunt,¹ and yet I do not think there is another man in the Old Water-Colour Society with so keen an eye for truth, or with power so universal. And this is the reason for the exceeding prominence which in the foregoing investigation one or two artists have always assumed over the rest; for the habits of accurate observation and delicate powers of hand which they possess have equal effect, and maintain the same superiority in their works, to whatever class of subject they may be directed. And thus we have been compelled, however unwillingly, to pass hastily by the works of many gifted men, because, however pure their feeling, or original their conceptions, they were wanting in those faculties of the hand and mind which insure perfect fidelity to nature; it will be only hereafter, when we are at liberty to take full cognizance of the thought, however feebly it may be clothed in language, that we shall be able to do real justice to the disciples either of modern or of ancient art.

But as far as we have gone at present, and with respect only to the *material* truth, which is all that we have been able to investigate, the conclusion to which we must be led is as clear as it is inevitable: that modern artists, as a body, are far more just and full in their views of material things than any landscape painters whose works are extant; but that J. M. W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen.

Nor are we disposed to recede from our assertion made in Sec. I. Chap. I. § 10,² that this material truth is indeed a perfect test of the relative rank of painters, though it does not in itself constitute that rank. We shall be able to prove that truth and beauty, knowledge and imagination, invariably are associated in art;

§ 6. *General conclusions to be derived from our past investigation.*

§ 7. *Truth, a standard of all excellence.*

¹ [See above, p. 603.]

² [Sec. i. of Part ii., p. 138.]

and we shall be able to show that not only in truth to nature, but in all other points, Turner is the greatest landscape painter who has ever lived. But his superiority is, in matters of feeling, one of kind, not of degree. Superiority of degree implies a superseding of others; superiority of kind implies only sustaining a more important, but not more necessary, part than others. If *truth* were all that we required from art, all other painters might cast aside their brushes in despair, for all that they have done he has done more fully and accurately; but when we pass to the higher requirements of art, beauty and character, their contributions are all equally necessary and desirable, because different, and however inferior in position or rank, are still perfect of their kind; their inferiority is only that of the lark to the nightingale, or of the violet to the rose.

Such then are the rank and standing of our modern artists. We have had, living with us, and painting for us, the greatest painter of *all* time; a man with whose supremacy of power no intellect of past ages can be put in comparison for a moment. Let us next inquire what is the rank of our critics. Public taste, I believe, as far as it is the encourager and supporter of art, has been the same in all ages; a fitful and vacillating current of vague impression, perpetually liable to change, subject to epidemic desires, and agitated by infectious passion, the slave of fashion, and the fool of fancy; but yet always distinguishing, with singular clear-sightedness, between that which is best and that which is worst of the particular class of food which its morbid appetite may call for; never failing to distinguish that which is produced by intellect, from that which is not, though it may be intellect degraded by ministering to its misguided will. Public taste may thus degrade a race of men capable of the highest efforts in art into the portrait painters of ephemeral fashions, but it will yet not fail of discovering who, among these portrait painters, is the man of most mind. It will separate the man who would have

§ 8. *Modern criticism. Changefulness of public taste.*

§ 9. *Yet associated with a certain degree of Judgment.*

become Buonaroti from the man who would have become Bandinelli,¹ though it will employ both in painting curls, and feathers, and bracelets. Hence, generally speaking, there is no *comparative* injustice done, no false elevation of the fool above the man of mind, provided only that the man of mind will condescend to supply the particular article which the public chooses to want. Of course a thousand modifying circumstances interfere with the action of the general rule; but, taking one case with another, we shall very constantly find the price which the picture commands in the market a pretty fair standard of the artist's rank of intellect. The press, therefore, and all who pretend to lead the public taste, have not so much to direct the multitude whom to go to, as what to ask for. Their business is not to tell us which is our best painter, but to tell us whether we are making our best painter do his best.

Now none are capable of doing this, but those whose principles of judgment are based both on through *practical* knowledge of art, and on broad general views of what is true and right, without reference to what has been done at one time or another, or in one school or another. Nothing can be more perilous to the cause of art, than the constant ringing in our painters' ears of the names of great predecessors, as their examples or masters. I would rather hear a great poet, entirely original in his feeling and aim, rebuked or maligned for not being like Wordsworth or Coleridge, than a great painter criticized for not putting us in mind of Claude or Poussin. But such references to former excellence are the only refuge and resource of persons endeavouring to be critics without being artists. They cannot tell you whether a thing is right or not; but they can tell you whether it is like something else or not. And the whole tone of modern criticism, so far as it is worthy of being called criticism, sufficiently shows it to proceed entirely from

§ 10. *Duty of the press.*

§ 11. *Qualifications necessary for discharging it.*

§ 12. *General incapability of modern critics,*

¹ [Bartolommeo Bandinelli, Florentine sculptor (1487–1559), the jealous rival of Michael Angelo Buonaroti; see Vasari's *Lives* (Bohn's ed.), iv. 249.]

persons altogether unversed in practice, and ignorant of truth, but possessing just enough of feeling to enjoy the solemnity of ancient art; who, not distinguishing that which is really exalted and valuable in the modern school, nor having any just idea of the real ends or capabilities of landscape art, consider nothing right which is not based on the conventional principles of the ancients, and nothing true which has more of nature in it than of Claude. But it is strange that while the noble and unequalled works of modern landscape painters are thus maligned and misunderstood, our historical painters, such as we have, are permitted to pander more fatally every year to the vicious English taste, which can enjoy nothing but what is theatrical, entirely unchastised, nay, encouraged and lauded, by the very men who endeavour to hamper our great landscape painters with rules derived from consecrated blunders. The very critic who has just passed one of the noblest works of Turner,—that is to say, a masterpiece of art to which Time can show no parallel,—with a ribald jest, will yet stand gaping in admiration before the next piece of dramatic glitter and grimace, suggested by the society and adorned with the appurtenances of the green-room,¹ which he finds hung low upon the wall as a brilliant example of the ideal of English art. It is natural enough indeed, that the persons who are disgusted by what is pure and noble, should be delighted with what is vicious and degraded; but

§ 13. *And in-consistency with themselves.*

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 have here this footnote:—

“We have very great respect for Mr. Maclise’s power as a draughtsman, and if we thought that his errors proceeded from weakness, we should not allude to them, but we most devoutly wish that he would let Shakespeare alone. If the Irish ruffian who appeared in ‘Hamlet’ last year had been gifted with a stout shillelagh, and if his state of prostration had been rationally accounted for by distinct evidence of a recent ‘compliment’ on the crown; or if the maudlin expression of the young lady christened ‘Ophelia’ had been properly explained by an empty gin-bottle on her lap, we should have thanked him for his powerful delineation both of character and circumstance. But we cannot permit him thus to mislead the English public (unhappily too easily led by any grinning and glittering fantasy), in all their conceptions of the intention of Shakespeare.”

Maclise’s “Hamlet,” now No. 422 in the National Gallery, was exhibited at the Academy in 1842. For another reference to the picture, see above, p. 82 *n.*]

it is singular that those who are constantly talking of Claude and Poussin, should never even pretend to a thought of Raffaele. We could excuse them for not comprehending Turner, if they only would apply the same cut-and-dried criticisms where they might be applied with truth, and productive of benefit; but we endure not the paltry compound of ignorance, false taste, and pretension, which assumes the dignity of classical feeling, that it may be able to abuse whatever is above the level of its understanding, but bursts into rapture with all that is mean or meretricious, if sufficiently adapted to the calibre of its comprehension.

To notice such criticisms, however, is giving them far more importance than they deserve. They can lead none astray but those whose opinions are absolutely valueless, and we did not begin this chapter with any intent of wasting our time on these small critics, but in the hope of pointing out to the periodical press what kind of criticism is now most required by our school of landscape art; and how it may be in their power, if they will, to regulate its impulses, without checking its energies, and really to advance both the cause of the artist, and the taste of the public.

One of the most morbid symptoms of the general taste of the present day is, a too great fondness for unfinished works. Brilliancy and rapidity of execution are everywhere sought as the highest good, and so that a picture be cleverly handled as far as it is carried, little regard is paid to its imperfection as a whole. Hence some artists are permitted, and others compelled, to confine themselves to a manner of working altogether destructive of their powers, and to tax their energies, not to concentrate the greatest quantity of thought on the least possible space of canvas, but to produce the greatest quantity of glitter and clap-trap in the shortest possible time. To the idler and trickster in art, no system can be more advantageous; but to the man who is really desirous of doing something worth having lived for, to a man of industry, energy, or feeling,

§ 14. *How the press may really advance the cause of art.*

§ 15. *Morbid fondness at the present day for unfinished works;*

we believe it to be the cause of the most bitter discouragement. If ever, working upon a favourite subject or a beloved idea, he is induced to tax his powers to the utmost, and to spend as much time upon his picture as he feels necessary for its perfection, he will not be able to get so high a price for the result, perhaps, of a twelvemonth's thought, as he might have obtained for half-a-dozen sketches with a forenoon's work in each, and he is compelled either to fall back upon mechanism, or to starve. Now the press should especially endeavour to convince the public that by this purchase of imperfect pictures they not only prevent all progress and development of high talent, and set tricksters and mechanics on a level with men of mind, but defraud and injure themselves. For there is no doubt whatever, that, estimated merely by the quantity of pleasure it is capable of conveying, a well-finished picture is worth to its possessor half-a-dozen incomplete ones; and that a perfect drawing is, simply as a source of delight, better worth a hundred guineas than a drawing half as finished is worth thirty.* On the other hand, the body of our artists should be kept in mind, that, by indulging the public with rapid and unconsidered work, they are not only depriving themselves of the benefit which each picture ought to

§ 16. *By which the public defraud themselves;*

§ 17. *And in pandering to which, artists ruin themselves.*

* I would further insist on all that is advanced in these paragraphs, with especial reference to the admirable, though strange, pictures of Mr. Millais and Mr. Holman Hunt; and to the principles exemplified in the efforts of other members of a society which unfortunately, or rather unwisely, has given itself the name of "Pre-Raphaelite;" unfortunately, because the principles on which its members are working are neither pre-nor post-Raphaelite, but everlasting. They are endeavouring to paint, with the highest possible degree of completion, what they see in nature, without reference to conventional or established rules; but by no means to imitate the style of any past epoch. Their works are, in finish of drawing, and in splendour of colour, the best in the Royal Academy; and I have great hope that they may become the foundation of a more earnest and able school of art than we have seen for centuries.¹

¹ [Note first inserted in ed. 5 (1851); *cf.* above, p. 599 *n.* Similarly in his letter to the *Times* (May 30, 1851), Ruskin hoped that the Pre-Raphaelites "may, as they gain experience, lay in our England the foundations of a school of art nobler than the world has seen for three hundred years" (*Arrows of the Chace*, ed. 1880, i. 97).]

render to them, as a piece of practice and study, but they are destroying the refinement of general taste, and rendering it impossible for themselves ever to find a market for more careful works, supposing that they were inclined to execute them. Nor need any single artist be afraid of setting the example, and producing laboured works, at advanced prices, among the cheap quick drawings of the day. The public will soon find the value of the complete work, and will be more ready to give a large sum for that which is inexhaustible, than a portion of it for that which they are wearied of in a month. The artist who never lets the price command the picture, will soon find the picture command the price. And it ought to be a rule with every painter, never to let a picture leave his easel while it is yet capable of improvement, or of having more thought put into it. The general effect is often perfect and pleasing, and not to be improved upon, when the details and facts are altogether imperfect and unsatisfactory. It may be difficult, perhaps the most difficult task of art, to complete these details, and not to hurt the general effect; but, until the artist can do this, his art is imperfect and his picture unfinished. That only is a complete picture which has both the general wholeness and effect of nature, and the inexhaustible perfection of nature's details. And it is only in the effort to unite these that a painter really improves. By aiming only at details, he becomes a mechanic; by aiming only at generals, he becomes a trickster; his fall in both cases is sure. Two questions the artists has, therefore, always to ask himself: First, "Is my whole right?" Secondly, "Can my details be added to? Is there a single space in the picture where I can crowd in another thought? Is there a curve in it which I can modulate, a line which I can vary, a vacancy I can fill? Is there a single spot which the eye, by any peering or prying, can fathom or exhaust? If so, my picture is imperfect; and if, in modulating the line or filling the vacancy, I hurt the general effect, my art is imperfect."

§ 18. *Necessity
of finishing
works of art
perfectly.*

But, on the other hand, though incomplete pictures ought neither to be produced nor purchased, careful and real *sketches* ought to be valued much more highly than they are. Studies of landscape, in chalk or sepia, should form a part of every Exhibition, and a room should be allotted to drawings and designs of figures in the Academy.¹ We should be heartily glad to see the room which is now devoted to bad drawings of incorporeal and imaginary architecture,—of things which never were, and which, thank Heaven! never will be,—occupied, instead, by careful studies for historical pictures; not blots of chiaroscuro, but delicate outlines with the pen or crayon.

§ 19. Sketches not sufficiently encouraged.

From young artists nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bonâ fide imitation* of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters; to utter weak and disjointed repetitions of other men's words, and mimic the gestures of the preacher, without understanding his meaning or sharing in his emotions. We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, their unsystematized experiments upon the Sublime. We scorn their velocity; for it is without direction: we reject their decision; for it is without grounds: we condemn their composition; for it is without materials: we reprobate their choice; for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God. Nothing is so bad a symptom, in the work of young artists, as too much dexterity of handling; for it is a sign that they are satisfied with their work, and have tried to do nothing more than they were able to do. Their work should be full of failures; for these are the signs of efforts. They should keep to quiet colours, greys and browns; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object

§ 20. Brilliancy of execution or efforts at invention not to be tolerated in young artists.

§ 21. The duty and after privy-leges of all students.

¹ [On this point, cf. the Appendix to Ruskin's *Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House*, 1856.]

of emulation, should go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth.¹ Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them take up the scarlet and the gold, give the reins to their fancy, and show us what their heads are made of. We will follow them wherever they choose to lead; we will check at nothing; they are then our masters, and are fit to be so. They have placed themselves above our criticism, and we will listen to their words in all faith and humility; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master.

Among our greater artists, the chief want, at the present day, is that of *solemnity* and definite purpose. We have too much picture-manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water; a little bit of all that is pretty, a little sun and a little shade, a touch of pink and a touch of blue, a little sentiment and a little sublimity, and a little humour and a little antiquarianism, all very neatly associated in a very charming picture, but not working together for a definite end. Or if the aim be higher, as was the case with Barret and

§ 22. *Necessity, among our great artists, of more singleness of aim.*

¹ [Cf. below, § 23 *n.* This passage—"rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing"—is often quoted apart from its context, as if it were Ruskin's last word on the whole spirit and aims of the landscape-painter. Thus isolated, the passage has been made the foundation of many erroneous criticisms. It is said, for instance, that Ruskin ignored the value of composition, and that his words here are inconsistent with his subsequent praise of Turner's free hand in dealing with the materials of his scenes. It will be seen, however, that Ruskin is here addressing himself to "young artists"; he is inculcating a method of study, a means of mastery, not a philosophy of art. In the preface to his *Pre-Raphaelitism*, he cited the passage (ending at "scorning nothing"), but was again careful to remark that it was addressed "to the young artists of England." In his *Catalogue of the Sketches and Drawings by Turner exhibited at Marlborough House, 1857-58*, Ruskin pointed to the severe discipline which Turner underwent before "giving reins to his fancy." A typical instance of the misunderstanding of Ruskin's meaning in this passage, and a reply at length by one of the present editors, may be found in the *Fortnightly Review* for March and April, 1900.]

Varley,¹ we are generally put off with stale repetitions of eternal composition; a great tree, and some goats, and a bridge, and a lake, and the Temple at Tivoli, etc. Now we should like² to see our artists working out, with all exertion of their concentrated powers, such marked pieces of landscape character as might bear upon them the impression of solemn, earnest, and pervading thought, definitely directed, and aided by every accessory of detail, colour, and idealized form, which the disciplined feeling, accumulated knowledge, and unspared labour of the painter could supply. I have alluded, in the second preface, to the deficiency of our modern artists in these great points of earnestness and completeness;³ and I revert to it, in conclusion, as their paramount failing, and one fatal in many ways to the interests of art. Our landscapes are all descriptive, not reflective; agreeable and conversational, but not impressive nor didactic. They have no better foundation than

“That vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err; tis merely what is called mobility,
A thing of temperament, and *not of art*,
Though seeming so from its supposed facility.

This makes your actors, *artists*, and romancers,
Little that’s great, but much of what is clever.”⁴

Only it is to be observed that, in painters, this vivacity is *not* always versatile. It is to be wished that it were, but it is no such easy matter to be versatile in painting. Shallowness of thought insures not its variety, nor rapidity of production its originality. Whatever may be the case in literature, facility is in art no certain sign of inventive power. The artist who covers most canvas does not always show, even in the sum

¹ [For Barret and Varley, see above, p. 275 *n.*]

² [From here to the end of § 22—“Now we should like . . . worst original”—was first given in ed. 2; ed. 1 reads simply:—

“Now we should like to see our artists working out, with all exertion of their concentrated powers, and application of their most extensive knowledge, such tints of simple and marked individual sentiment as they may get from nature at all places, and at all times.”]

³ [Preface to 2nd ed. § 40, p. 46.]

⁴ [*Don Juan*, canto xvi. stanzas 97 and 98. Two lines are omitted in the quotation after “facility,” and two more after “romancers.”]

of his works, the largest expenditure of thought.* I have never seen more than four works of John Lewis¹ on the walls of the Water-Colour Exhibition; I have counted forty from other hands; but have found in the end that the forty were a multiplication of one, and the four a concentration of forty. And therefore I would earnestly plead with all our artists, that they would make it a law *never* to repeat themselves; for he who never repeats himself will not produce an inordinate number of pictures, and he who limits himself in number gives himself at least the opportunity of completion. Besides, all repetition is degradation of the art; it reduces it from headwork to handwork; and indicates something like a persuasion on the part of the artist that nature is exhaustible or art perfectible; perhaps, even, by him exhausted and perfected. All copyists are contemptible, but the copyist of himself the most so, for he has the worst original.

Let then every picture² be painted with earnest intention

* Of course this assertion does not refer to the differences in mode of execution, which cause one painter to work faster or slower than another, but only to the exertion of mind commonly manifested by the artist, according as he is sparing or prodigal of production.

¹ [For Lewis, see above, p. 120 *n.*]

² [In ed. 1 (only) this paragraph was quite different, being as follows:—

“Let them take for their subjects some touch of single, unadulterated feeling, out of the simple and serious parts of nature, looking generally for peace and solemnity rather than for action or § 23. *What should be their general system.* magnificence, and let each of their subjects so chosen be different from all the others, but yet part of the same system with all the others, having a planned connection with them, as the sonnets of Wordsworth have among themselves; and then let each of these chants or sonnets be worked out with the most laborious completeness, making separate studies of every inch of it, and going to nature for all the important passages, for she will always supply us with what we want a thousand times better than we can ourselves; and let only seven or eight such pictures be painted in the year, instead of the forty or fifty careless repetitions which we see our more prolific water-colour painters produce at present; and there can be little doubt that the public will soon understand the thing, and enjoy it, and be quite as willing to give one hundred guineas for each complete and studied poem as they are now to give twenty for a careless or meaningless sketch. And artists who worked on such a principle would soon find that both their artistical powers, and their fancy, and their imagination, were incalculably strengthened by it, and that they acquired by the pursuit of what was simple, solemn, and individual, the power of becoming, when they chose, truly magnificent and universal.”

With this passage, *cf.* above, pref. ed. 2, § 40 *n.*, p. 46.]

of impressing on the spectator some elevated emotion, and exhibiting to him some one particular, but exalted, beauty. Let a real subject be carefully selected, in itself suggestive of, and replete with, this feeling and beauty; let an effect of light and colour be taken which may harmonize with both; and a sky not invented but recollected: in fact, all so-called invention is in landscape nothing more than appropriate recollection, good in proportion as it is distinct. Then let the details of the foreground be separately studied, especially those plants which appear peculiar to the place; if any one, however unimportant, occurs there, which occurs not elsewhere, it should occupy a prominent position: for the other details, the highest examples of the ideal forms* or characters which he requires are to be selected

§ 23. *What should be their general aim.*

* "Talk of improving nature when it *is* Nature—Nonsense."—*E. V. Ripplingille*.¹ I have not yet spoken of the difference, even in what we commonly call Nature, between imperfect and ideal form: the study of this difficult question must, of course, be deferred until we have examined the nature of our impressions of beauty; but it may not be out of place here to hint at the want of care, in many of our artists, to distinguish between the real work of nature and the diseased results of man's interference with her. Many of the works of our greatest artists have for their subjects nothing but hacked and hewn remnants of farm-yard vegetation, branded, root and branch, from their birth, by the prong and the pruning-hook; and the feelings once accustomed to take pleasure in such abortions can scarcely become perceptive of forms truly ideal. I have just said (page 624) that young painters should go to nature trustingly, rejecting nothing, and selecting nothing: so they should; but they must be careful that it *is* nature to whom they go, nature in her liberty, not as servant of all work in the hands of the agriculturist, nor stiffened into court-dress by the landscape-gardener. It must be the pure wild volition and energy of the creation which they follow, not subdued to the furrow, and cicatrized to the pollard, not persuaded into proprieties, nor pampered into diseases. Let them work by the torrent side, and in the forest shadows; not by purling brooks and under "tonsile shades." It is impossible to enter here into discussion of what man can or cannot do by assisting natural operations; it is an intricate question: nor can I, without anticipating what I shall have hereafter to advance, show how or why it happens that the racehorse is *not* the artist's ideal of a horse, nor a prize tulip his ideal of a flower; but so it is. As far as the painter is concerned, man never touches nature but to spoil; he operates on her as a barber would on the Apollo; and if he sometimes increases some particular power or excellence, strength or agility

¹ [Ripplingille (1798–1859), painter and writer on art, and conductor of *The Artist and Amateur's Magazine* (1843–4), to which he contributed various papers in accord with the sentiments above given.]

by the artist from his former studies, or fresh studies made expressly for the purpose, leaving as little as possible—nothing, in fact, beyond their connection and arrangement—to mere imagination. Finally, when his picture is thus perfectly realized in all its parts, let him dash as much of it out as he likes; throw, if he will, mist round it, darkness, or dazzling and confused light, whatever, in fact, impetuous feeling or vigorous imagination may dictate or desire; the forms, once so laboriously realized, will come out, whenever they *do* occur, with a startling and impressive truth which the uncertainty in which they are veiled will enhance rather than diminish; and the imagination, strengthened by discipline and fed with truth, will achieve the utmost of creation that is possible to finite mind.

The artist who thus works will soon find that he cannot repeat himself if he would; and new fields of exertion, new subjects of contemplation, open to him in nature day by day; and that, while others lament the weakness of their invention, *he* has nothing to lament but the shortness of life.

in the animal, tallness, or fruitfulness, or solidity in the tree, he invariably loses that *balance* of good qualities which is the chief sign of perfect specific form; above all, he destroys the appearance of free *volition* and *felicity*, which, as I shall show hereafter, is one of the essential characters of organic beauty. Until, however, I can enter into the discussion of the nature of beauty, the only advice I can safely give the young painter is, to keep clear of clover fields and parks, and to hold to the unpenetrated forest and the unfurrowed hill. There he will find that every influence is noble, even when destructive; that decay itself is beautiful; and that, in the elaborate and lovely composition of all things, if at first sight it seems less studied than the works of men, the appearance of Art is only prevented by the presence of Power.

“Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: ‘tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men
Shall e’er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.”

—WORDSWORTH [*Tintern Abbey*].

And now but one word more,¹ respecting the great artist whose works have formed the chief subject of this treatise. The greatest qualities of those works have not yet been so much as touched upon. None but their imitative excellences have been proved, and, therefore, the enthusiasm with which I speak of them must necessarily appear overcharged and absurd. It might, perhaps, have been more prudent to have withheld the full expression of it till I had shown the full grounds for it; but once written, such expression must remain till I have justified it. And, indeed, I think there is enough, even in the foregoing pages, to show that these works are, as far as concerns the ordinary critics of the press, above all animadversion, and above all praise; and that, by the public, they are not to be received as in any way subjects or matters of opinion, but of faith. We are not to approach them to be pleased, but to be taught; not to form a judgment, but to receive a lesson. Our periodical writers, therefore, may save themselves the trouble either of blaming or praising: their duty is not to pronounce opinions upon the work of a man who has walked with nature threescore years; but to impress upon the public the respect with which they are to be received, and to make request to him, on the part of the people of England, that he would now touch no unimportant work, that he would not spend time on slight or small pictures, but give to the nation a series of grand, consistent, systematic, and completed poems.² We desire that he should follow out his own thoughts and intents of heart, without reference to any human authority.

§ 24. *Duty of the press with respect to the works of Turner.*

¹ ["And now but one word . . . but of faith," ed. 1 (only) for this passage reads briefly:—

“With respect to the great artist whose works have formed the chief subject of this treatise, the duty of the press is clear. He is above all criticism, beyond all animadversion, and beyond all praise. His works are not to be received as in any way subjects or matters of opinion; but of Faith.”]

² [Ed. 1 (only) adds:—

“poems, using no means nor vehicle capable of any kind of change. We do not presume to form even so much as a wish, or an idea, respecting the manner or matter of anything proceeding from his hand. We desire only that he would follow . . .”]

But we request, in all humility, that those thoughts may be seriously and loftily given; and that the whole power of his unequalled intellect may be exerted in the production of such works as may remain for ever, for the teaching of the nations. In all that he says, we believe; in all that he does, we trust.* It is therefore that we pray him to utter nothing lightly; to do nothing regardlessly. He stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be

* It has been hinted, in some of the reviews of the second volume of this work, that the writer's respect for Turner has diminished since the above passage was written. He would, indeed, have been deserving of little attention, if, with the boldness manifested in the preceding pages, he had advanced opinions based on so infirm foundation as that the course of three years could effect modification in them. He was justified by the sudden accession of power which the works of the great artist exhibited at the period when this volume was first published, as well as by the slow standard of the criticism to which they were subjected, in claiming, with respect to his then works, a submission of judgment greater indeed than may generally be accorded to even the highest human intellect, yet not greater than such a master might legitimately claim from such critics; and the cause of the peculiar form of advocacy into which the preceding chapters necessarily fell has been already stated more than once. In the following sections it became necessary, as they treated a subject of intricate relations and peculiar difficulty, to obtain a more general view of the scope and operation of art, and to avoid all conclusions in any wise referable to the study of particular painters. The reader will therefore find, not that lower rank is attributed to Turner, but that he is henceforward compared with the greatest men, and occupies his true position among the most noble of all time.¹

¹ [Note first introduced in ed. 3. The occasion of the note is explained in the following extract from a letter by Ruskin to W. H. Harrison, written at Vevay, August 12, 1846:—

“I answered the *Athenæum* when it wrote politely; its rascality and rudeness put it under the mark of answer now. Still, as it and some others hint that my views of Turner have changed, I should be glad, if there be time, to add the note on the next page, at the end of the first volume—putting it in the form of a note to the sentence ‘in all that he says we believe, in all that he does we trust.’ I think this would be well at any rate, as many readers might fancy the same thing. I shall come back to Turner in the third volume.”

The MS. of the note (preserved among Harrison's papers) shows a few variations from the printed text; as, e.g. “*shallow* foundation” for “*infirm*.” The reference is to a very abusive review of the second volume of *Modern Painters* in the *Athenæum* for July 25, 1846 (No. 978, pp. 765–767), in the course of which the writer said, “He begins his book with a contrite avowal of over-hastiness, and he ends it with a recantation of his former creed about Mr. Turner's infallible paintership.”]

a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophency; adoration to the Deity, revelation to mankind.¹

POSTSCRIPT²

The above passage was written in the year 1843; too late. It is true, that, soon after the publication of this work, the abuse of the press, which had been directed against Turner with unceasing virulence during the production of his noblest works, sank into timid animadversion, or changed into unintelligent praise; but not before illness, and, in some degree, mortification, had enfeebled the hand and chilled the heart of the painter.³

This year (1851) he has no picture on the walls of the Academy; and the *Times* of May 3rd says, "We miss those works of INSPIRATION!"

We miss! Who misses? The populace of England rolls by to weary itself in the great bazaar of Kensington, little thinking that a day will come when those veiled vestals and prancing amazons, and goodly merchandize of precious stones and gold, will all be forgotten as though they had not been, but that the light which has faded from the walls of the Academy is one which a million of Kohi-i-Noors could not rekindle, and that the year 1851 will, in the far future, be remembered less for what it has displayed than for what it has withdrawn.

DENMARK HILL,
June, 1851.

¹ [*cf.* the praise of Turner in the Letter to a College Friend of Dec. 3, 1840, Vol. I. p. 429.]

² [The Postscript was added in ed. 5 (1851). With it *cf.* the concluding passage in Ruskin's reply to *The Weekly Chronicle*, Appendix ii. p. 645.]

³ [See above, Introduction, p. xlii.]

APPENDIX

- I. A REPLY TO "BLACKWOOD'S" CRITICISM OF TURNER (1836)
- II. REPLIES TO PRESS CRITICISMS OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. I.
 1. A LETTER TO "THE WEEKLY CHRONICLE" (SEPT. 23, 1843)
 2. ART CRITICISM. A LETTER TO "THE ARTIST AND AMATEUR'S MAGAZINE" (JAN. 1844)
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I

A REPLY TO "BLACKWOOD'S" CRITICISM OF TURNER¹

(1836)

1. THOSE who have long bowed themselves in reverence and admiration to the imperial passing-on of the maiden meditation of their much loved Maga,²—who have fed upon her thoughts of beauty, and listened to her words of wisdom,— must indeed be grieved to meet with the most exquisite combination of ignorance and bad taste which she has just presented to them, in the shape of a criticism on the works of J. M. W. Turner, R. A.

It usually happens, that people most admire what they least understand. In the case of this artist the rule is reversed; he is admired, because understood, only by a few.

2. What sort of a critic he may be, to whom Maga has presented the magic ring of her authority, appears to me very difficult to determine. He must have a mind fastidiously high bred, indeed, who complains of vulgarity in Murillo.³

¹ [This paper (the origin of which is described in the Introduction, above, p. xviii.) has not hitherto been published. It is here printed from a copy, in a female hand, found among Ruskin's MSS. at Brantwood, MS. Book vii. (see Vol. II. p. 532). Some account of it, with one extract (the greater portion of § 5), was given in W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, pp. 46–48. The paragraphs are here numbered for convenience of reference.

In the number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for October 1836 (vol. xl. No. 252) there was an article on "The Exhibitions." The first portion of it dealt with the annual Exhibition of Old Masters then held by the British Institution (pp. 543–549); the latter portion, with the summer exhibition of the "Somerset House" (*i.e.* Royal Academy's) Exhibition, pp. 549–556. Notices of Turner's pictures occupied pp. 550–551.]

² [This familiar term for *Blackwood* was simply a contraction of Maga-zine.]

³ [In a note on "The Assumption of the Virgin," by Murillo, the reviewer had said: "There are no less than nine pictures by Murillo in this Gallery, of large size, and high pretensions, and, to speak as a merchant, we presume them to be estimated at great value. Now and then we see a Madonna and Child by Murillo (as in the Dulwich Gallery), which justifies a high reputation, but how seldom are we entirely satisfied with his works! His taste was too much steeped in vulgarity, so that he rarely exhibited any grace or dignity. In his Holy Families even, his vulgarity is too often conspicuous. The study of beggar-boys seems to have been ever uppermost in his mind." A few years later Ruskin was to adopt as his own the opinion of Murillo which he here denounces; see the letter to Liddell, below, p. 670. For other references to Murillo, in very much the same sense, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. pt. iii. sec. i. ch. x. § 3, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv. § 4, and *Two Paths*, § 57 n.]

He appears never to have seen any of this artist's more elevated pieces. It is true that his virgins are never such Goddess-mothers as those of Correggio or Raphael, but they are never vulgar: they are mortal, but into their mortal features is cast such a light of holy loveliness, such a beauty of sweet soul, such an unfathomable love, as renders them occasionally no unworthy rivals of the imaginations of the higher masters. He has observed with truth that the pictures in the British Institution are not favourable specimens of the master;¹ I even doubt if the "Angels coming to Abraham" be from his hand: but he does not seem aware that the "Holly Family" in the Dulwich Gallery² is as much inferior to some of his higher efforts, as it is superior to the paintings in the British Institution.

3. With regard to his remarks on Turner, I will take them in order:³—

If he had expressed himself grammatically, I believe he would have affirmed that the "Venice of Juliet and her Nurse" was a composition from models of

¹ [The nine Murillos exhibited were "The Assumption of the Virgin" (Lord Ashburton); "St. Francis with the Infant Saviour" (Lord Cowley); "The Angels coming to Abraham" and "The Return of the Prodigal" (Duke of Sutherland); "San Julian," "St. Joseph leading the Infant Saviour, who carries a basket with carpenter's tools," "Santa Rosa—espousing the Infant Saviour," "Virgin of the Assumption," and "Portrait of Don Andres de Andrade and his favourite dog" (J. M. Brackenbury, Esq.). In "The Angels coming to Abraham" the critic had complained of its grey tone, adding, "With regard to the angels, we should certainly wish their 'visits to be few and far between.' 'But for some angelic indications, we should have thought the apparent unwillingness of Abraham to receive them quite justified, and should such suspicious-looking characters darken the door of any respectable citizen of Cheapside, there is little doubt that he would look out for the policeman.']

² [La Madonna del Rosario, No. 281 (formerly 347).

³ [Turner's pictures at the Academy in 1836 were No. 73, "Juliet and her Nurse" (now in the possession of Colonel O. H. Paine, of New York), No. 144, "Rome from Mount Aventine" (now Lord Rosebery's), and No. 202, "Mercury and Argus" (now Lord Strathcona's). *Blackwood's* criticisms were as follows: "'Juliet and her Nurse.'—That is indeed a strange jumble—'confusion worse confounded.' It is neither sunlight, moonlight, nor starlight, nor firelight, though there is an attempt at a display of fireworks in one corner, and we conjecture that these are meant to be stars in the heavens—if so, it is a versification of Hamlet's extravagant madness—

'Doubt that the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt Truth to be a liar;'

but with such a Juliet you would certainly doubt 'I love.' Amidst so many absurdities, we scarcely stop to ask why Juliet and her nurse should be at Venice. For the scene is a composition as from models of different parts of Venice, thrown higgledy-piggledy together, streaked blue and pink, and thrown into a flour tub. Poor Juliet has been steeped in treacle to make her look sweet, and we feel apprehensive lest the mealy architecture should stick to her petticoat, and flour it."

Of "Rome from Mount Aventine," the critic said that it was "a most unpleasant mixture, wherein white gamboge and raw sienna are, with childish execution, daubed together."

"But," he added, "we think the 'Hanging Committee' should be *suspended* from their office for admitting his 'Mercury and Argus, No. 102.' It is perfectly childish. All blood and chalk. There was not the least occasion for a Mercury to put out Argus's eyes; the horrid glare would have made him shut the whole hundred, and have made Mercury stone blind. Turner reminds us of the man who sold his shadow, and that he might not appear singular, will not let anything in the world have a shadow to show

different parts of the city, thrown, as he elegantly express it, "higgledy-piggledy together." Now, it is no such thing; it is a view taken from the roofs of the houses at the S. W. angle of St. Mark's place, having the lagoon on the right, and the column and church of St. Mark in front. The view is accurate in every particular, even to the number of divisions in the Gothic¹ of the Doge's palace. It would, I think, be as well if your critic would take something more certain than his own vague ideas to bear witness to a fact which tends to the depreciation of a picture, and which was to be asserted by Maga.

He next proceeds to inform us that Turner is out of nature. Perhaps, since he has made this most singular discovery, he may have an idea that "there's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark, but he's an arrant knave." He may even have supposed that there never actually existed such a thing as Ariel; may have suspected that Oberon and Titania never walked the turf of Athenian forests; nay, the far more singular idea may have entered his pericranium, that the super-imposition of an ass's head on his own shoulders would be "out of nature." Turner may be mad: I daresay he is, inasmuch as highest genius is allied to madness; but not so stark mad as to profess to paint nature. He paints *from* nature, and pretty far from it, too; and he would be sadly disappointed who looked in his pictures for a possible scene. Are we to quarrel with him for this? If we are, let us at once condemn to oblivion the finest works of the imagination of our poets: "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" must be vile,—"Prometheus Unbound," absurd,—much of Shakespeare detestable,—Milton ridiculous,—Spenser childish. Alas! the spirit of all poetry must come under the animadversions of this sweeping rule.

4. Your critic finds much fault with Turner's colour. I think he himself has a rather singular idea of colour when he remarks of a yellow petticoat, that it looks as if it had been dipped in treacle. I suppose, however, this is for the sake of the paltry pun which follows. He goes on to remark that his execution is "childish." Of all artists, Turner is perhaps the least deserving of such blame; he can produce instantaneous effect by a roll or his brush, and, with a few dashes of mingled colour, will express the most complicated subject: the means employed appear more astonishingly inadequate to the effect produced than in any other master. No one can deny that the faults of Turner are numerous, and perhaps more egregious than those of any other great existing artist; but if he has greater faults, he has also greater beauties.

5. The critic affirms that he has deprived the sun of his birthright to cast shadows. Now the manner in which Turner makes his visible sunbeams walk over his foregrounds towards the spectator, is one of his most peculiar beauties;

for love or money. . . . He has robbed the sun of his birthright to cast shadows. Whenever Nature shall dispense with them too, and shall make trees like brooms, and this green earth to alternate between brimstone and white, set off with brightest blues that no longer shall keep their distance; when cows shall be made of white paper, and milk-white figures represent pastoral, and when human eyes shall be happily gifted with a kaleidoscopic power to patternize all confusion, and shall become ophthalmia proof, then will Turner be a greater painter than ever the world yet saw, or than ever the world, constituted as it is at present, wishes to see. It is grievous to see genius, that it might outstrip all others, fly off into mere eccentricities, where it ought to stand alone, because none to follow it."]

¹ [By "the Gothic" is here meant (as in *Poems*, Vol. II. p. 402) "the structure and mouldings of arch" (see *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 114).]

and in this very picture of "Mercury and Argus" it is inimitably fine,—and is produced by the exquisite perspective of his shadows, and the singular lurid tints of his reflected lights.

The connoisseur remarks, a few pages further on, that "*even composition is often made out by light, shade, and colour.*"¹ Will he inform us what else it could be made out by? Form does a little; but nothing compared to light, shade, and colour; and this he proceeds to assure us the graver cannot give. A good engraver can express any variety of colour, for there is as much light and shade in pure colour as in neutral tints; and it is this power of giving light and shade by pure colour in which Turner so peculiarly excels, and by which his pictures become so wonderfully adapted for engraving;² (for I presume that even this Zoilus³ of Turner will not venture to deny that engravings from Turner are [not⁴] inimitably fine, and unapproachable by those from the paintings of any other artist;) and this peculiarity in his manner is remarkably observable in "Mercury and Argus," for though the shadows of the complicated foreground are beautifully true, they are all expressed by colour. That this is contrary to nature, and to the rules of Art, I do not deny; and therefore it is a great pity that the admiration of the genius of Turner, which is almost universal among artists, raises up so many imitators. He is a meteor, dashing on in a path of glory which all may admire, but in which none can follow: and his imitators must be, and always have been, months fluttering about the lights, into which if they enter they are destroyed.⁵

5. His imagination is Shakespearian in its mightiness. Had the scene of "Juliet and her Nurse" risen up before the mind of a poet, and been described in "words that burn,"⁶ it had been the admiration of the world: but, placed before us on the canvass, it becomes—what critics of the brush and pallet may show their wit upon at the expence of their judgement; and what real artists and men of feeling and taste *must* admire, but dare not attempt to imitate. Many-coloured mists are floating above the distant city, but such mists as you might imagine to be aetherial spirits, souls of the mighty dead breathed out of the tombs of Italy into the blue of her bright heaven, and wandering in vague and infinite glory around the earth that they have loved. Instinct with

¹ [In praising Danby's "Opening of the Sixth Seal," the reviewer said (p. 554): "The print gives not the composition, for even composition is often made out by light and shade and colour, which, where the tones are so varied, the graver will fail to give."]

² [Ruskin's first knowledge of Turner was derived from engravings, and especially from the vignettes in Rogers' *Italy* (see *Præterita*, i. ch. i. § 28). To these he often refers in his *Juvenilia*: see Vol. I. pp. 233, 243. For Turner and the engravers, see above, p. 299 n.]

³ [Zoilus, the critical Thersites of antiquity, was known as the chastiser even of Homer ("Homeromastix"). He also flew at Plato, Isocrates, and other great writers:—

"Ingenium magni livor detrectat Homeri:
Quisquis es, ex illo, Zoile, nomen habes."

—OVID. *Rem. Am.* 366.]

⁴ [The MS. has "not," which, however, is clearly a mistake.]

⁵ [Cf. *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 4, in Vol. I. p. 6.]

⁶ ["Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

—GRAY: *Progress of Poesy.*]



J.M.W. Turner R.A.

Allen & Co. So.

Mercury and Argus.

From the Picture in possession of Lord Stretcham & Mount Royal.

the beauty of uncertain light, they move and mingle among the pale stars, and rise up into the brightness of the illimitable heaven, whose soft, said blue eye gazes down into the deep waters of the sea for ever,—that sea whose motionless and silent transparency is beaming with phosphor light,¹ that emanates out of its sapphire serenity like bright dreams breathed into the spirit of a deep sleep. And the spires of the glorious city rise indistinctly bright into those living mists, like pyramids of pale fire from some vast altar; and amidst the glory of the dream, there is as it were the voice of a multitude entering by the eye,—arising from the stillness of the city like the summer wind passing over the leaves of the forest, when a murmur is heard amidst their multitude.

This, oh Maga, is the picture which your critic has pronounced to be like "models of different parts of Venice, streaked blue and white, and thrown into a flour-tub"! That this picture is not seen by either starlight, sunlight, moonlight, or firelight, is perfectly true: it is a light of his own, which no other artist can produce,—a light which seems owing to some phosphorescent property in the air. The picture can be, and ought only to be viewed as embodied enchantment, delineated magic.²

6. With regard to this connoisseur's remarks on our present school of painting, I perfectly agree with him.³ The meretricious glare of Somerset House, or of any of our modern exhibitions, is strikingly faulty and disagreeable: but Turner is an exception to all rules, and can be judged by no standard of art. In a wildly magnificent enthusiasm, he rushes through the aetherial dominions of the world of his own mind,—a place inhabited by the *spirits of things*; he has filled his mind with materials drawn from the close study of nature (no artist has studied nature more intently)—and then changes and combines, giving effects without absolute causes, or, to speak more accurately, seizing the soul and essence of beauty, without regarding the means by which it is effected.

7. It appears to me that your critic intends to refer to something of this sort when he says (what he meant to say I cannot tell, for he has left it to his readers to express, as well as to answer, his objections)—he says that "genius ought to stand alone, because none to follow it." Now if I do him the favour to put this into English for him, it will be, I suppose, "because none are capable of following it." Why should they not be capable of following it? He might as well tell us that a man walked alone, *because* nobody else walked with him. Have not all persons the same fingers and muscles,—brushes, canvas, and colours? Genius cannot show itself by mere handling;—

¹ [A favourite expression of Ruskin in his *juvenilia*: see Vol. II. p. 94 n.]

² [It is interesting to note that the enthusiasm of the young Ruskin for these pictures was shared by Constable. "Turner has outdone himself," he wrote of the exhibition of 1836, "he seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent and so airy" (Leslie's *Life of Constable*, p. 277).]

³ [In concluding his article on the exhibitions, the critic expressed the opinion (pp. 554–555) that the arts had retrograded in this country. "Our best painters," he said, "were before the Academy. . . . We fear it is in the nature of Academie and their Exhibitions to multiply artists, but not to promote genius. Every exhibitor must strive to attract, and this endeavour leads him beyond 'the modesty of nature.' . . . The practice, by-the-bye, of touching and retouching, on the walls, before the public are admitted, should on no account be allowed; for how can pictures painted in one light and retouched under another, and with all meretricious glare about them, be expected to look well when removed to the quietness of a private gallery?"]

it is by the difference in their powers and prejudices that minds are distinguished. All genius is mannered, and frequently eccentric; and it is not the effort of a little mind to be singular, but the doings of a mighty mind, which we perceive in the works of Turner. All minds move in a peculiar channel, and think and feel in a peculiar manner. Turner thinks and feels in colour; he cannot help doing so. Nature has given him a peculiar eye, and a wildly beautiful imagination, and he must obey its dictates; and the astronomer, who observes the erratic course of a comet with astonishment and admiration, would be as reasonable in supposing that he could direct its course, as are the petty connoisseurs, who imagine themselves capable of comprehending, guiding, and dictating to the electric genius of Turner.

8. At the present day, contumely, and scorn, and animadversion are heaped on the devoted head of this artist by the short-handed reporters of newspapers, and short-sighted critics of magazines. Innumerable dogs are baying the moon:—do they think she will bate of her brightness, or aberrate from the majesty of her path?

There is no danger that either the fame or the feelings of Turner should be hurt by such “criticism”: but there *is* danger—imminent danger—of injury to the reputation of his critics. This is of no consequence where those critics are but the writers of a day,—persons whose reputation is of as little consequence as their opinion. But when Maga takes up the pen of criticism she should remember that the injury of her honour is proportionate to the value of her words, and the weight of her authority: and that authority should be delegated to persons who can judge accurately, feel deeply, and write correctly; not to critics of so fastidious a disposition as to discover vulgarity in the mind of Murillo, and childishness in the pencil of Turner.

October 1st, 1836.

II

REPLIES TO CRITICISMS OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. I.

1. "MODERN PAINTERS": A REPLY¹

To the Editor of "The Weekly Chronicle."

SIR,—I was much gratified by reading in your columns of the 15th² instant a piece of close, candid, and artistical criticism on my work entitled *Modern Painters*. Serious and well-based criticism is at the present day so rare, and our periodicals are filled so universally with the splenetic jargon or meaningless praise of ignorance, that it is no small pleasure to an author to meet either with praise which he can view with patience, or censure which he can regard with respect. I seldom, therefore, read, and have never for an instant thought of noticing, the ordinary animadversions of the press; but the critique on *Modern Painters* in your pages is evidently the work of a man both of knowledge and feeling; and is at once so candid and so keen, so honest and so subtle, that I am desirous of offering a few remarks on the points on which it principally touches—they are of importance to art; and I feel convinced that the writer is desirous only of elucidating truth, not of upholding a favourite error. With respect first to Gaspar's painting of the "Sacrifice of Isaac." It is not on the faith of any *single* shadow that I have pronounced the time intended to be near noon³—though the shadow of the two figures being very short, and cast *from* the spectator, is in itself conclusive. The whole system of chiaroscuro of the picture is lateral; and the light is expressly shown not to come from the distance by its breaking brightly on the bit of rock and waterfall on the left, from which the high copse wood altogether intercepts the rays proceeding from the horizon. There are multitudes of pictures by Gaspar with this same effect—leaving no doubt whatever on my mind that they are all manufactured by the same approved recipe, probably given him by Nicholas, but worked out by Gaspar with the clumsiness and vulgarity which are invariably attendant on the efforts of an inferior mind to realise the ideas of a greater. The Italian masters universally make the horizon the chief light of their picture, whether the effect intended be of noon or evening. Gaspar, to save himself the trouble of graduation,

¹ [From *The Weekly Chronicle*, September 23, 1843. Reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 3–13.]

² [It should be 16th, the criticism having appeared in the preceding weekly issue. For an extract from the criticism, see above, Introduction, p. xxxv.]

³ [See above, p. 283.]

washes his sky half blue and half yellow, and separates the two colours by a line of cloud. In order to get his light conspicuous and clear, he washes the rest of his sky of a dark deep blue, without any thoughts about time of day or elevation of sun, or any such minutia; finally, having frequently found the convenience of a black foreground, with a bit of light coming in round the corner, and probably having no conception of the possibility of painting a foreground on any other principle, he naturally falls into the usual method—blackens it all over, touches in a few rays of lateral light, and turns out a very respectable article; for in such language only should we express the completion of a picture painted throughout on conventional principles, without one reference to nature, and without one idea of the painter's own. With respect to Salvator's "Mercury and the Woodman,"¹ your critic has not allowed for the effect of time on its blues. They are now, indeed, sobered and brought down, as is every other colour in the picture, until it is scarcely possible to distinguish any of the details in its darker parts; but they *have been* pure and clean, and the mountain is absolutely the same colour as the open part of the sky. When I say it is "in full light," I do not mean that it is the highest light of the picture, (for no distant mountain *can* be so, when compared with bright earth or white clouds), but that no accidental shadow is cast upon it; that it is under open sky, and so illumined that there must necessarily be a difference in hue between its light and dark sides, at which Salvator has not even hinted.

Again, with respect to the question of focal distances,² your critic, in common with many very clever people to whom I have spoken on the subject, has confused the obscurity of objects which are *laterally* out of the focal *range*, with that of objects which are *directly* out of the focal *distance*. If all objects in a landscape were in the same plane, they should be represented on the plane of the canvas with equal distinctness, because the eye has no greater lateral range on the canvas than in the landscape, and can only command a point in each. But this point in the landscape may present an intersection of lines belonging to different distances,—as when a branch of a tree, or tuft of grass, cuts against the horizon: and yet these different distances cannot be discerned together: we lose one if we look at the other, so that no painful intersection of lines is ever felt. But on the canvass, as the lines of foreground and of distance are on the *same* plane, they *will* be seen together whenever they intersect, painfully and distinctly; and, therefore, unless we make one series, whether near or distant, obscure and indefinite, we shall always represent as visible at once that which the eye can only perceive by two separate acts of seeing. Hold up your finger before this page, six inches from it. If you look at the edge of your finger, you cannot see the letters; if you look at the letters, you cannot see the edge of your finger, but as a confused, double, misty line. Hence in painting, you must either take for your subject the finger or the letters; you cannot paint both

¹ [See above, p. 281. The critic of the *Chronicle* had written that the rocky mountains in this picture "are *not* sky-blue, neither are they near enough for detail of crag to be seen, neither are they in full light, but are quite as indistinct as they would be in nature, and just the colour."]

² [See above, p. 322. "Turner introduced a new era in landscape art, . . . intended to repose." To that passage the critic of the *Chronicle* had objected, attempting to show that it would result in Nature being "represented with just half the quantity of light and colour that she possesses."]

distinctly without violation of truth. It is of no consequence how quick the change of the eye may be; it is not one whit quicker than its change from one part of the horizon to another, nor are the two intersecting distances more visible at the same time than two opposite portions of a landscape to which it passes in succession. Whenever, therefore, in a landscape, we look from the foreground to the distance, the foreground is subjected to *two* degrees of indistinctness: the first, that of an object *laterally* out of the focus of the eye; and the *second*, that of an object *directly* out of the focus of the eye; being too near to be seen with the focus adapted to the distance. In the picture, when we look from the foreground to the distance, the foreground is subjected only to *one* degree of indistinctness, that of being out of the lateral range; for as both the painting of the distance and of the foreground are on the same plane, they are seen together with the same focus. Hence we must supply the *second* degree of indistinctness by slurring with the brush, or we shall have a severe and painful intersection of near and distant lines, impossible in nature. Finally, a very false principle is implied by part of what is advanced by your critic— which has led to infinite error in art, and should therefore be instantly combated whenever it were hinted—that the ideal is different from the true. It is, on the contrary, only the perfection of truth. The Apollo is not a *false* representation of man, but the most perfect representation of all that is constant and essential in man,—free from the accidents and evils which corrupt the truth of his nature.¹ Supposing we are describing to a naturalist some animal he does not know, and we tell him we saw one with a hump on its back, and another with strange bends in its legs, and another with a long tail, and another with no tail, he will ask us directly, but what is its *true* form, what is its *real* form? This truth, this reality, which he requires of us, is the *ideal* form, that which is hinted at by all the individuals,—aimed at, but not arrived at. But never let it be said that, when a painter is defying the principles of nature at every roll of his brush, as I have shown that Gaspar does, when, instead of working out the essential characters of specific form, and raising those to their highest degree of nobility and beauty, he is casting all character aside, and carrying out imperfection and accident; never let it be said, in excuse for such degradation of nature, that it is done in pursuit of the ideal. As well might this be said in defence of the promising sketch of the human form pasted on the wainscoat behind the hope of the family—artist and musician of equal power—in the “Blind Fiddler.”² Ideal beauty is the generalization of consummate knowledge, the concentration of perfect truth, —not the abortive vision of ignorance in its study. Nor was there ever yet one conception of the human mind beautiful, but as it was based on truth.

¹ [The passage in the *Chronicle* ran thus: “The Apollo is but an ideal of the human form; no figure ever moulded of flesh and blood was like it.” With the objection to this criticism we may compare the passage above, p. III, where the ideal is defined as “the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable.” See also *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiii. § 2;—“The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed is called the Ideal of the species;” and “That unfortunate distinctness between Idealism and Realism which leads most people to imagine that the Ideal is opposed to the Real, and therefore false.”]

² [This picture of Sir David Wilkie’s was presented to the National Gallery (No. 99) by Sir George Beaumont, in 1826. For other references to Wilkie, see p. 82 *n.*]

Whenever we leave nature, we fall immeasurably beneath her. So, again, I find fault with the “ropy wreath” of Gaspar,¹ not because he chose massy cloud instead of light cloud; but because he has drawn his massy cloud *falsely*, making it look tough and powerless, like a chain of Bologna sausages, instead of gifting it with the frangible and elastic vastness of nature’s mountain vapour.

Finally, Sir why must it be only “when he is gone from us”² that the power of our greatest English landscape painter is to be acknowledged? It cannot, indeed, be fully understood until the current of years has swept away the minor lights which stand around it, and left it burning alone; but at least the scoff and the sneer might be lashed into silence, if those only did their duty by whom it is already perceived. And let us not think that our unworthiness has no effect on the work of the master. I could be patient if I thought that *no* effect was wrought on his noble mind by the cry of the populace; but, scorn it as he may, and does, it is yet impossible for any human mind to hold on its course, with the same energy and life, through the oppression of a perpetual hissing, as when it is cheered on by the quick sympathy of its fellow-men.³ It is not in art as in matters of political duty, where the path is clear and the end visible. The springs of feeling may be oppressed or sealed by the want of an answer in other bosoms, though the sense of principle cannot be blunted except by the individual’s *own* error; and though the knowledge of what is right, and the love of what is beautiful, may still support our great painter through the languor of age—and Heaven grant it may for years to come—yet we cannot hope that he will ever cast his spirit upon the canvass with the same freedom and fire as if he felt that the voice of its inspiration was waited for among men, and dwelt upon with devotion. Once, in ruder times, the work of a great painter* was waited for through days at his door, and attended to its place of deposition by the enthusiasm of a hundred cities; and painting rose from that time, a rainbow upon the Seven Hills, and on the cypress heights of Fiésole, guiding them and lighting them for ever, even in the stillness of their decay. How can we hope that England will ever win for herself such a crown,

* Cimabue. The quarter of the town is yet named, from the rejoicing of that day, Borgo Allegri.⁴

¹ [The bank of cloud in the “Sacrifice of Isaac” is spoken of above, p. 375, as “a ropy, tough-looking wreath.” On this the reviewer commented.]

² [“We agree” (wrote the *Chronicle*) “with the writer in almost every word he says about this great artist; and we have no doubt that, when he is gone from among us, his memory will receive the honour due to his living genius.” Cf. with this passage the postscript (above, p. 631), written in June 1851.]

³ [Cf. *A Joy for Ever*, § 26.]

⁴ [The picture thus honoured was that of the Virgin, painted for the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where it now hangs in the Rucellai Chapel. “This work was an object of so much admiration to the people, . . . that it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpets and other festal demonstrations, from the house of Cimabue to the church, he himself being highly rewarded and honoured for it. It is further reported, and may be read in certain records of old painters, that whilst Cimabue was painting this picture in a garden near the gate of San Pietro, King Charles the Elder, of Anjou, passed through Florence, and the authorities of the city, among other marks of respect, conducted him to see the picture of Cimabue. When this work was shown to the king, it had not before been seen by any one; wherefore all the men and women of Florence hastened in great crowds to admire it, making all

while the works of her highest intellects are set for the pointing of the finger and the sarcasm of the tongue, and the sole reward for the deep, earnest, holy labour of a devoted life, is the weight of stone upon the trampled grave, where the vain and idle crowd will come to wonder how the brushes are mimicked in the marble above the dust of him who wielded them in vain?

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
THE AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS."

2. ART CRITICISM¹

[To the Editor of "*The Artist and Amateur's Magazine*."]'

SIR,—Anticipating, with much interest, your reply to the candid and earnest inquiries of your unknown correspondent, Matilda Y.,² I am led to hope that you will allow me to have some share with you in the pleasant task of confirming an honest mind in the truth. Subject always to your animadversion and correction, so far as I may seem to you to be led astray by my peculiar love for the works of the artist to whom her letter refers, I yet trust that in most of the remarks I have to make on the points which have perplexed her, I shall be expressing not only your own opinions, but those of every other accomplished artist who is really acquainted—and which of our

possible demonstrations of delight. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, rejoicing in this occurrence, ever afterwards called that place Borgo Allegri; and this name it has since retained, although in process of time it became enclosed within the walls of the city" (Vasari, *Lives of Painters*. Bohn's edition. London, 1850. Vol. i. p. 41). This well-known anecdote may also be found in Jameson's *Early Italian Painters*, p. 12. Ruskin refers to it again in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 74.]

¹ [From *The Artist and Amateur's Magazine* (edited by E. V. Rippingille), January 1844, pp. 280–287. Reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 14–36.]

² [This letter, though not in form a reply to criticisms upon *Modern Painters*, is so in fact; and as furthermore it deals with several matters touched upon in the first volume, it is here included. Ruskin wrote the letter, as the following extracts from his Diary show, in December 1843:—

"Dec. 1, 1843.—Blackguardly letter in *Art Union* and interesting one in Rippingille's thing, to be answered—the last at great length. Working hard all day. Dec. 2.—A bad, hard-working day, with my letter; till I see the result, I cannot tell if a good one. Dec. 4.—Finished and sent off my letter."

The letter was in reply to one signed (ostensibly or really) "Matilda Y.," printed in *The Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, p. 265, December 1843, and relating to the opposite opinions held by different critics of the works of Turner, which were praised by some as "beautiful and profoundly truthful representations of nature," "legitimate deductions of a mighty intellect, from a long course of scientific practice," whilst others declared them to be "dreary creations of a distempered vision and a disordered mind," "executed without end, aim, or principle." "May not these contradictions," wrote the correspondent, in the passage alluded to by Ruskin, "be in a great measure the result of extreme ignorance of art in the great mass of those persons who take upon themselves the office of critics and reviewers? Can any one be a judge of art whose judgment is not founded on an accurate knowledge of nature? It is scarcely possible that a mere knowledge of pictures, however extensive, can qualify a man for the arduous and responsible duties of public criticism of art."]

English masters is not?—with the noble system of poetry and philosophy which has been put forth on canvass, during the last forty years, by the great painter who has presented us with the almost unparalleled example of a man winning for himself the unanimous plaudits of his generation and time, and then casting them away like dust, that he may build his monument—ære perennius.¹

Your correspondent herself, in saying that mere knowledge of *pictures* cannot qualify a man for the office of a critic, has touched the first source of the schisms of the present, and of all time, in questions of pictorial merit. We are overwhelmed with a tribe of critics who are fully imbued with every kind of knowledge which is useful to the picture-dealer, but with none that is important to the artist. They know where a picture *has* been retouched, but not where it *ought* to have been; they know if it has been injured, but not if the injury is to be regretted. They are unquestionable authorities in all matters relating to the panel or the canvass, to the varnish or the vehicle, while they remain in entire ignorance of that which the vehicle conveys. They are well acquainted with the technical qualities of every master's touch; and when their discrimination fails, plume themselves on indisputable tradition, and point triumphantly to the documents of pictorial genealogy. But they never go *quite* far enough back; they stop *one* step short of the real original; they reach the human one, but never the Divine. Whatever, under the present system of study, the connoisseur of the gallery may learn or know, there is one thing he does *not* know,—and that is nature. It is a pitiable thing to hear a man like Dr. Waagen,² about to set the seal of his approbation,

¹ [See above, Introduction, p. xxxiii.]

² [Gustav Friedrich Waagen, Director of the Berlin Gallery from 1832 until his death in 1868. He was the author of various works on art, amongst them one entitled *Works of Art and Artists in England* (London, 1838), which is that alluded to here. The passage quoted concludes a description of his “first attempt to navigate the watery paths,” in a voyage from Hamburg to the London Docks (vol. i. p. 13). His criticism of Turner may be found in the same work (vol. ii. p. 80), where, commenting on Turner's ‘Fishermen endeavouring to put their fish on board,’ then, as now, in the gallery of Bridgewater House (No. 169), and which was painted as a rival to the great sea-storm of Vanderveelde, he writes, that “in the truth of clouds and waves” . . . it is inferior to that picture, compared with which “it appears like a successful piece of scene-painting. The great crowd of amateurs, who ask nothing more of the art, will always far prefer Turner's picture.” Ruskin had been reading the book at this time, as appears from the following notes in his Diary:—

“Nov. 21, 1843.—Not so much done to-day, except that I have had the satisfaction of finding Dr. Waagen—of such mighty name as a connoisseur—a most double-dyed ass . . .

“Nov. 27.— . . . Got a good deal out of Waagen, but he is an intolerable fool—good authority only in matters of tradition.”

Dr. Waagen revised and re-edited his book in a second, entitled, “Treasures of Art in Great Britain” (1854), in which these passages are repeated with slight verbal alterations (vol. i. p. 3, vol. ii. p. 53). In this work he acknowledges his ignorance of Turner at the time the first was written, and gives a high estimate of his genius. “Buildings,” he writes, “he treats with peculiar felicity, while the sea in its most varied aspects is equally subservient to his magic brush.” He adds, that but for one deficiency, the want of a sound technical basis, he “should not hesitate to recognize Turner as the greatest landscape painter of all time.” With regard, however, to the above-named picture, it may be remembered that Ruskin has himself instanced it as one of the marine pictures which Turner spoiled by imitation of Vanderveelde. (*Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37.) For another reference to Waagen, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 1.]

or the brand of his reprobation, on all the pictures in our island, expressing his insipid astonishment on his first acquaintance with the sea. "For the *first* time I understood the truth of their pictures (Backhuysen's and Van de Velde's,) and the refined art with which, by intervening dashes of sunshine, near or at a distance, and *ships to animate the scene*, they produce such a charming variety on the surface of the sea." For the first time!—and yet this gallery-bred judge, this discriminator of coloured shreds and canvass patches, who has no idea how ships animate the sea, until—charged with the fates of the Royal Academy—he ventures his invaluable person from Rotterdam to Greenwich, will walk up to the work of a man whose brow is hard with the spray of a hundred storms, and characterize it as "wanting in truth of clouds and waves"! Alas for Art, while such judges sit enthroned on their apathy to the beautiful, and their ignorance of the true, and with a canopy of canvass between them and the sky, and a wall of tradition, which may not be broken through, concealing from them the horizon, hurl their darkened verdicts against the works of men, whose night and noon have been wet with the dew of heaven,—dwelling on the deep sea, or wandering among the solitary places of the earth, until they have "made the mountains, waves, and skies a part of them and of their souls."

When information so narrow is yet the whole stock in trade of the highest authorities of the day, what are we to expect from the lowest? Dr. Waagen is a most favourable specimen of the tribe of critics; a man, we may suppose, impartial, above all national or party prejudice, and intimately acquainted with that half of his subject (the technical half) which is all we can reasonably expect to be known by one who has been trained in the painting-room instead of in the fields. No authority is more incontrovertible in all questions of the genuineness of old pictures. He has at least the merit—not common among those who talk most of the old masters—of knowing what he *does* admire, and will not fall into the same raptures before an execrable copy as before the original. If, then, we find a man of this real judgment in those matters to which his attention has been directed, entirely incapable, owing to his ignorance of nature, of estimating a modern picture, what can we hope from those lower critics who are unacquainted even with those technical characters which they have opportunities of learning? What, for instance, are we to anticipate from the sapient lucubrations of the critic—for some years back the disgrace of the pages of *Blackwood*—who in one breath displays his knowledge of nature, by styling a painting of a furze bush in the bed of a mountain torrent a specimen of the "high pastoral," and in the next his knowledge of Art, by informing us that Mr. Lee "reminds him of Gainsborough's best manner, but is inferior to him in composition"¹ We do not mean to say anything against Mr. Lee's pictures]; but can we forbear to smile at the hopeless innocence of the man's novitiate, who could be reminded by them of landscapes powerful enough in colour to take their place beside those of Rembrandt or Rubens? A little attention will soon convince your correspondent of the utter futility or falsehood of the ordinary critiques of the press; and there could, I believe, even at present, be little doubt in her mind as to the fitting answer to the question, whether we are to take the opinion of the accomplished artist or of the common news monger, were it not for a misgiving which, be she conscious of

¹ [See the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters* (above, p. 18). For the reference to the "high pastoral" see *Blackwood, loc. cit.*, p. 192.]

it or not, is probably floating in her mind,—whether that can really be *great* Art which has no influence whatsoever on the multitude, and is appreciable only by the initiated few. And this is the real question of difficulty. It is easy to prove that such and such a critic is wrong; but not so, to prove that what everybody dislikes is right. It is fitting to pay respect to Sir Augustus Callcott, but is it so to take his word against all the world?¹

This inquiry requires to be followed with peculiar caution; for by setting at defiance the judgment of the public, we in some sort may appear to justify that host of petty scribblers, and contemptible painters, who in all time have used the same plea in defence of their rejected works, and have received in consequence merciless chastisement from contemporary and powerful authors or painters, whose reputation was as universal as it was just. “Mes ouvrages,” said Rubens to his challenger, Abraham Janssens, “ont été exposés en Italie, et en Espagne, sans que J’aie reçu la nouvelle de leur condamnation. Vous n’avez qu’à soumettre les vôtres à la même épreuve.”² “Je défie,” says Boileau, “tous les amateurs les plus mécontents du public, de me citer un bon livre que le public ait jamais rebuté, à moins qu’ils ne mettent en ce rang leur écrits, de la bonté desquels eux seuls sont persuadés.”³

Now the fact is, that the whole difficulty of the question is caused by the ambiguity of this word—the “public.” Whom does it include? People continually forget that there is a *separate* public for every picture, and for every book. Appealed to with reference to any particular work, the public is that class of persons who possess the knowledge which it presupposes, and the faculties to which it is addressed. With reference to a new edition of Newton’s *Principia*, the “public” means little more than the Royal Society. With reference to one of Wordsworth’s poems, it means all who have hearts. With reference to one of Moore’s, all who have passions. With reference to the works of Hogarth, it means those who have worldly knowledge,—to the works of Giotto, those who have religious faith. Each work must be tested exclusively by the fiat of the *particular* public to whom it is addressed. We will listen to no comments on Newton from people who have no mathematical knowledge; to none on Wordsworth from those who have no hearts; to none on Giotto from those who have no religion. Therefore, when we have to form a judgment of any new work, the question “What do the public say to it?” is indeed of vital importance; but we must always inquire, first, who are *its* public? We must not submit a treatise on moral philosophy to a conclave of horse-jockeys, nor a work of deep artistical research to the writers for the Art Union.

The public, then, we repeat, when referred to with respect to a particular work, consist only of those who have knowledge of its subject, and are possessed of the faculties to which it is addressed.

¹ [Matilda Y., after referring to various hostile criticisms of Turner, had gone on to say that on the other hand, “Sir Augustus Callcott (on visiting a certain collection) made the most obvious distinction in his preference and admiration of the works of Turner, speaking of them as instances of a beautiful and profoundly truthful representation of nature.”]

² [Abraham Janssens, in his jealousy of Rubens, proposed to him that they should each paint a picture, and submit the rival works to the decision of the public. Ruskin gives Rubens’ reply, the tenor of which may be found in any life of the artist—(See Hasselt’s *Histoire de Rubens* (Brussels, 1840), p. 48, from which Ruskin quotes; Descamps, vol. i. p. 304; Walpole’s *Anecdotes of Painting*, Bohn’s octavo edition, p. 306).]

³ [Preface to the *Oeuvres Diverses du Sr. Boileau Despreaux* (Paris, 1701).]

If it fail to touching *these*, the work is a bad one; but it in no degree militates against it that it is rejected by those to whom it does not appeal. To whom, then, let us ask, and to *what* public do the works of Turner appeal? To those only, we reply, who have profound and disciplined acquaintance with nature, ardent poetical feeling, and keen eye for colour (a faculty far more rare than an ear for music). They are deeply-toned poems, intended for all who love poetry, but not for those who delight in mimickries of wine-glasses and nutshells. They are deep treatises on natural phenomena, intended for all who are acquainted with such phenomena, but not for those who, like the painter Barry, are amazed at finding the realities of the Alps grander than the imaginations of Salvator, and assert that they saw the moon from the Mont Cenis four times as big as usual, “from being so much nearer to it”!* And they are studied melodies of exquisite colour, intended for those who have perception of colour; not for those who fancy that all trees are Prussian green. Then comes the question, Were the works of Turner *ever* rejected by any person possessing even partially these qualifications? We answer boldly, never. On the contrary, they are universally hailed by *this* public with an enthusiasm not undeserving in appearance—at least to those who are debarred from sharing in it, of its usual soubriquet—the Turner mania.

Is, then, the number of those who are acquainted with the truth of nature so limited? So it has been asserted by one who knew much both of Art and Nature, and both were glorious in his country.†

“ΠΙ. Ού μέντο εἰωθάσιν ἄνθρωποι ὀνομάζειν οὕτως.
 ΣΩ. Πότερον, ὦ Ἰππια, οἱ εἰδότες ἢ οἱ μὴ εἰδότες;
 ΠΙ. Οἱ πολλοί.
 ΣΩ. Εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοί οἱ εἰδότες τάληθές, οἱ πολλοί;
 ΠΙ. Οὐ δῆτα. “

—HIPPIAS MAJOR.

* This is a singular instance of the profound ignorance of landscape in which great and intellectual painters of the human form may remain; an ignorance, which commonly renders their remarks on landscape painting nugatory, if not false.¹

† Plato.—“*Hippias*. Men do not commonly say so.
Socrates. Who do not say so,—those who know, or those who do not know?
Hippias. The multitude.
Socrates. Are then the multitude acquainted with truth?
Hippias. *Certainly not.*”

The answer is put into the mouth of the sophist; but put as an established fact, which he cannot possibly deny.²

¹ [The amazement of the painter is underrated:—“You will believe me much nearer heaven upon Mount Cenis than I was before, or shall probably be again for some time. We passed this mountain on Sunday last, and about seven in the morning were near the top of the road over it, on both sides of which the mountain rises to a very great height, yet so high were so in the valley between them that the moon, which was above the horizon of the mountains, appeared at least five times as big as usual, and much more distinctly marked than I ever saw it through some very good telescopes.” —Letter to Edmund Burke, dated Turin, Sept. 24, 1766 (*Works of James Barry, R.A.*, 2 vols., quarto (London, 1809), vol. i. p. 58). For other references to Barry, see above, pp. 82, 145, 311.]

² [Hippias Major, 284 E. For another citation from the same dialogue, see above, p. 50.]

Now, we are not inclined to go quite so far as this. There are many subjects with respect to which the multitude *are* cognizant of truth, or at least of *some* truth; and those subjects may be generally characterized as everything which materially concerns themselves or their interests. The public are acquainted with the nature of their own passions, and the point of their own calamities,—can laugh at the weakness they feel, and weep at the miseries they have experienced; but all the sagacity they possess, be it how great soever, will not enable them to judge of likeness to that which they have never seen, nor to acknowledge principles on which they have never reflected. Of a comedy or a drama, an epigram or a ballad, they are judges from whom there is no appeal; but not of the representation of facts which they have never examined, of beauties which they have never loved. It is not sufficient that the facts or the features of nature be around us, while they are not within us. We may walk day by day through grove and meadow, and scarcely know more concerning them than is known by bird and beast, that the one has shade for the head, and the other softness for the foot. It is not true that “the eye, it cannot choose but see,” unless we obey the following condition, and go forth “in a wise passiveness,”¹ free from that plague of our own hearts which brings the shadow of ourselves, and the tumult of our petty interests and impatient passions, across the light and calm of Nature. We do not sit at the feet of our mistress to listen to her teaching; but we seek her only to drag from her that which may suit our purpose, to see in her the confirmation of a theory, or find in her fuel for our pride. Nay, do we often go to her even thus? Have we not rather cause to take to ourselves the full weight of Wordsworth’s noble appeal—

“Vain pleasures of luxurious life!
For ever with yourselves at strife,
Through town and country, both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds.
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder, to discern
The freshness, the eternal youth
Of admiration, sprung from truth,
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o’erflowing:
To sound the depths of every art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart?”²

When *will* they learn it? Hardly, we fear, in this age of steam and iron, luxury and selfishness. We grow more and more artificial day by day, and see less and less worthiness in those pleasures which bring with them no morbid excitement, in that knowledge which affords us no opportunity of display. Your correspondent may rest assured that those who do not *care* for nature, who do not love her, *cannot* see her. A few of her phenomena lie on the surface; the nobler number lie deep, and are the reward of watching and

¹ [Wordsworth: *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*, i. “Expostulation and Reply.”]

² [*Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*, 1814, iii. “Effusion.”]

of thought. The artist may choose *which* he will render: no human art can render both. If he paint the surface, he will catch the crowd; if he paint the depth, he will be admired only—but with how deep and fervent admiration, none but they who feel it can tell—by the thoughtful and observant few.

There are some admirable observations on this subject in your December number (“An Evening’s Gossip with a Painter”¹); but there is one circumstance with respect to the works of Turner which yet further limits the number of their admirers. They are not prosaic statements of the phenomena of nature,—they are statements of them under the influence of ardent feeling; they are, in a word, the most fervent and real poetry which the English nation is at present producing. Now, not only is this proverbially an age in which poetry is little cared for; but even with those who have most love of it, and most need of it, it requires, especially if high and philosophical, an attuned, quiet, and exalted frame of mind for its enjoyment; and if dragged into the midst of the noisy interests of every-day life, may easily be made ridiculous or offensive. Wordsworth recited, by Mr. Wakley,² in the House of Commons, in the middle of a financial debate, would sound, in all probability, very like Mr. Wakley’s own verses. Wordsworth, read in the stillness of a mountain hollow, has the force of the mountain waters. What would be the effect of a passage of Milton recited in the middle of a pantomime, or of a dreamy stanza of Shelley upon the Stock Exchange? Are we to judge of the nightingale by hearing it sing in broad daylight in Cheapside? For just such a judgment do we form of Turner by standing before his pictures in the Royal Academy. It is a strange thing that the public never seem to suspect that there may be a poetry in painting, to meet which, some preparation of sympathy, some harmony of circumstance, is required; and that it is just as impossible to see half-a-dozen great pictures as to read half-a-dozen great poems at the same time, if their tendencies or their tones of feeling be contrary or discordant. Let us imagine what would be the effect on the mind of any man of feeling, to whom an eager friend, desirous of impressing upon him the merit of different poets, should read successively, and without a

¹ [See *The Artist and Amateur’s Magazine*, p. 248. The article named was written in duologue, and in the passage alluded to “Palette,” an artist, points out to his companion “Chatworthy,” who represents the general public, that “next to the highest authorities in Art are the pure, natural, untainted, highly educated, and intelligent *few*.” The argument is continued over some pages, but although the *Magazine* is not now readily accessible, it will not be thought necessary to go further into the discussion.]

² [Mr. Thomas Wakley (1795–1862), at this time M.P. for Finsbury, and coroner for Middlesex. He was the founder of the *Lancet*, and took a deep interest in medicine, which he at one time practised. The allusion here is to Wakley’s speech in opposing the second reading of the Copyright Bill on April 6, 1842. He ridiculed the claims of authors, and recited, in illustration, Wordsworth’s “I met Louisa in the shade,” and the lines “To a Butterfly.” “If they give a poet,” he said, “an evening sky, dew, daisies, roses, and a rivulet, he might make a very respectable poem. Why, anybody might do it!” Whereupon, an hon. member exclaimed, “Try it.” “He had tried it,” rejoined Wakley, “and there (pointing to Monckton-Milnes) is an honourable gentleman who has tried it and is a poet of the first water. He thought, however, that a member of society might employ his talents to much better advantage than in the composition of such productions as he had quoted.”]

pause, the following passages, in which lie something of the prevailing character of the works of six of our greatest modern artists:—

LANDSEER.

“His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show’d he was nane o’ Scotland’s dougs,
But whalpit some place far abroad
Whar sailors gang to fish for cod.”¹

MARTIN.

“Far in the horizon to the north appear’d
From skirt to skirt, a fiery region, stretched
In battailous aspéct, and nearer view
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng’d, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portray’d.”

WILKIE.

“The risin’ moon began to glow’r
The distant Cumnock hills out owre;
To count her horns, wi’a’ my pow’r,
I set mysel’;
But whether she had three or fowr,
I couldna tell.”

EASTLAKE.

“And thou, who tell’st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.”

STANFIELD.

“Ye mariners of England,
Who guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze.”

TURNER.

“The point of one white star is quivering still,
Deep in the orange light of widening dawn,
Beyond the purple mountains. Through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it, now it fades: it gleams again,
As the waves fall, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air,
'Tis lost! and through you peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sunlight quivers.”²

Precisely to such advantage as the above passages, so placed,* appear, are the works of any painter of mind seen in the Academy. None suffer

* It will be felt at once that the more serious and higher passages generally suffer most. But Stanfield, little as it may be thought, suffers grievously in the Academy, just as the fine passage from Campbell is ruined by its position between the perfect tenderness of Byron and Shelley. The more vulgar a picture is, the better it bears the Academy.

¹ [The references to this and the five passages following are (1) Burns, “The Twa Dogs”; (2) Milton, “Paradise Lost,” vi. 79; (3) Burns, “Death and Doctor Hornbook”; (4) Byron, “Hebrew Melodies,” “Oh! snatched away in beauty’s bloom”; (5) Campbell; and (6) Shelley, “Prometheus Unbound,” Act ii. Sc. 1.]

² [For another comparison of Shelley with Turner, see above, p. 364, and *cf.* vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*, sec. ii. ch. iv. § 18.]

more than Turner's, which are not only interfered with by the prosaic pictures around them, but neutralize each other. Two works of his, side by side, destroy each other to a dead certainty, for each is so vast, so complete, so demandant of every power, so sufficient for every desire of the mind, that it is utterly impossible for two to be comprehended together. Each must have the undivided intellect, and each is destroyed by the attraction of the other; and it is the chief power and might of these pictures, that they are works for the closet and the heart—works to be dwelt upon separately and devotedly, and then chiefly when the mind is in its highest tone, and desirous of a beauty which may be food for its immortality. It is the very stamp and essence of the purest poetry, that it can only be so met and understood; and that the clash of common interests, and the roar of the selfish world, must be hushed about the heart, before it can hear the still, small voice, wherein rests the power communicated from the Holiest.*

Can, then,—will be, if I mistake not, the final inquiry of your correspondent, —can, then, we ordinary mortals,—can I, who am not Sir Augustus Callcott, nor Sir Francis Chantrey, ever derive any pleasure from works of this lofty character? Heaven forbid, we reply, that it should be otherwise. *Nothing* more is necessary for the appreciation of them, than that which is necessary for the appreciation of any great writer,—the quiet study of him with an humble heart. There are, indeed, technical qualities, difficulties overcome, and principles developed, which are reserved for the enjoyment of the artist; but these do not add to the influence of the picture. On the contrary, we must break through its charm, before we can comprehend its means, and “murder to dissect.” The picture is intended, not for artists alone, but for all who love what it portrays; and so little doubt have we of the capacity of all to understand the works in question, that we have the most confident expectation, within the next fifty years, of seeing the name of Turner placed on the same impregnable height with that of Shakspeare.¹ Both have committed errors of taste and judgment. In both it is, or will be, heresy even to feel those errors, so entirely are they over-balanced by the gigantic powers of whose impetuosity they are the result. So soon as the public are convinced, by the maintained testimony of high authority, that Turner is worth understanding, they will try to understand him; and if they try, they can. Nor are they, now, as is commonly thought, despised or defied by him. He has

*“Although it is in verse that the most consummate skill in composition is to be looked for, and all the artifices of language displayed, yet it is in verse only that we throw off the yoke of the world, and are, as it were, privileged to utter our deepest and holiest feelings. Poetry in this respect may be called the salt of the earth. We express in it, and receive in it, sentiments for which, were it not for this permitted medium, the usages of the world would neither allow utterance nor acceptance.”— *Southey's Colloquies*.² Such allowance is never made to the painter. In him, inspiration is called insanity,—in him, the sacred fire, possession.

¹ [“This Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakspeare and Verulam, in the annals of the light of England.” See *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (1854), § 101.]

² [*Sir Thomas More; or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*. Colloquy xiv. (vol. ii. p. 399, in Murray's edition, 1829). Ruskin had at this time been reading the book “with much pleasure” (Diary, Dec. 4, 1843).]

too much respect for them to endeavour to please them by falsehood. He will not win for himself a hearing by the betrayal of his message.

Finally, then, we would recommend your correspondent, first, to divest herself of every atom of lingering respect or regard for the common criticism of the press, and to hold fast by the authority of Callcott, Chantrey, Landseer, and Stanfield;¹ and this, not because we would have her *slavishly* subject to any authority but that of her own eyes and reason, but because we would not have her blown about with every wind of doctrine,² before she has convinced her reason, or learned to use her eyes. And if she can draw at all, let her make careful studies of any natural objects that may happen to come in her way,—sticks, leaves, or stones,—and of distant atmospheric effects on groups of objects; not for the sake of the drawing itself, but for the sake of the powers of attention and accurate observation which thus only can be cultivated. And let her make the study, not thinking of this artist or of that; not conjecturing what Harding would have done, or Stanfield, or Callcott, with her subject; not trying to draw in a bold style, or a free style, or any other style; but drawing *all* she *sees*, as far as may be in her power, earnestly, faithfully, unselectingly; and, which is perhaps the more difficult task of the two, *not* drawing what she does *not* see. Oh, if people did but know how many lines nature *suggests* without *showing*, what different art should we have! And let her never be discouraged by ill success. She will seldom have gained more knowledge than when she most feels her failure. Let her use every opportunity of examining the works of Turner; let her try to copy them, then try to copy some one else's, and observe which presents most of that kind of difficulty which she found in copying nature. Let her, if possible, extend her acquaintance with wild natural scenery of every kind and character, endeavouring in each species of scenery to distinguish those features which are expressive and harmonious from those which are unaffecting or incongruous; and after a year or two of such discipline as this, let her judge for herself. No authority need then, or can then, be very influential with her. Her own pleasure in works of true greatness* will be too real, too instinctive, to be persuaded, or laughed out of her. We bid her, therefore, heartily good-speed, with this final warning:—Let her beware, in going to nature, of taking with her the commonplace dogmas or dicta of Art. Let her not look for what is like Titian, or like Claude, for composed form, or arranged chiaroscuro; but believe that everything which God has made is beautiful, and that everything which nature teaches is true. Let her beware, above everything, of that wicked pride which makes man think he can dignify God's glorious creations, or exalt the majesty of His universe. Let her be humble, we repeat, and

* We have not sufficiently expressed our concurrence in the opinion of her friend, that Turner's modern works are his greatest. His early ones are nothing but amplifications of what others have done, or hard studies of every-day truth. His later works, no one but himself could have conceived: they are the result of the most exalted imagination, acting with the knowledge acquired by *means* of his former works.³

¹ [All cited by Matilda Y. as admirers of Turner.]

² [Ephesians, iv. 14: "carried about with every wind of doctrine."]

³ [*Cf.* above, p. xxxiii. *n.*, and preface to ed. 3, p. 53.]

earnest. Truth was never sealed, if so sought. And once more we bid her good-speed in the words of our poet-moralist:—

“Enough of Science and of Art:
Seal up these barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches, and receives.”¹

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

The Author of “MODERN PAINTERS.”

3. REFLECTIONS IN WATER²

[To the Editor of “*The Artist and Amateur’s Magazine.*”]

SIR,—The phenomena of light and shade, rendered to the eye by the surface or substance of water, are so intricate and so multitudinous, that had I wished fully to investigate, or even fully to state them, a volume instead of a page would have been required for the task. In the paragraphs³ which I devoted to the subject I expressed, as briefly as possible, the laws which are of most general application—with which artists are indeed so universally familiar, that I conceived it altogether unnecessary to prove or support them: but since I have expressed them in as few words as possible, I cannot afford to have any of those words missed or disregarded; and therefore when I say that on *clear* water, *near* the eye, there is no shadow, I must not be understood to mean that on *muddy* water, *far* from the eye, there is no shadow. As, however, your correspondent appears to deny my position in toto, and as many persons, on their first glance at the subject, might be inclined to do the same, you will perhaps excuse me for occupying a page or two with a more explicit statement, both of facts and principles, than my limits admitted in the *Modern Painters*.

¹ [Wordsworth: *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*, ii. “The Tables Turned” (1798), being the companion poem to that quoted above, p. 650. The second line should read, “Close up these barren leaves.”]

² [From *The Artist and Amateur’s Magazine* (edited by E. V. Rippingille), February 1844, pp. 314–319. Reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. pp. 283–298. In the first edition of *Modern Painters* (p. 522, above) it was stated that “the horizontal lines cast by clouds upon the sea are not shadows, but reflections”; and that “on clear water near the eye there can never be even the appearance of shadow.” This statement being questioned in a letter to the *Art Union Journal* (November 1843), and that letter being itself criticised in a review of *Modern Painters* in *The Artist and Amateur’s Magazine*, p. 262 (December 1843), there appeared in the last-named periodical two letters upon the subject, of which one was from J. H. Maw, the correspondent of the *Art Union*, and the other—that reprinted here—a reply from “The Author of *Modern Painters.*” Ruskin wrote it (as a note in his Diary shows) on Jan. 10, 1844.]

³ [The passages in *Modern Painters* referred to in this letter were considerably altered and enlarged in later editions of the work; the original version is here given at pp. 520–527.]

First, for the experimental proof of my assertion that “on clear water, near the eye, there is no shadow.”¹ Your correspondent’s trial with the tub is somewhat cumbersome and inconvenient;² a far more simple experiment will settle the matter. Fill a tumbler with water; throw into it a narrow strip of white paper; put the tumbler into sunshine; dip your finger into the water between the paper and the sun, so as to throw a shadow, across the paper and on the water. The shadow will of course be distinct on the paper, but on the water absolutely and totally invisible.

This simple trial of the fact, and your explanation of the principle given in your ninth Number,³ are sufficient proof and explanation of my assertion; and if your correspondent requires authority as well as ocular demonstration, he has only to ask Stanfield or Copley Fielding, or any other good painter of sea: the latter, indeed, was the person who first pointed out the fact to me when a boy. What then, it remains to be determined, are those lights and shades on the sea, which, for the sake of clearness, and because they appear such to the ordinary observer, I have spoken of as “horizontal lines,” and which have every appearance of being cast by the clouds like real shadows? I imagined that I had been sufficiently explicit on this subject both at pages 330 and 363:⁴ but your correspondent appears to have confused himself by inaccurately receiving the term *shadow* as if it meant darkness of any kind; whereas my second sentence—“every *darkness* on water is reflection, not shadow,”—might have shown him that I used it in its particular sense, as meaning the absence of *positive* light on a visible surface. Thus, in endeavouring to support his assertion that the shadows on the sea are as distinct as on a grass field, he says that they are so by contrast with the “light *reflected* from its polished surface;” thus showing at once that he has been speaking and thinking all along, not of shadow, but of the absence of reflected light—an absence which is no more shadow than the absence of the image of a piece of white paper in a mirror is shadow on the mirror.

The question, therefore, is one of terms rather than of things; and before proceeding it will be necessary for me to make your correspondent understand thoroughly what is meant by the term shadow as opposed to that of reflection.

Let us stand on the sea-shore on a cloudless night, with a full moon over the sea, and a swell on the water. Of course a long line of splendour will be seen on the waves under the moon, reaching from the horizon to our very feet. But are those waves between the moon and us *actually* more illuminated than any other part of the sea? Not one whit. The whole surface of the sea is under the same full light, but the waves between the moon and us are the only ones which are in a position to reflect that light to our eyes. The sea

¹ [§ 9, p. 521, above.]

² [See *The Artist and Amateur’s Magazine*, p. 313, where the author of the letter, to which this is a reply, adduced in support of his views the following experiment, viz.: to put a tub filled with clear water in the sunlight, and then taking an opaque screen with a hole cut in it, to place the same in such a position as to intercept the light falling upon the tub. Then, he argued, cover the hole over, and the tub will be in shadow; uncover it again, and a patch of light will fall on the water, proving that water is *not* “insusceptible of light as well as shadow.”]

³ [In the review of *Modern Painters* mentioned above.]

⁴ [Of the first edition of the first volume of *Modern Painters*. The passages will be found in this ed. at pp. 521, 550.]

on both sides of that path of light is in perfect darkness—almost black. But is it so from shadow? Not so,—for there is nothing to intercept the moonlight from it: it is so from position, because it cannot reflect any of the rays which fall on it to our eyes, but reflects instead the dark vault of the night sky. Both the darkness and the light on it, therefore—and they are as violently contrasted as may well be—are nothing but reflections, the whole surface of the water being under one blaze of moonlight, entirely unshaded by any intervening object whatsoever.¹

Now, then, we can understand the cause of the *chairoscuro* of the sea by daylight with lateral sun. Where the sunlight reaches the water, every ripple, wave, or swell reflects to the eyes from some of its planes either the image of the sun or some portion of the neighbouring bright sky. Where the cloud interposes between the sun and sea, all these luminous reflections are prevented, and the raised planes of the waves reflect only the dark under-surface of the cloud; and hence, by the multiplication of the images, spaces of light or positive lights and shadows—corresponding to the outlines of the clouds—laterally east, and therefore seen in addition to, and at the same time with, the ordinary or direct reflection, vigorously contrasted, the lights being often a blaze of gold, and the shadows a dark leaden grey; and yet, I repeat, they are no more real lights, or real shadows, on the sea, than the image of a black coat is a shadow on a mirror, or the image of white paper a light upon it.

Are there, then, *no* shadows whatsoever upon the sea? Not so. My assertion is simply that there are none on clear water near the eye. I shall briefly state a few of the circumstances which give rise to real shadow in distant effect.

I. Any admixture of opaque colouring matter, as of mud, chalk, or powdered granite, renders, water capable of distinct shadow, which is cast on the earthy and solid particles suspended in the liquid. None of the seas on our south-eastern coast are so clear as to be absolutely incapable of shade; and the faint tint, though scarcely perceptible to a near observer,* is sufficiently manifest when seen in large extent from a distance, especially when contrasted, as your correspondent says, with reflected lights. This was one reason for my introducing the words—“near the eye.”

There is, however, a peculiarity in the appearances of such shadows which requires especial notice. It is not merely the transparency of water, but its polished surface, and consequent reflective power, which render it incapable of shadow. A perfectly opaque body, if its power of reflection be perfect, receives no shadow (this I shall presently prove); and therefore, in any lustrous body, the incapability of shadow is in proportion to the power of reflection. Now the power of reflection in water varies with the angle of the impinging ray, being of course greatest when that angle is least: and thus, when we look along the water at a low angle, its power of reflection maintains its incapability

* Of course, if water be perfectly foul, like that of the Rhine or Arve, it receives a shadow nearly as well as mud. Yet the succeeding observations on its reflective power are applicable not to it, even in this state.

¹ [It may be worth nothing that the optical delusion above explained is described at some length by Mr. Herbert Spencer (*The Study of Sociology*, 1874, p. 191), as one of the commonest instances of popular ignorance.]

of shadow to a considerable extent, in spite of its containing suspended opaque matter; whereas, when we look *down* upon water from a height, as we then receive from it only rays which have fallen on it at a large angle, a great number of those rays are unreflected from the surface, but penetrate beneath the surface, and are then reflected* from the suspended opaque matter: thus rendering shadows clearly visible which, at a small angle, would have been altogether unperceived.

II. But it is not merely the presence of opaque matter which renders shadows visible on the sea seen from a height. The eye, when elevated above the water, receives rays reflected from the bottom, of which, when *near* the water, it is insensible. I have seen the bottom at seven fathoms, so that I could count its pebbles, from the cliffs of the Cornish coast; and the broad effect of the light and shade of the bottom is discernible at enormous depths. In fact, it is difficult to say at what depth the rays returned from the bottom become absolutely ineffective—perhaps not until we get fairly out into blue water. Hence, with a white or sandy shore, shadows forcible enough to afford conspicuous variety of colour may be seen from a height of two or three hundred feet.

III. The actual colour of the sea itself is an important cause of shadow in distant effect. Of the ultimate causes of local colour in water I am not ashamed to confess my total ignorance, for I believe Sir David Brewster himself has not elucidated them.¹ Every river in Switzerland has a different hue. The Lake of Geneva, commonly blue, appears, under a fresh breeze, striped with blue and bright red; and the hues of coast-sea are as various as those of a dolphin; but, whatever be the cause of their variety, their intensity is, of course, dependent on the presence of sunlight. The sea under shade is commonly of a cold grey hue; in sunlight it is susceptible of vivid and exquisite colouring: and thus the forms of clouds are traced on its surface, not by light and shade, but by variation of *colour*,—by greys opposed to greens, blues to rose-tints, etc. All such phenomena are chiefly visible from a height

* It must always be remembered that there are two kinds of reflection,—one from polished bodies, giving back rays of light unaltered; the other from unpolished bodies, giving back rays of light altered. By the one reflection we see the images of other objects on the surface of the reflecting object; by the other we are made aware of that surface itself. The difference between these two kinds of reflection has not been well worked by writers on optics; but the great distinction between them is, that the rough body reflects most rays when the angle at which the rays impinge is largest, and the polished body when the angle is smallest. It is the reflection from polished bodies exclusively which I usually indicate by the term; and that from rough bodies I commonly distinguish as “positive light;” but as I have here used the term in its general sense, the explanation of the distinction becomes necessary. All light and shade on matter is caused by reflection of some kind; and the distinction made throughout this paper between reflected and positive light, and between *real* and pseudo shadow, is nothing more than the distinction between two kinds of reflection.

I believe some of Bouguer’s² experiments have been rendered inaccurate,—not in their general result, nor in *ratio* of quantities, but in the quantities themselves,—by the difficulty of distinguishing between the two kinds of reflected rays.

¹ [See Ruskin’s *Enquiries on the Causes of the Colour of the Water of the Rhine* (1834), and the note thereto appended in Vol. I. p. 193.]

² [Pierre Bouguer (1693–1758), author of, amongst other works, the *Traité d’Optique sur la Gradation de la Lumière*.]

and a distance; and thus furnished me with additional reasons for introducing the words—"near the eye."

IV. Local colour is, however, the cause of one beautiful kind of chiaroscuro, visible when we are close to the water—shadows cast, not *on* the waves, but through them, as through misty air. When a wave is raised so as to let the sunlight through a portion of its body, the contrast of the transparent chrysoprase green of the illuminated parts with the darkness of the shadowed is exquisitely beautiful.

Hitherto, however, I have been speaking chiefly of the *transparency* of water as the source of its incapability of shadow. I have still to demonstrate the effect of its polished surface.

Let your correspondent pour an ounce or two of quicksilver into a flat white saucer, and, throwing a strip of white paper into the middle of the mercury, as before into the water, interpose an upright bit of stick between it and the sun: he will then have the pleasure of seeing the shadow of the stick sharply defined on the paper and the edge of the saucer while on the intermediate portion of mercury it will be totally invisible.* Mercury is a perfectly opaque body, and its incapability of a shadow is entirely owing to the perfection of its polished surface. Thus, then, whether water be considered as transparent or reflective, (and according to its position it is one or the other, or partially both—for in the exact degree that it *is* the one, it is *not* the other,) it is equally incapable of shadow. But as on distant water, so also on near water, when broken, pseudo, shadows take place, which are in reality nothing more than the aggregates of reflections. In the illuminated space of the wave, from every plane turned towards the sun there flashes an image of the sun; in the *un*-illuminated space there is seen on every such plane only the dark image of the interposed body. Every wreath of the foam, every jet of the spray, reflects in the sunlight a thousand diminished suns, and refracts their rays into a thousand colours; while in the shadowed parts the same broken parts of the wave appear only in dead, cold white; and thus pseudo shadows are caused, occupying the position of real shadows, defined in portions of their edge with equal sharpness: and yet, I repeat, they are no more real shadows than the image of a piece of black cloth is a shadow on a mirror.

But your correspondent will say, "What does it matter to me, or to the artist, whether they *are* shadows or not? They are darkness, and they supply the place of shadows, and that is all I contend for." Not so. They do *not* supply the place of shadows; they are divided from them by this broad distinction, that while shadow causes uniform deepening of the ground-tint in the objects which it affects, these pseudo shadows are merely portions of that ground-tint itself undeeened, but cut out and rendered conspicuous by flashes of light irregularly disposed around it. The ground-tint both of shadowed and illumined parts is precisely the same—a pure pale grey, catching as it moves the hues of the sky and clouds; but on this, in the illumined spaces, there fall touches and flashes of intense reflected light, which are absent in the shadow. If, for the sake of illustration, we consider the wave as hung with a certain quantity of lamps, irregularly disposed, the shape and extent of a shadow on that wave will be marked by the lamps being all put out within its influence, while the tint of the water itself is entirely unaffected by it.

* The mercury must of course be perfectly clean.

The works of Stanfield will supply your correspondent with perfect and admirable illustrations of this principle. His water-tint is equally clear and luminous whether in sunshine or shade; but the whole lustre of the illumined parts is attained by bright isolated touches of reflected light.

The works of Turner will supply us with still more striking examples, especially in cases where slanting sunbeams are cast from a low sun along breakers, when the shadows will be found in a state of perpetual transition, now defined for an instant on a mass of foam, then lost in an interval of smooth water, then coming through the body of a transparent wave, then passing off into the air upon the dust of the spray—supplying, as they do in nature, exhaustless combinations of ethereal beauty. From Turner's habit of choosing for his subjects sea much broken with foam, the shadows in his works are more conspicuous than in Stanfield's, and may be studied to greater advantage. To the works of these great painters, those of Vanderveelde may be opposed for instances of the impossible. The black shadows of this latter painter's near waves supply us with innumerable and most illustrative examples of everything which sea shadows are *not*.

Finally, let me recommend your correspondent, if he wishes to obtain perfect knowledge of the effects of shadow on water, whether calm or agitated, to go through a systematic examination of the works of Turner. He will find *every* phenomenon of this kind noted in them with the most exquisite fidelity. The Alnwick Castle,¹ with the shadow of the bridge cast on the dull surface of the moat, and mixing with the reflection, is the most finished piece of water-painting with which I am acquainted. Some of the recent Venices have afforded exquisite instances of the change of colour in water caused by shadow, the illumined water being transparent and green, while in the shade it loses its own colour, and takes the blue of the sky.

But I have already, sir, occupied far too many of your valuable pages, and I must close the subject, although hundreds of points occur to me which I have not yet illustrated.* The discussion respecting the Grotto of Capri is somewhat irrelevant, and I will not enter upon it, as thousands of laws respecting light and colour are there brought into play, in addition to the water's incapability of shadow.² But it is somewhat singular that the Newtonian principle, which your correspondent enunciates in conclusion, is the *very cause* of the incapability of shadow which he disputes. I am not, however, writing a treatise on optics, and therefore can at present do no more than simply explain what the Newtonian law actually signifies, since, by your correspondent's enunciation of it, "pellucid substances reflect light only from their surfaces," an inexperienced reader might be led to conclude that *opaque* bodies reflected light from something else than their surfaces.

The law is, that whatever number of rays escape reflection at the surface

* Among other points, I have not explained why water, though it has no shadow, has a dark side. The cause of this is the Newtonian law noticed below, that water weakens the rays passing through its mass, though it reflects none; and, also, that it reflects rays from both surfaces.

¹ [See above, pp. 235, 423.]

² [The review of *Modern Painters* had mentioned the Grotto of Capri, near Naples, as "a very beautiful illustration of the great quantity of light admitted or contained in water," and on this Mr. J. H. Maw had commented.]

of water, pass through its body without further reflection, being therein weakened, but not reflected; but that, where they pass *out* of the water again, as, for instance, if there be air-bubbles at the bottom, giving an under-surface, to the water, there a number of rays are reflected from that undersurface, and do *not* pass out of the water, but return to the eye; thus causing the bright luminosity of the under bubbles. Thus water reflects from both its surfaces—it reflects it when passing out as well as when entering; but it reflects none whatever from its own interior mass. If it did, it would be capable of shadow.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS."

III

LETTERS ON "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. I¹

1. TO SAMUEL PROUT²

21st February [1844].³

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been very busy lately at the British Gallery,⁴ etc., or I should before have taken the privilege of replying more fully to your most gratifying letter,⁵ notwithstanding the difficulty I always have in answering your letters, because you put me in a false position, and overwhelm me with expressions of deference to my crude opinions which give me great pain. However, I am not going thereby to be debarred from the advantages I can derive from your advice—and so I have a question or two to ask about the subjects of your last letter.

I do not quite understand the kind of execution to which you refer in the "favourites," and I should like to know definitely, because I constantly find myself pleased with pictures at first sight, which, if I had them by me for some time, I should be the first to condemn; and therefore I am very doubtful of my judgment of the works of painters of which I have no examples on the room walls.

Do you allude to Harding? I think he is going all wrong just now, and losing himself in his execution, but I think his execution *in itself* very wonderful. I scarcely know anything with which I have been more impressed

¹ [The following letters refer in part to Ruskin's work on vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*; but as they were written in reply to remarks made by his friends on vol. i., and as, moreover, they describe the aim and spirit of that earlier work, it seems better to include them here.]

² [The original of this letter is at Brantwood, bound up with the MS. of the Preface to the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* (1879).]

³ [Date added from the postmark, Camberwell Green, Feb. 21, 1844.]

⁴ [*i.e.* the exhibition of the Gallery of British Artists (the gallery of the Society of British Artists) in Suffolk Street, founded in 1824. On Feb. 12, 1844, Ruskin notes in his Diary:—

" . . . Went in with my mother to see British Gallery. Everything atrociously bad—Danby worst of—man of genius indeed—what next? I must take careful notes there, however."]

⁵ [For Prout's opinion of *Modern Painters*, vol. i., see *Præterita*, ii. ch. ix. § 170; and with regard to this letter, see above, Introduction, p. xlii. Prout had apparently felt that the book was a little hard on him, in comparison with some of the author's "favourites."]

than with the *quiet* velocity, the tranquil swiftness of his pencil as he works. I have seen artists blotting and splashing, falling and fumbling to the right in a most wonderful way; but Harding’s cool, straightforward, gliding, decision impressed me exceedingly. The expressions respecting sharp-edged rocks do not indeed agree with those of “softening outline,”¹ but they refer to different circumstances both of subject and aim. Nature does not always show either hard or soft lines—each is necessary to contrast with the other and exhibit it. I have praised Turner quite as much for the sharp edges of his shadows as for the soft outlines of his forms, and the praise of Harding’s execution refers only to his rapid attainment of what he wants of nature’s severer lines—in their right places. He commonly selects subjects which possess their sharper qualities, and effects which induce them; and where he has even erred in the application of his powers, one may still praise the power in itself, and the execution in itself. If you notice the passages relating to Harding, I think you will find that I have rather directed attention to the power of the parts, than to the balance or relations of the whole. But you must tell me what you allude to more distinctly, and then I shall be better able to excuse myself, or shall see where I am wrong.

I have been the more bold in praising Harding, because I know him to be an earnest, industrious, unflinching workman, and never to fail from affectation or indolence. He never lays down a touch without *thinking*; he never lays down any to show his dexterity, or catch the eye. He works with an image of nature in his mind, which may be imperfect or erroneous, but which he *does* struggle for ardently and honestly, and if he ever leaves a stroke crude and raw, it is because he fears it would be still less like what he wanted if he were to retouch it, not because he wishes to *appear* to do all he wants at once. He is going astray just now in blots and body colour, but he will come right again, I think; there is a fine energy about him. If I could only put into him a little feeling like yours of the character of places, and make him understand the beauty and majesty of subject, instead of looking only for a good arrangement and an agreeable chiaroscuro, I think he would be a great man. I fear, however, he has not depth of feeling enough, and that he will remain the mere clever draughtsman. I cannot get him into anything like solemnity or intensity: he puts, coal barges at Venice instead of gondolas, and sinks the Alps for the sake of a post and a cow. Don’t show him this letter, though, for I have derived infinite instruction from him, and shall still; and there is no man whose simplicity of aim and effort I more respect, if I could only get him to draw worse, and feel more.

I have been surprised on looking back to the page to which you refer² to see that you do indeed cut a “sorry figure in the volume,” but you know you are above *Canaletti* still. However, I must so far endeavour to justify myself as to state what I allude to as “mannerism,” etc., and what was running in my head at the time.

I have already said—and I mean to say it more effectively—that I think your drawings the most characteristics, impressive, and mentally truthful of

¹ [The expressions regarding Harding’s “sharp-edged rocks” are in pt. ii. sec. iv. ch. iv. § 10 (p. 479, above); Prout had probably contrasted the passage with what is elsewhere said (eds. 1 and 2) about the need of “soft and melting lines” in certain outlines (p. 323, above).]

² [See above, pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 8 (eds. 1 and 2), p. 256. The reference to Prout’s “mannerism” is in the note to that passage.]

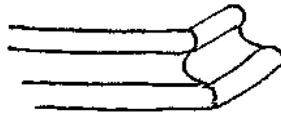
any architectural paintings of the day. I find they retain their power over me without the least diminution, and that there is a refreshing life and force about them which is an unequivocal stamp of always struck with this given for the column (*vide*, temple of drapery, I cannot but Corinthian capital is nor is a piece of outline chipped like to say that *such* mannerism is wrong. If the expression is right, the means must be; but I cannot understand *how* they are right, or how they produce that right impression which I feel they do. And I wish you would tell me how you account to yourself for the truthful effects of means apparently



real genius. But, at the same time, I am wonder when I look too closely at the are produced, and when I see capital of a Corinthian Pallas), and this for a piece of call it—mannerism; for a not composed of such lines, drapery terminated by a thick stone. Yet far be it from me

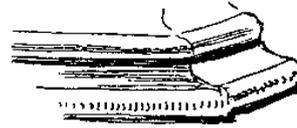


illegitimate, and be so, just as Venice, the base worked thus, etc. lines in nature,



Harding would have given thus (not very delicate, certainly, but still you will understand what I mean). Now Harding's would be *right* in means, and yours are certainly wrong or inadequate, and yet your work, as a whole, produces tenfold the impression. The meaning of this I cannot fathom. I don't know anything that puzzles me more. I wish you would kindly give me your own explanation of it.

which you must yourself feel to much as I do. In your Piazzetta, of the column on the right is Now there are of course no such but delicate shadows, which



I have much more to say, but I have not time to say it now. I know you wish me to be open with you, and indeed you have full right to know all my feelings on this and every other subjects connected with art. I will trespass upon you again soon; meantime, all join in kindest regards and best wishes for your health and happiness. I am much delighted by the expressions of fresh and poetical feeling which occur in your letters: they are not those of deadened emotion or weakened power. Long may you so feel! Take a little ramble south this summer, and let me meet you in Auvergne, or on the Lago Maggiore; you will find yourself as young as ever—there.¹

Ever, my dear sir,

Gratefully and respectfully² yours,

J. RUSKIN.

SAMUEL PROUT, Esq., F.S.A.,
HASTINGS.

¹ [Ruskin was abroad in 1844 from May 14 to August 24, but it does not appear that Prout joined him. Prout was at this time in poor health, and very low-spirited: see the letters in J. L. Roget's *History of the Old Water-Colour Society*, ii. p. 55; he died in 1852. He had been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1830.]

² [Corrected from "affectionately."]

2. TO THE REV. OSBORNE GORDON¹

March 10th, 1844.

DEAR GORDON,— . . . I received with much gratitude your kind note. I wish you had spoken on the subject while you were here,² as it is scarcely one whose numerous bearings can be fitly touched by the slow travel of the pen. I imagined there was something on your kind when I saw you; there was a slight air of disapproving uncomfortableness in you which I knew and could not mistake; it used to come sometimes in '39 when I couldn't read my Aristophanes.

Well, you ask me if the cultivation of taste be the proper "ergon" of a man's life,³ and you desire me to consider the matter as a thesis, separate from my own case. This is impolitic of you, for you thereby deprive yourself of a most powerful ally—conscience. If you were to put it straight to *me* to say whether *I* am right in thinking of nothing but pictures, I might possibly say No; but if you put it to me whether all men who are living happy lives in the cultivation of art and observance of nature, are also living sinful lives—I should be inclined to take a very different view of the question, and still say *No*—and a much louder, *No* than the preceding; therefore, if you please, I will give you the advantage which you would deny yourself, and take my own case for discussion, especially as therein I am better acquainted with ultimate motives than in other people's.

First, then, your expression—cultivation of *taste*—is too vague in two ways;—it does not note the differences between cultivation of one's own taste—and of other people's;—and it leaves open to various interpretations that most vague of all words—*taste*—which means, in some people's mouth, the faculty of knowing a Claude from a copy, and, in others, the passionate love of all the works of God. Now observe—I am not engaged in selfish cultivation of critical acumen, but in ardent endeavour to spread the love and knowledge of art among all classes;—and secondly, that the love and knowledge I would communicate are not of technicalities and fancies of men, but of the universal system of nature—as interpreted and rendered stable by art;—and, thirdly, observe that all that I hope to be able to do will be accomplished, if my health holds, in two or three years at the very utmost;⁴ and then consider whether the years from four to seven and twenty could be, on the whole, much better employed—or *are*, on the whole, much better employed by most men—than in showing the functions, power, and value of an art little understood; in exhibiting the perfection, desirableness, and instructiveness of all features, small or great, of external nature, and directing the public to expect and the artist to intend—an earnest and elevating *moral* influence in all that they admire and achieve.

¹ [For whom, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. §§ 8, 10. This letter is printed from a copy (made probably at his father's instance) now at Brantwood. It should be compared with the Letter to Dale, written in 1841, in Vol. I. p. 395.]

² [Gordon, as Ruskin's Diary shows, had been on a visit at Denmark Hill from Jan. 15–19.]

³ [See Aristotle's discussion of man's peculiar work or function, in the *Ethics*, book i. ch. vii. § 10.]

⁴ [As the pamphlet originally projected became a treatise, and the treatise a library, so the "two or three years" became a lifetime.]

But you will say that I am not yet capable of doing this. Possibly not; yet I think I am quite as capable of *Preaching* on the beauty of the creation, of which I know something, as of preaching on the beauty of a system of salvation of which I know nothing. If I have not power of converting men to an earnest feeling for nature, I should have still less of turning them to earnestness in religion. The one is surely a lighter task than the other; you were probably not aware that I had any such consistent and important design, and indeed at first I had not: it is from meditation on my subject only that I have seen to what it will lead me, and what I have to do. The summer before last, —it was on a Sunday, I remember, at Geneva,¹—we got a paper from London containing a review of the Royal Academy; it put me in a rage, and that forenoon in church (it's an odd thing, but all my resolutions of which anything is to come are invariably formed, whether I will or no, in church—I scheme all thro' the litany)—that forenoon, I say, I determined to write a pamphlet and blow the critics out of the water. On Monday we went to Chamonix, and on Tuesday I got up at four in the morning, expecting to have finished my pamphlet by eight. I set to work, but the red light came on the *Done du Gouté*—I couldn't sit it—and went out for a walk. Wednesday, the same thing happened, and I put off my pamphlet till I should get a wet day. The wet day didn't come—and consequently, before I began to write, I had got more materials together than were digestible in an hour or two. I put off my pamphlet till I got home. I meditated all the way down the Rhine, found that *demonstration* in matters of art was no such easy matter, and the pamphlet turned into a volume. Before the volume was half way dealt with it hydraized into three heads, and each head became a volume. Finding that nothing could be done except on such enormous scale, I determined to take the hydra by the horns, and produce a complete treatise on landscape art.

Then came the question, what is the real end of landscape art? and then the conviction that it had been entirely degraded and mistaken, that it might become an instrument of gigantic moral power, and that the demonstration of this high function, and the elevation of the careless sketch or conventional composition into the studied sermon and inspired poem, was an end worthy of my utmost labour—and of no short expenditure of life. "*Soit,*" perhaps you will say, "I give you till twenty-seven to do that, and what will you do next?" Heaven knows! Something assuredly, but I must know my feelings at twenty-seven, before I can tell what. I cannot prepare for it at present, and therefore I need not know what it is to be. I shouldn't be surprised to find myself taking lay orders and going to preach, for a time at least, in Florence or Rome. One thing I shan't do, and that is preach or life in London. But I wish you would, when you have leisure, give me your opinion as to what would be my duty, and in doing so, keep in mind these following characteristics of my mind:—

First, its two great prevalent tendencies are to mystery in what it contemplates and analysis² in what it studies. It is externally occupied in watching vapours and splitting straws (Query, an unfavourable tendency in a sermon).

¹ [See Introduction, p. xxiii.]

² [See *Fors Clavigera*, Letters liv., where Ruskin refers to the "habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind" as "the main practical faculty of my life, causing Mazzini to say of me . . . that I had 'the most analytic mind in Europe.'"]

Secondly, it has a rooted horror of neat windows and clean walls (Query, a dangerous disposition in a village).

Thirdly, it is slightly heretical as to the possibility of anybody's being damned (Q. an immoral state of feeling in a clergyman).

Fourthly, it has an inveterate hatred of people who turn up the white of their eyes (Q. an uncharitable state of feeling towards a pious congregation).

Fifthly, it likes not the company of clowns—except in a pantomime (Q. an improper state of feeling towards country squires).

Sixthly and seventhly, it likes solitude better than company, and stones¹ better than sermons.

Take all these matters into serious consideration. You used to tell my mother, I believe, that I had more brains than the average quantity. I believe you were wrong, and that the only superiority in my make is a keen sensibility to the beauty of colour and form, and a love of that which is pure and simple. I find I forget things more than others—and more totally—that I am dull and slow in conversation—in fact, that whatever capacity I have is the result of careful training and fond love of solitary nature. I believe God gives every man certain gifts which enable him to fulfil some particular function, and I don't think my fondness for hills and streams—being, as it is, so strong in me as to amount to an instinct—was given me merely to be thwarted. I am very sorry to have written so much all about myself, but I assure you I often think of these things, and your letter gave me an opportunity of talking of them which I was glad of. At your leisure send me some of your thoughts on the matter. We are all glad to hear Miss G. is better, etc., etc.

Ever with kindest regards,

Etc., etc.

[The copy omits the signature.]

3. TO THE REV. H. G. LIDDELL²

October 12, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR,— I was on the very point of writing to beg for your opinion and assistance on some matters of art, when your invaluable letter arrived. I cannot tell you how glad and grateful it makes me; glad for its encouragement, and grateful for its advice. For indeed it is not self-confidence, but

¹ [Ruskin used to say that if his natural bent in this direction had been more exclusively developed, he might have been "the first geologist of his time in Europe;" see *Præterita*, i. ch. v. § 109.]

² [Then Greek Reader in Christ Church; afterwards Dean. For Ruskin's friendship with him, see *Præterita*, i. ch. xi. § 230. This letter is reprinted from *Henry George Liddell: A Memoir*, by the Rev. H. L. Thompson, 1899, pp. 216–222. Liddell's letter, to which Ruskin's is a reply, is not to be found. "He seems," says Mr. Thompson, "to have commented unfavourably on the style in which the volume was got up, and to have made various suggestions as to phrases and modes of expression, and some criticisms on the main thesis of the work." In describing his undergraduate days, Ruskin says that Liddell "was the only man in Oxford among the masters of my day who knew anything of art; and his keen saying of Turner, that he 'had got

only eagerness and strong feeling which have given so overbearing a tone to much of what I have written. I *need* some support, considering the weight and numbers of those against me; and you will, I am sure, believe me when I say that I looked to none in the whole circle of the friends whom I most respect with so much anxiety as to you: though I never ventured to hope for more than *pardon* from you for one half of the book, even if (which I little anticipated) you should take the trouble of looking over it at all. You may judge, therefore, of the infinite pleasure which your kind letter gave me: and, from the respect which you know I felt for all your opinions (even when I, in my ignorance, was little capable of understanding them, and felt most inclined to dispute them), you may judge of the deference. I would yield to them now, when a little more acquaintance with high art has brought me into nearer sympathy with you. I wish there was something in your letter which I could obey without assenting to, that I might prove to you my governability. But alas! there is nothing of all the little that you say in stricture which I do not feel, and which I have not felt for some time back. In fact, on looking over the book the other day, after keeping my mind off the subject entirely for two or three months, I think I could almost have anticipated your every feeling; and I determined on the instant to take in future a totally different tone. In fact, the *Blackwood* part was put in to please some friends (especially one to whom I am much indebted for his trusting me with his drawings),¹ and the booksellers. The title-page is booksellers' work too, and was put in in defiance of my earnest wishes.² I let it go, for I considered myself writing for the public, not for men of taste, and I thought the booksellers knew more about the public than I. I was wrong, however, and will allow nothing of the kind in future.

But it seems to me that the pamphleteer manner is not confined to these passages: it is ingrained throughout. There is a nasty, snappish, impatient, half-familiar, half-claptrap web of young-mannishness everywhere. This was, perhaps, to be expected from the haste in which I wrote. I am going to try for better things; for a serious, quiet, earnest, and simple manner, like the execution I want in art. Forgive me for talking of myself and my intentions thus, but your advice will be so valuable to me that I know you will be glad to give it; especially as the matter I have in hand now³ relates not more to Turner than to that pure old art which I have at last learnt (thanks to you, Acland, and Richmond) to love.

As soon as I began to throw my positions respecting the beautiful into

hold of a false ideal,' would have been infinitely helpful to me at that time, had he explained and enforced it" (*Præterita*, i. ch. xi. § 230). Many years afterwards (in 1879), Liddell, in a letter to Ruskin, thus described his first sight of *Modern Painters*: "Thirty-six years ago I was at Birmingham, examining the boys in the great school there. In a bookseller's window I saw *Modern Painters*, by a Graduate of Oxford. I knew nothing of the book, or by whom it was written. But I bought it, and read it eagerly. It was like a revelation to me, as it has been to many since. I have it by me—my children have read it: and I think with a pleasure, a somewhat melancholy pleasure, on those long past days." It was largely through Liddell's influence that Ruskin was in 1869 appointed to the Slade Professorship of Fine Art at Oxford (see Introduction to the volume containing *Lectures on Art*.)

¹ [Mr. Bicknell or Mr. Windus, see above, pp. 244, 234.]

² [See Introduction, p. xxxi.]

³ [The Second volume of *Modern Painters*.]

form, I found myself necessarily thrown on the human figure for great part of my illustrations; and at last, after having held off in fear and trembling as long as I could, I saw there was no help for it, and that it must be taken up to purpose. So I am working at home from Fra Angelico, and at the British Museum from the Elgins. I passed through Paris in my return from the Alps, when I at last found myself *up* to admiration of Titian, and past Rubens (in matter of colour), and now, therefore, I think I shall do, when I have given a year or two to these pure sources. I don't think, with my heart full of Fra Angelico,¹ and my eyes of Titian, that I shall fall back into the pamphleteer style again.

Don't suppose, however, with all this, that I am going to lose Turner. On the contrary, I am more *épris* than ever, and that especially with his latest works—Goldau, etc.²

Monomania, you think. Possibly; nevertheless, I should not have spoken so audaciously as I have under the influence of any conviction, however strong, had I not been able to trace, in my education, some grounds for supposing that I might in deed and in truth judge more justly of him than others can. I mean, my having been taken to mountain scenery when a mere child,³ and allowed, at a time when boys are usually learning their grammar, to ramble on the shores of Como and Lucerne; and my having since, regardless of all that usually occupies the energies of the traveller—art, antiquities, or people—devoted myself to pure, wild, solitary, natural scenery; with a most unfortunate effect, of course, as far as general or human knowledge is concerned, but with most beneficial effect on that peculiar sensibility to the beautiful in all things that God has made, which it is my present aim to render more universal. I think, too, that just as it is impossible to trace the refinements of natural form, unless with the pencil in the hand—the eye and mind never being keen enough until excited by the effort to imitate—so it is nearly impossible to observe the refinement of Turner unless one is in the habit of copying him. I began copying him when I was fourteen,⁴ and so was early initiated into much which escapes even the observation of artists, whose heads are commonly too full of their own efforts and productions to give fair attention to those of others. That it was politic to give expression to all my feelings respecting Turner might well be denied, had my object in the beginning been what it is now. But I undertook, not a treatise on art or nature, but, as I thought, a small pamphlet defending a noble artist against a strong current of erring public opinion. The thing swelled under my hands, and it was not till I had finished the volume that I had any idea to what I might be led. I saw that I should have to recast the whole, some time or other; and was too impatient to do *something* to do so at once. So I let it go on as it was. The very end and aim of the whole affair was Turner; and when I let the second edition appear without alteration, it was because I found my views on many points altering and expanding so rapidly that I should never have got the thing together again until the whole of the following portions were completed. So I determined to let it alone, write

¹ [See the last words in vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*.]

² [For these later drawings, see above, Introduction, p. xxiii.]

³ [See Vol. I. Introduction, p. xxv.]

⁴ [Or rather thirteen, *i.e.* in 1833, when he began copying the vignettes in Rogers *Italy*; see Vol. I., Introduction, p. xxix.]

the rest first, and then recast the whole. I think I shall have it too long by me to run the risk of flippancy of manner again, and the illustrations will render it unnecessary for me to run into caricatured description. I am going to Paris for some time, and then to Florence, before I put it finally together; chiefly to study the early Italian schools, for I want to bring the public, as far as I can, into something like a perception that religion must be, and always has been, the ground and moving spirit of all great art.¹ It puts me into a desperate rage when I hear of Eastlake's buying Guidos for the National Gallery.² He at least ought to know better—not that I should anticipate anything from looking at his art, but from his reputed character and knowledge.

I shall be, as you will easily conceive, no little time in getting my materials together. In fact, I have to learn half of what I am to teach. The engravers plague me sadly, and I am obliged at last to take the etching into my own hands, and this demands much time. In fact, I ought to have good ten years' work before I produce anything; but the evil is crying, and I must have at it. I hope in twelve or eighteen months to see my way to a sort of an end; and however imperfectly (owing to my narrow reading and feeble hand in *exhibiting* what I feel), I think I shall yet throw the principles of art into a higher system than ordinary writers look for: showing that the principles of beauty are the same in all things, that its characters are typical of the Deity, and of the relations which in a perfect state we are to hold with Him: and that the same great laws have authority in *all* art, and constitute it great or contemptible in their observance or violation.

And now can you tell me of any works which it is necessary I should read on a subject which has given me great trouble—the essence and operation of the imagination as it is concerned with art? Who is the best metaphysician who has treated the subject generally, and do you recollect any passages in Plato or other of the Greeks particularly bearing upon it?

Do you know Eastlake at all, or any man connected with the National Gallery? I hope you do all you can to put a stop to this buying of Guidos and Rubenses. Rubens may teach us much of mere art, but there is plenty of him in the country, and for Guido there is not even this excuse. We want Titians, we want Paul Veroneses. Our English school must have colour. Above all, we want the only man who seems to me to have united the most intense feeling with all that is great in the artist as such—John Bellini. I don't hope yet for Giotto or Fra Angelico; but if they would give us John Bellini and Titian I shouldn't grumble. I intend some in time in my life to have a general conflagration of Murillos,³ by-the-bye: I suppose more

¹ [In looking back upon his art-teaching, Ruskin said in his Oxford course—"Readings in *Modern Painters*"—that the first thing he had tried to show was "That the life of Art was in Religion." See ch. ii. of the Oxford *Lectures on Art* for his summing-up in this connection.]

² [Sir Charles (then Mr.) Eastlake had been appointed Keeper of the National Gallery in 1843. Among the first purchases made during his term of office were Guido's "Christ and St. John" (No. 191), "Lot and his Daughters" (No. 193), and "Susannah and the Elders" (No. 196). For a reference to the last, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 24. Ruskin attacked the purchase of these pictures in a letter to the *Times* (Jan. 7, 1847); see *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 64.]

³ [See below, p. 672, and *cf.* above, p. 635. *n.*]

corruption of taste and quenching of knowledge may be traced to him than to any man who ever touched canvas.

Pardon the villainous writing of this letter. I have been much interrupted, and have scarcely had a moment to myself, and I don't like to leave your kind one longer unanswered, or I would write rather more legibly.

Ever, my dear Sir,
Sincerely and respectfully yours,
J. RUSKIN.

4. TO THE SAME¹

October 15, 1844.

MY DEAR LIDDELL,—You might think it affectation, were I to tell you the awkwardness with which I obey you, unless you considered the especially *childlike* position in which my good stars place me; for while many not older than I are already entrusted with the highest responsibilities that can demand or arouse the energy of manly character, I am yet as much at my ease as I was ten years ago, leading still the quiet life of mere feeling and reverie,

"That hath no need of a remoter charm
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye;"²

and, in fact, feeling scarcely any difference in myself from the time of impositions and collections,³ except in so far that I have discovered a great part of my time to have been lost, and made my way to a clearer view of certain ends which have been forwarded in nothing *but* vision; that I feel particularly ashamed of much that I have done, and particularly agonized about much that I have not done; that I should not now write letters of advice to Henry Acland, nor spend my time at Rome in sketching house-corners.⁴ But these changes of feeling render me, if anything, less disposed to unpupil myself than I was before; and therefore I obey you, though most willingly and, gratefully, yet under protest, and only because there are better means of showing respect than mere matters of form.

I could say more on this point, but I don't want to let your letter remain unanswered two days, and as I am going early into town to-morrow I must go on to some things I have to say about the points noticed in your letter. I am glad of your countenance in my opposition of studies, though I am a little afraid that such versatility of admiration—though it may make a good judge of art—makes a bad master of it. Nevertheless, for my present ends it is better it should be so. But though I can turn, and am glad to be able to turn,

¹ [Reprinted from Mr. Thompson's *Memoir*, pp. 222–228. To the preceding letter 'Liddell seems to have written a long reply, and at the close to have desired his correspondent to drop for the future the formal style of address, and to call him simply by his surname.']

² [Wordsworth: *Tintern Abbey*.]

³ [For this Oxford term (College examinations), see *Præterita*, i. ch. xi. § 220.]

⁴ [As, *e.g.*, in the Piazza del Pianto; see Vol. I. pl. 15 and p. lvii.]

to the most opposed sources of thought and characters of beauty, surely we ought to demand in each kind the perfect and the best examples. The world is so old, that there is no dearth of things first-rate; and life so short, that there is no excuse for looking at things second-rate. Let us then go to Rubens for blending, and to Titian for quality, of colour; to Cagliari for daylight, and Rembrandt for lamplight; to Buonarotti for awfulness, and to Van Huysum¹ for precision. Each of their excellences has its use and order, and reference to certain modes and periods of thought, each its right place and proper dignity, incompatible. Any man is worthy of respect in his own rank, who has pursued any truth or attainment with all his heart and strength. But I dread and despise the artists who are respectable in many things, and have been excelled by *some one* in everything. They are surely the more dangerous; for mediocrity in much is more comprehensible and attractive than the superiority in singleness, which has abandoned much to gain one end. Murillo seems to me a peculiar instance of this. His drawing is free and not ungraceful, but most imperfect, and slurred to gain a melting quality of colour. That colour is agreeable because it has no force nor severity; but it is morbid, sunless, and untrue. His expression is sweet, but shallow; his models amiable, but vulgar and mindless; his chiaroscuro commonplace, opaque, and conventional: and yet all this so agreeably combined, and animated by a species of waxwork life, that it is sure to catch everybody who has not either very high feeling or strong love of truth, and to keep them from obtaining either. He sketched well from a model, and now and then a single figure is very fine. He was not a *bad* painter, but he exercises a most fatal influence on the English school, and therefore I owe him an especial grudge. I have never entered the Dulwich Gallery for fourteen years without seeing at least three copyists before the Murillos. I *never* have seen *one* before the Paul Veronese.

Next, with respect to Turner. I hope we are not opposed so much as you think. You know all my praise relates to his fidelity to, and love of, nature; it does not affirm in him the highest degree of solemnity, or of purity, in feeling or choice; and there is one circumstance which it seems to me has great influence on the minds of most men of feeling with respect to the works of the old masters as compared with him. On this subject—the creation of *pure* light and the sacrifice of everything to that end—I shall have much to say which (if it has not already occurred to you,—as it is most probable it should) will be more pleasantly read in print than, in these hieroglyphics. Putting, however, this great source of power out of the question (and how much is involved in it I am not prepared to say), Turner will still appear rather in the light of a man of great power, drawing good indiscriminately, and therefore necessarily in very different kinds and degrees, out of everything, than

¹ [In his 1844 Diary (August), among notes on the Louvre, is the following on No. 505 (but the numbers have since been changed; it is a landscape):—

“A landscape by Van Huysum, who seems to me the most delicate of the Dutch painters, in which individual leaves of trees and foreground are given or attempted, and the futility of the effort shown by the entire spottiness and pettiness of all the near objects, though the nearest, especially the details of leafage on the right, are delightful from their delicacy and precision, being there in their place. The man has fine feeling; the distance is rich, glowing, and full of Italian dignity, and his knowledge of details is here useful to him, from his being at once compelled and able, to avoid them or analyze and generalize them.”]

of one devoting his energies to the full development of any particular moral emotion. He is rather the philosopher who perceives and equally exhibits all, than the ardent lover who raises some peculiar object by all the glories of imagination and with all the powers of his heart. His *powers* I think you never denied; at least when I first showed you my "Winchelsea" with the troop of soliders at Oxford¹ you said, "Yes, just like him, what no one else could do, but—" I am not quite sure what the particular "but" was; whatever, it was, the *powers* were admitted. These powers then seemed employed with a versatility, which gives a result in art very much like what *Don Juan* is in literature, in everything but its want of moral feeling; a result containing passages and truths of every character, the most exquisite tenderness, the most gignatic power, the most playful familiarity, the most keen philosophy and overwhelming passion; and yet the whole will not produce on most men's minds the effect of a great poem. It does on mine; but certainly not to the degree which it might perhaps have done had there been less power and more unity. But it is great in its kind, and there is a system in both the art and the poem which may be reasoned out, and a great whole arrived at by reflection, as out of the chaos of human life and circumstances of its Providence. You must have felt this, I think, in looking over the "Liber Studiorum," in which you pass from the waste of English lonely moorland with the gallowstree ghastly against the dying twilight, to the thick leaves and dreamy winds of the Italian woods; from a study of cocks and hens scratching on a dunghill to the cold, slow colossal coil of the Jason serpent; from the sport of children about a willowy pond to the agony of Rizpah.²

Turner, as far as I can ascertain anything of his past life, is a man of inferior birth and no education, arising at a time when there were no masters to guide him to great ends, and by the necessity and closeness of his study of nature withdrawn from strong human interests; endowed with singular delicacy of perception and singular tenderness of heart, but both associated with quick temper and most determined obstinacy, acting constantly under momentary impulses, but following out inflexibly whatever he has begun. Considering the little feeling for high art which, till within the last ten years, existed in this country, and the absence of sympathy with him in all but what he felt himself was the mere repetition of things bygone, and which could not be bettered, we cannot but expect that there should be something to regret in his career, and something wanting to his attainments; and we must be content to receive the great and new lessons which he has read to us out of the material world, without quarrelling with the pettinesses and inconsistencies, perhaps unavoidable unless where art is the minister to vast national sympathies and the handmaid of religion.

I had much more to say, but my time is gone. I will attend to all you advise respecting the next book. I have not spoken about your kind defence of the present one, but cannot now. I think I shall be pretty sure not to use the language of any particular Church, for I don't know exactly which one I belong to. A Romanist priest, after a long talk under a tree in a shower at St. Martin's, assured me I was quite as good a Catholic as he. However, the religious language I shall use in what references I may have to make will

¹ [The drawing was given to Ruskin by his father on his twenty-first birthday at Oxford: see *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 13.]

² [Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi.]

be simply that of the Bible;¹ and a few allusions to the doctrine of the Trinity and the general attributes of the Deity will be all I shall require. Thank you much for your reference to Vaughan about imagination, etc. Thank you also for your careful notes of the *errata* in the old book, which I shall take care to alter.

If the only and single result of my labour had been that which you mention, some rest to your mind in a period of pain, it would have been enough reward for me, even without the privilege which the close of your letter allows me, of continuing,

My dear Liddell,

Very truly and gratefully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

5. TO THE SAME²

MY DEAR LIDDELL,—I forgot when I last wrote, to speak of Greswell's paper respecting Art professorships—several people have been talking to me on the subject—everybody says *something* should be done—and nobody says what. Is any combined effort being made at Oxford—any petition to be signed or measure taken which I can any way forward—as of course I should be most desirous so to do. Greswell's paper³ is very valuable and interesting—and I wish it had been a little expanded and generally circulated—more especially that he had dwelt more distinctly on the relations of Art to Religion—as—under this point of view—I conceive he might have brought his measures forward not merely as expedient or desirable—but even as a matter of duty in no light degree incumbent on the members of the University. There appears to me but one obstacle in your way—you may get your pictures—your gallery—your

¹ [Every reader will be struck by the number of Bible words and phrases in Ruskin's books. It is partly in order to call attention to this point that the editors supply, no doubt otherwise superfluously, the references as they occur. See also *The Bible References of John Ruskin*, by Mary and Ellen Gibbs (George Allen: 1898).]

² [Not hitherto published; printed by permission of Mrs. Liddell from the original among the papers of the late Dean. One or two words in it are not very legible. It is interesting to have Ruskin's remarks on the difficulty of filling a post which he was called on to "create" in 1870.]

³ [Richard Greswell (1800–1881), fellow and tutor of Worcester College, Oxford; opened a subscription on behalf of National Education in 1843 with a donation of £

1000; one of the founders of the Museum and Ashmolean Society, Oxford. The paper referred to is *On Education in the Principles of Art: a Paper read before the Members of the Ashmolean Society*, by the Rev. Richard Greswell, B.D.: Oxford, 1844. He called attention to the absence of works in English on the philosophy of art, and continues: "It is with a view to the supplying of this positive and notorious defect in our system of education, and as a salutary check upon that exclusive preference of the useful, as distinguished from the ornamental, and, particularly, upon that almost idolatrous love of money, which is becoming, every day, more and more characteristic of the English nation,—that I think it desirable that three Professorships of the Theory of Art (and especially of Christian art) should be founded by Royal Authority, one in London . . . and the other two at Oxford and at Cambridge." What he urged was done, twenty-six years later, by the munificence of Felix Slade, and Ruskin, the first Slade Professor at Oxford, certainly discharged the duties of the office in the spirit recommended by Greswell.]

authority—and your thirty thousand pounds—but what will you do for a *Professor*? Where can you lay finger on the man who has at once the artistical power to direct your taste in matters technical—and the high feeling and scholarship necessary to show the end of the whole matter? There is—strictly speaking—not a man in England who can colour—except Etty—and even he not securely[?]; and I don't like the idea of a professor of painting with no eye for colour. Eastlake would, I suppose, be the man generally thought of. A gentleman and a scholar he may be—a man of some feeling too—of more than the generality of R.A.'s—but, it seems to me, thoroughly shallow with a tinge[?] of the Annual and drawing-room—(witness Heloise's velvet sleeves)—his types of the human face are of low standard—he draws poorly—and cannot colour at all.¹ I don't mean to say that a man may not be able to teach without being able to realise what he desires—but in the works of every man from whose teaching I should hope effect—I should expect a fire—energy—and aim at the right—however failing or shortcoming—not a polite or agreeable mediocrity. Mulready is a better artist than Eastlake, but I know not his attainments in literature—nor his tone of feeling. I should fear a tendency Dutchward in him. Redgrave's delicate domesticity would hardly make much of the drawings of Michael Angelo. Whom else can you name—Not, I presume, Howard—nor Sir Martin—nor Maclise?²

I daresay you thought my last letter about Turner very confused from my not distinguishing between single pictures (as poems in themselves) and the mass of his works. But the fact is I am much in the habit of considering his pictures in their relations to each other—as a body of writing—rather than as separate works³—and what I said of them as a mass will apply to the greater portion of them individually. But it is always unfair to look at them individually—because—especially in such works as the England and Wales—every one of them has a certain part to play and story to tell and gap to fill with references to the rest; and on several of the subjects in that work being objected to—as uninteresting—and others—*similar* to those more *agreeable* being requested—he said at once—No, this I have *done*, *that* I have not done, I will *repeat* nothing and I will omit nothing.

So that his aim is in fact as much historical as imaginative—historical of all facts and phases of nature—and he becomes fully impressive and powerful only so often as nature does so herself, endeavouring, however, always whatever he deals with, to treat in a *great* manner—though not always in a poetical one.

Hence also he will not perhaps exercise so much power over the imagination as an inferior artist might—with another system. For it seems to me that one great secret in awakening the imaginative faculties is to present to it features in some respect resembling what it would have coined out for itself—

¹ [For another reference to Eastlake, see preceding letter, p. 670; for a later, *Academy Notes*, 1855, s. No. 120. In 1848 Ruskin reviewed Eastlake's *Materials for a History of Oil Painting in the Quarterly* (reprinted in *On the Old Road*, 1885 and 1899, vol. i.). “Heloise” was Eastlake's picture, No. 48, in the Academy of 1844.]

² [For Mulready, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., Addenda and Epilogue. For Redgrave, *Academy Notes*, 1855, s. No. 240. Henry Howard, R.A. (1769–1847), was at this time Professor of Painting in the Royal Academy; Sir Martin Shee, its President. For Maclise, see above, p. 51.]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30, where Ruskin gives Turner's saying, “What is the use of them, but together?”]

if spontaneously exciting. But not to present much matter of a new and direct *information*, otherwise the intellect is set to work—and the imagination overpowered. Now, most people's imaginations are full of ideas which however *elegant*, are crude and wrong in many respects—and when we correct these by presenting to them refined truth, we do not supply excitement to the mind as it *is*, but we try to change it and give it new ideas, an operation in some degree painful and requiring effort. So that when—as Perugino would—we set the imagination to work by presenting to it a type of tree like this,¹ we do so far more effectually and nobly than if we gave to our type all the imperfection with which the mind is *unacquainted*, and so instead of rousing the creative faculty—such as it is—with its own materials, demanded the attention of the intellectual faculties to give it new ones. Hence the merit and *necessity* of the rigid manner of the backgrounds of these glorious old works, in which we find *refinement* of the highest order, realising what the imagination would naturally suggest, but no effort at teaching or informing. I have worked out this subject pretty fully, and if I do not change my mind with respect to it, I shall hope to have your opinion respecting it when presented in more legible form—meantime I merely mention it as one of the reasons which prevent great modern works from having the same effect as the old—for the modern are full of information—crowded with facts entirely unknown to the observer—types with which his imagination has never been familiarised, and which therefore have no effect whatever by association, or any other of those delicately toned cords by which more familiar nature is bound to the heart—hence they excite the passions little and have no historical effects;—no carrying back into past time—they are the world as it was and is, not our *ideas* of things past away—and they appeal only to the sense of pure—inherent beauty, a sense nearly, if not altogether, wanting in many men.

The art of the Intellect and of the heart must thus be in some degree opposed—but I think I see my way to a partial reconciliation of them in the ideal at which I am aiming, remembering always that there *is* a beauty which may make *thought* impossible, which may fill the soul with an intense—changeless. less *qewria*.²

Of course none of these circumstances in any degree justify the landscape painters for their specific errors and imperfections, but they may, I imagine, account for much of what is impressive in them in spite of such errors. The backgrounds of the great religionists have the science of the naturalist and the quaintness of the imagination together. *They* are the people to be looked to—only the more knowledge we put into the spectator—the less quaintness we require, at least so it seems to me—but I beg your pardon for all this, which I merely go through that you may know exactly how far I am disposed to go—with modern art—and so tell me where you think I am wrong.

Yours ever most sincerely,

J. RUSKIN.

¹ [A rough sketch of a feathery tree, in the style of Perugino, is here given in the original.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. ii. § i., and cf. *Letters to a College Friend*, in Vol. I., p. 425.]

IV
PREFACES TO SELECTIONS FROM
“MODERN PAINTERS”

1. FRONDES AGRESTES¹

(1875)

I HAVE been often asked to republish the first book of mine which the public noticed, and which, hitherto, remains their favourite, in a more easily attainable form than that of its existing editions. I am, however, resolved never to republish the book as a whole; some parts of it being, by the established fame of Turner, rendered unnecessary; and others having been always useless, in their praise of excellence which the public will never give the labour necessary to discern. But, finding lately that one of my dearest friends, who, in advanced age, retains the cheerfulness and easily delighted temper of bright youth, had written out, for her own pleasure, a large number of passages from *Modern Painters*, it seemed to me certain that what such a person felt to be useful to herself, could not but be useful also to a class of readers whom I much desired to please, and who would sometimes enjoy, in my early writings, what I never should myself have offered them. I asked my friend, therefore, to add to her own already chosen series, any other passages she thought likely to be of permanent interest to general readers; and I have printed her selections in absolute submission to her judgment, merely arranging the pieces she sent me in the order which seemed most convenient for the reciprocal bearing of their fragmentary meanings, and adding here and there an explanatory note; or, it may be, a deprecatory one, in cases where my mind had changed. That she did me the grace to write every word with her own hands, adds, in my eyes, and will, I trust, in the readers' also, to the possible claims of the little books on their sympathy; and although I hope to publish some of the scientific and technical portions of the original volumes in my own large editions, the selections here made by my friend under her quiet woods at Coniston—the Unter-Walden of England—will, I doubt not, bring within better reach of many readers, for whom I am not now able myself to judge or choose, such service as the book was ever capable of rendering, in the illustration of the powers of nature, and intercession for her now too often despised and broken peace.

HERNE HILL,
5th December, 1874.

¹[See above, Introduction, p. xlviii., and Bibliographical Note, p. lxi.]

2. IN MONTIBUS SANCTIS¹

(1884)

I RECEIVE at present with increasing frequency requests or counsels from people whose wishes and advice I respect, for the reprinting of *Modern Painters*. When I formerly stated my determination not to republish that work in its original form,² it was always with the purpose of giving its scientific sections, with further illustration, in *Deucalion* and *Proserpina*, and extracts from those relating to art and education in my Oxford Lectures.³ But finding, usually, for these last, subjects more immediately interesting; and seeing that *Deucalion* and *Proserpina* have quite enough to do in their own way—for the time they have any chance of doing it in—I am indeed minded now to reprint the three scientific sections of *Modern Painters* in their original terms, which, very thankfully I find, cannot much be bettered, for what they intend or attempt. The scientific portions, divided prospectively, in the first volume, into four sections, were meant to define the essential forms of sky, earth, water, and vegetation: but finding that I had not the mathematical knowledge required for the analysis of wave-action, the chapters on Sea-painting were never finished, the materials for them being partly used in the *Harbours of England*, and the rest of the design remitted till I could learn more dynamics. But it was never abandoned, and the corrections already given in *Deucalion* of the errors of Agassiz and Tyndall on the glacier theory, are based on studies of wave-motion which I hope still to complete the detail of in that work.

My reprints from *Modern Painters* will therefore fall only into three divisions, on the origin of form in clouds, mountains, and trees. They will be given in the pages and type now chosen for my Oxford Lectures;⁴ and the two lectures on existing Storm-cloud already published will form a proper introduction to the cloud-studies of former times, of which the first number is already in the press. In like manner, the following paper,⁵ prepared to be read before the Mineralogical Society on the occasion of their meeting in Edinburgh this year, and proposing, in brief abstract, the questions which are at the root of rock-science, may not unfitly introduce the chapters of geological enquiry, begun at the foot of the Matterhorn thirty years ago,⁶

¹ [See above, Introduction, p. xlix., and Bibliographical Note, p. lxii.]

² [In the Preface to the edition of 1873; see above, p. 54.]

³ [In 1875 Ruskin gave a course on “The *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds,” and in 1877 on “Readings in *Modern Painters*.” Both these courses were in some measure résumés of that work. Most of his other courses broke new ground; and on resuming the professorship in 1883, he again lectured on fresh topics—“The Art of England,” and “The Pleasures of England.”]

⁴ [*i.e.* the form in which *The Art of England* (1884) and (afterwards) *The Pleasures of England* (1884–85) were originally published, small quarto and Caslon *o.f.* type. Ruskin used to have the lectures set up in advance, and read them (in part) from the print which (as he used to say) had then to be large to suit his old eyes. The lectures on “The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century,” delivered at the London Institution in February 1884, were similarly printed and published.]

⁵ [Printed in a later volume of this edition; read (not by Ruskin himself) before the Mineralogical Society, July 24, 1884.]

⁶ [The reference is to the chapters on the Matterhorn in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* (written in 1854–56). Ruskin, however, began his studies “at the foot of the Matterhorn” at an earlier date, *viz.* in 1849.]

enquiries which were the proper sequel of those instituted by Saussure, and from which the fury of investigation in extinct zoology has since so far diverted the attention of mineralogists, that I have been virtually left to pursue them alone; not without some results, for which, fortified as they are by the recent advance of rock-chemistry, I might claim, did I care to claim, the dignity of Discoveries. For the separate enumeration of these, the reader is referred to the postscript to the opening paper.¹

The original woodcuts will all be used in this edition, but in order not to add to the expense of the republished text, I have thought it best that such of the steel plates as are still in a state to give fair impressions, should be printed and bound apart; purchaseable either collectively or in separate parts, illustrative of the three several sections of text. These will be advertised when ready.²

The text of the old book, as in the already reprinted second volume,³ will be in nothing changed, and only occasionally explained or amplified by notes in brackets.

It is also probable that a volume especially devoted to the subject of Education may be composed of passages gathered out of the entire series of my works; and since the parts of *Modern Painters* bearing on the principles of art will be incorporated in the school lectures connected with my duty at Oxford, whatever is worth preservation in the whole book will be thus placed at the command of the public.

BRANTWOOD,
16th September, 1884.

¹ [On these points, see Vol. VI.]

² [This scheme was never carried out. It is possible that some of the additional plates, referred to above (p. liii.), were intended, for inclusion in this projected separate publication. The volume on Education was not done, either; see above, Introduction, p. l. n.]

³ [The separate edition of that volume, issued in 1883; see Vol. IV.]

V

THE MSS. OF “MODERN PAINTERS”

VOL. I

THE MSS. of portions of this volume, to which the editors have had access, and which (so far as they are aware) are alone extant, are as follow:—

(I.) The Brantwood MS. contained in the second of the two MS. books of *The Poetry of Architecture*. The *Modern Painters* MSS. occupy sixty to seventy pages of this book, and consist of two drafts, (*a*) and (*b*)—probably the earliest made by the author—of this volume as first designed by him.

(*a*) The first draft of all proceeds only a very short way. The following is the text of it:—

“The ends of all landscape painting are, properly speaking, two. The first, to set before the spectator a true and accurate representation of objects. The second, to convey into the mind of the spectator the peculiar impression those objects made on the mind of the painter himself. Artists, as they aim at one or other of these ends, may be divided into the painters of facts, and the painters of emotion—two great classes, to one or other of which all landscape painters may be referred.

“The painters of facts have again two distinct ends. The one, to delight by accuracy of imitation; the other, to delight by the beauty of the represented objects. Both these ends are usually, in some degree, aimed at in the same picture; but those artists who excel most in imitation are apt to select only such subjects as may best display their power, and gradually to lose all sense and desire of intrinsic beauty, or any other desirable attribute, in the subject itself. While the painters of beauty, assisting the natural attractions of their subject by all the expedients of art, verge gradually in aim upon the painters of emotion.

“Of the purely imitative aim and manner, we may adduce as examples the pot and kettle part of the Dutch school; the minute labour of Gerard Dow and Ostade, to reach the perfect lustre of brass-pans and particular scarlet of ripe carrots; the inconceivable consumption of sight and time upon the chiselling (not merely the decoration, but even the rough traces of the stone-mason’s mallet) in the stone tablets with which they often support the elbows of their Dutch beauties;— and, in higher art, the laboured tears of Carlo Dolci’s *Mater Dolorosa*; the rustling damasks of Paul Veronese; the separate hairs and glancing

jewels of some of the heads of Rembrandt; and—last, but not least— certain hats and sticks, kid gloves and satin slippers, on which our own Landseer has lately spent as much labour as, had it been applied as it is in the Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner, might have touched the hearts of half the world.

"In all these cases, be it observed, it is not his subject which the artist wishes to display, his only endeavour to please is by the manifestation of his own power of simple imitation. We are not intended to do obeisance to raw carrots, nor to be overpowered with a sense of sublimity in the extended orbit of a frying-pan; nor had Landseer any tyrannical and worse than Gessler-like intention of making the world bow before not even the presence, but the effigy of Prince Albert's hat. In all cases we are expected to derive pleasure and bestow praise as we perceive the perfection of mere imitation. And the pleasure is felt and praise given by no small portion of the world, and in no small degree. I do not mean merely by the uneducated and childish, not merely by the great portion of the public who chase flies, dewdrops, lace and satin through an exhibition; but by many who call themselves connoisseurs, who exclaim at a figure as its greatest praise, that it seems to be coming out of the canvas, and measure the merit of a Crucifixion by the corpse colour of the wounded flesh.

"Nor do I deny that some of this praise is deserved by the imitative painter. Great industry, long practice, and perfect knowledge of all that is mechanical, of all that can be really taught, in art, are necessary to his success. And as a mechanic, as a clever workman, he is deserving of high praise,—of the same kind of praise which we bestow on a tapestry-worker or a turner, or any kind of artificer who is ready and dextrous with both eyes and fingers, but of no other kind, and of no more praise than these."

(*b*) Here the first draft (*a*) ends, and the essay is begun again, from a somewhat different point of departure, in draft (*b*). Chapter I. of this, after a short exordium on imitation in art, makes the following initial classification of the subject—namely, the two great ends of landscape painting, (1) the representation of facts, (2) of thoughts. This is the distinction afterwards drawn in pt. ii. sec. i. ch. i.; the draft has the passage there given about the artist as the spectator's "conveyance, not companion; horse, not friend" (see above, p. 133 *n.*, and the rest of the chapter closely follows the chapter just mentioned, having, however, an additional paragraph at the end which shows the comparatively modest proportions on which *Modern Painters* was then designed:—

"In the second part of the work I shall endeavour, as far as I think I understand them, to explain the qualities and powers of his [Turner's] mind, and to institute such a comparison as the subject admits of between these and the faculties of the men who have until now been considered the Fathers of Landscape Art."

Chapter II. in the draft (of which chapter there are two versions) is substantially the same as chapter ii. in the text.

Chapter III. ("Of the Relative Importance of Truths") is a first draft from which chapters iii.—iv. in the text were afterwards expanded.

Two following passages in the MS. are missing, having been cut out. They must have contained the beginning of chapter iv., which similarly is a draft from which sec. ii. chs. i.—iii. were expanded, dealing with Truth of Tone, Truth of Colour, and Truth of Chiaroscuro severally. One passage in the draft is of special interest as recording an effect noted in one of Ruskin's diaries (see note on p. 271, above).

Chapter v. in the draft was similarly expanded into sec. ii. chs. iv. and v. Here this draft ends.

(II.) The Allen (now Morgan) MSS. consisting of a MS. book—one of a series numbered by Ruskin. The one with which we are here concerned (No. 14A) includes, besides portions of *Modern Painters*, vol. i., various notes of Architectural Details; a translation of some of the Epistle to the Romans, with comments (see above, p. xxix.), and various data for *The Stones of Venice*. This volume, with many others of a like kind, was given by Ruskin to Mr. George Allen in May 1885; it has recently been sold by him (together with all the others *Modern Painters* MSS. in his possession) to Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. This MS. of vol. i. represents a later stage of the book than drafts (a) and (b) described above, corresponding more nearly to its final form. It contains:—The Synopsis of Contents (pp. 55–75 of this edition), and portions of the following: Part I. sec. i. chs. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. and vii.; sec. ii. chs. i. ii. and iii. Part II. sec. i. ch. vii.; sec. ii. ch. iii. The MS. of the Synopsis of Contents must be of later date than the rest.

Passage from these Allen MSS. have already been given in footnotes to the text. Of the close revision of words and phrases, which a study of the MSS. discloses, some illustrative samples have also been given already. Further citations are unnecessary here, for the other variations are for the most part more of arrangement than of substance.

Speaking generally, we may say that there is no MS. of the volume in its final, or even penultimate form. Nor is there any MS. at all of the Prefaces, the Introductory chapter, and of the greater portion of Part II.

In addition to the MSS., the editors have had access, as already mentioned (p. xlvii.), to two printed copies of the volume which Ruskin kept by him for revision, and in which he made various notes, corrections, and memoranda. One of these copies—once his father's, who has marked it for selections—is of the third edition (1846). Ruskin's notes in it are much later; probably after 1870, certainly after 1860. The other copy (ed. 1867) was used by him when proposing to rearrange the volume. Many of the author's notes, contained in one or other of these copies, have already been cited in footnotes to the text. His scheme of rearrangement was as follows:—

The Introductory chapter (pt. i. sec. i. ch. i.) stood as it was, with some excisions (see notes on pp. 80, 83, 84, 85). The next chapter ("Definition of Greatness in Art") was rechristened "Definition of the General Subject," and had § 1 of the following chapter added to it. Chapter iii. was entitled "Extended Definitions of the Ideas Conveyable by Art," and contained chs. iii.—vii. (as they stand in the text, but considerably curtailed).

After this "General Introduction" in three chapters, Ruskin went on to chapter iv., which he entitled "General Principles: 1. Of Ideas of Power, 2. Of Ideas of Imitation." This included chs. i. and ii. of sec. ii. as they now stand, though again considerably curtailed, and was intended to include also a good deal else, for at the end of the present chapter ii. (see p. 127), Ruskin notes, "Add passage about lusciousness and delight, p. 7," and "Now to p. 179 of vol. v.;" that is to say, he meant to add a passage containing some of the points made on our p. 87, and to work in, at the end of the revised chapter here, the chapter in the fifth volume on the grand style in painting (entitled "The Rule of the Greatest"), that being a topic clearly connected with Ideas of Power. Chapter iii. in vol. i. (pt. i. sec. ii.), "Of the Sublime," thus became superfluous, and was deleted, with the exception of the three last sentences (see p. 130), which formed the connection between the revised ch. iv. of Part I. and the following Part II.

Part II. Section I., "General Principles respecting Ideas of Truth," remained unaltered (except for a few minor excisions and corrections, already noted).

Part II. Section II., "Of General Truths," was to be rearranged. Chapter i., "Of Truth of Tone," was left as it stood; but chapter ii., "Of Truth of Colour," was to be given "with chapter iii. of vol. iv." ("Of Turnerian Light"). Chapter iii., "Of Truth of Chiaroscuro," was to be omitted, for it is headed in Ruskin's copy "Not this," and chapter iv., "Of Truth of Space:—First, as dependent on the focus of the eye," chapter v., "Of Truth of Space:—Secondly, as its appearance is dependent on the power of the eye," was to be given "with chs. iv. and v. of vol. iv." ("Of Turnerian Mystery:—First, as Essential," and "Of Turnerian Mystery:—Secondly, Wilful"). It will thus be seen that this section was to be altogether recast; chs. ii. § v. being incorporated, in some rearranged form, with chs. iii. iv. and v. of vol. iv.

Beyond this point Ruskin's markings for his proposed rearrangement do not extend.

It only remains to add that on the fly-leaf of one of his copies Ruskin has written the following memoranda:—

French Preface.

1. Writing not what I thought—all—but only what was necessary at particular times.
2. Writing too soon.
3. ——— in necessary passion and vexation.
4. With Landscape idiosyncrasy.
5. Forgetting to give due importance to Harmony.
6. My own labour. Explain plate of Raphael. Purism.

It does not appear what "French Preface" means. The clue is probably to be found in the letters of Ruskin to Monsieur E. Chesneau of Feb. 1 and Feb. 13, 1867,¹ from which it appears that M. Chesneau had some intention of publishing a volume of selections from Ruskin's works translated into French.

¹ Nos. 1 and 2 in the privately printed volume of *Letters from John Ruskin to Ernest Chesneau* (1894); included in a later volume of this edition.

In the letters referred to, Ruskin rather discountenances the idea "at present," laying stress on "many imperfect statements and reasonings" in his art-writings which he had yet to complete and correct. Presumably Ruskin jotted down the heads of an explanatory preface which for a time he thought of writing to such a book as M. Chesneau proposed. He would have explained that his various volumes were written to meet particular needs, and that he had not in any one of them expressed all his thoughts; that he had begun to write *Modern Painters* at an early age, before his studies were completed or his opinions on all points fixed; that much of his work was a passionate protest against ideas, criticisms, or tendencies that had excited his anger; that his own art-preferences and studies were at first (and in some degree, always) turned towards landscape; and that he had not in his first volume given due importance to harmony in composition. Lastly, he would have dwelt upon the labour that he had devoted, over so many years, to the preparation of *Modern Painters*. Whenever in that book, a plate is described by Ruskin as "after" such and such a master, he had always himself made the drawing for the engraver from the original picture. The plate entitled "Latest Purism" (No. 11 in vol. iii. of the book), after Raphael, is a case in point.

VI

MINOR “VARIE LECTIONES”

All the more important and substantial variations between the various editions of *Modern Painters*, vol. i., have already been given in footnotes to the text, or at the end of chapters. For the sake of completeness, the remaining variations are here given. A few quite obvious misprints, however—in mere matters of spelling—are not enumerated.

Preface to Second Edition, § 2, line 12, for “still” ed. 2 reads “yet”; § 17, line 3, for “spicula” eds. 2 and 3 read “spiculæ”; § 24, line 2, “*In many arts*” was misprinted “*Its*” in 1873 ed.; § 31, line 8, for “with” eds. 2, 3, and 4 read “for”; § 38, line 27, for “Anio” ed. 2 reads “Arno”; § 40 *n.*, line 6, for “for” eds. 2, 3, and 4 read “of”; § 45, line 12, for “would” eds. 2, 3, and 4 read “had”; § 46, the last three words were printed with capitals in ed. 2, thus “What They Are.”

Synopsis of Contents.—Part I. sec. i., ch. iii. § 3, “The meaning of the word ‘excellence’ ” omitted in ed. 2. Part II. sec. i. ch. ii. § 8, “Compare part i. sec. i. ch. iv.” omitted in ed. 2. Ch. vii. § 1, for “the several aims at” ed. 2 read “the aim at”; § 3, for “gave” eds. 2 reads “give.” The rest of the contents of this chapter as printed do not appear in eds. 1 and 2, which read instead, “§ 6. And with the feeling of modern artists. § 7. The character of Venice as given by Canaletti. § 8. By Prout. § 9. By Stanfield. § 10. By Turner. § 11. The system to be observed in comparing works with reference to truth. § 12 (ed. 2). Difficulty of demonstration in such subjects. § 13. General plan of investigation.”

Similarly in other chapters, where the contents were different in eds. 1 and 2, the synopsis differed; the marginal notes, repeated in the synopsis of those eds., have already been given in footnotes to the several chapters. The following are other variations in the synopsis:—

Sec. ii. ch. v. § 14, for “Canaletto” eds. 1 and 2 read “Canaletti.” (So throughout the volume, eds. 1 and 2 spell Canaletti—see note in Vol. I., p. 223—Orgagna, Canvass. “Graduations” for “gradations” is another early peculiarity of the Oxford Graduate.)

Sec. iii. ch. iv. § 3, for “And indefiniteness . . .” eds. 3 and 4 read (wrongly) “And in definiteness.” § 7, after “in this respect,” ed. 2 adds “Works of Stanfield.” § 16, before “Swift rain-cloud in the Conventry,” eds. 2 and 3 read, “Deep-studied form of . . .”

Sec. iv. ch. iii. § 10, for “Effects of external influence” ed. 2 reads “Effects of external nature . . .”

Sec. v. ch. i. § 6, for “General laws” ed. 2 reads “rules,” and for “the imperfection of its reflective surface,” “its universality of reflection.”

Sec. vi. ch. i. § 25, after the line as it stands, ed. 2 inserts "Their ideal form." Ch. ii. § 6, for "his last works" eds. 2 and 3 read "his present works." Ch. iii. § 23, for "aim" ed. 1 reads "system."

Text.—*Part i.* sec. i. ch. iv. § 1, lines 20, 21, eds. 1 and 2 omit "In which case."
Sec. ii. ch. ii. § 9, line 9, for "good" eds. 1 and 2 read "fine."

Part ii. sec. i. ch. ii. § 2, line 18, eds. 1–5 and 1873 read in the quotation from Locke "it not reaching," and so in some eds. of the original; other eds. of Locke, and ed. of 1888 (*Modern Painters*), read "if not reaching," as in the text of this ed.; in the preceding line, eds. 1–5 and 1873 read incorrectly "ideas" instead of "idea." § 8 (marginal note), eds. 1 and 2 omit reference to "Part i. sec. i. ch. iv."

Ch. iv. § 1, line 15, the reference was erroneously given to "Chap. V." in ed. of 1873.

Ch. v. § 1, line 11, "no" misprinted "not" in 1873 ed.

Ch. vi. § 2, line 1, "as truths" misprinted "are truths" in 1873 ed.; § 3, line 9, the reference was erroneously given to "Sec. II." in 1873 ed.

Ch. vii. § 11, the reference here given (p. 181) to sec. and ch. was in previous eds. given to the page; there are other similar variations elsewhere. § 37, for "Nicolo Pisano," ed. 3 read "Nino"; line 6 from end, for "these very times" eds. 3 and 4 read "this year 1846." § 42, "Proserpine" misprinted "Prosperine" in ed. 3 (see above, p. lii. *n*). § 43, line 3, "Roger's Poems" (so in all previous eds.) should be "poems" as the reference is to the *Italy* as well as to the *Poems*. § 44, lines 1 and 2, "paintings" and "drawings" were not italicised in eds. 3 and 4.

Part ii. sec. ii. ch. i. § 12, line 1, for "Chap. v. of the next section" ed. of 1873 reads "Chap. vi. of this section"; line 15, for "1842" eds. 1 and 2 read "last year's exhibition."

Ch. ii. § 5, line 16, for "can it be seriously supposed" eds. 1 and 2 read "can you seriously suppose." § 6, line 15, for "nearer" eds. 1–4 read "nearest." § 11, line 14, before "fond" eds. 1 and 2 insert "exceedingly."

Ch. iv. § 1, line 14, "effects" misprinted "efforts" in ed. of 1873; § 6, line 7, eds. 2 and 3 omit "observe."

Ch. v. § 6, line 8, for "us," eds. 1 and 2 read "you."

Ch. v. § 10, last line but 4, eds. 2–4 read "anything."

Part ii. sec. iii. ch. i. § 1, in the quotation from Wordsworth, "too bright *or* good" was misprinted "*nor*" in eds. 1–5 and 1873. § 15, in the quotation from Wordsworth, eds. 1 and 2 italicised the word "suddenly" only. § 20 (marginal note), eds. 1–4 italicised the word "quality."

Ch. ii. § 7, line 9, for "Farther" eds. 1 and 2 read "Further." § 9, in the quotation from Wordsworth all eds. previous to this read:—

Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
Through their ethereal texture, had become . . .

The quotation in this ed. has been corrected by Wordsworth's text (which shows also some variations of punctuation.) § 11, line 14, after "observe" 1873 ed. wrongly inserts a comma. § 14, for the reference to "§ 7 of this chapter" 1873 ed. wrongly reads "Sec. I. Chap. II."

Ch. iii. § 22, line 19, before "The moment" eds. 1 and 2 read "I believe." § 26, line 20, eds. 1–4 spell "moonlight" with a capital "M."

Ch. iv. § 7 (marginal note), eds. 1 and 2 added "works of Stanfield." § 8, for

"dexterous" eds. 1 and 2 read "dextrous." § 14, in the quotation from Scott all eds. previous to this contained the following errors:—line 8, "nor shrub" and "nor power" transposed; line 10 "wearied" for "weary"; line 11 "But" for "For." § 15, in the quotation from Wordsworth all eds. previous to this omitted "and."

Ch. v. § 2, in the table of Turner drawings, "Lowestoft" misprinted "Lowstoffe" in eds. 1–4.

Part ii. sec. iv. ch. ii. § 4, line 1, for "lecturing" eds. 1–4 read "giving a lecture." § 21, line 10, for "; but let us express" eds. 1 and 2 read ". In conclusion let us express."

Ch. iii. § 5, line 6, "Loch" in eds. 1–4; "Lake" was erroneously substituted in ed. 5 and afterwards, although in the marginal note "Loch" was retained. § 5, line 7, before "been admirably engraved" eds. 1–4 insert "luckily." § 15, line 1, before "there is no" eds. 1 and 2 insert "Now."

Ch. iv. § 2, for "in the Academy 1842" eds. 1 and 2 read "last year's Academy." § 13, lines 9, 10, "not one contour" was misprinted "no tone colour" in eds. 5 and 1873.

Part ii. sec. v. ch. i. § 2, line 1, for "to suggest" eds. 1 and 2 "to reach."

Ch. ii. § 1, line 21, before "fondness" eds. 1 and 2 read "little too great." § 3, for "He has shown" eds. 1–4 read "he is a man of." § 5, for "In the Exhibition of 1842" eds. 1 and 2 read "last year's Exhibition." § 9, for "Academy 1842" eds. 1 and 2 read "last year's Academy." § 11, line 1, for "we wish" eds. 1 and 2 read "we almost wish."

Ch. iii. § 6, last line, eds. 1 and 2 read "Salt Ash" for "Turner's Saltash." § 22, the words "takes the shape" were not italicised in eds. 1–4. § 37, lines 33, for "the Earl of Ellesmere" eds. 3 and 4 read "Lord Francis Egerton."

Part ii. sec. vi. ch. i. § 1, line 9, for "With the Italian" eds. 1 and 2 read "Among." § 2, the marginal note in the eds. 1 and 2 is opposite the words "It will be best to begin," etc. § 8, last line, for "This is nature" eds. 1 and 2 read "Now this is nature." § 12, line 12, for "The landscape of Poussin" eds. 1–4 read "the windy landscape," and in the next line eds. 1 and 2 spell "Aeneas" "Eneas." § 12, last line, "angle" misprinted "agle" in 1873 ed. § 16 (marginal note), ed. 1873 reads incorrectly "Leafage in . . ." for "Leafage. Its . . ." § 23, line 2, for "Marly" 1873 ed. has "Marley." § 24, line 1, the reference is wrongly given to "Ch. iv." in eds. 1–5 and 1873. § 24, last line, for "Oakhampton" eds. 1 and 2 read (correctly) "Okehampton."



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THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

Two thousand and sixty-two copies of this edition—of which two thousand are for sale in England and America—have been printed at the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh, and the type has been distributed.



J. Bushell

Allen & Co. Sc.

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

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

LIBRARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF

JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO

1903

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LIBRARY EDITION

VOLUME IV

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II

CONTAINING

PART III

SECTIONS I & II

OF THE IMAGINATIVE AND
THEORETIC FACULTIES

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

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

WORDSWORTH

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1903

TO THE
LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR

ORIGINAL ADVERTISEMENT
TO VOL. II¹

THE following chapters will be found to confirm and elucidate the positions left doubtful in the preceding volume. They ought not to have appeared in a detached form, but the writer could not expect his argument to be either remembered with accuracy, or reviewed with patience, if he allowed years² to elapse between its sections.

¹ [So in the third and later editions. In eds. 1 and 2 the Advertisement reads:—
“The illustrations in preparation for the third volume of this work having rendered a large page necessary, the present volume and the new edition of the first volume are arranged in a corresponding form.

“The following chapters,” etc.]
² [Ed. 1 reads “Olympiads” for “years.”]

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

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

¹ Except No. 6.

IV.

b

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. IV

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

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

¹ *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 82.

² *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76.

³ See passage from his diary quoted in Vol. III. p. xxxi.

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

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

Nov. 20, 1843.—Have done Plato—some Pliny—written a good bit . . . and a little bit of Rio⁴—tolerable day's work—some Italian besides—a walk—and investigation of foliage of Scotch fir.

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

Nov. 22.—Didn't like the study this morning, and didn't mend it—must make another. Read a little Plato—wrote a long letter to Brown⁵—wrote a chapter of book

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

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

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

¹ See Vol. I. pp. 493–494.

² Vol. III. pp. xliv., 641–661.

³ Vol. III. pp. xxix.-xxxi., xlv. *n.*

⁴ See below, p. xxiii.

⁵ *Cf.* the letter in Appendix III., below, p. 390.

⁶ The engraver of many plates in *Modern Painters*.

⁷ Always a favourite game with Ruskin.

⁸ But see note on p. 158, below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ The engraver of some of the plates in the last three volumes of *Modern Painters*.

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

³ A manner of publication which Ruskin often adopted in later life.

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

⁵ For a reference to Michael Angelo's "Tomb of Lorenzo," see below, p. 282.

⁶ See "Advertisement," p. xi., and Bibliographical Note, p. liii.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Cited in *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 103.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 104.

³ See below, Appendix i., p. 368.

⁴ See Vol. III. p. 669.

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

⁶ *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 104.

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

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

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

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

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

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

BAVENO, *Sunday, 24th Aug.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOHN RUSKIN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

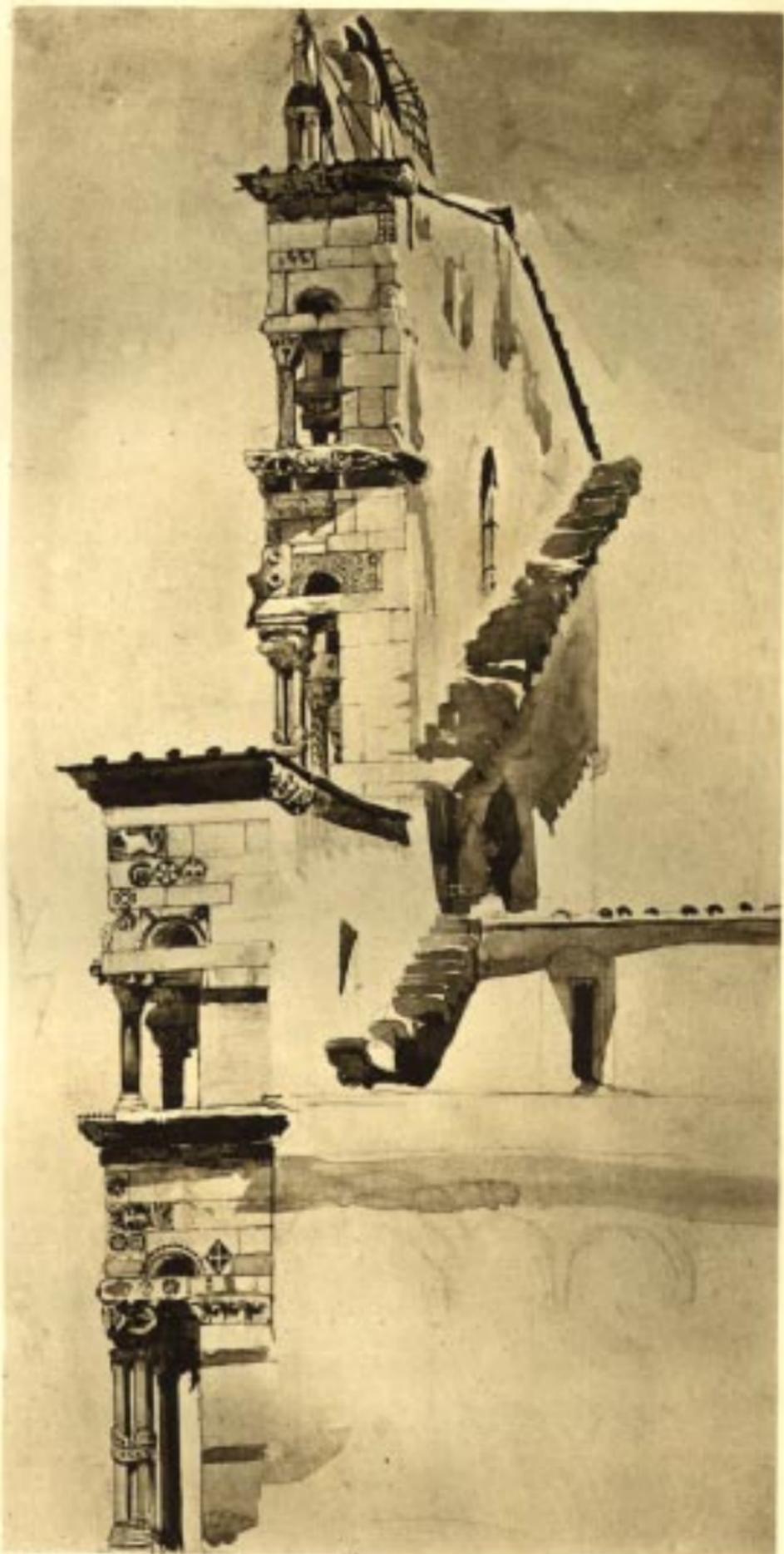
It was here, then, that the glory of the inlaid architecture of Italy, the beauty of Italian sacred painting, and the ideal of Christian sculpture were revealed to him. The following letter shows how his days were spent in that tutress city:²—

LUCCA, *Tuesday evening [May 6]*.

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

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

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



J. Ruskin.

Allen & Co. Jr.

San Michele, Lucca.
(1845)

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

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

After working at this till ½ past five or so, I give up for the day, and walk for exercise round the ramparts. There, as you know, I have the Pisan mountains, the noble peaks of Carrara, and the Apennines towards Parma, all burning in the sunset, or purple and dark against it, and the olive woods towards Massa, and the wide, rich, viny plain towards Florence, the Apennines still loaded with snow, and purple in the green sky, and the clearness of the sky here is something miraculous. No romance can be too high flown for it; it passes fable.

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

INTRODUCTION

Finally, when the rose tints leave the clouds, I go and spend a quarter of an hour beside the tomb of Ilaria di Caretto. . . . [Here follows the description of the statue, given below, p. 122 *n.*] With this I end my day, and return home as the lamps begin to burn in the Madonna shrines, to read Dante, and to write to you

Love to my mother. Ever, my dearest Father,

Your most affectionate son,

J. RUSKIN.

From Lucca Ruskin passed to Pisa, where the Campo Santo with its frescoes opened to him a new world of simple and sincere religious art, and became to him, he says, “a veritable Palestine.”¹ His letters soon show him absorbed in copying and recopying from Giotto and Simon Memmi, and Benozzo Gozzoli and Orcagna. It was a graphic Bible that he found spread out before him:—

“. . . You cannot guess (he writes to his father, May 15,) how these men must have read their Bible, how deeply the patriarchal spirit seems written in their hearts. I have been drawing from Benozzo’s life of Abraham, which is as full and abundant as the scripture itself, nothing missed, though a good deal added. Little Ishmael fighting little Isaac to Sarah’s great indignation, being one of such passages,—a comment on the ‘saw the son of the Egyptian mocking’ of the Bible [*Genesis* xxi. 9]; but this is succeeded by the most heavenly Hagar in the Wilderness. I shall set to work on her to-morrow. To-day I have been finishing an easy bit (easy because small and well made out)—Abraham parting from the Angels when they go towards Sodom.² It is a beautiful observance of the scriptural history that while *three* angels came to Abraham, only two come to Sodom at even [*Genesis* xviii. 2, xix. 1]. In the fresco the central angel is rising, looking back towards Sodom with his hand raised in the attitude of condemnation, afterwards adopted by M. Angelo in the Judgment. The *two* angels turn towards Sodom, one with his eyes steadfast on the city, the other looking back to Abraham. The latter turns away, with his hands folded in entire faith and resignation, but with such a quivering distress about the lips and appeal for pity in the eye that I have had the tears in mine over and over again while I was drawing it. The plaster on which is this passage has already risen in a blister from the wall, and will be blown into the Arno in dust before the year is out.”

Everything at Pisa delighted him—the Cathedral, the little church of

¹ Epilogue, § 7, below, p. 350.

² See Plate 10, facing p. 316, below.

La Spina, the sunsets on the Carrara mountains; “but,” he writes (May 18):—

“the Campo Santo is the thing. I never believed the patriarchal history before, but I do now, for I have seen it. You cannot conceive the vividness and fulness of conception of these great old men. In spite of every violation of the common confounded rules of art, of anachronisms and fancies, the boldest and wildest—Lorenzo de’ Medici figuring as an Egyptian sorcerer, and Castruccio degli Interminelli coming in over and over again long before the flood, and all the patriarchs in the costume of the thirteenth century—*N’importe*; it is Abraham himself still. Abraham and Adam, and Cain, Rachel and Rebekah, all are there, real, visible, created, substantial, such as they were, as they must have been; one cannot look at them without being certain that they have lived; and the angels, great and real and powerful, that you feel the very wind from their wings upon your face, and yet expect to see them depart every instant into heaven; it is enough to convert one to look upon them; one comes away like the women from the sepulchre, having seen a vision of angels which said that he was Alive. And the might of it is to do all this with such fearless, bold, simple truth, no slurring, no cloudiness, nor darkness;¹ all is God’s good light and fair truth; Abraham sits *close* to you, entertaining the angels, you may touch him and them; and there is a woman behind him, bringing the angels some real positive pears, and the angels have knives and forks and glasses, and a table-cloth as white as snow, and there they sit with their wings folded: you may put your finger on the eyes of their plumes, like St. Thomas, and believe. And the centre angel has lifted his hand and is telling Abraham—his very lips moving—that Sarah shall have a son, and there is no doubt on Abraham’s face, only he holds his knife hard for wonder and gladness. And Sarah is listening, holding back the curtains of the tent.”

His manner of life was as strenuous at Pisa (May 18) as at Lucca:—

“Breakfast at 7, to work at 8, work till one; or on Thursdays and Saturdays till 12, when I go to call on the Professor Rossini and see more pictures. Dine at 2; to work again at 3, always in Campo Santo; stop at 5, walk about town, or as yesterday up on the roof of La Spina, to get the details. Then up tower to see sunset on Carrara mountains, home at ½ past 7 or 8; tea and write till 9½, or longer, if I am not sleepy; bed at 10.”

When his portfolio was well filled at Pisa, Ruskin moved on to

¹ See on this subject the contrast which Ruskin drew between early Christian art and the religious paintings of our own day: *Academy Notes*, 1875, s. Nos. 584 and 129.

Florence, where his “new discoveries,” he says, became yet “more absorbing.”¹ The novelty and enthusiasm are well expressed in a letter to his father:—

FLORENCE, *June 4*.— . . I went yesterday to Santa Maria Novella, and was very much taken aback. *There* is the Madonna of Cimabue,² which all Florence followed with trumpets to the church; *there* is the great chapel painted by Orcagna, with the Last Judgment, at least 500 figures; *there* is the larger chapel with 14 vast and untouched frescoes, besides the roof, of Domenico Ghirlandajo; *there* is the tomb of Filippo Strozzi; *there* is the great crucifixion of Giotto; there, finally, are three *perfectly* preserved works of Fra Angelico, the centre one of which is as near heaven as human hand or mind will ever or can ever go. Talk of chiaroscuro and colour; give me those burnished angel wings of which every plume is wrought out in beaten gold, in zones of crimson and silver colour alternately, which play and flash like, and with far more rainbow hue about them than, the breasts of the Valparaiso birds, which, however, will give you some idea of the effect and power of light in them. And then the faces, without one shadow of earth or mortality about them, all glorified

He studied principally the primitives, without, however, neglecting the later painters. His continued and increased admiration of Michael Angelo appears throughout this volume; but already he had begun to trace in the work of the crowning masters what he afterwards described as the writing on the wall.³ “Raphael and Michael Angelo,” he says (June 4), “were great fellows, but from all I can see they have been the ruin of art.”

Ruskin’s studies at Florence may be traced in nearly every chapter of this volume. His note-books show that he did not spare himself. He was sometimes at work by five o’clock in the morning. The galleries, the churches and convents, the private palaces, were all laboriously explored; and those were the days when many works of art, now gathered together in galleries and museums, were still preserved—or more truthfully, neglected—in their several shrines. He felt the desultoriness of the work, but persevered notwithstanding:—

“It requires a good deal of courage, mind you,” he writes in a letter to his mother (Florence, June 26), “to work as I am working at present—obliged to take a shallow glance at everything and to master nothing. I am not studying a branch of science in which I feel steady progress,

¹ Epilogue, § 10, below, p. 351.

² See *Mornings in Florence*, § 34.

³ See *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 125–127.

but gathering together a mass of evidence from a number of subjects, and I have to think, before everything that I see, of its bearings in a hundred ways. Architecture, sculpture, anatomy, botany, music, all must be thought of and in some degree touched upon, and one is always obliged to stop in the middle of one thing to take note of another—of all modes of study the least agreeable, and least effectual. For instance, I am going now to the Palais Pitti. I have to look at its stones outside and compare them with the smooth work of modern buildings;¹ when I go in, I shall sit down to study a bit of Rubens for an illustration of my book;² this Rubens leads me into a train of thought respecting composition diametrically opposite to that which would be induced by a Raffaele.”

While Ruskin was thus writing to his mother, his father was writing to him to deplore the falling off in the son's poetry. This tour of 1845 was the last occasion, as we have seen, on which he was at all seriously or determinedly to cultivate his faculty of versification. He had sent home from Florence the lines on “Mont Blanc Revisited,” and from Pisa, a month earlier, those “Written among the Basses Alpes,”³ His father's verdict was for once severe (June 26):—

“I am, to speak truth, disappointed in the last lines sent home, and you see by enclosed Harrison is of same opinion. The Scythian Banquet Song, which you think little of, was the greatest of all your poetical productions. All the Herodotean pieces show real power, and have a spice of the devil in them. I mean nothing irreverent, but the fervour and fury and passion of true poetry. It is cruel in me to ask you to write for me; you should never write poetry but when you cannot help it. Mama objected to your highest poetry being published, but she was rather surprised at “The Old Seaman” on taking it up. The first verse of “Mont Blanc Revisited”—“Oh mount beloved”—seems feeble. Your poetry at present has got among your prose, and it may be well to leave it there till the important book be done, which I am certain will overflow with poetry. Never mind my cravings for little poems, nor Murray's for articles. Age quod agis.⁴ The Book has told, and it is important to pour into the opened ear of the public all you have to say, boldly, surely, and determinedly beyond contradiction, as far as full knowledge of the subject can protect any one from contradiction.”

¹ For the architecture of the Palazzo Pitti, see below, sec. i. ch. x. § 3 n., p. 137.

² Ruskin does not seem to have used in *Modern Painters* any illustrations, pictorial or otherwise, from Rubens's pictures at Florence; but his diary shows that he studied them carefully.

³ See Vol. II. pp. 233, 238.

⁴ The motto which J. J. Ruskin had chosen: see Vol. I. p. xi.

Ruskin's answer is marked by great good sense. He felt within himself that he was now beginning what he afterwards called his first man's work;¹ and, though the poetical impulse was dead, he was conscious of increasing grip and grit. But he is not quite just in what he says about the self-absorption of his mind. The lines "Written among the Basses Alpes" are indeed charged with little compassion, but they are significant of that awakening interest in human conduct and social justice which was soon to colour all his work and thought:—

PARMA, *July 10.*— . . . I am not surprised at the lines being so far inferior, but I do not think I have lost power. I have only lost the exciting circumstances. The life I lead is far too comfortable and regular, too luxurious, too hardening. I see nothing of human life, but waiters, doganiers, and beggars. I get into no scrapes, suffer no inconveniences, and am subject to no species of excitement except that arising from art, which I conceive to be too abstract in its nature to become productive of poetry, unless combined with experience of living passion. I don't see how it is possible for a person who gets up at four, goes to bed at ten, eats ices when he is hot, beef when he is hungry, gets rid of all claims of charity by giving money which he hasn't earned, and of those of compassion by treating all distress more as picturesque than as real—I don't see how it is at all possible for such a person to write good poetry. . . . Nevertheless I believe my mind has made great progress in many points since that poetical time. I perhaps could not—but I certainly would not, now write such things. I might write more tamely, but I think I should write better sense, and possibly if I were again under such morbid excitement, I might write as strongly, but with more manly meaning. I believe, however, the time for it has past.

From Parma, whither Ruskin had gone from Florence, he wrote again to his father on the same day, summing up in the form of a class list the conclusions of his studies at Lucca, Pisa, and Florence:—

PARMA, *July 10.*— . . . I have pretty well now arranged my scale of painters; I may shift them about here and there a little. I am not sure of the places of all, but I regard them pretty nearly in this order and I shall not alter very much.

CLASS I

Pure Religious Art. The School of Love.

1. Fra Angelico. Forms a class by himself; he is not an artist properly so-called, but an inspired saint. 2. Perugino. 3. Pinturicchio.

¹ The words occur in the MS. notes for the second lecture of his Oxford course, "Readings in *Modern Painters*."

4. Francia. 5. Raffaello. 6. Duccio. 7. John Bellini. 8. Simone Memmi.
9. Taddeo Gaddi. 10. Fra Bartolommeo. 11. Lorenzo di Credi. 12.
Buffalmaccio.

CLASS 2

*General Perception of Nature human and divine—accompanied
by more or less religious feeling. The School of the Great Men. The
School of Intellect.*

1. Michael Angelo. 2. Giotto. 3. Orcagna. 4. Benozzo. 5. Leonardo.
6. Ghirlandajo. 7. Masaccio.

CLASS 3

The School of Painting as Such

1. Titian. 2. Giorgione. 3. John Bellini. 4. Masaccio. 5.
Ghirlandajo. 6. P. Veronese. 7. Tintoret. 8. Van Eyck. 9. Rubens. 10.
Rembrandt. 11. Velasquez.

CLASS 4

School of Errors and Vices

1. Raffaello (in his last manner). 2. The Caraccis. 3. Guido. 4. C.
Dolci. 5. Correggio. 6. Murillo. 7. Caravaggio—with my usual group
of landscapists.

You see two or three come into two classes. Bellini was equally
great in feeling and in colour. The first class is arranged entirely by the
amount of holy expression visible in the works of each, not by art.
Otherwise F. Bartolommeo must have come much higher, and Duccio
much lower.

But other revelations were in store; and Ruskin was yet to revise
his list.¹ From Parma he went, through Milan, to mountain-solitude at
Macugnaga. Thence he wandered to the Italian side of the St. Gothard,
in order to find and study the sites or scenes of some of Turner's later
drawings; to these studies we shall revert in the next volume but one,
for it was not till he came to the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* that
Ruskin utilised this portion of the material gathered by him in 1845.
After leaving Faedo, he met J. D. Harding at Baveno, and with him
went by Como, Bergamo, Desenzano and Verona to Venice. At first
they were both pre-occupied with sketching. But one day, after they
had been there a fortnight, they went to see the then little known and
uncared-for Tintorets in the Scuola di San Rocco. It was a revelation,
and decided the current of Ruskin's life. He had been in some sort
prepared for it in the Church of Sta. Maria dell' Orto. The

¹ For other lists, see *Elements of Drawing* Appendix ii., and *The Two Paths*,
Appendix i.

Paradise in the Ducal Palace—which he afterwards called “the thought-fullest and most precious picture in the world”¹—had on this occasion left him cold. But the pictures in the church just mentioned stirred him greatly. The following is the account of them written at the time in his note-book;² it is interesting to compare these first impressions with the published accounts:³—

Chiesa della Madonna dell’ Orto.—It was in this church that I first became acquainted with the real genius of Tintoret. I was startled by the picture, which was luckily at the time taken down and in a side chapel, of the Presentation of the young Madonna, and I saw at once that the manner of painting was more great, simple, and full of meaning than that of any other Venetian master; and that the expressions of admiration in the crowd around were more dramatically rendered than I had ever seen except by Giotto. The figure of the young girl—the head crowned with soft light—is made so naturally and so perfectly the centre of all, and its child simplicity and purity so preserved—even to the feebleness of the short, quiet, unconscious step—contrasted with the massy forms and firm, muscular action of the large figure in the foreground—that I know not any representation of the subject whatsoever in which so much reality and sweetness of impression is obtained.

But on passing from this to the Last Judgment in the choir, I saw at once that it was to Tintoret, and to him only, that my time at Venice was to be given—and that I had found, what I never expected to see of any school, a work which could stand in the same category with Michael Angelo’s Last Judgment. It shares in one respect the fault of the Paradiso, *i.e.*—that there are no figures in it which individually possess great interest—and it differs entirely from the type of the subject adopted by the older painters in that no *emotions* are represented, nothing but the great *sensation* of re-awakened life. It differs both from them, and from the work of Michael Angelo, in another respect also—that while Orcagna’s, Angelico’s, and M. Angelo’s are alike not the representation of a definite local scene—but the presenting of a series of groups to the *imagination* typical of the Judgment of all the earth, Tintoret’s is a definite painting of a spot of earth, and so reminds one of Bartolommeo’s—and the only appeals made to the larger faculty of the imagination are in the circle of the Apostles seen far off in the heavens (the principal figure is

¹ *The Relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret* (1872).

² These and other notes on pictures at Venice are now among the Morgan MSS. of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (see below, p. 361). They seem to have been torn out of the 1845 note-book, which, as now preserved at Brantwood, ends at Florence.

³ For the “Presentation,” see *Stones of Venice*, Venetian Index, s. “Orto”; for the “Last Judgment,” see below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 24, p. 277.

indistinguishable owing to the darkness, the height of the picture, and the injuries it has received) and in the traditional incident of the Charon boat—the only one which Tintoret has deigned to avail himself of—and which he has boldly varied—for the Satan instead of driving the wicked down with his spear—has seized one by the limbs and is hurling him into the boat, as in the statue of Hercules and Hylas—the suspended figure stretching its arms behind. But there is also a wonderful meaning in the incident chosen for the middle distance, the great river of God's wrath: bearing down with it heaps of human creatures—tossed and twisted over one another—crowds more, hastening in insane, ungovernable terror from the vague wild distance—to fall into its waters and be borne away. As a piece of painting it would be quite impossible to surpass the rush of this vast river—and the bending and crashing of the torn fragments of forest at its edge.

Among the foreground figures there is, as I have said before, no painting of emotions; the good and the evil are not yet distinguished—they have not yet had time to separate into groups of terror and hope—they are awakening—some ghastly skeleton figures rattling into life—others with their features of corruption shaking the clay from their hair—clogged yet with the earth—appearing here and there like swimmers in a weedy sea—hardly seen among the knotted grass of the rank foreground. One group on the right, in which an angel touches and wakes a youth, is very finely composed; a little more dignity in the features of both would have made it noble. The air is full of the rising bodies—I never saw anything approaching their perfect buoyancy, except by M. Angelo. The colour is throughout quiet and grey, and rightly so, as a matter of feeling, but it necessitates some little inferiority in colour to the rest of his works, neither is the light and shade very broad or grand.

The impressions thus received in the Church of Sta. Maria dell'Orto were confirmed and strengthened at the Scuola di San Rocco. The revelation is described in letters to his father:—

VENICE, *Sept.* 23.—I have been quite overwhelmed to-day by a man whom I never dreamed of—Tintoret. I always thought him a good and clever and forcible painter; but I had not the smallest notion of his enormous powers. Harding has been as much taken aback as I have—but he says he is “crumbled up,” while I feel encouraged and excited by the good art. . . . It is marvellous lucky I came here, or I might have disgraced myself for ever by speaking slightly of Tintoret. I look upon Tintoret now, though as a less perfect painter, yet as a far greater man than Titian ipse

Sept. 24.—I have had a draught of pictures to-day enough to drown me. I never was so utterly crushed to the earth before any human intellect as I was to-day—before Tintoret. Just be so good as to take my list of painters and put him in the school of Art at the top—top—top of everything, with a great big black line underneath him to stop him off from everybody; and put him in the school of Intellect, next after Michael Angelo. He took it so entirely out of me to-day that I could do nothing at last but lie on a bench and laugh. Harding said that if he had been a figure-painter, he never could have touched a brush again, and that he felt more like a flogged schoolboy than a man, and no wonder. Tintoret don't seem able to stretch himself till you give him a canvas forty feet square, and then—he lashes out like a leviathan, and heaven and earth come together. M. Angelo himself cannot hurl figures into space as he does, nor did M. Angelo ever paint space which would not look like a nutshell beside Tintoret's. Just imagine the audacity of the fellow—in his Massacre of the Innocents one of the mothers has hurled herself off a terrace to avoid the executioner and is falling head foremost and backwards—holding up the child still.¹

And such a Resurrection as there is!—the rocks of the Sepulchre cracked all to pieces and roaring down upon you, while the Christ soars forth into a torrent of angels, whirled up into heaven till you are lost ten times over.² And then to see his touch of quiet thought in his awful Crucifixion. There is an *ass* in the distance, feeding on the remains of palm leaves. If that isn't a master's stroke, I know not what is.³ As for painting, I think I didn't know what it meant till to-day; the fellow outlines you your figure with ten strokes, and colours it with as many more. I don't believe it took him ten minutes to invent and paint a whole length. Away he goes, heaping host on host, multitudes that no man can number—never pausing, never repeating himself. Clouds and whirlwinds and fire and infinity of earth and sea, all alike to him. And then the noble fellow has put in Titian on horseback at one side of his great picture, and himself at the other, but he has made Titian principal. This is the way great men are with each other: no jealousy there. I am going to calculate the number of feet square he has covered with mind in Venice; there are more than 4000 square feet in three of his pictures, and I have seen about 60 large and small—no, many more it must be, but I am afraid to say how many. I am going back to-day (Thursday, 24th) to set to work on them in earnest, one by one.

Sept. 25.—Is this really the 25th? I don't know at all what to

¹ See below, pp. 205, 272–273, 278.

² See *Stones of Venice* (Venetian index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 10).

³ See below, pp. 127, 270–271, 305, 354.

do. I am so divided between Tintoret and the Grand Canal. I had a good two hours' sit before him this morning, and it did me mighty good and made me feel bigger, taken up into him as it were. I am in a great hurry now to try my hand at painting a real, downright, big oil picture. I think I am up to a dodge or two that I wasn't, and I must have some tries in it. Tintoret has shown me how to paint leaves. My word, he does *leave* them with a vengeance. I think you would like to see how he does the trunk, too, with two strokes; one for the light side and one for the dark side, all the way down; and then on go the leaves: never autumn swept them off as he sweeps them on; and then to see his colossal straws; and his sublime rush-bottomed chairs; and his stupendous donkey in the Flight into Egypt—such a donkey, such a donkey, with ears that look as if they heard the Massacre of the Innocents going on in Palestine all the way from Egypt; and well he might if it had been Tintoret's instead of Herod's. I looked at it to-day till I heard the women shriek—there they are—tumbling all over each other, executioners' swords and all—one mass of desperation and agony, nothing disgusting, nothing indecent, no blood, no cutting of throats; but the most fearful heap of human grief and madness and struggle that ever man's mind conceived.

The rush and enthusiasm of Ruskin's new discoveries are even more striking in these first impressions, than in the more deliberate descriptions based upon them. One sees how true of his own case is what he says in this volume of correct taste generally: it is "for ever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished."¹

Ruskin's mind was now well stored; his heart was full, and he turned homewards to write the book in which—with complete conviction and full confidence of his power to make others share it—he set himself to expound the principles he had evolved, and to interpret the art he had learnt to understand. He reached Dover on Nov. 4, 1845. The volume appeared in the following April. By comparing the first draft with the final form, or by noting the allusions in the book to things seen during the tour of 1845, we may be sure that all the latter portion was written during or after the tour, and that most of the rest was during the same period recast. In one sense the volume took Ruskin three years to write; in another, it must have been written in some six months.

The volume was published on April 24, 1846, by which time Ruskin, on whom the strain of its composition had told severely, was once more abroad. The favourable reception of his work was now well assured, and

¹ Sec. i. ch. iii. § 11, p. 60, below.

the publishers (Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.) had “accepted the book on J. J. Ruskin’s terms (so his wife wrote), for they had already reported it as called for by the public.”¹ *Modern Painters* was beginning also to attract attention in America, where its readers were destined to be more numerous even than in Great Britain.² The first volume, it will be remembered, was going into a third edition, and the author was becoming a literary celebrity. He records in his diary with some pride that in 1844 he was invited to the Private View at the Academy—not then so accessible as now, and was there honoured by the company of Rogers:—

May 2, 1844.—A memorable day; my first private view of the Royal Academy. I stayed to the very last, and shall scarcely forget the dream-like sensation of finding myself with Rogers the poet—not a soul beside ourselves in the great rooms of the Academy.

Rogers made the tour of the pictures with him, and he records some of his dry remarks. The identity of the “Graduate” was by this time an open secret in many literary circles, and some of Ruskin’s drawings which had been exhibited added to his reputation. “It happened to us within the last few weeks,” wrote one of the reviewers, “to be a guest at a meeting of the Graphic Society, where some drawings from the pencil of the gentleman to whom the authorship of this work is ascribed were exhibited, and on that occasion a member of the Royal Academy, after examining one of the subjects with much attention, exclaimed in our hearing—’The man who can draw like that may write anything he pleases upon art.’ ”³

The second volume, therefore, could count on a respectful hearing, and favourable reviews were not long in making their appearance. “The press notices,” says Ruskin, were “either cautious or complimentary,—none, to the best of my memory, contemptuous.”⁴ Some exception must be made here, as we shall see,⁵ but the general tone of the reviewers was certainly favourable. Many of the Quarterly Reviews—then more numerous and influential than now—took the occasion of the nearly simultaneous appearance of volume ii. and a third edition of volume i. to notice the two together. The second volume was especially praised. Thus the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (July 1846, pp. 380–416), in a notice with long extracts of the two volumes, remarked that in the latter the author “speaks in a tone of maturer judgment, and greater modesty; is less

¹ W. G. Collingwood’s *Life of John Ruskin*, 1900, p. 105.

² The third edition of the first volume was reprinted at New York in 1847; for a review of it, see *North American Review*, No. 138 (January 1848).

³ *Church of England Quarterly Review*, July 1846, p. 205.

⁴ *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 192.

⁵ Below, pp. xlii.-xliii.

bent upon making out a case for a client, than on extracting the principles of art." The review was critical in many respects, but "we are prepared emphatically to declare," said the writer in conclusion, "that his work is the most valuable contribution towards a proper view of painting, its purpose and means, that has come within our knowledge." *The North British Review* (February 1847, pp. 401–430) wrote:—

"This is a very extraordinary and a very delightful book, full of truth and goodness, of power and beauty. If genius may be considered (and it is as serviceable a definition as is current) that power by which one man produces, for the use or the pleasure of his fellow-men, something at once new and true, then have we here its unmistakable and inestimable handiwork . . . The book gave us wings, opened new doors into heaven, brought the country into the town, made the invisible seen, the distance near."

Another quarterly of the time, *The Ecclesiastic* (April 1847, pp. 212–222), after praising the style of the second volume—"formed," as the reviewer rightly surmised, "chiefly upon that of Hooker"—said:—

"This book, though clever and brilliant, is not only so: and it will survive many born with it and before it. It will live long; and more than this, it will bear fruit, and its influence will make itself seen. It has one feature which is rare in the present day: it is, as we have said, a work of enthusiasm: we have in it the heart, as well as the head of the author. . . . The writer's love and devotion are not wasted. They will find their reward in kindling kindred flames in others, and securing a rich tribute of homage and sympathy, which nothing else receives besides true and original genius."

*The Church of England Quarterly*¹ (July 1846, vol. xx. pp. 205–214), in recalling and justifying its high praise of the first volume, found in the second "a more elevated tone":—

"The poetry of the first volume had more of the dash and sparkle, but without the power, of the mountain cataract; the poetry of the second has the solemn depth and volume of the broad and vast river. . . . Without reference to the age or position of the author, it is one of the most marvellous productions of modern times; but when we consider the fact, very generally understood, that the writer is a very young man, and in circumstances which render the ordinary rewards and stimulants of authorship valueless, we know not which more to admire, the vigour, purity, and ripeness of thought, which

¹ Other favourable reviews appeared in the *British Quarterly Review* (May 1847, pp. 469–486), and the *Prospective Review* (May 1847, pp. 213–225). In the *Western Miscellany: a Journal of Literature, Science, Antiquities, and Art for the West of England*, a series of four expository articles with highly appreciative comments (by George Wightwick) was devoted to the two volumes (1849, pp. 11–19, 35–43, 67–75, 99–107).

have combined to produce such a work; or the noble, generous, and fearless devotion of those high powers to prove that art is only to be valued as it shall contribute to the glory of Him who is the source of all power, harmony, and beauty.”

The weekly and daily press was also on the whole favourable. Thus the *English Gentleman* (May 2, 1846), after similarly remarking on the growing impression made by the first volume, declared the second to rise “infinitely higher,” and to be “all thought from beginning to end”:—

“Indeed we question if any but a high order of mind will embrace the full grandeur of its design, or follow the masterly analysis by which the propositions are elucidated. . . . The more one reads the book the more it fascinates. The style of diction, the analysis, the clearness of perception, and the steady momentum of thought, remind one of Bacon: the bursts of Christian eloquence, with which, by a strange, yet harmonious connection, the argument is here and there illustrated and enforced, savour of Jeremy Taylor; but the high and lofty tone, the deep enthusiasm, the association of religion with art on principles intelligible to this age,—these are the author’s own; and together with the fund of deep observation and practical knowledge which the book displays, they render it one of the most original and remarkable productions of what, till the author’s views prevail, must still be called æsthetic criticism.”

The *Britannia*, too, which had been very complimentary to the first volume¹ found “additional force” in the second (June 6, 1843). The *Weekly Chronicle* (May 16, 1846), while refusing to surrender Gaspar Poussin, or even “the ruffian Salvator” to the slaughter, commended the volume “to all true lovers of the beautiful”:—

“The writer,” said the reviewer, “is a painter, as well as a poet; he knows the details as well as the generalities of his subject, and no man can read him without gaining ideas. . . . It is a real delight in this age of commercialism and utilitarianism to meet with a man who can talk of nature with the love he does, and who can defend so chivalrously the spiritual against the material,—the imponderable beauties of creation against those gross realities which everywhere so much prevail.”

The second volume did not, however, escape some contempt and abuse. The *Athenæum* (July 25, 1846, No. 978, pp. 765–767) represented that the author had been converted by its former strictures from his Turner mania—a point to which Ruskin replied in the third edition of the first volume,² and returned to the charge with a copious vocabulary of abuse against his new production. “Flowers of Billingsgate,” “brick-bats,”

¹ See Vol. III. p. xxxvii.

² See Vol. III. p. 630.

“Kennel-water,” “eructations of idle wind,” were among the critical amenities which it bestowed upon the Graduate, with whom, however, it parted on a note of mingled praise and blame. “Never,” said the reviewer, “did we see such acuteness and confusedness of mind—such power and impotence—such trains of error and of truest deduction—such pure taste and perverted judgment—such high and low feeling for art—we must add, such an elevated and vulgarian spirit of criticism—evinced in any treatise pretending to legislate upon *Æsthetics*.” Another review, barely less unfavourable, appeared in the *Daily News* (June 22, 1846), which found in the volume “child’s play and fiddle-faddle,” “subserviency of thoughts to words,” and “high-sounding and somewhat lengthy and involved periods.” The writer acknowledged that “the volume is evidently the work of a man of no ordinary talent and elevation of sentiment”; but he made a somewhat unlucky shot in adding that the Graduate “must first learn to see with his own eyes; at present he sees pictures and everything else through the medium of books.”¹

The volume which was thus received is in style, no less than in contents, different from its predecessor. The manner at which Ruskin aimed in the second volume is described in the letter to Liddell of October 1844.² He sought to eschew “the pamphleteer manner,” and to attain a more “serious, quiet, earnest and simple manner.” “The calmer tone of the second volume . . . resulted,” he afterwards said, “from the simple fact that the first was written in great haste and indignation, for a special purpose and time;—the second, after I had got engaged, almost unawares, in inquiries which could not be hastily nor indignantly pursued.”³ He was now dealing with arguments of high philosophy, and he sought elevation and dignity of language. In theory he was opposed to any tricks of style which departed from simplicity; he explains his point of view in a letter here printed in an Appendix.⁴ In practice, however, he fell into some mannerisms—afterwards exposed unmercifully by himself.⁵ He had been sent to Hooker by his old tutor, Osborne Gordon,⁶ and imitation led him into affectations,—“in the notion,” as he elsewhere says, “of returning as far as I could to what I

¹ Ruskin’s father refers to this review in a letter to W. H. Harrison (Genoa, July 14, 1846): “I see C. Dickens’s paper has a shot at *M. P.*, vol. 2. There are heavier shots than this likely to come. The Utilitarians and Jesters must have a kick at their opponent at any rate.” Dickens had by this time resigned the editorship to John Forster.

² See Vol. III. p. 668.

³ *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. Appendix 11.

⁴ See Appendix iii., p. 390.

⁵ See, e.g., notes on pp. 50, 93, 94, 111.

⁶ *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 184.

thought the better style of old English literature.”¹ The second volume contains throughout high thought wedded to stately language; it includes many purple passages which are favourites in books of selections; and it sustains, hardly with a break, a note of dignity. But probably Ruskin’s own verdict is likely to stand: the style of the second volume is too self-conscious; it was an experiment rather than a development; “it was not,” he says, “my proper style.”²

In subject-matter this volume of *Modern Painters*, though marred by some faults—by no one more mercilessly exposed than by the author himself in his notes to the revised edition of 1883—occupies a central place in Ruskin’s system. It sets forth the spiritual as opposed to the sensual theory of art. It expresses what he elsewhere calls “the first and foundational law respecting human contemplation of the natural phenomena under whose influence we exist, that they can only be seen with their properly belonging joy, and interpreted up to the measure of proper human intelligence, where they are accepted as the work and the gift of a Living Spirit greater than our own.”³ The book, as he states,⁴ had two objects. First, to “explain the nature of that quality of beauty which I now saw to exist through all the happy conditions of living organism”—to explain its nature, and to explain also the theoretic faculty of Admiration by which it may be apprehended.⁵ And, secondly, to explain the school of Angelico at Florence, and of Tintoret at Venice. Its effect in this latter respect, which alone can be measured with any precision, was sure and speedy. It turned the taste of the age to the primitives. The acquisition for the National Gallery of many early Italian pictures—a policy which Ruskin advocated strenuously in a letter to the *Times* in 1847⁶—is an illustration of this conversion of taste and interest. The foundation and work of the Arundel Society are another. Of this Society, established in 1849 and dissolved in 1897, Ruskin was from the first a member of the Council, other members being his friends Liddell, Newton, and Oldfield.⁷ The original prospectus of the Society, after referring to the importance of meeting a revived interest in art by suitable instruction, remarks—as if in echo of passages of this volume—that “the materials for such instruction are abundant, but scattered, little accessible, and, in some instances, passing away. Of the frescoes of Giotto, Orcagna, Ghirlandajo, much which has never been delineated, nor even properly described, is rapidly perishing.”

¹ *Sesame and Lilies*, 1871, preface, § 1.

² *Love’s Meinie*, § 130.

³ *Deucalion*, ii. ch. ii. (“Revision”) § 2.

⁴ *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 183.

⁵ Cf. *The Art of England*, § 38.

⁶ See *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 62–66 (reprinted in a later volume of this edition).

⁷ See *Præterita*, ii. ch. viii.

Among the undertakings announced as under consideration was the engraving of many of the works of art mentioned by Ruskin in his second volume—such as “the architecture and sculpture of the Spina Chapel at Pisa” (see p. 39), “the pulpit in S. Andrea at Pistoja” (p. 300), “the frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli in the chapel of the Riccardi Palace at Florence” (p. 320), and “the works of Tintoretto in the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice” (pp. 268, 270, 272, 274). The water-colour copies of works of art made for the Society, and reproduced by it in chromolithography, were on its dissolution presented to the National Gallery. The reader who examines the collection there will see how many of the works to which Ruskin called attention in this volume were selected by the Society for record.¹

Nor was the volume less successful in establishing the fame of Tintoret. It has been well pointed out that Ruskin had come to Venice in a right mood to appreciate the sweep and grandeur of Tintoretto’s genius. “Fresh from the stormy grandeur of the St. Gothard, he found the lurid skies and looming giants of the Visitation, or the Baptism, or the Crucifixion, reechoing the subjects of Turner as ‘deep answering to deep.’ ”² Between Turner and Tintoret there is, indeed, both spiritual and technical affinity. “Greater imagination, a grander impressionism and conception, and a more burning zeal, rather than a faithful adherence to the traditions of the schools, was Tintoretto’s message to the ages.”³ It was the message that Turner also conveyed, and there is reason for thinking that in the mighty Venetian he had recognised a kindred spirit.⁴ It was part of Ruskin’s mission to reveal the genius of both painters to the modern world. He justly claims, in the Epilogue to this volume and elsewhere,⁵ that he disclosed the supremacy of Tintoret, who had fallen almost into neglect⁶ until

¹ e.g., Fra Angelico’s frescoes in S. Marco, and Ghirlandajo’s in S. Maria Novella. For Ruskin’s testimony to the work of the Society, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. v. § 6, and *Ariadne Florentina*, § 244. For it he wrote two monographs—*Giotto and his Works in Padua* and *Monuments of the Cavalli Family*.

² W. G. Collingwood’s *Life of John Ruskin*, 1900, p. 104. Compare Ruskin’s letter to Burne-Jones below, p. 356.

³ J. B. Stoughton Holborn’s *Tintoretto*, 1903, p. 90.

⁴ “Samuel Rogers used to tell the following story. He was on his way to Italy immediately after the peace that followed the downfall of Napoleon, and he met several artists returning from that country. The first was Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Rogers put the question to him, ‘What do you think the finest picture you have seen in Italy?’ After slight hesitation, he replied, ‘*The Miracle of St. Mark*, by Tintoretto.’ Rogers then said, ‘The next painter I met was Turner, and I put the same question to him. Without a moment’s hesitation he said, ‘Tintoretto.’ ” (*Reminiscences of Frederick Goodall, R.A.*, 1902, p. 37).

⁵ Epilogue, § 13, p. 355; *Præterita*, i. ch. ix. §§ 183–184; *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 61 and 67.

⁶ That is, among critics and the general public. That artists appreciated Tintoret we have already seen. The following tribute by Etty may be added. Writing

this volume and the third of *The Stones of Venice* were published. In this respect, as also in winning better recognition for the school of Fra Angelico, the second volume of *Modern Painters* assuredly did not miss its mark. Ruskin refers in *The Stones of Venice*¹—with “astonishment and indignation”—to the notice of Tintoret in Kugler’s *Handbook of Painting*, then and for many years to come the recognised authority in such matters. The note added to later editions of the *Handbook* is significant of the efficacy of Ruskin’s championship:—

“The remarks in the text upon Tintoretto have been retained, although they do scant justice to that great master, whose works are now better known and more fully understood and appreciated in England, principally through the eloquent writings of Mr. Ruskin. It may be asserted with confidence that no painter has excelled him in nobility and grandeur of conception, and few in poetic intention.”²

To like effect testifies Mr. W. M. Rossetti:—

“The writer who has done by far the most to establish the fame of Tintoret at the height which it ought to occupy is Professor Ruskin in his *Stones of Venice* and other books; the depth and scope of the master’s power had never before been adequately brought out, although his extraordinary and somewhat arbitrarily used executive gift was acknowledged.”³

Mr. Charles Eliot Norton has well said that the chapters in this volume on Imagination, with their “illustrations of the theme drawn from the works . . . of Tintoret, the artist endowed above all others with imaginative power,” . . . “form an unrivalled text-book for the student of the nobler qualities of the art. This section of the book,” he adds, “in its setting forth of the function of the imaginative faculty in pictorial art, may well be compared with Wordsworth’s *Prefaces* in their study of the same faculty as displayed in poetry. Wordsworth’s and Ruskin’s treatises are mutually complementary;⁴ and they afford a body of doctrine admirably fitted to enlighten, enlarge, and elevate the understanding of

to Lawrence from Venice in 1823, he says: “*You*, I am sure, must have been much struck with the Tintorets here; in the Academy, Ducal Palace, etc.; his Last Judgment, Crucifixion, small St. Agnes. What a glorious group that is we see at the foot of the Cross! Really, for composition, for pathos, appropriate and harmonious combination of hues, and great executive power, I have never seen it excelled, rarely equalled. The poetry of his Last Judgment, the hues, the teeming richness of composition,—figures whirled in all possibilities of action and foreshortening,—excite astonishment at his powers that does not easily subside” (Alexander Gilchrist’s *Life of Etty*, i. 169).

¹ Introductory remarks to Venetian Index.

² Fifth edition, 1887, ii. p. 612.

³ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., xx. p. 611.

⁴ See below, p. 299, where Ruskin himself refers to Wordsworth’s *Preface*.

the reader in its appreciation of the work and worth of the most precious and loftiest of human powers.”¹

To trace the effect of the volume in what was to Ruskin its main purpose and function—namely, its theory of the spiritual quality of beauty—admits of no such precise measurement. Like the first volume, it influenced deeply many of the best minds of the day.² It preached the dignity of art,³ and in doing so it struck many a responsive chord in artists of high purpose,⁴ and—like the many other utterances from the same pen which succeeded it—contributed something to elevate the standards of production and taste.⁵ But other ideas and ideals of art arose in later days, and Ruskin came to doubt whether the theory of its spiritual quality and function had left much mark upon the world.

Ruskin’s feelings in this matter must be referred to in some detail, in order to explain the subsequent history of the second volume. This follows in the main that of *Modern Painters* generally, as already told.⁶ The second volume was reprinted in 1848, 1851, 1856, and 1869; it was included, of course, in the new edition of 1873.⁷ He was averse from the republication of the book, and was especially out of humour with this second volume. He had outgrown its theological standpoint; he was ashamed of its sectarian narrowness;⁸ and he was displeased by its affectations of style. Hence, when contemplating a revised series of his

¹ Introduction to the “Brantwood edition” of the separate issue of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., New York, 1891, pp. ix.-x.

² See Vol. III. pp. xxxvii.-xli.

³ See especially sec. i. ch. i. § 2, p. 26.

⁴ “There is a passage in the second volume of *Modern Painters* [sec. i. ch. xv. § 12, p. 217], ‘Theoria the Service of Heaven,’ which I have chanted to myself in many a lonely lane, and which interprets many thoughts I have had” (*Letters of James Smetham*, p. 7).

⁵ The testimony of the leading journal in an article on the day following Ruskin’s death, is worth recording in this connection. “He constructed an ideal for the artist as well as an ideal of art. He showed the artistic profession that it has a mission like the pulpit. He inculcated upon it self-respect because its art is worthy of respect. If sometimes he bade the public look in a picture gallery for qualities it had no particular right to seek for there, he obliged it at least to use its eyes and test its judgment. Artists have not been tender in their retorts upon their critic. They may be excused for a sense of hurt at his frequent caprices, and at his unmeasured severity. They must not be unmindful that they owe the fuller recognition of their title to public admiration and public patronage in no small degree to the blaze of glory with which his meteoric pen has invested their whole vocation. Every painter has risen in stature by virtue of John Ruskin’s vindication of the heights to which English art must, and English artists may, aspire” (*Times*, Jan. 22, 1900).

⁶ See Vol. III. pp. xlvi.-l.

⁷ For particulars of the separate editions, see Bibliographical Note below, p. liii.; for editions of the complete work, Vol. III. pp. lviii.-lxi.

⁸ See, e.g., *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76, and, in this volume, notes of 1883 on pp. 61, 110, 199.

Works in 1870–1871, he excluded the second volume of *Modern Painters* from its scope.¹ Subsequently, however, he selected that very volume for separate and special republication. What caused Ruskin to change his mind was, firstly, the rise of the so-called æsthetic craze, with which by the ignorant he was sometimes himself connected; and, next, the constraint he felt to reinforce the system of “natural philosophy and natural theology,” which he had accepted as the basis of his teaching and which had come to be assailed on so many sides. He had intended, he says, “never to have reprinted the second volume of *Modern Painters*;” but “I find now,” he added, “that the ‘general student’ has plunged into such abysses, not of analytic, but of dissolytic,—dialytic—or even diarrhœic—lies, belonging to the sooty and sensual elements of his London and Paris life, that however imperfectly or dimly done, the higher analysis of that early work of mine ought at least to be put within his reach; and the fact, somehow, enforced upon him, that there were people before *he* lived, who knew what ‘æsthesi-’ meant, though they did not think that pigs’ flavouring of pigs’-wash was ennobled by giving it that Greek name: and that there were also people who knew what vital beauty meant, though they did not seek it either in the model-room, or the Parc aux Cerfs.”² To the same effect, is the note added in 1883 to the first chapter of this volume (see p. 35), in protest against the “æsthetic” folly “which in recent days has made art at once the corruption, and the jest, of the vulgar world.” Similarly, Ruskin felt impelled to republish his second volume as a protest against “so many baseless semblances of philosophy,” and a vindication of the Faith “in the creating Spirit, as the source of Beauty.”³

Accordingly in 1882 Ruskin prepared, and in the following year published, a new and revised edition of this second volume. Particulars of it will be found in the Bibliographical Note (p. liv.), and all matter added in it is incorporated in this edition—see the Preface (pp. 3–9); the Introductory Note to the second section (pp. 219–222); the author’s footnotes—distinguished by the addition of “[1883]”—*passim*; and the Epilogue (pp. 343–357). Ruskin had come to feel, then, in the end that he had builded better than he knew, and that the volume, which he had thought of discarding, might yet be of special value in its time. “Looking back,” he said at Oxford of *Modern Painters*, “I find that though all its Turner work was right and good, the essential business of the book was quite beyond that, and one I had never thought of. I had been as a faithful scribe, writing words I knew not the force of or final intent. I find now

¹ See *Sesame and Lilies*, 1871, Preface, § 2.

² *Love’s Meinie* (1881), § 130.

³ *Deucalion* (ii. ch. ii. “Revision,” §§ 1–4), published in 1883.

the main value of the book to be exactly in that systematic scheme of it which I had despised, and in the very adoption and insistence upon the Greek term *Theoria*, instead of sight or perception, in which I had thought myself perhaps uselessly or affectedly refined.”¹

The *text* of the volume is that last revised by the author, *i.e.*, that of the edition of 1883. The re-numbering of chapters adopted in that edition has, however, for reasons stated below (p. lv.), not been adopted here; and one or two notes, which were omitted in that edition (published, as we have seen, for special purposes), have been restored (see pp. 37, 97, 131). One or two mistakes left uncorrected in the 1883 edition, but marked in Ruskin’s own copy, have here been rectified (see pp. 146, 152). All the editions have been collated, and the variations are noted. The second volume was not, however, so largely revised by the author as was the first; so that the number of substantial and interesting variations, here noted underneath the text, is fewer, while that of minor variations, consigned to an appendix (pp. 396–399), is proportionately larger in this volume than in its predecessor.

The *manuscripts*, etc., of this volume to which the editors have had access are voluminous and interesting. They are fully described in Appendix I. (pp. 361–383). They fall under three heads: (1) materials for the first draft of the volume, and (2) the MS. of the volume in its published form. Several additional passages from the former source, and one from the latter, are printed in the Appendix; they were carefully written, and were discarded by the author not as inadequate, but owing to changes in the scheme of the volume. Particular attention may be called to a beautiful description of a storm at Chamouni (pp. 363–365), and to the notes for a chapter or chapters on Terror as an element of the Sublime (pp. 371–378). Ruskin’s careful preservation of his first draft enables us also to trace with more or less precision the stages through which the volume passed on its way to final publication. The later MS. is also described in the Appendix (pp. 381–383); it has been further used in the annotation of the text, in order to illustrate the author’s habits of revision and compression (see, *e.g.*, pp. 36, 218). When “the MS.” is referred to in notes on the text, it means, unless otherwise stated, this later MS. (3) Thirdly, an additional chapter (pp. 384–389), and some “Supplementary Notes” (pp. 378–381) are here printed from MSS. preserved by Ruskin at Brantwood (see p. 383).

¹ Second lecture of the course “Readings in *Modern Painters*” (Nov. 8, 1877).
IV. d

The *illustrations* introduced in this edition have for the most part not before been published, and are, with one exception, from drawings by the author. They fall into three classes, according as they are (*a*) drawings of places described in the volume, (*b*) studies belonging to the date of the book, or (*c*) copies by the author of works of art referred to by Ruskin.

It will be seen that he was much and painfully impressed by the destruction, called restoration, of ancient buildings during his Continental tour of 1845. Several of the drawings here given are of buildings which were then, or have since, suffered in that way.

To the destruction of the little church of Sta. Maria della Spina at Pisa (No. 4) reference will be found at p. 136, below. Ruskin's drawing (13 x 19), in pencil and white, was made in November 1840. It is at Brantwood.

To the scraping of the "Interior Court of the Ducal Palace" (No. 2) he refers in a letter to his father in 1845, cited at p. 41, below. He there refers to "the part I drew": see also p. 343, below. The drawing in question (pencil and sepia), here reproduced, was made in 1841. It is in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford (Reference Series, No. 64).

Three other architectural sketches belong to the year 1845. The "Exterior of the Ducal Palace" (No. 9) is in the Reference Series (No. 67). "The traceries," says Ruskin, in the *Catalogue of the Reference Series*, "are drawn to scale with care, and cannot be photographed from this point, as the view is taken from the water."

The "study of the marble inlaying on the front of Casa Loredan, Venice" (No. 8) is from a water-colour drawing of the same year, also in the Ruskin School at Oxford (Rudimentary Series, No. 22).

The "San Michele, Lucca" (No. 1), also sketched in 1845, shows a lateral view of the façade of the destroyed church as it appeared in that year. Another view is given in Vol. III. (Plate 1), where the building is described (p. 206 *n.*). The present drawing is No. 85 in the Educational Series of the Ruskin Drawing School.

As a sample of Ruskin's studies of landscape at this period, the "Stone Pine at Sestri" is given (No. 12). To this he refers in the Epilogue to the present volume (§ 4, p. 346, below). In a letter to his father (April 30, 1845), he says:—

"I have been working all day like a horse, and have got a most valuable study of stone pine; rock to sit on, under the shade of an ilex, no wind, air all that's right."

The drawing is No. 22 in the Educational Series at Oxford.

The "Study of the Sea-Horse of Venice (actual size)" is of later date. It is here introduced (No. 5), because it is referred to in the text (see p. 154 *n.*). The original drawing by Ruskin, in pencil, is No. 43 in the Rudimentary Series at Oxford. The engraving here given was made some thirty years ago by Mr. George Allen, from the drawing by Ruskin, for publication in an intended "Oxford Art School Series."

The last group of illustrations consists of Ruskin's copies of, or studies from, works referred to in *Modern Painters*. To the drawings which he made in the Campo Santo at Pisa in 1845 he refers in the Epilogue to this volume (§ 8, p. 350, below, and see p. xxx., above). Most of the drawings there mentioned have not been found among Ruskin's collections; but one, "Abraham Parting from the Angels," is at Oxford¹ and is here reproduced (No. 10); it is of the greater interest from Ruskin's description of this portion of Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco in a letter to his father (see above, p. xxx., and *cf.* p. 316, below).

The other illustrations are from Ruskin's sketches from Tintoret's "Adoration of the Magi" (in the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice); these sketches are referred to in *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 144. The picture is described in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, *s.* "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 2), and referred to in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vii. §§ 2, 3. The studies are here introduced as the only examples now available of Ruskin's work upon Tintoret in 1845 which bore so much fruit in the present volume. The drawings are at Herne Hill. No. 6, a sketch of the whole composition, is from a drawing in colour (28 x 40); No. 7, a study of the figures of the King and Attendants, is from a drawing in pencil and brush (13 x 20). No. 11, a study of the cherubs, is from a drawing in pencil (14½ x 21½).

The *frontispiece* is again, as in Vol. II., from a drawing of Chamouni, where, as will be seen, this second volume of *Modern Painters* had its birth (Appendix i., p. 363). The drawing is described in the Epilogue (§ 4, p. 345, below), and is here reproduced by kind permission of its owner, Lady Simon.

The *facsimile* of Ruskin's manuscript here given (between pp. 364–365) is from the Allen (now Pierpont Morgan) MS., described in Appendix i. (p. 361). The passage has not before been published.

E. T. C.

¹ Placed by Ruskin in his latest re-arrangement in the Educational Series, but not numbered or noticed in the printed catalogues.

Bibliographical Note.—Editions of the whole of *Modern Painters*, and selections from the various volumes, have already been enumerated in the Bibliographical Note to volume i. of the work. Here enumeration is made only of the separate editions of volume ii.

First Edition (1846).—The title-page was as follows:—

Modern Painters. [Volume II. | Containing | Part III. | Sections 1 and 2.
| Of the Imaginative and Theoretic Faculties | By a Graduate of Oxford
| (*Quotation* from Wordsworth, as in vol. i.) | London: | Smith, Elder & Co.,
65 | Cornhill. | 1846.

Imperial 8vo, pp. xvi.+217. For the increase of the size of the page, see above, p. xi. On p. v. was the Dedication (here on p. ix.); on pp. vii.–viii. the Advertisement (here p. xi.); Contents, pp. ix.–xvi.; Text, pp. 1–215; Addenda, pp. 216–217 (see here, pp. 36–37, 69–70, 121, 341–342). On the reverse of p. 217 there was the following list of Errata:—

Pages 35, 37, 39 in headlines, *for* of unity, *read* of infinity.
" 60, in side note, *for* Arts, *read* Art.
destructiveness. " 92, line 8, *for* distinctiveness, *read*
" 109, the extract from Wordsworth should read
thus:— "In such high hour, the Living God
Of visitation from
Thought was not.
" 126, line 15, *for* Corn, *read* Born.
" 131, " 24, *for* steps, *read* stops.
" 142, " 7, *for* Chamouix, *read* Chamonix.
unimaginative. 147, " 18, *for* imaginative, *read*
" 151, " 17, *for* alternation, *read* alteration.

Issued on April 24, 1846, in green ornamental cloth boards, uniform with the third ed. of volume i. (see Vol. III. of this ed., p. lvii.). Price, 10s. 6d.

Second Edition (1848).—Title-page identical with first edition, except that the date is altered, and the words "Second Edition" are added below the quotation: pp. xvi. +220. The text occupies pp. 1–213, and the Addenda pp. 215–220. These Addenda were new notes (see, here, pp. 333–341). Issued on January 1, 1849, in the same coloured boards and at the same price as the first edition. The text was considerably revised throughout (see, *e.g.*, pp. 52, 57, 61, 132, 137, 147, 149, 150, 190, 208, 215, 302, 307).

Third Edition (1851).—The alterations of the title-page are (1) "By John Ruskin, | Author of "The Stones of Venice," "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," | etc., etc.," instead of "By a Graduate of Oxford"; (2) "Third Edition, revised by the author," instead of "Second Edition"; (3) new date. Issued in October 1851 in the same style and at the same price as the previous editions. The text was again revised throughout, but the alterations were not very important.

¹ [In the text the first two lines had been quoted as one line.]

Fourth Edition (1856).—Issued February 15; except for the number of the edition, and the date on the title-page, this was a reprint of the third edition. Price and binding as before.

Fifth Edition (1869).—Again a reprint of the third, except for the above-mentioned alterations and the substitution of the publisher's new address, "15 Waterloo Place." Price and binding as before.

Re-arranged Edition in two volumes (1883).—For the circumstances of this re-issue, see above, p. xlvi. The title-page was as follows:—

Modern Painters. | Volume II. | "Of Ideas of Beauty," | and | "Of the Imaginative Faculty." | By John Ruskin, LL.D., | Honorary Student of Christ Church, Oxford; Honorary Fellow of | Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and Slade Professor, | of Fine Art, Oxford. | (*Quotation* from Wordsworth.) | Re-arranged in two volumes, and revised | By the Author. | Vol. I. (Vol. II.) | George Allen, | Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent | 1883 | [*All rights reserved*].

Of this edition, vol. i. contained pp. xx. + 360; vol. ii., pp. v. + 248. Issued in April 1883, crown 8vo, in violet cloth boards, with white-paper black label, 10s. the two volumes. Two thousand copies were printed.

The first of these volumes contains a new preface (here, pp. 3–9), and Part III. Section I. of the one-volume edition, re-arranged with various additional notes; the second contains a long Introductory Note (here, pp. 219–222); Part III. Section II. of the one-volume edition, re-arranged with various additional notes; the Addenda; and an Epilogue (here, pp. 343–357). All the new matter of the two-volume edition was included in vol. ii. of the "Complete Edition" (1888), the new notes being given at the end; in this edition they are given below the text. The arrangement of sections and chapters was changed in the 1883 edition, as will be seen by comparing the Synopsis of Contents as reprinted below (pp. 11–21) with the following divisions in the 1883 edition:—

(Vol. I. Contents:—)

PART II.¹

Of Ideas of Beauty.

SECTION I.

Of the Theoretic Faculty.

(Chs. 1–4 of the one-vol. edition.)

SECTION II.

Of Typical Beauty.

(Chs. 1–7, being chs. 5–11 of the one-vol. ed.)

SECTION III.

Of Vital Beauty.

(Chs. 1–4, being chs. 12–15 of the one-vol. ed.)

¹ This was a mistake for Part III., there having already been a Part II. in the first volume of the Work.

(Vol. II. Contents:—)

PART III.

Of the Imaginative Faculty.

(Chs. 1–5, being chs. 1–5, of Section II. of the one-vol. ed.).

This was perhaps an improved arrangement, but it has been thought better in this edition to retain the former arrangement, as more familiar, and also as agreeing (in the numbering of the *Parts*) with that of the other volumes of the work.

Re-issues of the Re-arranged Edition.—There have been no changes in the text. A *second* edition, similar to the first, was issued in May 1885. For a *third* (June 1888) the type was reset and the pagination altered (vol. i. 357 pp. instead of 360; vol. ii., 245 instead of 248); this was issued in dark green cloth. The collation of the *fourth* (May 1891), *fifth* (October 1893), and *sixth* (October 1896) editions agrees with the third. The price remained the same throughout, and of each edition 2000 copies were printed. In July 1897 the price was reduced to 5s., and the two volumes were bound in one cover.

An authorised *American edition* of the re-arranged edition of 1883 appeared in New York in 1891, with an introduction (pp. v.–x.) by Charles Eliot Norton.

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II

IV.

A

PREFACE

TO THE RE-ARRANGED EDITION (1883)

1. MY reasons for this carefully revised reprint of the second volume of *Modern Painters*, after so often declaring that I would reprint none of the book except the pieces relating to natural history, are given in the eighth number of *Deucalion*:¹ and I will only say farther here that many and many a time during the revision, I wished I had persisted in my old resolution; not in the mere wounded vanity of an old author looking back on his earliest essays, but in much shame, and some indignation, at finding the most solemn of all subjects of human thought handled at once with the presumption of a youth, and the affectation of an anonymous writer.

2. But that the confession of faults might be complete, I have made no attempt to amend the text. Not a word is omitted; and, I believe, only three or four changed, which were too obscure, or evidently at the time inadvertent.² A few, now useless, notes, referring to buildings since destroyed, or pictures carried away from their homes to Berlin or St. Petersburg, have been cancelled,—and a few pedantic ones shortened; while the parts of the text which needed contradiction, or correction, have been dealt with as they occurred, in notes distinguished from the old ones by being placed within marks of parenthesis.³

¹ [In ch. ii. ("Revision") of vol. ii. as *Deucalion*, issued in May 1883. See above, Introduction, p. xlviii.]

² [A few words in one sentence, omitted (possibly by accident) in the 1883 edition, are here restored (see p. 158). For words inserted and expressions altered, see pp. 29, 42, 50, 52, 59, 66, 139, 223.]

³ [These notes are distinguished in the present edition by the addition of the date ("1883"). The cancelled notes, and passages of notes, are restored in this edition, as they were in that of 1888; see pp. 37, 97, 131.]

3. To the Addenda given in the former second edition I have subjoined a little piece of autobiography, which explains the peculiar temper in which the whole book was written: and it remains for me here, only to give such general account of its contents as may enable the reader to make what use of them may seem best to him.

Its first great assertion is, that beautiful things are useful to men because they are beautiful, and for the sake of their beauty only; and not to sell, or pawn—or, in any other way, turn into money. This, the beginning of all my political economy,¹ is very sufficiently established in the opening chapter.

It then proceeds to ask—What makes anything beautiful, or ugly, in itself? implying therefore that positive beauty, and positive ugliness, are independent of anybody's taste. This, parenthetically, it proceeds to prove; and the parenthetic chapters, (ii. to iv. of the first section,) are again sufficiently pointed and conclusive in their proof.

4. I next enter on the main task of defining the nature of Beauty itself, and of the faculties of mind which recognize it, and invent. Without analyzing the contents of separate chapters, I may at once explain the general theorem of the book by pointing to the passage at page 49, ending with, and summed in, the text—“Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;”² words always understood by me as having reference, like the other Beatitudes, to actual human life, according to the word of Job—“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee;”³ this revelation being given to Job entirely through the forms and life of the natural world, severally shown him by their unseen Creator. The same confession of faith, after the same instruction, is again uttered by Linnæus in the beginning of the “Systema (properly *Imperium*) Naturæ:” “Deum

¹ [See, e.g., *Unto This Last*, § 77, where Ruskin states, as his cardinal principle: “There is no wealth but life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration.”]

² [With this general theorem of the volume compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iv. § 24, and *Aratra Pentelici*, § 12, where the beautiful is defined as “what one noble spirit has created, seen and felt by another of similar or equal nobility.”]

³ [Job xlii. 5.]

sempiternum, immensum, omniscium, omnipotentem, expergefactus transeuntem* vidi, et obstupui.” “As one awaked out of sleep, I saw the Lord passing by—eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, and I stood as in a trance.”

5. He does not say “all-merciful”; the vision, to him, is as that of Eliphaz—“the hair of my flesh stood up”;¹ yet note well, that the terror of Eliphaz, the self-aborrence of Job, and the awe of Linnæus, are all entirely distinct from the spurious and prurient self-condemnation which is the watch-word of modern Protestantism. The *perfect virtue* of Job, of Daniel, and of Noah, is directly, and at length, *asserted by the Deity Himself*, before these three men are taken for His best beloved friends; and the words “Pure in heart” were never, in any place, used by me (and they are referred to again and again through the whole body of my works),² or at any moment thought of, by me, as expressing states of religious belief or fantasy, such as modern theological writers supposed to be signified by the “washing of sanctification,”³ or any other parallel phrase of doctrinal mystery; but only the definite human virtue possible to human effort, and *commanded* in the plain words, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and *purify your hearts, ye double-minded.*”⁴

6. And this should have been much more distinctly stated together with the general code of ethics founded on that understanding of the text, before I advanced to any argument

* More fully, “a tergo transeuntem,” referring to the vision of Moses, Exodus xxxiii. 22. It may be well to translate here the instantly following expression of the chain of the earth’s life, as dependent on the sun, since modern philosophers brandish and bellow this fact about, as if, forsooth, *they* had been the first to discover it! “*I saw animals dependent on vegetables,—vegetables on things earthly,*”—(air and water)—“*things earthly on the globe of the earth,—then, by never shaken law, the globe of the earth to revolve round the sun, from which it has its loan of life.*”⁵

¹ [Job iv. 15.]

² [See below, sec. i. ch. ii. § 10; and cf. *Eagle’s Nest*, §§ 121, 176; *St. Mark’s Rest*, § 129; “Usury” in *On the Old Road*, vol. iii. 1899, § 179.]

³ [1 Cor. vi. 11 and Titus iii. 5: “He saved us by the washing of regeneration.”]

⁴ [James iv. 8.]

⁵ [Cf. *Deucalion* (vol. ii. ch. ii. § 18, ed. 1883, “Revision”) for a further reference to “the nobly religious passion” of Linnæus.]

from it on laws of Art. For much of what I then wrote, and more of what I have since written, has been widely and loudly denied, because my readers had wholly different thoughts from mine of what is meant, in the Bible, by Righteousness, and Faith; or in heathen literature by Righteousness, Honour, and Piety. All these virtues imply radically the conception,—they lead ultimately to the revelation,*—of personal and governing Deity: but they begin, practically, and themselves consist to the end, in truthful knowledge of *human power* and *human worth*; in respect for the natural claims and feelings of others; and in the precision and thoroughness of our obedience to the primary laws of probity and truth,—“A just ephah, and a just hin;” “Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”¹

This character, intelligently obedient to a moral law common to the Jew and Arab,—to the Greek and Christian,—the past world, the present world, and the world to come,—is assumed here, and in all my other writings whatever, as the *basis* of religion itself,—not religion as the basis of *it*,† and the first condition of true delight in the contemplation of any visible thing, or the conception of any invisible one; for only in this state of mind can we see that anything is Good, in the sense that its Creator pronounced it so.

7. Understanding thus much, and the quantity of careful thought and diligent reading which had led me to such conclusion, but of which it was not my business then to speak,

* Compare *Eagle's Nest*, Chap. II. § 30: “It is as little the part of a wise man to reflect much on the nature of things above him, as of beings beneath him. It is immodest to suppose that he can conceive the one, and degrading to suppose that he should be busied with the other. To recognize his everlasting inferiority, and his everlasting greatness; to know himself, and his place; to be content to submit to God without understanding Him; and to rule the lower creation with sympathy and kindness, yet neither sharing the passion of the wild beast, nor imitating the science of the insect,—this you will find is to be modest towards God, gentle to His creatures, and wise for himself.”

† Compare *Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture vii. p. 142. [At that page in all previous eds., § 80.]

¹ [Leviticus xix. 36; Matthew v. 37.]

the reader will find that the sentence, “Man’s use and purpose,” etc., which comes upon him with so startling suddenness in the opening chapter, is yet a most strict and close definition of necessary axiom; though I ought to have led up to it with some preface, and written much of what followed, so that it might still have been acceptable by those who were not prepared to admit the primary statement. In the same way, the use of the word “Theoria”¹ for “contemplation,” and the sum of general inferences, by the untranslated quotation from Aristotle (p. 145), were not so much affectations, as an appeal to pre-established authority. For that great sentence of Aristotle’s is the conclusion of all the moral philosophy then taught at our universities, and it goes far beyond what I have ever ventured to say myself. I translate it now, thankful that it does so, yet with some demur: “And perfect happiness is some sort of energy of Contemplation, for all the life of the gods is (therein) glad; and that of men, glad in the degree in which some likeness to the gods in this energy belongs to them. For none other of living creatures (but men only) can be happy, since in no way can they have any part in Contemplation.”

This, as I have said, goes far beyond my own statement; for *I* call any creature “happy” that can love, or that can exult in its sense of life: and I hold the kinds of happiness common to children and lambs, to girls and birds, to good servants, and good dogs, for no less god-like than the most refined raptures of contemplation attained to by philosophers.

8. It must farther be pointed out, that the use of the Aristotelian word was in some passages of this book necessary, in order to distinguish the mental pleasures taken in beauty from those of the senses, vulgarly now also called from the Greek, “æsthetic.”² I may, in a moment, illustrate the difference by answering a question often lately asked about me by

¹ [See also Introduction, p. xxii.; Appendix i., p. 362; and Vol. III. p. 676 of this edition.]

² [In describing Brantwood Mr. Collingwood writes:—“You expect that Gothic porch you read of in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, and you are surprised to find a stucco classic portico in the corner, painted and *grained*, and heaped around

the æsthetic cliques of London,—why, in the pictures they have seen of my home, there is no attempt whatever to secure harmonies of colour, or form, in furniture. My answer is, that I am entirely independent for daily happiness upon the sensual qualities of form or colour; that, when I want them, I take them either from the sky or the fields, not from my walls, which might be either whitewashed, or painted like a harlequin's jacket, for aught I care; but that the slightest incident which interrupts the harmony of *feeling* and association in a landscape, destroys it all to me, poisoning the entire faculty of contemplation. From my dining-room, I am happy in the view of the lower reach of Coniston Water, not because it is particularly beautiful, but because it is entirely pastoral and pure. Were a single point of chimney of the Barrow iron-works to show itself over the green ridge of the hill, I should never care to look at it more.

9. It is to be noted, also, that the peculiar form of monastic life, which makes itself eminently comfortable in its cell instead of eminently miserable, is commonly provoked into farther extravagance by pride in its own good taste: while even the more amiable and domestic characters of mind which, for our true comfort and content, dispose us to make the most of what we can gather for the decoration of our homes, as chaffinches decorate their nests with lichen, have in these days taken an aspect of peculiar selfishness, in their carelessness of all mischief and suffering in the external world, as long as it is out of sight of the parlour window. I have already casually noticed,¹ in examining certain feelings respecting

with lucky horseshoes, brightly blackleaded. . . . (And then of Ruskin's study:—) Polished steel fender, very unæsthetic; curious shovel—his design, he will stop to remark, and forged by the village smith. Red mahogany furniture, with startling shiny emerald leather chair-cushions; red carpet and green curtains. Most of the room crowded with book-cases and cabinets for minerals, 'handsome and neat enough.' ” (*Life*, 1900, pp. 341, 346.) Much of the furniture came from Denmark Hill, and he retained (he would say) what was good enough for his father as quite good enough for himself. A picture of Ruskin's study (after a drawing by A. Macdonald) had appeared in the *Art Journal* for Dec. 1881. Another, of Ruskin seated in his study, by T. Blake Wirgman, appeared in the *Graphic*, April 3, 1886.

¹ [In the Preface (§ 41) to the *Notes on Prout and Hunt* (1879–1880). See also *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 136; and *cf.* Vol. I. pp. 164–165.]

sublimity in landscape, which I share with Turner and Prout, that one great gift, common to us all, was the accurate sense of comparative magnitudes. This is not a trigonometric, but a tragic power; it indicates a general habit of just comparison and estimate, and means, for me, (answering only here for myself,) that I cannot be consoled by a bit of Venetian glass for the destruction of Venice, nor for the destitution of a London suburb by the softness of my own armchair.¹

10. Some other points of idiosyncrasy, of which count should be taken in tracing the connection of this book with my subsequent writings, are touched upon in the Epilogue, and I will only say farther here, that, often repenting as aforesaid, during the labour of revision, my consent to republish so crude an essay, I am in the end satisfied of what is said in the closing pages (154 to 168)² of *Love's Meinie*, touching its usefulness at the present time: and can warrant my reader that whatever may be the shortcoming or over-forcing of its argument, its criticisms will be found permanently trustworthy and its conclusions inherently secure.³

¹ [So, a few years before the date of this preface, Ruskin wrote from Venice:—"Here is a little grey cockle-shell, lying beside me, which I gathered, the other evening, out of the dirt of the Island of St. Helena; and a brightly-spotted snail-shell, from the thirsty sands of Lido; and I want to set myself to draw these, and describe them, in peace. 'Yes,' all my friends say, 'that is my business; why can't I mind it, and be happy?' Well, good friends, I would fain please you, and myself with you; and live here in my Venetian palace, luxurious; scrutinant of dome, cloud, and cockleshell. . . . But alas! my prudent friends, little enough of all that I have a mind to may be permitted me. For this green tide that eddies by my threshold is full of floating corpses, and I must leave my dinner to bury them, since I cannot save; and put my cockle-shell in cap, and take my staff in hand, to seek an unincumbered shore" (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 72, "Venice, 9th November, 1876.")]

² [*i.e.* of the ed. of 1881, end of "The Dabchicks" chapter. In some editions, §§ 130 *seqq.* See above, Introduction, p. xlviii.]

³ [The Introductory Note of 1883 to section ii. of this volume, which in the editions of 1888 and later years followed the above preface, is in this edition (as in that of 1883) placed at the beginning of section ii.: see below, p. 219.]

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¹ [This Synopsis was omitted in the 1883 edition.]

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PART III
OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY

SECTION I

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY

CHAPTER I

OF THE RANK AND RELATIONS OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY*

ALTHOUGH the hasty execution and controversial tone of the former portions of this essay have been subjects of frequent regret to the writer, yet the one was in some measure excusable in a work referred to a temporary end, and the other unavoidable in one directed against particular opinions.¹ Nor is either of any necessary detriment to its availableness as a foundation for more careful and extended survey, in so far as its province was confined to the assertion of obvious and visible facts, the verification of which could in no degree be dependent either on the care with which they might be classed, or the temper in which they were regarded. Not so with respect to the investigation now before us, which, being not of things outward, and sensibly demonstrable, but of the value and meaning of mental impressions, must be entered upon with a modesty and cautiousness proportioned to the difficulty of determining the likeness, or community, of such impressions, as they are received by different men; and with seriousness proportioned

§ 1. With what care the subject is to be approached.

* This sounds very like the "peerage and baronetage" of the Theoretic Faculty; but must stand as it stood, meaning, of course, the place of said faculty with respect to others. [1883.]

¹ [See Vol. III. pp. 3, 7, 668.]

to the importance of rightly regarding those faculties over which we have moral power, and therefore in relation to which we assuredly incur a moral responsibility. There is not the thing left to the choice of man to do or not to do, but there is some sort or degree of duty involved in his determination; and by how much the more, therefore, our subject becomes embarrassed by the cross influences of variously admitted passion, administered discipline, or encouraged affection, upon the minds of men, by so much the more it becomes matter of weight and import to observe by what laws we should be guided, and of what responsibilities regardful, in all that we admit, administer, or encourage.

Nor indeed have I ever, even in the preceding sections, spoken with levity, though sometimes perhaps
 § 2. *And of what importance considered.* with rashness. I have never treated the subject as other than demanding heedful and serious examination, and taking high place among those which justify, as they reward, our utmost ardour and earnestness of pursuit. That it justifies them must be my present task to prove; that it demands them has never been doubted. Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all.* To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it, their hearts. "Le peintre Rubens s'amuse à être ambassadeur,"¹ said one with whom, but for his own words, we might have thought that effort had been absorbed in power, and the labour of his art in its felicity. "E faticoso lo studio

* I wish the "must" were indeed imperative. The violently increasing number of extremely foolish persons, who now concern themselves about pictures, may be counted among the meanest calamities of modern society. [1883.]

¹ [In 1628 Rubens made a journey to Madrid, at the invitation of the King of Spain. It was on this occasion that he was discovered by a courtier busily painting. "Ho!" cried the latter, "does his most Catholic Majesty's representative amuse himself with painting?" "No," was the reply, "the painter Rubens amuses himself with diplomacy."]

della pittura, e sempre si fa il mare maggiore,”¹ said he, who of all men was least likely to have left us discouraging report of anything that majesty of intellect could grasp, or continuity of labour overcome.* But that this labour, the necessity of which, in all ages, has been most frankly admitted by the greatest men, is justifiable from a moral point of view, that it is not a vain devotion of the lives of men, that it has functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests, and that the objects of it have calls upon us which it is inconsistent alike with our human dignity and our heavenward duty to disobey, has never been boldly asserted nor fairly admitted;² least of all is it likely to be so in these days of despatch and display, where vanity, on the one side, supplies the place of that love of art which is the only effective patronage, and, on the other, that of *the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can blind to its shortcomings, or beguile of its hope.*[†]

And yet it is in the expectation of obtaining at least a partial acknowledgment of this, as a truth decisive³ both of aim and conduct, that I enter upon the second division of my subject. The time I have already devoted to the task I should have considered too great, and that which I fear may be yet required for its completion would have been cause to me of utter discouragement, but that the object I propose to myself is of no partial nor accidental importance.⁴ It is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvases; it is not now to

* Tintoret. (Ridolfi, Vita.)

† One of the best short statements of a true artist’s mind which I have ever given. [1883. The passage was first italicised in that edition.]

¹ [Ruskin himself had been drawn into this greater sea. “Tintoret swept me away at once,” he says, in recalling his impressions at Venice in 1845, “into the ‘mare maggiore’ of the schools of painting which crowned the power and perished in the fall of Venice” (*Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 140). See also the closing passage of the lecture on “The Unity of Art” in *The Two Paths*, where “those great words of the aged Tintoret” are again quoted.]

² [See again the Letters to Gordon and Liddell, in Vol. III. pp. 665, 670.]

³ [Ed. 1 reads “influential” instead of “decisive.”]

⁴ [See once more the Letters to Gordon and Liddell, in Vol. III., as cited above.]

expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person; it is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires, and to elevate to its healthy and beneficial operation that art which, being altogether addressed to them, rises or falls with their variableness of vigour, now leading them with Tyrtæan fire, now singing them to sleep with baby murmurings.

Because that with many of us the recommendation of our own favourite pursuits is, I fear, rooted more in conceit of ourselves, than in affection towards others, so that sometimes in our very pointing of the way we had rather that the intricacy of it should be admired than unfolded, whence a natural distrust of such recommendation may well have place in the minds of those who have not yet perceived any value in the thing praised; and because, also, men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way, or at least (for the word has been often so accepted from the beginning of time) since in these days they act its more limited meaning farther out, and give to it more practical weight and authority; it will be well in the outset that I define exactly what kind of Utility I mean to attribute to art, and especially to that branch of it which is concerned with those impressions of external Beauty, whose nature it is our present object to discover.

That is, to everything created pre-eminently useful, which enables it rightly and fully to perform the functions appointed to it by its Creator. Therefore, that we may determine what is chiefly useful to man, it is necessary first to determine the use of Man himself.

Man's use and function (and let him who will not grant me this follow me no farther,* for this I purpose always to assume) are, to be the witness of the glory of God, and to

* Many readers in old times, *did* follow me no farther; the passage being indeed offensively aggressive in its pietism, and rude in its brevity. For its better explanation see the preface to this edition (p. 7). [1883.]

advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.¹

Whatever enables us to fulfil this function is, in the pure and first sense of the word, Useful to us: pre-eminently, therefore, whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist are, (*only*)² in a secondary and mean sense, useful; or rather, if they be looked for alone, they are useless, and worse, for it would be better that we should not exist, than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses and lands, and food and raiment were alone useful, and as if Sight, Thought, and Admiration* were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables;† men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body,³ who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vinedressers and husbandmen, who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden;† hewers of wood and drawers of water,⁴ who think that it is to give them wood to hew and water to draw, that the pine-forests cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and the great rivers move like His eternity. And so comes upon us that Woe of the preacher, that though God “hath made everything beautiful in his time, also He hath set the

* “We live by admiration, hope, and love.”—*Excursion*, book iv.

† I ought to have said, vegetable manure. [1883.]

† All the same, I wish, myself, that the angels gave us some clearer notion of them. [1883.]

¹ [A reminiscence of the answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism (which Ruskin learnt when a child): “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever;” see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 75, Notes and Correspondence, iv.]

² [The word “only” in brackets and italics was here inserted in the 1883 ed.]

³ [Matthew vi. 25.]

⁴ [Joshua ix. 21.]

world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”¹

This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends men to grass like oxen,² seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuance of national power and peace.³ In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of endurance, fortitude; out of deliverance, faith: but when they have learned to live under providence of laws and with decency and justice of regard for each other, and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem to arise out of their rest; evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear, also, a fear greater than of sword and sedition: that dependence on God may be forgotten, because the bread is given and the water sure; that gratitude to Him may cease, because His constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law; that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world; that selfishness may take place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vainglory, and love in dissimulation;* that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts, to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp.⁴ About the river of human life there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine; the iris colours its

§ 6. *The evil consequences of such interpretation. How connected with national power;*

* Rom. xii. 9.

¹ [Ecclesiastes iii. 11. See also Psalm lxxx. 7–10: “Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine. . . . The hills were covered with the shadow of it.” The whole passage is a good instance of Ruskin’s use of Biblical words and phrases (see Vol. III. p. 674). See further, Matthew vi. 25; Luke xii. 23; Joshua ix. 21.]

² [Daniel iv. 25.]

³ [On the effect of long peace on a nation, see *Crown of Wild Olive*, App., § 161.]

⁴ [Luke xii. 35.]

agitation, the frost fixes upon its repose. Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones,¹ which, so long as they are torrent-tossed and thunder-stricken, maintain their majesty, but when the stream is silent, and the storm passed, suffer the grass to cover them and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust.*

And though I believe that we have salt enough of ardent and holy mind amongst us to keep us in some measure § 7. *How to be averted.* from this moral decay, yet the signs of it must be watched with anxiety, in all matters however trivial, in all directions however distant. And at this time, when the iron roads are tearing up the surface of Europe, as grapeshot do the sea; when their great net² is drawing and twitching the ancient frame and strength³ together, contracting all its various life, its rocky arms and rural heart, into a narrow, finite, calculating metropolis of manufactures; when there is not a monument throughout the cities of Europe that speaks of old years and mighty people, but it is being swept away to build cafés and gaming-houses;⁴ when the honour of God is thought

* I have suffered these passages to remain unaltered, because, though recent events have turned them into irony, they are, perhaps, not undeserving of attention, as having marked, during a period of profound and widely extended peace, some of the sources of the national debasement which, on the continent of Europe, has precipitated its close, and been manifested alike in the dissolution of authority, the denial of virtue, and the unresisted victory of every dream of folly and every shape of sin.⁵

¹ [*cf.* below, sec. i. ch. vi. § 2, p. 93, “not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones,” etc.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read “sagene” (Greek σαγηνη, Italian *sagena*, French *seine*)=a large drag net.]

³ [Eds. 1 and 2 had “of England.”]

⁴ [A long note was here appended in the earlier editions, but was cancelled in that of 1883. It is here, for better convenience, printed, with various elucidatory passages from Ruskin’s diaries, at the end of the chapter, p. 37. *Cf. On the Old Road*, 1899, i. § 265.]

⁵ [In the ed. of 1883 Ruskin added the following further note:—

“Note of 1856, alluding to the Crimean and other wars. The words ‘denial of virtue’ refer to the physical philosophy of automatic necessity, which has become every day more absurd and mischievous since this was written.”

It was not, however, a note of 1856, for it appeared in the second (1848) edition of the volume. In the ed. of 1888 the reference to the Crimean War was accordingly omitted by the publisher, and “Note of 1848” substituted; the actual reference was to the political upheavals of that year. For Ruskin’s view on the Crimean War, in the same sense as the above passage, see the next volume, ch. xviii.]

to consist in the poverty of His temple, and the column is shortened and the pinnacle shattered, the colour denied to the casement and the marble to the altar, while exchequers are exhausted in luxury of boudoirs and pride of reception-rooms; when we ravage without a pause all the loveliness of creation which God in giving pronounced Good,¹ and destroy without a thought all those labours which men have given their lives and their sons' sons' lives to complete, and have left for a legacy to all their kind, a legacy of more than their hearts' blood, for it is of their souls' travail;—there is need, bitter need, to bring back into men's minds, that to live is nothing, unless to live be to know Him by whom we live;² and that He is not to be known by marring His fair works, and blotting out the evidence of His influences upon His creatures; nor amidst the hurry of crowds and crash of innovation, but in solitary places, and out of the glowing intelligences which He gave to men of old. He did not teach them how to build for glory and for beauty; He did not give them the fearless, faithful, inherited energies that worked on and down from death to death, generation after generation, that we³ might give the work of their poured-out spirit to the axe and the hammer; He has not cloven the earth with rivers,⁴ that their white wild waves might turn wheels and push paddles, nor turned it up under as it were fire,⁵ that it might heat wells and cure diseases; He brings not up His quails by the east wind only to let them fall in flesh about the camp of men;⁶ He has not heaped the rocks of the mountain only for the quarry, nor clothed the grass of the field only for the oven.⁷

Science and art are either subservient to life or the objects of it.⁸ As subservient to life, or practical, their results are,

¹ [Genesis i. 10.]

² [John xvii. 3.]

³ [Ed. 1 reads, "we, foul and sensual as we are, might . . ."]

⁴ [Habakkuk, iii. 9.]

⁵ [Job xxviii. 5.]

⁶ [Numbers xi. 31: "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp."]

⁷ [Matthew vi. 30.]

⁸ [Ed. 1 reads, "All science and all art may be divided into that which is subservient to life, or which is the object of it."]

in the common sense of the word, Useful. As the object of life or theoretic,* they are, in the common sense, Useless. And yet the step between practical and theoretic science is the step between the miner and the geologist, the apothecary and the chemist; and the step between practical and theoretic art is that between the builder and the architect, between the plumber and the artist; and this is a step allowed on all hands to be from less to greater. So that the so-called useless part of each profession does, by the authoritative and right instinct of mankind, assume the more noble place; even though books be sometimes written, and that by writers of no ordinary mind, which assume that a chemist is rewarded for the years of toil which have traced the greater part of the combinations of matter to their ultimate atoms, by discovering a cheap way of refining sugar; and date the eminence of the philosopher whose life has been spent in the investigation of the laws of light, from the time of his inventing an improvement in spectacles.

§ 8. *Division of the pursuits of men into subservient and objective.*

But¹ the common consent of men admits that whatever branch of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and regards material uses, is ignoble, and whatever part is addressed to the mind only is noble; and that geology does better in reclothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy

* With juvenile vanity I begin using this word in my own peculiar sense, before it is explained to the reader in any sense at all. He must please remember that Theory, from the beginning to the end of this part of *Modern Painters*, is used in the sense of contemplation, whenever it is used carefully. Passages may perhaps occur in which I have used the word accidentally in its ordinary sense of "supposition;" but I will try to catch these in revising.² [1883.]

¹ [Ruskin in his copy for revision omits § 8 down to this point, and reads here, "And even the common consent . . ." The rest of § 8 is § 3 in *Fronde Agrestes*. For "admits that whatever branch," ed. I reads "proves and accepts the proposition, that whatever part . . ."]

² [There were, however, no such passages caught, though a passage on p. 64 might have been noticed. In a later note of 1883, Ruskin inadvertently uses the word "theory" in its ordinary sense: see p. 233.]

better in opening to us the houses of heaven, than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization than in setting limbs.* Only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice, and we live, dispense yet such kind influences, and so much of material blessing, as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit;† that the strong torrents which, in their own gladness, fill the hills with hollow thunder and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed, and barge to bear: that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval, and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and warm the quickening spring; and that for our incitement,—I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward,—herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

§ 9. *Their
relative dign-
ities.*

It would appear, therefore, that those pursuits which are altogether theoretic, whose results are desirable or admirable in themselves and for their own sake, and in which no farther end to which their

* All this, though right, is much too violently expressed—the juvenile vanity again appearing in the desire, to say what might appear strange, in the most striking way; and what might be questioned by many readers, in the most positive way. As I grew older, I more and more respected vulgar uses; and in the 8th chapter of *Deucalion*¹ which I am at present arranging, it will be found that they are regarded as a leading test of rightly systematized science. [1833.]

† Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, book II. chap. ii. § 2.

¹ [Ruskin meant the 8th *Part* (*i.e.* ch. ii. of vol. ii. as originally published, entitled “Revision”), where he says:—“It is perhaps, of all the tests of difference between the majestic science of those days, and the wild theories or foul curiosities of our own, the most strange and the most distinct, that the practical suggestions which are scattered through the writings of the older naturalists tend always directly to the benefit of the general body of mankind.”]

productions or discoveries are referred can interrupt the contemplation of things as they are, by the endeavour to discover of what selfish uses they are capable (and of this order are painting and sculpture), ought to take rank above all pursuits which have any taint* in them of subserviency to life, in so far as all such tendency is the sign of less eternal and less holy function.† And such rank these two sublime arts would indeed assume in the minds of nations, and become objects of corresponding efforts, but for two fatal and widespread errors respecting the great faculties of mind concerned in them.

§ 10. *How reversed through erring notions of the contemplative and imaginative faculties.*

The first of these, or the Theoretic faculty, is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is, the considering and calling it *Æsthetic*,‡ degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or

* “Taint” is a false word. The entire system of useful and contemplative knowledge is one; equally pure and holy: its only “taints” are in pride, and subservience to avarice or destruction; but see the footnote. [1883. The “footnote” is the earlier one that follows¹.]

† I do not assert that the accidental utility of a theoretic pursuit, as of botany for instance, in any way degrades it, though it cannot be considered as elevating it. But essential utility, a purpose to which the pursuit is in some measure referred, as in architecture, invariably degrades, because then the theoretic part of the art is comparatively lost sight of; and thus architecture takes a level below that of sculpture or painting, even when the powers of mind developed in it are of the same high order.

When we pronounce the name of Giotto, our venerated thoughts are at Assisi and Padua, before they climb the Campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore. And he who would raise the ghost of Michael Angelo must haunt the Sistine and San Lorenzo, not St. Peter’s.**

‡ It is one of the principal reasons for my reprinting this book, that it contains so early and so decisive warning against the then incipient folly, which in recent days has made art at once the corruption, and the jest, of the vulgar world. [1883.]

** This old note already anticipates the subjection of the constructive to the decorative science of architecture which gave so much offence, to architects capable only of construction, in the *Seven Lamps*, written two years later, and *Stones of Venice*.¹ The obscure sentence about Michael Angelo signifies that he is to be judged by his sculpture and painting—not his dome building, which is true enough—and I wish now very heartily that he had never done anything but domes. [1883.]

¹ [*Seven Lamps*, ch. i. § 1; *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. ii., “The Virtues of Architecture.”]

perhaps worse, of custom; so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.¹

The second great faculty is the Imaginative, which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas it has received from external nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty to other minds. And the error respecting this faculty is, in considering that its function is one of falsehood, that its operation is to exhibit things as they are *not*, and that in so doing it mends the works of God.

Now, as these are the two faculties to which I shall have occasion constantly to refer during that examination of the Ideas of Beauty and Relation on which we are now entering, because it is only as received and treated by these that those ideas become exalted and profitable, it becomes necessary for me in the outset² to explain their power and define their sphere; and to vindicate, in the system of our nature, their true place for the intellectual lens and moral retina, by which, and on which, our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented.

NOTE.—The reader will probably recollect the two sonnets of Wordsworth which were published at the time when the bill for the railroad between Kendal and Bowness was laid before Parliament. His remonstrance was of course in vain; and I have since heard that there are proposals entertained

¹ [In the MS. there was an additional passage here, which is worth printing as an illustration of the author's compression in final revision:—

“. . . fanners of the soul's sleep. This can hardly be the case with the sciences; one may indeed collect spars and gather weeds and cheapen coins for mere amusement; but then one cannot have anything to do with the science properly so-called; one may be a spar-collector in idleness, but one cannot be a geologist in idleness, nor a botanist,—there must be work, memory, thought, activity, or one is nothing. But it unfortunately happens in the case of art that it is exceedingly possible to be an artist, and an amateur also, in idleness; that the amusing and æsthetic part of the science is not boldly marked off from the great or theoretic part, and of course it is the very necessity of human weakness to stop the greater number of votaries in this easy stage until the whole function of art is forgotten and despised.”]

² [In his copy for revision Ruskin underlines this word, writing in the margin “and in the end-set and in-set”; he underlines also the words “the intellectual lens and moral retina.”]

for continuing this line to Whitehaven through *Borrowdale*. I transcribe the note prefixed by Wordsworth to the first sonnet.

“The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit’s sake. ‘Fell it!’ exclaimed the yeoman; ‘I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.’ It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.”

The men who thus feel will always be few, and overborne by the thoughtless avaricious crowd: but is it right, because they are a minority, that there should be no respect for them, no concession to them, that their voice should be utterly without regard in the council of the nation; and that any attempt to defend one single district from the offence and foulness of mercenary uses, on the ground of its beauty and power over men’s hearts, should be met, as I doubt not it would be, by total and impenetrable scorn?¹

[The following is the note referred to above on p. 31. In the re-arranged edition of 1883, this note was omitted, and the following substituted:—

“I cancel the long note, then irrelevant, and now useless, specifying instances of destruction in progress—since irremediably fulfilled. Nearly all that was historically of value in the great cities of Europe, has been swept away by their shopkeepers, since this book was last printed.”]

The extent of ravage among works of art, or of historical interest, continually committing throughout the continent may, perhaps, be in some measure estimated from the following facts, to which the experience of every traveller may add indefinitely:—

At Beauvais.—The magnificent old houses at the corner of the market-place, supported on columns of workmanship (so far as I recollect) unique in the North of France, have recently been destroyed for the enlarging of some ironmongery and grocery warehouses. The arch across the street leading to the cathedral has been destroyed also, for what purpose I know not.

At Rouen.—The last of the characteristic houses on the quay is now disappearing. When I was last there, I witnessed the destruction of the noble Gothic portal of the church of St. Nicholas, whose position interfered with the

¹ [In ed. 1 this note was printed among the Addenda at the end of the volume (see below, p. 333.) In the re-arranged edition of 1883, Ruskin added the following note:—

“This was, I believe my first protest against railroads. The ‘men who thus feel’ are not so few as I then thought, and it has since become every year a more pressing question with me, how the joys and interests of gentle and sensible persons are to be supported against the violence, restlessness, and avarice of what I believe to be indeed a minority, though an intensely active and powerful one.”

Ruskin had a few years before writing this note seen a scheme for railway extension in the Lake District defeated; see his preface to R. Somervell’s *Protest against the Extension of Railways in the Lake District*, 1876, reprinted in *On the Old Road*, vol. ii. (ed. 1899), §§ 261 *seq.*, and in a later volume of this edition, where other protests in similar cases are collected.]

courtyard of a hotel; the greater part of the ancient churches are used as smithies, or warehouses for goods.

So also at Tours (St. Julien).—One of the most interesting pieces of middle-aged domestic architecture in Europe, opposite the west front of the cathedral, is occupied as a café; and its lower storey concealed by painted wainscotings, representing, if I recollect right, twopenny rolls surrounded by circles of admiring cherubs.¹

At Geneva.—The wooden projections or² loggias, which were once the characteristic feature of the city, have been entirely removed within the last ten years.³

At Pisa.—The old Baptistery is at this present time in process of being “restored,” that is, dashed to pieces; and common stone, painted black and varnished, substituted for its black marble. In the Campo Santo, the invaluable frescoes, which might be protected by merely glazing the arcades, are left exposed to wind and weather. While I was there in 1846,⁴ I saw a monument to some private person put up against the lower part of the wall. The bricklayers knocked out a large space of the lower brickwork, with what beneficial effect to the loose and blistered stucco on which the frescoes are painted above, I leave the reader to imagine; inserted the tablet, and then plastered over the marks of the insertion, destroying a portion of the border of one of the paintings. The greater part of Giotto’s “Satan before God” has been destroyed by the recent insertion of one of the beams of the roof.

The tomb of Antonio Puccinello, which was the last actually put up against the frescoes, and which destroyed the terminal subject of the Giotto series, bears date 1808.⁵

¹ [For vandalism at Tours, *cf.* Vol. I. p. 430.

² [So, correctly, in the MS.; all previous eds. read “of” for “or.”]

³ [See the description of Old Geneva in *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 92.]

⁴ [This should be 1845; and so below, “June 1846” and “September 1846” should in each case be 1845. Ed. I reads “last year,” “June last year,” and “September last.” These were in later editions wrongly altered to “1846.”]

⁵ [Ruskin had been much exercised, while at Pisa in May 1845, at the neglect of the Campo Santo. See the passage from a letter given in Vol. III. p. 205, and *cf.* *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 130. In another letter to his father (Pisa, May 14), he writes:—

“Two thousand pounds would put glass round the whole of the Campo Santo, and preserve all that remains of the frescoes, and our Government give 2500 for a rascally Guido not worth sixpence. Seriously I am going to write to George Richmond and Sir R. Inglis, and anyone else I can think of and see if I can’t get a subscription set on foot. Two thousand pounds only, to save Giotto, Simon Memmi, Andrea Orcagna, Antonio Veneziano, and Benozzo Gozzoli ! and there will not be a fragment left in thirty years more, unless it be done.”

Of the Baptistery he writes (May 21):—

“Poor dear old Baptistery, all its precious old carving is lying kicking about the grass in front of it, the workmen are wonderful at the ‘knocking down’ like Sam Weller. Where there used to be black marble, they put up common stone painted and varnished, but it don’t matter. All’s one for that: the old Baptistery is gone. I have picked up some of the old bits for love, and shall send them home to McCracken in a box with the Lucca fragments. I wish to heaven this town were inhabited by bats and monkeys instead of these men.”

For Sam Weller and the “knockin’ down” see *Pickwick*, chs. xxxvii. and xxxviii. McCracken was the principal shipping agent of the day; advertisements of his

It has been proposed (or at least it is so reported) that the church of La Spina should be destroyed in order to widen the quay.¹

At Florence.—One of its most important and characteristic streets, that in which stands the church of Or San Michele, has been within the last five years entirely destroyed and rebuilt in the French style; consisting now almost exclusively of shops of Bijouterie and Parfumerie. Owing to this direction of public funds, the fronts of the Duomo, Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, and half the others in Florence, remain in their original bricks.²

The old refectory of Santa Croce, containing an invaluable Cenacolo, if not

firm may be seen in old editions of Murray's *Handbooks*. He was also a great admirer of Ruskin and afterwards of the Pre-Raphaelites: see *Letters of D. G. Rossetti to William Allingham*, edited by G. Birkbeck Hill, 1897, p. 25. Of the vandalism in putting up monuments in the Campo Santo, Ruskin writes (May 25):—

"I saw some of the improvements going on in the Campo Santo yesterday. They were going to put up a monument to some apothecary, and so three workmen came and knocked a great hole in the wall; of course every blow of the hammer causing the fresco plaster, already loose, to detach itself more and more from the wall, and tearing down at the same time half of what remained of a head of Antonio Veneziano. Then they put up a slab with the apothecary's name upon it, and saying that it was a great pity he was dead (*I think it's a pity that anybody here is left alive*); and then they knocked down some more fresco to put up his bust. This they put up so as to conceal all that they had left of the Antonio head; and then they filled up the whole with wet plaster, and plastered away half a yard more of the old fresco decorated border on each side, to make the wall flat, and so they left it to damp all the painting above and prepare it for tumbling off next time. But they won't let me take tracings, not they! I shall certainly get into the habit of swearing in Italy. I am beginning to do so mentally to a considerable extent."

¹ [For the subsequent destruction of this church, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 18 and 20.]

² [Of the rebuilding of Florence Ruskin also gave an account in a letter to his father (Florence, May 30, 1845):—

". . . Do you recollect the street that used to run from the post office to the cathedral, or baptistery—very narrow and Italian, all full of crimson draperies and dark with old roofs? Judge of my horror, when on turning the corner, I beheld (as it seemed) the Rue St. Honoré at Paris, with a whole row of confectioners' shops fresh gilt, and barbers' between, and 'Parfumerie et Quincaillerie,' within ten yards of Brunelleschi's monument! They have actually pulled down the whole street and built a new one instead, and a fit one it is for these Italians as they are now, full of bonbons, segars, and pomatum. And actually when in total despair I was walking home with my eyes on the gutter, wishing I could wash the whole population of Florence down with it into the sewer, I was aroused by nearly tumbling over one of the parapet stones of the divine old church of Or San Michele, which they have got scaffolding on both sides of at once. I think verily the Devil is come down upon earth, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time [Rev. xii. 12]. And a short time he will have if he goes on at this rate, for in ten years more there will be nothing in the world but eating-houses and gambling-houses and worse, and then he'll have nothing more to do. The French condemned the Convent of San Marco where I am just going, and all the pictures of Fra Angelico were only saved by their being driven out. If I ever write anything that this foul world will listen to (which, unless I get more wicked or more foolish, I suppose I never shall), and don't black those Frenchmen's faces for them to some purpose, I wish my tongue may cleave to the roof of my mouth."

The front of the Duomo has only now (1903) been entirely completed, though the

by Giotto, at least one of the finest works of his school, is used as a carpet manufactory.¹ In order to see the fresco, I had to get on the top of a loom. The *cenacolo* (of Raffaello?) recently discovered I saw when the refectory it adorns was used as a coach-house. The fresco which gave Raffaello the idea of the Christ of the Transfiguration is in an old wood-shed at San Miniato, concealed behind a heap of faggots. In June, 1846, I saw Gentile da Fabriano's picture of the Adoration of the Magi, belonging to the Academy of Florence, put face upmost in a shower of rain in an open cart; on my suggesting the possibility of the rain's hurting it, an old piece of matting was thrown over its face, and it was wheeled away "per essere pulita." What fate this signified is best to be discovered from the large Perugino in the Academy; whose divine distant landscape is now almost concealed by the mass of French ultramarine painted over it, apparently with a common house-brush, by the picture-cleaner.

Not to detain the reader by going through the cities of Italy, I will only further mention, that at Padua the rain beats through the west window of the Arena chapel, and runs down *over* the frescoes;² that at Venice, in September, 1846, I saw three buckets set in the Scuola di San Rocco to catch the rain which came *through* the *canvases* of Tintoret on the roof;³ and that, while the old works of art are left thus unprotected, the palaces are being restored in the following modes:⁴ The English residents knock out bow windows to see

greater part was finished in 1887. The façade of S. Croce was cased in white and green marbles in 1863, from funds in large measure supplied by an Englishman, Mr. Sloane. The construction of the façade of San Lorenzo is now in contemplation.]

¹ [It was the monks who let out the Great Refectory of S. Croce as a carpet manufactory; since the suppression of the Convent, the carpets have gone, and the Refectory is used for the exhibition of various fragments of sculpture, etc. Ruskin bought a piece of carpet there "partly for memory of the place, partly to keep me well up to the boilingpoint against the nation and its ways, for I will not forgive them" (letter to his father, June 7). The so-called "Last Supper of Raphael" is in the Refectory of the Convent of Sant' Onofrio, which now belongs to the Government and is well kept; on the other walls are reproductions of "Last Suppers" by other masters. The discovery of Raphael's name on the dress of St. Thomas led to the fresco being attributed to him; it is now generally assigned to "the School of Perugino." The fresco from which it has been suggested that Raphael derived the idea of his "Transfiguration" is in the vestibule that serves as an entrance to the church of San Miniato al Monte. It was in 1845 also that Ruskin saw the picture of Gentile da Fabriano being carted off; the incident is described in his Diary. The picture (No. 165 in the Accademia) is generally accounted the painter's masterpiece. The Perugino referred to is the "Assumption of the Virgin" (No. 57) for which see below, p. 84.]

² [Of Padua in 1845, Ruskin wrote to his father that it was unspoilt (Padua, Oct. 15):—

"This place is the only town in Italy in which I have found no important change, and there is in consequence still a sweet and feeling character about it; and it is associated moreover with all my childish pleasure in going to Venice, so that I shall always love it."

³ [See the letter to Severn in Appendix iii., below, p. 395.]

⁴ [Of the state of things at Venice (where in 1845 the railway was approaching completion), he wrote (Sept. 10):—

"The afternoon was cloudless; the sun intensely bright—the gliding down the canal of the Brenta exquisite. We turned the corner of the bastion where Venice once appeared, and behold—the Greenwich railway, only with less arches and more dead walls, entirely cutting off the whole open sea and



J. Franklin.

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Court of the Ducal Palace, Venice.
(1841)

up and down the canal; the Italians paint all the *marble* white or cream colour, stucco the fronts, and paint them in blue and white stripes to imitate alabaster. This has been done with Danieli's hotel, with the north angle of the church of St. Mark (there taking the place of the real alabasters which have been torn down), with a noble old house in St. Mark's Place, and with several in the narrow canals. The marbles of St. Mark's, and carvings, are being *scraped* down to make them look bright; the lower arcade of the Doge's palace is white-washed; the entrance porch is being restored, the operation having already proceeded so far as the knocking off of the heads of the old statues; an iron railing painted black and yellow has been put round the court. Faded tapestries and lottery tickets (the latter for the benefit of charitable institutions) are exposed for sale in the council chambers.¹

half the city—which now looks as nearly as possible like Liverpool at the end of the dockyard wall. The railway covered with busy workmen—scaffolding and heaps of stones—an iron station where the Madonna del Acqua [see Vol. I. p. 543, II. p. 227] used to be, and a group of omnibus gondolas, so—[sketch]. When we entered the Grand Canal, I was yet more struck, if possible, by the fearful dilapidation which it has suffered in these last five years. Not only are there two-thirds of the palaces under *repair*—we know what that means, but they could not stand without it; they are mouldering down as if they were all leaves and autumn had come suddenly. Few boats about—all deathlike and quiet—save for the scaffolding and plastering. Danieli's is peculiarly remarkable in this respect; he has done the thing thoroughly. All its rich marble front is covered with a smooth polished bright white stucco—painted in stripes, so—[sketch], in imitation of marble, with the grand big blue sign in brilliant relief. . . . Of all the fearful changes I ever saw wrought in a given time, that on Venice since I was last here beats. It amounts to destruction—all that can be done of picture now is in the way of restoration. The Foscari palace is all but a total ruin—the rents in its walls are half a foot wide. The interior court of the Doge's palace, especially the part I drew, is being repaired—covered with scaffolding, and as a preparatory step they have already knocked off the heads of the statues. The area is already on one side bound by iron railings of this pattern [sketch], the heads being painted orange yellow, the rest black—Austrian colours, you know. The front of St. Mark's is being fitted with grand new windows, and the exterior arcade of the Doge's palace has been brilliantly whitewashed inside, splashing the capitals all over,—breaking most of them.”]

¹ [Ruskin was to live to see an extension of the lottery under the shadow of St. Mark which grieved him yet more. (See *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, and *St. Mark's Rest*, ch. ii.)]

CHAPTER II
OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY AS CONCERNED WITH
PLEASURES OF SENSE

I PROCEED, therefore, first to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term “Theoretic” for “Theoretic.” “Æsthetic,” which is the one commonly now¹ employed with reference to it.

Now the term “æsthesis” properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies; in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in any way sensual; they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral: and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavour to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks, “Theoretic,” which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, *Theoria*.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of æsthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness

¹ [The word “now” was inserted in the 1883 ed., with the following note:—
“It was, of course, never so used by good or scholarly English writers, nor ever could be.”]

of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The dignity of affection is no way lessened, because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals; neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated, because they are common to men. It is clear, therefore, that there is a standard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted by Aristotle,¹ that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some, and not so with respect to others; and that those with respect to which they are so called, are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of them is just, and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that, “in these also men may be conceived as taking pleasure either rightly, or more or less than is right.”* Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, let us consider² how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind;

§ 3. Use of the terms “temperate,” and “intemperate”.

* ως δεῖ, και καθ υπερβολην και ελλειψιν.³

¹ [*Ethics*, iii. 10, 2–4: “When he who loves honour or learning is delighted by that which he loves, it is not his body that is affected, but his mind. But men are not called either temperate or intemperate for their behaviour with regard to these pleasures; nor for their behaviour with regard to any other pleasures that are not of the body. For instance, those who are fond of gossip and of telling stories, and spend their days in trifles, are called babblers, but not intemperate; nor do we apply this term to those who grieve at the loss of money or friends. Intemperance, then, will be concerned with the pleasures of the body, but not with all even of these: for those who delight in the case of their eyesight, in colours and forms and painting, are not called temperate or intemperate” (F. H. Peter’s translation, slightly altered).]

² [Ed. 1 reads here “we ought to have been told,” and at the end of the paragraph adds, “This let us attempt to ascertain.”]

³ [These words follow immediately on the passage quoted in the last note but one: “and yet in these also men may be conceived,” etc.]

and what is that difference in nature of the pleasure, which diminishes the criminality of its excess.

Men are held intemperate, only when their desires *overcome* or *prevent the action of their reason*;¹ and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and therefore in many instances and acts which do not lower the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly, owing to *its own* imperfection, or to the imperfection of the premises submitted to it,—as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others;—and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, though those orders may be full of error owing to the reason's own feebleness; so long, men are not held intemperate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred, but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed; and that the reasonable creature has been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere passion, then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures of touch and taste; for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and this penalty being actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice; and the man, as utterly incapable of Will,* is called intemperate, or ακολαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out

* Comp. Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, book I. chap. viii.

¹ [The italics in this paragraph were introduced in the 1883 edition. In ed. 1 Aristotle's word ακολαστοι was added in brackets after "held intemperate." For other minor variations here, see Appendix iv., p. 396.]

this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue farther, observing how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged; and yet is not so attributed as in the case of sensual pleasures: because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate; and, in consequence, assign to him his place, for the time, among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which *proves* their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of coexisting continually with the better delights and true perfections of human nature.¹

§ 5. *Grounds of inferiority in the pleasures which are subjects of intemperance.*

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as instruments of our preservation, compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty, prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence; for the distinction of all that is useful or

¹ [In all eds. previous to 1883 these words read, "with other delights and true perfections of the system." They were left in the 1883 ed., Ruskin adding in the text:—"('With the better delights and true perfections of human nature, ' I should have said).'" The revised reading was given in the 1888 and following eds., and is here retained.]

dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter; and the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognize intimations of elemental danger, without perceiving either melody¹ in the voice, or majesty in the thunder.* And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us; being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these delights; first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and, secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now, in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine; for God will not make anything an object of life to His creatures which does not point to, or partake of, Himself.[†] And so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their self-sufficiency.² But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted,

* Modern philosophy, on the other hand, supposes the colours of flowers to be of no use to *us* at all;—and that a bee couldn't have found its way to a thistle unless the flower had been purple!³ [1883.]

[†]An entirely unwarranted assertion, made evidently without reflection, and on hearsay. The paragraph down to “self-sufficiency” is just as unnecessary as it is insecure. The rest of the page [*i.e.* the rest of § 6] is true, and the proper basis of following argument. [1883.]

¹ [“music” in ed. 1.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, “owing to their permanence and self-sufficiency, where no other sensual pleasures are permanent or self-sufficient.”]

³ [See letter about a paper on flowers and insects by Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) in *Hortus Inclusus* (p. 103, ed. 1887; p. 119, ed. 1902).]

or chance-distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise Joy, Admiration, and Gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call *Æsthesis*; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call *Theoria*. For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the Beautiful as a gift of God; a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold: first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

And that this joyfulness and reverence are a necessary part of Theoretic pleasure, is very evident, when we consider that, by the presence of these feelings, even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered Theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted that “we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments,” though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough.¹ For the fact is, that of scents artificially prepared the extreme desire is intemperance; but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance: not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those; so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents, but not the sowing of violets

§ 7. *How the lower pleasures may be elevated in rank.*

¹ [Here, in the 1883 ed., Ruskin noted:—

“I forget what it is; and the reader need not be troubled to find out.” The passage follows that from the *Ethics* cited above (iii. 10, 6): “for the intemperate delight in these smells because they remind them of the things that they lust after. You may, indeed, see other people taking delight in the smell of food when they are hungry; but to take delight in such smells (constantly) is the mark of the intemperate man, as he (alone) is (constantly) lusting after such things.”]

along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon the myrrh upon the handles of the lock,¹ and the sense of Isaac of the field-fragrance upon his son.² And the general law for all these pleasures is, that, when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things; but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become Theoretic: and so we may find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

It will now be understood³ why it was formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of moral, and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures connected with them as derived from "those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection."⁴ For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior intelligence, finally, with thankfulness and veneration towards that intelligence itself;* and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the

§ 8. *Ideas of Beauty, how essentially moral;*

* All this is right; and more sincerely and passionately written than its affected manner would permit many readers to believe. It unfortunately affects brevity as well as accuracy, and crowds the statements which should have been successively made and patiently explained, into a single sentence, by some tempers entirely unacceptable. [1883.]

¹ ["I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock" (v. 5). The other Bible references here are, Mark xiv. 3, Luke vii. 37, John xii. 3, and Genesis xxvii. 27.]

² [Ed. 1 read, "and that of Isaac concerning his son.]"

³ [The passage beginning here, and down to the end of § 9, was read by Ruskin in the first lecture (Nov. 6, 1877) of his Oxford course, "Readings in *Modern Painters*," in order to show that "whatever other changes or additions may have occurred in my teaching, in this [*i.e.* in protest against sensual theories of art] it has been consistent and reiterated."]

⁴ [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. i. sec. i. ch. vi. § 2; Vol. III. p. 110 of this edition.]

perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, or intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the Intellect; it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart.¹ Dependent both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after-action of the Intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart-feeling about them. And thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect, as in all others, that men are “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, having the *Understanding* darkened because of the hardness of their *hearts*, and so, being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness.”² For we do indeed see constantly that men having naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it; but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

Nor is what the world commonly understands by the cultivation of ‘taste,’ anything more or better than this; at least in times of corrupt and overpampered civilization, when men build palaces, plant groves, and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the

¹ [In all eds. before 1883 there was only a comma here, and the word “dependent” did not occur. In breaking up the sentences in 1883, Ruskin noted:—

“I am shorter breathed at sixty-three than I was at six-and-twenty; and am obliged to help myself to a comfortable full-stop, before I can get on with my own sentence.”]

² [Ephesians iv. 18, 19. The quotation marks and italics were introduced in the 1883 ed.; as in the case of the word “heart” at the end of § 10.]

best they had. I do not know that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned; her teaching through both they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds, and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts, of the violet couch and plane-tree shade, they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we; but they found

§ 10. *How ex-
alted by affect-
tion.*

not anything, except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen. They loved the Hybla heather* more for its sweet hives than its purple hues. But the Christian Theoria seeks not, though it accepts and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought; but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful as well as in what is kind: nay, even in all that seems coarse and commonplace, seizing that which is good; and sometimes delighting more at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure; hating only what is selfsighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of Him still where all seems forgetful of Him, and to turn that into a witness of His working which was meant to obscure it; and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding Him for ever, according to the written promise, "Blessed are the pure in *heart*, for they shall see God."¹

* In the old edition, "the Hybla heather they loved," because I thought it classical and dignified to put subject before predicate. So above, "her teaching they understood never," with double inversion, verb before adverb. The contents of the paragraph are good, and were developed at length in the third volume.² [1883.]

¹ [Matthew v. 8.]

² [Ch. xiii., "Of Classical Landscape."]

CHAPTER III
OF ACCURACY AND INACCURACY IN IMPRESSIONS OF
SENSE*

HITHERTO we have observed only the distinctions of dignity among pleasures of sense, considered merely as such, and the way in which *any* of them may become theoretic in being received with right feeling.

§ 1. *By what test is the health of the Perceptive faculty to be determined?*

But as we go farther, and examine the distinctive nature of ideas of beauty, we shall, I believe, perceive something in them besides æsthetic pleasure, something which attests a more important function belonging to them than attaches to other sensual ideas, and exhibits a more exalted character in the faculty by which they are received. And this was what I alluded to when I said in the chapter already referred to (§ 1)¹ that “we may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with the nature of God, that we have been so constructed as in a healthy state of mind to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature.”

This point it is necessary now farther to develope.

* Without giving new headings to chapters, I think it will be useful to mark occasionally for the reader, in simpler terms than he finds in the text, the real progress of the argument.

The first chapter asserts, and I think with sufficient force proves, that the external creation is not merely useful to man in furnishing him with food, but chiefly in giving him subjects of admiration and reflection.

The second chapter asserts (but has not yet attempted to prove) that this creation cannot be rightly admired, nor truly thought of, but as the work and gift of a loving Creator.

The third chapter now enters on the question, what parts or characters of natural things bear most clearly the evidence of having been so created; and by what faculties we discern and prefer them.² [1883.]

¹ [The chapter, referred to above (p. 48), on “Ideas of Beauty,” in vol. i. of the book, Vol. III. p. 109 in this edition.]

² [This note was in the ed. of 1883 printed at the head of the chapter.]

Our first inquiry must evidently be, how we are authorized to affirm of any man's mind, that it is in a healthy state or otherwise, respecting impressions of sight;¹ and what canon or test there is by which we may determine of these impressions that they are or are not *rightly* esteemed beautiful. For it does not at first appear easy to prove that men ought to like one thing rather than another; and although this is granted generally by men's speaking of 'bad' or 'good' taste, yet the right of individual opinion (sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then palpably without foundation) does not appear altogether irrational in matters æsthetic, wherein little operation of voluntary choice is supposed possible. It would appear strange, for instance, to assert, respecting a particular person who preferred the scent of violets to that of roses, that he had no right to do so. And yet, while I have said that the sensation of beauty is intuitive and necessary, as men derive pleasure from the scent of a rose, I have assumed that there are some sources from which it is *rightly* derived, and others from which it is *wrongly* derived; in other words, that men have no right to think some things beautiful and no right to remain apathetic with regard to others.

Hence then arise two questions, according to the sense in which the word *right* is taken: the first, in what way an impression of sense may be *deceptive*, and therefore a conclusion respecting it untrue; and the second, in what way an impression of sense, or the preference of one, may be a subject of *will*, and therefore of moral duty or delinquency.

§ 2. *And in what sense may the terms "right" and "wrong" be attached to its conclusions?*

¹ [The words "respecting impressions of sight," were transposed to this place in the 1883 ed.; in previous eds. they came after "any man's mind"; the 1883 ed. also inserted the "and" before "what canon." The latter passage was different in ed. 1, which reads thus:—

"What canon or test is there . . . beautiful? To what authority, when men are at variance with each other on this subject, shall it be deputed to judge which is right? or is there any such authority or canon at all?"

"For it does not . . . taste, it is frequently denied, when we press to particulars, by the assertion of each individual that he has a right to his opinion—a right which is sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then palpably without foundation, but which does not appear," etc.]

To the first of these questions I answer, that we cannot speak of the immediate impression of sense as false, nor of its preference to others as mistaken: for no one can be deceived respecting the actual sensation he perceives or prefers.* But falsity may attach to his assertion or supposition, that what he himself perceives is from the same object perceived by others, or is always to be by himself perceived, or is always to be by himself preferred; and when we speak of a man as wrong in his impressions of sense, we either mean that he feels differently from all, or from a majority, respecting a certain object, or that he prefers at present those of his impressions which ultimately he will not prefer.

To the second I answer, that over immediate impressions and immediate preferences we have no power, but over *ultimate* impressions, and especially ultimate preferences, we have; and that, though we can neither at once choose whether we shall see an object red, green, or blue, nor determine to like the red better than the blue, or the blue better than the red, yet we can, if we choose, make ourselves ultimately susceptible of such impressions in other degrees, and capable of pleasure in them in different measure. And seeing that wherever power of any kind is given there is responsibility attached, it is the duty of men to prefer certain impressions of sense to others, *because* they have the power of doing so.† And this

* I have not sufficiently carried out the analysis here. No note is taken in the passage of diseased conditions of the organs; or imperfect ones; jaundice or colour-blindness is not thought of as affecting the argument. But it is supposed that there may not be exact similarity in sensations, even among healthy and well-organized persons, and that when we say that we dislike, or like, peppermint or aniseed, it is conceivable that peppermint to some noses may not be exactly the same thing as peppermint to others. It is, however, most rational and simple to assume what is certainly the clearest probability, that the general sensations of humanity are approximately alike; that a taste for garlic or aniseed is an artificially acquired one, and that one for castor oil or asafætida¹ would only be acquired by great perseverance. [1883.]

† This rather astounding paragraph was anciently parted from the preceding text only by a semicolon! I have fenced it, at least, with two fullstops; for it is, in fact, the radical theorem, not only of this book, but of all my writings on art. [1883.]

¹ [Cf. a similar remark in *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 450.]

is precisely analogous to the law of the moral world, whereby men are supposed not only capable of governing their likes and dislikes, but the whole culpability or propriety of actions is dependent upon this capability; so that men are guilty or otherwise, not for what they do, but for what they desire, the command being not Thou shalt obey, but Thou shalt love, the Lord thy God; a vain command if men were not capable of governing and directing their affections.¹

I assert, therefore, that even with respect to impressions of sense, we have a power of preference, and a corresponding duty; and I shall show first the nature of the power, and afterwards the nature of the duty.

§ 3. *What power we have over impressions of sense.*

Let us take an instance from one of the lowest of the senses, and observe the kind of power we have over the impressions of lingual taste. On the first offering of two different things to the palate, it is not in our power to prevent or command the instinctive preference. One will be unavoidably and helplessly preferred to the other. But if the same two things be submitted to judgment frequently and attentively, it will be often found that their relations change. The palate, which at first perceived only the coarse and violent qualities of either, will, as it becomes more experienced, acquire greater subtlety of discrimination, perceiving in both characters² at first unnoticed, which on continued experience will probably become more influential than the first impressions; and whatever this final verdict may be, it is felt by the person who gives it, and received by others, as a more correct one than the first.

So, then, the power we have over the preference of impressions of taste is not actual nor immediate, but only a power of testing and comparing them frequently and carefully, until that which is the more permanent, the more consistently agreeable, be determined.

§ 4. *Depends on acuteness of attention.*

¹ [Matthew xxii. 37. Ed. 1 reads: "which, if men were not . . . affections, would be the command of an impossibility."]

² [For "characters" ed. 1 reads "agreeable or disagreeable qualities."]

But when the instrument of taste is thus in some degree perfected and rendered subtle, by its being practised upon a single object, its conclusions will be more rapid with respect to others; and it will be able to distinguish more quickly in other things, and even to prefer at once those qualities which are calculated finally to give it most pleasure, though more capable with respect to those on which it is more frequently exercised; whence people are called ‘judges’ with respect to this or that particular object of Taste.

Now, that verdicts of this kind are received as authoritative by others, proves another and more important fact; namely, that not only changes of opinion take place in consequence of experience, but that those changes are from *variation* of opinion to *unity* of opinion;—and that whatever may be the differences of estimate among unpractised or uncultivated tastes, there will be unity of taste among the experienced; and that, therefore, the result of repeated trial and experience is to arrive at principles of preference in some sort common to all, and which are a part of our nature.

I select the sense of taste for an instance, because it is the least favourable to the position I hold, since there is more latitude allowed, and more actual variety of verdict, in the case of this sense than of any other, and yet, however susceptible of variety even the ultimate approximations of its preferences may be, the authority of judges is distinctly allowed; and we hear every day the admission, by those of unpractised palate, that they are, or may be, wrong in their opinions respecting the real pleasurable-ness of things either to themselves or to others.

The sense, however, in which they thus use the word “wrong” is merely that of falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency. But there is, as I have stated, a duty, more or less imperative, attached to every power we possess, and therefore to this power over the lower senses as well as to all others.

§ 5. *Ultimate conclusions universal.*

§ 6. *What duty is attached to this power over impressions of sense.*

And this duty is, evidently, to bring every sense into that state of cultivation in which it shall form the truest conclusions respecting all that is submitted to it, and procure us the greatest amount of pleasure consistent with its due relation to other senses and functions. Which three constituents of perfection in sense, (1) true judgment, (2) maximum sensibility, and (3) right relation to others, are invariably coexistent and involved one by the other; for the true judgment is the result of the high sensibility, and the high sensibility of the right relation.* Thus, for instance, with respect to pleasures of taste, it is our duty not to devote such inordinate attention to the discrimination of them as must be inconsistent with our pursuit, and destructive of our capacity, of higher and preferable pleasures, but to cultivate the sense of them in that way which is consistent with all other good; by temperance, namely, and by such attention as the mind, at certain resting moments, may fitly pay even to so ignoble a source of pleasure as this. By which discipline we shall bring the faculty of taste itself to its real maximum of sensibility;† for it cannot be doubted that health, hunger, and such general refinement of bodily habits as shall make the body a perfect and fine instrument in all respects, are better promoters of actual enjoyment of taste, than the sickened, sluggish, hard-stimulated fastidiousness of Epicurism.

So also it will certainly be found with all the senses, that they § 7. *How re-* individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure *warded.* when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest; and that by the overcultivation of any one (for morbid sources of pleasure, and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all) we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.

* This paragraph reads rather headlong, again; but it is well considered and extremely weighty and valuable. [1883.]

† Alas, for all this fine talking, I never took pains enough to learn from my father to be a good judge of wine; an unfilial folly of which I daily repent,—with such a sense of its cruelty and absurdity as—I need not try to express, since it would not be believed. [1883.]

If then, as we find in this example of the lowest sense, the power we have over sensation depends mainly on the exercise of attention through certain prolonged periods; and if by this exercise we arrive at ultimate, constant, and common sources of agreeableness, casting off those which are external, accidental, and individual;¹ that which is required in order to the attainment of accurate conclusions respecting the essence of the Beautiful is nothing more than earnest, loving, and unselfish attention to our impressions of it, by which those which are shallow, false, or peculiar to times and temperaments, may be distinguished from those that are eternal. And this dwelling upon and fond contemplation of them (the *Anschauung* of the Germans),* is perhaps as much as was meant by the Greek *Theoria*: and it is indeed a very noble exercise of the souls of men, and one by which they are peculiarly distinguished from the anima of lower creatures, which cannot, I think, be proved to have any capacity of contemplation at all, but only a restless vividness of perception and conception, the “fancy” of Hooker (*Eccl. Pol.*, book i. chap. vi. 2).²

But two very important points are to be observed respecting the direction and discipline of the attention in the early

* I have not the least idea, now, what the “*Anschauung*” of the Germans is; and whatever it may be, beg my pupils to have nothing to do with it. [1883.]³

¹ [Ed. 1 does not contain the passage “If then, as we find . . . individual,” but reads, “That then which is required,” etc.]

² [Ed. 1 adds a further sentence to this paragraph thus:—

“And yet this dwelling upon them comes not up to that which I wish to express by the word *Theoria*, unless it be accompanied by full perception of their being a gift from and manifestation of God, and of all those other nobler emotions before described, since not until so felt is their essential nature comprehended.”]

³ [But see in *Love’s Meinie*, ch. iii., a passage in which Ruskin explains that “for what is now called ‘æsthesis’ he used the word ‘sensation’ (the sensation of cold or heat, of a peacock’s or a lark’s cry, etc.). “But,” he adds, “for the Perception of Beauty, I always used Plato’s word, which is the proper word in Greek, and the only possible *single* word that can be used in any other language by any man who understands the subject,—’*Theoria*,—the Germans only having a term parallel to it, ‘*Anschauung*,’ assumed to be its equivalent in p. 22 of the old edition of *Modern Painters*, but which is not its real equivalent, for *Anschauung* does not (I believe) *include* bodily sensation, whereas Plato’s *Theoria* does, so far as is necessary; and mine, somewhat more than Plato’s.” For Ruskin’s dislike of German philosophy, see the parody in the next volume, ch. xii. § 3 n. and Appendix ii., and *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 252.]

stages of judgment. The first, that, for beneficent purposes, the nature of man has been made reconcilable by custom to many things naturally painful to it, and even improper for it; and that therefore, though by continual experience, united with thought, we may discover that which is best of several, yet if we submit ourselves to authority or fashion, and close our eyes, we may be by custom made to tolerate, and even to love and long for, that which is naturally painful and pernicious to us; whence arise incalculable embarrassments on the subject of art.

§ 8. *Errors induced by the power of habit.*

The second, that, in order to the discovery of that which is better of two things, it is necessary that both should be equally submitted to the attention, and therefore that we should have so much faith in authority as shall make us repeatedly observe and attend to that which is said to be right, even though at present we may not feel it so. And in the right mingling of this faith with the openness of heart which proves all things, lies the great difficulty of the cultivation of the taste, as far as the spirit of the scholar is concerned; though, even when he has this spirit, he may be long retarded by having evil examples submitted to him by ignorant masters.*

§ 9. *The necessity of submission in early stages of judgment.*

The temper,¹ therefore, by which right taste is formed, is characteristically patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it. It does not trample upon it, lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks. It is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive; it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed; it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it. It is “an honest and good

* This and the next paragraph are of extreme value and importance. The eleventh paragraph should be also remembered in connection with them. [1883.]

¹ [The passage from here to the end of § 9 is § 2 in *Fronde Agrestes*. For “characteristically” ed. 1 reads “first”; and in ed. 1 there are commas and in ed. 2 semicolons instead of full-stops, after “submitted to it,” “husks,” and “falls on it.”]

heart,”¹ that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And the pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good is so great, that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, or diseases of vanity; it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies; its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any whitewashed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow.

Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right; more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers, but it is sure to come (*quite*)* right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and must ultimately love and rest in the great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure consist, I believe, in a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world; only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine characteristics, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary; just as we conceive of cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

* I have inserted this “quite” because I meant it, and the sentence needs it; but I must beg the reader to observe that I don’t, even now, think myself *quite* right in *all* matters, even of taste. [1883.]

¹ [Luke viii. 15.]

§ 10. *The large scope of matured judgment.*

Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality; for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of its universal laws. Hence, false taste may be known by its fastidiousness, by its demands of pomp, splendour, and unusual combination, by its enjoyment only of particular styles and modes of things, and by its pride also: for it is for ever meddling, mending, accumulating, and self-exulting; its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things round it by the way they fit it. But true taste is for ever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished, lamenting over itself, and testing itself by the way that it fits things.¹ And it finds whereof to feed, and whereby to grow, in all things. The complaint so often heard from young artists, that they have not within their reach materials or subjects enough for their fancy, is utterly groundless, and the sign only of their own blindness and inefficiency; for there is that to be seen in every street and lane of every city,—that to be felt and found in every human heart and countenance,—that to be loved in every roadside weed and moss-grown wall which, in the hands of faithful men, may convey emotions of glory and sublimity continual and exalted.

Let therefore the young artist beware of the spirit of Choice;* it is an insolent spirit at the best, and commonly a base and blind one too, checking all progress and blasting all power, encouraging weaknesses, pampering partialities, and teaching us to look to accidents of nature for the help and the joy which should come from our own hearts. He draws nothing well who

* "Nothing comes amiss,
A good digestion turneth all to health."—G. HERBERT.²

¹ [Very true of Ruskin himself; see above, Introduction, p. xxxix.]

² [*The Church Porch*, lx.]

thirsts not to draw *everything*; when a good painter shrinks, it is because he is humbled, not fastidious; when he stops, it is because he is surfeited, and not because he thinks Nature has given him unkindly food, or that he fears famine.*¹

Hence, it becomes a more imperative duty to accustom ourselves to the enjoyment of those pleasures of sight which are most elevated in character, because these are not only the most acute, but the most easily, constantly, and unselfishly attainable.[†] For had it been ordained by the Almighty² that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces, tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system of Divine Providence; which, leaving it open to us if we will, as creatures in probation, to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened

* Yet note the difference between the choice that comes of Pride, and the choice that comes of Love, and compare Chap. XV. § 6.

[†] This is all true, in the sense attached to it; but requires reconciliation with what I have said elsewhere of the rarity of extremely beautiful things.³ I will not trouble the reader at present with more than the immediate statement in the text. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 adds a sentence, and reads as follows:—

“ . . . fears famine. I have seen a man of true taste pause for a quarter of an hour to look at the channellings that recent rain had traced in a heap of cinders.

“And here is evident another reason of that duty which we owe respecting our impressions of sight, namely, to discipline ourselves to the enjoyment of those which are eternal in their nature, not only because these are the most acute, but because they are the most easily . . .”]

² [The passage “For had it been” down to the end of § 13 is § 4 in *Frondees Agrestes*, where, at this point, Ruskin added the following note:—

“The reader must observe, that having been thoroughly disciplined in the Evangelical schools, I supposed myself, at four-and-twenty, to know all about the ordinances of the Almighty. Nevertheless, the practical contents of the sentence are good; if only they are intelligible, which I doubt.”]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. i. ch. iv. § 3, Vol. III. p. 156 of this edition.]

satiety, incapable of pleasure, unless, Caligula like,¹ it concentrate the labour of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour, leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight from the meanest objects of creation;—a delight which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

Seeing then that these qualities of material objects which are calculated to give us this universal pleasure, are demonstrably constant in their address to human nature, they must belong in some measure to whatever has been esteemed beautiful throughout successive ages of the world, and they are also by their definition common to all the works of God. Therefore it is evident that it must be possible to reason them out, as well as to feel them out; possible to divest every object of that which makes it accidentally or temporarily pleasant, and to strip it bare of distinctive qualities, until we arrive at those which it has in common with all other beautiful things, which we may then safely affirm to be the cause of its ultimate and true delightfulness.

Now this process of reasoning will be that which I shall endeavour to employ in the succeeding investigations, a process perfectly safe, so long as we are quite sure that we are reasoning concerning objects which produce in us one and the same sensation, but not safe if the sensation produced be of a different nature,* though it may be equally agreeable; for what produces a different

* The word “nature” is not sufficiently explained in this passage; and it ought to have reiterated in full,—what produces “a sensation of a different nature” must be a different cause; for instance, the prick of a thorn on the tongue as distinguished from the pungency of a flavour. Mr. Alison would have called both beautiful, or both ugly, indiscriminately. [1883.]

¹ [The reference is to Caligula’s scheme for building a city upon the highest Alps, or to the bridge which he threw across from Baiae to Puteoli, upwards of three miles in length, in order to march along it in state and furnish a two days’ wonder to the world; see Suetonius, c. 19.]

sensation must be a different cause. And the difficulty of reasoning respecting Beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations, for which there can be no common cause.

When, for instance, Mr. Alison endeavours to support his position, that "no man is sensible to beauty in those objects with regard to which he has not previous ideas," by the remark that "the beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant,"¹ we see at once that it is hopeless to argue with a man who, under his general term Beauty, may, for anything we know, be sometimes speaking of mathematical demonstrability and sometimes of historical interest.² While, even if we could succeed in limiting the term to the sense of external attractiveness, there would be still room for many phases of error; for though the beauty of a snowy mountain and of a human cheek or forehead, so far as both are considered as mere matter, is the same, and traceable to certain qualities of colour and line, common to both, and by reason extricable; yet the flush of the cheek and moulding of the brow, as they express modesty, affection, or intellect, possess sources of agreeableness* which are not common to the snowy mountain, and the interference of whose influence we must be cautious to prevent in our examination of those which are material or universal.[†]

The first thing, then, that we have to do, is accurately to

* The general tendency of modern art, under the guidance of Paris, renders it necessary to explain now to the reader, what I before left him to feel, that the sexual instinct is entirely excluded from consideration throughout the argument of this essay; I take no notice of the feelings of the beautiful, which we share with flies and spiders. Conf. the 2nd paragraph of next chapter. [1883.]

† Compare Spenser (Hymn to Beauty):

"But ah, believe me, there is more than so,
That works such wonders in the minds of men."

¹ [*Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, by Archibald Alison, LL.B., F.R.S. (1st ed. 1790), Essay i., ch. i. § 3 (vol. i. p. 37 of the 4th ed. of 1815).]

² [*Cf. a similar remark in Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 450.]

discriminate and define those appearances from which we are about to reason as belonging to beauty, properly so called, and to clear the ground of all the confused ideas and erroneous theories with which the misapprehension or metaphorical use of the term has encumbered it.

§ 16. *The term "beauty," how limitable in the outset. Divided into typical and vital.*

By the term Beauty, then, properly are signified two things. First, that external quality of bodies already so often spoken of, and which, whether it occur in a stone, flower, beast, or in man, is absolutely identical, which, as I have already asserted, may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes, and which therefore I shall, for distinction's sake, call Typical Beauty: and, secondarily, the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man; and this kind of beauty I shall call Vital Beauty.

Any application of the word Beautiful to other appearances or qualities than these is either false or metaphorical; as, for instance, to the splendour of a discovery, the fitness* of a proportion, the coherence of a chain of reasoning,¹ or the power of bestowing pleasure which objects receive from association, a power confessedly great, and interfering, as we shall presently find, in a most embarrassing way with the attractiveness of inherent beauty.

But in order that the mind of the reader may not be biassed at the outset by that which he may happen to have received of current theories respecting beauty, founded on the

* *Constructive* fitness, I should have said, or mechanical; as between the length of arms in a lever. [1883.]

¹ [In the first draft this point, of the loose use of the term beauty, is put in a more familiar way:—

“The clown in every Christmas pantomime licking the freshly purloined ham, immediately informs us that it's ‘Beautiful. ‘ ‘Beautiful, ‘ exclaims the young surgeon beneath his breath, as he watches the quivering muscles and curdling veins writhe and knot beneath the swift knife of the practised operator. ‘Beautiful, ‘ exclaims the mathematician, as he finishes the investigation of one of Newton's boldest problems. Are we to suppose because in these three cases the same word is used that there is anything of common feeling between any one of them and the artist who stands for the first time before Raphael's St. Catherine?”]

above metaphorical uses of the word (theories which are less to be reprobated as accounting falsely* for the sensations of which they treat, than as confusing two or more pleasurable sensations together), I shall briefly glance at the four erroneous positions most frequently held upon this subject, before proceeding to examine those typical and vital properties of things, to which I conceive that all our original conceptions of beauty may be traced.

* I meant, that they are not so false, or sometimes are not false at all, in accounting, etc. [1883.]

CHAPTER IV

OF FALSE OPINIONS HELD CONCERNING BEAUTY*

I PURPOSE at present to speak only of four of the more current opinions respecting Beauty, for of the errors connected with the pleasurable-ness of constructive¹ proportion, and of the expression of right feelings in the countenance, I shall have opportunity to treat in the succeeding chapters (compare Ch. VI., Ch. XIV.).

Those erring or inconsistent positions which I would at once dismiss are: the first, that the Beautiful is the True; the second, that the Beautiful is the Useful; the third, that it is dependent on Custom; and the fourth, that it is dependent on the Association of Ideas.

(A) To assert that the Beautiful is the True, appears, at first, like asserting that propositions are matter, and matter propositions. But giving the best and most rational interpretation we can, and supposing the holders of this strange position to mean only that things are beautiful which appear what they indeed are, and ugly which appear what they are not, we find them instantly contradicted by each and every conclusion of experience. A stone looks as truly a stone as a rose looks a rose, and yet is not so beautiful: a cloud may look more like a castle than a cloud, and be the more beautiful on that account. The mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands; the false image of the under heaven fairer than the

* The whole of this chapter is extremely well reasoned and clearly put; nor can I in any necessary point better it. The importance of its contents to future analysis may justify my requesting the reader's fixed attention to its distinctions and definitions. [1883.]²

¹ [The word "constructive" was inserted in the 1883 ed.]

² [This note was in the ed. of 1883 printed at the head of the chapter.]

sea.* I am at a loss to know how any so untenable a position could ever have been advanced; but it may, perhaps, have arisen from some confusion of the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, and from an illogical expansion of the very certain truth, that nothing is beautiful in art, which, professing to be an imitation, or a statement, is not as such in some sort true.†

(B) That the Beautiful is the Useful, is an assertion evidently based on that limited and false sense of the latter term which I have already deprecated. As it is the most degrading and dangerous supposition which can be advanced on the subject, so, fortunately, it is the most palpably absurd. It is to confound admiration with hunger, love with lust, and life with sensation; it is to assert that the human creature has no ideas and no feelings except those ultimately referable to its brutal appetites. It has not a single fact nor appearance of fact to support it, and needs no combating; at least until its advocates have obtained the consent of the majority of mankind, that the most beautiful productions of nature are seeds and roots; and of art, spades and millstones.

(C) Somewhat more rational grounds appear for the assertion that the sense of the Beautiful arises from Familiarity with the object, though even this could not long be maintained by a thinking person. For all that can be alleged in defence of such a supposition is, that familiarity deprives some objects, which at first appeared ugly, of much of their repulsiveness;‡ whence it is as rational to conclude that

* I should have written, "image of heaven under the sea, fairer than the sea itself." [1883.]

† Observe the careful limitation,—*in some sort* true. Altogether true, it never can be,—far short of true, it often *ought* to be. [1883.]

‡ The sternest sense of Johnson, and brightest wit of Goldsmith, have been used to exhibit the follies of fashion, and show the power of national habit; but they never seriously deny the reality of beauty, however the Chinese Citizen of the World may be shocked by the white teeth and long feet of English ladies.¹ [1883.]

[¹ These references are explained in the next volume, ch. iii. §§ 1, 2, where Ruskin reverts to the subject here discussed.]

§ 2. *Of the false opinion that Beauty is Usefulness. Compare Chap. XII. § 5.*

§ 3. *Of the false opinion that Beauty results from Custom. Compare Chap. VI. § 1.*

familiarity is the cause of beauty, as it would be to argue that because it is possible to acquire a taste for olives, therefore custom is the cause of lusciousness in grapes.¹ Nevertheless, there are some phenomena resulting from the tendency of our nature to be influenced by habit, of which it may be well to observe the limits.

Custom has a two-fold operation; the one to deaden the frequency and force of repeated impressions, the other to endear the familiar object to the affections. Commonly, where the mind is vigorous, and the power of sensation very perfect, it has rather the last operation than the first; with meaner minds, the first takes place in the higher degree, so that they are commonly characterized by a desire of excitement, and the want of the loving, fixed, theoretic power. But both take place in some degree with all men; so that as life advances impressions of all kinds become less rapturous, owing to their repetition. It is however beneficently ordained that repulsiveness shall be diminished by custom in a far greater degree than the sensation of beauty; so that the anatomist in a little time loses all sense of horror in the torn flesh and carious bone, while the sculptor ceases not to feel, to the close of his life, the deliciousness of every line of the outward frame. So then, as in that with which we are made familiar the repulsiveness is constantly diminishing, and such claims as it may be able to put forth on the affections are daily becoming stronger, while, in what is submitted to us of new or strange, that which may be repulsive is felt in its full force while no hold is as yet laid on the affections, there is a very strong preference induced in most minds for that to which they are accustomed over that they know not, and this is strongest in those which are least open to sensations of positive beauty. But however far this operation may be carried, its utmost effect is but the deadening and approximating of the sensations of beauty and ugliness. It never mixes, nor crosses, nor in any way alters them; it

§ 4. *The two-fold operation of Custom. It deadens sensation, but confirms affection.*

§ 5. *But never either creates or destroys the essence of Beauty.*

¹ [For another refutation of the theory that beauty results from custom, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 10.]

has not the slightest connection with, or power over, their nature. By tasting two wines alternately, we may deaden our perception of their flavour; nay, we may even do more than can ever be done in the case of sight, we may confound the two flavours together; but it will hardly be argued, therefore, that custom is the cause of either flavour. And so, though by habit we may deaden the effect of ugliness or beauty, it is not for that reason to be affirmed that habit is the cause of either sensation. We may keep a skull beside us¹ as long as we please, we may overcome its repulsiveness, we may render ourselves capable of perceiving many qualities of beauty about its lines, we may contemplate it for years together if we will,—it and nothing else,—but we shall not get ourselves to think as well of it as of a child's fair face.

It would be easy to pursue the subject farther, but I believe that every thoughtful reader will be perfectly well able to supply farther illustrations, and sweep away the sandy fountains of the opposite theory, unassisted. Let it, however, be observed, that, in spite of all custom, an Englishman § 6. *Instances.* instantly acknowledges, and at first sight, the superiority of the turban to the hat, or of the plaid to the coat; that, whatever the dictates of immediate fashion may compel, the superior gracefulness of the Greek or middleage costumes is invariably felt; and that, respecting what has been asserted of negro nations looking with disgust on the white face, no importance whatever is to be attached to the opinions of races who have never received any ideas of beauty whatsoever (these ideas being only received by minds under some certain degree of cultivation),² and whose disgust arises

¹ [As Ruskin himself at one time did; see *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 25, and *cf.* Vol. II. p. 57 *n.* of this edition.]

² [Ed. 2 here adds a footnote, given in ed. 1 among the Addenda at the end, as follows:—

“Some confusion may arise in the mind of the reader on comparing this passage with others in the course of the volume, such as the second paragraph of the next chapter, in which the instinctive sense of beauty is asserted as existing in the child. But it is necessary always to observe the distinction made in the second chapter between the instinctive, or æsthetic, and the real or theoretic perception of Beauty; and farther, it is to be remembered, that every elevated human instinct is in a measure put under voluntary power, and

naturally from what they may suppose to be a sign of weakness or ill health. It would be futile to proceed into farther detail.

I pass to the last and most weighty theory, that the agreeableness in objects which we call Beauty, is the result of the Association with them of agreeable or interesting ideas.

(D) Frequent has been the support and wide the acceptance of this supposition, and yet I suppose that no two consecutive sentences were ever written in defence of it, without involving either a contradiction or a confusion of terms.¹ Thus Alison: "There are scenes undoubtedly more beautiful than Runnymede, yet, to those who recollect the great event that passed there, there is no scene perhaps which so strongly seizes on the imagination²:"—where we are wonder-struck at the audacious obtuseness which would prove the power of imagination by its *overcoming that very other power* (of inherent beauty) whose existence the arguer denies. For the only logical conclusion which can possibly be drawn from the above sentence is, that imagination is *not* the source of beauty, for although no scene seizes so strongly on the imagination, yet there are scenes "more beautiful than Runnymede." And though instances of self-contradiction as laconic and complete as this are³ to be found in few writers except Alison,* yet if the arguments on the subject be fairly sifted from the mass of confused language with which they are always encumbered, and placed

* The reader must not confuse the metaphysician with the historian. I know no work of as wide range in which the argument is more logically sustained, or more justly in many points conclusive, than that of Sir A. Alison's *History of Europe*. [1883.]⁴

when highly cultivated, appears in increasing purity and intensity in each succeeding generation, or, on the other hand, diminishes until the race sinks into degradation nearly total, out of which no general laws may safely be deduced."]

¹ [On this subject, cf. *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 450.]

² [*Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, 1815 ed., i. 25.]

³ [For "are to be found . . . Alison," eds. 1 and 2 read "are rare," and also omit the words "and placed in logical form," and instead of "involve . . . syllogisms," read "fall into . . . forms."]

⁴ [For a less favourable opinion of Alison's *History of Europe*, see Vol. I. p. 458.]

in logical form, they will be found invariably to involve one of these two syllogisms: either, Association gives pleasure, and Beauty gives pleasure, therefore Association is Beauty; or, the power of Association is stronger than the power of Beauty, therefore the power of Association *is* the power of Beauty.¹

Nevertheless* it is necessary for us to observe the real value and authority of association in the moral system, and how ideas of actual beauty may be affected by it, otherwise we shall be liable to embarrassment throughout the whole of the succeeding argument.

§ 8. *Association is, first, rational. It is of no efficiency as a cause of Beauty.*

Association is of two kinds, Rational and Accidental. By Rational Association I understand the interest which any object may bear historically, as having been in some way connected with the affairs or affections of men; an interest shared in the minds of all who are aware of such connection: which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms; it is no theory to be confuted, but a misuse of language to be set aside, a misuse involving the positions that in uninhabited countries the vegetation has no grace, the rock no dignity, the cloud no colour, and that the snowy summits of the Alps receive no loveliness from the sunset light, because they have not been polluted by the wrath, ravage, and misery of men.[†]

By Accidental Association, I understand the accidental

* The four false theories are now dismissed; nor farther regarded throughout the whole essay. [1883.]

† It is curious to note in this passage the single emotion of youth, so often described by Wordsworth.² The more advanced perception indicated in the opening paragraph of the "Lamp of Memory," in the *Seven Lamps*, should be compared. As I have grown older, the aspects of nature conducive to human life have become hourly more dear to me; and I had rather now see a brown harvest field than the brightest Aurora Borealis. [1883.]

¹ [For some additional passages on this subject, printed from the author's first draft, see Appendix i., pp. 365–366.]

² [As, for instance, in the passage quoted below, at the end of § 11, and in the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*; in which connection see *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 244.]

connection of ideas and memories with material things, owing to which those material things are regarded as agreeable or otherwise, according to the nature of the feelings or recollections they summon; the association being commonly involuntary and oftentimes so vague as that no distinct image is suggested by the object, but we feel a painfulness in it or pleasure from it, without knowing wherefore. Of this operation of the mind (which is that of which I spoke as causing inextricable embarrassments on the subject of beauty) the experience is constant, so that its more energetic manifestations require no illustration. But I do not think that the minor degrees and shades of this great influence have been sufficiently appreciated. Not only all vivid emotions, and all circumstances of exciting interest, leave their light and shadow on the senseless things and instruments among which, or through whose agency, they have been felt or learned, but I believe that the eye cannot rest on a material form, in a moment of depression or exultation, without communicating to that form a spirit and a life,—a life which will make it afterwards in some degree loved or feared,—a charm or a painfulness for which we shall be unable to account even to ourselves, which will not indeed be perceptible, except by its delicate influence on our judgment in cases of complicated beauty.¹ Let the eye but rest on a rough piece of branch of curious form during a conversation with a friend, rest however unconsciously, and though the conversation be forgotten, though every circumstance connected with it be as utterly lost to the memory as though it had not been, yet the eye will, through the whole life after, take a certain pleasure in such boughs which it had not before, a pleasure so slight, a trace of feeling so delicate, as to leave us utterly unconscious of its peculiar power; but undestroyable by any reasoning, a part, thenceforward, of our constitution, destroyable only by the same arbitrary process

§ 9. *Association accidental. The extent of its influence.*

¹ [The words, "which will not . . . beauty," were omitted in ed. 2, which also reads "some rude or uncouth form" for "a rough piece of branch of curious form," and, five lines lower down, "forms" for "boughs."]

of association by which it was created. Reason has no effect upon it whatsoever. And there is probably no one opinion which is formed by any of us, in matters of taste, which is not in some degree influenced by unconscious association of this kind. In many who have no definite rules of judgment, preference is decided by little else, and thus, unfortunately,* its operations are mistaken for, or rather substituted for, those of inherent beauty, and its real position and value in the moral system are in a great measure overlooked.

For I believe that mere pleasure and pain have less associative power than duty performed or omitted, and that the great use of the Associative faculty is not to add beauty to material things, but to add force to the Conscience. But for this external and all-powerful witness, the voice of the inward guide might be lost in each particular instance, almost as soon as disobeyed; the echo of it in after time, whereby, though perhaps feeble as warning, it becomes powerful as punishment, might be silenced, and the strength of the protection pass away in the lightness of the lash. Therefore it has received the power of enlisting external and unmeaning things in its aid, and transmitting to all that is indifferent its own authority to reprove or reward; so that, as we travel the way of life, we have the choice, according to our working, of turning all the voices of Nature into one song of rejoicing, and all her lifeless creatures into a glad company, whereof the meanest shall be beautiful in our eyes by its kind message, or of withering and quenching her sympathy into a fearful withdrawn silence of condemnation, or into a crying out of her stones, and a shaking of her dust against us. Nor is it any marvel that the theoretic faculty should be overpowered by this momentous operation, and the indifferent appeals and inherent glories of external things in the end overlooked, when the perfection of God's works is felt only as the sweetness of His

* "Unfortunately" is a wrong word here. Nothing is unfortunate in the system of our nature; we become unfortunate in refusing to understand it and obey. See the more careful sequel, § 11, "And it is well for us," etc. [1883.]

§ 10. *The dignity of its function.*

promises, and their admirableness only as the threatenings of His power.

But it is evident that the full exercise of this noble function of the Associative faculty is inconsistent with absolute and incontrovertible conclusions on subjects of theoretic preference. For it is quite impossible for any individual to distinguish in himself the unconscious underworking of indefinite association peculiar to him individually, from those great laws of choice under which he is comprehended with all his race. And it is well for us that it is so, the harmony of God's good work is not in us interrupted by this mingling of universal and peculiar principles: for by these such difference is secured in the feelings as shall make fellowship itself more delightful, by its inter-communicate character; and such variety of feeling also in each of us separately as shall make us capable of enjoying scenes of different kinds and orders, instead of morbidly seeking for some perfect epitome of the Beautiful in one. And also that deadening by custom of theoretic impressions to which I have above alluded, is counterbalanced by the pleasantness of acquired association; and the loss of a the intense feeling of the youth, "which had no need of a remoter charm, by thought supplied, or any interest unborrowed from the eye,"¹ is replaced by the gladness of conscience, and the vigour of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the earth and its dead people.*

In proportion therefore to the value, constancy, and efficiency of this influence, we must be modest and cautious in the pronouncing of positive opinions on the subject of beauty. For every one of us has peculiar sources of enjoyment necessarily opened to him in certain scenes and things, sources which are sealed to

§ 11. *How it is connected with impressions of beauty.*

§ 12. *And what caution it renders necessary in the examination of them.*

* And, much more, its living people, and those hereafter to live. [1883.]

¹ [Wordsworth: *Tintern Abbey*; the lines are quoted also in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvii. § 2, and in a letter to Liddell, Vol. I. p. 671.]

others; and we must be wary, on the one hand, of confounding these in ourselves with ultimate conclusions of taste, and so forcing them upon all as authoritative, and on the other, of supposing that the enjoyments of others which we cannot share are shallow or unwarrantable, because incommunicable. I fear, for instance, that in the former portion of this work I may have attributed too much community and authority to certain affections of my own for scenery inducing emotions of wild, impetuous, and enthusiastic characters, and too little to those which I perceive in others for things peaceful, humble, meditative, and solemn. So also between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking, which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different temperament; the youth sympathizing more with the gladness, fulness, and magnificence of things, and the grey hairs with their completion, sufficiency, and repose. And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown, only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is *dislike*,* and not affection. For by the very nature of these Beautiful qualities, which I have defined to be the signature of God upon His works, it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love, and that as far as the influence of association has voice in the question, though it is indeed possible that the inevitable painfulness of an object, for which we can render no sufficient reason, may be owing to its recalling of a sorrow, it is more probably dependent on its accusation of a crime.

* An admirable conclusion,—yet needing this much of drawback, that things justly disliked, and ascertained to be so, ought to be disliked more and more until we put an end to them; and that we have always to beware of getting used to evil, no less than of forgetting good. [1883.]

CHAPTER V¹

OF TYPICAL BEAUTY:—FIRST, OF INFINITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY*

THE subject being now in some measure cleared of embarrassment, let us briefly distinguish those qualities or types on whose combination is dependent the power of mere material loveliness. I pretend neither to enumerate nor to perceive them all: for it may be generally observed that whatever good there may be desirable by man, more especially good belonging to his moral nature, there will be a corresponding agreeableness in whatever external object reminds him of such good, whether it remind him by arbitrary association, or by typical resemblance; and that the infinite ways, whether by reason or experience discoverable, by which² matter in some sort may remind[†] us of moral perfections, are hardly within any reasonable limits to be explained, if even by any single mind they might all be traced. Yet certain palpable and powerful modes there are, by observing which we may come at such general conclusions on the subject as may be practically useful, and more than these I shall not attempt to obtain.

§ 1. *Impossibility of adequately treating the subject.*

* The preceding chapter, though one of great importance, is throughout a parenthesis, and the proper subject of enquiry is now taken up, a little too hurriedly. The word "typical" might also have been better chosen; especially since it has lately been used so often to signify representative examples of things. It means here any character in material things by which they convey an idea of immaterial ones. [1883.]

† "Put us in mind" would have been a better phrase; as a rock, of stability—or its shadow, of kindness, etc. [1883.]

¹ [In the "re-arranged" 1883 ed. a new Section (II.) began here, "Of Typical Beauty," this being ch. i. "Of Infinity," etc.]

² [Ed. 2 reads, ". . . resemblance; and that the numberless ways in which matter . . ." Ed. 1 reads as here; in ed. 3 Ruskin returned to the first form of the passage.]

And first, I would ask of the reader to enter upon the subject with me, as far as may be, as a little child, ridding himself of all conventional and authoritative thoughts, and especially of such associations as arise from his respect for Pagan art, or which are in any way traceable to classical readings. I recollect that Mr. Alison traces his first perceptions of beauty in external nature to this most corrupt source,¹ thus betraying so total and singular a want of natural sensibility as may well excuse the deficiencies of his following arguments.² For there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the Theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few among those who love Nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendours.³ And the bitter decline of this

§ 2. *With what simplicity of feeling to be approached.*

¹ [The reference appears to be to scattered remarks in the earlier pages of Alison's *Essays on . . . Taste*, in which the writer refers to classical allusions as giving sublimity to natural scenery; as, for instance, remembrances of the *Georgics*, or of Hannibal's march over the Alps.]

² [In the first draft this point was elaborated at much greater length; see passages from the MSS. in Appendix i. pp. 367–368.]

³ [Ruskin is here recording his own experience, as in the following argument he is adopting the philosophy of recollection which Wordsworth, in his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, borrowed from Plato. Ruskin's love of nature in his earliest years has been sufficiently illustrated in his Juvenilia, and especially in the *Poems* (Vol. II.). Already, when he was thinking of this volume of *Modern Painters*, he was conscious at times of losing something of his earliest rapture. Thus he writes in his diary of 1844—at Geneva (June 1):—

“I have been singularly down-hearted all this journey, and conceive not why. I have felt more than I ever did, I think; and yet not with the buoyancy or life of old time. I think always of those who have no power of seeing what I see, and am full of remorse that I see it, and of the time that may—and that must come—when I shall not see it myself.”

And so, again, even at Chamouni (June 6):—

“A lovely day, to light me to my own valley. I have just come down (½ past 8) from my old seat on the block of the Brevent. But I do not feel as I ought to feel. For the first time in my life, I begin to miss the exhilaration of spirit which these scenes awakened in my childhood. I am not likely to wake to-morrow mad with delight at the idea of climbing a hill, I shall not be singing about the passages at the thought of sketching among rocks—the sketching has become a labour, the climbing a tranquil enjoyment; I am a man in feeling, though not in knowledge, and deeply am I grieved to find it so. But it is perhaps better for me.”

But this mood soon passed. “I enjoyed the whole day,” he writes on June 8, “*in my old way*, and walked home all the way from the Flégère, level and all, with a *child's springiness of mind and step*” (so italicised by Ruskin in reading his diary for *Præterita*.)

glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject, not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end* of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy.
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing boy:
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy.
 The youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is nature’s priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended.
 At length the man perceives it die away
 And fade into the light of common day.”¹

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art has yet attained. But we lose the

* To the origin and *purpose* of it, yes; but not to the immortality of it,—else the lamb might be proved as immortal as its slaughterer. Wordsworth is indeed “almost without appeal” as to the impressions of natural things on the human mind,—but by no means as to the logical conclusions to be surely drawn from them. [1883.]²

¹ [So in eds. 1, 3, and others. In ed. 2 Ruskin substituted some other lines from the same poem, thus:—

“Not for these I raise
 The songs of thanks and praise,
 But for these obstinate questionings
 Of sense, and outward things,
 Fallings from us: vanishings,
 Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized.”]

² [Ruskin had two or three years before the date of this note been analyzing Wordsworth’s position as a poet; see *Fiction Fair and Foul*, e.g. §§ 50–52, 79, 80. See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvii. § 11; and on the *Ode*, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 92, and *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 244.]

perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget, the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the Sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean.¹ I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children, (or would be common, if they were all in circumstances admitting it,) but I have ascertained it to be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for nature;² and I am certain that the modification of it which belongs to our after years is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken, by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter; and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly accorded to the same effect in Nature herself. Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects,—from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful,—the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and

§ 3. *The child instinct respecting space.*

§ 4. *Continued in after life.*

¹ [For Ruskin's early love of the sea, cf. *Præterita*, i. ch. iv. § 86. But as a child, he says, he "cared more for a beach on which the waves broke than for wide sea" (*ibid.* ch. vi. § 121).]

² [Ed. 2 (only) omits the words "have ascertained . . . and I."]

longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind, (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile,) but I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious; whether all that is dazzling in colour, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark troublous-edged sea.

Let us try to discover that which effects of this kind possess or suggest, peculiar to themselves,¹ and which other effects of light and colour possess not. There *must* be something in them of a peculiar character, and that, whatever it be, must be one of the primal and most earnest motives of beauty to human sensation.

§ 5. *Whereto
this instinct is
traceable.*

Do they show finer characters of form than can be developed by the broader daylight? Not so; for their power is almost independent of the forms they assume or display; it matters little whether the bright clouds be simple or manifold, whether the mountain line be subdued or majestic; the fairer forms of earthly things are by them subdued and disguised, the round and muscular growth of the forest trunks is sunk into skeleton lines of quiet shade, the purple clefts of the hill-side are labyrinthed in the darkness, the orbed spring and whirling wave of the torrent have given place to a white, ghastly, interrupted gleaming. Have they more perfection or fulness of colour? Not so; for their effect is oftentimes deeper when their hues are dim, than when they are blazoned with crimson and pale gold: and assuredly, in the blue of the rainy sky, in the many tints of morning flowers, in the sunlight on summer foliage and field, there are more sources of

¹ [Ed. 2 (only) was here again shorter; reading, instead of "and which . . . and that," simply "for this . . ." For "earnest" ed. 2 reads "effectual."]

mere sensual¹ colour-pleasure than in the single streak of wan and dying light. It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light (for the sun itself at noonday is effectless upon the feelings), that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree, and that is—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison-house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of His dwelling-place. For the sky of night though we may know it boundless, is dark; it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down; but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.

Now not only is this expression of infinity in distance most precious wherever we find it, however solitary it may be, and however unassisted by other forms and kinds of beauty, but it is of that value that no such other forms will altogether recompense us for its loss; and, much as I dread the enunciation of anything that may seem like a conventional rule, I have no hesitation in asserting that no work of any art, in which this expression of infinity is possible, can be perfect, or supremely elevated, without it, and that, in proportion to its presence, it will exalt and render impressive even the most tame and trivial themes. And I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of *heaven light* or of *object light*.* For I know not any truly great painter of any time, who manifests not the most intense pleasure in the luminous space of his backgrounds, or who ever sacrifices

* This quite true conclusion reaches farther than I then knew, or at least felt clearly enough to express. Not only light *in* the sky, but light *from* it, is essential to the greatest work; the diffused light of heaven on all sides, as distinguished from chiaroscuro in a room. [1883.]

¹ ["sensual" is omitted in ed. 2 only.]

this pleasure where the nature of his subject admits of its attainment; as, on the other hand, I know not that the habitual use of dark backgrounds can be shown as having ever been coexistent with pure or high feeling, and, except in the case of Rembrandt (and then under peculiar circumstances only), with any high power of intellect. It is, however, necessary carefully to observe the following modifications of this broad principle.

The absolute necessity, for such I indeed consider it, is of no § 7. *Conditions of its necessity.* more than such a mere luminous distant point as may give to the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them. There is a spectral etching of Rembrandt, a Presentation of Christ in the Temple,¹ where the figure of a robed priest stands glaring by its gems out of the gloom, holding a crozier. Behind it there is a subdued window-light, seen in the opening between two columns, without which the impressiveness of the whole subject would, I think, be incalculably brought down. I cannot tell whether I am at present allowing too much weight to my own fancies and predilections,* but without so much escape into the outer air and open heaven as this, I can take permanent pleasure in no picture.

And I think I am supported in this feeling by the unanimous § 8. *And connected analogies.* practice, if not the confessed opinion, of all artists. The painter of portrait is unhappy without his conventional white stroke under the sleeve, or beside the arm-chair; the painter of interiors feels like a caged bird, unless he can throw a window open, or set the door ajar; the landscapist dares not lose himself in forest without a gleam of light under its farthest branches, nor venture out in rain unless he may somewhere pierce to a better promise in the distance, or cling to some closing gap of variable blue above.

* No: but far too much weight to little matters. A vulgar picture cannot be made a religious one by a hole in a wall. [1883.]

¹ [There are two impressions of this in the British Museum Collection; Nos. 275 and 276 in the Exhibition Catalogue of 1899. For Ruskin's later criticism of such passages in Rembrandt's work, see *Cestus of Aglaia*, §§ 52–54.]

Escape, Hope, Infinity, by whatever conventionalism sought, the desire is the same in all, the instinct constant: it is no mere point of light that is wanted in the etching of Rembrandt above instanced, a gleam of armour or fold of temple curtain would have been utterly valueless; neither is it liberty, for though we cut down hedges and level hills, and give what waste and plain we choose, on the right hand and the left, it is all comfortless and undesired, so long as we cleave not a way of escape forward; and however narrow and thorny and difficult the nearer path, it matters not, so only that the clouds open for us at its close.* Neither will any amount of beauty in nearer form make us content to stay with it, so long as we are shut down to that alone; † nor is any form so cold or so hurtful but that we may look upon it with kindness, so only that it rise against the infinite hope of light beyond. The reader can follow out the analogies of this unassisted.

But although this narrow portal of escape be all that is absolutely necessary, I think that the dignity of the painting increases with the extent and amount of the expression. With the earlier and mightier painters of Italy, the practice is commonly to leave their distance of pure and open sky, of such simplicity that it in nowise shall interfere with, or draw the attention from, the interest of the figures; and of such purity that, especially towards the horizon, it shall be in the highest degree expressive of the infinite space of heaven. I do not mean to say that they did this with any occult or metaphysical motives. They did it, I think, with the unpretending simplicity of all earnest men; they did what they loved and felt; they sought what the heart naturally seeks, and gave what it most gratefully receives; and I look to them as in all points of principle (not, observe, of knowledge or empirical attainment)

§ 9. *How the dignity of treatment is proportioned to the expression of Infinity.*

* All this is—in the main—true; but much too emphatically put. Disagreeable things may be less disagreeable when one sees a way out of them, but one prefers things pleasant in the meantime, whether there's a way out, or not. [1883.]

† Well; I don't feel justified in saying that, till I've had the chance. [1883.]

as the most irrefragable authorities, precisely on account of the child-like innocence, which never deemed itself authoritative, but acted upon desire, and not upon dicta, and sought for sympathy, not for admiration.

And so we find the same simple and sweet treatment, the open sky, the tender, unpretending horizontal white clouds, the far winding and abundant landscape, in Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Laurati, Angelico, Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Francia, Perugino, and the young Raffaele;¹ the first symptom of conventionality appearing in Perugino, who, though with intense feeling of light and colour he carried the glory of his luminous distance far beyond all his predecessors, began at the same time to use a somewhat morbid relief of his figures against the upper sky. This he has done in the Assumption of the Florentine Academy, in that of l' Annunziata, and of the Gallery of Bologna;² in all which pictures the lower portions are incomparably the finest, owing to the light distance behind the heads.* Raffaele, in his fall,

* This is quite true; but not for metaphysical reasons only. Against a light background, the dark points and half tones of a head have double power; and are just so far additional elements in its expression. [1883.]

¹ [All these painters had been studied by Ruskin in 1845 at Pisa and Florence. Laurati (so called by Vasari) is more generally known as Pietro Lorenzetti; frescoes by him in the Campo santo at Pisa were much admired by Ruskin.]

² [In his picture diary of 1845 Ruskin notices among other things the re-painting of Perugino's Assumption in the Florentine Academy:—

“The Assumption of the Virgin.—The four figures at the bottom of this picture would by themselves with the bright distance be perfectly exquisite, but the upper figures which come light against the dark upper half of the sky are a little inferior in effect, the angels especially fluttery and poor. (Indeed there is a little tendency to this fault in Perugino not infrequently. It occurs again, I see, as far as one can judge of engravings, in his works at Siena, and in the Assumption here in the Annunziata it is very painful. Notwithstanding, this latter is for the grace and unity of action in its many figures most distinguished, and far from deserving the unkind mention of it in Rio.) The distance of this . . . picture (the Assumption) has once been very heavenly. Vestiges of its lovely trees and delicate hills are just perceptible under the load of French ultra-marine, which the picture-cleaner has laid on apparently with the house-painter's brush. Where any of the real distance is left, he has changed its colour and turned all the greens to the same crude blue.”

(The word left blank is indecipherable). Rio's unkind mention" of the Assumption in the Annunziata is that, "to the triumph of his enemies, it was not thought worthy to occupy the place that had been reserved for it;" and that it "unfortunately confirms the severe judgment passed upon it by his contemporaries" (*The Poetry of Christian Art*, 1854, p. 177).]

betrayed the faith he had received from his father and his master, and substituted for the radiant sky of the Madonna del Cardellino, the chamber-wall of the Madonna della Seggiola, and the brown wainscot of the Baldacchino.¹ Yet it is curious to observe how much of the dignity even of his later pictures depends on such portions as the green light of the lake, and sky behind the rocks, in the St. John of the Tribune; and how the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell' Impannata is redeemed into something like elevated character, merely by the light of the linen window from which it takes its name.

That which was done by the Florentines in pure simplicity of heart, the Venetians did through love of the colour and splendour of the sky itself, even to the frequent sacrificing of their subject to the passion of its distance. In Caraccio, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese,

¹ [The Madonna del Cardellino (painted about 1506) is in the Tribune of the Uffizi. Plate No. 11 in vol. iii. of *Modern Painters* (ch. xviii. § 12) is engraved from Ruskin's drawing of the background. The Madonna della Seggiola (or della Sedia) is in the Pitti; painted between 1510 and 1514. The Madonna del Baldacchino (left unfinished by Raphael before 1508) is also in the Pitti, as also is the Madonna dell' Impannata (painted about 1513). Ruskin's notes on these pictures, in his Florentine diary of 1845, are as follows:—

“The Seggiola struck me exactly as it did before—a clever, well-finished, vulgar, piece of maternity, very uncopiable. The Madonna dell' Impannata I thought less of than ever before. I see the execution is chiefly attributed to Raffaello's scholars, but it does not matter who it is by, the picture is a coarse and vulgar one, full of grimace without feeling. The figures are all brought out in full light, except only the left limb of St. John, which shows its dark side against the light. Owing to this, the picture would have appeared intolerably vulgar and modern, if one were only to take away the green window behind, from which it has its name.

“Madonna del Baldacchino.—I had several times past this, not only without knowing it to be a Raffaello, but thinking it one of the worst pictures in the Gallery, before I accidentally cast my eye on its name in the catalogue. Without any exception it is the worst Raffaello I ever saw. The architecture behind is brown, without air, tone, and more like wood than stone, the conical canopy looks as if the Virgin had been a Chinese instead of an Israelite. Vulgar, kicking angels, with ragged straggly hair drifting in the Salvator style, hold up the curtain with the studied grace of infant phenomena at the Olympic. The Madonna of most common type with a frizzed head-dress, attacked most justly by Rio; the bishops and saints silly, affected, and beggarly studies—I should say from the Pincian steps; they are moreover carelessly painted and unfinished, their great black eyes as meaningless as Murillo's, the flesh is throughout brown, and the blues of the drapery are raw and vapid.”

Rio's remark is that “the strange and artificial arrangement of the hair . . . seems to have been adopted for the express purpose of spoiling the effect,” a fault which he attributes to other hands than Raphael's (*l.c.* p. 218).]

and Tintoret, the preciousness of the luminous sky, so far as it might be at all consistent with their subject, is nearly constant; abandoned altogether in portraiture only, seldom even there, and never with advantage. Titian and Veronese, who had less exalted feeling than the others, afford a few instances of exception: the latter overpowering his silvery distances with foreground splendour; the former sometimes sacrificing them to a luscious fulness of colour, as in the Flagellation in the Louvre, by a comparison of which with the unequalled majesty of the Entombment opposite, the applicability of the general principle may at once be tested.¹

But of the value of this mode of treatment there is a farther and more convincing proof than its adoption either by the innocence of the Florentine or the ardour of the Venetian; namely, that when retained or imitated from them by the landscape painters of the seventeenth century, when appearing in isolation from all other good, among the weaknesses and paltrinesses of Claude, the mannerisms of Gaspar, and the caricatures and brutalities of Salvator, it yet redeems and upholds all three, conquers all foulness by its purity, vindicates all folly by its dignity,* and puts an uncomprehended power of permanent address to the human heart upon the lips of the senseless and the profane.[†]

* Too fast and far again! by much; the impetus of phrase running away with me. See the mischief of fine writing. [1883.]

† In one of the smaller rooms of the Pitti Palace, over the door, is a Temptation of St. Anthony, by Salvator, wherein such power as the artist possessed is fully manifested, and less offensively than is usual in his sacred subjects.² It is a vigorous and ghastly thought, in that kind of horror which is dependent on scenic effect perhaps unrivalled, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again in speaking of the powers of Imagination. I allude to it here, because the sky of the distance affords a remarkable instance of the power of light at present under discussion. It is formed of flakes of black cloud, with rents and openings of intense and lurid green, and at least half of the impressiveness of the picture depends on these openings. Close them, make the sky one mass of gloom, and the spectre will be awful no longer. It

¹ [For Ruskin's notes on these pictures, in his 1844 diary, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 102.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "fully manifested with little, comparatively, that is offensive." For another reference to the picture, see below, sec. ii. ch. v. § 7 n., p. 319.]

Now although I doubt not that the general value of this treatment will be acknowledged by all lovers of art, it is not certain that the point to prove which I have brought it forward will be as readily conceded; namely, the inherent power of all representations of infinity over the human heart. For there are, indeed, countless associations of pure and religious kind, which combine with each other to enhance the impression when presented in this particular form, whose power I neither deny nor am careful to distinguish, seeing that they all tend to the same point, and have reference to heavenly hopes; delights they are in seeing the narrow, black, miserable earth fairly compared with the bright firmament; reaching forward unto the things that are before, and joyfulness in the apparent, though unreachable, nearness and promise of them. But there are other modes in which infinity may be represented, which are confused by no associations of the kind, and which would, as being in mere matter, appear trivial and mean, but for their incalculable influence on the forms of all that we feel to be beautiful. The first of these is the curvature of lines and surfaces, wherein it at first appears futile to insist upon any resemblance or suggestion of infinity, since there is certainly, in our ordinary contemplation of it, no sensation of the kind. But I have repeated again and again that the ideas of beauty are instinctive, and that it is only upon consideration, and even then in doubtful and disputable way, that they appear in their typical character. Neither do I intend at all to insist upon the particular meaning which they appear to myself to bear, but merely on their actual and demonstrable agreeableness: so that in the present case, while I assert positively,

§ 13. *Other modes in which the power of Infinity is felt.*

§ 14. *The beauty of Curvature.*

owes to the light of the distance both its size and its spirituality. The time would fail me, if I were to name the tenth part of the pictures, which occur to me, whose vulgarity is redeemed by this circumstance alone: and yet let not the artist trust to such morbid and conventional use of it as may be seen in the common blue and yellow effectism of the present day. Of the value of moderation and simplicity in the use of this, as of all other sources of pleasurable emotion, I shall presently have occasion to speak farther.

and have no fear of being able to prove, that a curve of any kind is more beautiful than a right line, I leave it to the reader to accept or not, as he pleases, that reason of its agreeableness which is the only one that I can at all trace; namely, that every curve divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction.

That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove is, the subtlety and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever.¹ I believe that, except in crystals, in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast (as in the slope of débris), in rays of light, in the levels of calm water and alluvial land,* and in some few organic developments, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature; though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves; and while, therefore, for the most part the eye is fed in natural forms with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are provided to give beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly broken ground which Nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak,² and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another

* These seem important exceptions; they are not so, and are themselves liable to much exception. Crystals are indeed subject to rectilinear limitations; but their real surfaces are continually curved. Rays of light are varied, by infinite gradation—the level of calm water is only right-lined when it is shoreless. [1883.]

¹ [On this subject, cf. *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xx. § 19, and vol. iii. ch. i. § 8.]

² [See below, sec. ii. ch. v. § 9, p. 320.]

(as in the browsing¹ line of park trees), the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colours. It is their infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a *lusus naturæ*: for we have seen that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light;² and for the gradation of the few plane surfaces that exist, means are provided in local colour, aërial perspective, reflected lights, etc., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. For instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease and decrepitude. Compare the gradated colours of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual deepening of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veins of old age.

Gradation is so inseparable a quality of all natural shade, that the eye refuses in painting to understand a shadow which appears without it; while, on the other hand, nearly all the gradations of nature are so subtle, and between degrees of tint so slightly separated, that no human hand can in any wise equal, or do anything more than suggest the idea of them. In proportion to the space over which gradation extends, and to its invisible subtlety, is its grandeur: and in proportion to its narrow limits and violent degrees, its vulgarity. In Correggio, it is morbid in spite of its refinement of execution, because the eye is drawn to it, and it is made the most observable character of the picture; whereas natural gradation is for ever escaping observation to that degree that the greater part of artists in working from nature

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 read "cattle" for "browsing," and, four lines lower, ed. 1 italicises "their infinity."]

² [Ed. 1 here adds, "which is most intense when it impinges at the highest angle."]

§ 16. *The beauty of Gradation.*

§ 17. *How found in nature.*

see it not,¹ but either lay down such continuous lines and colours as are both disagreeable and impossible; or, receiving the necessity of gradation as a principle instead of a fact,* use it in violently exaggerated measure, and so lose both the dignity of their own work, and, by the constant dwelling of their eyes upon exaggeration, their sensibility to that of the natural forms. So that we find the majority of painters divided between the two evil extremes of insufficiency and affectation; and only the greatest men capable of making gradation continuous and yet extended over enormous spaces and within degrees of narrow difference, as in the body of a strong light.[†]

From the necessity of gradation results what is commonly given as a rule of art, though its authority as a rule obtains only from its being a fact of nature, that the extremes of high light and pure colour can exist only in points. The common rules respecting sixths and eighths, held concerning light and shade, are entirely absurd and conventional; according to the subject and the effect of light, the greater part of the picture will be, or ought to be, light or dark; but that principle which is not conventional is, that of all light, however high, there is some part that is higher than the rest; and that of all colour, however pure, there is some part that is purer than the rest; and that generally of all shade, however deep, there is some part deeper than the rest, though this last fact is frequently sacrificed in art, owing to the narrowness of its means. But on the right gradation of focusing of light and colour depends, in great measure, the value of both. Of this I have spoken sufficiently in pointing out the singular constancy of it in the works of Turner. (Part II. Sec. II. Chap. II. § 16.) And it is generally to be

* I meant, as a trick for the emphasis of colour, instead of an exponent of actual form or effect. This, however, is done legitimately in illumination, and other merely decorative, not imitative, coloured work. [1883.]

†This is a valuable practical passage, of which the substance is often reiterated in my later works. [1883.]²

¹ [Ed. 1 inserts "(except in certain of its marked developments)."]

² [See, e.g., *Lectures on Art*, ch. vi., "Light."]

observed that even raw and valueless colour, if rightly and subtly gradated, will, in some measure, stand for light; and that the most transparent and perfect hue will be, in some measure, unsatisfactory if entirely unvaried. I believe the early skies of Raffaele owe their luminousness more to their untraceable and subtle gradation than to inherent quality of hue.

Such are the expressions of infinity which we find in creation,* of which the importance is to be estimated rather by their frequency than by their distinctness. Let, however, the reader bear constantly in mind that I insist not on his accepting any interpretation of mine, but only on his dwelling so long on those objects which he perceives to be beautiful, as to determine whether the qualities to which I trace their beauty be necessarily there or not. Farther expressions of infinity there are in the mystery of Nature, and, in some measure, in her vastness; but these are dependent on our own imperfections, and therefore, though they produce sublimity, they are unconnected with beauty. For that which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness: and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable; not concealed, but incomprehensible; it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.

*§ 19. Infinity
not rightly im-
plied by vast-
ness.*

* I meant, "in those conditions of the creation which appeal to the pleasure of the human eyes." Of course those which appeal to thought are themselves infinite. This last paragraph is heedlessly and insolently written; yet not wholly valueless, for the gist of it in the close is true; that the lessons of Heaven are not written illegibly for its creatures: and that all the smoke of the darkness which hides the Maker from this world, is of the world's making. [1883.]

CHAPTER VI¹

OF UNITY, OR THE TYPE OF THE DIVINE COMPREHENSIVENESS²

“ALL things,” says Hooker, “God only excepted, besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things.”³

§ 1. *The general
conception of
divine Unity.*

Hence the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection; and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God, and of which our true conception is rightly explained and limited by Dr. Brown in his XCII.nd lecture;⁴ that Unity which consists not in His own singleness or separation, but in the necessity of His inherence in all things that be, without which no creature of any kind could hold existence for a moment. Which necessity of divine essence I think it better to speak of as Comprehensiveness, than as Unity; because unity is often understood in the sense of oneness or singleness, instead of universality; whereas the only unity which by any means can become grateful or an object of hope to men, and whose types therefore in material things can be beautiful, is that on which turned the last words and prayer of Christ before His crossing of the Kedron brook, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.”⁵

¹ [The ed. of 1883 makes this ch. ii. of section ii. (“Of Typical Beauty”).]

² [On unity as a principle in decoration, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xxi. § 33, and *cf.* vol. iii. ch. i. § 26.]

³ [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. xi. 1.]

⁴ [*Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. By Thomas Brown, M.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. (Lecture xcii.: “On the Existence of the Deity.”)]

⁵ [John xvii. 20.]

And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures; and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the unity of spirits* is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love; and these are their delight and their strength; for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual good; their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's. And so the unity of earthly creatures is their power and their peace; not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains; but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support; of hands that hold each other and are still.¹ And so the unity of matter is, in its noblest form, the organization of it which builds it up into temples for the spirit; and in its lower form, the sweet and strange affinity which gives to it the glory of its orderly elements, and the fair variety of change and assimilation that turns the dust into the crystal, and separates the waters that be above the firmament from the waters that be beneath: and, in its lowest form, it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and their weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and

§ 2. *The glory of all things is their Unity.*

* I meant, of course, human spirits: modern desecration of the latter word has cast so much shadow on it that one cannot read it without shrinking.

This second paragraph is one of the most valuable in essential contents I have ever written, but the literary art and pedantry of it, employed to express the most solemn of truths in a tinkle that shall be pleasant to the ear, are now very grievous to me. It was well meant at the time, however, and may perhaps yet have its use. [1883.]

¹ [§ 2 down to this point is § 72 of *Fronde Agrestes*, where Ruskin added the following note:—

“A long, affected, and obscure second volume sentence, written in imitation of Hooker. One short sentence from Proverbs is the sum of it: ‘How can one be warm alone?’ ”

The sentence is from Ecclesiastes iv. 11: “Two have heat, how can one be warm alone.” Eds. 1 and 2 went on “breathlessly,” with only a colon after “are still.”]

their stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others' good.

Now of that which is thus necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear; and the appearance of some species of unity is, in the most determined sense of the word, essential to the perfection of beauty in lines, colours, or forms.¹

But of the appearances of unity, as of unity itself, there are several kinds, which it will be found hereafter convenient to consider separately.* Thus there is the Unity of different and separate things, subjected to one and the same influence, which may be called Subjectional Unity; and this is the unity of the clouds, as they are driven by the parallel winds, or as they are ordered by the electric currents; this the unity of the sea-waves, this of the bending and undulation of the forest masses; and in creatures capable of will it is the unity of will or of impulse. And there is Unity of Origin, which we may call Original Unity; which is of things arising from one spring and source, and speaking always of this their brotherhood; and this in matter is the unity of the branches of the trees, and of the petals and starry rays of flowers, and of the beams of light; and in spiritual creatures it is their filial relation to Him from whom they have their being. And there is unity of Sequence, which is that of things that form links in chains, and steps in ascents, and stages in journeys; and this, in matter, is the unity of communicable forces in their continuance from one thing to another; and it is the passing upwards and downwards of beneficent effects among

* Yes, I should rather think so; and they ought to have been named separately, too, and very slowly; and not upset in a heap on the floor, as they are in this terrific two-page sentence. It is all right, however, when once it is sorted. See note † on p. 99.² [1883.]

¹ [For "and the appearance . . . forms," ed. 1 reads:—

"And so to the perfection of beauty in lines, or colours, or forms, or masses, or multitudes, the appearance of some species of Unity is in the most determined sense of the word essential."]

² [The reference was wrongly given in previous eds. as "note at end of chapter."]

all things,¹ the melody of sounds, the continuity of lines, and the orderly succession of motions and times; and in spiritual creatures it is their own constant building up, by true knowledge and continuous reasoning, to higher perfection, and the singleness and straightforwardness of their tendencies to more complete communion with God. And there is the unity of Membership, which we may call Essential Unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole; and this is the great unity of which other unities are but parts and means; it is in matter the harmony of sounds and consistency of bodies, and among spiritual creatures their love and happiness and very life in God.

Now of the nature of this last kind of unity, the most important whether in moral or in those material things with which we are at present concerned, there is this necessary to be observed; that it cannot exist between things similar to each other. Two or more equal and like things cannot be members one of another, nor can they form one, or a whole thing. Two they must remain, both in nature, and in our conception, so long as they remain alike, unless they are united by a third different from both. Thus the arms, which are like each other, remain two arms in our conception. They could not be united by a third arm; they must be united by something which is not an arm, and which, imperfect without them as they without it, shall form one perfect body. Nor is unity even thus accomplished, without a difference and opposition of direction in the setting on of the like members. Therefore, among all things which are to have unity of membership one with another, there must be difference of variety; and though it is possible that many like things may be made members of one body, yet it is remarkable that this structure appears characteristic of the lower creatures, rather than the higher, as the many legs of a caterpillar, and the many arms and suckers of the radiata;²

¹ [Ed. 1 reads "all things, and it is the melody of sounds, and the beauty of continuous lines, and . . ."]

² [In Cuvier's system of classification the 4th grand branch of the animal kingdom, containing the radiated animals or zoöphytes (polypi, infusoria, etc.). "The lower groups," says Huxley, "which he (Cuvier) knew least and which he threw into a great

and that, as we rise in order of being, the number of similar members becomes less, and their structure commonly seems based on the principle of the unity of two things by a third, as Plato states it in the *Timæus*, § 11.¹

Hence, out of the necessity of Unity, arises that of Variety; a necessity often more vividly, though never so deeply felt, because lying at the surface of things, and assisted by an influential principle of our nature, the love of change, and by the power of contrast. But it is a mistake which has led to many unfortunate results, in matters respecting art, to insist on any inherent agreeableness of variety, without reference to a farther end. For it is not even true that variety as such, and in its highest degree, is beautiful. A patched* garment of many colours is by no means so agreeable as one of a single and continuous hue; the splendid colours of many birds are eminently painful from their violent separation, and inordinate variety, while the pure and colourless swan is, under certain circumstances, the most beautiful of all feathered creatures.† A forest of all manner of trees is poor, if not disagreeable, in effect;‡ a mass of one species of tree is sublime. It is therefore only harmonious and chordal variety, that variety which is necessary to secure and extend unity (for the greater the number of objects which by their differences become members of one another, the more extended and sublime is their unity), which is rightly

* I meant, discordantly patched—else the sentence is simply untrue. [1883.]²

† Compare Chap. IX. § 5, note.

‡ Spenser's various forest is the Forest of Error.

heterogeneous assemblage, the Radiata, have been altogether remodelled and rearranged. . . . Whatever form the classification of the animal kingdom may eventually take, the Cuvierian Radiata is in my judgment effectually abolished" (*Classification*, 1869, p. 86).]

¹ [P. 31 of the ordinary arrangement: "Are we right in saying that there is one heaven, or shall we rather say that there are many and infinite? There is one, if the created heaven is to accord with the pattern. For that which includes all other intelligible creatures cannot have a second or companion; in that case there would be no need of another living being which would include these two, and of which they would be parts, and the likeness would be more truly said to resemble not those two, but that other which included them" (Jowett's translation).]

² [Cf. what Ruskin says of the quality of spottiness (ποικιλία) in art: *Aratra Pentelici*, § 204, and cf. below, p. 134 (note of 1883).]

agreeable; and so I name not Variety as essential to beauty, because it is only so in a secondary and casual sense.*

Of the Love of Change as a principle of human nature, and the pleasantness of variety resulting from it, something has already been said (Ch. IV. § 4); only as there I was opposing the idea that our being familiar with objects was the cause of our delight in them, so here I have to oppose the contrary position that their strangeness is the cause of it. For neither familiarity nor strangeness has more operation on, or connection with, impressions of one sense than of another; and they have less power over the impressions of sense, generally, than over the intellect in its joyful accepting of fresh knowledge, and dull contemplation of that it has long possessed. Only in their operation on the senses they act contrarily at different times; as for instance, the newness of a dress, or of some kind of unaccustomed food, may make it for a time delightful, but as the novelty passes away, so also may the delight, yielding to disgust or indifference; which in their turn, as custom begins to operate, may pass into affection and craving, and that which was first a luxury, and then a matter of indifference, become a necessity: † whereas in subjects of the intellect,

§ 6. *Change, and its influence on beauty.*

* It must be matter of no small wonderment to practical men, to observe how grossly the nature and connection of Unity and Variety have been misunderstood and misstated by those writers upon taste who have been guided by no experience of art, most singularly perhaps by Mr. Alison, who, confounding Unity with Uniformity, and leading his readers through thirty pages of discussion respecting Uniformity and Variety, the intelligibility of which is not by any means increased by his supposing Uniformity to be capable of existence in single things, at last substitutes for these two terms, sufficiently contradictory already, those of Similarity and Dissimilarity, the reconciliation of which opposites in one thing we must, I believe, leave Mr. Alison to accomplish.¹

† Και το ταυτα πραττειν πολλακις ηδου .□. το γαρ συνηθες ηδου ην. και το μεταβ αλλεινηδου εις φυσιν γαρ γιγνεται μεταβαλλειν.—Arist. Rhet. I. c. 11.²

¹ [See *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, ch. iv. pt. iii., vol. ii. pp. 8 seq. in ed. of 1815.]

² ["And to do the same things often is pleasant . . . for what we are accustomed to is pleasant. And to change is pleasant, for change is according to nature." The reference was wrongly given in all previous eds. as chapter 2, and ταυτα was printed ταυτα. In the 1883 edition the quotation was not given, and Ruskin noted:—

"I have cut out here a quotation from Aristotle—which was only put in to show that I had read him."]

the chief delight they convey is dependent upon their being newly and vividly comprehended; and as they become subjects of contemplation they lose their value, and become tasteless and unregarded, except as instruments for the reaching of others; only that though they sink down into the shadowy, effectless heap of things indifferent, which we pack, and crush down, and stand upon, to reach things new, they sparkle afresh at intervals as we stir them by throwing a new stone into the heap, and letting the newly admitted lights play upon them. And, both in subjects of the intellect and the senses, it is to be remembered that the love of change is a weakness and imprefection of our nature, (and implies in it the state of probation;)* and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put in us as that “custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life;”¹ and only such weak thews² and baby grasp given to our intellect as that “the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist.”[†] And

§ 7. *The love of change, how morbid and evil.* so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change: for the weakest-minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old; in so far that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use, neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are house-holders with storehouses of things new and old; but they

* The words I have now put in parenthesis are false. Heaven itself may be as changeful as a kaleidoscope, for aught we know. [1883.]

† Hooker,³ I think, by the sound of it: to whom Pope would have quietly and rightly answered—“Why wish to persist, then, when God says you have done enough?” [1883.]

¹ [Wordsworth: *Intimations of Immortality*; the lines are quoted again in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xxvii. § 23.]

² [Ed. 1 read “back.”]

³ [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. xi. 3.]

catch at the new-fashioned garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest; and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the perception of beauty, and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain;* but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity. Neither is there any better test of beauty than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; for there is much that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of time, though assuredly it *will* by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is for ever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

Receiving, therefore, variety only as that which accomplishes unity, or makes it perceived, its operation is found to be very precious, both in that which I have called Unity of Subjection, and Unity of Sequence, as well as in Unity of Membership; † for although things in all respects the same may, indeed, be subjected to one influence, yet the power of the influence, and their obedience to it, are best seen by varied operation of them on their individual differences; as in clouds and waves there is a glorious unity of rolling, wrought out by the wild and wonderful differences of their absolute forms; which differences, if removed, would leave in them only multitudinous

§ 8. *The conducting of variety towards Unity of Subjection.*

* Not proved. The adversary may ask,—and lately, not without good grounds for inquiry,—Why it is not to be held? [1883.]

† The four unities above specified were,—

1. Of Subjection.
2. Of Origin.
3. Of Sequence.
4. Of Membership.

That of Origin is omitted here, because things springing from one root must be of one nature. [1883.]

and petty repetition, instead of the majestic oneness of shared passion. And so in the waves and clouds of human multitude when they are filled with one thought; as we find frequently in the works of the early Italian men of earnest purpose, who despising, or happily ignorant of, the sophistications of theories and the proprieties of composition, indicated by perfect similarity of action and gesture on the one hand, and by the infinite and truthful variation of expression on the other, the most sublime strength, because the most absorbing unity, of multitudinous passion that ever human heart conceived. Hence, in the cloister of St. Mark's, the intense, fixed, statue-like silence of ineffable adoration upon the spirits in prison at the feet of Christ, side by side, the hands lifted, and the knees bowed, and the lips trembling together;* and in St.

* Fra Angelico's fresco in a cell of the upper cloister.¹ He treated the subject frequently. Another characteristic example occurs in the Vita di Cristo of the Academy, a series now unfortunately destroyed by the picture cleaners.² Simon Memmi, in Santa Maria Novella, has given another very beautiful instance.³ In Giotto the principle is universal, though his multitudes are somewhat more dramatically and powerfully varied in gesture than Angelico's. In Mino da Fiesole's altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogio at Florence, close by Cosimo Rosselli's fresco, there is a beautiful example in marble.⁴

¹ [Of San Marco, at Florence.]

² [In his note-book of 1845, Ruskin writes:—

“With the Vita di Cristo, at the Accademia, I was grievously disappointed. I strongly suspect that the whole of this series has been lately, and since Kugler saw it, through the picture-dealer's hands, and that the greater part of Angelico's work has been washed off, and as little of the picture-cleaner put on. At all events the pictures are now in the most miserable condition, some two-thirds effaced, others so daubed and defaced as to alter the expression of the faces and make them monstrous or ludicrous; many appear to have been somewhat hastily executed by Angelico himself, and some of the open air backgrounds with architecture are very disagreeable from their raw colour, glaring without brilliancy, red walls and sand-coloured earth, and blue sky jumbled together without even feeling; in fact it could hardly be otherwise; after the seclusion of convent life, the imagination is destroyed for want of materials. Two, however, are very fine in this respect, and those are just two of the bits which, like the scene of his Annunciation in the cloister, he could get from convent life—the Washing of the Feet, which is under a cloister, the clear air seen in the open court beyond, given with wonderful light and purity; and the Giving of the Sacrament, in which the roof is dark blue and the walls green, and the whole filled with a fine transparent variable shadow . . .”]

³ [In the frescoes, once ascribed to him, in the Spanish Chapel.]

⁴ [The altar is in the chapel of the miracle of a chalice found to contain natural blood. On the altar are angels adoring the chalice; the fresco by Cosimo Rosselli

Domenico of Fiesole,* that whirlwind rush of the angels and the redeemed souls round about Him at His resurrection, in which we hear the blast of the horizontal trumpets mixed with the dying clangour of their ingathered wings. The same great feeling occurs throughout the works of the serious men, though most intensely in Angelico; and it is well to compare with it the vileness and falseness of all that succeeded, when men had begun to bring to the cross foot their systems instead of their sorrow. Take as the most marked and degraded instance, perhaps, to be anywhere found, Bronzino's treatment of the same subject (Christ visiting the spirits in prison), in the picture now in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii; which, vile as it is in colour, vacant in invention, void in light and shade, a heap of cumbrous nothingness, and sickening offensiveness, is of all its voids most void in this, that the academy models therein huddled together at the bottom, show not so much unity or community of attention to the academy model with the flag in its hand above, as a street crowd would to a fresh-staged charlatan. Some *point* to the God who has burst the gates of death, as if the rest were

* The predella of the picture behind the altar.¹

describes the miracle. Ruskin describes his discovery of the treasures in this chapel, in a letter to his father (June 20):—

“To-day I was poking about churches, and found in St. Ambrogio—a glorious fresco all burned and smoked—in a little sacred, idolatrous chapel, with an altar-piece which I was quite certain was by Mino da Fiesole. Well, I called the sacristan, and half-a-dozen more monks one after another. What was the picture? Who by? ‘Non si sa. Molto antica.’ Who was the alter-piece by? ‘Non si sa.’ What did the fresco represent? ‘O’è un miracolo del Santo Sacramento.’ What miracle? Not a soul of them could tell me anything about it. Was the altar-piece by Mino? ‘No.’ I wasn’t satisfied, made them light me some candles, and after a little search I showed them Mino’s name in a corner—OPVS MINI—he never puts more. Then they were highly delighted, for a work of Mino’s is of great value and very rare. The fresco is the *chef-d’œuvre* of Cosimo Roselli, and most magnificent. This may give you some notion of the intellectual condition of Florence.”]

¹ [The entry in the note-book (June 21) is as follows:—

“An excellent instance of the fulness of sentiment in a rushing crowd which only Angelico can give. It is in three divisions; in the centre one, a host of angels rush towards their risen Lord, those nearest blowing a blast through horizontal trumpets, as in Orcagna’s Judgment. On the right the female, on the left the male, saints, all animated with the same enthusiasm; and the play of colour and unity of action as seen from below is as fine as anything I have seen.”]

incapable of distinguishing Him for themselves; and others turn their backs upon Him, to show their unagitated faces to the spectator.*

In Unity of Sequence, the effect of variety is best exemplified by the melodies of music, wherein, by the differences of the notes, they are connected with each other in certain pleasant relations. This connection, taking place in quantities, is Proportion, respecting which certain general principles must be noted, as the subject is one open to many errors, and obscurely treated of by writers on art.

§ 9. *And towards Unity of Sequence.*

Proportion is of two distinct kinds: † *Apparent* when it takes place between quantities for the sake of connection only, without any ultimate object or causal necessity; and *Constructive*, when it has reference to some function to be discharged by the quantities depending on their proportion. From the confusion of these two kinds of proportion have arisen the greater part of the erroneous conceptions of the influence of either.

§ 10. *The nature of Proportion. 1st, of apparent Proportion.*

(A) Apparent Proportion, or the sensible relation of quantities, is one of the most important means of obtaining unity amongst things which otherwise must have remained distinct in similarity; and as it may consist with every other kind of unity, ‡ and persist when every other means of it fails, it may be considered as lying at the root of most of our

* I had much more heart power of conceiving the real scenes when I wrote this book than I have now, and was therefore a far better judge of religious art. I have just been looking at all these pictures again, and find myself a little weary of rows of heads turned in the same direction; and disposed sometimes to say a good word even for Bronzino, in his portraits.¹ (Florence, September, 1882.) [1883.]

† This digression on Proportion, as one of the elements of Unity of Sequence, contains a good deal that is extremely right and useful; but it ought to have been given in a separate chapter. [1883.]

‡ Thus the proportions of increase in the lobes, or intervals between the serrations of a leaf, are associated with the beautiful Unity of Origin in the divergence of the ribs from the stem. [1883.]

¹ [Bronzino's portraiture may be judged also in London, at the National Gallery, where there are five examples of it; see especially No. 649.]

impressions of the beautiful. There is no sense of rightness or wrongness connected with it; no sense of utility, propriety, or expediency. These ideas enter only where the proportion of quantities has reference to some function to be performed by them. It cannot be asserted that it is right or that it is wrong that A should be to B as B to C; unless A, B, and C have some desirable operation dependent on that relation. But nevertheless it may be highly agreeable to the eye that A, B, and C, if visible things, should have visible connection of ratio, even though nothing be accomplished by such connection.

(B) On the other hand, Constructive Proportion, or the adaptation of quantities to functions, is agreeable, not (necessarily) to the eye, but to the mind, which is cognizant of the function to be performed. Thus the pleasantness or rightness of the proportions of a column depends not on the mere relation of diameter and height (which is not proportion at all, for proportion is between three terms at least); but on three other involved terms, the strength of materials, the weight to be borne, and the scale of the building. The proportions of a wooden column are wrong in a stone one, and of a small building wrong in a large one;* and this owing solely to

* It seems never to have been rightly understood, even by the more intelligent among our architects, that Proportion is in any way connected with positive size; it seems to be held among them that a small building may be expanded to a large one merely by proportionally expanding all its parts: and that the harmony will be equally agreeable on whatever scale it be rendered. Now this is true of apparent proportion, but utterly false of constructive; and, as much of the value of architectural proportion *is* constructive, the error is often productive of the most painful results. It may be best illustrated by observing the conditions of proportion in animals. Admiration has often been thoughtlessly claimed for the strength, supposed gigantic, of insects and smaller animals; as being capable of lifting weights, leaping distances, and surmounting obstacles, of proportion apparently overwhelming. Thus the *Formica Herculanea* will lift in its mouth and brandish like a baton, sticks thicker than itself and six times its length, all the while scrambling over crags of about the proportionate height of the Cliffs of Dover, three or four in a minute. There is nothing extraordinary in this, nor any exertion of strength necessarily greater than human, in proportion to the size of the body. For it is evident that if the *bulk* and *strength* of any creature be expanded or diminished in proportion to each other, the distance through which it can leap, the time it can maintain exertion, or any other third term resultant,

mechanical considerations which have no more connection with ideas of beauty, than the relation between the arms of a lever adapted to the raising of a given weight; and yet it is highly agreeable to perceive that such constructive proportion has been duly observed, as it is agreeable to see that anything is fit for its purpose or for ours, and also that it has been the

remains *constant*; that is, diminish weight of powder and of ball proportionately, and the distance carried is constant, or nearly so. Thus, a grasshopper, a man, and a giant 100 feet high, supposing their muscular strength equally proportioned to their size, can or could all leap, not proportionate distance, but the same, or nearly the same, distance; say, four feet the grasshopper, or forty-eight times his length; six feet the man, or his length exactly; ten feet the giant, or the tenth of his length; some allowance being made for the greater resistance of the air to the smaller animal, and other slight disadvantages.¹ Hence, all small animals can, proportionally, perform feats of strength and agility exactly so much greater than those possible to large ones, as the animals themselves are smaller; and to enable an elephant to leap like a grasshopper, he must be endowed with strength a million times greater in *proportion* to his size. Now the consequence of this general mechanical law is, that as we increase the scale of animals, their means of power, whether muscles of motion or bones of support, must be increased in a more than proportionate degree, or they become utterly unwieldy and incapable of motion. And there is a limit to this increase of strength. If the elephant had legs as long as a spider's, no combination of animal matter that could be hide-bound would have strength enough to move them. To support the megatherium, we must have a humerus a foot in diameter, though perhaps not more than two feet long, and that in a vertical position under him; while the gnat can hang on the window-frame, and poise himself to sting, in the middle of crooked stilts like threads, stretched out to ten times the breadth of his body on each side. Increase the size of the megatherium a little more, and no phosphate of lime will bear him: he would crush his own legs to powder. (Compare Sir Charles Bell, *Bridgewater Treatise on the Hand*, p. 296, and the note.) Hence there is not only a limit to the size of animals, in the conditions of matter, but to their activity also, the largest being always least capable of exertion; and this would be the case to a far greater extent, but that nature beneficently alters her proportions as she increases her scale; giving slender frames to the smaller tribes, and ponderous strength to the larger.² So in vegetables, compare the stalk of an ear of oat, and the trunk of a pine, the mechanical structure being in both the same. So also in waves, of which the large never can be mere exaggerations of the small, but have different slopes and curvatures. So in mountains, and all things else, necessarily, and from ordinary mechanical laws. Whence in architecture, according

¹ [The words, "some allowance . . . disadvantages," were omitted in ed. 1, which also read "*cæteris paribus*" for "proportionally," and, in the next line, "to be executed by" for "possible to."]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "giving, as we have seen, long legs and enormous wings to the smaller tribes, and short and thick proportion to the larger."]

result of intelligence in the artificer of it; so that we sometimes feel a pleasure in apparent non-adaptation, if it be a sign of ingenuity, as in the unnatural and seemingly impossible lightness of Gothic spires and roofs.

Now, the errors against which I would caution the reader in this matter* are three. The first is, the overlooking or denial of the power of Apparent Proportion, of which power neither Burke, nor any other writer whose works I have met with, takes cognizance. The second is, the attribution of *beauty* to the appearances of Constructive Proportion. And the third, the denial, with Burke, of *any* value or agreeableness in Constructive Proportion.¹

to the scale of the building, its proportions *must* be altered constructively, and ought to be so apparently even where the constructive expedients are capable of disguise;² and I have no hesitation in calling that unmeaning exaggeration of parts in St. Peter's,³ of flutings, volutes, friezes, etc., in the proportions of a smaller building, a vulgar blunder, and one that destroys all the majesty that the building ought to have had; and still more I should so call all imitations and adaptations of *large* buildings on a *small* scale. The true test of right proportion is, that it shall itself inform us of the scale of the building, and be such that even in a drawing it shall instantly induce the conception of the actual size, or size intended. I know not what Fuseli means by that aphorism of his:—

“Disproportion of parts is the element of hugeness; proportion, of grandeur. All Gothic styles of Architecture are huge. The Greek alone is grand.”⁴

When a building *is* vast, it ought to look so; and the proportion is right which exhibits its vastness. Nature loses no size by her proportion; her buttressed mountains have more of Gothic than of Greek in them.

* I meant, “with respect to the subject of Proportion altogether;” the two kinds of it being both considered in the definitions of popular error. [1883.]

¹ [*Of the Sublime and Beautiful*, part iii. secs. ii.-v. The passage quoted below, in § 14, is from sec. v.; p. 173 in the ed. of 1782.]

² [Ed. 1 omits “constructively, and ought to be . . . disguise.”]

³ [*Cf.* Vol. I. p. 380.]

⁴ [Aphorism 107, *Life and Writings of Fuseli*, 1831, vol. iii. p. 103. The text is “All Oriental, all Gothic styles,” etc. In a note to an additional passage in the MS., which was ultimately struck out, Ruskin, in referring to another aphorism of Fuseli, says:—

“It is a pity his love of epigram destroys his power of persuasion. A sentence is couched in too few words when they contain its meaning indeed, but neither display it nor recommend it.”

For other references to Fuseli's Aphorisms, see pp. 137, 236, 259.]

Now, the full proof of the influence of Apparent Proportion, I must reserve for illustration by diagram;¹ one or two instances, however, may be given at present, for the better understanding of its nature.

§ 11. *The value of Apparent Proportion in curvature.*

We have already asserted that all curves are more beautiful than right lines. All curves, however, are not equally beautiful, and their differences of beauty depend on the different proportions borne to each other by those infinitely small right lines of which they may be conceived as composed.

When these lines are equal and contain equal angles, there can be no connection nor unity of sequence in them. The resulting curve, the circle, is therefore the least beautiful of all curves.

When the lines bear to each other some certain proportion: or when, the lines remaining equal, the angles vary; or when by any means whatsoever, and in whatever complicated modes, such differences as shall imply connection are established between the infinitely small segments, the resulting curves become beautiful. The simplest of the beautiful curves are the conic, and the various spirals; but it is difficult to trace any ground of superiority or inferiority among the infinite numbers of the higher curves. I believe that almost all are beautiful in their own nature, and that their comparative beauty depends on the constant quantities involved in their equations. Of this point I shall speak hereafter at greater length.²

The universal forces of nature, and the individual energies of the matter submitted to them, are so appointed and balanced, that they are continually bringing out curves of this kind in all visible forms, and that circular lines become nearly impossible under any circumstances. The acceleration, for instance, of velocity, in streams that descend from hill-sides, gradually increases their

§ 12. *How produced in natural forms.*

¹ [An intention not fulfilled.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii.]

power of erosion, and in the same degree¹ the rate of curvature in the descent of the slope, until at a certain degree of steepness this descent meets, and is concealed by, the straight line of the detritus. The junction of this right line with the plain is again modified by the farther bounding of the larger blocks, and by the successively diminishing scale of landslips caused by the erosion at the bottom.* So that the whole contour of the hill is one of curvature; first, gradually increasing in rapidity to the maximum steepness of which the particular rock is capable, and then decreasing in a decreasing ratio, until it arrives at the plain-level. This type of form, modified of course more or less by the original boldness of the mountain, and dependent on its age, its constituent rock, and the circumstances of its exposure, is yet in its general formula applicable to all.† So the curves of all things in motion, and of all organic forms, most rude and simple in the shell spirals, and most complicated in the muscular lines of the higher animals.

This influence of Apparent Proportion, a proportion, be it observed, which has no reference to ultimate ends, but which

* This is, I believe, the first intimation given in my writings of the care with which they were to enforce and follow out the study of abstract curvature;² a study which, as yet unknown in our drawing schools, is nevertheless the indispensable basis of all noble design in art, and all accurate observation of external form by science. Twenty years of useless debate and senseless theory respecting glacier motion might have been spared us, if Professor Agassiz had been able to draw with his own hand, accurately, a single curve of mountain crest, glacier wave, river's bank, or fish's tail. [1883.]³

† It has been mathematically analyzed by Mr. Alfred Tylor, who was, I believe, the first investigator of the laws of curve in descent of great rivers.⁴ [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "as it gradually increases their power of erosion increases in the same gradual degree," etc., and, two lines lower, reads, "right" for "straight." Three lines lower again, ed. 1 reads "proportion" for "scale," and, in the next line, "line" for "contour."]

² [See vol. iv. of *Modern Painters, Elements of Drawing*, etc.]

³ [An echo of a controversy into which Ruskin entered with much warmth; see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 34, and *Deucalion*, *passim*. What Ruskin here means is apparently that Agassiz, if he had had the gift of drawing accurately, might have hit upon the viscous theory which was reserved for Forbes. For Ruskin's remarks on Tyndall's similar inability to draw, see *Deucalion*, i. ch. vi. § 11.]

⁴ [Alfred Tylor (1824–1884), geologist, author of *On Changes of Sea Level* and other scientific papers.]

is itself, seemingly, the end¹ of operation to many of the forces of nature, is therefore at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever. For no form can be beautiful which is not composed of curves whose unity is secured by relations of this kind.

Not only however in curvature, but in all associations of lines whatsoever, it is desirable that there should be reciprocal relation, and the eye is unhappy without perception of it. It is utterly vain to endeavour to reduce this proportion to finite rules, for it is as various as musical melody, and the laws to which it is subject are of the same general kind; so that the determination of right or wrong proportion is as much a matter of feeling and experience as the appreciation of good musical composition. Not but that there is a science of both, and principles which may not be infringed; but that within these limits the liberty of invention is infinite, and the degrees of excellence infinite also. Whence the curious error of Burke, in imagining that because he could not fix upon some one given proportion of lines as better than any other, therefore proportion had no value or influence at all.² It would be as just to conclude that there is no such thing as melody in music, because no one melody can be fixed upon as best.*

The argument of Burke on this subject³ is summed up in the following words:—"Examine the head of a beautiful horse, find what proportion that bears to his body and to his limbs, and what relations these have to each other; and when you have settled these proportions as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any

§ 13. *Apparent Proportion in lines.*

§ 14. *Error of Burke in this matter.*

* The reader will please observe that a Positive Good, and Positive Evil, are always assumed in my writings as existing in total independence of our opinions about such good and evil. It is for us to find out what *they are*: not to concern ourselves with what we, or anybody else, happen to think. [1883.]

¹ [Eds. 1 and 2 add, "and object."]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 read "nor" for "or." Ed. 1 reads, "at all, which is the same as to conclude . . . because there are more melodies than one."]

³ [See above, p. 105 *n.*, for the reference.]

other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary, forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty, it amounts, I believe, to a concession, that no certain measures operating from a natural principle are necessary to produce it, at least so far as the brute species is concerned.”*

In this argument there are three very palpable fallacies. The first is, the rough application of measurement to the heads, necks, and limbs, without observing the subtle differences of proportion and position of parts in the members themselves; for it would be strange if the different adjustment of the ears and brow in the dog and horse, did not require a harmonizing difference of adjustment in the head and neck. The second fallacy is that above specified, the supposition that proportion cannot be beautiful if susceptible of variation; whereas the whole meaning of the term has reference to the adjustment and functional correspondence of *infinitely variable* quantities. And the third error is, the oversight of the very important fact, that, although “different and even contrary forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty,” they are by no means consistent with equal *degrees* of beauty: so that, while we find in all animals such proportion and harmony of form as gift them with positive agreeableness consistent with the station and dignity of each, we

* This is an admirable sentence, and although there are fallacies in it,—and even more than the three which are examined in the following paragraph,—they are not, as with Alison, fallacies of logic, but only omissions of points needing to be relatively considered. Burke is perfectly right, as far as he goes, or intended to go; he meant only to prove that the ratios of definite number which were beautiful in one thing, were not so in another; and he was the first English writer on art who used his common sense and reason on this subject. The essay on the Sublime and Beautiful is, like all his writing, extremely rational and forcible; and deserves most careful and reverent reading.¹ [1883.]

¹ [Cf. Vol. III. p. 128 n.]

perceive, also, a better proportion in some (as the horse, eagle, lion, and man, for instance,) expressing the nobler functions and more exalted powers of the animal.

And this allowed superiority of some animal forms is, in itself, argument against the second error above named,* that of attributing the sensation of beauty to the perception of Expedient or Constructive Proportion. (For everything that God has made is equally well constructed with reference to its intended functions.)[†] But all things are not equally beautiful. The megatherium is absolutely as well proportioned, in the adaptation of parts to purposes, as the horse or the swan; but by no means so handsome as either. The fact is, that the perception of expediency of proportion can but rarely affect our estimates of beauty, for it implies a knowledge which we very rarely and imperfectly possess, and the want of which we tacitly acknowledge.[‡]

Let us consider that instance of the proportion of the stalk of a plant to its head, § given by Burke. In order to judge of the expediency of this proportion, we must know, First, the scale of the plant; for the smaller the scale, the longer the stem may safely be: Secondly, the toughness of the materials of the stem, and the mode of their mechanical structure: Thirdly, the specific gravity of the head: Fourthly, the position of the head which the nature of fructification requires:

* P. 64 [in this edition]. This whole chapter is terribly confused: but the gist of it all is right, and worth the reader's pains to disentangle. [1883.]

† The sentence put in brackets [in 1883 ed.] is a mere piece of pious insolence. No mortal has any business with God's intentions, or pretence of insight into them; but assuredly some animals are awkwardly made, and others well made, with reference to similar functions. [1883.]

‡ If we acknowledged it openly, we should be wiser. [1883.]

§ The passage ought to have been quoted; but it is to the same intent as the preceding one. [1883.]

¹ ["What proportion do we discover between the stalks and the leaves of flowers, or between the leaves and the pistils? How does the slender stalk of the rose agree with the bulky head under which it bends? but the rose is a beautiful flower; and can we undertake to say that it does not owe a great deal of its beauty even to that disproportion?" (*Of the Sublime and Beautiful*, pt. iii. sec. ii. p. 169, ed. 1782).]

Fifthly, the accidents and influences to which the situation for which the plant was created is exposed. Until we know all this, we cannot say that proportion or disproportion exists: and because we cannot know all this, the idea of expedient proportion enters but slightly into our impression of vegetable beauty, but rather, since the very existence of the plant proves that these proportions have been observed, and we know that nothing but our own ignorance prevents us from perceiving them, we take their accuracy on trust,¹ and are delighted by the variety of results which the Divine intelligence has attained in the various involutions of these quantities; and perhaps most when, to outward appearance, such proportions have been neglected; more by the slenderness of the campanula* than the security of the pine.

What is obscure in plants is utterly concealed in animals, owing to the greater number of means employed § 16. *And* and functions performed. To judge of Expedient *animals.* Proportion in them, we must know all that each member has to do, its bones, its muscles, and the amount of nervous energy communicable to them; and yet, as we have more experience and instinctive sense of the strength of muscles than of wood, and more practical knowledge of the use of a head or a foot than of a flower or a stem, we are much more likely to presume upon our judgment respecting proportions here; and are not afraid² to assert that the plesiosaurus and camelopard have necks too long, that the turnspit has legs too short, and the elephant a body too ponderous.

But the painfulness arising from the idea of this being the case is occasioned partly by our sympathy with the animal, partly by our false apprehension of incompleteness in the Divine

* Meaning blue-bell, or Scottish hare-bell: but I spoiled the clearness of idea in the sentence, for the sake of the alliteration of panula and pine. [1883.]³

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "we take the proportion on credit, and are delighted . . ."; and, four lines lower, reads "violated" for "neglected."]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "and we are very apt to . . ."]

³ [The MS. reads, "the harebell . . . the oak."]

work;* nor in either case has it any connection with impressions of that typical beauty of which we are at present speaking; though some, perhaps, with that vital beauty which will hereafter come under discussion.

§ 17. *Summary.*

I wish therefore the reader to hold, respecting proportion generally:

1st, That Apparent Proportion, or the melodious connection of quantities, is a cause of unity, and therefore one of the sources of all beautiful form.

2ndly, That Constructive Proportion is agreeable to the mind when it is known or supposed, and that its seeming absence is painful in a like degree; but that this pleasure and pain have nothing in common with those dependent on Ideas of Beauty.

Farther illustrations of the value of Unity I shall reserve for our detailed examination, as the bringing them forward here would interfere with the general idea of the subject-matter of the Theoretic faculty which I wish succinctly to convey.

* For the just and severe reproof of which, compare Sir Charles Bell, *On the Hand*, pp. 31, 32.**

** I can't compare Sir Charles, at present!—and don't want to, for the real impertinence to be reproved is in supposing ourselves to be able to understand the depths and meanings of the Creation, as if we had been by, all the time. In practical and visible fact, some creatures *are* weak, incomplete, and in that degree ugly, by comparison with others; and a lizard, who shakes his tail off in a tremor, is as much inferior to a dog who can wag it comfortably, as a feeble person who changes his mind in a minute is to a man who can both pause and persevere. [1883.]

¹ [“The Bridgewater Treatises, iv.”: *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as evincing Design*: 1834. At the pages cited, Bell says: “The compassion excited by these philosophers for animals, which they consider imperfectly organised, is uncalled for; as well might they pity the larva of the summer fly, which creeps in the bottom of a pool, because it cannot yet rise upon the wing. . . . We must not estimate the slow motions of animals by our own sensations,” etc.]

CHAPTER VII¹

OF REPOSE, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE PERMANENCE

THERE is probably no necessity more imperatively felt by the artist, no test more unfailing of the greatness of artistic treatment, than that of the appearance of repose; yet there is no quality whose semblance in matter is more difficult to define or illustrate.

§ 1. Universal feeling respecting the necessity of repose in art. Its sources.

Nevertheless, I believe that our instinctive love of it, as well as the cause to which I attribute that love, (although here also, as in the former cases, I contend not for the interpretation, but for the fact,)* will be readily allowed by the reader. As opposed to passion, change, fulness, or laborious exertion, Repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power. It is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labour, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures. And as we saw before that the infinity which was a type of the Divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence; so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct through the infliction upon the fallen creature of a curse necessitating

* The reader will please note these guarding sentences: they were perfectly sincere; and it is always open to the rationalist to reject the metaphysical conclusions, or propositions, in this book, while he may accept with confidence its statements of all primary laws of judgment in design. [1883.]

¹ [The ed. of 1883 makes this ch. iii. of section ii.]

a labour once unnatural and still most painful; so that¹ the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one, but a longing for renovation and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection.² Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope,³ is accompanied by the promise of rest;* and the death bequest of Christ to men is peace.⁴

Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define (it would be less sacred if more explicable)

§ 2. *Repose,*
how expressed
in matter.

ευδουσιν δ ορεων κορυφαι τε και φαραγγες⁵

or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined: and with respect to these the expression of repose is greater in proportion

* Matt. xi. 28.

¹ [The passage, "The desire of rest" to the end of § 1, is § 83 in *Frondes Agrestes*.]

² [The corresponding passage in the first draft is here given as an illustration of the way in which, in places where Ruskin made the same points and in part embodied his first words, he yet severely compressed in re-writing:—

"The infliction upon us as fallen creatures of a curse necessitating a labour once unnatural, always painful to us, must at once plant in our hearts, as one of their holiest aspirations, the desire of *rest*; and the frequent setting forth, in the tenderest passages of Scripture, of peace and rest as the utmost good and comfort which could be bought for us by the Redeemer, must necessarily so bind the idea of them up in our bosoms with all that is dearest to them that the very words fall in a species of music on the bodily ears and a very material object becomes delightful to us, in proportion as it realises to the eye our mental conception of repose."

³ [The text is, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This call and Christian hope is constantly referred to in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine.]

⁴ [John xiv. 27.]

⁵ [In the ed. of 1883 these words were omitted, and the following note given:—

"'The crests and chasms of the mountains are asleep.' It was quoted in Greek, and I forget from whom."

The line is from Alcman, 44, in Bergk's *Lyrici Gr*. Ruskin took it, as appears from one of his note-books, from T. Mitchell's edition of the *Wasps* of Aristophanes, where it is quoted in a note.]

to the amount and sublimity of the action which is *not* taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we do not speak of repose in a pebble, because the motion of a pebble has nothing in it of energy or vitality, neither its repose of stability.¹ But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immovably among the fern; because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than in the enhancing of the characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Thus Wordsworth speaks of the Cloud, which in itself has too much of changefulness for his purpose, as one

“That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether² if it move at all.”

And again the children, which, that it may remove from them the child-restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers,

“Beneath an old grey oak, as violets, lie.”³

On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such, vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image: they

“Lie couched around us like a flock of sheep.”⁴

¹ [The draft gives another illustration here:—

“They are the small and weak waves which splash and dance, and spend themselves in vain turbulence; the surges of the deep sea move in mighty and quiet lines—slow and unbroken—and soundless but irresistible.”]

² [“Resolution and Independence,” xi. The passage is referred to by Wordsworth in his remarks on the Imagination in the “Preface” of 1815.]

³ [This is line 149 in the earlier editions of Wordsworth’s “Descriptive Sketches during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps.” In the 1835 and later editions, the passage was revised, the children being likened to “lambs or fawns” and placed “under a hoary oak’s thin canopy.”]

⁴ [Quoted from memory. The passage in “Nutting” is:—

“And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep . . .”]

Thus, as we saw that Unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary, Variety, so
 § 3. *The necessity to Repose of an implied energy.* Repose demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, Energy: and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of the same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.*

But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to
 § 4. *Mental Repose, how noble.* indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith: faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test, as the shield, of the true being and life of man; or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God, in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For, whether in one or other form,—whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their King, as in the “Stand still and see the salvation of God”¹ of the Red Sea shore, there is rest and peacefulness, the “standing still,” in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful even when based only, as of old, on the self-command and self-possession,

* The two preceding paragraphs, second and third, are extremely well thought out, and clearly worded: the succeeding fourth is one of the best in all my books, relating to religious subjects; and of peculiar value at this time, when even the *conceptions* of Faith and Obedience have become impossible to the vulgar heart, in England. [1883.]

¹ [Exodus xiv. 13.]

the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love, of the creature;* but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

Hence I think that there is no desire more intense or more exalted than that which exists in all rightly disciplined minds for the evidences of repose in external signs: and what I cautiously said respecting infinity, I say fearlessly respecting repose; that no work of art can be great without it, and that all art is great in proportion to the appearance of it. † It is the most unfailing test of beauty,

§ 5. *Its universal value as a test of art.*

* “The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime,
The life where hope and memory are as one.
Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation, in that quietness.”

—WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, book iii.

But compare carefully (for this is put into the mouth of one diseased in thought and erring in seeking) the opening of the ninth book; and observe the difference between the mildew of inaction—the slumber of Death; and the patience of the Saints—the rest of the Sabbath Eternal. Rev. xiv. 13.1

† This is wildly overstated; and the rest of the paragraph is nearly pure nonsense,—yet with a grain of meaning at the bottom, which is worth explanation, and, once explained, contains an apology due to the reader, and a palliation, just to myself, for the extravagance, not of this passage only, but of many subsequent ones like it.

When I was first in Rome, in the winter of 1840, my own real art pleasures were only in Turner and Prout: but I desired earnestly to profit by the opportunities round me; and when Mr. George Richmond and Mr. Joseph Severn took me to the Vatican, looked very reverently at whatever I was bid.

Of Raphael, however, I found I could make nothing whatever. The only thing clearly manifest to me in his compositions was, that everybody seemed to be pointing at everybody else, and that nobody, to my notion, was worth pointing at.

But the colossal perplexities and subtle chiaroscuro of the Sistine Chapel impressed me, like the sublimity of mountains; the authority of Reynolds, which was at that time conclusive with me, enforced the feeling of which I was already not a little vain, that I could sympathize with the greatest (so he

¹ [The prose part of the note was omitted in the ed. of 1883, and the following note inserted:—

“I have italicised the beautiful line which describes a perfectly happy life; and cut out a useless note, which in the old edition introduced irrelevant matter.”]

whether of matter or of motion; nothing can be ignoble that possesses it, nothing right that has it not; and in strict proportion to its appearance in the work is the majesty of mind to be inferred in the artificer. Without regard to other qualities, we may look to this for our evidence; and by the search for this alone we may be led to the rejection of all that is base, and the accepting of all that is good and great, for the paths of wisdom are all peace. We shall see, by this light, three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole world-horizon, Phidias,¹ Michael Angelo, and Dante; and then, separated from their great religious thrones only by less fulness and earnestness of faith, Homer and Shakespeare; and from these we may go down step by step among the mighty men of every

was called by all my friends) of Italian masters. I set myself almost exclusively to the study of him, and long before I had begun writing *Modern Painters*, knew every figure and statue by Michael Angelo, either in Rome or Florence, very literally by heart: while I remained in total ignorance of the antecedent religious schools. When, in 1845, the writings of Lord Lindsay² led me to these, and I worked for the first time in Santa Maria Novella, and also for the first time read Dante, it seemed to me that the entire virtue and intellectual power of the older schools had been consummated in Dante; and then the three dynasties of Greek, Christian Mystic, and Christian Naturalist, became represented to me by the three men, Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante, named in the text; and represented also, with a power and simplicity unqualified by relative or intermediate knowledge. The physical repose of the statues of the Theseus, and of the Dawn and Twilight, and the spiritual repose of the conceptions of Paradise, by Dante and Angelico, impressed me as their distinctive character: and the apparently sudden enthusiasm of the pages I am excusing, was indeed the outcome of the eager emotions of five youthful years. Rightly expanded, or even understood as it was meant, the paragraph has a considerable measure of subtle truth in it; but as it stands, it is, as I have just confessed, nearly pure nonsense; for although great work is for the most part quiet, there is a great deal of quiet work in the world which is also extremely small, and extremely dull.

The sense in which Homer and Shakespeare are spoken of as separate from the masters of the definitively Christian schools, will be found afterwards developed in my essay on *The Mystery of Life*.³ It is curious, now, to myself, to see how early this feeling was in my mind. [1883.]

¹ [This passage—in which Phidias is spoken of by Ruskin in the same breath with Michael Angelo and Dante—is cited in *The Two Paths* (§ 80) in order to negative “the supposition that I have attacked or despised Greek work.”]

² [See above, p. xxiii. *n.*]

³ [The third lecture in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 113.]

age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of true inspiration vanishes in tottering affectation or tortured insanity.¹ There is no art, nor pursuit whatsoever, but its results may be classed by this test alone. Everything of evil is betrayed and winnowed away by it; glitter, confusion, or glare of colour; inconsistency² of thought; forced expression; evil choice of subject; redundance of materials, pretence, over-charged decoration, or excessive division of parts; and this in everything. In architecture, in music, in acting, in dancing, in whatsoever art, great or mean, there are yet degrees of greatness or meanness entirely dependent on this single quality of repose.

Particular instances are at present needless, and cannot but be inadequate; needless, because I suppose that every reader, however limited his experience of art, can supply many for himself; and inadequate, because no number of them could illustrate the full extent of the influence of the expression. I believe, however, that by comparing the convulsions of the Laocoon with the calmness of the Elgin Theseus,³ we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence, as shown by its absence in one, and

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "vanishes in the tottering affectations or the tortured insanities of modern times."]

² [Ed. 1 inserts "or absence," and instead of "redundance of materials, . . . In architecture, in music, . . ." reads:—

"over accumulation of materials, whether in painting or literature, the shallow and unreflecting nothingness of the English schools of art, the strained and disgusting horrors of the French, the distorted feverishness of the German:—pretence, over decoration, over division of parts in architecture, and again in music, in acting . . ."]

³ [In the draft Ruskin used, not the "Theseus," but the so-called "Dying Gladiator" of the Capitol at Rome, to contrast with the "Laocoon":—

"The dying gladiator—though the statue of a vanquished slave—a mere victim of some butcher of the arena—is yet noble and exalted in its whole tone and character, for the very reason—strange as it may appear—that in its numbing clasp the right hand has already forgotten its cunning, and death has stamped upon the seared and disgraced brow the nobility of its repose."

Ruskin had been studying the Elgin Marbles much at this time (see Vol. III. p. 669), and now, as well as in his later works, he constantly referred to the so-called "Theseus" (from the East Pediment of the Parthenon) as a standard of perfection in its kind. See, e.g., below, sec. ii. ch. iv. § 19; *Two Paths*, § 21; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 23; *Eagle's Nest*, § 39; *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, vol. i. (*The Economist* of Xenophon), Preface.]

§ 6. *Instances
in the Laocoon
and Theseus,*

presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel; not that I believe, even in this respect, the Laocoon is justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this; a subject ill-chosen, meanly conceived, and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge.*

* I would also have the reader compare with the meagre lines and contemptible tortures of the Laocoon, the awfulness and quietness of M. Angelo's treatment of a subject in most respects similar (the Plague of the Fiery Serpents),¹ but of which the choice was justified both by the place which the event holds in the typical system he had to arrange, and by the grandeur of the plague itself, in its multitudinous grasp, and its mystical salvation; sources of sublimity entirely absent in the death² of the Dardan priest. It is good to see how his gigantic intellect reaches after repose, and truthfully finds it, in the falling hand of the near figure, and in the deathful decline of that whose hands are held up even in their venomous coldness to the cross; and though irrelevant to our present purpose, it is well also to note how the grandeur of this treatment results, not merely from choice, but from the greater knowledge and more faithful rendering of truth. For whatever knowledge of the human frame there may be in the Laocoon, there is certainly none of the habits of serpents. The fixing of the snake's head in the side of the principal figure is as false to nature as it is poor in composition of line. A large serpent never wants to bite, it wants to hold; it seizes therefore always where it can hold best, by the extremities, or throat; it seizes once and for ever, and that before it coils; following up the seizure with a cast of its body round the victim, as invisibly swift as the twist of a whip-lash round any hard object it may strike: and then it holds fast, never moving the jaws or the body; if the prey has any power of struggling left, it throws round another coil, without quitting the hold with the jaws. If Laocoon had had to do with real serpents, instead of pieces of tape with heads to them, he would have been held still, and not allowed to throw his arms or legs about. It is most instructive to observe the accuracy of Michael Angelo, in the rendering of these circumstances; the binding of the arms to the body, and the knotting of the whole mass of agony together, until we hear the crashing of the bones beneath the grisly sliding of the engine folds. Note also in all the figures the expression of another circumstance; the torpor and cold numbness of the limbs induced by the serpent venom, which, though justifiably overlooked by the sculptor of the Laocoon, as well as by Virgil, in consideration of the rapidity of the death by crushing, adds infinitely to the power of the Florentine's conception, and would have been better hinted by Virgil, than that sickening distribution of venom on the garlands. In fact, Virgil has missed both of

¹ [The painting on one of the corner spandrels of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; one of four Biblical subjects symbolical of man's redemption.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, ". . . entirely wanting in the slaughter of . . ."]

In Christian art, it would be well to compare the feeling of the finer among the altar-tombs of the middle ages, § 7. *And in altar-tombs.* with any monumental works after Michael Angelo; perhaps more especially with works of Roubillac or Canova.¹

truth and impressiveness every way: the “morsu depascitur” is unnatural butchery, the “perfusus veneno” gratuitous foulness, the “clamores horrendos” impossible degradation. Compare carefully the remarks on this statue in Sir Charles Bell’s *Essay on Expression* (third edition, p. 192), where he has most wisely and incontrovertibly deprived the statue of all claim to expression of energy and fortitude of mind, and shown its common and coarse intent of mere bodily exertion and agony; while he has confirmed Payne Knight’s just condemnation of the passage in Virgil.² Observe,³ however, that no fault is to be found with the uniting of the poisonous and crushing powers in the serpents; this is, both in Virgil and Michael Angelo, a healthy operation of the imagination, since though those two powers are not, I believe, united in any known serpent, yet in the essence or idea of serpent they are; nor is there anything contradictory in them or incapable of perfect unity. But in Virgil it is unhealthy operation of the imagination which destroys the verity both of the venom and the crushing, by attributing impossible concomitants to both; by supposing in the poison an impossible quantity uselessly directed, and leaving the victim capability of crying out, under the action of the coils.

If the reader wishes to see the opposite view of the subject, let him compare Winckelmann; and Schiller, letters on *Æsthetic Culture*.⁴

¹ [Louis François Roubillac (1695–1762), settled in London in 1720, and became the most popular sculptor of the time in this country. His tombs in Westminster Abbey, more theatrical than sepulchral, are well known. They hit the taste of the time; but Roubillac himself, when he came back from Italy and once more saw his own sculptures, had the magnanimity to exclaim: “By God! my own works looked to me as meagre and starved as if they had been made of tobacco pipes” (Stanley’s *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 1882, p. 235). For Ruskin’s opinion of Canova, see Vol. III. pp. 154, 230, and *cf.* below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 27, p. 279.]

² [Sir Charles Bell (*Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting*, quotes and confirms by remarks of his own the following criticism by Payne Knight (*On Taste*, p. 333): “It is not with the agonies of a man, writhing in the pangs of death, that we sympathise, on beholding the celebrated group of Laocoon and his sons; for such sympathies can only be painful and disgusting; but it is with the energy and fortitude of mind which those agonies call into action and display. For though every feature and every muscle is convulsed, and every nerve contracted, yet the breast is expanded and the throat compressed, to shew that the suffers in silence. I therefore still maintain in spite of the blind and indiscriminate admiration, which pedantry always shews for everything which leaves the stamp of high authority, that Virgil has debased the character, and robbed it of all its sublimity and grandeur of expression, by making Laocoon *roar like a bull.*”]

³ [This and the next sentence of the footnote appear in ed. 1 as a note in the Addenda, thus:—“It ought to have been noticed respecting the Virgilian conception of the Laocoon, that no fault . . .”]

⁴ [Winckelmann’s appreciation of the group is quoted at the beginning of a treatise, to which it is curious that Ruskin does not refer—namely, Lessing’s *Laocoon*. Virgil’s

In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance-door of the north transept, there is a monument by Jacopo della Quercia to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi.¹ I name it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period;* but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in

* It is forty years since I first saw it, and I have never found its like.—(Pisa, 5th November, 1882.) [1883.]

description, on which some have supposed that the sculptor based his work, is in *Aeneid*, xi. 199 *seqq.* Schiller's discussion of the Laocoon will be found in the paper entitled "Pathos," in the *Philosophical and Æsthetic Letters and Essays of Schiller*, translated by J. Weiss, 1845, pp. 223–228.]

¹ [Ruskin's first note of Ilaria is contained in a letter to his father describing the days at Lucca (May 6, 1845):—

"When the rose tints leave the clouds I go and spend a quarter of an hour beside the tomb of Ilaria di Caretto. It is in the Cathedral. She was the second wife of Paolo Guinigi, Signore of Lucca in 1430. He left the Lucchese several good laws which they have still, but in a war with the Florentines he was betrayed by his allies, and died in a prison at Pavia. The tower of his palace fortress is overgrown with copse-wood, but the iron rings, to which his horses used to be fastened, still are seen along the length of the street before it; and the hooks by which the silken draperies were suspended on festa days.

"This, his second wife, died young, and her monument is by Jacopo della Quercia, erected soon after her death. She is lying on a simple pillow, with a hound at her feet. Her dress is of the simplest middle age character, folding closely over the bosom and tight to the arms, clasped about the neck. Round her head is a circular fillet with three star-shaped flowers. From under this the hair falls like that of the Magdalene, its undulation just felt as it touches the cheek, and no more. The arms are not folded, nor the hands clasped nor raised. Her arms are laid softly at length upon her body, and her hands cross as they fall. The drapery flows over the feet and half hides the hound. It is impossible to tell you the perfect sweetness of the lips and closed eyes, nor the solemnity of the seal of death which is set upon the whole figure. The sculpture—as art—is in every way perfect: truth itself, but truth selected with inconceivable refinement of feeling. The cast of the drapery, for severe natural simplicity and perfect grace, I never saw equalled, nor the fall of the hands; you expect every instant, nay rather you seem to see every instant, the last sinking into death. There is no decoration nor work about it; not even enough for protection; you may stand beside it leaning on the pillow, and watching the twilight fade off the sweet dead lips and arched eyes in their sealed close."

Many years later (1878) Ruskin wrote another description of the tomb (*The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 24); for a minor reference to it, see also *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 66; and for its influence on Ruskin, *Fors*, Letter 45, *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 113, and Epilogue to the present volume, § 5, p. 347. A head of Ilaria, reproduced from a drawing made by Ruskin in 1882, will be found in a later volume of this edition. A water-colour drawing of the head, by Mr. W. G. Collingwood, is in the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield. The plate of the whole tomb here given is from a photograph.]



From a photograph

Allen & Co. Po

Tomb of Maria di Caretto, Lucca.

modern times.* She is lying on a simple couch with a hound at her feet; not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure. It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one. The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, † the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet; there is that about them which forbids breath; something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden by the drapery, and the forms of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.¹

* Whenever, in monumental work, the sculptor reaches a deceptive appearance of life or death, or of concomitant details, he has gone too far. The statue should be felt to be a statue, not look like a dead or sleeping body; it should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outworn flesh, but it should be the marble *image* of death or weariness. So the concomitants should be distinctly marble, severe and monumental in their lines: not shroud, not bed-clothes, not actual armour nor brocade; not a real soft pillow, not a downright hard-stuffed mattress; but the mere type and suggestion of these, and the ruder, often the nobler.² Not that they are to be unnatural; such lines as are given should be true,³ and clear of the hardness and mannered rigidity of the strictly Gothic types; but lines so few and grand as to appeal to the imagination only, and always to stop short of realization. A monument by a modern Italian sculptor has been lately placed in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce, forcible as portraiture, and delicately finished, but looking as if the person had been restless all night, and the artist admitted to a faithful study of the disturbed bed-clothes in the morning.⁴

† The braiding is not flat, but in tresses, of which the lightest escape, and fall free. [1883.]

¹ [The passage, "In the Cathedral of Lucca . . . tenderness," is § 85 in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

² [For "and the ruder, often the nobler," ed. 1 has "a certain rudeness and incompleteness of finish is very noble in all . . ." And the last sentence runs thus:—

"There is a monument put up lately by a modern Italian sculptor in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce; the face fine and the execution dexterous. But it looks as if . . ."]

³ [Ed. 1 reads "should be pure and true."]

⁴ [In the Capella Aldobrandini Borghese, in the North Transept. The monument is to the Countess Zamoyska, and is by Lorenzo Bartolini (1777–1850).]

If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see, through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which, in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey.

CHAPTER VIII¹

OF SYMMETRY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE JUSTICE

WE shall not be long detained by the consideration of this, the fourth constituent of beauty, as its nature is universally felt and understood. In all perfectly beautiful objects, there is found the opposition of one part to another, and a reciprocal balance, in animals commonly between opposite sides (note the disagreeableness occasioned by the exception in flat-fish, having the eyes on one side of the head); while in vegetables the opposition is less distinct, as in the boughs on opposite sides of trees, and the leaves and sprays on each side of the boughs; and in dead matter less perfect still, often amounting only to a certain tendency towards a balance, as in the opposite sides of valleys and alternate windings of streams. In things in which perfect symmetry is from their nature impossible or improper, a balance must be at least in some measure expressed before they can be beheld with pleasure. Hence the necessity of what artists require as opposing lines or masses in composition, the propriety of which, as well as their value, depends chiefly on their inartificial and natural invention. Absolute equality is not required, still less absolute similarity. A mass of subdued colour may be balanced by a point of a powerful one, and a long and latent line overpowered by a short and conspicuous one. The only error against which it is necessary to guard the reader, with respect to symmetry, is, the confounding of it with proportion, though it seems strange that the two terms could ever have been used as synonymous. Symmetry is the *opposition of equal quantities to each other*; proportion,

§ 1. *Symmetry, what, and how found in organic nature.*

§ 2. *How necessary in art.*

¹ [Ch. iv. of sec. ii. in the re-arranged edition of 1883.]

the *connection* of *unequal* quantities with each other. The property of a tree sending out equal boughs on opposite sides is symmetrical; its sending out shorter and smaller towards the top, proportional. In the human face, its balance of opposite sides is symmetry; its division upwards, proportion.

Whether the agreeableness of symmetry be in any way referable to its expression of the Aristotelian *ισοτης* that is to say, of abstract justice,¹ I leave the reader to determine; I only assert respecting it, that it is necessary to the dignity of every form, and that by the removal of it we shall render the other elements of beauty comparatively ineffectual: though, on the other hand, it is to be observed that it is rather a mode of arrangement of qualities than a quality itself; and hence symmetry has little power over the mind, unless all the other constituents of beauty be found together with it. A form may be symmetrical and ugly, as many Elizabethan ornaments, and yet not so ugly as it would have been if unsymmetrical, but bettered always by increasing degrees of symmetry: as in star figures wherein there is a circular symmetry of many like members, whence their frequent use for the plan and ground of ornamental designs. So also it is observable that foliage in which the leaves are concentrically grouped, as in the chestnuts, and many shrubs, rhododendrons, for instance,² is far nobler in its effects than any other, so that the sweet chestnut most fondly and frequently occurs in the landscape of Tintoret and Titian (beside which all other landscape grandeur vanishes).* And even in the meanest things the rule holds, as in the kaleidoscope, wherein agreeableness is given to forms altogether accidental, merely by their repetition and reciprocal opposition. Which orderly balance and arrangement are essential to the perfect operation of the

* Nonsense, again; from believing the talk about Titian's landscape too easily. [1883.]

¹ [See *Ethics*, v. 3, 1.]

² [Eds. 1 and 2 insert here “—(whence the perfect beauty of the Alpine rose)—” For Ruskin's love for that flower, *cf.* Vol. II. p. 371.]

more earnest and solemn qualities of the Beautiful, as being heavenly in their nature, and contrary to the violence and disorganization of sin; so that the seeking of them, and submission to them, are characteristic of minds that have been subjected to high moral discipline, and constant in all the great religious painters, to the degree of being an offence and a scorn to men of less tuned and tranquil feeling. Equal ranks of saints are placed on each side of the picture; if there be a kneeling figure on one side, there is a corresponding one on the other; the attendant angels beneath and above are arranged in like order;¹ and the balance is preserved even in actions necessitating variety of grouping, as always by Giotto; and by Ghirlandajo in the introduction of his chorus-like side figures; and by Tintoret most eminently in his noblest work, the Crucifixion,² where not only the grouping, but the arrangement of light, is absolutely symmetrical. Where there is no symmetry, the effects of passion and violence are increased, and many very sublime pictures derive their sublimity from the want of it, but they lose proportionally in the diviner quality of beauty. In landscape the same sense of symmetry is preserved, as we shall presently see, even to artificialness, by the greatest men; and it is one of the principal faults in the landscapes of the present day, that the symmetry of nature is sacrificed to irregular picturesqueness. Of this, however, hereafter.³

¹ [Ed. 1 reads here:—

“in like order. The *Rafaelle* at Blenheim, the *Madonna di San Sisto*, the *St. Cecilia*, and all the works of Perugino, Francia, and John Bellini present some such form, and the balance at least is preserved even in pictures of action necessitating . . .”

For the *Raphael* at Blenheim (now No. 1171 in the National Gallery), see Vol. I. p. 495; for the *San Sisto* (at Dresden), Vol. III. p. 13 *n.*, and p. 369 of this vol.; for the *St. Cecilia* (at Bologna), Vol. II. p. 167.]

² [See below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 20, p. 270.]

³ [See next volume, ch. xiv.]

CHAPTER IX¹

OF PURITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE ENERGY

IT may at first appear strange that I have not, in my enumeration of the Types of Divine attributes, included that which is certainly the most visible and evident of all, as well as the most distinctly expressed in Scripture; “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”² But I could not logically class the presence of an actual substance or motion with mere conditions and modes of being; neither could I logically separate from any of these, that which is evidently necessary to the perception of all. And it is also to be observed, that, though the love of light is more instinctive in the human heart than any other of the desires connected with beauty, we can hardly separate its agreeableness in its own nature from the sense of its necessity and value for the purposes of life; neither the abstract painfulness of darkness from the sense of danger and powerlessness connected with it. And note also that it is not *all* light, but light possessing the universal qualities of beauty, diffused or infinite rather than in points; tranquil, not startling and variable; pure, not sullied or oppressed; which is indeed pleasant and perfectly typical of the Divine nature.

Observe, however, that there is one quality, the idea of which has been just introduced in connection with light, which might have escaped us in the consideration of mere matter, namely Purity: and yet I think that the original notion of this quality is altogether material, and has only been attributed to colour when such colour is suggestive of the condition of matter from which

§ 1. *The influence of Light, as a sacred symbol.*

§ 2. *The idea of Purity connected with it.*

¹ [Ch. v. of sec. ii. in the re-arranged edition of 1883.]

² [1 John i. 5.]

we originally received the idea. For I see not in the abstract how one colour should be considered *purser* than another, except as more or less compounded: whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colours, as well as in the simplest; a quality difficult to define, and which the reader will probably be surprised by my calling the type of Energy, with which it has certainly little traceable connection in the mind.

I believe, however, if we carefully analyze the nature of our ideas of impurity in general, we shall find them refer especially to conditions of matter in which its various elements are placed in a relation incapable of healthy or proper operation; and most distinctly to conditions in which the negation of vital or energetic action is most evident; as in corruption and decay of all kinds, wherein particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, piecemeal, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. And thus there is a peculiar painfulness attached to any associations of inorganic with organic matter, such as appear to involve the inactivity and feebleness of the latter; so that things which are not felt to be foul in their own nature become so in association with things of greater inherent energy: as dust or earth, which in a mass excites no painful sensation, excites a most disagreeable one when strewing or staining an animal's skin; because it implies a decline and deadening of the vital and healthy power of the skin. But all reasoning about this impression is rendered difficult,¹ because the ocular sense of impurity connected with corruption is enhanced by the offending of other senses and by the grief and horror of it in its own nature, as the special punishment and evidence of sin: and on the other hand, the

§ 3. *Originally derived from conditions of matter.*

§ 4. *Associated ideas adding to the power of the impression. Influence of clearness.*

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "by the host of associated ideas connected with it, for . . .," and, two lines lower, inserts "infinitely" before "enhanced."] IV.

ocular delight in purity is mingled, as I before observed, with the love of the mere element of light, as a type of wisdom and of truth; whence it seems to me that we admire the transparency of bodies; though probably it is still rather owing to our sense of more perfect order and arrangement of particles, and not to our love of light, that we look upon a piece of rock crystal as purer than a piece of marble, and on the marble as purer than a piece of chalk. And let it be observed, also, that the most lovely objects in nature are only partially transparent. I suppose the utmost possible sense of beauty is conveyed by a feebly translucent, smooth, but not lustrous surface of white, and pale warm red, subdued by the most pure and delicate greys, as in the finer portions of the human frame; in wreaths of snow, and in white plumage under rose light,* so Viola of Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, and Homer of Atrides wounded.† And I think that transparency and lustre, both beautiful in themselves, are incompatible with the highest beauty; because they destroy form, on the full perception of which more of the divinely typical character of the object depends than upon

§ 5. *Perfect beauty of Surface, in what consisting.*

* The reader will observe that I am speaking at present of mere material qualities. If he would obtain perfect ideas respecting loveliness of luminous surface, let him closely observe a swan with its wings expanded in full light five minutes before sunset. The human cheek or the rose leaf is perhaps hardly so pure, and the forms of snow, though individually as beautiful, are less exquisitely combined.¹

† (ὡς δ' ὅτε τις τ' ἐλεφάντα γυνη φοινικί μινης
Μηονί .)

So Spenser of Shamefacedness, an exquisite piece of glowing colour, and (sweetly of Belphæbe; so the roses and lilies of all poets. Compare) the making of the image of Florimel:

“The substance whereof she the body made
Was purest snow, in mossy mould congealed,
Which she had gathered in a shady glade
Of the Riphæan hills.
The same she tempered with fine mercury,
And mingled them with perfect vermily.”

With Una he perhaps overdoes the white a little. She is two degrees of comparison above snow. Compare his questioning in the Hymn to Beauty,

¹ [This note was omitted in the 1883 edition. With what is here said about the beauty of wreaths of snow, cf. Vol. III. p. 446.]

its colour.¹ Hence in the beauty of snow and of flesh, so much translucency is allowed as is consistent with the full explanation of the forms; while we are suffered to receive more intense impressions of light and transparency from other objects, which nevertheless, owing to their necessarily unperceived form, are not perfectly nor affectingly beautiful. A fair forehead outshines its diamond diadem. The sparkle of the cascade withdraws not our eyes from the snowy summits in their evening silence.

It may seem strange to many readers that I have not spoken of purity in that sense in which it is most frequently used, as a type of sinlessness. I do not deny that the frequent metaphorical use of it in Scripture may have, and ought to have, much influence on the sympathies with which we regard it; and that probably the immediate agreeableness of it to most minds arises far more from this source* than from that to

§ 6. *Purity only metaphorically a type of sinlessness.*

about that mixture made of colours fair; (and goodly temperament of pure complexion):

“Hath white and red in it such wondrous power
That it can pierce through the eyes into the heart?”

(Where the distinction between typical and vital beauty is very gloriously carried out.)²

* I cannot but wonder more and more at the obstinacy of the public in calling these early books my best writing. The hissing of these two lines, after “immediate,” might be made a warning example in public schools. [1883.]

¹ [On this point, cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. i. ch. v., and see note to Vol. III. p. 162 in this edition.]

² [In the ed. of 1883 Ruskin omitted from this note the passages now placed in brackets, and added the following:—

“I have cut away some useless prolixities in the above note, and would pray the reader to take Spenser’s Hymn for his teacher, and ask to be taught no more.”

For “Viola of Olivia,” see Act i. sc. v.: “‘Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature’s own sweet and cunning hand laid on.” The line from Homer is in the *Iliad*, iv. 141: “as when a Maeonian maid has stained ivory with purple dye,” etc. Shamefacedness, with “faire blushing face, As roses did with lilies interlace,” is in *The Faerie Queene*, book v. c. 3, st. 23. Belphebe: “and in her cheekes the vermeill red did shew Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,” *ibid.* ii. 3, 22. Florimel, *ibid.* iii. 8, 6. Una: “upon a lowly asse more white than snow. Yet she much whiter,” *ibid.* i. 1, 4. Of Ruskin’s reading of Spenser at this time, there is the following note in his diary:—

Jan. 21, 1844.—Pretty good day on the whole—read a little Faery Queene also, but it is heavy, though with sweet lines occasionally.]

which I have chosen to attribute it. But, in the first place, if it be indeed in the signs of Divine and not of human attributes that beauty consists, I see not how the idea of sin can be formed with respect to the Deity; for it is an idea of a relation borne by us to Him, and not in any way to be attached to His abstract nature:¹ while the Love, Mercifulness, and Justice of God I have supposed to be symbolized by other qualities of beauty, and I cannot trace any rational connection between them and the idea of Spotlessness in matter; nor between this idea and any of the virtues which make up the righteousness of man, except perhaps those of truth and openness, which have been above spoken of as more expressed by the transparency than the mere purity of matter. So that I conceive the use of the terms purity, spotlessness, etc., in moral subjects, to be merely metaphorical; and that it is rather that we illustrate these virtues by the desirableness of material purity than that we desire material purity because it is illustrative of these virtues.*

I repeat, then, that the only idea which I think can be legitimately connected with purity of matter, is this
 § 7. *Energy, how expressed by purity of matter,* of vital and energetic connection among its particles; as that of foulness is essentially connected with dissolution and death. Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould, is expressed by the epithet “living,” very singularly given to rock, in almost all languages (singularly, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone,

* This uncertain and unsatisfactory paragraph enters on subjects far out of its grasp, and misses the things close at hand, which needed chief consideration. See final note to this chapter (p. 134, **). [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads:—

“. . . to his abstract nature. And if the idea of sin is incapable of being formed with respect to him, so also is its negative, for we cannot form an idea of negation, where we cannot form an idea of presence. If, for instance, one could conceive of taste or flavour in a proposition of Euclid, so also might we of insipidity, but if not of the one, then not of the other. So that in speaking of the goodness of God, it cannot be that we mean anything more than his Love, Mercifulness, and Justice, and these attributes I have shown to be expressed by other . . . in matter. Neither can I trace any more distinct relation between this idea . . . openness, of which I have already spoken as more expressed . . .”]

but for this visible energy and connection of its particles); and so to flowing water, opposed to stagnant.¹ And I do not think that, however pure a powder or dust may be, the idea of beauty is ever connected with it; for it is not the mere purity, but the *active* condition of the substance which is desired;* so that as soon as it shoots into crystals, or gathers into efflorescence, a sensation of active or real purity is received which was not felt in the calcined *caput mortuum*.

And again, in colour, I imagine that the quality which we term purity is dependent on the full energizing of § 8. *And of* the rays that compose it; of which if in compound *colour.* hues any are overpowered and killed by the rest, so as to be of no value nor operation, foulness is the consequence; while so long as all act together, whether side by side, or from pigments seen one through the other, so that all the colouring matter employed may come into play in the harmony desired, and none be quenched nor killed, purity results.† And so in all cases I suppose that pureness is made to us desirable, because expressive of that constant presence and energizing of the Deity by which all things live and move, and have their being;² and that foulness is painful as the accompaniment of disorder and decay, and always indicative of the withdrawal of Divine support. And the practical analogies of life, the invariable connection of outward foulness with mental sloth and degradation, as well as with bodily lethargy and disease, together with the contrary indications of freshness and purity belonging to every healthy and active organic frame (singularly seen in the effort of the young leaves when first their inward energy prevails over the earth, pierces its corruption, and shakes its dust

* Well observed, but not conclusively. Snow is a powder, practically, in hard frost; and it is perhaps easier to attach the idea of purity to flour than to bread. [1883.]

† Again well said; and the statement should have been farther enforced. The essential difference between painting and daubing is that a *painter* lays not a grain more colour than is needed. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "and so of water as opposed to stagnancy."]

² [Acts xvii. 28.]

away from their own white purity of life), all these circumstances strengthen the instinct by associations countless and irresistible. And then, finally, with the idea of purity comes that of spirituality; for the essential characteristic of matter is its inertia, whence, by adding to its purity of energy, we may in some measure spiritualize even matter itself. Thus in the Apocalyptic descriptions, it is the purity of every substance that fits it for its place in heaven; the river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of the Lamb, is clear as crystal,¹ and the pavement of the city is pure gold “like unto clear glass.”*

§ 9. *Spirituality, how so expressed.*

* I have not spoken here of any of the associations connected with warmth or coolness of colour; they are partly connected with Vital beauty, compare Chap. XIV. §§ 21, 22, and partly with impressions of the sublime, the discussion of which is foreign to the present subject: purity, however, it is which gives colour to both; for neither warm nor cool colour can be beautiful, if impure.

Neither have I spoken of any questions relating to melodies of colour; a subject of separate science, whose general principle has been already stated in the Seventh Chapter respecting unity of Sequence. Those qualities only are here noted which give absolute beauty, whether to separate colour or to melodies of it: for all melodies of it are not beautiful, but only those which are expressive of certain pleasant or solemn emotion; the rest are startling, or curious, or cheerful, or exciting, or sublime, but not beautiful; and so in music. And all questions relating to this grandeur, cheerfulness, or other characteristic impression of colour, must be considered under the head of Ideas of Relation.**

** I used then to slip things out of my way from one chapter to another, partly with a notion of being systematic, partly because I was tired; until at last they often slipped out of my head altogether. Thus in the sixth paragraph, the quite primary difficulty of saying whether spots are pretty or ugly; whether a fallow-deer is the worse for dappling, or a mackerel for mottling, or a fox-glove for speckling, is wholly lost sight of; and, throughout the chapter, the question why we like gold-yellow better than brass-yellow—or rose-colour better than brown—or in general any colour better than any other. I believe there is something said on these points farther on in the book:2 if not, I'll say something about them where I think it will be useful; only in the meantime, observe that we like gold because it is of a pretty and permanent yellow; and not the yellow colour because it is like gold. I overwork the epithet “golden” in most of my descriptions; not because I like guineas, but because I like buttercups and broom. [1883.]

¹ [Revelation xxii. 1, xxi. 18–21.]

² [In his first scheme for the volume Ruskin had planned to treat the question at length; and in the first draft, some pages were written on the subject: see Appendix i., p. 368. In the book as it stands, there is little discussion of the sources and order of pleasure in different colours.]

CHAPTER X¹

OF MODERATION, OR THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW²

OF objects which, in respect of the qualities hitherto considered, appear to have equal claims to regard, we find, nevertheless, that certain are preferred to others in consequence of an attractive power, usually expressed by the terms ‘chasteness,’ ‘refinement,’ or ‘elegance:’ and it appears also that things which in other respects have little in them of natural beauty, and are of forms altogether simple, and adapted to simple uses, are capable of much distinction and desirableness in consequence of these qualities only. It is of importance to discover the real nature of the ideas thus expressed.

Something of the peculiar meaning of the words is referable to the authority of fashion and the exclusiveness of pride, owing to which that which is the mode of a particular time is submissively esteemed, and that which by its costliness or its rarity is of difficult attainment, or in any way appears to have been chosen as the best of many things (which is the original sense of the words elegant and exquisite), is esteemed for the witness it bears to the dignity of the chooser: but neither of these ideas is in any way connected with constant³ beauty: neither do they account for that agreeableness of colour and form which is especially termed chasteness, and which it would seem to be a characteristic of rightly trained minds in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject.

¹ [Ch. vi. of sec. ii. in the re-arranged edition of 1883.]

² [For the application of this element of beauty to ornament, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xxi. § 31.]

³ [Ed. 1 reads “are” for “is,” “eternal” for “constant,” and inserts “at all” before “account.”]

There is however another character of artificial productions to which these terms have partial reference, § 3. *How to the perception of Completion.* finish, exactness, or refinement: which are commonly desired in the works of men, owing both to their difficulty of accomplishment and consequent expression of care and power (compare Chapter on Ideas of Power, Part I. Sec. I.¹), and from their greater resemblance to the working of God, whose “absolute exactness,” says Hooker, “all things imitate, by tending to that which is most exquisite in every particular.”² And there is not a greater sign of the imperfection of general taste, than its capability of contentment with forms and things which, professing completion, are yet not exact nor complete; as in the vulgar with wax and clay and china figures, and in bad sculptors with an unfinished and clay-like modelling of surface, and curves and angles of no precision or delicacy; and in general, in all common and unthinking persons, with an imperfect rendering of that which might be pure and fine: as churchwardens are content to lose the sharp lines of stone carving under clogging obliterations of whitewash; and as the modern Italians scrape away and polish white all the sharpness and glory of the carvings on their old churches, as most miserably and pitifully on St. Mark’s at Venice,³ and the Baptisteries of Pistoja and Pisa,* and many others. So also

* When I came here first, in 1845, the pinnacles of the Baptistery were lying round it in shattered heaps. I have since witnessed the destruction of the Spina chapel,—see *Fors Clavigera* of 1874;⁴ and yesterday found the whole façade of one of the few remaining uninjured churches, plastered white with election bills.—(Pisa, Nov. 7th, 1882.) [1883.]

¹ [Vol. III. pp. 93–98, in this edition.]

² [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. v. 3. “Tending to” is “tending unto” in the original.]

³ [In a letter to his father from Venice (Sept. 14, 1845), Ruskin writes:—

“I am but barely in time to see the last of dear old St. Mark’s. They have ordered him to be ‘pulito,’ and after whitewashing the Doge’s Palace, and daubing it with the Austrian national distillation of coffins and jaundice, they are scraping St. Mark’s clean. Off go all the glorious old weather stains, the rich hues of the marble which nature, mighty as she is, has taken two centuries to bestow, and already the noble corner farthest from the sea—that on which the sixth part of the age of the generations of man was dyed in gold—is reduced to the colour of magnesia—the old marbles displaced and torn down.”]

⁴ [See *Fors*, Letter 20 (of 1872, not 1874).]



J. Ruskin

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Sta. Maria della Spina, Pisa.
(1840)

the delight of vulgar painters in coarse and slurred painting, merely for the sake of its coarseness;* as of Spagnoletto, Salvator, or Murillo, opposed to the divine finish which the greatest and mightiest of men disdained not, but rather wrought

* It is to be carefully noted that when rude execution is evidently not the result of imperfect feeling and desire (as in these men above named it is), but¹ either of impatient thought which there was necessity to note swiftly, or agitated thought which it was well to note with a certain wildness of manner, as pre-eminently and in both kinds the case with Tintoret, and in lower and more degraded modes with Rubens, and generally in the sketches and first thoughts of great masters, there is received a very noble pleasure, connected both with ideas of power (compare again Part I. Sec. II. Chap. I.) and with certain actions of the imagination of which we shall speak presently. But this pleasure is not received from the beauty of the work, for nothing can be perfectly beautiful unless complete, but from its simplicity and sufficiency to its immediate purpose, where the purpose is not of beauty at all, as often in things rough hewn; pre-eminently, for instance, in the stones of the foundations of the Pitti and Strozzi Palaces, whose noble rudeness is to be opposed both to the useless polish and the barbarous rustications of modern times,² although indeed this instance is not to be received without exception, for the majesty of these rocky buildings depends also in some measure upon the real beauty and finish of the natural curvilinear fractures opposed to the coarseness of human chiselling. And again, as respects works of higher art, the pleasure of their hasty or imperfect execution is not indicative of their beauty, but of their majesty and fulness of thought and vastness of power. Shade is only beautiful when it magnifies and sets forth the forms of fair things; so negligence is only noble when it is, as Fuseli hath it, "the shadow of energy."³ Which that it may be, secure the substance and the shade will follow; but let the artist beware of stealing the manner of giant intellects when he has not their intention, and of assuming large modes of treatment when he has little thoughts to treat. There is wide difference between *indolent* impatience of labour and *intellectual* impatience of delay; large difference between leaving things unfinished because we have *more to do*, and because we are satisfied with what we *have done*. Tintoret, who prayed hard, and hardly obtained, that he might be permitted, the charge of his colours only being borne, to paint a newly-built house from base to battlement,⁴ was not one to shun labour; it is the pouring in upon him of glorious thoughts, in inexpressible multitude, that his sweeping hand follows so fast. It is as easy to know the slightness of earnest haste from the slightness of blunt feeling, indolence, or affectation, as it is to know the dust of a race, from the dust of dissolution.

¹ [Ed. 1 reads:—

" . . . it is) but of thought; either impatient, which there was necessity to note swiftly, or impetuous, which it was well to note in mighty manner, as pre-eminently . . . with Tintoret, and often with Michael Angelo, and in lower," etc.]

² [For another reference to the architecture of the Pitti Palace, see *Seven Lamps*, ch. iii. § 11.]

³ [Aphorism 21; *Life and Writings*, iii. 68.]

⁴ [This story is told by Carlo Ridolfi in his *Vita di Tintoretto*, Venice, 1642.]

out with painfulness and life-spending; as Leonardo and Michael Angelo (for the latter, however many things he left unfinished, did finish, if at all, with a refinement that the eye cannot follow, but the feeling only, as in the Pietà of Genoa);¹ and Perugino always, even to the gilding of single hairs among his angel tresses; and the young Raffaello when he was heaven-taught; and Angelico, and Pinturicchio, and John Bellini, and all other such serious and loving men. Only it is to be observed that this finish is not a part nor constituent of beauty, but the full and ultimate rendering of it; so that it is an idea only connected with the works of men, for all the works of the Deity are finished with the same, that is, infinite, care and completion: and so what degrees of beauty exist among them can in no way be dependent upon this source, inasmuch as there are between them no degrees of care. And therefore, as there certainly is admitted a difference of degree in what we call chasteness, even in Divine work (compare the hollyhock or the sunflower with the vale lily), we must seek for it some other explanation and source than this.

And if, bringing down our ideas of it from complicated objects to simple lines and colours, we analyze and regard them carefully, I think we shall be able to trace them to an under-current of constantly agreeable feeling, excited by the appearance in material things of a self-restrained liberty; that is to say, by the image of that acting of God with regard to all His creation, wherein, though free to operate in whatever arbitrary, sudden, violent, or inconstant ways He will, He yet, if we may reverently so speak, restrains in Himself this His omnipotent liberty, and works always in consistent modes, called by us laws. And this restraint or moderation (according to the words of Hooker,² “that which doth moderate the force and power, that which

¹ [A medallion in high relief of the Madonna clasping her dead Son, in the chapel of the Albergo dei Poveri; its attribution to Michael Angelo has been disputed (see J. A. Symonds: *Life of Michelangelo*, 1893, ii. 203). Ruskin had noted it at Genoa in 1845, and wrote to his father (April 27), that it was “worth coming here twice for.”]

² [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. ii. 1.]

§ 4. *Finish, by great masters esteemed essential.*

§ 5. *Moderation, its nature and value.*

doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a Law,") is in the Deity not restraint, such as it is said of creatures, but, as again says Hooker,¹ "the very being of God is a law to His working," so that every appearance of painfulness or want of power and freedom in material things is wrong and ugly; for the right restraint, the image of Divine operation, is, both in them and in the spirit of* men, a willing and not painful stopping short of the utmost degree to which their power might reach, and the appearance of fettering or confinement is the cause of ugliness in the one, as the slightest painfulness or effort in restraint is a sign of sin in the other.

I have put this attribute of beauty last, because I consider it the girdle and safeguard of all the rest, and in this respect the most essential of all; for it is possible that a certain degree of beauty may be attained even in the absence of one of its other constituents, as sometimes in some measure without symmetry or without unity. But the least appearance of violence or extravagance, of the want of moderation and restraint, is, I think, destructive of all beauty whatsoever in everything, colour, form, motion, language, or thought; giving rise to that which in colour we call glaring, in form inelegant, in motion ungraceful, in language coarse, in thought undisciplined, in all unchastened; which qualities are in everything most painful, because the signs of disobedient and irregular operation. And herein we at last find the reason of that which has been so often noted² respecting the subtlety and almost invisibility of natural curves and colours, and why it is that we look on those lines as least beautiful which fall into wide and far license of curvature, and as most

§ 6. *It is the girdle of Beauty.*

§ 7. *How found in natural curves and colours.*

* I am obliged to insert these three words, ["the spirit of"] to show what I meant. For the text, as it stood, implied that men were immaterial. Also it should have been observed that the ideas of liberty and restraint can only be attached to things capable of different kinds of energy or motion,—as to a stream and a canal, a tree wild or pruned, and the like. [1883.]

¹ [*Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. ii. 2.]

² [See above, sec. i. ch. v. § 14, p. 87.]

beautiful which approach nearest (so that the curvilinear character be distinctly asserted) to the government of the right line; as in the pure and severe curves of the draperies of the religious painters. And thus in colour it is not red, but rose colour, which is most beautiful; neither such actual green as we find in summer foliage partly, and in our painting of it constantly, but such grey green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase,¹ and the sea-foam: and so of all colours; not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference, beyond and out of their own nature, to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory. Whereof the ignorance is shown in all evil colourists by the violence and postiveness of their hues, and by dulness and discordance consequent; for the very brilliancy and real power of all colour is dependent on the chastening of it, as of a voice on its gentleness, and as of action on its calmness, and as all moral vigour on self-command. And therefore as that virtue which men last, and with most difficulty, attain unto,* and which many attain not at all, and yet that which is essential to the conduct and almost to the being of all other virtues; since neither imagination, nor invention, nor industry, nor sensibility, nor energy, nor any other good having, is of full avail without this of self-command, whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced, and by the signs of which they are separated from that lower host of things brilliant, magnificent, and redundant, and farther yet from that of the loose, the lawless, the exaggerated, the insolent, and the profane; I would have the necessity of

§ 8. *How difficult of attainment, yet essential to all good.*

* I would fain strike out the "unto," and otherwise "moderate" the whole passage—but will trust the reader's patience with it, rather than my own vexation. See the terminal note.² [1883.]

¹ [See Vol. III. pp. 17, 529.]

² [*i.e.* note at the end of the present chapter.]

it foremost among all our inculcating, and the name of it largest among all our inscribing, in so far that, over the doors of every school of Art, I would have* this one word, relieved out in deep letters of pure gold,—Moderation.

* How the public ever pardoned, as they did, the steady self-confidence and general “I would have” (it so) of this book, is extremely difficult for me now to conceive: and yet they were right; for at the root of this simplicity of egotism, there was a natural consciousness of my real power of discrimination which I no more cared to assert than a good dog his power of scent; and on the other hand,—and *this* I wish I *had* more distinctly asserted,—there was in me as firmly rooted conviction of my own littleness, or nothingness, in relation to the men whom I loved and praised. [1883.]

CHAPTER XI¹

GENERAL INFERENCES RESPECTING TYPICAL BEAUTY*

I HAVE now enumerated and, in some measure, explained those characteristics of *mere* matter by which I conceive it becomes agreeable to the Theoretic faculty, under whatever form, dead, organized, or animated, it may present itself. It will be our task in the succeeding volume² to examine, and illustrate by examples, the mode in which these characteristics appear in every division of creation, in stones, mountains, waves, clouds, and all organic bodies, beginning with vegetables, and then taking instances in the range of animals, from

§ 1. *The subject incompletely treated, yet admitting of general conclusions.*

* Before attempting these generalizations of the subject, I ought to have given one or two simple examples of the practical application of the foregoing section: and to have shown how, for instance, a wild rose is pretty because it has concentric petals,—because each petal is bounded by varying curves,—because these curves are dual, and symmetrically opposed,—because the five petals are bent into the form of a cup which gives them gradated depth of shade,—because the shade as well as the light is coloured with crimson and gold,—and because both the gold and the crimson are used in their most subtle degrees and tints. I will not, however, now alter or interrupt the course of the old essay, but must at least make the reader clearly aware, that hitherto, the circumstances said to be productive of beauty have been simply those which please the eye, wherever they occur; that blue is thought of as an agreeable colour, when it is a pure blue, whether in a butterfly's wing, or in the sky; and a consistently varied curve is thought of as a pleasant line, whether it limits a mountain, a wave, or a limb. And chiefly I must reiterate, with reference to modern narrownesses or meannesses of thought, that the pleasure of the eye is never confused with the blind and temporary instincts of the blood; and that, briefly, and always, a girl is praised because she is like a rose,—not a rose because it is like a girl.³ [1883.]

¹ [Ch. vii. of sec. ii. in the re-arranged edition of 1883.]

² [The succeeding volume, when it came to be published ten years later, was, however, constructed on a different plan, being in some measure an interpolation; the subjects specified above were resumed in vol. iv. of the work.]

³ [This note was in the edition of 1883 printed at the head of the chapter.]

the mollusc* to man; examining how one animal form is nobler than another, by the more manifest presence of these attributes, and chiefly endeavouring to show how much there is of admirable and lovely, even in what is commonly despised. At present I have only to mark the conclusions at which we have as yet arrived respecting the rank of the Theoretic faculty, and then to pursue the inquiry farther into the nature of vital beauty.

As I before said, I pretend not to have enumerated all the sources of material beauty, nor the analogies connected with them; it is probable that others may occur to many readers, or to myself, as I proceed into more particular inquiry; but I am not careful to collect all evidence within reach¹ on the subject. I desire only to assert and prove some certain principles, and by means of these to show something of the relations which the material works of God bear to the human mind, leaving the subject to be fully pursued, as it only can be, by the ardour and affection of those whom it may interest.

The characters above enumerated are not to be considered as stamped upon matter for our teaching or enjoyment only, but as the *necessary perfection*² of God's working, and the inevitable stamp of His image on what He creates. For it would be inconsistent with His Infinite perfection to work imperfectly in any place, or in any matter; wherefore we do not find that flowers and fair trees, and kindly skies, are given only where man may see them and be fed by them; but the Spirit of God works

§ 2. *Typical
Beauty not
created for
man's sake.*

* This was indeed the original plan of the book,—formed, the reader will please to observe, in 1845. I reflected upon it for fifteen years,—and then gave it up. In another fifteen years the scientific world professed itself to have discovered that the mollusc was the Father of Man; and the comparison of their modes of beauty became invidious; nevertheless, it is possible I may have a word or two to say, on the plan of the old book, yet. [1883.]

¹ [For “evidence within reach,” ed. 1 has “conceivable evidence,” and later reads, “to show, in some measure, the inherent worthiness and glory of God's works and something of the relations they bear to each other and to us, leaving,” etc.]

² [Ed. 1 has “necessary consequence of the perfection.”]

everywhere alike, where there is no eye to see, covering all lonely places with an equal glory; using the same pencil and outpouring the same splendour, in the caves of the waters where the sea snakes swim, and in the desert where the satyrs dance, among the fir trees of the stork, and the rocks of the conies, as among those higher creatures whom He has made capable witnesses of His working. Nevertheless, I think that the admission of different degrees of this glory and image of Himself upon creation, has the look of something meant especially for us; for although, in pursuance of the appointed system of Government by universal laws, these same degrees exist where we cannot witness them, yet the existence of degrees at all seems at first unlikely in Divine work; and I cannot see reason for it unless that palpable one of increasing in us the understanding of the sacred characters by showing us the results of their comparative absence. For I know not that if all things had been equally beautiful, we could have received the idea of beauty at all; or, if we had, certainly it had become a matter of indifference to us, and of little thought; whereas, through the beneficent ordaining of degrees in its manifestation, the hearts of men are stirred by its occasional occurrence in its noblest form, and all their energies are awakened in the pursuit of it, and endeavour to arrest it or recreate it, for themselves. But whatever doubt there may be respecting the exact amount of modification of created things admitted with reference to us, there can be none respecting the dignity of that faculty by which we receive the mysterious evidence of their devine origin. The fact of our deriving constant pleasure from whatever is a type or semblance of divine attributes, and from nothing but that which is so, is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature; it not only sets a great gulf of specific separation between us and the lower animals, but it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly

§ 3. *But degrees of it admitted for his sake.*

§ 4. *What encouragement hence to be received.*

delight in. Probably to every higher order of intelligence more of His image becomes palpable in all around them, and the glorified spirits and the angels have perceptions as much more full and rapturous than ours, as ours than those of beasts and creeping things. And receiving it, as we must, for a universal axiom that “no natural desire can be entirely frustrate,” and seeing that these desires are indeed so unfailing in us that they have escaped not the reasoners of any time, but were held divine of old, and in even heathen countries,* may we not see in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we too often regard them, cause for thankfulness, ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years,¹ and hedges the paths of Men?

*

Ἡ δὲ τελεία ἐνδαιμονία θεωρητικὴ τις ἐστὶν ἐνεργεία. . . . τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ἀπᾶς ὁ βίος μακαρίος, τοῖς δὲ ἀνθρώποις, εἴ ὅσον ὁμοίωμα τι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας νπαρχει. τῶν δὲ ἀλλῶν ζῶων οὐδὲν ἐνδαιμονεῖ, ἐπειδὴ οὐδαμῆ κοινῶ νει θεωρίας.—Arist. *Eth.* lib. 10 [cap. 8, §§ 7, 8].**

** It seems to me now amazing that I acknowledge no indebtedness to this passage and its context, which seem, looking from this distance of years, to have suggested the whole idea of my own essay.² But my impression is that I simply did not understand them on first reading the Ethics, and only after working the matter out from my own Evangelical points of view, saw with surprise that the persons whom I had been in the habit of calling “Heathen” knew as much before. The sentence will now be found translated [see p. 7] and illustrated in the Preface to this volume. [1883.]

¹ [Psalms xv. 11.]

² [In the first edition Ruskin added to the quotation the following words: “The concluding book of the Ethics should be carefully read. It is all most valuable.”]
IV. K

CHAPTER XII¹

OF VITAL BEAUTY

I. OF RELATIVE VITAL BEAUTY²

I PROCEED more particularly to examine the nature of that second kind of Beauty of which I spoke in the third chapter,³ as consisting in “the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things.” I have already noticed⁴ the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: if,⁵ passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the Lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile flower,* whose small, dark purple, fringed⁶ bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave,⁷ and partly dying of very fatigue after its

§ 1. *Transition from typical to vital Beauty.*

* *Soldanella alpina.*

¹ [Here, in the re-arranged edition of 1883, began section iii. “Of Vital Beauty,” ch. i. being entitled “Of Vital Beauty. I. Relative.”]

² [For the application of this principle to architecture, see *Seven Lamps*, ch. iv. § 1, ch. v. § 1.]

³ [§ 16, p. 64.]

⁴ [In the preceding volume, p. 446, pt. ii. sec. iv. ch. ii. § 19.]

⁵ [This passage down to “surely sighted” forms § 54 of *Fronde Agrestes* (together with a passage from pt. ii. sec. iv. ch. ii. § 19 of vol. i.). In *Fronde Agrestes* Ruskin added the following note to *Soldanella Alpina*:—

“I think it is the only Alpine flower which actually pierces snow, though I have seen gentians filling thawed hoof-prints. Crocuses are languid till they have had sun for a day or two. But the soldanella enjoys its snow, at first, and afterwards its fields. I have seen it make a pasture look like a large lilac silk gown.”

See below, ch. xiii. § 11, p. 172 n.]

⁶ [In all previous editions, and in *Fronde Agrestes*, the bell of the soldanella is described as “small, dark purple-fringed,” but the whole bell is purple. Ruskin in his own copy of *Modern Painters* notes the misprint, and corrects as above.]

⁷ [This was a touch added by the author in revising; the MS. reads, “wondering at its own doings.”]

hard-won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances or evidences of happiness; and is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, *to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy*;^{*} and, secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, in those that wallow or in those that soar;¹—in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble Theoretic faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital beauty.

Its first perfection,² therefore, relating to Vital Beauty, is

* I have italicised this important sentence, on the truth of which far more depends than this poor book brings out of it.³ [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, “of those that wallow or of those that soar” instead of “in,” and then adds:—

“of the fiend hunted swine by the Gennesaret lake, or of the dove returning to its ark of rest;—in our right . . .”]

² [This § 2 is repeated, with some general explanations, in *Love’s Meinie*, ch. iii. §§ 130–131.]

³ [Contrast the author’s earlier feeling of the connection between beauty and sadness; see *The Poetry of Architecture*, Vol. I. p. 18.]

the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the
 § 2. *The perfection of the Theoretic faculty, as concerned with vital Beauty, is Charity.* utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable; neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto Him, can we increase this our possession of Charity, of which the entire essence is in God only. But even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character; for he¹ who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet,* and the creatures which live not for his uses, filling those spaces in the universe which he needs not;² while on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves; nor

* Untrue, I am sorry to say, in both clauses of the sentence. It is very possible to love grasses and ferns without loving God, and much too possible to be religious without loving either fields or beasts. The simple statement that the degree of beauty we can see, in visible things, depends on the love we can bear them, is trustworthy: the end of the paragraph about hunting should be re-written in a different manner,—to the same purpose,—and the rest of it left out. [1883.]

¹ [The passage, "He who loves not . . . touched more truly," is § 74 in *Fronde Agrestes*, and the following passage, "It is good to read . . . for their necessities" (end of § 2), is § 73. Ruskin added in that book the following notes—the first to the second passage (in its order here), the second to the first:—

¹ "I am more and more grieved, as I re-read this and other portions of the most affected and weak of all my books, (written in a moulting time of my life,)—the second volume of *Modern Painters*,—at its morbid violence of passion and narrowness of thought. Yet, at heart, the book was, like my others, honest; and in substance it is mostly good; but all boiled to rags."

² "Morbidly Franciscan, again! and I am really compelled to leave out one little bit my friend liked,—as all kindly and hopeful women would,—about everything turning out right, and being to some good end. For we have no business whatever with the ends of things, but with their beings; and their beings are often entirely bad.]"

² [Ed. 1 adds:—

" . . . and which live not for his uses; nay, he has seldom grace to be grateful even to those that love and serve him, while, on the other hand, . . . more truly. Wherefore it is good . . ."]

without looking upon them, every one, as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if, in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly.¹ It is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother;² and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge,³ and yet more truly and rightly taught in the Hartleap Well,

“Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels;”

and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching,⁴ that anguish of our own—

“Is tempered and allayed by sympathies,
Aloft ascending and descending deep,
Even to the inferior kinds.”

So that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole Theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect,⁵ than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chætodon and alligator in one; and gathers into one continuance of cruelty, for his amusement, all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.⁶

¹ [Here, in *Fronde Agrestes*, came note (2) above.]

² [So Tennyson, in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*:—

“Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again, He that in his catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours.”]

³ [“He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

For a comparison of “the Modern with the Ancient Mariner,” see *Deucalion*, ii. ch. ii. (“Revision”) § 18 *n.*]

⁴ [Ed. 1 reads, “added teaching of that gift, which we have from things beneath us, in thanks for the love they cannot equally return; that anguish . . .”]

⁵ [Here, in *Fronde Agrestes*, came note (1) above.]

⁶ [Ed. 1 has the following note here:—

“I would have Mr. Landseer, before he gives us any more writhing otters, or yelping packs, reflect whether that which is best worthy of contemplation in a hound be its ferocity, or in an otter its agony, or in a human being its victory, hardly achieved even with the aid of its more sagacious brutal allies, over a poor little fish-catching creature, a foot long.”]

As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain, to those in which it is doubtful, or only seeming, as possibly in plants (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes,")¹ yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving;* at least its essence is the desire of doing good or giving happiness.² Still the sympathy of very sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with³ Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita,⁴ and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils and the celandine:

"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old:"

and so all other great poets;[†] nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or

* This third paragraph, again, is mostly nonsense. Love can grow either in giving or taking, it does not matter which, when either is right,—and it will grow by neither, when they are wrong. And although it is very pretty and amusing to think of flowers as friends, or pets, yet it is to be remembered that an immense quantity of the pleasure we take in the beauty of the botanic world is given us by vegetables, which we are prepared mercilessly to thresh, mince, boil, and dine on. [1883.]

[†] Compare Milton:

"They at her coming sprung,
And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew."⁵

¹ [Ed. 1 adds, "neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain." The quotation is of course from Wordsworth's "Lines written in Early Spring."]

² [Ed. 1 reads:—

". . . giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term.

"Nevertheless, the sympathy . . ."]

³ [Ed. 1 inserts, "Shelley of the Sensitive Plant, and . . ." For other references to that poem, see Vol. I. p. 158.]

⁴ [For other references to the flower fancies of Shakspeare, see Vol. I. p. 158, and Vol. III. p. 37. The following quotation is from "The Small Celandine."]

⁵ [*Paradise Lost*, viii. 46.]

acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

For it is matter of easy demonstration,* that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy. In a rose-tree, setting aside all the considerations of gradated flushing of colour, and fair folding of line, which its flowers share with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find, in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and strength in the plant.¹ Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it *seems, solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives; but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms appear to be necessary to its health; the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection; they are useless to us, except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant; and if we see a leaf withered, or shrunk, or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

§ 4. Which is proportioned to the appearance of Energy in the Plants.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigour and sensibility in the plant,² is easily proved by observing the effect of those which

* Here the rational development of the original proposition begins; and the reasoning is henceforward accurate and trustworthy, leading to many very useful conclusions, down to the end of the chapter. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself."]

² [Compare *Sesame and Lilies*, § 27.]

show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow; their various parts, if they are ramified,¹ jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other: and the fruit imposed upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty, and yet, even here, the sharpness or the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even colour of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition; our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of decay, interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

The same singular characters belong in animals to the crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, etc., and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders; so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

Now I wish particularly to impress upon the reader that all these higher² sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment in it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity; for such an acknowledgment belongs to the second operation of the Theoretic faculty (compare § 1),*

§ 5. *This sympathy is unselfish, and does not regard utility.*

* This ought to have been put down much more clearly, under *a* and *b* and *c* and *d*; but then it would not have read so prettily. It may be enough clarified if the reader will recollect simply that the first state of vital beauty

¹ [Ed. 1 omits the words "if they are ramified," and instead of "and the fruit . . . disease," reads:—

"(note the singular imposition in many of them, the prickly pear for instance, of the fruit upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease) and often farther opposed by branch truncation of line as in the cactus truncato-phylla."]

² [This word "higher" was inserted by Ruskin in his copy for revision.]

and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining; so that we even find that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall, is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us.* The same trunk, hewn down, and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge,—it has become useful;¹ and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colours, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and though now adapted to become permanently useful, its beauty is lost for ever, or to be regained only when decay and ruin shall have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the Theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility to one creature which is based on the pain or destruction of any other; for in such services as are² consistent with the essence and energy of both it takes

is defined to be Happiness, perceived with sympathy; the second, Moral intention, perceived with praise. Hence the first aphorism of the “Laws of Fésole”: “All great art is praise.” [1883.]

* “Exiit ad cælum ramis felicibus arbos.”³

¹ [Ed. 1 adds, “it lives not for itself;” and, four lines lower, inserts “in part” after “only.”]

² [This passage was differently worded in ed. 1, thus:—“abhorrence of all utility which is based on the pain or destruction of any creature, for in such ministering to each other as is consistent . . .”]

³ [Virgil’s *Georgics*, ii. 81.]

delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

But still clearer evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals: of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in *animal* form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys.

And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our thoughts the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty ceases. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the Desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe.* So long as we observe the

* A grievously ill-chosen example! The pretty dorsal crest of the little Venetian sea-horse had been more to the purpose; but I don't know whether there are either pins or needles in it.¹ [1883.]

¹ [For note on the author's drawing of the Venetian sea-horse here given, see Introduction, p. 1.]



Drawn by J. Ruskin.

Engraved by G. Allen.

Study of the Sea-Horse of Venice.

consistent energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water, as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that, when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and, when it is raised, put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation; and that in all which is outwardly manifested, we seem to see His presence rather than His workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life rather than the adaptation of matter.*

If therefore,¹ as I think appears from all evidence, it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty, from the impenetrable hide and slow movement of the elephant and the rhinoceros,

* These continually reiterated passages against the study of anatomy ought to be collated by careful students of my books, for illustration of the final statements on the subject in *Eagle's Nest*.² [1883.]

¹ [Here again the phrasing was different in ed. 1, which reads:—

“As, therefore, it appears from all evidence that it is the sense of felicity which we most desire in organic form, it is evident from reason, as demonstrable by experience, that those forms . . . gradations of beauty, from the apparent impenetrableness of hide . . .”]

² [The “final statements” are in *Eagle's Nest*, lecture viii.; cf. what Ruskin said in his course entitled “Readings in *Modern Painters*,” that one of the three main things he had tried to teach was “that the food of art is ocular and passionate study of nature”—ocular as opposed to “telescopic, scalpellic and dispassionate.” See also *Love's Meinie*, § 76 seq. For other references, see in *Modern Painters*, in this vol. sec. ii. ch. v. § 17; vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 18, and Appendix ii.; *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. iv. § 3; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. §§ 23 n., 32, 47 n.; *Ethics of the Dust*, § 56; Letters on “A Museum or Picture Gallery,” in the *Art Journal*, 1880 (*On the Old Road*, ed. 1899, ii. §§ 200–202).]

from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the moth, the buoyancy of the bird, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

Thus far then, the Theoretic faculty is concerned with the § 8. *The second happiness* of animals, and its exercise depends *perfection of* on the cultivation of the affections only. Let us *the Theoretic* next observe how it is concerned with the *moral* *faculty, as con-* *functions* of animals, and therefore how it is *cerned with life,* dependent on the cultivation of every moral *is justice of* sense. There is not any organic creature but, in *moral judg-* its history and habits, will exemplify or illustrate *ment.* to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God's providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. Thus the functions and the fates of animals are distributed to them, with a variety which exhibits to us the dignity and results of almost every passion and kind of conduct: some filthy and slothful, pining and unhappy; some rapacious, restless, and cruel; some ever earnest and laborious, and, I think, unhappy in their endless labour; creatures, like the bee, that heap up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them,¹ and others employed, like angels, in endless offices of love and praise. Of which, when in right condition of mind, we esteem those most beautiful, whose functions are the most noble, whether as some, in mere energy, or as others, in moral honour: so that we look with hate on the foulness of the sloth, and the subtlety of the adder, and the rage of the hyæna; with the honour due to their earthly wisdom we invest the earnest ant and unwearied bee; but we look with full perception of sacred function to the tribes of burning plumage and choral voice.* And so what lesson we might receive for our earthly conduct from the creeping and laborious things, was taught us by that earthly

* "True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

—WORDSWORTH, *To the Skylark*.²

¹ [Psalm xxxix. 6.]

² [Ed. 1 adds the previous line:—

"Type of the wise—who soar, but never roam"]

King who made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones¹ (yet thereafter was less rich toward God).^{*} But from the lips of a heavenly King, who had not where to lay His head,² we were taught what lesson we have to learn from those higher creatures who sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns, for their Heavenly Father feedeth them.³

There are many hindrances⁴ in the way of our looking with this rightly balanced judgment on the moral § 9. *How im-* functions of the animal tribes, owing to the *peded.* independent and often opposing characters of typical beauty, as it seems arbitrarily distributed among them; so that the most fierce and cruel creatures are often clothed in the liveliest colours, and strengthened by the noblest forms; with this only exception, that so far as I know, *there is no high beauty in any slothful animal*; while even among those of prey, its characters exist in exalted measure upon those that range and pursue, and are in equal degree withdrawn from those that lie subtly and silently in the covert of the reed and fens. But we should sometimes check the repugnance or sympathy with which the ideas of their destructiveness or innocence accustom us to regard the animal tribes, as well as those meaner likes and dislikes which arise, I think, from the greater or less resemblance of animal powers to our own; and pursue the pleasures of typical beauty down to the scales of the alligator, the coils of the serpent, and the joints of the beetle; and again, on the other hand, sometimes regardless of the impressions of typical beauty, accept from each creature, great or small, the more important lessons taught by its position in creation as sufferer

* The reader had better take Dante's beautiful reading of the character of Solomon, than mine,—“Spira di tal amor,” etc., *Par.* X. 109; and “ch'ei fu Re,” etc., *Par.* XIII. 95. [1883.]

¹ [1 Kings x. 27.]

² [Matthew viii. 20.]

³ [Matthew vi. 26.]

⁴ [This is another § which was largely revised in ed. 2. The first ed. reads:—

“There is much difficulty in the way of . . . typical beauty, which are among them, as it seems, arbitrarily distributed; so that . . . cruel are often clothed . . . covert of the reeds and fens. But that mind only is fully disciplined in its Theoretic power, which can, when it chooses, throwing off the sympathies and repugnancies with which the ideas of *destructiveness* (misprinted *distinctiveness*) or innocence . . . of animal powers to our own, can pursue . . .”]

or chastiser, as lowly or having dominion, as of foul habit or lofty aspiration; and from the several perfections which all illustrate or possess, courage, perseverance, industry, or intelligence, or, higher yet, love, and patience, and fidelity, and rejoicing, and never wearied praise. That these moral perfections indeed are causes of beauty in proportion to their expression, is best proved by comparing those features of animals in which they are more or less apparent;¹ as, for instance, the eyes, of which we shall find those ugliest which have in them no expression nor life whatever, but a corpse-like stare, or an indefinite meaningless glaring, as (in some lights) those of owls and cats; and mostly of insects and of all creatures in which *the eye seems rather an external optical instrument, than a bodily member through which emotion and virtue of soul may be expressed** as pre-eminently in the chamæleon,² because the seeming want of sensibility and vitality in a creature is the most painful of all wants. And next to these in ugliness, come the eyes that gain vitality indeed, but only in the expression of intense malignity, as in the serpent and alligator; and next, to whose malignity is added the virtue of subtlety and keenness, as of the lynx and hawk; and then, by diminishing the malignity and increasing the expressions of comprehensiveness and determination, we arrive at those of the lion and eagle; and at last, by destroying

* Modern science, as it has been often noticed in my subsequent writings, entirely ceases to understand the difference between eyes and microscopes.³ [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads:—

“Which moral perfections, that they indeed are productive, in proportion to their expression of instant beauty instinctively felt, is best proved by comparing those parts of animals in which they are definitely expressed, . . .”]

² [The words “as pre-eminently in the chamæleon,” were omitted in the 1883 ed., in which also the preceding italicising was first introduced.]

³ [See *Eagle's Nest*, § 99, where Ruskin emphasises “the difference between eyes and telescopes,” and claims for sight that it is “an absolutely spiritual phenomenon” (with which passage cf. *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 66). Again, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 75, Ruskin illustrates his argument in the case of astronomy; in Letter 95 he explains how he would have no microscopic study of botany in his ideal schools and museums. In the *Art of England*, §§ 117, 118, he applies the doctrine to minuteness in art—“all delicacy which is rightly pleasing to the human mind is addressed to the unaided human sight, not to microscopic help or mediation.” See also *Mornings in Florence*, § 34; *Deucalion*, ch. ii.; and *Præterita*, ii. ch. x. § 200.]

malignity altogether, at the fair eye of the herbivorous tribes, wherein the superiority of beauty consists always in the greater or less sweetness and gentleness, primarily; as in the gazelle, camel,* and ox; and in the greater, or less intellect, secondarily; as in the horse and dog; and, finally, in gentleness and intellect both in man. And, again, taking the mouth, another source of expression, we find it ugliest where it has none, as mostly in fish; or perhaps where, without gaining much in expression of any kind, it becomes a formidable destructive instrument, as again in the alligator; and then, by some increase of expression, we arrive at birds' beaks, wherein there is much obtained by the different ways of setting on the mandibles (compare the bills of the duck and the eagle); and thence we reach the finely developed lips of the carnivora (which nevertheless lose their beauty in the actions of snarling and biting), and from these we pass to the nobler because gentler and more sensible, of the horse, camel, and fawn, and so again up to man: only the principle is less traceable in the mouths of the lower animals, because they are only in slight measure capable of expression, and chiefly used as instruments, and that of low function: whereas in man the mouth is given most definitely as a means of expression, beyond and above its lower functions. (See the remarks of Sir Charles Bell on this subject in his *Essay on Expression*; and compare the mouth of the negro head given by him (page 28, third edition) with that of Raffaello's *St. Catherine*.¹) I shall illustrate the subject farther hereafter, by giving the mouth of one of the demons of Orcagna's *Inferno*,² with projecting incisors, and that

* The gentle expression of the camel's eye is wholly deceptive. See Mr. Palgrave's account of him, *Arabia*, Chap. I., p. 39. [1883.]

¹ [*Cf.* in the preceding volume, p. 253, and below, p. 331.]

² [In the Campo Santo at Pisa. Ruskin writes in his 1845 note-book:—

“The demons are a good deal like those on what is commonly known as the ‘dragon pattern’ of Wedgwood ware. But they are nevertheless, many, very inventive and all full of energy and expression. Most of them have birds' claws of some kind; one, however, is cloven-footed, and another, the one sketched in my book, web-footed. They have boat-hooks much like those of Thames watermen.”

With this extract, *cf.* Ruskin's review of Lord Lindsay, *On the Old Road*, 1899, i. § 72.]

of a fish and a swine, in opposition to pure graminivorous and human forms;* but at present it is sufficient for my purpose to insist on the single great principle, that wherever expression is possible, and uninterfered with by characters of typical beauty, which confuse the subject exceedingly as regards the mouth, for the typical beauty of the carnivorous lips is on a grand scale, while it exists in very low degree in the beaks of birds; wherever, I say, these considerations do not interfere, the beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it; and wherever beauty exists at all, there is some kind of *virtue* to which it is owing; as the majesty of the lion's eye is owing not to its ferocity but to its seriousness and seeming intellect, and of the lion's mouth to its strength and sensibility, and not its gnashing of teeth, nor wrinkling in its wrath; and farther be it noted, that of the intellectual or moral virtues, the moral are those which are attended with most beauty; so that the gentle eye of the gazelle is fairer to look upon than the more keen glance of men, if it be unkind.

Of the parallel effects of expression upon plants there is little to be noted, as the mere naming of the subject cannot § 11. *As also in plants.* but bring countless illustrations to the mind of every reader: only this, that, as we saw they were less susceptible of our sympathetic love, owing to the absence in them of capability of enjoyment, so they are less open to the affections based upon the expression of moral virtue, owing to their want of volition; so that even on those of them which are deadly and unkind we look not without pleasure, the more because this their evil operation cannot be by them outwardly expressed, but only by us empirically known; so that of the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching

* Never done yet! in my published books: but the sketches and engravings of animals in my school at Oxford are enough to show what I meant. [1883.]¹

¹ [See *Catalogue of the Rudimentary Series.*]

out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one toward another in shade and protection; and to us also in scents and fruits (for of their healing virtues, however important to us, there is no more outward sense nor seeming than of their properties mortal or dangerous).

Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature, we find that our full receiving of its beauty § 12. *Recapitulation.* depends, first on the sensibility, and then on the accuracy and faithfulness,¹ of the heart in its moral judgments; so that it is necessary that we should not only love all creatures well, but esteem them in that order which is according to God's laws and not according to our own human passions and predilections; not looking for swiftness, and strength, and cunning, rather than for patience and kindness; still less delighting in their animosity and cruelty one toward another: neither, if it may be avoided, interfering with the working of nature in any way; nor, when we interfere to obtain service, judging from the morbid conditions of the animal or vegetable so induced; for we see every day the power of general taste² destroyed in those who are interested in particular animals, by their delight in the results of their own teaching, and by the vain straining of curiosity for new forms such as nature never intended; as the false types, for instance, which we seen earnestly sought for by the fanciers of rabbits and pigeons,* and constantly in horses, substituting for the true and balanced beauty of the free creature some morbid development of a single power, as of swiftness in the racer, at the expense, in certain measure, of the animal's healthy constitution and fineness of form; and so the delight of horticulturists in the spoiling of plants; so that in all cases we are to beware of such opinions as seem in any way referable

* Since, extended into the basis of the theory of Development!³ [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "touchstone faithfulness."]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "the Theoretic faculty entirely destroyed."]

³ [Ruskin was, however, interested in the subject of pigeons, and in 1886 accepted the dedication of a book on *The Pleasures of a Pigeon Fancier*, by the Rev. J. Lucas.]

to human pride, or even to the grateful or pernicious influence of things upon ourselves; and to cast the mind free, and out of ourselves, humbly, and yet always in that noble position of pause above the other visible creatures, nearer God than they, which we authoritatively hold, thence looking down upon them, and testing the clearness of our moral vision by the extent, and fulness, and constancy of our pleasure in the light of God's love as it embraces them, and the harmony of His holy laws, that for ever bring mercy out of rapine, and religion out of wrath.¹

¹ [Ruskin read the greater part of this chapter in one of his Oxford lectures (the seventh or eighth "Readings in *Modern Painters*"), and then passed to show and talk about some of Carpaccio's pictures. The passages to be read are marked in his copy of the book, and at the end of the chapter he has written (as a note for his lecture): "That is good preface for our Carpaccio work to-day—though written 30 years ago. And our work to-day begins very nearly at the beginning of his"—*i.e.* presumably (for the MS. of the lectures here fails) with the representations of animals in some early works by Carpaccio.]

CHAPTER XIII¹

II. OF GENERIC VITAL BEAUTY

HITHERTO we have observed the conclusions of the Theoretic faculty with respect to the relations of happiness, and of *more or less exalted* function existing between *different orders* of organic being. But we must pursue the inquiry farther yet, and observe what impressions of beauty are connected with more or less perfect fulfilment of the *appointed* function by *different individuals* of the same species. We are now no longer called to pronounce upon worthiness of occupation or dignity of disposition; but both employment and capacity being known, and the animal's position and duty fixed, we have to regard it in that respect alone, comparing it with other individuals of its species, and to determine how far it worthily executes its office; whether, if scorpion, it have poison enough, or if tiger, strength enough, or if dove, innocence enough, to sustain rightly its place in creation, and come up to the perfect idea of dove, tiger, or scorpion.²

§ 1. *The beauty of fulfilment of appointed function in every animal.*

In the first or sympathetic operation of the Theoretic faculty, it will be remembered, we receive pleasure from the signs of mere happiness in living things. In the second theoretic operation of comparing and judging, we constituted ourselves such judges of the lower creatures as Adam was made by God when they were brought to him to be named; and we allowed of beauty in them as they reached, more or

¹ [Ch. ii. ("Of Vital, Beauty, II. Generic") of sec. iii. in the re-arranged edition of 1883.]

² [The MS. here has an additional passage:—

“. . . or scorpion; and the ideas of beauty connected with it are perhaps as purely moral in their character, owing to the kind of faith and trust of which they require the exercise, as any of which we have hitherto treated.”]

less, to that standard of moral perfection by which we test ourselves. But in the third place we are to come down again from the judgment seat, and, taking it for granted that every creature of God is in some way good, and has a duty and specific operation providentially accessory to the wellbeing of all, we are to look, in this faith, to that employment and nature of each, and to derive pleasure from their entire perfection and fitness for the duty they have to do, and in their entire fulfilment of it; and so we are to take pleasure and find beauty in the magnificent binding together of the jaws of the ichthyosaurus for catching and holding, and in the adaptation of the lion for springing, and of the locust for destroying, and of the lark for singing, and in every creature for the doing of that which God has made it to do. Which faithful pleasure in the perception of the perfect operation of lower creatures I have placed last among the perceptions of the Theoretic faculty concerning them, because it is commonly last acquired, both owing to the humbleness and trustfulness of heart which it demands, and because it implies a knowledge of the habits and structure of every creature, such as we can but imperfectly possess.

The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed, is called the Ideal of the species.* The question of the nature of ideal conception of species, and of the mode in which the mind arrives at it, has been the subject of so much discussion, and source of so much embarrassment, chiefly owing to that unfortunate distinction between Idealism and Realism which leads most people to imagine the Ideal opposed to the Real, and therefore *false*, that I think it necessary to request the reader's most careful attention to the following positions.†

Any work of art which represents, not a material object,

* For the definition of species itself,—rarely, if ever, given amidst the contentions for its origin,—see *Deucalion*, Vol. II., Chap. I. [1883.]

† The following paragraphs are indeed of extreme importance, but parenthetic in this chapter. [1883.]

but the mental conception of a material object, is, in the primary sense of the word, ideal. That is to say, it represents an idea and not a thing. Any work of art which represents or realizes a material object is, in the primary sense of the term, unideal.

Ideal works of art, therefore, in the first sense, represent the result of an act of imagination, and are good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition and general power of the imagination whose acts they represent.

Unideal works of art (the studious production of which is termed Realism) represent actual existing things, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.

All entirely bad works of art may be divided into those which, professing to be imaginative, bear no stamp of imagination, and are therefore false; and those which, professing to be representative of matter, miss of the representation, and are therefore nugatory.

It is the habit of most observers to regard art as representative of matter, and to look only for the entireness of representation; and it was to this view of art that I limited the arguments of the former sections of the present work, wherein, having to oppose the conclusions of a criticism entirely based upon the realist system, I was compelled to meet that criticism on its own grounds. But the greater parts of works of art, more especially those devoted to the expression of ideas of beauty, are the results of the agency of imagination, their worthiness depending, as above stated, on the healthy condition of the imagination.

Hence it is necessary for us, in order to arrive at conclusions respecting the worthiness of such works, to define and examine the nature of the imaginative faculty, and to determine, first, what are the signs or conditions of its existence at all; and, secondly, what are the evidences of its healthy and efficient existence, upon which examination I shall enter in the 2nd Section of the present Part.

But there is another sense of the word 'Ideal' besides this,

and it is that with which we are here concerned.* It is evident that, so long as we apply the word to that art which represents ideas and not things, we may use it as truly of the art which represents an idea of Caliban, and not real Caliban, as of the art which represents an idea of Antinous, and not real Antinous. For that is as much imagination which conceives the monster, as which conceives the man. If, however, Caliban and Antinous be creatures of the same species, and the form of the one contain not the fully developed types or characters of the species, while the form of the other presents the greater part of them, then the latter is said to be a form more ideal than the other, as a nearer approximation to the general 'idea' or conception of the species.

Now it is evident that this use of the word Ideal is much less accurate than the other from which it is derived; for it rests on the assumption that the assemblage of all the characters of a species in their perfect development cannot exist but in the imagination.

For if it can actually and in reality exist, it is not right to call it ideal or imaginary; it would be better to call it characteristic or general, and to reserve the word Ideal for the results of the operation of the imagination, either on the perfect or imperfect forms.

Nevertheless, the word Ideal has been so long and universally accepted in this sense, that it becomes necessary to continue the use of it, so only that the reader will be careful to observe the distinction in the sense, according to the

* And I heartily wish we had been *unconcerned* about it. The whole of this chapter is extremely pedantic and tiresome; but not untrue, and towards the end containing some rather pretty talk, long afterwards carried on in *Proserpina*. There is also an undercurrent of meaning in it—double meaning indeed—afterwards more or less enforced in all my writings,—first, that Greek idealism is dull, and that living girls may be very pretty without being like the Venus de' Medici;¹—secondly that, as Mr. Wordsworth says, the imagination has still perhaps a point or two to "bestow" on them.² [1883.]

¹ [So Ruskin says in *The Queen of the Air* (§ 167), that the Venus of Melos "could not hold her own for a moment against the beauty of a simple English girl, of pure, rare and kind heart."]

² ["Confer" seems to be Wordsworth's favourite word in his account of the Imagination in the "Preface" of 1815.]

subject matter under discussion. At present then, using it as expressive of the noble generic form which indicates the full perfection of the creature in all its functions, I wish to examine how far this perfection exists, or may exist, in nature, and, if not in nature, how it is by us discoverable or imaginable.

It is well, when we wish to arrive at truth, always to take familiar instances, wherein the mind is not likely to be biassed by any elevated associations or favourite theories. Let us ask therefore, first, what kind of ideal form may be attributed to a limpet or an oyster; that is to say, whether all oysters do or do not come up to the entire notion or idea of an oyster.* I apprehend that,¹ of those which are of full size and healthy condition, there will be found many which fulfil the conditions of an oyster in every respect; and that so perfectly, that we could not, by combining the features of two or more together, produce a more perfect oyster than any that we see. I suppose, also, that out of a number of healthy fish, birds, or beasts, of the same species, it would not be easy to select an individual as superior to *all* the rest; neither, by comparing two or more of the nobler examples together, to arrive at the conception of a form superior to that of either; but that, though the accidents of more abundant food or more fitting habitation

§ 5. *Of ideal form. First in the lower animals.*

* This paragraph was, with too good reason, objected to by my critical friends.² I thought it extremely crushing and Socratic; besides that, it began my proposed series of illustrations "from the mollusc to man."³ Long afterwards, I got Mr. Hunt to make me a drawing of the shell, but without the oyster! which, not being wholly satisfied with, I let pass out of my hands, much now to my regret. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "I apprehend that, although in respect of size, age, and kind of feeling, there may be some differences between them, yet of those . . ."]

² [The reference may be to the following passage in the review of the volume in the *Daily News* (June 22, 1846): "He is as yet all sentiment and fine words; and this accounts for the unconscious gravity with which he at times utters the richest burlesque. The dissertation on the moral duty of cultivating the taste of the palate, and the equally grave remarks on the ideal of an oyster, may be appreciated by many; but no pen could do them justice save that which drew the *Hermitte of Belly fulle*."]

³ [See above, sec. i. ch. xi. § 1, p. 143. For Ruskin's commission to William Hunt to paint some studies of still life for country schools of art, see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, s. No. 146.]

may induce among them some varieties of size, strength, and colour, yet the entire generic form would be presented by many, neither would any art be able to add to or diminish from it.

It is, therefore, hardly right to use the word Ideal of the § 6. *In what* generic forms of these creatures, of which we see *consistent.* actual examples; but if we are to use it, then be it distinctly understood that its ideality consists in the full development of all the powers and properties of the creature as such, and is inconsistent with accidental or imperfect developments, and even with great variation from average size; the ideal size being neither gigantic nor diminutive, but the utmost grandeur and entireness of proportion at a certain point above the mean size; for as more Individuals always fall short of generic size than rise above it, the generic is above the average or mean size.* And this perfection of the creature invariably involves the utmost possible degree of all those properties of beauty, both typical and vital, which it is appointed to possess.

Let us next observe the conditions of ideality in vegetables.

§ 7. *Ideal form* Out of a large number of primroses or violets, I *in vegetables.* apprehend that, although one or two might be larger than all the rest, the greater part would be very sufficient primroses and violets; and that we could, by no study nor combination of violets, conceive of a better violet than many in the bed. And so generally of the blossoms and separate members of all vegetables.

But among the entire forms of the complex vegetables, as of oak trees, for instance, there exists very large and constant difference; some being what we hold to be fine oaks, as in parks and places where they are taken care of, and have their own way, and some are but poor and mean oaks, which

* Wrong. The mean size is the generic one,—and some ideals lean toward the tiny. Of course, I was thinking of Michael Angelo,—but had better have taken warning from Bandinelli.¹ [1883.]

¹ [For Bandinelli, see preceding volume, p. 618, and below, sec. i. ch. xiv. § 20, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 27, pp. 194, 279.]

have had no one to take care of them, but have been obliged to maintain themselves.

That which we have to determine is, whether ideality be predicable of the fine oaks only, or whether the poor and mean oaks also may be considered as ideal, that is, coming up to the conditions of oak, and the general notion of oak.

Now there is this difference between the positions held in creation by animals and plants, and thence in the dispositions with which we regard them; that the animals, being for the most part locomotive, are capable both of living where they choose, and of obtaining what food they want, and of fulfilling all the conditions necessary to their health and perfection. For which reason they are answerable for such health and perfection, and we should be displeased and hurt, if we did not find it in one individual as well as another.

§ 8. *The difference of position between plants and animals.*

But the case is evidently different with plants. They are intended fixedly to occupy many places comparatively unfit for them, and to fill up all the spaces where greenness, and coolness, and ornament, and oxygen are wanted, and that with very little reference to their comfort or convenience.* Now it would be hard upon the plant, if, after being tied to a particular spot, where it is indeed much wanted, and is a great blessing, but where it has enough to do to live; whence it cannot move to obtain what it needs or likes, but must stretch its unfortunate arms here and there for bare breath and light, and split its way among rocks, and grope for sustenance in unkindly soil; it would be hard upon the plant, I say, if under all these disadvantages, it were made answerable for its appearance, and found fault with because it was not a fine plant of the kind. And it seems to be that, in order that no unkind comparisons may be drawn between one and another, there are not appointed to plants the fixed number, position, and proportion of members which are ordained in animals (and any variation from which in these is unpardonable), but a

§ 9. *Admits of variety in the Ideal of the former.*

* Compare the chapter on the Root, in *Proserpina*. [1883.]

continually varying number and position, even among the more freely growing examples, admitting therefore all kinds of license to those which have enemies to contend with; and that without in any way detracting from their dignity and perfection.

So then there is in trees no perfect form which can be fixed upon or reasoned out as ideal; but that is always an ideal oak which, however poverty-stricken, or hunger-pinched, or tempest-tortured, is yet seen to have done, under its appointed circumstances, all that could be expected of oak.

The ideal, therefore, of the park oak is that which was described in the conclusion of the former part of this work;¹ full size, united terminal curve, equal and symmetrical range of branches on each side. The wild oak may be anything, gnarled,² and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, and yet ideal, so only that, amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature,—enduring power, patience in waiting for, and ingenuity in obtaining what it needs,—is brought out, and so more of the essence of oak exhibited, than under more fortunate conditions.

And herein, then, we at last find the cause of that fact which we have twice already noted,³ that the exalted or seemingly improved condition, whether of plant or animal, induced by human interference, is not the true and artistical idea of it.* It has

§ 10. *Ideal form in vegetables destroyed by cultivation.*

* I speak not here of those conditions of vegetation which have especial reference to man, as of seeds and fruits, whose sweetness and farina seem in great measure given, not for the plant's sake, but for his, and to which therefore the interruption in the harmony of creation of which he was the cause is extended, and their sweetness and larger measure of good to be obtained only by his redeeming labour. His curse has fallen on the corn and the vine; and the wild barley misses of its fulness, that he may eat bread by the sweat of his brow.⁴

¹ [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. vi. ch. i. §§ 16 *seq.*; Vol. III. p. 588 of this ed.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "The ideal . . . that to which I alluded in . . . side. The ideal of the mountain oak may be anything, twisting, and . . . rock-encumbered, so only that . . . what it wants . . ."]

³ [Above, ch. xii. § 12, ch. xiii. § 6.]

⁴ [Genesis iii. 19.]

been well shown¹ by Dr. Herbert,* that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or subsoil in a wild state, not because such soil is favourable to them, but because they alone are capable of existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth, and maintain about it the temperature, that it delights in; withdrawing from it, at the same time, all rivals, which, in such conditions, nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization; but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live; it has been thereto endowed with courage and strength, and capacities of endurance; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeding of its own over luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed and rooted out for its good alone, but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as He covers the valleys with corn;² and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honour, nor usurp its throne, are its strength and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God to be truly esteemed.

The first time that I saw the *Soldanella alpina*, before spoken of,³ it was growing, of magnificent size, on a sunny alpine

* *Journal of the Horticultural Society*, Part I.

¹ [This passage, down to "constellations of the earth" in § 11, is § 55 of *Frondes Agrestes*.]

² [Job xxviii. 10; Psalms lxxv. 13.]

³ [Above, p. 146. Ruskin is here recalling what he noted in his diary in 1844:—

ST. MARTINS, *June 5*.—Two of the most delicious and instructive days I ever spent in my life. Note, first, of the two purple flowers which I dried to-day, the round bushy one grows in enormous quantities near the

pasture, among bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of *Geum montanum*, and *Ranunculus pyrenæus*. I noticed it only because new to me, nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after, I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds; and, as I described it (p. 146), piercing through an edge of avalanche, which, in its retiring, had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burned by recent fire; the plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts, but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

The *Ranunculus glacialis* might perhaps by cultivation be blanched from its wan and corpselike paleness to purer white, and won to more branched and lofty development of its ragged leaves. But the ideal of the plant is to be found only in the last, loose stones of the moraine, alone there; wet with the cold, unkindly drip of the glacier water, and trembling as the loose and steep dust to which it clings yields ever and anon, and shudders and crumbles away from about its root.

And if it be asked how this conception of the utmost beauty of ideal form is consistent with what we formerly argued¹ respecting the pleasantness of the appearance of felicity in the creature, let it be observed, and for ever held, that the right and

top, and about the top, of the Montagne Benit (?); the other (*) more scattered, though in profusion near the top, and more sparingly half way down. [The following note added on the opposite sheet.] (*Couttet tells me it is the very first flower which pierces the snow; in flower always the day after the snow uncovers it. Found a few, but fine, to-day above the Flégère; June 8th. Its name is Soldanella.) The oxalis acetosella, in considerable quantities under the rocks, and in the woods, about two-thirds of the way up; the anemone nemorosa more sparingly a little lower. The yellow flower, of which only one bad specimen is dried, in vast quantities, high and low on the summit itself; the bell gentian grew in mossy knots, everywhere—of luxuriant size, scattered, though not in such profusion, as far as half way down. The star gentian very rare at the top, thickly scattered below with the other. Common crowfoot, daisy, and dandelion, up to the top. In the pastures below, the globe ranunculus, yellow, mixed in profusion with the purple orchis.]

¹ [See above, sec. i. ch. iii. § 16, p. 64.]

true happiness of every creature is in this very discharge of its function, and in those efforts by which its strength and inherent energy are developed; and that the repose of which we also spoke as necessary to all beauty,¹ is, as was then stated, repose not of inanition, nor of luxury, nor of irresolution, but the repose of magnificent energy and being; in action, the calmness of trust and determination; in rest, the consciousness of duty accomplished and of victory won; and this repose and this felicity can take place as well in the midst of trial and tempest, as beside the waters of comfort; they perish only when the creature is either unfaithful to itself, or is afflicted by circumstances unnatural and malignant to its being, and for the contending with which it was neither fitted nor ordained. Hence that rest which is indeed glorious is of the chamois crouched breathless on his granite bed, not of the stalled ox over his fodder; and that happiness which is indeed beautiful is in the bearing of those trial tests which are appointed for the proving of every creature, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and in the fulfilment to the uttermost of every command it has received, and the outcarrying to the uttermost of every power and gift it has gotten from its God.

Therefore the task of the painter, in his pursuit of ideal form, is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in § 13. *The* his power, of the peculiar virtues, duties, and *ideality of Art.* characters of every species of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate² and marble, and it is in the utmost and most exalted exhibition of such individual character, order, and use, that all ideality of art consists.*

* Extreme nonsense, I grieve to see—and say, and what is worse, unguarded nonsense; for I never really meant that “all” ideality of art consisted in specific distinctions. The passage is an impetuous slip in controversy, and meant to be conclusive against the people who had said that trees, in a painting, should be of no particular species. [1883.]

¹ [See above, ch. vii. § 3, p. 116.]

² [Misprinted “slab” in ed. of 1873.]

The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favourite trunk, and the right kind of wood to its necessary stone; in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, colour, and inward anatomy of everything, the more truly ideal his work becomes. All confusion of species, all careless rendering of character, all unnatural and arbitrary association, are vulgar and unideal in proportion to their degree.

It is to be noted, however, that Nature sometimes in a measure herself conceals these generic differences, and that when she displays them it is commonly on a scale too small for human hand to follow; the pursuit and seizure of the generic differences in their concealment, and the display of them on a larger and more palpable scale, is one of the wholesome and healthy operations of the imagination of which we are presently to speak.*

Generic differences, being often exhibited by art in different manner from that of their natural occurrence, are, in this respect, more strictly and truly ideal in art than in reality.

This only remains to be noted, that, of all creatures whose existence involves birth, progress, and dissolution, ideality is predicable all through their existence, so that they be perfect with reference to their supposed period of being. Thus there is an ideal of infancy, of youth, of old age, of death, and of decay.† But when the ideal form of the species is spoken of or conceived in general terms, the form is understood to be of that period when the generic attributes are perfectly developed, and

§ 14. *How connected with the Imaginative faculties.*

§ 15. *Ideality, how belonging to ages and conditions.*

* Compare Sec. II. Chap. IV. § 21.

† I suppose I meant this to be understood of dying vegetation, or mouldering rocks and walls. But the whole chapter is stupid and useless: all that it says, or intended to say, is fortunately put in clearer form in the following chapter¹ on the Imagination. [1883.]

¹ ["The following section," rather; but the reference is more particularly to sec. ii. ch. iv.]

previous to the commencement of their decline. At which period all the characters of vital and typical beauty are commonly most concentrated in them, though the arrangement and proportion of these characters vary at different periods; youth having more of the vigorous beauty, and age of the reposing; youth of typical outward fairness, and age of expanded and etherealized moral expression; the babe, again in some measure atoning in gracefulness for its want of strength; so that the balanced glory of the creature continues in solemn interchange, perhaps even

“Filling more and more with crystal light,
As pensive Evening deepens into night.”¹

Hitherto, however, we have confined ourselves* to the examination of ideal form in the lower animals, and we have found that, to arrive at it, no exertion of fancy is required in combining forms, but only simple choice among those naturally presented, together with careful study² of the habits of the creatures. I fear we shall arrive at a very different conclusion, in considering the ideal form of man.

* I wish we had! The assertion comes oddly after I had just been talking of babies and old ladies. [1883.]

¹ [Wordsworth. Sonnet of 1827, “To——, in her seventieth year.” The first of the lines quoted is “And filling,” etc.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, “investigation and anatomizing.”]

CHAPTER XIV

III. OF VITAL BEAUTY IN MAN

HAVING thus passed gradually through all the orders and fields of creation, and traversed that goodly line of God's happy creatures who "leap not, but express a feast, where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants,"¹ without finding any deficiency which human invention might supply, nor any harm which human interference might mend,* we come at last to set ourselves face to face with ourselves; expecting that in creatures made after the image of God,² we are to find comeliness and completion more exquisite than in the fowls of the air and the things that pass through the paths of the sea.³

But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness, a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each; but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation: features seamed by sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse: bodies consumed with sloth, broken down by labour, tortured by disease, dishonoured in foul uses; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish; our bones full of the sin of our youth,⁴ the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath,

* Assumption again; and of the unblushingest. [1883.]

¹ [George Herbert: *The Temple* ("Providence," lines 133–134). The lines are quoted again by Ruskin in *Deucalion*, ii. ch. ii. ("Revision).]

² [Genesis i. 26.]

³ [Psalms viii. 8.]

⁴ [Psalms xxv. 7.]

and the branch cut off above;¹ well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be.²

Herein there is at last something, and too much for that short-stopping intelligence and dull perception of ours to accomplish, whether in earnest fact, or in the seeking for the outward image of beauty:—to undo the devil's work; to restore to the body the grace and the power which inherited disease has destroyed; to restore to the spirit the purity, and to the intellect the grasp, that they had in Paradise. Now, first of all, this work, be it observed, is in no respect a work of imagination. Wrecked we are, and nearly all to pieces; but that little good *by which we are to redeem ourselves** is to be got out of the old wreck, beaten about and full of sand though it be; and not out of that desert island of pride on which the devils split first, and we after them: and so the only restoration of the body that we can reach is not to be coined out of our fancies, but to be collected out of such uninjured and bright vestiges of the old seal as we can find and set together: and the ideal of the good and perfect soul, as it is seen in the features, is not to be reached by imagination, but by the seeing and reaching forth of the better part of the soul to that of which it must first know the sweetness and goodness in itself, before it can much desire, or rightly find, the signs of it in others.[†]

* I am glad to see that even in this Evangelical burst of flame upon the "corruption of human nature," I was at least quit of the folly of hoping for redemption except in personal effort. But I don't know what I meant by "the desert island of pride" as in opposition to effort, for a true Evangelical would say, the pride was in trying to do anything ourselves. I *believe* I must have meant the notion that everybody, once converted, was as good as anybody else. [1883, when the italics in § 2 were first introduced.]

† *This* sentence certainly does mean that a painter of saints must be a saint himself,—which is true: and many a time since, I've said so more plainly. [1883.]³

¹ [Job xviii. 16.]

² [James i. 23, 24.]

³ [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 22, "greatness in art is the expression of a mind of a God-made great man;" *Two Paths*, § 45, "great art is

I say *much* desire and *rightly* find, because there is not any soul so sunk as not in some measure to feel the impression of mental beauty in the human features, and detest in others its own likeness, and in itself despise that which of itself it has made.

Now, of the ordinary process by which the realization of ideal bodily form is reached, there is explanation enough in all treatises on art, and it is so far well comprehended that I need not stay long to consider it. So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively, in all exercises of dignity, not in straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften and refine the forms of strength; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental intelligence of what is noble in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine, from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal of humanity: and on the Greek modes of attaining it,¹ chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the influence, for good or evil, of the mind upon the bodily shape, the wreck of the mind itself, and the modes by which we may conceive of its restoration.

The visible operation of the mind upon the body may be classed under three heads.

nothing else than the type of a strong and noble life;" and *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. i. ch. vii. § 37, "all great painters, of whatever school, have been great only in their rendering of what they have seen and felt." And, therefore, no man can paint religious subjects in the great style unless his mind has a natural disposition to them (*Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 5); in which connexion, see what is said of Fra Angelico, *passim* in this volume.]

¹ [Ed. I adds, "as well as on what he produced, as a perfect example of it, . . ."]

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened; and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless); and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well described the desirableness and opposition to brutal types;¹ only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power: or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither; and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness, of the eye and forehead: and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these may be, we will not at present stay to enquire.

§ 4. *Modifications of the bodily ideal owing to influence of mind. First, of Intellect.*

Secondly, the operation of the moral feelings conjointly with the intellectual powers on both the features and form.² Now, the operation of the right moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter, for *it is not possible that selfishness should reason*

§ 5. *Secondly, of the Moral Feelings.*

¹ [Ed. 1 supplies the reference, "p. 59, third edition" of the *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting*.]

² [Ed. 1 reads:—

"The second point to be considered in the influence of mind upon body, is the mode of operation and conjunction of the moral feelings on and with the intellectual powers, and then their conjoint influence on the bodily form. Now the operation . . ."]

rightly in any respect,* but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things: neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it; neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it; neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together; neither enmity, for that must be unjust; neither fear, for that exaggerates all things; neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so; but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat; so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such space as to absorb and overshadow all else; so that, the simultaneous exercise of both being in a sort impossible, we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expansion of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it), as in the condition described by Wordsworth,

“In such high hour
Of visitation from the Living God,
Thought was not;”¹

only, if we look far enough, we shall perhaps find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent; and though we cannot, while we feel deeply, *reason* shrewdly, yet I

* Good: and the following passage is carefully written, and of considerable value: only it should have been noted that, since Faith holds the reins of Reason, she ought to be early taught to drive. [1883.]

¹ [*The Excursion*, book i. (“The Wanderer”), line 211. The passage is quoted again in the following volume, ch. xvii. § 11. For Ruskin’s admiration, at this time, of *The Excursion*, see the letter in Appendix iii., below, p. 393.]

doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever *comprehend* fully; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties, which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows,* speaking of past effort and painfulness of mental application, which are inconsistent with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous¹ augury; but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow; only these, in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin. But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness), and the dignity which that higher authority (of divine law, and not human reason), can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length: for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any beauty but theirs to which men pay long obedience:† at all events, if not by sympathy² discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features: neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation; for even

* In simpler terms, this I suppose means that angels must not be wrinkled or saints frown. [1883.]

† I do not know how “long” the obedience may last: but it may be quite universal to types extremely the reverse of “theirs,”—as in London and Paris at present—1882. [1883.]

¹ [Misprinted “felicitous” in the 1873 edition.]

² [This passage, “If not by sympathy . . . upon the features,” is § 80 in *Frondes Agrestes*.]

§ 6. *What beauty is bestowed by them.*

all the movements and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them; and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action, and, through continuance of this, a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.¹

The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul-culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul than of the fair and ruddy countenance of David.

Now, be it observed that, in our statement of these three directions of mental influence, we have several times been compelled to stop short of definite conclusions, owing to the inconsistency,² first, of different kinds of intellect with each other; secondly, of the moral faculties with the intellectual (and if we had separately examined the moral emotions, we should have found certain inconsistencies among them also); and again, of the soul-culture generally with the bodily perfections. Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the Dog is not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labour in the Ant and Bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And

¹ ["On all the beautiful features of men and women, throughout the ages, are written the solemnities and majesty of the law they knew, with the charity and meekness of their obedience; on all unbeautiful features are written either ignorance of the law, or the malice and insolence of their disobedience" (*The Art of England*, § 83). Cf. *Sesame and Lilies*, § 70, and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 91).]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "owing to the apparent inconsistency of certain excellencies and beauties to which they tend, as first, . . ."]

this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, *but an evidence of his greater nobility*,* and of the goodness of God towards him. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the Love¹ of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the Unity of the creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes; humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race.[†] Therefore, in investigating the signs of the ideal

* I am thankful to have another sentence to italicise, introducing the better philosophy of my later works. [1883.]

† "In another sense still the human race may be considered *as one man only*. While each animal begins anew the work of its species, each human being does not begin anew the work of mankind. He continues it, and cannot but continue it. He receives, on his entrance into life, the heritage of all ages—he is the son of the whole human race. Thousands of causes, thousands of persons have co-operated since the beginning of time to make him what he is. Man, isolated either in time or space, is not truly man. Absolute solitude transforms him into an animal, and much less than an animal, since he wants its infallible instincts, or has only in their stead a powerless reason, indolent, and as it were, shrouded. A man, then, does not come up to his type, does not perfectly exist, without his race; it is the race that makes him a man. And when we picture to ourselves a man existing by himself as man, and with all the attributes of his race, we dream; since a man purely individual and isolated is an impossibility. It is not thus in any other department of the animal kingdom. A whole does not exist anywhere else as in our race; but is it not wonderful that true individuality exists only in the same race also, and that the sole being whose nature is developed fully only as one of a race is also the only one who manifests the sentiment of liberty, morality, and the consciousness implied in the word Me?"—*Vinet's (Alex.) Vital Christianity*²

¹ [This passage, "The Love of the human race . . . the complement of his race," is § 81 in *Fronde Agrestes*.]

² [This note did not appear in ed. 1. The italicising of "as one man only" was introduced in the 1883 ed.]

or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type; and yet, on the other hand, we must cautiously distinguish between differences conceivably existing in a perfect state, and differences resulting from immediate and present operation of the Adamite curse.* Of which the former are differences that bind, and the latter that separate. For although we can suppose the ideal or perfect human heart, and the perfect human intelligence, equally adapted to receive every right sensation, and pursue every order of truth, yet as it is appointed for some to be in authority and others in obedience, some in solitary functions and others in relative ones, some to receive and others to give, some to teach and some to discover; and as all these varieties of office are not only conceivable as existing in a perfect state of man, but seem almost to be implied by it, and at any rate cannot be done away with but by a total change of his constitution and dependencies, of which the imagination can take no hold; so there are habits and capacities of expression induced by these various offices, which admit of many separate ideals of equal perfection.¹ There is an ideal of

§ 10. *Consequent separation and difference of Ideals.*

Authority, of Judgment, of Affection, of Reason, and of Faith,[†] neither can any combination of these ideals be attained; not that the just judge is to be supposed incapable of affection, nor the king incapable of obedience, but as it is impossible that any essence short of the Divine should at the same instant be equally receptive of all emotions, those emotions

* In order to accept the statements in the following passage, one of the best, of its kind, in this book, it is not necessary that the reader should believe the literal story of the Fall, but only that, in some way, "Sin entered into the world, and Death by Sin."² For more definite expression of my own belief and meaning, the reader should refer to the 8th number of *Deucalion*.³ [1883.]

† I meant, of the countenances expressing these different characters. The analysis, given without explanation, is very close and subtle. "Authority" is

¹ [There is no break here in ed. 1, which reads, "of equal perfection, according to the functions of the creatures, so that there is an ideal . . ."]

² [Romans v. 12.]

³ [See above, Introduction, p. xlviii.]

which, by right and order, have the most usual victory, both leave the stamp of their habitual presence on the body, and render the individual more and more susceptible of them in proportion to the frequency of their prevalent recurrence.¹ Still less can the differences of age and sex, though seemingly of more finite influence, be banished from any human conception. David, ruddy and of a fair countenance, with the brook stone of deliverance in his hand, is not more ideal than David leaning on the old age of Barzillai, returning chastened to his kingly home. And they² who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless; the child taken early to his place cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who has finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come, different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrow and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace, of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat of day or eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, or the clouds opened by revelation; differences in warning, in mercies, in sicknesses, in signs, in time of calling to account; alike only they all are, by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy. "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."³

the character of a person who establishes law;—"Judgment," of one who applies it;—"Affection," of one whose law is love. "Reason," as the mistress of Investigation, is opposed to "Faith," the mistress of Imagination. [1883.]

¹ [Here again ed. 1 went on "breathlessly," reading thus:—"prevalent recurrence; added to which causes of distinctive character are to be taken into account the difference of age and sex, which though . . . cannot be banished . . ."]

² [This passage, "They who are" down to "even unto thee" (end of § 10), is § 82 in *Fronde Agrestes*. The Bible references here are: 1 Samuel xvii. 42; 2 Samuel xix. 31–39; 1 Cor. xv. 41; Jonah iv. 6–8; Mark ii. 4.]

³ [Matthew xx. 14, a text which afterwards gave a title to one of Ruskin's bestknown works—*Unto this Last*.]

Hence, then, it will follow, that we must not determinedly banish from the human form and countenance, in our restoration of its ideal, everything which can be ultimately traced to the Adamite Fall for its cause, but only the immediate operation and presence of the degrading power of sin. For there is not any part of our nature, nor can there be through eternity, uninfluenced or unaffected by the fall, and that not in any way of degradation, for the renewing in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than that of Paradise; and yet throughout eternity it must imply and refer to the disobedience, and the corrupt state of sin and death, and the suffering of Christ Himself, which can we conceive of any redeemed soul as for an instant forgetting, or as remembering without sorrow? Neither are the alternations of joy and such sorrow as by us is inconceivable, being only as it were a softness and silence in the pulse of an infinite felicity, inconsistent with the state even of the unfallen; for the angels, who rejoice over repentance, cannot but feel an uncomprehended pain as they try and try again in vain, whether they may not warm hard hearts with the brooding of their kind wings. So that we have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion. And hence in that contest before noted, between the body and the soul, we may often have to indicate the body as far conquered and outworn, and with signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it; and yet without ever diminishing the purity of its ideal: and since it is not in the power of any human imagination to reason out or conceive the countless modifications of experience, suffering, and separated feeling, which have modelled and written their indelible images, in various order, upon every human countenance, so no right ideal can be reached by any combination of feature nor by any moulding and melting of individual beauties together, and still less without

§ 11. *The effects of the Adamite curse are to be distinguished from signs of its immediate activity.*

§ 12. *Which latter only are to be banished from ideal form.*

model or example at all; but *there is a perfect ideal to be wrought out of every face around us* that has on its forehead the writing and the seal of the angel ascending from the East,* by the earnest study and penetration of the written history thereupon, and the banishing of the blots and stains, wherein we still see, in all that is human, the visible and instant operation of unconquered Sin.

Now I see not how any of the steps of the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion can be evaded, and yet it would be difficult to state anything more directly opposite to the general teaching and practice of artists. It is usual to hear portraiture opposed to the pursuit of ideality, and yet we find that no face can be ideal which is not a portrait. Of this general principle, however, there are certain modifications which we must presently state; but let us first pursue it a little farther and deduce its practical consequences.

§ 13. *Ideal form is only to be obtained by portraiture.*

These are, first, that the pursuit of idealism in humanity, as of idealism in lower nature, can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied with that earnest mental¹ study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it, disentangle the hieroglyphics of its sacred history, rend the veil of the bodily temple, and rightly measure the relations of good and evil contending within it for mastery;† that everything done without such study must be shallow and contemptible; that generalization or combination of individual character will end less in the mending than the losing of it, and, except in certain instances of which we shall presently take note, is valueless and vapid, even if it escape being painful from its want of truth.² And that habit of the old

* Rev. vii. 2.

† Compare Part II. Sec. I. Chap. III. § 6.

¹ [Ed. 1 reads “. . . mental as well as ocular . . .”]

² [Ed. 1 adds:—

“which in these days it often in some measure does, for we indeed find faces about us with want enough of life or wholesome character in them to justify anything.”]

and great painters of introducing portrait into all their highest works, I look to, not as error in them, but as the very source and root of their superiority in all things; for they were too great and too humble not to see in every face about them that which was above them, and which no fancies of theirs could match nor take place of; wherefore we find the custom of portraiture constant with them, both portraiture of study and for purposes of analysis, as with Leonardo; and actual, professed, serviceable, hard-working portraiture of the men of their time, as with Raffaele, and Titian, and Tintoret; and portraiture of love, as with Fra Bartolomeo of Savonarola, and Simon Memmi of Petrarch, and Giotto of Dante, and Gentile Bellini of a beloved imagination of Dandolo,¹ and with Raffaele constantly; and portraiture for the sake of the nobility of personal character even in their most imaginative works,² as was the practice of Ghirlandajo perpetually, and Masaccio and Raffaele, and manifestly of the men of highest and purest ideal purpose, as again Giotto, and in his characteristic monkish heads, Angelico, and John Bellini (note especially the St. Christopher at the side of that mighty

§ 14. *Instances among the greater of the Ideal Masters.*

¹ [Fra Bartolommeo was one of the band of faithful followers who shut themselves up with Savonarola in San Marco; his portrait of his master is in the museum of the convent. (There is another of Savonarola as St. Peter Martyr in the Accademia.) Of Simone Memmi (or Martini) Vasari says, "great was his good fortune in that he lived at the same time with Messer Francesco Petrarca, and that he further chanced to meet that love-devoted poet at the court of Avignon." In the "Spanish Chapel" of S. Maria Novella, in the fresco of "The Church Militant and Triumphant" (attributed by Vasari to Simone), the portrait of Petrarch is introduced among the illustrious personages surrounding the Pope (Vasari, Bohn's ed., 1855, vol. i. pp. 182, 185). Giotto's portrait of Dante is in his fresco of Paradise in the Bargello. Ruskin describes it in his note-book of 1845:—

"The head of Dante has been drawn with love, and its completion is so delicate that I hardly know a head in fresco, at any period of art, that can compete with it. It is stippled with the greatest delicacy, its colour pure and deep, the eye deeply thoughtful, the expression beautifully calm."

It is recorded of Gentile Bellini that he cherished "enthusiasm for 'blind old Dandolo (see *Childe Harold*, iv. 12), the octogenarian doge' (ruled 1192–1205), who played so important a part in the crusade of the Latins against the Greek empire," and had "the zeal to copy the portrait of this Venetian hero from the very ancient original which was falling to pieces" (see Rio's *Poetry of Christian Art*, p. 356).]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "portraiture in real downright necessity of models, even in their noblest works, . . ."]

picture of St. Jerome, at Venice¹): and so of all: which practice had indeed a perilous tendency among men of debased mind, who used models such as and where they ought not;² or among men who looked not at their models with intellectual or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good, as even Titian has done in that academy study at Venice which is called a St. John,³ and all workers whatsoever that I know of, after Raffaele's time, as Guido and the Carracci, and such others; but it is nevertheless the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art, neither has any great man ever been able to do without it, nor dreamed of doing without even to the close of his days.⁴

¹ [In the church of S. Giovanni Crisostomo. The picture is described below, sec. ii. ch. v. § 8, p. 319, and *cf.* preceding volume, p. 180.]

² [Ed. 1 reads:—

“ . . . ought not, as Lippi and the corrupted Raffaele; and is found often at exceeding disadvantage among men who . . . ”]

³ [In the Venetian Academy; elsewhere referred to as “the Desert of Titian;” see preceding volume, p. 173.]

⁴ [In the MS. this passage was somewhat different, and some points were touched on which Ruskin afterwards made elsewhere. After noticing (though in slightly different terms) the old portraiture “for analysis,” “of love,” etc., the MS. continues:—

“ . . . or else they were portraits of greater persons of the state—persons whom the more feudal system and the more frequent exercise of arbitrary power had a tendency to destroy external evidence of pride; nay, I am not sure that the greater and more frequent and palpable crime and violence of those days had not also a tendency to destroy the evidence of petty vanities, and induce a gravity and sadness on the features; or else they were of persons indeed great and who could not be proud, as was the case principally with the Doges of Venice, whose beautiful habit of representing themselves in acts of humiliation and thanksgiving is touchingly and justly noted by Rio.

“Whereas in modern times portraiture having become a rage, almost a necessity, the most vulgar and vain persons over whose diamonds and lace, crimson curtains and columnar landscapes the artist has to spend his mechanical years, necessarily corrupt and quench such feeling as he might have possessed; the copyism of emptiness makes him empty, and his faculties, unaccustomed to any perception of great qualities, miss them even in those few examples where otherwise they might have been found. The qualities of dress, too, are fatally against him; for the robes of state or ceremony, being seldom worn, are not familiarised to the person of the wearer, so that if assumed for a time, there is no life in them, and the ideas of the painter separate the man and his dress, till it comes to painting the face first and the coat afterwards. In old times the habitual dress became a part of the man and was treated naturally from being constantly seen as such. If no robe of state be admitted, the painter necessarily struggles to distinguish his subject by some peculiarity or other, and falls into affectation.”

Some of this passage was afterwards utilised, as will be seen, in § 19 below. For the choice of the Venetians in being “painted on their knees,” see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iii. § 15; the reference to Rio will be found in *The Poetry of Christian Art*, English ed. 1854, pp. 365, 403. For the importance of beautiful and stately dress, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 31, and *A Joy for Ever*, § 54.]

And therefore there is not any greater sign of want of vitality and hopefulness in the schools of the present day, than that unhappy prettiness and sameness under which they mask, or rather for which they barter, in their lentil thirst, all the birthright and power of nature; which prettiness, wrought out and spun fine in the study,¹ till it hardly betters the blocks on which dresses and hair are tried in barbers' windows and milliners' books, cannot but be revolting to any man who has his eyes, even in a measure, open to the divinity of the immortal seal on the common features that he meets in the highways and hedges hourly and momentarily, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaele's three times over, even when the glory of the wedding garment is not there.*

§ 15. *Evil results of opposite practice in modern times.*

If then individual humanity be taken as the basis of our conception, its right ideal² is to be reached, we have asserted, only by the banishment of the immediate signs of sin upon the countenance and body. How, therefore, are the signs of sin[†] to be known and separated?

No intellectual operation is here of any avail. There is not any reasoning by which the evidences of depravity are to be traced in movements of muscle or forms of feature; there is not any knowledge, nor experience, nor diligence of

* The error, since this passage was written, has been reversed: we have now plenty of wayside painting, but scarcely any ideal or historical: still less religious. The paragraph itself is expanded and explained in the chapter on "Purism" in the third volume of *Modern Painters*. [1883.]

† "As separated from the evil of distress," I should have said. [1883.]

¹ [In the MS. Ruskin had added "out of empty heads"; so above, he had written "the utter want of vitality and *power of hopefulness* . . . sameness *of feature*." Every page of the MS. shows similar instances of pruning in the process of revision.]

² [Here ed. 1 has a fresh paragraph, thus:—

"So far, then, of the use of the model and the preciousness of it in all art, from the highest to the lowest. But the use of the model is not all. It must be used in a certain way, and on this choice of right or wrong way all our ends are at stake, for the art, which is of no power without the model, is of pernicious and evil power if the model be wrongly used. What the right use is, has been at least established, if not fully explained, in the argument by which we arrived at the general principle.

"The right ideal is to be reached, . . ."]

§ 16. *The right use of the model.*

comparison that can be of avail. Here, as throughout the operation of the Theoretic faculty, the perception is altogether moral, and instinctive love and clinging to the lines of light. Nothing but love can read the letters, nothing but sympathy catch the sound; there is no pure passion that can be understood or painted except by pureness of heart; the foul or blunt feeling will see itself in everything, and set down blasphemies; it will see Baalzebub in the casting out of devils; it will find its God of flies in every alabaster box of precious ointment.¹ The indignation of zeal toward God² it will take for anger against man; faith and veneration it will miss, as not comprehending; charity it will turn into lust; compassion into pride; every virtue it will go over against, like Shimei, casting dust.³ But the right Christian mind will, in like manner, find its own image wherever it exists; it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out of all dens and caves, and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it, and always turn away its eyes from beholding vanity;⁴ and so it will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from heaven does over the hard, and black, and broken mountain rocks, following their forms truly, and yet catching light for them to make them fair, and that must be a steep and unkindly crag indeed which it cannot cover.

Now of this spirit there will always be little enough in the world, and it cannot be given or taught by men, and so it is of little use to insist on it farther; only I may note some practical points respecting the ideal treatment of human form, which may be of some use. There is not the face, I have said, which the painter may not make ideal if he choose; but that subtle feeling which shall find out all of good that there is in any given countenance is not, except by concern for other things than art,

§ 16. *Ideal form to be reached only by Love.*

§ 17. *Practical principles deducible.*

¹ [The Bible references here are Matthew ix. 34: "But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." Baalzebub (2 Kings i. 2, 16) was the god of flies. Matthew xxvi. 7-14.]

² [Ed. 1 inserts "(nemesi)."]

³ [2 Samuel xvi. 13.]

⁴ [Psalms cxix. 37.]

to be acquired. But certain broad indications of evil there are which the bluntest feeling may perceive, and which the habit of distinguishing and casting out would both ennoble the schools of art, and lead, in time, to greater acuteness of perception with respect to the less explicable characters of soul beauty.

Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds; the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body.

§ 18. *Expressions chiefly destructive of ideal character. 1st. Pride.*

Now of these, the first, Pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original vice of all;¹ and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure; for there is not the man so lofty in his standing or capacity, but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him; and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know, nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether understand not one; not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, (which is the real essence and criminality of Pride:)* nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them; but,

* The words in parenthesis are false. The criminality of pride is a selfish pleasure in our own pre-eminence, whether it be acknowledged as God's gift or not:—"Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are."² The denial of the power of God, as by Nebuchadnezzar, is impiety *added to* pride. [1883, when the words were first placed in parenthesis.]

¹ [For "vice of all," ed. 1 reads, "story of all sin," and in the next line inserts "that is" before "when grounded."]

² [Luke xviii. 11.]

taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity; to which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment;¹ tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendour and possession; together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and, if unknown, it is insolent in the portrait to proclaim: whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time.* To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaele, Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armour does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return: nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling, always crownless, and returning thanks to God for His help; or as priests interceding for the nation in its affliction. But this feeling and its results have been so well traced by Rio,[†] that I need not speak of it farther.

* Rather strong, this! but extremely true. All the paragraph is valuable, and its sequel, to the end of the chapter, excellent in general criticism, and, with the slight exceptions noted, the basis of all my critical teaching since. [1883.]

† *De la Poésie Chrétienne. Forme de l' Art*, chap. viii.2

¹ [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. ("Roman Renaissance") § 37, where Ruskin refers to this passage and further illustrates it.]

² [For the reference to the English edition, see note on § 14 above.]

That second destroyer of ideal form, the appearance of § 20. *Secondly,* Sensual character, though not less fatal in its *Sensuality.* operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety.¹ For it is not possible to say by what minute differences the right conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining, as Bandinelli puts a scent of common flesh² about his marble Christ,³ and as many, whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo; or he will baptize all things and wash them with pure water, as our own Stothard.⁴ Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it; neither is it here the place to show how⁵ it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends, in very considerable measure, on the intensity and warmth of its *colour*.* For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and § 21. *How con* devoid of all the radiance and life of flesh, the *-nected with im-* lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, *purity of colour,* will become so hard in the loss of the glow and gradation by which nature illustrates

* I am glad to see how early this great principle of colour, so contrary to the common estimate of it, was known to me, and thus strongly asserted. [1883.]⁶

¹ [Compare with this section, *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 58.]

² [Ed. 1 reads, "a foul scent of human flesh . . ."]

³ [See below, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 27, p. 280.]

⁴ [For other references to Stothard, whom Ruskin called the Angelico of England, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vi. § 5; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 52; *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 80.]

⁵ [Ed. 1 reads less briefly, "to take note of the way in which . . ."]

⁶ [So in *The Queen of the Air*, colour is "the spiritual power of art" (§ 94 n.). Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiv. § 42; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. v. §§ 30–34.]

them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of colour, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas right splendour of colour both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire; furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject,* seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of colour and form, and with no unworthy seeking. But the mere power of perfect and glowing colour will, in some sort, redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though¹ often treating base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti Palace, and that of the Barberigo at Venice,² yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely: and with Giorgione, who had more imaginative intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie

§ 22. *And prevented by its splendour,*

* Nevertheless, he ought not to take subjects *needing* excuse. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "though of little feeling and often . . ."; and, four lines lower, instead of "more imaginative intellect," ed. 1 reads "nobler and more serious intellect, . . ."]

² [The following is Ruskin's note in his Florentine note-book (1845) on Titian's Magdalen in the Pitti:—

"This picture may once have been fine, merely as a work of art, but it is now destroyed; a few folds of the hair, here and there, a shadow of the flesh, and the alabaster box with 'Titianus' in brown letters on it are all that remain. The rest is either picture-dealer, or ground colour with all the glazings off. In consequence the hair looks like a brown mat or like that of a rough Blenheim spaniel; the mass of it, without the slightest grouping or arrangement, is like the pictures of Circassians on the signs of Barbers in Bishopsgate Within. The fleshy and shapeless body is nearly as disgusting. The face of the grossest possible type, and the eyes turned up, as the model turned them when she was ordered to do so, are the crowning sin. The little alabaster vase and brown signature are very delicious; if I had the picture, I would cut them out and burn the rest."

Titian's pictures in the Barberigo Palace at Venice were at a later date sold to the Emperor of Russia (see *Stones of Venice*, Venetian index, s. Barberigo.)]

on the grass like flakes of sunshine.* With the religious painters, on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by colour, so that generally their draped figures are preferable.¹ But they, with Michael Angelo and most of the Venetians, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared with them, seem striving how best to illustrate Spenser's stanza in its second clause—

“Of all God's works which doe this worlde adorn,
There is no one more faire, and excellent,
Than is man's body both for power and forme
Whiles it is kept in sober government.
*But none than it more foul and indecent
Distempered through misrule and passions bace.*”²

Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of colour they reach, and power they possess.³ Much may be forgiven to Rubens; less, as I think, to Correggio, who has more of inherent sensuality wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects; as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a

* As in the noble Louvre picture.⁴

¹ [Ed. 1 adds, “. . . , as in the Francia of our own gallery. But these . . . ,” omitting “most of” before “the Venetians.” “The Francia of our own gallery” is the altar-piece with lunette (a Pietà), Nos. 179, 180, bought for the National Gallery in 1841.]

² [*Faerie Queene*, book ii. canto ix. st. 1. The italics were introduced in the 1883 ed.]

³ [Ed. 1 has no break here, and reads:—

“power they possess, whence much may be forgiven to Rubens, (as to our own Etty,) less, as I think to Correggio, who with less apparent and evident coarseness has more . . .”

The words “excepting always Etty” on the next page were inserted in ed. 2, which omitted the above passage.]

⁴ [The “Concert Champêtre” or “Pastoral” described by Rossetti in a sonnet.]

model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante:* and again in the lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana (both at Parma), not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil.¹ Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery;² and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, excepting always Etty;[†] only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue; so that I do not assert that the purpose and object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as of

* The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

† Not in the least excepting him—this sentence, I fear, is mere politeness to a painter then living; and it ought to have been explained as only meaning that his colour was not “absolute clay.”³ [1883.]

¹ [The fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin is in the Palatine Library at Parma; it is figured at p. v. of Signor Ricci’s *Correggio* (English ed., 1896). The picture called by Italian writers upon art “Il Giorno” (contrasting it with Correggio’s “Notte” at Dresden), is the “Madonna with St. Jerome”; the figure which Ruskin calls St. Catherine, is more commonly identified as the Magdalen: the picture is engraved at p. 278 of Ricci. The “Charioted Diana” is a fresco in the Camera di San Paola; see Ricci, p. 166. Ruskin had been studying Correggio at Parma in July 1845, and here fulfils the slaughter promised in a letter to his father (July 10):—

“I am off for Piacenza to-morrow, for this is without exception the dullest, ugliest town I have seen except Modena; it gives one the horrors, and I am so disgusted with Correggio that I know not what to say or do for indignation. . . . I always thought little of him, but of all vulgar, coarse, obscene, paltry desecrators of sacred subject I ever cast eyes on, his frescoes beat! They are rank blasphemy. I have had a hard scramble to-day over the tiles of the cathedral, to peep in at the little windows of the cupola, just to be sure of my game—and then, have at him.”

See also a letter to D. G. Rossetti in 1865 in which Ruskin, referring to this period, thanks Providence that he “did not then write a separate book against Correggio” (*Rossetti Papers*, 1903, p. 138). For in later books Ruskin’s estimate of Correggio was very different. For a transitional reference, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 8, and then for full appreciation, *ibid.* vol. iv. ch. iv. § 9; vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. § 3; pt. ix. ch. viii. 1; *Queen of the Air*, § 163; *Lectures on Art*, § 177; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 94; *Art of England*, § 76.]

² [No. 196. This picture with another Guido, No. 193 (“Lot and his daughter leaving Sodom”), were bought at very high prices in 1844—acquisitions which put Ruskin “into a desperate rage”; see his letters to Liddell, Vol. III. p. 670.]

³ [Etty died in 1847—the year after the publication of this volume. To his colour, Ruskin rendered another tribute in his review of Eastlake’s *History of Oil Painting* in the *Quarterly Review* for March 1848 (*On the Old Road*, ed. 1899, vol. i. § 135). In *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 266), he was less complimentary; see note on that passage.]

Titian for instance, were always elevated, but only that we, who § 25. *And* cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen *modern art.* pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands. And it is to be noted also, that, in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be regarded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind* (as pre-eminently with the Greeks), and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed; and hence, from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil; and for that daring frankness of the old men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauzeveiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crimping-pins, out of which, I believe, nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.†

Respecting those two other vices of the human form, the expressions of Fear and Ferocity, there is less to be § 26. *Thirdly,* noted, as they only occasionally enter into the *Ferocity and* conception of character; only it is most necessary to *Fear. The latter* make careful distinction between the conception of *how to be* power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, *distinguished* influence, or agent, and the actual fear of any of these: for it is *from Awe.* possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear; and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed Awe, and is a most noble

* Utterly bad writing again: I ought to have said "as not of necessity awakening ideas," etc. [1883.]

† Too truly prophesied: the vile help of photography hastening the corruption.¹ [1883.]

¹ [For a discussion of the nude in art, see *Eagle's Nest*, §§ 149, 164, 167, *Ariadne Florentina*, § 254 n., and cf. a letter by Ruskin in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 1, 1885.]

passion;¹ whereas fear, mortal and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded; and even when fear is felt respecting things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and contract all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay; for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven and fire running along the ground. And so among² the children of God,* while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him, which is called the Fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to Him as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer; and perfect love, and casting out of fear; so that it is not possible that, while the mind is rightly bent on Him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural; and the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it (“Of whom shall I be afraid?”),³ so that they are as David was, “devoted to His fear;”³ whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of Him, and in His real terribleness and omnipresence fear Him not nor know Him, yet are by real,

§ 27. *Holy Fear, how distinct from human Terror.*

* The insolence of these abrupt and unhesitating theological assertions, now become extremely painful to me, and much repented of, yet is in this degree pardonable, that is part of the main argument of the book, taken up in different places, as the occasion serves or tempts. The words “children of God” were meant only as a short expression for those who have entered His kingdom as a little child. [1883.]

¹ [For a full treatment of the subject of Awe, see Appendix i. pp. 371–381.]

² [This passage, “Among the children . . . (‘Of whom shall I be afraid?’),” is § 78 of *Fronde Agrestes*.]

³ [The Bible references here are 2 Samuel xxii. 2; St. John iv. 18; Psalms xxvii. 1, cxix. 38.]

acute, piercing, and ignoble fear, haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate, that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of

§ 28. *Ferocity is joined always with Fear. Its unpardonableness.* terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane. So, also, it is always joined with ferocity,* which is of all passions the least

human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute it is pleasant, and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of Hell.

Therefore, of all subjects that can be admitted to sight, the expressions of fear and ferocity are the most foul and detestable; and so there is in them I know not what sympathetic attractiveness for minds powerless and impious painters. cowardly and base, as the vulgar of most nations; and as they are easily rendered by men who can render nothing else, they are often trusted in by the herd of painters incapable and profane, as in that monstrous abortion of the first room of the Louvre, called the Deluge,¹ whose subject is pure, acute, mortal fear; and so generally in the senseless horrors of the modern French schools, spawn of the guillotine; also there is not a greater test of grandeur or meanness of mind than the expressions it will seek for and develope in the features and forms of men in fierce strife; whether determination and devotion, and all the other attributes of that unselfishness which constitutes heroism, as in the

* This is as bad as one of Gibbon's generalizations—"The timid are always cruel," and the like. It is, of course, nonsense; many of the timidest creatures being also the sweetest, and most of the fiercer ones fearless. The substance of what follows, however, is right enough. [1883.]

¹ [By Nicolas Poussin; for other references to the picture see preceding volume, p. 518; *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvi. § 23–24; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 18.]

warrior of Agasias;¹ and distress not agitated nor unworthy, though mortal, as in the dying gladiator;² or brutal ferocity and butchered agony, of which the lowest and least palliated examples are those battles of Salvator Rosa which none but a man base-born, and thief-bred, could have conceived³ without sickening; of which I will only name that example in the Pitti Palace, wherein the chief figure in the foreground is a man with his arm cut off at the shoulder, run through the other hand into the breast with a lance.* And manifold instances of the same feeling are to be found in the repainting of the various representations of the Inferno, so common through Italy; more especially that of Orcagna's in the Campo Santo,⁴ wherein the few figures near the top that yet remain untouched are grand in their severe drawing and expressions of enduring despair, while those below, repainted by Solazzino, depend for their expressiveness upon torrents of blood; so in the Inferno of Santa Maria Novella, and of the Arena chapel,⁵ not to speak of the horrible images of the Passion, by which vulgar Romanism has always striven to excite the languid sympathies of its untaught flocks. Of

* Compare Michelet, *Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille*, chap. iii. note. He uses language too violent to be quoted; but excuses Salvator by reference to the savage character of the Thirty Years' War. That this excuse has no validity may be proved by comparing the painter's treatment of other subjects. See Sec. II. Chap. III. § 18, note [p. 265, below].

¹ [See preceding volume, p. 82.]

² [The famous piece of sculpture in the Capitoline Museum at Rome—the subject of Byron's familiar lines (*Childe Harold*, iv. 140). For another reference, see above, p. 119 n.]

³ [For "conceived" ed. 1 reads "dwelt on for an instant." The MS. has "held his breath to paint."]

⁴ [Ruskin in his note-book of 1845 wrote of this fresco as follows:—

"The Hell was probably once fine, but the whole of the lower part repainted by Solazzino, as well as the figure of Lucifer (who looks like a large unboiled crab), is execrable beyond forgiveness, and if preserved at all should immediately be reduced to outline and white plaster. The round, fat, unboned, cushiony limbs painted pink and running with blood are as disgusting as they are childish; there is more art in some of the signs at Bartholomew Fair."]

⁵ [Orcagna's Inferno in S. Maria Novella is behind the altar of the chapel at the head of the staircase leading out of the north transept. The "Inferno of the Arena Chapel" refers to Giotto's fresco of "The Last Judgment," in which Hell occupies the whole right side of the composition.]

which foulness let us reason no farther, the very image and memory of them being pollution; only noticing this, that there has always been a morbid tendency in Romanism towards the contemplation of bodily pain, owing to the attribution of saving power to it; which, like every other moral error, has been of fatal effect in art, leaving not altogether without the stain and blame of it even the highest of the Romanist painters; as Fra Angelico, for instance, who, in his Passion subjects, always insists weakly on the bodily torture, and is unsparing of blood; and Giotto, though his treatment is usually grander, as in that Crucifixion over the door of the Convent of St. Mark's, where the blood is hardly actual, but issues from the feet in a conventional form, and becomes a crimson cord which is twined strangely beneath about a skull;¹ only what these holy men did to enhance, even though in their means mistaken, the impression and power of the sufferings of Christ, or of His saints, is always in a measure noble, and to be distinguished with all reverence from the abominations of the irreligious painters following; as of Camillo Procaccini, in one of his martyrdoms in the Gallery of the Brera, at Milan,² and other such, whose names may be well spared to the reader.

¹ [This crucifix is over the principal entrance (inside) of the church, not the convent of San Marco. It is mentioned by Vasari (i. 111), and is supposed to be the work which established Giotto's fame over Cimabue's, and called forth the lines in the *Purgatorio* (*Credette Cimabue*, etc., xi. 91, quoted in *Mornings in Florence*, § 37). It is thus described by Ruskin in the 1845 note-book:—

“This . . . [crucifix], of which a copy exists in the transept of Ogni Santi, is, I doubt not, the original of Giotto, and it has served as model for a host of others, small and great, with which the Tuscan churches were filled at the period, the same bend of the body and type of countenance being used in all. The two saints on the arms are in this of Giotto's singularly poor, but the face of the Christ is exceedingly grand—Vandyke-like, the hair flowing with the greatest dignity, the light soft, graduated, and beautifully concentrated on the forehead, the brow horizontal and full of power, the nose straight, the mouth sublime, no hard lines, nor lip drawing about it. The blood gushes from the side in a flat stream, that from the feet runs down till it enters a cavity of the rock, where it turns in a most singular way about a skull. On each side of the skull is a beautiful kneeling figure.”

It appears from a further passage in the diary that from this work (as of very many others noted in it) Ruskin made a study.]

² [There is, however, no martyrdom by Camillo Procaccini in the Brera. The reference must be taken as generic, applying to pictures by the Eclectic School of the Procaccini—Ercole Procaccini, Camillo (his son), Giulio Cesare (another son), and Giovanni Battista Crespi (a scholar).]

These, then, are the four passions whose expression, in any degree, is degradation to the human form.¹ But of all passion it is to be observed, that it becomes ignoble either when entertained respecting unworthy objects, and therefore shallow or unjustifiable; or when of impious violence, and so destructive of human dignity. Thus Grief is noble or the reverse, according to the dignity and worthiness of the object lamented, and the grandeur of the mind enduring it. The sorrow of mortified vanity or avarice is simply disgusting; even that of bereaved affection may be base if selfish and unrestrained. All grief that convulses the features is ignoble because it is commonly shallow, and certainly temporary, as in children; though in the shock and shiver of a strong man's features, under sudden and violent grief, there may be something of sublime. The grief of Guercino's Hagar, in the Brera Gallery at Milan,² is partly despicable, partly disgusting, partly ridiculous; it is not the grief of the injured Egyptian, driven forth into the desert with the destiny of a nation in her heart; but of a servant of all work turned away

¹ [Ed. 1 reads:—"These, then, are the four passions whose presence, in any degree, on the human face is degradation. But of all passion it is to be generally observed . . ." The MS. reads in place of the first six lines of § 30:—

"The ignoble character of passion on the human face depends not so much on the character of the passion itself, as on the nobility and dignity of what excites it, and that which I call essentially ignoble is pure passion, *i.e.* the expression of pain, grief or fear concerning unworthy objects, or in general of pure passion as such without expression of any noble conception or worthy thought. Thus the fear which a man feels of being run over in the street, or of falling out of a window, though it may happen for an instant to be very acute, is essentially ignoble in its effect on the features. The fear which might be expressed in the same face during a violent thunderstorm, or of falling down a precipice is not ignoble, because although the pure passion is as base in itself, it is accompanied in the latter case with noble conceptions of divine power or natural sublimity."

This is one of several cases where familiar illustrations and simple language in the MS. were omitted or altered during revision, in order to preserve the uniform note of elevation at which Ruskin aimed in this volume.]

² [This is the picture which excited the admiration of Byron. "Of painting," he wrote from Milan, describing a visit to the Brera Gallery, "I know nothing; but I like a Guercino—a picture of Abraham putting away Hagar and Ishmael—which seems to be natural and godly" (*Letters and Journals*, ed. of 1899, iii. 377). And so Stendhal: "Il y a une Agar du Guercin faite, pour attendrir les cœurs les plus durs et les plus dévoués à l'argent ou aux cordons" (*Rome, Naples, et Florence*, ed. 1854, p. 45). Modern opinion follows rather that of Ruskin; see, for instance, J. A. Symonds' *Renaissance*, ed. 1898, vii. 225.]

for stealing tea and sugar.* Common painters forget that passion is not absolutely, and in itself, great or violent, but only in proportion to the weakness of the mind it has to deal with; and that, in exaggerating its outward signs, they are not exalting the passion, but lowering¹ the hero.[†] They think too much of passions as always the same in their nature: forgetting that the love of Achilles is different from the love of Paris, and of Alcestis from that of Laodamia. The use and value of passion is not as a subject of contemplation in itself, but as it breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the human mind, or displays its mightiness and ribbed majesty, as mountains are seen in their stability best among the coil of clouds; whence, in fine, I think it is to be held, that all passion which attains overwhelming power, so that it is not as resisting, but as conquered, that the creature is contemplated, is unfit for high art, and destructive of the ideal character of the countenance: and, in this respect, I cannot but hold Raffaele to have erred in his endeavour to express passion of such acuteness in the human face; as in the fragment of the Massacre of the Innocents² in our own gallery (wherein, repainted though it be, I suppose the purpose of the master is yet to

* Extremely right; and the entire contents of this paragraph, with the 31st, are of great general value. They are much illustrated and reinforced in my later writings. [1883.]

† “The fire, that mounts the liquor till it run o’er,
In seeming to augment it, wastes it.”

—Henry VIII.

¹ [For “lowering,” ed. 1 reads “evaporating.”]

² [This is a cartoon, after a design by Raphael, 9 feet 11 inches by 9 feet 3 inches. It was presented by Mr. Prince Hoare to the Foundling Hospital, and was lent by that institution to the National Gallery in 1840. It was formerly No. 184 in the catalogues of the Gallery (see e.g. “Felix Summerly’s” (Sir H. Cole’s) *Handbook*, 1852). The number was removed and allotted to another work when the cartoon was reclaimed by the Hospital in 1858 (see *Report of the Director of the National Gallery*, 1858). The Massacre of the Innocents was a subject more than once designed by Raphael; there is a well-known engraving of one design by Marc Antonio (see No. 567 in Sidney Colvin’s *Guide to an Exhibition of Drawings and Engravings* in the British Museum, 1895. There are studies for the subject in the Albertina collection at Vienna and in the Venice Academy. Raphael had intended it to form one of the series of cartoons for the Vatican tapestries.)]

be understood); for if such subjects are to be represented at all, their entire expression may be given without degrading the face, as we shall presently see done with unspeakable power by Tintoret;* and I think that all subjects of the kind, all human misery, slaughter, famine, plague, peril, and crime, are better in the main avoided, as of unprofitable and hardening influence, unless so far as out of the suffering, hinted rather than expressed, we may raise into nobler relief the eternal enduring of fortitude and affection, of mercy and self-devotion; or when, as by the threshing-floor of Ornan, and by the cave of Lazarus,¹ the angel of the Lord is to be seen in the chastisement, and his love to be manifested to the despair of men.

Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs which are most to be shunned in the seeking of § 32. *Recapitulation.* Ideal beauty;† though it is not the knowledge of them, but the dread and hatred of them, which will effectually aid the painter; as, on the other hand, it is not by mere admission of the loveliness of good and holy expression that its subtle characters are to be traced. Raffaele himself, questioned on this subject, made doubtful answer:² he probably could not trace through what early teaching or by what dies of emotion the image had been sealed upon his heart. Our own Bacon, who well saw the impossibility of reaching it by the combination of many separate beauties, yet explains not the nature of that “kind of felicity” to which he attributes

* Sec. II. Chap. III. § 22.

† Let it be observed that it is always of beauty, not of human character in its lower and criminal modifications, that we have been speaking. That variety of character, therefore, which we have affirmed to be necessary, is the variety of Giotto and Angelico, not of Hogarth. Works concerned with the exhibition of general character are to be spoken of in the consideration of Ideas of Relation.

¹ [Chronicles xxi. 15; John xi. 38.]

² [In a letter to his friend Count Castiglione, Raphael could only explain that he painted from an idea in his mind (“Mi servo d’ una certa idea che me viene in mente.”) See below, p. 351.]

success.¹ I suppose those who have conceived and wrought the loveliest things, have done so by no theorizing, but in simple labour of love, and could not, if put to a bar of rationalism, defend all points of what they had done; but painted it in their own delight, and to the delight of all besides, only always with that respect of conscience, and “fear of swerving from that which is right, which maketh diligent observers of circumstances, the loose regard whereof is the nurse of vulgar folly; no less than Solomon’s attention thereunto was, of natural furtherances, the most effectual to make him eminent above others, for he gave good heed, and pierced everything to the very ground.”*

With which good heed, and watching of the instants when men feel warmly and rightly, as the Indians do for the diamond in their washing of sand, and that with the desire and hope of finding true good in men, and not with the ready vanity that sets itself to fiction instantly, and carries its potter’s wheel about with it always (off which there will come only clay vessels of regular shape after all), instead of the pure mirror that can show the seraph standing by the human body—standing as signal to the heavenly land:† with this heed and this charity, there are none of us that

* Hooker, book v. chap. i. § 2.

† “A man all light, a seraph man,
By every corse there stood.

This seraph band each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight;
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light.”

—*Ancient Mariner*.²

¹ [*Essays*, xliii. “*Of Beauty*”: “Not but I thinke a Painter may make a better Face, than ever was; But he must doe it, by a Kinde of Felicity (as a Musician that maketh an excellent Ayre in Musicke, And not by Rule.”]

² [Ed. 1 quotes two more lines at the beginning:—

“Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood,
A man . . .”]

may not bring down that lamp upon his path of which Spenser sang:—

“That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem,
An outward show of things, that only seem;
But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds which kindleth lover’s fire,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay;
But, when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native planet shall retire,
For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky.”¹

¹ [*An Hymne in Honour of Beautie*. Ruskin first quotes the last two lines of st. 13, and then omitting st. 14, the whole of st. 15. See above, p. 131, where the Hymn is also quoted, and Ruskin’s note thereon.]

CHAPTER XV¹

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING THE THEORETIC FACULTY

OF the sources of beauty open to us in the visible world, we have now obtained a view which, however scanty² in its detail, is yet general in its range. Of no other sources than these visible ones, can we, by any effort in our present condition of existence, conceive. For what revelations have been made to humanity inspired, or caught up to heaven, of things to the heavenly region belonging, have been either by unspeakable words,³ or else by their very nature incommunicable, except in types and shadows; and ineffable by words belonging to earth, for, of things different from the visible, words appropriated to the visible can convey no image. How different from earthly gold the clear pavement of the city might have seemed to the eyes of St. John, we of unreceived sight cannot know; neither of that strange jasper and sardine can we conceive the likeness which He assumed that sat on the throne above the crystal sea; neither what seeming that was of slaying that the Root of David bore in the midst of the elders; neither what change it was upon the form of the fourth of them that walked in the furnace of Dura, that even the wrath of Idolatry knew for the likeness of the Son of God. The knowing that is here permitted to us is either of things outward only, as in those it is whose eyes Faith never opened, or else of that dark

¹ [Ch. iv. of sec. iii. in the Re-arranged Edition of 1883.]

² [Ed. 1 reads “. . . which though most feeble in its grasp and scanty . . .”]

³ [Ed. 1 adds, “which it is not lawful for man to utter, . . .” In marking the revisions made after the first edition, the reader will already have observed how often Ruskin curtailed his words.]

part that her glass shows feebly, of things supernatural, that gleaming of the Divine form among the mortal crowd, which all may catch if they will climb the sycamore and wait: nor how much of God's abiding at the house may be granted to those that so seek, and how much more may be opened to them in the breaking of bread, cannot be said; but of that only we can reason which is in a measure revealed to all, of that which is by constancy and purity of affection to be found in the things and the beings around us upon earth.¹ Now among all those things whose beauty we have hitherto examined, there has been a measure of imperfection. Either inferiority of kind, as the beauty of the lower animals, or resulting from degradation, as in man himself; and although in considering the beauty of human form, we arrived at some conception of restoration, yet we found that even the restoration must be, in some respect, imperfect, as incapable of embracing all qualities, moral and intellectual, at once, neither to be freed from all signs of former evil done or suffered. Consummate beauty, therefore, is not to be found on earth, neither is it to be respecting humanity legitimately conceived. But by certain operations of the imagination upon ideas of beauty received from things around us, it is possible to conceive respecting superhuman creatures (of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived) a beauty in some sort greater than we see. Of this beauty, however, it is impossible to determine anything until we have traced the imaginative operations to which it owes its being, of which operations this much may be prematurely said, that they are not creative, that no new ideas are elicited by them, and that their whole function is only a certain dealing with, concentrating, or mode of regarding the impressions received from external things: that therefore, in the beauty to which they will conduct us, there will be found no new element,

§ 2. *What imperfection exists in visible things. How in a sort by imagination removable.*

§ 3. *Which however, affects not our present conclusions.*

¹ [The Bible references in § 1 are Revelations xxi. 18; iv. 3, 6; Daniel iii. 25; Luke xix. 4; Acts ii. 42.]

but only a peculiar combination or phase of those elements that we now know; and that therefore we may at present draw all the conclusions with respect to the rank of the Theoretic faculty, which the knowledge of its subject matter can warrant.

We have seen that this subject matter is referable to four general heads. It is either the record of conscience, written in things external, or it is a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter, or it is the felicity of living things, or the perfect fulfilment of their duties and functions. In all cases it is something Divine; either the approving voice of God, the glorious symbol of Him, the evidence of His kind presence, or the obedience to His will by Him induced and supported.

All these subjects of contemplation are such as we may suppose will remain sources of pleasure to the perfected spirit throughout eternity. Divine in their nature, they are addressed to the immortal part of men.

There remain, however, two points to be noticed before I can hope that this conclusion will be frankly accepted by the reader. If it be the moral part of us to which Beauty addresses itself, how does it happen, it will be asked, that it is ever found in the works of impious men, and how is it possible for such to desire or conceive it?

On the other hand, how does it happen that men in high state of moral culture are often insensible to the influence of material beauty: and insist feebly upon it as an instrument of soul culture?

These two objections I shall endeavour briefly to answer; not that they can be satisfactorily treated without that examination of the connection between all kinds of greatness in art,¹ on which I purpose to enter in the following volume.² For

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, "without that detailed examination of the whole body of great works of art, on which . . ."]

² [See in *Modern Painters*, ch. iii., "Of the Real Nature of Greatness of Style," and the succeeding chapters on the False and True Ideals.]

the right determination of these two questions is indeed the whole end and aim of my labour (and if it could be here accomplished, I should bestow no effort farther), namely, the proving that no supreme power of art can be attained by impious men; and that the neglect of art, as an interpreter of divine things, has been of evil consequence to the Christian world.*

At present, however, I would only meet such objections as must immediately arise in the reader's mind.

And first, it will be remembered that I have, throughout the examination of Typical beauty, asserted our instinctive sense of it;¹ the moral *meaning* of it being only discoverable by reflection. Now this instinctive sense of it varies in intensity among men, being given, like the hearing ear of music, to some more than to others: and if those to whom it is given in large measure be unfortunately men of impious or unreflecting spirit, it is very possible that the perceptions of beauty should be by them cultivated on principles merely *æsthetic*,[†] and so lose their hallowing power; for though the good seed in them is altogether divine, yet, there being no blessing in the spring thereof, it brings forth wild grapes in the end. And yet these wild grapes are well discernible, like the deadly gourds of Gilgal.² There is in all works of such men a taint and stain, and jarring discord, darker³ and louder exactly in proportion to the moral deficiency; of which the best proof and measure are to be found in their treatment of the human form (since in landscape it is nearly impossible to introduce definite

§ 6. *Typical beauty may be æsthetically pursued. Instances.*

* It is extraordinary that these real motives of the book have never been asserted till now, and even here, thus hastily. I had no memory, myself, when I began the revision of the text, that it was anywise so pregnant with design of subsequent works. [1883.]

[†] I have italicised the word, that the reader may note the anticipation of the mischief which has since followed from this sect. [1883.]

¹ [Ed. 1 reads less accurately "asserted its instinctive power; . . ." The italicising of "meaning" was introduced in ed. 2.]

² [2 Kings iv. 38–40.]

³ [For "darker," ed. 1 reads unalliteratively "blackier."]

expression of evil),* of which the highest beauty has been attained only once, and then by no system-taught painter, but by a most holy Dominican monk of Fiesole: and beneath him all fall lower and lower in proportion to their inferior sanctity (though with more or less attainment of that which is noble, according to their intellectual power and earnestness), as Raffaello in his *St. Cecilia*¹ (a mere study of a passionate, dark-eyed, large-formed Italian model); and even Perugino, in that there is about his noblest faces a short-coming, indefinable; an absence of the full outpouring of the sacred spirit that there is in Angelico; traceable, I doubt not, to some deficiencies and avaricious flaws of his heart, whose consequences in his conduct were such as to give Vasari hope that his lies might stick to him (for the contradiction of which in the main, if there be not contradiction enough in every line that the hand of Perugino drew, compare Rio;^{†2} and note also what Rio has singularly missed observing, that Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence Gallery, has put a scroll into the hand, with the words “*Timete Deum*,” thus surely indicating what he considered his duty and message): and so all other even of the sacred painters, not to speak of the lower body of men in whom, on the one hand, there is marked sensuality and impurity in all that they seek of beauty, as in Correggio and Guido; or, on the other, a partial want of the sense of beauty itself, as in Rubens and Titian, exhibited in the adoption of coarse types of feature and form; sometimes,

* I had not seen, at this time, and could not have conceived the darkness and distortion of the vicious French schools of landscape. [1883.]

† De la Poésie Chrétienne. *Forme de l' Art*.

¹ [“The image with the lifted eyes,” at Bologna, described in “The Broken Chain”; see Vol. II. p. 167 and *n.*]

² [Vasari’s bias against the Umbrian master is, indeed, very marked, and there is no proof whatever that Perugino was irreligious or atheistic, as Vasari implies. The criminal records of Florence show, however, that he was of violent temper (see Symonds’ *Renaissance*, iii. 218). The passage of Rio to which Ruskin refers is at p. 165 of the English ed. of 1854. The “Portrait of Perugino” in the Uffizi is inscribed on the back: “1494 D’Luglio Pietro Perugino Pinse Franco del Ope,” and is now believed to represent, not Perugino himself, but Francesco delle Opere, a Florentine artist, a brother of Giovanni Corniole. For other references by Ruskin to Perugino, see below, sec. ii. ch. v. § 20, p. 330; and *Ariadne Florentina*, App. vi.]

also (of which I could find instances in modern times), by a want of evidence of delight in what they do; so that, after they have rendered some passage of exceeding beauty, they will suffer some discordant point to interfere with it, and it will not hurt them; as if they had no pleasure in that which was best, but had done it in inspiration that was not profitable to them; as deaf men might touch an instrument with a feeling in their heart, which yet returns not outwardly upon them, and so know not when they play false: and sometimes by total want of choice, for there is a choice of love in all rightly tempered men; not that ignorant and insolent choice which rejects half nature as empty of the right, but that pure choice that fetches the right out of everything; and where this is wanting, we may see men walking up and down in dry places, finding no rest;¹ ever and anon doing something noble and yet not following it up, but dwelling the next instant on something impure or profitless with the same intensity and yet impatience, so that they are ever wondered at and never sympathized with, and while they dazzle all they lead none; and then, beneath these again, we find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil desire ill repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for, and feeding upon, horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin; as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villainous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.

But secondly, it is to be noted that it is neither by us ascertainable what moments of pure feeling or aspiration may occur to men of minds apparently cold and lost, nor by us to be pronounced through what instruments, and in what strangely occurrent voices, God may choose to communicate good to men. It seems to me that much of what is great, and to all men beneficial, has been wrought by those who

§ 7. *How interrupted by false feeling.*

§ 8. *Greatness and truth are sometimes by the Deity sustained and spoken in and through evil men.*

¹ [Matthew xii. 43.]

neither intended nor knew the good they did; and that many mighty harmonies have been discoursed by instruments that had been dumb or discordant, but that God knew their stops. The Spirit of Prophecy consisted with the avarice of Balaam, and the disobedience of Saul.¹ Could we spare from its page that parable, which he said, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open; though we know that the sword of his punishment was then sharp in its sheath beneath him in the plains of Moab? or shall we not lament with David over the shield, cast away on the Gilboa mountains, of him to whom God gave *another heart* that day, when he turned his back to go from Samuel?² It is not our part to look hardly, nor to look always, to the character or the deeds of men, but to accept from all of them, and to hold fast, that which we can prove good, and feel to be ordained for us. We know that whatever good there is in them is itself divine; and wherever we see the virtue of ardent labour and self-surrendering to a single purpose, wherever we find constant reference made to the written scripture of natural beauty, this at least we know is great and good; this we know is not granted by the counsel of God without purpose, nor maintained without result: their interpretation we may accept, into their labour we may enter, but they themselves must look to it, if what they do has no intent of good, nor any reference to the Giver of all gifts. Selfish in their industry, unchastened in their wills, ungrateful for the Spirit that is upon them, they may yet be helmed by that Spirit whithersoever the Governor listeth; involuntary instruments they may become of others' good; unwillingly they may bless Israel, doubtfully discomfit Amalek; but short-coming there will be of their glory, and sure, of their punishment.³

I believe I shall be able, incidentally, in succeeding investigations, to prove this short-coming, and to examine

¹ [Numbers xxiv. 4, 16.]

² [2 Samuel i. 21.]

³ [James iii. 4; Exodus xvii. 8-13.]

the sources of it; not absolutely indeed (seeing that all reasoning on the characters of men must be treacherous, our knowledge on this head being as corrupt as it is scanty, while even in living with them it is impossible to trace the working, or estimate the errors, of great and self-secreted minds), but at least enough to establish the general principle upon such grounds of fact as may satisfy those who not too severely demand the practical proof (often in a measure impossible) of things which can hardly be doubted in their rational consequence. At present, it would be useless to enter on an examination for which we have no materials; and I proceed, therefore,¹ shortly to reply to that other objection urged against the real moral dignity of the faculty, that many Christian men seem to be in themselves without it, and even to discountenance it in others.

§ 9. *The second objection arising from the coldness of Christian men to external beauty.*

It has been said by Schiller, in his letters on æsthetic culture, that the sense of beauty never farthered the performance of a single duty.²

Although this gross and inconceivable falsity will hardly be accepted by any one in so many words, seeing that there are few who do not receive,³ and know that they receive, at certain moments strength of some kind, or rebuke, from the appealing of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon

¹ [Ed. 1 reads:—

“and I proceed, therefore, to notice that other and opposite error of Christian men in thinking that there is little use or value in the operation of the Theoretic faculty; not that I at present feel myself capable, or that this is the place for the discussion of that vast question of the operation of Taste (as it is called) on the minds of men, and the national value of its teaching, but I wish shortly to reply to that objection which might be urged to the real moral dignity . . .”]

² [See, for statements in that sense, Letter 10 of the “Letters upon the Æsthetic Culture of the Man” (in the book cited above, p. 122 *n.*). Such statements, taken by themselves, hardly represent Schiller’s theories.]

³ [Ed. 1 reads, “so many terms, seeing that there are few so utterly lost but that they receive . . .”]

him out of the sky; though, I say, this falsity is not wholly and in terms admitted, yet it seems to be partly and practically so in much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in the recommending of the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and immediately shown: though they insist much on His giving of bread, and raiment, and health (which He gives to all inferior creatures), they require us not to thank Him for that glory of His works which He has permitted us alone to perceive: they tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at even;¹ they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight. Now there are reasons for this, manifold, in the toil and warfare of an earnest mind, which, in its efforts at the raising of men from utter loss and misery, has often but little time or disposition to take heed of anything more than the mere life, and of those so occupied it is not for us to judge; but I think that of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins, which often, even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with nature fallen, they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed. It seems to me that the real sources of bluntness in the feelings towards the splendour of the grass and glory of the flower,² are less to be found in ardour of occupation, in seriousness of compassion, or heavenliness of desire, than in the turning of the eye at intervals of rest too selfishly within; the want of power to shake off the anxieties of actual and near interest, and to leave results in God's hands; the scorn of all that does not seem immediately apt for our purposes, or open to our understanding, and perhaps something of pride,

§ 10. *Reasons for this coldness in the anxieties of the world. These anxieties overwrought and criminal.*

¹ [Genesis xxiv. 63.]

² [Wordsworth: *Intimations of Immortality*:—

“Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.”]

which desires rather to investigate than to feel. (I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them.)* If, for every¹ rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if, for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of His kindness to them; if side by side, with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market - place.² At all events, whatever may be the inability, in this present life, to mingle the full enjoyment of the Divine works with the full discharge of every practical duty, and confessedly in many cases this must be, let us not attribute the inconsistency to any indignity of the faculty of contemplation, but to the sin and the suffering of the fallen state, and the change of order from the keeping of the garden to the tilling of the ground. We cannot say how far it is right or agreeable with God's will, while men are perishing round about us; while grief

§ 11. *Evil consequences of such coldness.*

§ 12. *Theoria the service of Heaven.*

* This eleventh paragraph, as being extremely palatable to everybody, and especially to the amiable Protestant, has been more quoted, I suppose, than any sentence I ever wrote. The first clause of it, now put as a parenthesis, should be at once cancelled, if in this reprint I cancelled anything; but becomes pardonable to me, when I see the general fervour of belief in God's goodness, and man's possible happiness, which runs throughout all the theology in this volume. The close of the paragraph is good and valuable. [1883.]

¹ [This passage, "If, for every rebuke . . . in the market-place," is § 79 of *Frondes Agrestes*.]

² [Luke vii. 32.]

and pain, and wrath, and impiety, and death, and all the powers of the air, are working wildly and evermore,¹ and the cry of blood going up to heaven, that any of us should take hand from the plough; but this we know, that there will come a time when the service of God shall be the beholding of Him; and though in these stormy seas where we are now driven up and down, His Spirit is dimly seen on the face of the waters, and we are left to cast anchors out of the stern, and wish for the day, that day will come, when, with the evangelists on the crystal and stable sea, all the creatures of God shall be full of eyes within, and there shall be “no more curse, but His servants shall serve Him, and shall see His face.”²

¹ [Here a characteristic instance may be noted, in comparing the text with the MS., of the chastening to which Ruskin subjected his words. The MS. reads, “. . . all the powers of the air are turning the heap of human dust over and over with their reeking spades.”]

² [The Bible references in § 12 are Genesis ii. 15, iii. 23, i. 2; Revelations iv. 6, 8, xxii. 3, 4.]

SECTION II

OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

INTRODUCTORY NOTE (1883)¹

1. IN revising this terminal division of my former second volume, I find less to be corrected or condemned than in the previous chapters; but far more, were it conveniently now possible, to be supplied. The treatment of this part of the subject is not only incomplete, but involves the omission of all the most important practical questions in the useless curiosity of analysis, just as a common anatomist describes the action of muscles in walking, without thereby helping anybody to walk, or those of a bird's wing in flying, without defining the angles of its stroke to the air.² I have thus examined at tedious length the various actions of human conception and memory, without helping any one to conceive, or to remember; and, at least in this part of the book, scarcely touching at all on the primary questions (both moral and intellectual) how far the will has power over the imagination. It was perhaps in reality fortunate that I should not have entered on these higher inquiries till I was older and more experienced; nor shall I now attempt to remedy such defects by hasty patching of the text or fortuitous addition of notes to it. One or two introductory observations may, however, make this imperfect essay more useful, so far as it reaches.

2. In the first place, the reader must be warned not to trouble himself with the distinctions, attempted or alluded to, between Fancy and Imagination. The subject is jaded, the matter of it insignificant, and the settlement of it practically

¹ [Inserted at the beginning of vol. ii. of the re-arranged edition (1883)].

² [Cf. *Love's Meinie*, Lecture ii.]

impossible, not merely because everybody has his own theory, but also because nobody ever states his own in terms on which other people are agreed. I am myself now entirely indifferent which word I use; and should say of a work of art that it was well “fancied,” or well “invented,” or well “imagined,” with only some shades of different meaning in the application of the terms, rather dependent on the matter treated, than the power of mind involved in the treatment. I might agree with Sir Piercie Shafton that his doublet was well fancied,¹ or that his figure of speech was well conceived, and might perhaps reserve the word “imagined” for the design of an angel’s dress by Giotto, or the choice of a simile by Dante. But such distinctions are scarcely more than varieties of courtesy or dignity in the use of words; and I could not in essential nature of faculty distinguish Sir Piercie’s designing from Giotto’s, except, as I said, with respect to the matter of it, and the fixture of his attention rather on the dress than the angel. Briefly, the power of the human mind to invent circumstances, forms, or scenes, at its pleasure, may be generally and properly called “imagination;” while the especial power of intellect required to handle the different subjects of invention varies in so many modes that it is of no use to try to find words for them. Sir Piercie (to keep to one example) is at no loss for new metaphors, or for new patterns of colour, but he is struck dumb when required to invent a story; and stands helpless by, hearing with mere amazement Mysie Happer’s flowing relation to the inquiring landlord “that Ball, her palfrey, had fallen by the way, because he had been over-wrought with carrying home the last melder of meal to the portioner of Longhope; and that she had turned in Ball to graze in the Taskers’ Park, near Cripplecross, for he had stood as still as Lot’s wife with very weariness; and that the knight had courteously insisted she should ride behind him, and that she had brought him to her kind friend’s hostelry rather than to proud Peter Peddie’s, who got his malt at the Mellerstane Mills; and that he must get the best the house

¹ [See *The Monastery*, ch. xxvii., and for the passage quoted further on, ch. xxix.]

afforded, and that he must get it ready in a moment of time, and that she was ready to help in the kitchen.” It seems to me, indeed, probable, from my general experience, and observation, that the distinction thus implied by Scott between the gifts of ornamental designs and of circumstantial invention, may be well grounded, and perhaps demonstrable by a sufficient comparison of biographies; yet these faculties are usually possessed in the same relative proportion by great painters, so that the pictures most entertaining by their incidents are usually also the richest in their ornament; and certainly if Miss Edgeworth, in that unbounded faith in the directing power of education which she learnt from Johnson, had been one of the company on any of the happy days when Scott took Turner to show him the best views of the scenery of Abbotsford,¹ she would assuredly, had the question been mooted, have maintained that Scott, had he chosen, might have been the brightest of landscape painters, and Turner, under better literary culture, have written the *Lady of the Lake*.

3. But a far more important subject of inquiry than any respecting the various kinds or powers of imagination is the degree in which all of them are subject to the control of the will, and liable to disease through the absence of direction and discipline. No attempt whatever, so far as I have observed, has yet been made by physicians to distinguish the morbid developments or disturbances of really strong intellectual powers from those which result from conditions of weakness or deficiency in them, as, for instance, the ordinary spectre seen by most persons in a state of feverish exhaustion from the visions of over-excited religious or poetical fancy. In all cases when it is involuntary, the vision or imagination may be considered as morbid (unless admitted to be supernatural); but even on the simplest principles of physical investigation the visions of St. Paul or St. Anthony are not to be classed with those of common delirium, and still less the powers

¹ [See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ch. lxxx., where Scott's walks with Turner are described.]

which can be summoned at will, and directed to chosen objects, with those which enslave the conscience, and resist the reason, of their possessor.¹

4. I scarcely now remember how far through a true sense of my inability at that time to deal with them adequately, or how far through imperfect sense of their importance, all these subjects of inquiry have been waived in the following essay, but I felicitate the reader on the neglect of which I am nevertheless myself ashamed; and believe that the conclusions arrived at are safer in their narrowness than they could have been in pretending to include the total field of investigation.

The reader must therefore remember throughout that the “Imagination” spoken of is meant only to include the healthy, voluntary, and necessary action of the highest powers of the human mind on subjects properly demanding and justifying their exertion;² and that, without adopting, if he think them inaccurate, the terms I have used for any special kind of them, he may yet be helped, by the analysis I have given, to follow with more pleasurable interest the various operations of constructive or inventive genius on the common material of the external world.

¹ [With the distinctions here drawn between morbid and healthy action of the imagination, should be compared *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 88 (Feb. 8, 1880), where Ruskin emphasises “the precise and sharp distinction between the state of morbid inflammation of brain which gives rise to false vision” and “the not morbid, however dangerous, states of more or less excited temper, and too much quickened thought.” Compare also, for the healthy exercise of the imagination in seeing visions and painting or describing them “from the life,” *Deucalion* (chapter entitled “Revision,” § 18) and *Lectures on Art*, §§ 45, 46. See also below, Ruskin’s remarks on Bunyan, p. 349 n.]

² [See *Pleasures of England*, “The Pleasures of Fancy,” § 89, where Ruskin quotes this passage and explains that it means “that all healthy minds possess imagination, and use it at will, under fixed laws of truthful perception and memory.” Compare *Deucalion*, ii. ch. i., where Ruskin gives an example to “show you in a moment what long chapters of *Modern Painters* were written to explain,—how the real faculty of imagination is always true, and goes straight to its mark; but people with no imagination are always false, and blunder or drivel about their mark.” Ruskin’s chapter on the Imagination may appropriately be compared with Lamb’s essay on the “Sanity of True Genius,” where many of the same points are made—*e.g.* “The true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject but has dominion over it. . . . From beyond the scope of Nature if he summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. . . . Herein the great and little wits are differenced; that if the latter wander ever so little from nature or actual existence, they lose themselves and their readers. Their phantoms are lawless; their visions nightmares.”]

CHAPTER I

OF THE THREE FORMS OF IMAGINATION

WE have hitherto been exclusively occupied with those sources of pleasure which exist in the external creation, and which in any faithful copy of it must to a certain extent exist also.

§ 1. *A partial examination only of the Imagination is to be attempted.*

These sources of beauty, however, are not presented by any very great work of art in a form of pure transcript. They invariably receive the reflection of the mind under whose influence* they have passed, and are modified or coloured by its image.

This modification is the Work of Imagination.

As, in the course of our succeeding investigation, we shall be called upon constantly to compare sources of beauty existing in nature with the images of them received by the human mind, it is very necessary for us shortly to review the conditions and limits of the Imaginative faculty, and to ascertain by what tests we may distinguish its sane, healthy, and profitable operation, from that which is erratic, diseased, and dangerous.

It is neither desirable nor possible here to examine or illustrate in full the essence of this mighty faculty. Such an examination would require a review of the whole field of literature, and would alone demand a volume.† Our present task is not to explain or exhibit full portraiture of this function of the mind in all its relations, but only to obtain some certain tests by which we may determine whether

* In the old editions, "shadow." I change to "influence," because it is not the proper work of intellect to cast shadows on what it observes. [1883.]

† "Many and many volumes," I should have said. It had, altogether, more than a volume to itself, as it was,—scattered through five of the old edition,—and was then not half analyzed. [1883.]

it be very Imagination or not, and unmask all impersonations of it; and this chiefly with respect to art, for in literature the faculty takes a thousand forms according to the matter it has to treat, and becomes like the princess of the Arabian tale, sword, eagle, or fire, according to the war it wages;¹ sometimes piercing, sometimes soaring, sometimes illumining, retaining no image of itself, except its supernatural power; so that I shall content myself with tracing that particular form of it, and unveiling those imitations of it only, which are to be found, or feared, in painting, referring to other creations of mind only for illustration.

Unfortunately, the works of metaphysicians will afford us in this most interesting inquiry, no aid whatsoever. They who are constantly endeavouring to fathom and explain the essence of the faculties of mind, are sure, in the end, to lose sight of all that cannot be explained (though it may be defined and felt); and because, as I shall presently show, the essence of the Imaginative faculty is utterly mysterious and inexplicable, and to be recognized in its results only, or in the negative results of its absence, the metaphysicians, as far as I am acquainted with their works, miss it altogether, and never reach higher than a definition of Fancy by a false name.

What I understand by fancy will presently appear: not that I contend for nomenclature, but only for distinction between two mental faculties, by whatever name they be called; one the source of all that is great in the poetic arts, the other merely decorative and entertaining; but which are often confounded together, and which have so much in common as to render strict definition of either difficult.

Dugald Stewart's meagre definition may serve us for a starting point. "Imagination," he says, "includes conception or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which we are to make a

¹ [The reference is to the story of the Second Royal Mendicant, ch. iii. of *The Arabian Nights* (Lane's edition)].

§ 2. *The works of the Metaphysicians, how nugatory with respect to this faculty.*

§ 3. *D. Stewart's definition, how inadequate.*

selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials from the qualities and circumstances which are connected with them in nature; and judgment or taste, which selects the materials and directs their combination. To these powers we may add that particular habit of association to which I formerly gave the name of Fancy; as it is this which presents to our choice all the different materials which are subservient to the efforts of imagination, and which may therefore be considered as forming the ground-work of poetical genius.”¹

(By Fancy in this passage, we find on referring to the chapter treating of it, that nothing more is meant than the rapid occurrence of ideas of sense to the mind.)

Now, in this definition, the very point and purpose of all the inquiry is missed. We are told that judgment or taste “directs the combination.” In order that anything may be directed, an end must be previously determined; what is the faculty that determines this end? and of what frame and make, how boned and fleshed, how conceived or seen, is the end itself? Bare judgment or taste, cannot approve of what has no existence; and yet by Dugald Stewart’s definition we are left to their catering among a host of conceptions, to produce a combination which, as they work for, they must see and approve before it exists. This power of prophecy is the very essence of the whole matter, and it is just that inexplicable part which the metaphysician misses.

As might be expected from his misunderstanding of the faculty he has given an instance entirely nugatory.* § 4. *His instance nugatory*
It would be difficult to find in Milton a passage in which less power of imagination was shown, than the description of Eden, if, as I suppose, this be

* He continues thus: “To illustrate these observations, let us consider the steps by which Milton must have proceeded in creating his imaginary garden of Eden. When he first proposed to himself that subject of description, it is reasonable to suppose that a variety of the most striking scenes which he had seen, crowded into his mind. The association of ideas suggested them, and the power of conception placed each of them before him with all its beauties and imperfections. In every natural scene, if we destine

¹ [*Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Part i. ch. viii.; ed. 1843, p. 257.]
IV. P

the passage meant, at the beginning of the fourth book, where I can find three expressions only in which this power is shown; the “*burnished* with golden rind, hung amiable,” of the Hesperian fruit, the “*lays forth* her purple grape” of the vine, and the “*fringed* bank with myrtle crowned” of the lake:* and these are not what Stewart meant, but only that accumulation of bowers, groves, lawns, and hillocks, which is not imagination at all, but composition, and that of the commonest kind. Hence if we take any passage in which there is real imagination, we shall find Stewart’s hypothesis not only inefficient and obscure, but utterly inapplicable.

Take one or two at random.

§ 5. *Various instances.*

“On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war.”

it for any particular purpose, there are defects and redundancies, which art may sometimes, but cannot always correct. But the power of Imagination is unlimited. She can create and annihilate, and dispose at pleasure, her woods, her rocks, and her rivers. Milton, accordingly, would not copy his Eden from any one scene, but would select from each the features which were most eminently beautiful. The power of abstraction enabled him to make the separation, and taste directed him in the selection.”

* I ought at once to have explained here what I meant, myself, by imagination;¹ and how these three words gave evidence of it. I meant, and always do mean by it, primarily, the power of seeing anything we describe as if it were real; so that, looking at it as we describe (or paint), points may strike us which will give a vividness to the description that would not have occurred to vague memory, or been easily borrowed from the expressions of other writers. Any ordinary author might have spoken of oranges as golden, of grapes as purple, or of a bank as crowned with myrtle; but the conception is much more distinct and forcible which catches the lustre on the luminous rind, feels the weight of cluster in bending the festooned branches to the ground, or sees, in the distance, the delicate branches becoming a fringe at the lake’s border. On the contrary, the mere collection of the most agreeable features from various scenes is in the power of ordinary industry, and is rather the folly of vulgar minds than the strength of distinguished ones. No intelligent traveller would ask a landscape-painter to gather for him into one canvas the cascade of Terni, the lake of Nemi, and the promontory of Sestri. [1883.]

¹ [Cf. Ruskin’s index to *Fors Clavigera* for 1871 and 1872, s. “Imagination.”]

(Note that the word incensed is to be taken in its literal and material sense, set on fire.) What taste or judgment was it that directed this combination? or is there nothing more than taste or judgment here?

“Ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstaid; as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half-sunk with all his pines.”

“Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her *sultry* horn.”

“Missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven’s wide pathless way;
And oft, *as if her head she bowed,*
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.”¹

It is evident that Stewart’s explanation utterly fails in all these instances; for there is in them no “combination” whatsoever, but a particular mode of regarding the qualities or appearances of a single thing, illustrated and conveyed to us by the image of another; and the act of imagination, observe, is not the selection of this image, but the mode of regarding the object.

But the metaphysician’s definition fails yet more utterly, when we look at the imagination neither as regarding, nor combining, but as penetrating.

“My gracious silence, hail!
Wouldst thou have laugh’d, had I come coffin’d home,
That weep’st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.”²

¹ [The quotations are from (1) *Paradise Lost*, ii. 707; (2) *Paradise Lost*, vi. 193; (3) *Lycidas*, 25; (4) *Il Penseroso*, 65.]

² [*Coriolanus*, Act ii. sc. i.]

How did Shakespeare *know* that Virgilia could not speak?

This knowledge, this intuitive and penetrative perception, is still one of the forms, the highest, of imagination, but there is no combination of images here.

We find, then, that the Imagination has three totally distinct functions. It combines, and by combination creates new forms; but the secret principle of this combination has not been shown by the analysts. Again, it treats, or regards, both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways; and, thirdly, it penetrates, analyzes, and reaches truths by no other faculty discoverable. These its three functions, I shall endeavour to illustrate, but not in this order: the most logical mode of treatment would be to follow the order in which commonly the mind works; that is, penetrating first, combining next, and treating or regarding, finally; but this arrangement would be inconvenient, because the acts of penetration and of regard are so closely connected, and so like in their relations to other mental acts, that I wish to examine them consecutively; and the rather, because they have to do with higher subject matter than the mere act of combination, whose distinctive nature, that property which makes it imagination and not composition, it will, I think, be best to explain at setting out, as we easily may, in subjects familiar and material. I shall therefore examine the Imaginative faculty in these three forms; first, as Combining or Associative; secondly, as Analytic or Penetrative; thirdly, as Regardant or Contemplative.

§ 6. *The three operations of the Imagination: Penetrative, Associative, Contemplative.*

CHAPTER II

OF IMAGINATION ASSOCIATIVE

IN order to render our inquiry as easy as possible, we shall consider the dealing of the Associative imagination § 1. *Of simple Conception.* with the simplest possible matter,—that is, with conceptions of material things. First, therefore, we must define the nature of these conceptions themselves.

After beholding and examining any material object, our knowledge respecting it exists in two different forms. Some facts exist in the brain in a verbal form, as known, but not conceived; as, for instance, that it was heavy or light, that it was eight inches and a quarter long, etc., of which length we cannot have accurate conception, but only such a conception as might attach to a length of seven inches or nine; and which fact we may recollect without any conception of the object at all. Other facts respecting it exist in the brain in a visible form, not always visible, but visible at will, as its being of such a colour, or having such and such a complicated shape: as the form of a rose-bud for instance, which it would be difficult to express verbally, neither is it retained by the brain in a verbal form, but a visible one: that is, when we wish for knowledge of its form for immediate use, we summon up a vision or image of the thing; we do not remember it in words, as we remember the fact that it took so many days to blow, or that it was gathered at such and such a time.

The knowledge of things retained in this visible form is called *Conception* by the metaphysicians, which term I shall retain; it is inaccurately called *Imagination* by Taylor, in the passage quoted by Wordsworth in the preface to his

poems;¹ not but that the term Imagination is etymologically and rightly expressive of it, but we want that term for a higher faculty.

There are many questions respecting this faculty of conception of very great interest; such as the exact amount of aid that verbal knowledge renders to visible knowledge (as, for instance, the verbal knowledge that a flower has five, or seven, or ten petals, or that a muscle is inserted at such and such a point of the bone, aids the conception of the flower or the limb); and again, what amount of aid the visible knowledge renders to the verbal; as, for instance, whether any one, being asked a question about some animal or thing which instantly and from verbal knowledge he cannot answer, may have such power of summoning up the image of the animal or thing as to ascertain the fact by actual beholding (which I do not assert, but can conceive to be possible); and again, what is that indefinite and subtle character of the conception itself in most men, which admits not of being by themselves traced or realized, and yet is a sure test of likeness in any representation of the thing; like an intaglio, with a front light on it, whose lines cannot be seen, and yet they will fit one definite form only, and that accurately; these and many other questions it is irrelevant at present to determine,* since to forward our present purpose, it will be well to suppose the conception aided by verbal knowledge to be absolutely perfect; and we will suppose a man to retain such clear image of a large number of the material things he has seen, as to be able to set down any of them on paper, with perfect fidelity and absolute memory† of their most minute features.

In thus setting them down on paper, he works, I suppose,

* Compare Chapter IV. of this Section.

† On the distinction rightly made by the metaphysicians between conception absolute, and conception accompanied by reference to past time (or memory), it is of no use here to insist.

¹ [The reference is to the Preface to the edition of 1815. The passage there cited from W. Taylor (*British Synonyms Discriminated*) is: "A man has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense; it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation."]

exactly as he would work from nature, only copying the remembered image in his mind, instead of the real thing. He is, therefore, still nothing more than a copyist. There is no exercise of imagination in this whatsoever.

But over these images, vivid and distinct as nature herself, he has a command which over nature he has not. He can summon any that he chooses; and if, therefore, any group of them which he received from nature be not altogether to his mind, he is at liberty to remove some of the component images, and others foreign, and re-arrange the whole.

Let us suppose, for instance, that he has perfect knowledge of the forms of the Aiguilles Verte and Argentière, and of the great glacier between them at the upper extremity of the valley of Chamonix. The forms of the mountains please him, but the presence of the glacier suits not his purpose. He removes the glacier, sets the mountains further apart, and introduces between them part of the valley of the Rhone.

This is composition, and is what Dugald Stewart mistook for imagination, in the kingdom of which noble faculty it has no part nor lot.

The essential acts of Composition, properly so called, are the following. The mind which desires the new feature summons up before it those images which it supposes to be the kind wanted; of these it takes the one which it supposes to be fittest, and tries it; if it will not answer, it tries another, until it has obtained such an association as pleases it.

In this operation, if it be of little sensibility, it regards only the absolute beauty or value of the images brought before it; and takes that or those which it thinks fairest or most interesting, without any regard to their sympathy with those for whose company they are destined. Of this kind is all vulgar composition; the "Mulino" of Claude, described in the preface to the First Part, being a characteristic example.¹

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 41.]

If the mind be of higher feeling, it will look to the sympathy or contrast of the features, to their likeness or dissimilarity: it will take, as it thinks best, features resembling or discordant; and if, when it has put them together, it be not satisfied, it will repeat the process on the features themselves, cutting away one part and putting in another; so working more and more delicately down to the lowest details, until by dint of experiment, of repeated trials and shiftings, and constant reference to principles (as that two lines must not mimic one another, that one mass must not be equal to another), etc., it has mortised together a satisfactory result.

This process will be more and more rapid and effective, in proportion to the artist's powers of conception and association, these in their turn depending on his knowledge and experience. The distinctness of his powers of conception will give value, point, and truth to every fragment that he draws from memory. His powers of association, and his knowledge of nature, will pour out before him, in greater or less number and appositeness, the images from which to choose. His experience guides him to quick discernment in the combination, when made, of the parts that are offensive and require change.

The most elevated power of mind of all these is that of association, by which images apposite or resemblant, or of whatever kind wanted, are called up quickly and in multitudes. When this power is very brilliant, it is called Fancy; not that this is the only meaning of the word Fancy; but it is the meaning of it in relation to that function of the imagination which we are here considering; for fancy has three functions; one subordinate to each of the three functions of the imagination.

Great differences of power are manifested among artists in this respect; some having hosts of distinct images always at their command, and rapidly discerning resemblance or contrast; others having few images, and obscure, at their disposal, nor readily governing those they have.

§ 5. *What powers are implied by it. The first of the three functions of fancy.*

Where the powers of fancy are very brilliant, the picture becomes highly interesting; if her images are systematically and rightly combined, and truthfully rendered, it will become even impressive and instructive; if wittily and curiously combined, it will be captivating and entertaining.

But all this time the imagination has not once shown itself. All this (except the gift of fancy) may be taught; all this is easily comprehended and analyzed; but imagination is neither to be taught, nor by any efforts to be attained, nor by any acuteness of discernment dissected or analyzed.

§6. Imagination not yet manifested.

It has been said that in composition the mind can only take cognizance of likeness or dissimilarity, or of abstract beauty among the ideas it brings together. But neither likeness nor dissimilarity secures harmony. We saw in the Chapter on Unity that likeness destroyed harmony or unity of membership;¹ and that difference did not necessarily secure it, but only that particular *imperfection* in each of the harmonizing parts which can only be supplied by its fellow part. If, therefore, the combination made is to be harmonious,* the artist must induce in each of its component parts (suppose two only, for simplicity's sake), such imperfection as that the other shall put it right. If one of them be perfect by itself, the other will be an excrescence. Both must be faulty when separate, and each corrected by the presence of the other. If he can accomplish this, the result will be beautiful; it will be a whole, an organized body with dependent members;—he is an inventor. If not, let his separate features be as beautiful,

* The use of this word ought to have shown me the narrowness, and, if generalized, the fallacy of this theory of imperfection. Musicians, indeed, speak of the imperfection of chords, without certain notes required for their completion or resolution; but the separate notes in either melody or harmony are not themselves faulty or painful. The theory stated in the text applies in music only to the use of discords; and in painting applies but vaguely and doubtfully to anything. Two wrongs do, indeed, in pictures, sometimes make a right: but it is much more likely they will make a third wrong; and the several parts of a beautiful composition may often be as lovely as the whole. [1883.]

¹ [Sec. i. ch. vi. § 4, p. 95.]

as apposite, or as resemblant as they may, they form no whole. They are two members glued together. He is only a carpenter and joiner.

Now, the conceivable imperfections of any single feature are infinite. It is impossible, therefore, to fix upon a form of imperfection in the one, and try with this all the forms of imperfection of the other until one fits; but the two imperfections must be co-relatively and simultaneously conceived.

§ 7. *Imagination associative is the co-relative conception of imperfect component parts.*

This is Imagination, properly so called; imagination associative, the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it. By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass (for it evidently matters not whether the imperfections be conceived out of the infinite number conceivable, or selected out of a number recollected), two ideas which are *separately wrong*, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either is good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference*.^{*} Now, what is that prophetic action of mind, which out of an infinite mass of things that cannot be tried together, seizes, at the same instant, two that are fit for each other; together right, yet each disagreeable alone?

This operation of mind, so far as I can see, is absolutely inexplicable, but there is something like it in chemistry.¹

§ 8. *Material analogy with Imagination.*

“The action of sulphuric acid on metallic zinc affords an instance of what was once called Disposing Affinity.

^{*} This anticipatory preference or determination takes place whether the parts to be combined are beautiful or ugly. The following chemical illustration is not inapt, and the rest of the chapter, with some abatement of its hyperbole, true. [1883.]

¹ [See *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 83 (1877): “Among the other virtues of the great classic masters, this of enchanted Design is, of all, the least visible to the present apothecary mind; for although, when I first gave analysis of the inventive power in *Modern Painters*, I was best able to illustrate its combining method by showing that ‘there was something like it in chemistry,’ it is precisely what *is* like it in chemistry, that the chemist of to-day denies.”]

Zinc decomposes pure water at common temperatures with extreme slowness; but as soon as sulphuric acid is added, decomposition of the water takes place rapidly, though the acid merely unites with oxide of zinc. The former explanation was, that the affinity of the acid for oxide of zinc disposed the metal to unite with oxygen, and thus enabled it to decompose water; that is, the oxide of zinc was supposed to produce an effect previous to its existence. The obscurity of this explanation arises from regarding changes as consecutive, which are in reality simultaneous. There is no succession in the process, the oxide of zinc is not formed previously to its combination with the acid, but at the same instant. There is, as it were, but one chemical change, which consists in the combination, at one and the same moment, of zinc with oxygen, and of oxide of zinc with the acid; and this change occurs because these two affinities, acting together, overcome the attraction of oxygen and hydrogen for one another.”*

Now, if the imaginative artist will permit us, with all deference, to represent his combining intelligence under the figure of sulphuric acid; and if we suppose the fragment of zinc to be embarrassed among infinitely numerous fragments of diverse metals, and the oxygen dispersed and mingled among gases countless and indistinguishable; we shall have an excellent type, in material things, of the action of the imagination on the immaterial. Both actions are, I think, inexplicable; for, however simultaneous the chemical changes may be, yet the causing power is the affinity of the acid for what has no existence. It is neither to be explained how that affinity operates on atoms uncombined, nor how the artist’s desire for an unconceived whole prompts him to the selection of necessary divisions.

This operation would be wonderful enough, if it were concerned with two ideas only. But a powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines

§ 9. *The grasp and dignity of Imagination.*

* *Elements of Chemistry*, by the late Edward Turner, M.D., part ii. sec. iv.

at the same instant, not only two, but all the important ideas of its poem or picture; and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other; as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once, and its volition acts at the same instant in coils that go contrary ways.

This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable, admirable, altogether divine; and yet, wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work: for, by the definition of Unity of Membership (the essential characteristic of greatness), not only certain couples or groups of parts, but *all* the parts of a noble work must be separately imperfect; each must imply, and ask for all the rest, and the glory of every one of them must consist in its relation to the rest; neither while so much as one is wanting can any be right. And it is evidently impossible to conceive, in each separate feature, a certain want or wrongness which can only be corrected by the other features of the picture (not by one or two merely, but by all), unless, together with the want, we conceive also of what is wanted, that is, of all the rest of the work or picture. Hence Fuseli:—

“Second thoughts are admissible in painting and poetry only as dressers of the first conception; no great idea was ever formed in fragments.”

“He alone can conceive and compose, who sees the whole at once before him.”¹

There is, however, a limit to the power of all human imagination. When the relations to be observed are § 10. *Its limits.* *absolutely* necessary, and highly complicated, the mind cannot grasp them; and the result is a total deprivation of all power of imagination associative in such matter. For this reason, no human mind has ever conceived a new

¹ [Aphorisms 71 and 72; *Life and Writings*, iii. 85.]

animal.* For as it is evident that in an animal, every part implies all the rest; that is, the form of the eye involves the form of the brow and nose, these the form of the forehead and lip, these of the head and chin, and so on, so that it is physically impossible to conceive of any one of these members, unless we conceive the relation it bears to the whole animal; and as this relation is necessary, certain, and complicated, allowing of no licence or inaccuracy, the intellect utterly fails under the load, and is reduced to mere composition; putting the bird's wing on men's shoulders, or half the human body to half the horse's, in doing which there is no action of imagination, but only of fancy; though in the treatment and contemplation of the compound form there may be much imagination, as we shall presently see. (Chap. III. § 29.)

The matter, therefore, in which associative imagination can be shown is that which admits of great licence and variety of arrangement, and in which a certain amount of relation only is required; as especially in the elements of landscape painting, in which best it may be illustrated.

§ 11. *How manifested in treatment of uncertain relations. Its deficiency illustrated.*

When an unimaginative painter is about to draw a tree, (and we will suppose him, for better illustration of the point in question, to have good feeling and correct knowledge of the nature of trees,) he probably lays on his paper such a general form as he knows to be characteristic of the tree to be drawn, and such as he believes will fall in agreeably with the other masses of his picture, which we will suppose partly prepared. When this form is set down, he assuredly finds it has done something he did not intend it to do. It has mimicked some prominent line, or overpowered some necessary mass. He begins pruning and changing, and, after several experiments, succeeds in obtaining a form which does no material mischief to any other. To this form he

* Too bold a negative; yet it is true that imagined animals are nearly always feebler or less interesting than real ones. In the "Voyage of Violet, Guy, and Lionel," the Quangle-wangle always hides its head. [1883.]¹

¹ [Edward Lear's *Nonsense Songs and Stories*.]

proceeds to attach a trunk, and, working probably on a received notion or rule (for the unimaginative¹ painter never works without a principle) that tree trunks ought to lean first one way and then the other as they go up, and ought not to stand under the middle of the tree, he sketches a serpentine form of requisite propriety; when it has gone up far enough, that is, till it looks disagreeably long, he will begin to ramify it; and if there be another tree in the picture with two large branches, he knows that this, by all laws of composition, ought to have three or four, or some different number; and because he knows that if three or four branches start from the same point they will look formal, therefore he makes them start from points one above another; and because equal distances are improper, therefore they shall start at unequal distances. When they are fairly started, he knows they must undulate or go backwards and forwards, which accordingly he makes them do at random; and because he knows that all forms ought to be contrasted, he makes one bend down while the other three go up. The three that go up he knows must not go up without interfering with each other, and so he makes two of them cross. He thinks it also proper that there should be variety of character in them; so he makes the one that bends down graceful and flexible, and, of the two that cross, he splinters one and makes a stump of it. He repeats the process among the more complicated minor boughs, until coming to the smallest, he thinks farther care unnecessary, but draws them freely, and by chance. Having to put on the foliage, he will make it flow properly in the direction of the tree's growth; he will make all the extremities graceful; but will be tormented by finding them come all alike, and at last will be obliged to spoil a number of them altogether, in order to obtain opposition. They will not, however, be united in this their spoliation, but will remain uncomfortably separate and individually ill-tempered. He consoles himself by the reflection that it is unnatural for all of them to be equally perfect.

¹ [Misprinted "imaginative" in ed. 1.]

Now, I suppose that through the whole of this process, he has been able to refer to his definite memory or conception of nature for every one of the fragments he has successively added; that the details, colour, fractures, insertions, etc., of his boughs, are all either actual recollections or based on secure knowledge of the tree (and herein I allow far more than is commonly the case with unimaginate painters). But, as far as the process of combination is concerned, it is evident that, from beginning to end, his laws have been his safety, and his plague has been his liberty. He has been compelled to work at random or under the guidance of feeling only, whenever there was anything left to his own decision. He has never been decided in anything except in what he *must* or *must not* do. He has walked as a drunken man on a broad road; his guides are the hedges; and, between these limits, the broader the way, the more difficult his progress.¹

§ 12. *Laws of art, the safeguard of the unimagine,*

The advance of the imaginative artist is precisely the reverse of this. He owns no laws. He defies all restraint, and cuts down all hedges. There is nothing within the limits of natural possibility that he dares not do, or that he allows the necessity of doing. The laws of nature he knows; these are to him no restraint. They are his own nature. All other laws or limits he sets at utter defiance; his journey is over an untrodden and pathless plain. But he sees his end over the waste from the first, and goes straight at it; never losing sight of it, nor throwing away a step. Nothing can stop him, nothing turn him aside; falcons and lynxes are of slow and uncertain sight compared with his. He saw his tree, trunk, boughs, foliage and all, from the first moment; not only the tree, but the sky behind it; not only that tree or sky, but all the other great features of his picture: by what intense power of instantaneous selection and amalgamation cannot be explained, but by this it may be proved and tested; that, if we examine the

§ 13. *Are by the imaginative painter despised. Tests of Imagination.*

¹ [Ed. 1 reads more colloquially "the worse he gets on."]

tree of the unimaginative painter, we shall find that on removing any part or parts of it, though the rest will indeed suffer, as being deprived of the proper development of a tree, and as involving a blank space that wants occupation, yet the portions left are not made discordant or disagreeable. They are absolutely and in themselves as valuable as they can be; every stem is a perfect stem, and every twig a graceful twig, or at least as perfect and as graceful as they were before the removal of the rest. But if we try the same experiment on the imaginative painter's work, and break off the merest stem or twig of it, it all goes to pieces like a Prince Rupert's drop.¹ There is not so much as a seed of it but it lies on the tree's life, like the grain upon the tongue of Chaucer's sainted child.² Take it away, and the boughs will sing to us no longer. All is dead and cold.

This, then, is the first sign of the presence of real imagination

§ 14. *The
monotony of
unimaginative
treatment.*

as opposed to composition. But here is another not less important.

We have seen that as each part is selected and fitted by the unimaginative painter, he renders it, in itself, as beautiful as he is able. If it be ugly it remains so; he is incapable of correcting it by the *addition of another ugliness*,* and therefore he chooses all his features as fair as they may be (at least if his object be beauty). But a small proportion only of the ideas he has at his disposal will reach his standard of absolute beauty. The others will be of no use to him: and among those which he permits himself to use, there will be so marked a family likeness that he will be more and more cramped, as his picture advances, for want

* I had better have said "picturesqueness" or "individuality," than "ugliness"; yet the gist of this part of the chapter is true. [1883.]

¹ [Drops of molten glass, consolidated by falling into water; in shape resembling tadpoles. The thick end may be hammered safely; but if the smallest portion of the thin end is broken off, the whole flies into fine dust. These toys, if not invented by Prince Rupert, were introduced by him into England.]

² [*The Prioresses Tale*, l. 1852:—

"Me thoughte she leyde a greyn vp-on my tonge.
Wherefor I singe, and singe I mot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn."]

of material, and tormented by multiplying resemblances, unless disguised by some artifice of light and shade or other forced difference; and with all the differences he can imagine, his tree will yet show a sameness and sickening repetition in all its parts, and all his trees will be like one another, except so far as one leans east and another west, one is broadest at the top and another at the bottom: while through all this insipid repetition, the means by which he forces contrast, dark boughs opposed to light, rugged to smooth, etc., will be painfully evident, to the utter destruction of all dignity and repose. The imaginative work is necessarily the absolute opposite of all this. As all its parts are imperfect, and as there is an unlimited supply of imperfection (for the ways in which things may be wrong are infinite), the imagination is never at a loss, nor ever likely to repeat itself; nothing comes amiss to it; but whatever rude matter it receives, it instantly so arranges that it comes right; all things fall into their place, and appear in that place perfect, useful, and evidently not to be spared; so that of its combinations there is endless variety, and every intractable and seemingly unavailable fragment that we give to it, is instantly turned to some brilliant use, and made the nucleus of a new group of glory; however poor or common the gift, it will be thankful for it, treasure it up, and pay in gold; and it has that life in it, and fire, that wherever it passes, among the dead bones and dust of things, behold! a shaking, and the bones come together bone to his bone.

And now we find what noble sympathy and unity there are between the Imaginative and Theoretic faculties. Both agree in this, that they reject nothing, and are thankful for all; but the Theoretic faculty takes out of everything that which is beautiful, while the Imaginative faculty takes hold of the very imperfections which the Theoretic rejects; and, by means of these angles and roughnesses, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple, wherein the Theoretic faculty, in its turn, does deepest homage. Thus sympathetic in their desires,

§ 15. *Imagination never repeats itself.*

§ 16. *Relation of the Imaginative faculty to the Theoretic.*

harmoniously diverse in their operation, each working for the other with what the other needs not, all things external to man are by one or other turned to good.

Now we have hitherto, for the sake of clearness, opposed the total absence of imagination to the perfect presence of it, in order to make the difference between composition and imagination thoroughly understood. But if we are to give examples of either the want or the presence of the Power, it is necessary to note the circumstances by which both are modified. In the first place, few artists of any standing are totally devoid of this faculty: some small measure of it most of them possess, though of all the forms of intellect, this, and its sister, penetrative imagination, are the rarest and most precious; but few painters have reached eminence without some leaven of it; whether it can be increased by practice I doubt. On the other hand, fewer still are possessed of it in very high degree; and even with the men of most gigantic power in this respect, of whom, I think, Tintoret stands far the head, there are evident limits to its exercise, and portions to be found in their works that have not been included in the original grasp of them, but have been suggested and incorporated during their progress, or added in decoration; and, with the great mass of painters, there are frequent flaws and failures in the conception, so that when they intend to produce a perfect work, they throw their thought into different experimental forms, and decorate it and discipline it long before realizing it, so that there is a certain amount of mere composition in the most imaginative works; and a grain or two of imagination commonly in the most artificial. And again, whatever portions of a picture are taken honestly and without alteration from nature, have, so far as they go, the look of imagination, because all that nature does is imaginative,* that is, perfect as a whole, and made up of imperfect features; so that the painter of the meanest

* Nonsense, again. Imagination is the name of a human faculty, not of inanimate power: if we compare them on equal terms, there is plenty of natural scenery which is stupid and ugly, just as there are plenty of pictures that are so. See the note farther on at page 246. [1883.]

imaginative power may yet do grand things, if he will keep to strict portraiture; and it would be well if all artists were to endeavour to do so, for if they have imagination, it will force its way in spite of them, and show itself in their every stroke; and if not, they will not get it by leaving nature, but only sink into nothingness.

Keeping these points in view, it is interesting to observe the different degrees and relations of the imagination, as accompanied with more or less feeling or desire of harmony, vigour of conception, or constancy of reference to truth. Of men of name, perhaps Claude¹ is the best instance of a want of imagination, nearly total, borne out by painful but untaught study of nature, and much feeling for abstract beauty of form, with none whatever for harmony of expression. In Gaspar Poussin, we have the same want of imagination disguised by more masculine qualities of mind, and grander reachings after sympathy. Thus, in the Sacrifice of Isaac, in our own Gallery,² the spirit of the composition is solemn and unbroken; it would have been a grand picture if the forms of the mass of foliage on the right, and of the clouds in the centre, had not been hopelessly unimaginative. The stormy wind of the picture of Dido and Æneas blows loudly through its leaves; but the total want of invention in the cloud forms bears it down beyond redemption.³ The foreground tree of the La Riccia (compare Part II. Sec. VI. Chap. I. § 6) is another characteristic instance of absolute nullity of imagination.⁴

In Salvator, the imagination is vigorous, the composition dexterous and clever, as in the St. Jerome of the Brera Gallery, the Diogenes of the Pitti, and the pictures of the Guadagni Palace;⁵ while all are rendered valueless by coarseness of feeling and habitual non-reference to nature.

§ 18. Instance of
absence of
Imagination.—C
laude, Gaspar
Poussin.

§ 19. Its pre-
sence.—Salva-
tor, Nicolo
Poussin,
Titian,
Tintoret,

¹ [For Ruskin on Claude, see Vol. III. p. xxxiv.]

² [No. 31. See Vol. III. pp. 282, 332, 348, 376.]

³ [No. 95. See Vol. III. pp. 396, 409.]

⁴ [No. 98. See Vol. III. pp. 277, 577, 588 n.]

⁵ [There is no picture of St. Jerome by Salvator Rosa in the Brera; the reference is presumably to his "St. Paul the Hermit" there. The "Diogenes of the Pitti" is

All the landscape of Nicolo Poussin is imaginative,¹ but the development of the power in Tintoret and Titian is so unapproachably intense that the mind unwillingly rests elsewhere. The four landscapes which occur to me as the most magnificently characteristic are: first, the Flight into Egypt, of the Scuola di San Rocco (Tintoret); secondly, the Titian of the Camuccini collection at Rome, with the figures by John Bellini; thirdly, Titian's St. Jerome, in the Brera Gallery at Milan; and fourthly, the S. Pietro Martire,² which I name last in spite of its importance, because there is something unmeaning and unworthy of Titian about the undulation of the trunks, and the upper part of it is destroyed by the intrusion of some dramatic clouds of that species which I have enough described in our former examination of the Central Cloud Region, § 13.³

I do not mean to set these four works above the rest of the landscape of these masters; I name them only because the landscape is in them prominent and characteristic. It would be well to compare with them the other backgrounds of Tintoret in the Scuola, especially that of the Temptation

No. 475, commonly known as "The School of Philosophers"—a landscape with Diogenes throwing away his drinking-cup. Ruskin thus describes it in his 1845 note-book:—

"Although this picture wants breadth, it would yet be an interesting and valuable one if we could get rid of the philosophers, but these would pollute the loveliest landscape. (Diogenes is a true Salvator conception: St. Giles's all over). It is, however, on the whole, perhaps the best Salvator in the Pitti; the distance is more inventive than usual—city on hill, winding lake and bold mountains—the colour glowing, and the trees well studied."

For the Salvators in the Guadagni Palace, see preceding volume, p. 582, and below, ch. iii. § 18 n.]

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 263.]

² [Tintoret's "Flight into Egypt" is described below, ch. iii. § 22, p. 274. "The Titian of the Camuccini collection, etc.," is the "Feast of the Gods" (or "Bacchanal"), now in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle. It forms one of the series of four mythological landscapes painted for Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, of which the "Bacchus and Ariadne" in the National Gallery is another. It is supposed to have been left incomplete by Bellini and finished by Titian with a landscape borrowed from his native Cadore. The share of Bellini and Titian respectively in the work is, however, a subject of much debate (see, e.g., *The Earlier Work of Titian*, by Claude Phillips, 1897, pp. 66–69). An outline of the picture will be found at vol. i. p. 313 (ed. 1887) of Kugler's *Italian Schools of Painting*. For the St. Jerome, cf. preceding volume, pp. 181–182; below, § 19; and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 16, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 13. For the S. Pietro Martire, see preceding volume, p. 28.]

³ [Vol. i. pt. ii. sec. iii. ch. iii. Vol. III, p. 379, of this edition.]

and the Agony in the Garden, and the landscape of the two large pictures in the Church of La Madonna dell' Orto.¹

But for immediate and close illustration, it is perhaps best to refer to a work more accessible, the *Cephalus and Procris* of Turner in the *Liber Studiorum*.² I know of § 20. *And Turner.* no landscape more purely or magnificently imaginative, or bearing more distinct evidence of the relative and simultaneous conception of the parts. Let the reader first cover with his hand the two trunks that rise against the sky on the right, and ask himself how any termination of the central mass so *ugly* as the straight trunk which he will then painfully see, could have been conceived or admitted without *simultaneous conception* of the trunks he has taken away on the right? Let him again conceal the whole central mass, and leave these two only, and again ask himself whether anything so ugly as that bare trunk in the shape of a Y, could have been admitted without reference to the central mass? Then let him remove from this trunk its two arms, and try the effect; let him again remove the single trunk on the extreme right; then let him try the third trunk without the excrescence at the bottom of it; finally, let him conceal the fourth trunk from the right, with the slender boughs at the top: he will find, in each case, that he has destroyed a feature on which everything else depends; and if proof be required of the vital power of still smaller features, let him remove the sunbeam that comes through beneath the faint mass of trees on the hill in the distance.*

It is useless to enter into farther particulars; the reader may be left to his own close examination of this and of the

* This ray of light, however, has an imaginative power of another kind, presently to be spoken of. Compare Chap. IV. § 18.

¹ [For the "Temptation," see below, ch. iii. § 28 *n.*, ch. v. § 7 *n.*, pp. 285, 319. The two large pictures in S. Maria dell' Orto are "The Last Judgment" (see below, ch. iii. § 23–24) and "The Worship of the Golden Calf" (see below, ch. iv. § 17, and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 2 *n.*.) See also above, Introduction, p. xxxvi.]

² [Engraved and further discussed in *Lectures on Landscape*, §§ 94–96. See also preceding volume, pp. 586, 595 *n.*; below, ch. iv. § 18, and Epilogue, § 9; and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 19, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 29.]

other works of Turner, in which he will always find the associative imagination developed in the most profuse and marvellous modes; especially in the drawing of foliage and skies, in both of which the presence or absence of the associative power may best be tested in all artists. I have, however, confined my present illustrations chiefly to foliage, because other operations of the imagination, besides the associative, interfere extensively in the treatment of sky.

There remains but one question to be determined relating to this faculty; what operation, namely, supposing it possessed in high degree, it has or ought to have in the artist's treatment of natural scenery?

§ 21. *The due function of associative imagination with respect to nature.*

I have just said that nature is always imaginative,* but it does not follow that her imagination is always of high subject, or that the imagination of all the parts is of a like and sympathetic kind; the boughs of every bramble bush are imaginatively arranged, so are those of every oak and cedar; but it does not follow that there is imaginative sympathy between bramble and cedar. There are few natural scenes whose harmonies are not conceivably improvable either by banishment of some discordant point, or by addition of some sympathetic one; it constantly happens that there is a profuseness too great to be comprehended, or an inequality in the pitch, meaning, and intensity of different parts. The imagination will banish all that is extraneous; it will seize out of the many threads of different feeling which nature has suffered to become entangled, one only; and where that seems thin and likely to break, it will spin it stouter, and in doing this, it never knots, but weaves in the new thread; so that all its work looks as pure and true as nature itself, and cannot be guessed from it but by its exceeding simplicity, (*known* from it, it cannot be); so that herein we

* What I meant by this twice repeated bit of nonsense, was a fact of some interest, had it been better explained,—namely, that almost any honest study of natural grouping will look intellectually, if not always agreeably, composed,¹ provided it be honest throughout. [1883.]

¹ [See Vol. III. p. xxi.]

find another test of the imaginative work, that it looks always as if it had been gathered straight from nature, whereas the unimaginate shows its joints and knots, and is visibly composition.

And here, then, we arrive at an important conclusion (though one somewhat contrary to the positions commonly held on the subject), namely, that if anything looks unnatural, there can be no imagination in it (at least not associative). We frequently hear works that have no truth in them justified or elevated on the score of being imaginative. Let it be understood once for all, that imagination never deigns to touch anything but truth; and though it does not follow that where there is the appearance of truth, there has been imaginative operation, of this we may be assured, that where there is appearance of falsehood, the imagination has had no hand.*

§ 22. *The sign of imaginative work is its appearance of absolute truth.*

For instance, the landscape above mentioned of Titian's St. Jerome¹ may, for aught I know, be a pure transcript of a rocky slope covered with chestnuts among his native mountains. It has all the look of a sketch from nature; if it be not, the imagination developed in it is of the highest order; if it be, the imagination has only acted in the suggestion of the dark sky, of the shape of the flakes of solemn cloud, and of the gleam of russet light along the distant ground.†

* Compare Chap. III. § 30.**

** Untrue again, in the sweeping negation: right only in the general connection of wisely inventive with closely observant faculty. [1883.]

† It is said at Venice that Titian took the trees of the S. Pietro Martire out of his garden opposite Murano.² I think this unlikely; there is something about the lower trunks that has a taint of composition: the thought of the whole, however, is thoroughly fine. The backgrounds of the frescoes at Padua are also very characteristic, and the well-known woodcut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata³ one of the mightiest of existing landscape thoughts; and yet it is pure portraiture of pine and Spanish chestnut.

¹ [§ 19 above, p. 244.]

² [See Vol. III. p. 170 n.]

³ [See Vol. III. p. 355 n.]

Again, it is impossible to tell whether the two nearest trunks of the Æsacus and Hesperie of the Liber Studiorum,¹ especially the large one on the right with the ivy, have been invented, or taken straight from nature; they have all the look of accurate portraiture. I can hardly imagine anything so perfect to have been obtained except from the real thing; but we know that the imagination must have begun to operate somewhere, we cannot tell where, since the multitudinous harmonies of the rest of the picture could hardly in any real scene have continued so inviolately sweet.

The final tests, therefore, of the work of associative imagination are, its intense simplicity, its perfect harmony, and its absolute truth. It may be a harmony, majestic or humble, abrupt or prolonged, but it is always a governed and perfect whole; evidencing in all its relations the weight, prevalence, and universal dominion of an awful inexplicable Power; a chastising, animating, and disposing Mind.²

¹ [Engraved and further described in *Lectures on Landscape*, § 93; and see preceding volume, pp. 240, 586, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 29.]

² [The MS. reading of this last sentence may be given as an instance of Ruskin's careful revision, which was also in most cases compression: "It may be a harmony of majesty or of humility, of sorrow or of cheerfulness, but it is always a governed and perfect whole; and in its government, whether it be a work of art, or a scene of nature, there is felt the weight, prevalence, and universal dominion of an awful and inexplicable Power; a chastising, animating, and all-absorbing mind."]



J. Ruskin after Botticelli.

Allart & Co. Sc.

The Adoration of the Magi.

CHAPTER III OF IMAGINATION PENETRATIVE

THUS far we have been defining that combining operation of the Imagination, which appears to be in a sort mechanical, yet takes place in the same inexplicable modes, whatever be the order of conception submitted to it, though I choose to illustrate it by its dealings with mere matter before taking cognizance of any nobler subjects of imagery. We must now examine the dealing of the Imagination with its separate conceptions, and endeavour to understand, not only its principles of selection, but its modes of apprehension with respect to what it selects.

§ 1. *Imagination penetrative is concerned, not with the combining, but the apprehending of things.*

When Milton's Satan first "rears from off the pool his mighty stature," the image of leviathan before suggested not being yet abandoned, the effect on the fire-wave is described as of the upheaved monster on the ocean-stream.

§ 2. *Milton's and Dante's description of flame.*

"On each hand the flames
Driven backward, slope their pointed spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale."¹

And then follows a fiercely restless piece of volcanic imagery:

"As when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet." Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a sing'd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, i. 224.]

Yet I think all this is too far detailed, and deals too much with externals: we feel rather the form of the fire-waves than their fury; we walk upon them too securely; and the fuel, sublimation, smoke, and singeing seem to me images only of partial combustion; they vary and extend the conception, but they lower the thermometer. Look back, if you will, and add to the description the glimmering of the livid flames; the sulphurous hail and red lightning; yet all together, however they overwhelm us with horror, fail of making us thoroughly, unendurably *hot*. The essence of intense flame has not been given. Now hear Dante:

“Feriami ‘l Sole in su l’ omero destro,
 Che già raggiando tutto l’ Occidente
 Mutava in bianco aspetto di cilestro.
 Ed io facea con l’ ombra più rovente
 Parer la fiamma.”¹

That is a slight touch; he has not gone to Ætna or Pelorus for fuel; but we shall not soon recover from it, he has taken our breath away, and leaves us gasping. No smoke nor cinders there. Pure white, hurtling, formless flame; very fire-crystal, we cannot make spires nor waves of it, nor divide it, nor walk on it; there is no question about singeing soles of feet. It is lambent annihilation.

Such is always the mode in which the highest imaginative faculty seizes its materials. It never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind; it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart; nothing else will content its spirituality; whatever semblances and various outward shows and phases its subject may possess* go for nothing; it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks

§ 3. *The Imagination seizes always by the innermost point.*

* Another exemplary course of hissing. [1883.]

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxvi. 4. Cary translates:—

“The sun
 Now all the western clime irradiate changed
 From azure tinct to white; and, as I passed,
 My passing shadow made the umber’d flame
 Burn ruddier.”]

the very vital sap of that it deals with: once therein, it is at liberty to throw up what new shoots it will, so always that the true juice and sap be in them, and to prune and twist them at its pleasure, and bring them to fairer fruit than grew on the old tree; but all this pruning and twisting is work that it likes not, and often does ill; its function and gift are the getting at the root, its nature and dignity depend on its holding things always by the heart. Take its hand from off the beating of that, and it will prophesy no longer; it looks not in the eyes, it judges not by the voice, it describes not by outward features; all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms, from within.*

It may seem to the reader that I am incorrect in calling this penetrating possession-taking faculty § 4. *It acts intuitively and without reasoning.* Imagination. Be it so; the name is of little consequence; the faculty itself, called by what name we will, I insist upon as the highest intellectual power of man. There is no reasoning in it; it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus; it is a piercing pholas-like¹ mind's tongue, that works and tastes into the very rock heart; no matter what be the subject submitted to it, substance or spirit; all is alike divided asunder, joint and marrow, whatever utmost truth, life, principle it has, laid bare, and that which has not truth, life, nor principle, dissipated into its original smoke at a touch. The whispers at men's ears it lifts into visible angels. Vials that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years it unseals, and brings out of them Genii.²

Every great conception of poet or painter is held and treated by this faculty. Every character that is so much as

* The reader will find in the 86th paper of the *Guardian* some interesting passages confirmatory of the view above given of the Imagination.³

¹ [Pholas, a sea-animal of the molluscous kind that makes holes in stone.]

² [*The Arabian Nights*, ch. ii. (Lane's edition).]

³ [Note first added in ed. 2. Johnson there cites the verses in the Book of Job, beginning "Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder," and says: "Whereas the classical poets chiefly endeavour to paint the outward figure, lineaments and motions; the sacred poet makes all the beauties to flow from an inward principle in the creature he describes."]

touched by men like Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare, is by them held by the heart; and every circumstance or sentence of their being, speaking, or seeming, is seized by process from within, and is referred to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost for an instant; so that every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may. It is the Open Sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it;¹ the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the imagination only.

Hence there is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it § 5. *Signs of it in language.* has come. It is often obscure, often half-told; for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation: but, if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts.

I think the "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" of Francesca di Rimini, and the "He has no children" of Macduff,² are as fine instances as can be given; but the sign and mark of it are visible on every line of the four great men above instanced.

The unimaginate writer, on the other hand, as he has never § 6. *Absence of Imagination, has shown* pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it. If he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold disjointed heap: but it is all faggot

¹ [Cf. *Sesame and Lilies*, § 50.]

² ["That day we read no farther," *Inferno*, v. 138; *Macbeth*, Act iv. sc. iii.]

and no fire; the life breath is not in it; his passion has the form of the leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil; he fastens us all at anchor in the scaly rind of it; our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.¹

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after is not *newness*, as they vainly think (there is nothing new), it is only *genuineness*;* it all depends on this single glorious faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that; it is the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

This freshness, however, is not to be taken for an infallible sign of imagination, inasmuch as it results also from a vivid operation of fancy, whose parallel function to this division of the imaginative faculty it is here necessary to distinguish.

§ 7. *Distinction between Imagination and Fancy.*

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.†

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.‡

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks about it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well turned, or

* Some sense in this bit at last! The six pages of metaphor which we have just gone through mean, in all, little more than that the best authors express the mind, more than the person or manners, of men or heroes. I often wish, now, they were a little more communicative. It is pleasant to know that Pallas had blue eyes; but I think Homer might have also told us something about her lips and chin. [1883.]

† Compare Arist. *Rhet.* iii. 11.

‡ For the distinction between fancy and simple conception, see Chap. IV. § 3. [P. 290.]

¹ [*The Ancient Mariner*; the words are quoted also in the preceding volume, p. 524.]

rosy, or delicate, or lovely, or afflicts us with some other quenching and chilling epithet. Now hear Fancy speak:

“Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compared with that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly.”*¹

The real, red, bright being of the lip is there in a moment. But it is all outside; no expression yet, no mind. Let us go a step farther with Warner, of Fair Rosamond struck by Eleanor:

“With that she dashed her on the lips,
So dyed double red;
Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
Soft were those lips that bled.”²

The tenderness of mind begins to mingle with the outside colour, the Imagination is seen in its awakening. Next Shelley:

“Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
Through the veil that seems to hide them,
As the radiant lines of morning
Through thin clouds are they divide them.”³

* I take this and the next instance from Leigh Hunt’s admirable piece of criticism, “Imagination and Fancy,” which ought to be read with care, and to which, though somewhat loosely arranged, I may refer for all the filling up and illustration that the subject requires. With respect to what has just been said respecting want of imagination, compare his criticism of Addison’s *Cato*, p. 28. I cannot, however, confirm his judgment, nor admit his selection of instances, among painters: he has looked to their manner only and habitual choice of subject, without feeling their power; and has given work to the coarseness, mindlessness, and eclecticism of Guido and the Carracci, which, in its poetical demand of tenderness, might have foiled Pinturicchio, of dignity Leonardo, and of colour Giorgione.⁴

¹ [Quoted from Sir John Suckling at p. 35 of Leigh Hunt.]

² [Quoted from William Warner at p. 7 of Leigh Hunt.]

³ [Quoted from memory from Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, act ii. sc. 5:—

“Child of light, thy limbs are burning
Through the vest that seems to hide them,” etc.

Mrs. Shelley’s (1839) edition reads “lips” for “limbs,” but “Lamp of life” is a confusion of the first lines of the first and last verses of the song.]

⁴ [The book referred to is *Imagination and Fancy; or Selections from the English Poets, illustrative of those First Requisites of their Art*. By Leigh Hunt. (Smith, Elder & Co., 1844.) Of Addison’s *Cato* he remarks that it is full of those commonplaces,

There dawns the entire soul in that morning; yet we may stop if we choose at the image still external, at the crimson clouds. The imagination is contemplative rather than penetrative. Last, hear Hamlet:

“Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?”

There is the essence of lip, and the full power of the imagination.

Again, compare Milton’s flowers in *Lycidas* with *Perdita*’s. In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay:

“Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies,	<i>Imagination.</i>
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,	<i>Nugatory.</i>
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,	<i>Fancy.</i>
The glowing violet,	
<i>Imagination.</i>	
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,	<i>Fancy, vulgar.</i>
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,	<i>Imagination.</i>
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.”	<i>Mixed.</i>

Then hear *Perdita*:

“O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that, frighted, thou let’st fall
From Dis’s waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes,
Or Cytherea’s breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids.”

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched

conventional metaphors, and hackneyed images which betray the absence of imagination. Hunt in his illustrative extracts from Spenser, whom he calls “the poet of the painters,” “attached to each of the pictures in this Spenser Gallery the name of the painter of whose genius it reminded me.” Some of the most beautiful are thus connected with the names of the Caracci and Guido.]

them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's, and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape; while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that, without this bit of paper-staining, would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."¹

So, I believe, it will be found throughout the operation of the fancy, that it has to do with the outsides of things,*
 § 8. *Fancy, how involved with Imagination.* and is content therewith; of this there can be no doubt in such passages as that description of Mab so often given as an illustration of it,² and many other instances will be found in Leigh Hunt's work already referred to. Only some embarrassment is caused by passages in which Fancy is seizing the outward signs of emotion, understanding them as such, and yet, in pursuance of her proper function, taking for her share, and for that which she chooses to dwell upon, the outside sign rather than the emotion. Note in *Macbeth* that brilliant instance:

"Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky,
 And fan our people cold."

The outward shiver and coldness of fear is seized on, and irregularly but admirably attributed by the fancy to the drift

* As I said before [§ 7] if anybody likes to call the fancy of outsides, one faculty, and of insides, another, he may do as he pleases. But he needn't unless he please. [1883.]

¹ [*Hamlet*, iv. 5. Ruskin's close study of *Lycidas* is familiar to readers of *Sesame and Lilies*. The first lines of the quotation above from *The Winter's Tale* (iv. 4) were taken by Ruskin as the motto for his book on flowers, *Proserpina*. Cf. also Vol. I. p. 158 n.]

² [The description of Queen Mab and her equipage in *Romeo and Juliet* (Act i. sc. iv.)—

"Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
 The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
 The traces of the smallest spider's web,
 The collars of the moonshine's watery beams"—

is quoted by Leigh Hunt (*l.c.*, p. 33), who adds, "This is Fancy in its playful creativeness."

of the banners. Compare Solomon's Song, where the imagination stays not at the outside, but dwells on the fearful emotion itself:

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

Now, if these be the prevailing characteristics of the two faculties, it is evident that certain other collateral differences will result from them. Fancy, as she § 9. *Fancy is never serious.* stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest-hearted of the intellectual faculties, or rather one of the most purely and simply intellectual. She cannot be made serious,* no edge-tools but she will play with. Whereas the Imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at.¹ And thus there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination; for, on the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest, and hold securest; and on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Hence, I suppose that the powers of the imagination may always be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion; and thus, as Byron said,² there is no tenderness like Dante's, neither any intensity nor seriousness like his, such seriousness that it is incapable of perceiving that which is commonplace or ridiculous, but fuses all down into

* Fancy, in her third function, may, however, become serious, and gradually rise into imagination in doing so. Compare Chap. IV. § 5 [p. 292].

¹ [Ed. 1 adds:—

"The *ανηριθμον γελασμα* of the sea is on its surface, not in the deep. And thus . . ."

See for this phrase from Æschylus, Vols. II. pp. 36, 45; III. p. 573 *n.*]

² ["Why, there is gentleness in Dante beyond all gentleness, when he is tender."—Byron's Diary, Jan. 29, 1821 (*Letters and Journals* ed. by R. E. Prothero, v. 194).]

its own white-hot fire. And, on the other hand, I suppose the chief bar to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest; so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw, failing, or undipped vulnerable part, where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies;¹ and nothing is ever taken seriously or as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be, any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.

This, then, is one essential difference between imagination and fancy; and another is like it and resultant from it, that the imagination being at the heart of things, poises herself there, and is still, quiet, and brooding, comprehending all around her with her fixed look; but the fancy staying at the outside of things cannot see them all at once; but runs hither and thither, and round and about to see more and more, bounding merrily from point to point, and glittering here and there, but necessarily always settling, if she settle at all, on a point only, never embracing the whole. And from these single points she can strike out analogies and catch resemblances, which, so far as the point she looks at is concerned, are true, but would be false, if she could see through to the other side. This, however, she cares not to do; the point of contact is enough for her, and even if there be a gap left between the two things and they do not quite touch, she will spring from one to the other like an electric spark, and be seen brightest in her leaping.

Now these differences between the imagination and the fancy hold not only in the way they lay hold of separate conceptions, but even in the points they occupy of time; for the

¹ [Here, as in so many other places, Ruskin, in revising, curtailed. The MS. adds after "flies," "that suck blood and prick the gallantest horse," and, after "misunderstood," two lines lower, "half in jest and half in malice, and altogether in folly."]

fancy loves to run hither and thither in time, and to follow long chains of circumstances from link to link; but the imagination, if it may, gets hold of a moment or link in the middle that implies all the rest, and fastens there. Hence Fuseli's aphorism: "Invention never suffers the action to expire, nor the spectator's fancy to consume itself in preparation, or stagnate into repose. It neither begins from the egg, nor coldly gathers the remains."¹

§ 12. *The detailing operation of Fancy;*

In Retsch's illustrations to Schiller's *Kampf mit dem Drachen*,² we have an instance, miserably feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing, finishing action of the fancy. The dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armour, claws, and coils as grisly as may be; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest country about it far and wide; we have him, from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

All the time we have never got into the dragon heart, we have never once felt real pervading horror, nor sense of the creature's being; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's Jason, Liber Studiorum,³ and observe how the imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest country, no secret path, nor cloven hills; nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends in, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes

§ 13. *And suggestive of the Imagination.*

¹ [Aphorism 95; *Life and Writings*, iii. 93.]

² [*The Fight with the Dragon*. . . Illustrated with sixteen engravings in outline by Henry Moses, from the designs of Retsch (the German illustrator, 1779–1857). London: 1825. Cf. p. 371 below.]

³ [The original drawing is No. 461 in the National Gallery: for other references see preceding volume, p. 240; below, ch. iv. § 6, p. 297; *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. viii. § 7, ch. xviii. § 19.]

nor brandished lances, but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor manes, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, by the middle. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, griding upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring, is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader and broader, a lighting of funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze, among those broken trunks;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now.

Now it is necessary here very carefully to distinguish between that character of the work which depends on the imagination of the beholder, and that which results from the imagination of the artist; for a work is often called imaginative when it merely leaves room for the action of the imagination; whereas though nearly all imaginative works do this, yet it may be done also by works that have in them no imagination at all. A few shapeless scratches or accidental stains on a wall, or the forms of clouds, or any other complicated accidents, will set the imagination to work to coin something out of them; and all paintings in which there is much gloom or mystery, possess therein a certain sublimity owing to the play given to the beholder's imagination, without, necessarily, being in the slightest degree imaginative themselves. The vacancy of a truly imaginative work results not from absence of ideas, or incapability of grasping and detailing them, but from the painter having told the whole pith and power of his subject and disdain to tell more; and the sign of this being the case is, that the mind of the beholder is forced to act in a certain mode, and feels itself overpowered and borne away by that of the painter, and not able to defend itself, nor go which way it will: and the value of the work depends on the truth, authority, and inevitability of this suggestiveness.¹ Now observe in this work of

¹ [Ed. 1 adds, "and on the absolute right choice of the critical moment."]

Turner that the whole value of it depends on the character of curve assumed by the serpent's body; for had it been a mere semicircle, or gone down in a series of smaller coils, it would have been in the first case, ridiculous, as unlike a serpent, or in the second, disgusting, nothing more than an exaggerated viper; but it is that *coming straight* at the right hand which suggests the drawing forth of an enormous weight, and gives the bent part its springing look, that frightens us. Again, remove the light trunk* on the left, and observe how useless all the gloom of the picture would have been, if this trunk had not given it depth and *hollowness*. Finally and chiefly, observe that the painter is not satisfied even with all the suggestiveness thus obtained, but to make sure of us, and force us, whether we will or not, to walk his way, and not ours, the trunks of the trees on the right are all cloven into yawning and writhing heads and bodies, and alive with dragon energy all about us; note especially the nearest with its gaping jaws and claw-like branch at the seeming shoulder; a kind of suggestion which in itself is not imaginative, but merely fanciful (using the term fancy in that third sense not yet explained, corresponding to the third office of imagination); but it is imaginative in its present use and application, for the painter addresses thereby that morbid and fearful condition of mind which he has endeavoured to excite in the spectator, and which in reality would have been seen in every trunk and bough, as it penetrated into the deeper thicket, the object of its terror.

It is nevertheless evident, that however suggestive the work or picture may be, it cannot have effect unless we are ourselves both watchful of its every hint, and capable of understanding and carrying it out; and although I think that this power of continuing or accepting the direction of feeling given is less a peculiar gift, like that of the original seizing, than a faculty dependent on attention and improvable by cultivation; yet,

§ 15. *Imagination addresses itself to Imagination.*

* I am describing from a proof: in bad impressions this trunk is darkened.

to a certain extent, the imaginative work will not, I think, be rightly esteemed except by a mind of some corresponding power: not but that there is an intense enjoyment in minds of feeble yet right conception in the help and food they get from those of stronger thought; but a certain imaginative susceptibility is at any rate necessary, and above all things earnestness and feeling; so that assuredly a work of high conceptive dignity will be always incomprehensible and valueless except to those who go to it in earnest and give it time; and this is peculiarly the case when the imagination acts not merely on the immediate subject, nor in giving a fanciful and peculiar character to prominent objects, as we have just seen, but busies itself throughout in expressing occult and far-sought sympathies in every minor detail; of which action the most sublime instances are found in the works of Tintoret, whose intensity of imagination is such that there is not the commonest subject to which he will not attach a range of suggestiveness almost limitless; nor a stone, leaf, or shadow, nor anything so small, but he will give it meaning and oracular voice.

Instance, from the works of Tintoret. In the centre of the gallery at Parma, there is a canvas of Tintoret's, whose sublimity of conception and grandeur of colour are seen in the highest perfection, by their opposition to the morbid and vulgar sentimentalism of Correggio. It is an Entombment of Christ, with a landscape distance, of whose technical composition and details I shall have much to say hereafter;¹ at present I speak only of the thought it is intended to convey. An ordinary or unimaginative painter would have made prominent, among his objects of landscape, such as might naturally be supposed to have been visible from the sepulchre, and shown with the crosses of Calvary, some portion of Jerusalem;² but Tintoret has a far higher aim. Dwelling on the peculiar force of the event before him, as the fulfilment of the final prophecy respecting the Passion, "He made His grave with the wicked

¹ [See next volume, ch. xviii. § 18, and plate 17.]

² [Ed. 1 adds, "or of the valley of Jehoshaphat."]

and with *rich* in His death.”¹ he desires to direct the mind of the spectator to this receiving of the body of Christ, in its contrast with the houseless birth and the desert life. And, therefore, behind the ghastly tomb grass that shakes its black and withered blades above the rocks of the sepulchre, there is seen, not the actual material distance of the spot itself (though the crosses are shown faintly), but that to which the thoughtful spirit would return in vision, a desert place, where the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, and against the barred twilight of the melancholy sky are seen the mouldering beams and shattered roofing of a ruined *cattle-shed*, the canopy of the Nativity.

Let us take another instance. No subject has been more frequently or exquisitely treated by the religious § 17. *The An-*
painters than that of the Annunciation;² though, as *nunciation.*
usual, the most perfect type of its pure ideal has been given by Angelico, and by him with the most radiant consummation (so far as I know) in a small reliquary in the sacristy of St^a. Maria Novella.³ The background there,

¹ [Isaiah liii. 9.]

² [For some other remarks on this subject, in connection with Rossetti's "Ecce Ancilla Domini," see *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 3.]

³ [This is the work from which Ruskin made the pencil sketch (see below, p. 350) engraved as the frontispiece to the last volume of *Modern Painters*, and described at pt. ix. ch. viii. § 12 of that volume. See also *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 127. The following is the account of the picture in the 1845 note-book:—

“In the sacristy of Sta. Maria Novella is what I think on the whole his most *perfect* work, the small Annunciation of which I have a study. I have above noticed the exquisite jewellery of Angelico; it is here carried farther than in any other of his works, the gold deeper, and the ornaments more detailed and delicate. The glories are formed of rays indented in the gold deeper and deeper as they approach the head, so that there is always a vivid light on some portion of them, playing in the most miraculous way round the head as the spectator moves, and always brightest close to the head and graduated away so that the effect is absolutely real, and a positive light of the brightest brilliancy is obtained which throws the purest pale flesh colour out in dark relief—an advantage possessed by no other painter. The glories of the angels in the large Uffizii picture are executed with rays in the same way, but have also an outer circle of stars. The style of ornament adopted by Angelico in the dress is also very instructive. Had he made it perfectly regular and of complicated design, he would have given the dresses the appearance of having been embroidered, and the weight of the embroidery would have pulled his angels to earth in an instant. But he has used only rays or dashes of light in clusters, not joined at the roots (Note this in speaking of functional unity), and curved lines with dots at the end not particularly graceful, but varied and irregular looking like no earthly ornament,

however, is altogether decorative; but, in the fresco of the corridor of St. Mark's, the concomitant circumstances are of exceeding loveliness. The Virgin sits in an open loggia, resembling that of the Florentine church of L'Annunziata. Before her is a meadow of rich herbage, covered with daisies. Behind her is seen, through the door at the end of the loggia, a chamber with a single grated window, through which a starlike¹ beam of light falls into the silence. All is exquisite in feeling, but not inventive nor imaginative. Severe would be the shock and painful the contrast, if we could pass in an instant from that pure vision to the wild thought of Tintoret.² For not in meek reception of the adoring messenger, but startled by the rush of his horizontal and rattling wings, the Virgin sits, not in the quiet loggia, not by the green pasture of the restored soul, but houseless, under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted, from the central object of the picture forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork, with the plaster mildewed away from it, and the mortar mouldering from its seams; and if he look again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, will perhaps see, in the one and the other, nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoret could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the husband of Mary. But there is more meant than this. When he looks at the

but simple and childish and therefore heavenly. The Madonna's dress is blue; the angel's, lilac-purple. No other work of the painter can be set beside this for action and expression. The Virgin's face is absolutely luminous with love."

This reliquary has now been transferred to the museum in the convent of San Marco (Cell 34). The fresco next described in the text is on the upper floor, at the head of the stairs in the corridor.]

¹ [Misprinted "star-light" in the 1873 edition.]

² [Tintoret's "Annunciation" here described is in the Lower Room of the Scuola di San Rocco; for a further discussion of it, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii., Venetian Index (s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 1). A photographic reproduction of the picture will be found at p. 80 of J. B. Stoughton Holborn's *Tintoretto*, 1903 ("Great Masters" series.)]

composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square, which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This, I think, sufficiently explains the typical character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation; that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builders' tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the Corner.¹

In this picture, however, the force of the thought hardly atones for the painfulness of the scene and the turbulence of its feeling. The power of the master is more strikingly shown in his treatment of the subject which, however important, and however deep in its meaning, supplies not to the ordinary painter material enough ever to form a picture of high interest; the Baptism of Christ. From the purity of Giotto to the intolerable, inconceivable brutality of Salvator,* every order

§ 18. *The Baptism of Christ. Its treatment by various painters.*

* The picture is in the Guadagni Palace. It is one of the most important landscapes Salvator ever painted. The figures are studied from street beggars. On the other side of the river, exactly opposite the point where the Baptism of Christ takes place, the painter, with a refinement of feeling peculiarly his own, has introduced some ruffians stripping off their shirts to bathe. He is fond of this incident. It occurs again in one of the marines of the Pitti Palace, with the additional interest of a foreshortened figure, swimming on its back, feet foremost, exactly in the stream of light to which the eye is principally directed.²

¹ [Psalm cxviii. 22.]

² [The pictures by Salvator in the Guadagni Palace were the Showing and the Baptism of Christ. Ruskin's discussion of them in his 1845 note-book is worth giving at some length, as an illustration of his careful and prolonged study in the galleries:—

“These are decidedly the best Salvators I have ever seen and perfectly genuine and undoubtable throughout. By these in fairness he ought to be judged, for he has taken pains with them and this he seldom did. The first—the Showing of Christ—consists chiefly of a huge and wild group of skeleton trees which occupy the centre of the picture, and straggle about the sky, shapeless rocks thrown about the foreground and middle distance, and

of feeling has been displayed in its treatment; but I am aware of no single case, except this of which I am about to speak, in which it has formed an impressive picture.

Giotto's, in the Academy of Florence, engraved in the series just published (*Galleria delle belle Arti*),¹ is one of

cumbrous mountains behind. The other is finer; it is a sweet passage of calm river under steep and cavernous rocks, with a well studied distance and a grand dark tree obscuring the sky on the left. The skies are the same in both, the regular sky of Salvator—dark blue above cut off from the horizon by rolling white clouds with level flaky bases in shades, which come light upon the blue above, and dark on the yellow light of the distance below.

“At the first sight of these pictures I was taken aback; their magnificent size, masterly handling and vigorous chiaroscuro (enhanced as it is by the blue of the sky having much darkened) and the skeleton branches of the trees like the limbs of the Tempting Demon of the St. Anthony [by Salvator in the Pitti] altogether are at first so impressive that if I had only looked for five minutes and come away, I might have altered my whole opinion of Salvator; and as few people ever look more than five minutes at any picture, it is no wonder that the energy of the superficial master obtains so many admirers, as it had very nearly carried me away myself.

“But on sitting down for a moment and recovering from the first effect, the truth came upon me gradually and fast. Every time I looked, the colour seemed more false, and the eye detected some erring or disagreeable form. Repetition after repetition, mannerism after mannerism, was unveiled, and I did not leave the pictures before it had become painful to look at them. . . . It is not to be doubted that Salvator used this dead colour to enhance the sublimity of his landscape, and that to ill taught minds it does so, but to all pure feeling it only furnishes another and a manifest proof that all violations of national principles for an imaginative result, recoil on the inventor's head, and are productive of nothing but ugliness and disagreeableness. Had these pictures been warmed with real sunlight, they might have approached the true sublime, whereas now they are nothing but small scene-painting and that not of the best.

“But it is not only their colour which is deficient. Their air-tones are still more so, . . . and [the shadows are] perfectly vacant and impenetrable—not black, nor, in the common sense of the term, heavy; as extreme darks they would be good, but they are extreme darks everywhere, the whole picture being made up of these necessarily in order to give value to the low, grey lights. This vulgarity is one of the chief causes of the rapid impression the pictures make, and it is also one of the chief causes of their final failure. For there is nothing to be discovered or penetrated anywhere; distant and near, all is alike—dense, formless, hopeless brown, with the lights cleverly touched over it, the same, whether in rock, trees, or water. One passage only affords an exception, and its beauty is a test of the wrong in the rest. In the Baptism of Christ, on the opposite side of the river, on the right hand, a glade runs up among scattered trunks of trees behind the rocks, and this part of the picture is refreshing and full of nature: one can walk through it, and breathe in it. . . .”

For the incident of the bathers, see above, ch. ii. § 19, and preceding volume, p. 518 n.]

¹ [*Galleria dell' I. e Reale Accademia delle Belle Arti di Firenze pubblicata con incisione in rame. . . . Firenze, 1845. Giotto's "Baptism of Christ" is the seventh plate in that work.*]

the most touching I know, especially in the reverent action of the attendant angels;¹ and Leonardo's angel in that of Andrea del Verrocchio² is very beautiful, but the event is one whose character and importance are ineffable upon the features: the descending dove hardly affects us, because its constant symbolical occurrence hardens us, and makes us look on it as a mere type or letter, instead of the actual presence of the Spirit: and by all the sacred painters the power that might be put into the landscape is lost; for though their use of foliage and distant sky or mountain is usually very admirable, as we shall see in the fifth chapter, yet they cannot deal with near water or rock; and the hexagonal and basaltic

¹ [This is one of a series of panels, removed from vestment presses at Santa Croce, representing scenes from the life of Christ. They are now attributed to Taddeo Gaddi.]

² [This is famous as one of the few certainly authentic pictures, if not the only one, by Verrocchio in existence. It was painted by commission for the monks of Vallombrosa. The kneeling angel to the extreme left is said, by a tradition of Vasari, to have been painted by Verrocchio's pupil, Leonardo. Modern critics accept the tradition, and many attribute a larger share in the picture to him (see, *e.g.*, Eugène Muntz's *Leonardo*, English ed., i. 40). Ruskin described the picture in the 1845 note-book:—

“The head painted by Leonardo in this most interesting picture is not superior to Verrocchio's work in religious or grand qualities: neither of them is indeed particularly distinguished in this way; but still, the dark eyes and unpretending simplicity of Verrocchio's angels are to me quite as agreeable and certainly more solemn than the more finished beauty of Leonardo's work. But the difference is certainly great in the attractive qualities of art. Leonardo's hair is silky and lustrous, and more refined than even Raffaello's in his finest works, and curled with the greatest grace and complexity. Verrocchio's is black, short, rough and straggly. Leonardo's features are full, round, and most purely chiselled. Verrocchio's are thin and marked like Botticelli's, and from poor models. Leonardo's complexion, fair and pure and stippled and shaded with great sweetness of colour. Verrocchio's brown and lightless; and finally, while the latter paints the iris of the eye with a dark, unvaried brown like Raphael, Leonardo has dwelt with a boyish delight on all the light he could get in it, through it and on it, making it a lustrous and transparent grey, that he might have the opportunity, and though it is a little fishy, it is still very ardent and full of feeling and exceedingly clever. The story told of Verrocchio is easily to be credited on looking at it.”

Elsewhere in the note-book Ruskin adds:—

“In the angel which Leonardo painted in Verrocchio's picture in the Accademia, the eyes are filled with moist, tender, transparent lustre and light, while Verrocchio's beside it is painted with both iris and pupil hard and dark. I almost think Verrocchio's the grandest of the two in spite of Leonardo's beautiful drawing.”

Leonardo's angel, says Vasari, “was much superior to the other parts of the picture. Perceiving this, Andrea resolved never again to take pencil in hand, since Leonardo, though still so young, had acquitted himself in that art better than he had done” (Bohn's ed. 1871, ii. 255). One of the treasures of the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield is a work attributed to Verrocchio; see notes on that collection in a later volume of this edition.]

protuberances of their river shores are, I think, too painful to be endured even by the most acceptant mind; as eminently in that of Angelico, in the *Vita di Cristo*,¹ which, as far as I can judge, is a total failure in action, expression, and all else; and in general, it is in this subject especially that the greatest painters show their weakness. For this reason, I suppose, and feeling the difficulty of it, Tintoret has thrown into it his utmost strength, and it becomes noble in his hands by his most singularly imaginative expression, not only of the immediate fact, but of the whole train of thought of which it is suggestive; and by his considering the Baptism not only as the submission of Christ to the fulfilment of all righteousness, but as the opening of the earthly struggle with the prince of the powers of the air, which instantly beginning in the temptation, ended only on the cross.

The river flows fiercely under the shadow of a great rock.*

* A farther examination of this picture has made me doubt my interpretation of some portions of it. It is nearly destroyed, and placed between two lights, and far from the eye, so as to render its details in many of the shadowed portions almost untraceable. I leave the passage unaltered, however, until I can obtain an opportunity of close access to the picture. The other works described are in fuller light and in better preservation, and the reader may accept with confidence the account given of them, which I have confirmed by re-examination.²

¹ [In the Accademia at Florence; *cf.* above, p. 100 *n.*]

² [This note was added in the second edition (1848). J. A. Symonds, in an article in the *National Observer* of August 1, 1891 ("A Morning at San Rocco"), made fun of Ruskin's description, pointing out that what appeared to Ruskin "a horizontal floor of flaky cloud, on which stand the hosts of heaven," was in fact "a set of fairly well-dressed women on the river-bank of Jordan, with trees behind them, the tops of which are clearly reflected in the stream." Symonds pointed out other particulars in which the description given above hardly accords with the picture; but the footnote shows that he had been anticipated (as is generally the case with Ruskin's critics) by Ruskin himself. See also *Stones of Venice*, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," Upper Room, No. 11, where Ruskin says: "The river is seen far into the distance, with a piece of copause bordering it: the sky beyond is dark, but the water nevertheless receives a brilliant reflection from some unseen rent in the clouds, so brilliant, that when I was first at Venice, not being accustomed to Tintoret's slight execution, or to see pictures so much injured, I took this piece of water for a sky." In this later description of the picture, Ruskin says: "Behind the rocks on the right a single head is seen, with a collar on his shoulders; it seems to be intended for a portrait of some person connected with the picture." The *Pall Mall Gazette* (August 1, 1891), commenting on Symonds' article and Ruskin's own correction of this passage, remarked: "We doubt, however, whether even on further examination Mr. Ruskin would altogether give up his 'hosts of heaven.' On one occasion at Oxford he showed a sketch from some

From its opposite shore, thickets of close gloomy foliage rise against the rolling chasm of heaven, through which § 19. *By Tintoret.* breaks the brightness of the descending Spirit.

Across these, dividing them asunder, is stretched a horizontal floor of flaky cloud, on which stand the hosts of heaven. Christ kneels upon the water, and does not sink; the figure of St. John is indistinct, but close beside his raised right arm there is a spectre in the black shade; the Fiend, harpy-shaped, hardly seen, glares down upon Christ with eyes of fire, waiting his time. Beneath this figure there comes out of the mist a dark hand, the arm unseen, extended to a net in the river, the spars of which are in the shape of a cross. Behind this the roots and under stems of the trees are cut away by the cloud, and beneath it, and through them, is seen a vision of wild, melancholy, boundless light, the sweep of the desert; and the figure of Christ is seen therein alone, with His arms lifted as in supplication or ecstasy, borne of the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

There are many circumstances which combine to give to this noble work a more than usually imaginative character. The symbolical use of the net, which is the cross net still used constantly in the canals of Venice, and common throughout Italy, is of the same character as that of the carpenter's tools in the Annunciation; but the introduction of the spectral figure is of bolder reach, and yet more, that vision of the after-temptation which is expressly indicated as a subject of thought rather than of sight, because it is in a part of the scene which in *fact* must have been occupied by the trunks of the trees whose tops are seen above; and another circumstance completes the mystic character of the whole, that the flaky clouds which support the angelic hosts take on the right, where the light first falls upon them, the shape of the head

picture by Tintoret which, whether by chance or design we knew not, he held out wrong side up, and began discoursing on it so. 'Ah, well,' he said, joining in the general laughter, 'what does it matter? for in Tintoret you have heaven all round you.'"]

of a fish, the well-known type both of the baptismal sacrament and of Christ.

But the most exquisite instance of this imaginative power occurs in an incident in the background of the *Crucifixion*.¹ I will not insult this marvellous picture by an effort at a verbal account of it. I would not whitewash it with praise, and I refer to it only for the sake of two thoughts peculiarly illustrative of the intellectual faculty immediately under discussion. In the common and most Catholic treatment of the subject, the mind is either painfully directed to the bodily agony, coarsely expressed by outward anatomical signs, or else it is permitted to rest on that countenance inconceivable by man at any time, but chiefly so in this its consummated humiliation. In the first case, the representation is revolting; in the second, inefficient, false, and sometimes blasphemous. None even of the greatest religious painters have ever, so far as I know, succeeded here: Giotto and Angelico were cramped by the traditional treatment, and the latter especially, as before observed, is but too apt to indulge in those points of vitiated feeling which attained their worst development among the Byzantines; Perugino fails in his Christ in almost every instance: of other men than these, after them, we need not speak. But Tintoret here, as in all other cases, penetrating into the root and deep places of his subject, despising all outward and bodily appearances of pain, and seeking for some means of expressing, not the rack of nerve or sinew, but the fainting of the deserted Son of God before His Eloi cry, and yet feeling himself utterly unequal to the expression of this by the countenance, has, on the one hand, filled his picture with such various and impetuous muscular exertion, that the body of the Crucified

¹ [Also in the Scuola di San Rocco, Upper Room. For other references to the picture, see above, sec. i. ch. viii. § 4, and below, § 25, ch. iv. § 13, and Epilogue, § 12; also *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. i. § 8, ch. iii. § 17; and *Stones of Venice*, Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 62. A photographic reproduction of the picture will be found between pp. 80 and 81 of J. B. Stoughton Holborn's *Tintoretto*. The notice of the picture in that book is worth looking at as an instance of the acceptance of Ruskin's estimate of the master. See also above, Introduction, p. xlv. n.]

is, by comparison, in perfect repose, and, on the other, has cast the countenance altogether into shade. But the Agony is told by this, and by this only; that, though there yet remains a chasm of light on the mountain horizon where the earthquake darkness closes upon the day, the broad and sunlike glory about the head of the Redeemer has become wan, *and of the colour of ashes*.*

But the great painter felt he had something more to do yet. Not only that Agony of the Crucified, but the tumult of the people, that rage which invoked His blood upon them and their children. Not only the brutality of the soldier, the apathy of the Centurion, or any other merely instrumental cause of the Divine suffering, but the fury of His own people, the noise against Him of those for whom He died, were to be set before the eye of the understanding, if the power of the picture was to be complete. This rage, be it remembered, was one of disappointed pride; and the disappointment dated essentially from the time when, but five days before, the King of Zion came, and was received with hosannahs, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. To this time, then, it was necessary to direct the thoughts, for therein are found both the cause and the character, the excitement of, and the witness against, this madness of the people. In the shadow behind the cross, a man, riding on an ass colt, looks back to the multitude, while he points with a rod to the Christ crucified. The ass is feeding on the *remnants of withered palm-leaves*.¹

With this master-stroke, I believe, I may terminate all illustration of the peculiar power of the imagination over the feelings of the spectator, by the elevation into dignity and

* This circumstance, like most that lie not at the surface, has escaped Fuseli, though his remarks on the general tone of the picture are very good, as well as his opposition of it to the treatment of Rubens. (Lecture ix.)²

¹ [For Ruskin's first note of this "master-stroke," see above, Introduction, p. xxxviii.]

² [*Life and Writings of Fuseli*, ii. 366. The picture by Rubens which Fuseli contrasts for its inappropriate "gay technic exaltation" with the solemn tone of Tintoret is in the Church of St. Walburgha at Antwerp.]

meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances. But I have not yet sufficiently dwelt on the fact from which this power arises, the absolute truth of statement of the central fact as it was, or must have been. Without this truth, this awful first moving principle, all direction of the feelings is useless. That which we cannot excite, it is of no use to know how to govern.

I have before alluded, Sec. I. Chap. XIV., to the painfulness of Raffaele's treatment of the Massacre of the Innocents. Fuseli affirms of it, that, "in dramatic gradation he disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror."¹ If this be so,

§ 21. *The* I think the philosophical spirit has prevailed over
Massacre of the imaginative. The imagination never errs; it
the Innocents. sees all that is, and all the relations and bearings of
it; but it would not have confused the mortal frenzy of maternal
terror with various development of maternal character. Fear,
rage, and agony, at their utmost pitch, sweep away all character:
humanity itself would be lost in maternity, the woman would
become the mere personification of animal fury or fear. For this
reason all the ordinary representations of this subject are, I think,
false and cold: the artist has not heard the shrieks, nor mingled
with the fugitives; he has sat down in his study to convulse
features methodically, and philosophize over insanity. Not so
Tintoret.² Knowing, or feeling, that the expression of the human
face was, in such circumstances, not to be rendered, and that the
effort could only end in an ugly falsehood, he denies himself all
aid from the features, he feels that if he is to place himself or us
in the midst of that maddened multitude, there can be no time
allowed for watching expression. Still less does he depend on
details of murder and ghastliness of death; there is no blood, no
stabbing or cutting, but there is an awful substitute for these in
the chiaroscuro. The scene is the

¹ [Lecture iii., *Life and Writings*, ii. 176.]

² [For Ruskin's first note of this picture (also in the Scuola di San Rocco, Lower Room), see above, Introduction, p. xxxviii. For other references, see above, sec. i. ch. xiv. § 31, and below, § 25. A photographic reproduction of the picture is given at p. 82 of J. B. Stoughton Holborn's *Tintoretto*.]

outer vestibule of a palace, the slippery marble floor is fearfully barred across by sanguine shadows, so that our eyes seem to become bloodshot and strained with strange horror and deadly vision; a lake of life before them, like the burning seen of the doomed Moabite on the water that came by the way of Edom; a huge flight of stairs, without parapet, descends on the left; down this rush a crowd of women mixed with the murderers; the child in the arms of one has been seized by the limbs, *she hurls herself over the edge, and falls head downmost, dragging the child out of the grasp by her weight*;—she will be dashed dead in a second;¹—close to us is the great struggle; a heap of the mothers entangled in one mortal writhe with each other and the swords, one of the murderers dashed down and crushed beneath them, the sword of another caught by the blade and dragged at by a woman's naked hand; the youngest and fairest of the women, her child just torn away from a death grasp, and clasped to her breast with the grip of a steel vice, falls backwards, helplessly over the heap, right on the sword points; all knit together and hurled down in one hopeless, frenzied, furious abandonment of body and soul in the effort to save.² Far back, at the bottom of the stairs, there is something in the shadow like a heap of clothes. It is a woman, sitting quiet,—quite quiet,—still as any stone; she looks down steadfastly on her dead child, laid along on the floor before her, and her hand is pressed softly upon her brow.³

This, to my mind, is the only Imaginative, that is, the only true, real, heartfelt representation of the being and actuality of

¹ [Ed. 1 (in which the preceding words were not italicised) adds:—

“two others are farther in flight, they reach the edge of a deep river,—the water is beat into a hollow by the force of their plunge;—close to us . . .”]

² [Ed. 1 adds:—

“Their shrieks ring in our ears till the marble seems rending around us, but far back . . .”]

³ [Ruskin quoted this description a year later in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, s. “Rocco, Scuola di San”), adding that “there may have been some change in the colour of the shadow that crosses the pavement. . . . I formerly supposed that this was meant to give greater horror to the scene, and it is very like Tintoret if it be so; but there is a strangeness and discordance in it which make me suspect the colour may have changed.”]

the subject, in existence.* I should exhaust the patience of the reader, if I were to dwell at length on the various stupendous developments of the imagination of Tintoret in the Scuola di San Rocco alone. I would fain join awhile in that solemn pause of the journey into Egypt,¹ where the silver boughs of the shadowy trees lace with their tremulous lines the alternate folds of fair cloud, flushed by faint crimson light, and lie across the streams of blue between those rosy islands, like the white wakes of wandering ships; or watch beside the sleep of the disciples, among those massy leaves that lie so heavily on the dead of the night beneath the descent of the angel of the agony, and toss fearfully above the motion of the torches as the troop of the betrayer emerges out of the hollows of the olives;² or wait through the hour of accusing beside the judgment seat of Pilate, where all is unseen, unfelt, except the one figure that stands with its head bowed down, pale, like a pillar of moon light, half bathed in the glory of the Godhead, half wrapt in the whiteness of the shroud.³ Of these, and all the other thoughts of indescribable power that are now fading from the walls of those neglected chambers, I may perhaps endeavour at a future time to preserve some image and shadow more

§ 22. *Various works in the Scuola di San Rocco.*

§ 23. *The Last Judgment. How treated by various painters.*

* Note the shallow and uncomprehending notice of this picture by Fuseli. His description of the treatment of it by other painters is, however, true, terse, and valuable.⁴

¹ [In the Lower Room of the Scuola di San Rocco. For another reference to the "Flight into Egypt," see above, ch. ii. § 19, p. 244, and Introduction, p. xxxix.; and for a fuller description of the picture, *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 3).]

² ["The Agony in the Garden," in the Upper Room of the Scuola di San Rocco. For a fuller description of the picture, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 13).]

³ ["Christ before Pilate," in the Upper Room of the Scuola di San Rocco. For a fuller description of the picture, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 59). A photographic reproduction of the picture is given at p. 84 of J. B. Stoughton Holborn's *Tintoretto*.]

⁴ [Fuseli says of the picture: "The stormy brush of Tintoretto swept individual woe away in general masses. Two immense wings of light and shade divide the composition, and hide the want of sentiment in tumult." The other pictures of the Massacre noticed by Fuseli are by Bandinelli, Rubens, Le Brun, Poussin, and Raphael (quoted above, p. 272). See Lecture iii., *Life and Writings*, ii. 175-176.]

faithfully than by words;¹ but I shall at present terminate our series of illustrations by reference to a work of less touching, but more tremendous appeal; the Last Judgment in the Church of Santa Maria dell' Orto.² In this subject, almost all realizing or local statement had been carefully avoided by the most powerful painters, they judging it better to represent its chief circumstances as generic thoughts, and present them to the mind in a typical or abstract form. In the Judgment of Angelico the treatment is purely typical; a long Campo Santo, composed of two lines of graves, stretches away into the distance; on the left side of it rise the condemned; on the right the just.³ With Giotto and Orcagna,⁴ the conception, though less rigid, is equally typical; no effort being made at

¹ [An intention which Ruskin did not succeed in carrying out.]

² [For Ruskin's first note of this picture, see Introduction, pp. xxxvi.-xxxvii.]

³ [There are several examples of this subject by Fra Angelico. One of the best is in the Accademia at Florence (see Karl Károly's *Guide to the Paintings of Florence*, 1893, p. 133, for notices of it); another, from the Dudley collection, is now at Berlin (for a photographic reproduction, see *Fra Angelico*, by Langton Douglas, 1900, p. 132).]

⁴ [For an illustration of Giotto's Last Judgment at Padua, see *Giotto and his Works at Padua*. Orcagna's (one of a series now ascribed by some to Bernardo Daddi) is in the Campo Santo at Pisa. Ruskin gave an interesting account of the fresco in his 1845 note-book:—

“One hardly knows where to look for the first origin of the conventional mode of treating this subject, afterwards followed by all painters up to Michel Angelo. If *this* be the first idea, Orcagna should stand high in the list of truly creative painters. The origin of M. Angelo's whole plan is here. The Christ, in a singular oval glory divided by concentric lines like those on a watch case, and the resultant parallelograms thrown into rainbow zones of green and gold. The glory is just the shape of the Greek A,—Christ sitting on the cross bar. His right hand raised as in M. Angelo's. With his left he points to the wound in his side. At first, and from below, I thought the face a failure, but on close examination it gained upon me, and I have now every reason to suppose it very fine. It does not strike at first owing to a most meritorious effort of Orcagna's at rendering it perfectly tranquil and passionless. The brow is, however, slightly knit, but the eyes have no *local* direction, they seem to command all things. The Madonna in a similar glory, but lower and less, sits on the right hand. She is decidedly a failure—one of the most insipid figures in the whole work; nor is the action of the hand on the knee well explained. The hand is, however, finely drawn.

“On each side of these figures, but above, are three angels. Those on the right bear the Nails, Sponge, and Spear. Those on the left, the Cross, Scourge, and Shroud. Below them, six on each side, are the Apostles. These are by far the finest figures in the whole work. The St. John is perfectly sublime; the second and fifth, counting from right hand, also deserve careful study, the latter looking down on the condemned with bitter pity, the former partly in pity but more in indignation and disgust. The great mass of the condemned are on the whole done rather for general effect and *distant*, and there is great want of dramatic conception. There are different degrees

the suggestion of space, and only so much ground represented as is absolutely necessary to support the near figures and allow space for a few graves. Michael Angelo in no respect differs in his treatment, except that his figures are less symmetrically grouped, and a greater conception of space is given by their various perspective. No interest is attached to his background in itself. Fra Bartolomeo, never able to grapple with any species of sublimity except that of simple religious feeling, fails most signally in this mighty theme.* His group of the dead, including not more than ten or twelve figures, occupies the foreground only; behind them a vacant plain extends to the foot of a cindery volcano, about whose mouth several little black devils like spiders are skipping and crawling. The judgment of quick and dead is thus expressed as taking place in about a rood square, and on a single group; the whole of the space and horizon of the sky and land being left vacant, and the presence of the Judge of all the earth made more finite than the sweep of a whirlwind or a thunder-storm.

§ 24. *By Tintoret.* By Tintoret only has this unimaginable event been grappled with in its Verity; not typically nor symbolically, but as they may see it who shall not sleep, but be

* Fresco in an outhouse of the Ospedale St^a Maria Nuova at Florence.¹

of grief but very little attempt at expressing either different character or different *conditions* of emotion. One head only is very fine in this respect, that of a Dominican just above the queen in green, who is in the front row. This monk in the midst of the howling, struggling, and shrieking crowd is abandoned to a fixed, quiet, tearful despair, seemingly rather reviewing his past life, than intent on what is around him. The green queen too would have been fine, had the face been of a higher type; she is trying to pull back another female from the grasp of a demon, and seems rather intent on this victim than on herself. But all the kings and queens are a good deal like Sadler's Wells ones, and the mass of the figures exhibit nothing but various degrees of a mean terror, howling grief, or a despair which, except in the case of the monk above mentioned, Orcagna has failed to express except by covering the face with the hands . . ."

With this passage, *cf.* Ruskin's review of Lord Lindsay, *On the Old Road*, 1899, i. § 73.]

¹ [Painted in 1499 for the cloistered cemetery of S. Maria Novella; now in the Picture Gallery of the Hospital and greatly damaged. It was sawn from the wall and placed in an open court, where it suffered greatly from damp until it was transferred to the picture gallery. The lower part was completed by Mariotto Albertinelli. The upper part of the composition, by Fra Bartolommeo, evidently influenced the design of Raphael's "Disputa." An outline reproduction of the fresco is given at vol. ii. p. 446 of Kugler's *Handbook of Painting*, ed. 1887.]

changed. Only one traditional circumstance he has received with Dante¹ and Michael Angelo, the Boat of the Condemned; but the impetuosity of his mind bursts out even in the adoption of this image; he has not stopped at the scowling ferryman of the one, nor at the sweeping blow and demon dragging of the other, but seized Hylas-like by the limbs, and tearing up the earth in his agony, the victim is dashed into his destruction: nor is it the sluggish Lethe, nor the fiery lake that bears the cursed vessel, but the oceans of the earth and the waters of the firmament gathered into one white, ghastly cataract; the river of the wrath of God, roaring down into the gulf where the world has melted with its fervent heat,² choked with the ruin of nations, and the limbs of its corpses tossed out of its whirling, like water-wheels. Bat-like, out of the holes and caverns and shadows of the earth, the bones gather and the clay heaps heave, rattling and adhering into half-kneaded anatomies, that crawl, and startle, and struggle up among the putrid weeds, with the clay clinging to their clotted hair, and their heavy eyes sealed by the earth darkness yet, like his of old who went his way unseeing to the Siloam Pool; shaking off one by one the dreams of the prison-house, hardly hearing the clangour of the trumpets of the armies of God, blinded yet more, as they awake, by the white light of the new Heaven, until the great vortex of the four winds bears up their bodies to the judgment-seat: the Firmament is all full of them, a very dust of human souls, that drifts, and floats, and falls in the interminable, inevitable light; the bright clouds are darkened with them as with thick snow, currents of atom life in the arteries of heaven, now soaring up slowly, and higher and higher still, till the eye and the thought can follow no farther, borne up, wingless, by their inward faith and by the angel powers invisible, now hurled in countless drifts of horror before the breath of their condemnation.³

¹ [*Inferno*, iii. 89.]

² [2 Peter iii. 12.]

³ This description also was quoted in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian Index, s. "Orto").]

Now, I wish the reader particularly to observe throughout all these works of Tintoret, the distinction of the Imaginative Verity from falsehood on the one hand, and from realism on the other. The power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the TRUE nature of the thing represented, and on the utter scorn of the imagination for all shackles and fetters of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness. In the Baptism it cuts away the trunks of trees as if they were so much cloud or vapour, that it may exhibit to the thought the completed sequency of the scene;* in the Massacre it covers the marble floor with visionary light, that it may strike terror into the spectator without condescending to butchery; it defies the bare fact, but creates in him the fearful feeling; in the Crucifixion it annihilates locality, and brings the palm leaves to Calvary, so only that it may bear the mind to the Mount of Olives; as in the Entombment¹ it brings the manger to Jerusalem, that it may take the heart to Bethlehem; and all this it does in the daring consciousness of its higher and spiritual verity, and in the entire knowledge of the fact and substance of all that it touches. The imaginary boat of the demon angel expands the rush of the visible river into the descent of irresistible condemnation; but to make that rush and roar felt by the eye and heard by the ear, the rending of the pine branches above the cataract is taken directly from nature; it is an abstract of Alpine storm. Hence, while we are always placed face to face with whatever is to be told, there is in and beyond its reality a voice supernatural; and that which is doubtful in the vision has strength, sinew, and assuredness, built up in it by fact.

* The same thing is done yet more boldly in the large composition of the ceiling, the Plague of Fiery Serpents:² a part of the host, and another sky horizon, are seen through an opening in the ground.

¹ [At Parma; see above, ch. iii. § 16, p. 262; and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 18 (plate 17).]

² [Also in the Scuola di San Rocco, on the roof of the Upper Room; see for a full description of the picture, *Stones of Venice* (Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 24).]

Let us, however, still advance one step farther, and observe the imaginative power deprived of all aid from chiaroscuro, colour, or any other means of concealing the framework of its thoughts.

§ 26. *The Imagination, how manifested in sculpture.*

It was said by Michael Angelo that “non ha l’ottimo scultore alcun concetto, ch’ un marmo solo in se non circoscriva,”¹ a sentence which, though in the immediate sense intended by the writer it may remind us a little of the indignation of Boileau’s Pluto, “Il s’ensuit de-là que tout ce qui se peut dire de beau est dans les dictionnaires; il n’y a que les paroles qui sont transposées,”² yet is valuable, because it shows us that Michael Angelo held the imagination to be entirely expressible in rock, and therefore altogether independent, in its own nature, of those aids of colour and shade by which it is recommended in Tintoret, though the sphere of its operation is of course by these incalculably extended. But the presence of the imagination may be rendered in marble as deep, thrilling, and awful as in painting, so that the sculptor seek for the soul and govern the body thereby.

Of unimaginitive work, Bandinelli and Canova supply us with characteristic instances of every kind: the Hercules and Cacus of the former, and its criticism by Cellini, will occur at once to every one;³ the disgusting statue now placed so as to conceal Giotto’s important tempera picture in Santa Croce is a better

§ 27. *Bandinelli, Canova, Mino da Fiesole.*

¹ [Sonnet xv. The original reads “artista,” not “scultore.” J. A. Symonds (*Sonnets of Michael Angelo*, etc., 1878, p. 46) thus translates

“The best of artists hath no thought to show
What the rough stone in its superfluous shell
Doth not include: to break the marble spell
Is all the hand that serves the brain can do.”]

² [From “Les Héros de Roman: Dialogue a la manière de Lucien,” p. 180 in the *Oeuvres Complètes de Boileau-Despréaux*, 1861.]

³ [For Bandinelli, see above, p. 168 *n.*; for Canova, p. 121. This statue by Baccio Bandinelli (1488–1560), made in 1546, stands in the Piazza della Signoria at Florence. Cellini’s very entertaining criticism of it given to the Grand Duke, in presence of Bandinelli—who, says Cellini, “writhed and made the most ugly faces”—is in ch. lxx. of the second book of his *Autobiography* (Symonds’ translation, ed. 1888, ii. 221).]

instance;¹ but a still more impressive lesson might be received by comparing the inanity of Canova's garland grace, and ball-room sentiment,² with the intense truth, tenderness, and power of men like Mino da Fiesole, whose chisel leaves many a hard edge, and despises down and dimple, but it seems to cut light and carve breath, the marble burns beneath it, and becomes § 28. *Michael* transparent with very spirit.³ Yet Mino stopped at *Angelo*. the human nature; he saw the soul, but not the ghostly presences about it; it was reserved for Michael Angelo to pierce deeper yet, and to see the

¹ [In the Capella dei Baroncelli, in the south transept, is Bandinelli's "Dead Christ" in marble. For another reference to it, see above, p. 194. Ruskin's account of it in his note-book of 1845 is as follows:—

"It is difficult to speak of this work (marble, colossal) in terms of sufficient dispraise. It is a bad statue of a dying French duellist or gamester, and the legs of the model have been so bad that, I think in almost every point, their forms may be taken to contrast with the Elgins as pure examples of the wrong. The details and particular references are given at pages 17 and 38 of the note-book [a book of sketches, etc., in illustration of the written diary]. But the peculiarity of its general effect is not there stated. Commonly when a statue is by an inferior hand, one feels a want of vitality, or a rigidity or an imperfection of form resulting from deficient knowledge, or want of completion or badly selected position; but here there is no stoniness, no rigidity, no incompleteness; the statue has the disgusting effect of an ugly, naked body; one has the same reluctance to go near it, that one would have if it were a dirty, stripped Italian; the whole purity of the marble is destroyed by the man's vulgar conception, and this is an effect I never recollect having before perceived. Usually bad sculpture is not fleshy enough, but this is too much so."

This sculpture partially conceals Giotto's altar-piece, in five panels, of "The Coronation of the Virgin."

² [Cf. preceding volume, p. 230.]

³ [Ruskin had been specially struck by the two tombs by Mino da Fiesole in the church of the Badia. He writes in his note-book of 1845:—

"The recumbent figures have all his usual animation, but the gem of the church is the little child on the right hand side of that of Ugo, Count of Tuscany. It is the most beautiful and breathing realisation of infancy that ever sculptor struck; no fat legs, nor hands that look like stuffed gloves; no curly hair nor round cheeks nor bee-stung lips; the child is thin and somewhat hard in outline, there is no fine nor soft chiselling about it; it looks as if it had been exhausted by too much of the strong life within it, worn out with mind; and the execution is not delicate neither, but in many places hard and false or imperfect in what is commonly called *drawing*, and this is especially the case with the mouth, which hardly looks like a mouth at all when one looks close at it, but is rather like a deep chip or crack in the marble, and yet at the right distance it is a mouth all lighted up with love and child sweetness, altogether divine. Neither can I at all trace the sources of the heavenly expression in the eyes, for all is simply and even rudely cut, but the lines though apparently not refined in drawing are refined in their degree, their lightness and untraceableness being as total a defeat of all attempt to copy or imitate as nature herself."

indwelling angels. No man's soul is alone; Laocoon or Tobit, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand; the light or the fear of the Spiritual things that move beside it may be seen on the body; and that bodily form with Buonarotti, white, solid, distinct, material, though it be, is invariably felt as the instrument or the habitation of some infinite, invisible power. The earth of the Sistine Adam that begins to burn; the woman-embodied burst of Adoration from his sleep; the twelve great torrents of the Spirit of God that pause above us there, urned in their vessels of clay; the waiting in the shadow of futurity of those through whom the Promise and Presence of God went down from the Eve to the Mary, each still and fixed, fixed in his expectation, silent, foreseeing, faithful, seated each on his stony throne, the building stones of the word of God, building on and on, tier by tier, to the Refused one the head of the corner;¹ not only these, not only the troops of terror torn up from the earth by the four-quartered winds of the Judgment, but every fragment and atom of stone that he ever touched became instantly inhabited by what makes the hair stand up and the words be few: the St. Matthew, not yet disengaged from his sepulchre, bound hand and foot by his grave clothes, it is left for us to loose him; the strange spectral wreath of the Florence Pietà, casting its pyramidal, distorted shadow, full of pain and death, among the faint purple light that cross and perish under the obscure dome of St.^a Maria del Fiore; the white lassitude of joyous limbs, panther-like, yet passive, fainting with their own delight, that gleam among

¹ [The description down to this point is of the roof of the Sistine Chapel. (1) The creation of Adam, (2) the creation of Eve, and (3) the twelve Sibyls and Prophets, heralds and pioneers of Christ. "The Last Judgment" is of course on the wall of the same chapel. The "St. Matthew not yet disengaged from his sepulchre" refers to the huge roughed-out form of the disciple, now in the courtyard of the Accademia at Florence—the perfect shape not yet unloosed. "He also began," says Vasari, "a statue in marble of S. Matteo which, though it is but roughly hewn, shows perfection of design, and teaches sculptors how to extract figures from the stone." The unfinished Pietà—the sculptor's last work in marble—stands behind the high altar in the Cathedral of Florence. For the "Bacchus" in the Uffizi, see preceding volume, p. 118. The "Day and Night" and the "Dawn and Twilight" are of course in the Sagrestia Nuova of San Lorenzo; for another reference to them, see next volume, ch. viii. § 6, and, for Ruskin's study of them, see above, Introduction, p. xxi.]

the Pagan formalisms of the Uffizii, far away, separating themselves in their lustrous lightness as the waves of an Alpine torrent do by their dancing from the dead stones, though the stones be as white as they;* and finally, and perhaps more than all, those four ineffable types, not of darkness nor of day—not of morning nor evening, but of the departure and the resurrection, the twilight and the dawn of the souls of men—together with the spectre sitting in the shadow of the niche above them; † all these, and all else that I could

* The Bacchus. There is a small statue opposite it, also unfinished; but “a spirit still.”

† I would have insisted more on the ghostly vitality of this dreadful statue; but the passage referring to it in Rogers’ *Italy* supersedes all further description. I suppose most lovers of art know it by heart.

“Nor then forget that chamber of the dead,
Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
Turned into stone, rest everlastingly:
Yet still are breathing and shed round at noon
A twofold influence,—only to be felt—
A light, a darkness, mingling each with each;
Both, and yet neither. There, from age to age,
Two ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.
That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.
He meditates, his head upon his hand.

What from beneath his helm-like bonnet scowls?
Is it a face, or but an eyeless skull?
'Tis lost in shade; yet, like the basilisk,
It fascinates, and is intolerable.
His mien is noble, most majestic!
Then most so, when the distant choir is heard
At morn or eve—nor fail thou to attend
On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there;
When all, propitiating with solemn songs,
Visit the dead. Then wilt thou feel his power!”

It is strange that this should be the only written instance (as far as I recollect) of just and entire appreciation of Michael Angelo’s spiritual power.¹ It is perhaps owing to the very intensity of his imagination that he has been so little understood: for, as I before said, imagination can never be met by vanity, nor without earnestness. His Florentine followers saw in him an

¹ [A few years later, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (who, as we have seen, Vol. III. p. xxxviii., read Ruskin at Florence) wrote a fine commentary on these same statues in *Casa Guidi Windows*, i. 74 ff.]

name of his forming, have borne, and in themselves retain and exercise the same inexplicable power—inexplicable because proceeding from an imaginative perception almost super-human, which goes whither we cannot follow, and is where we cannot come; throwing naked the final, deepest root of the being of man, whereby he grows out of the invisible, and holds on his God home.*

anatomist and posture-master; and *art was finally destroyed by the influence over admiring idiocy* of the greatest mind that art ever inspired.**

** I italicised the earliest expression of my sense of the destructive power in Michael Angelo; my own mind was, however, still itself in the state described of “admiring idiocy” when I wrote the last words of the note. [1883.]

* I have not chosen to interrupt the argument respecting the essence of the imaginative faculty by any remarks on the execution of the imaginative hand; but we can hardly leave Tintoret and Michael Angelo without some notice of the pre-eminent power of execution exhibited by both of them, in consequence of their vigour and clearness of conception; nor without again¹ warning the lower artist from confounding this velocity of decision and impatience with the velocity of affectation or indolence. Every result of real imagination we have seen to be a truth of some sort; and it is the characteristic of truth to be in some way tangible, seizable, distinguishable, and clear, as it is of falsehood to be obscure, confused, and confusing. Not but that many, if not most truths have a dark side, a side by which they are connected with mysteries too high for us,—nay, I think it is commonly but a poor and miserable truth which the human mind can walk all round, but at all events they have one side by which we can lay hold of them, and feel that they are downright adamant, and that their form, though lost in cloud here and there, is unalterable and real, and not less real and rocky because infinite, and joined on, St. Michael’s Mount-like, to a far mainland. So then, whatever the real imagination lays hold of, as it is a truth, does not alter into anything else, as the imaginative part works at it, and feels over it, and finds out more of it, but comes out more and more continually; all that is found out pointing to and indicating still more behind, and giving additional stability and reality to that which is discovered already. But if it be fancy or any other form of pseudo-imagination which is at work, then that which it gets hold of may not be a truth, but only an idea, which will keep giving way as soon as we try to take hold of it, and turning into something else; so that, as we go on copying it, every part will be inconsistent with all that has gone before, and at intervals it will vanish altogether and leave blanks which must be filled up by any means at hand. And in these circumstances, the painter, unable to seize his thought, because it has not substance nor bone enough to bear grasping, is liable to catch at every line that he lays down, for help

¹ [See preceding volume, p. 126.]

Now, in all these instances, let it be observed—for it is to that end alone that I have been arguing all along—that the virtue of the Imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power), a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things.¹ I repeat that it matters not whether the reader is willing to call this faculty Imagination or not; I do not care about the name; but I would be understood when I speak of imagination hereafter, to mean this,² the base of whose authority

§ 29. *Recapitulation. The perfect function of the Imagination is the intuitive perception of Ultimate Truth.*

and suggestion, and to be led away by it to something else, which the first effort to realize dissipates in like manner, placing another phantom in its stead; until, out of the fragments of these successive phantoms, he has glued together a vague, mindless involuntary whole, a mixture of all that was trite or common in each of the successive conceptions, for that is necessarily what is first caught, a heap of things with the bloom off and the chill on, laborious, unnatural, inane, with its emptiness disguised by affectation, and its deadness enlivened by extravagance.

Necessarily from these modes of conception, three vices of execution must result; and these are found in all those parts of the work where any trust has been put in conception, and only to be avoided in portions of actual portraiture, for a thoroughly unimaginative painter can make no use of a study—all his studies are guesses and experiments, all are equally wrong, and so far felt to be wrong by himself, that he will not work by any of them, but will always endeavour to improve upon them in the picture, and so lose the use of them. These three vices of execution are then—first, feebleness of handling, owing to uncertainty of intention; secondly, intentional carelessness of handling, in the hope of getting by accident something more than was meant; and, lastly, violence and haste of handling, in the effort to secure as much as possible of the obscure image of which the mind feels itself losing hold. I am throughout, it will be observed, attributing right feeling to the unimaginative painter; if he lack this, his execution may be cool and determined, as he will set down falsehood without blushing, and ugliness without suffering. Added to these various evidences of weakness, will be the various vices assumed for the sake of concealment; morbid refinements disguising feebleness,—or insolence and coarseness to cover desperation. When the imagination is powerful, the resulting execution is of course the contrary of all this: its first steps will commonly be impetuous, in clearing its

¹ [With this § compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 62, and *Pleasures of England*, § 90.]

² [Ed. 1 reads:—

“to mean this, the true foundation of all art which exercises eternal authority over men’s minds; (all other imagination than this is either secondary and contemplative, or utterly spurious); the base of whose authority . . .”]

and being is its perpetual thirst for truth and purpose to be true. It has no food, no delight, no care, no perception, except of truth; it is forever looking under masks, and burning up mists; no fairness of form, no majesty of seeming will satisfy it; the first condition of its existence is incapability of being deceived; and though it sometimes dwells upon and substantiates the fictions of fancy, yet its own operation is to trace to their farthest limit the true laws and likelihoods even of the fictitious creation. This has been well explained by Fuseli, in his allusion to the Centaur of

ground and getting at its first conception—as we know of Michael Angelo in his smiting his blocks into shape (see the passage quoted by Sir Charles Bell in the *Essay on Expression*, from Blaise de Vigenere),¹ and as is visible in the handling of Tintoret always: as the work approaches completion, the stroke, while it remains certain and firm, because its end is always known, may frequently become slow and careful, both on account of the difficulty of following the pure lines of the conception, and because there is no fear felt of the conception's vanishing before it can be realized; but generally there is a certain degree of impetuosity visible in the works of all the men of high imagination, when they are not working from a study, showing itself in Michael Angelo by the number of blocks he left unfinished, and by some slight evidences in those he completed of his having worked painfully towards the close; so that, except the Duke Lorenzo, the Bacchus of the Florentine Gallery, and the Pietà of Genoa, I know not any of his finished works in which his mind is as mightily expressed as in his marble sketches; only, it is always to be observed that impetuosity or rudeness of hand is not necessarily—and, if imaginative, is never—carelessness. In the two landscapes at the end of the Scuola di San Rocco,² Tintoret has drawn several large tree trunks with two strokes of his brush—one for the dark, and another for the light side; and the large rock at the foot of the picture of the Temptation is painted with a few detached touches of grey over a flat brown ground; but the touches of the tree trunks have been followed by the mind as they went

¹ [*Anatomy of Expression*, 3rd ed., p. 207. The following is the passage: "I have seen Michael Angelo, when above sixty, and not very robust, make more fragments of the marble fly off in a quarter of an hour than three vigorous young sculptors would have done in an hour; and he worked with so much impetuosity, and put such strength into his blows, that I feared he would have broken the whole in pieces, for portions, the size of three or four fingers, were struck off so near to the contour or outline, that, if he erred by a hair's-breadth, he would have spoiled all and lost his labour, since the defect could not have been remedied as in working in clay."]

² [The pictures referred to are apparently the "Magdalen" and "St. Mary of Egypt" in the Lower Room; see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Venetian index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," Nos. 5 and 6). On Tintoret's rapidity of execution in this respect, see above, Introduction, p. xxxix. The "Temptation" is in the Upper Room; for a further description of it, see *Stones of Venice*, *ibid.*, No. 20. It is reproduced as the frontispiece to J. B. Stoughton Holborn's *Tintoretto*.]

Zeuxis;¹ and there is not perhaps a greater exertion of imaginative power than may be manifested in following out to their farthest limits the necessary consequences of such arbitrary combination; but let not the jests of the fancy be confounded with that after serious work of the imagination which gives them all the nervous verity and substance of which they are capable. Let not the monsters of Chinese earthenware be confounded with the Faun, Satyr, or Centaur.

How different this definition of the Imagination may be from the idea of it commonly entertained among us, I can hardly say, because I have a very indistinct idea of what is usually meant by the term. I hear modern works constantly praised as being imaginative, in which I can trace no virtue of any kind; but simple, slavish, unpalliated falsehood and exaggeration. I see

§ 30. *Imagination, how vulgarly understood.*

down with the most painful intensity through their every undulation; and the few grey strokes on the stone are so considered that a better stone could not be painted if we took a month to it: and I suppose, generally, it would be utterly impossible to give an example of execution in which less was left to accident, or in which more care was concentrated in every stroke, than the seemingly regardless and impetuous handling of this painter.

On the habit of both Tintoret and Michael Angelo to work straight forward from the block and on the canvas, without study or model, it is needless to insist; for though this is one of the most amazing proofs of their imaginative power, it is a dangerous precedent. No mode of execution ought ever to be taught to a young artist as better than another; he ought to understand the truth of what he has to do; felicitous execution will follow as a matter of course; and if he feels himself capable of getting at the right at once, he will naturally do so without reference to precedent. He ought to hold always that his duty is to attain the highest result he can—but that no one has any business with the means or time he has taken. If it can be done quickly, let it be so done; if not, let it be done at any rate. For knowing his way he is answerable, and therefore must not walk *doubtfully*; but no one can blame him for walking *cautiously*, if the way be a narrow one, with a slip on each side. He may pause, but he must not hesitate—and tremble, but must not vacillate.

¹ [True invention, says Fuseli, “discovers, selects, combines the *possible*, the *probable*, the *known*, in a mode that strikes with an air of truth and novelty, at once. Possible . . . means the representation of effects derived from causes, or forms compounded from materials, heterogeneous and incompatible among themselves, but rendered so plausible to our senses, that the transition of one part to another seems to be accounted for by an air of organisation . . . ; that this was the condition on which, and the limits within which alone the ancients permitted invention to represent what was, strictly speaking, impossible, we may with plausibility surmise from the picture of Zeuxis, described by Lucian in the memoir to which he has prefixed that painter’s name, who was probably one of the first adventurers in this species of

not what merit there can be in pure, ugly, resolute fiction; it is surely easy enough to be wrong; there are many ways of being unlike nature. I understand not what virtue that is which entitles one of these ways to be called imaginative, rather than another; and I am still further embarrassed by hearing the portions of those works called especially imaginative in which there is the most effort at minute and mechanical statement of contemptible details, and in which the artist would have been as actual and absolute in imitation as an echo, if he had known how. Against convictions which I do not understand I cannot argue; but I may warn the artist that imagination of this strange kind is not capable of bearing the time test; nothing of its doing has continued its influence over men; and if he desires to take place among the great men of older time, there is but one way for it; and one kind of imagination that will stand the immortal light: I know not how far it is by effort cultivable; but we have evidence enough before us to show in what direction that effort must be made.

We have seen (§ 10) that the Imagination is in no small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact, all moral truth can only thus be apprehended—and it is observable, generally, that all true and deep emotion is imaginative, both in conception and expression; and that the mental sight becomes sharper with every full beat of the heart: and, therefore, all egotism, and selfish care, or regard are, in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination; whose play and power depend altogether on our being able to forget ourselves and enter, like possessing spirits, into the bodies of things about us.

Again, as the Life of Imagination is in the discovering of truth, it is clear it can have no respect for sayings or opinions: knowing in itself when it has invented truly, restless and tormented except when it has this knowledge, its sense of success or failure is too acute to

imagery.” Fuseli goes on to recall the pains taken by Zeuxis “to give plausibility to a compound of heterogeneous forms, to inspire them with suitable soul, and to imitate the laws of existence.” But the Athenians admired not this artistic intention, but only the novelty of the subject, and the artist covered up his picture in disgust. (Lecture iii., in the *Life and Writings of Fuseli*, ii. 138.)]

§ 31. *How its cultivation is dependent on the moral feelings.*

§ 32. *On independence of Mind,*

be affected by praise or blame. Sympathy it desires—but can do without; of opinions it is regardless, not in pride but because it is conscious of a rule of action and object of aim in which it cannot be mistaken; partly, also, in pure energy of desire, and longing to do and to invent more and more, which suffer it not to suck the sweetness of praise—unless a little with the end of the rod in its hand, and without pausing in its march. It goes straight forward up the hill; no voices nor mutterings can turn it back, nor petrify it from its purpose.*

Finally, it is evident that, like the theoretic faculty, the imagination must be fed constantly by external nature—after the illustrations we have given this may seem mere truism, for it is clear that to the exercise of the penetrative faculty a subject of penetration is necessary; but I note it because many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of nature.¹ The most imaginative men always study the hardest, and are the most thirsty for new knowledge. Fancy plays² like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy: but Imagination is a pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains—bar her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the Tower of Famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.^{3*} That which we know of the lives of M. Angelo and Tintoret is eminently illustrative of this temper.

§ 33. *And on
habitual
reference to
nature*

¹ [Ed. I had a note, among the Addenda, referring to this passage; the note is given below, p. 341.]

² [This passage, "Fancy plays" to the end of the chapter, is § 14 of *Fronde Agrestes*, where Ruskin added the following note:—

"I leave this passage, as my friend has chosen it; but it is unintelligible without the contexts, which show how all the emotions described in the preceding passages of this section, are founded on trust in the beneficence and rule of an Omnipotent Spirit.]

³ [For the Tower of Famine, see Vol. I. p. 115. The Tuscan islands—Capraja (the "island of goats," so called by the ancients also) and Gorgona, a yet more sterile island affording pasture to wild goats only—would often have been seen by Ruskin from the mainland.]



J. Ruskin after Tintoret.

Allen & Co. 5c.

Figures from "The Adoration of the Magi."

CHAPTER IV

OF IMAGINATION CONTEMPLATIVE

WE have, in the two preceding chapters, arrived at definite conclusions respecting the power and essence of the imaginative faculty. In these two acts of penetration and combination, its separating and characteristic attributes are entirely developed; it remains for us only to observe a certain habit or mode of operation in which it frequently delights, and by which it addresses itself to our perceptions more forcibly, and asserts its presence more distinctly than in those mighty but more secret workings wherein its life consists.

§ 1. *Imagination contemplative is not part of the essence, but only a habit of the faculty.*

In our examination of the combining imagination, we chose to assume the first or simple conception to be as clear in the absence as in the presence of the object of it. This, I suppose, is, in point of fact, never the case, nor is an approximation to such distinctness of conception always a characteristic of the imaginative mind. Many persons have thorough and felicitous power of drawing from memory, yet never originate a thought, nor excite an emotion.

The form in which Conception actually occurs to ordinary minds appears to derive value and preciousness from that indefiniteness which we alluded to in the second chapter (§ 2); for there is an unfailing charm in the memory and anticipation of things beautiful, more sunny and spiritual than attaches to their presence; for with their presence it is possible to be sated, and even wearied, but with the imagination of them never; in so far that it needs some self discipline to prevent the mind from falling into a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with all that it immediately possesses, and continual longing for things absent;

§ 2. *The ambiguity of Conception.*

and yet I think this charm is not justly to be attributed to the mere vagueness and uncertainty of the conception, except thus far, that of objects whose substantial presence was painful, the sublimity and impressiveness, if there were any, are retained in the conception, while the sensual offensiveness is withdrawn; thus circumstances of horror may be safely touched in verbal description, and for a time dwelt upon by the mind as often by Homer and Spenser (by the latter frequently with too much grossness),¹ which could not for a moment be regarded or tolerated in their reality, or on canvas; and besides this mellowing and softening operation on those it retains, the conceptive faculty has the power of letting go many of them altogether out of its groups of ideas, and retaining only those where the “*meminisse juvabit*”² will apply; and in this way the entire group of memories becomes altogether delightful. But of those parts of anything which are in themselves beautiful, I think the indistinctness no benefit, but that the brighter they are the better; and that the peculiar charm we feel in conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas, rather than from their obscurity; for we do not usually recall, as we have seen, one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated, and into every moment we concentrate an epitome of the day; and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in detail remembered, the feeling and joy of them are obtained we know not how or whence: and so, with a kind of conceptive burning-glass, we bend the sunshine of all the day, and the fulness of all the scene upon every point that we successively seize; and this together with more vivid action of Fancy, for I think that the wilful and playful seizures of

§ 3. *Is not in itself capable of adding to the charm of fair things;*

¹ [Ed. 1 reads, “. . . grossness, as in the description of the combat of the Red Cross Knight with Errour . . .),” *Faerie Queene*, book i. canto i.]

² [Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 203.]

the points that suit her purpose, and help her springing, whereby she is distinguished from simple conception, take place more easily and actively with the memory of things than in presence of them. But, however this be, and I confess that there is much that I cannot satisfactorily to myself unravel with respect to the nature of simple conception, it is evident that this agreeableness, whatever it be, is not by art attainable, for all art is, in some sort, realization; it may be the realization of obscurity or indefiniteness, but still it must differ from the mere *conception* of obscurity and indefiniteness; so that whatever emotions depend absolutely on imperfectness of conception, as the horror of Milton's Death, cannot be rendered by art; for art can only lay hold of things which have shape, and destroys by its touch the fearfulness or pleasurable-ness of those which "shape have none."¹

But on this indistinctness of conception, itself comparatively valueless and unaffecting, is based the operation of the Imaginative faculty with which we are at present concerned, and in which its glory is consummated; whereby, depriving the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter, which stroke having once received, they pass current at once in the peculiar conjunction and for the peculiar value desired.

§ 4. But gives to the Imagination its regardant power over them.

Thus, in the description of Satan quoted in the first chapter,² "And like a comet burned," the bodily shape of the angel is destroyed, the inflaming of the formless spirit is alone regarded; and this, and his power of evil, associated in one fearful and abstract conception, are stamped to give them distinctness and permanence with the image of the

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, ii. 667.]

² [Of the second section, p. 226 above.]

comet, "That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge." Yet this could not be done, but that the image of the comet itself is in a measure indistinct, capable of awful expansion, and full of threatening and fear. Again, in his fall, the imagination gathers up the thunder, the resistance, the massy prostration, separates them from the external form, and binds them together by the help of that image of the mountain half sunk; which again would be unfit but for its own indistinctness, and for that glorious addition "with all his pines,"¹ whereby a vitality and spear-like hostility are communicated to its falling form; and the fall is marked as not utter subversion, but sinking only, the pines remaining in their uprightness and unity, and threatening of darkness upon the descended precipice; and again, in that yet more noble passage at the close of the fourth book, where almost every operation of the contemplative imagination is concentrated; the angelic squadron first gathered into one burning mass by the single expression "sharpening in mooned horns," then told out in their unity and multitude and stooped hostility, by the image of the wind upon the corn; Satan endowed with godlike strength and endurance in that mighty line, "Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved," with infinitude of size the next instant, and with all the vagueness and terribleness of spiritual power, by the "Horror plumed," and the "*what seemed both spear and shield.*"²

The third function of Fancy already spoken of as subordinate to this of the Imagination, is the highest of which she is capable; like the Imagination, she beholds in the things submitted to her treatment things different from the actual; but the suggestions she follows are not in their nature essential in the object contemplated; and the images resulting, instead of illustrating, may lead the mind away from it, and change the current of contemplative feeling: for, as in her operation parallel to Imagination penetrative we saw her dwelling upon

§ 5. *The third office of Fancy distinguished from Imagination contemplative.*

¹ [See above, p. 227].

² [The references here are to *Paradise Lost*, book iv., lines 978, 982, 987, 989, 990.]

external features, while the nobler sister faculty entered within; so now, when both, from what they see and know in their immediate object, are conjuring up images illustrative or elevatory of it, the Fancy necessarily summons those of mere external relationship, and therefore of unaffecting influence; while the Imagination, by every ghost she raises, tells tales about the prison house, and therefore never loses her power over the heart, nor her unity of emotion. On the other hand, the regardant or contemplative action of Fancy is in this different from, and in this nobler than, that mere seizing and likeness-catching operation we saw in her before; that, when contemplative, she verily believes in the truth of the vision she has summoned, loses sight of actuality, and beholds the new and spiritual image faithfully and even seriously; whereas, before, she summoned no spiritual image, but merely caught the vivid actuality, or the curious resemblance of the real object; not that these two operations are separate, for the Fancy passes gradually from mere vivid sight of reality, and witty suggestion of likeness, to a ghostly sight of what is unreal; and through this, in proportion as she begins to feel, she rises towards and partakes of Imagination itself; for Imagination and Fancy are continually united, and it is necessary, when they are so, carefully to distinguish the feelingless part which is Fancy's, from the sentient part, which is Imagination's. Let us take a few instances. Here is Fancy, first, very beautiful, in her simple capacity of, likeness-catching:

“To-day we purpose—ay this hour we mount,
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine.
Come down, we pray thee, ere the *hot sun count*
His dewy rosary on the eglantine.”¹

Seizing on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one, the fancy is content to lose the heart of the thing, the solemnity

¹ [Keats: *Isabella*, xxiv. For Ruskin's intense admiration of this “glorious poet,” see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. ix. § 9 n.]

of prayer: or perhaps I do the glorious poet wrong in saying this, for the sense of a sun worship and orison in beginning its race, may have been in his mind; and so far as it was so, the passage is imaginative and not fanciful. But that which most readers would accept from it, is the mere flash of the external image, in whose truth the Fancy herself does not yet believe, and therefore is not yet contemplative. Here, however, is Fancy believing in the images she creates:

“It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms,
Which *star the winds with points of coloured light*
As they rain through them; and *bright golden globes*
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven.”¹

It is not, observe, a mere likeness that is caught here; but the flowers and fruit are entirely deprived by the fancy of their material existence, and contemplated by her seriously and faithfully as stars and worlds; yet it is only external likeness that she catches; she forces the resemblance, and lowers the dignity of the adopted image.

Next take two delicious stanzas of Fancy regardant (believing in her creations), followed by one of heavenly imagination, from Wordsworth’s address to the daisy:²

“A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love’s court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations.
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

“I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!

¹ [Shelley: *Prometheus*, iii. 3.]

² [The poem of 1805. A stanza is omitted in the quotation after the first one. The text of the quotation has in this edition been amended, in matters of punctuation, in accordance with the original.]

Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
 Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
 May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee!

“Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last
 When all my reveries are past,
 I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
 Sweet silent creature!
 That breath'st with me in sun and air,
 Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
 My heart with gladness, and a share
 Of thy meek nature!”

Observe how spiritual, yet how wandering and playful, the fancy is in the first two stanzas, and how far she flies from the matter in hand; never stopping to brood on the character of any one of the images she summons, and yet for a moment truly seeing and believing in them all; while in the last stanza the imagination returns with its deep feeling to the heart of the flower, and “*cleaves fast*” to that. Compare the operation of the Imagination in Coleridge, on one of the most trifling objects that could possibly have been submitted to its action:

“The thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.”¹

Lastly, observe the sweet operation of Fancy regardant, in the following well-known passage from Scott, where both her beholding and transforming powers are seen in their simplicity:

“The rocky summits, split and rent,
 Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
 Or seemed fantastically set
 With cupola or minaret.

¹ [From the piece entitled “Frost at Midnight,” 1798.]

Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
 Nor lacked they many a banner fair,
 For, from their shivered brows displayed,
 Far o'er th' unfathomable glade,
 All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
 The briar-rose fell, in streamers green,
 And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
 Waved in the west wind's summer sighs."¹

Let the reader refer to this passage, with its pretty tremulous conclusion—above the pine tree, “where glistening streamers waved and danced,”² and then compare with it the following, where the Imagination operates on a scene nearly similar:

“Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
 The struggling brook; tall spires of windlestrae
 Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
 And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines,
 Branchless and blasted, clenched, with grasping roots,
 The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
 Yet ghastly. For, *as fast years flow away,*
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white; and, where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs;—so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions
 Where the pass expands
 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
 And seems, with its accumulated crags,
 To overhang the world; for wide expand
 Beneath the wan stars, and descending moon,
 Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom

¹ [*Lady of the Lake*, canto I. xi. Two lines are omitted after the fourth of the quotation.]

² [*Ibid.* xii:—

And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
 His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
 Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
 His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
 Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue;
 So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
 The scenery of a fairy dream.]

*Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each *inconstant blast*
Yielding one only response, at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder and the hiss of *homeless* streams,
Mingling its solemn song.”¹*

In this last passage, the mind never departs from its solemn possession of the solitary scene, the Imagination only giving weight, meaning, and strange human sympathies to all its sights and sounds.

In that from Scott* the Fancy, led away by the outside resemblance of floating form and hue to the banners, loses the feeling and possession of the scene, and places herself in circumstances of character completely opposite to the quietness and grandeur of the natural objects; this would have been unjustifiable, but that the resemblance occurs to the mind of the monarch, rather than to that of the poet; and it is that which, of all others, would have been the most likely to occur at the time; from this point of view it has high imaginative propriety. Of the same fanciful character is that transformation of the tree trunks into dragons noticed before in Turner's Jason;² and in the same way this becomes imaginative,

* Let it not be supposed that I mean to compare the sickly dreaming of Shelley³ over clouds and waves, with the masculine and magnificent grasp of men and things which we find in Scott; it only happens that these two passages are more illustrative, by the likeness of the scenery they treat, than any others I could have opposed, and that Shelley is peculiarly distinguished by the faculty of Contemplative imagination. Scott's healthy and truthful feeling would not allow him to represent the benighted hunter, provoked by loss of game, horse, and way at once, as indulging in any more exalted flights of imagination than those naturally consequent on the contrast between the night's lodging he expected, and that which befitted him.

¹ [Shelley: *Alastor*, 527 ff. In the fourteenth line of the quotation, “extends” (in all previous eds.) has been corrected, in accordance with Shelley's text, to “expands.” A few corrections of punctuation have also been made.]

² [Above, p. 261.]

³ [For Ruskin's waning enthusiasm for Shelley, see Vol. I. pp. 253–254 n.]

native, as it exhibits the effect of Fear in disposing to morbid perception. Compare with it the real and high action of the Imagination on the same matter in Wordsworth's Yew trees¹ (perhaps the most vigorous and solemn bit of forest landscape ever painted):—

“Each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling and inveterately convolved;
*Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane.*”

It is too long to quote, but the reader should refer to it: let him note especially, if painter, that pure touch of colour, “By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged.”

In the same way the blasted trunk on the left, in Turner's drawing of the spot where Harold fell at the Battle of Hastings,² takes, where its boughs first separate, the shape of the head of an arrow; this, which is mere fancy in itself, is imagination as it supposes in the spectator an excited condition of feeling dependent on the history of the spot.

I have been led perhaps into too great detail in illustrating these points; but I think it is of no small importance to prove how in all cases the Imagination is based upon, and appeals to, a deep heart feeling; and how faithful and earnest it is in contemplation of the subject-matter, never losing sight of it, nor disguising it, but depriving it of extraneous and material accidents, and regarding it in its disembodied essence. I have not, however, sufficiently noted, in opposition to it, that diseased action of the fancy which depends more on nervous temperament than intellectual power; and which, as in dreaming, fever, insanity, and other morbid conditions of mind, is frequently a source of daring and inventive conception; and so the visionary appearances resulting from disturbances of the frame by passion, and from the rapid tendency of the mind to invest with shape and intelligence the active influences about it, as in the various demons, spirits, and fairies of all imaginative

¹ [The poem of 1803 so entitled.]

² [Engraved by W. Cooke in R. R. Reinagle's *Views in Sussex*, 1819.]

nations; which, however, I consider are no more to be ranked as right creations of fancy or imagination than things actually seen and heard; for the action of the nerves is, I suppose, the same, whether externally caused, or from within, although very grand imagination may be shown by the intellectual anticipation and realization of such impressions, as in that glorious vignette of Turner's to the voyage of Columbus, "Slowly along the evening sky they went."¹ Note especially how admirably true to the natural form, and yet how suggestive of the battlement, he has rendered the level flake of evening cloud.

I believe that it is unnecessary for me to enter into farther detail of illustration respecting these points; for fuller explanation of the operations of the contemplative faculty of things verbally expressible, the reader may be referred to Wordsworth's preface to his poems;² it only remains for us, here, to examine how far this imaginative or abstract conception is to be conveyed by the material art of the sculptor or the painter.

§ 8. *The action of Contemplative imagination is not to be expressed by Art.*

Now, it is evident that the bold action of either the fancy or the imagination, dependent on a bodiless and spiritual image of the object, is not to be by lines or colours represented. We cannot, in the painting of Satan fallen, suggest any image of pines or crags; neither can we assimilate the briar and the banner, nor give human sympathy to the motion of the film, nor voice to the swinging of the pines.

Yet certain powers there are, within due limits, of marking the thing represented with an ideal character; and it was to these powers that I alluded in defining the meaning of the term Ideal, in the thirteenth chapter of the preceding section.³ For it is by this operation that the productions of high art are separated from those of the Realist.

§ 9. *Except under narrow limits.—First Abstract rendering of form without colour;*

¹ [Illustration to canto ii. of "The Voyage of Columbus" in Rogers' *Poems*; the drawing is No. 395 in the National Gallery. Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. pt. iv. ch. viii. § 7.]

² [See above, p. 230.]

³ [See above, p. 164.]

And, first, there is evidently capability of separating colour and form, and considering either separately. Form we find abstractedly considered by the sculptor; how far it would be possible to advantage a statue by the addition of colour, I venture not to affirm; the question is too extensive to be here discussed.¹ High authorities, and ancient practice, are in favour of colour; so the sculpture of the middle ages. The two statues of Mino da Fiesole² in the church of St^a. Caterina at Pisa have been coloured, the irises of the eyes painted dark, and the hair gilded, as also I think the Madonna in St^a. Maria della Spina; the eyes have been painted in the sculptures of Orcagna in Or San Michele. But it looks like a remnant of barbarism (compare the pulpit of Guido da Como, in the church of San Bartolomeo at Pistoja); and I have never seen colour on any solid forms, that did not, to my mind, neutralize all other power: the porcelains of Luca della Robbia are painful examples;³ and, in lower art, Florentine mosaic in relief. Gilding is more admissible, and tells sometimes sweetly

¹ [On the subject of colour in ancient sculpture, the reader may consult the authorities cited in E. T. Cook's *Popular Handbook to the Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum*, 1903, p. 107.]

² [This was a slip of the pen. The statues in question are not by Mino da Fiesole, but by Nino Pisano. Ruskin's account of them in his 1845 note-book is as follows:—

“In a chapel . . . [on the left of the high altar] are two statues by Nino Pisano. They call them Faith and Charity, but they seem to me like Faith and Hope; the doubtful one on the left is a little too smiling and French, but still fine; she has a roll in her hand, and a diadem on her brow. Faith has the right hand on her bosom and a book in her left, and looks down in meditation. These statues have been painted, the irises of the eyes dark, the inside of the dresses blue, the fringes of the dresses and their decorations richly gilt, and apparently the hair also; the marble seems to have been left for the face and body or dress. Be this as it may, they are now not injured by the remaining gold of the fringes, and they are certainly two examples of as much exquisite and living grace, chaste, pure, and yet full of blood and life as ever were warmed out of marble. All that I have seen of Nino's work is quite inimitable for grace, chastity, and animation.”

In the chapel of S. Maria della Spina there is a statue over the altar, by Nino, of the Madonna offering a flower to the infant Saviour; and at the west end, a Madonna with Child, partly gilt, by Nino or Ugolino da Pisa. The sculptures of Orcagna in Or San Michele are on the shrine built and sculptured by him.]

³ [In a letter to his father from Florence (May 29, 1845), Ruskin writes:—

“It is curious that at Pistoja they have a complete series of marble pulpits of all dates, richer than any to be met with elsewhere; the best of them beating the celebrated one in the Pisan Baptistery all to shivers. I have no doubt it is the finest pulpit in the world. There is a singular thing on the Hospital front, a series of bas-reliefs in coloured porcelain by Luca della Robbia, which have of course the most vulgar effect conceivable, looking like the commonest



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(1845)

upon figures of quaint design, as on the pulpit of St^a. Maria Novella, while it spoils the classical ornaments of the mouldings.¹ But the truest grandeur of sculpture I believe to be in the white form; something of this feeling may be owing to the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of obtaining truly noble colour upon it; but if we could colour the Elgin marbles with the flesh tint of Giorgione, I had rather not have it done.

Colour, without form, is less frequently obtainable; and it may be doubted whether it be desirable; yet I think § 10. *Of colour without form;* that to the full enjoyment of it a certain sacrifice of form is necessary; sometimes by reducing it to the shapeless glitter of the gem, as often Tintoret and Bassano; sometimes by loss of outline and blending of parts, as Turner; sometimes by flatness of mass, as often Giorgione and Titian. How far it is possible for the painter to represent those mountains of Shelley as the poet sees them, “mingling *their flames* with twilight,”² I cannot say; but my impression is, that there is no true abstract mode of considering colour; and that all the loss of form in the works of Titian or Turner is not ideal, but the representation of the natural conditions under which bright colour is seen; for form is always in a measure lost by Nature herself when colour is very vivid.

sign-post barbarisms. And yet if you struggle with yourself, and look into them, forgetting the colour, you find them magnificent works of the very highest merit—full of the purest sculptural feeling, and abundant in expression, grace of conception, and anatomical knowledge.”]

¹ [The pulpit is by Maestro Lazzaro. Ruskin’s account of it in his note-book of 1845 is as follows:—

“The pulpit is of marble gilt. It gives the usual series of the life of the Madonna, bearing this subtle inscription in which the omission of the single word ‘rather’ makes *rather* a difference: ‘Beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quæ suxisti. Beati qui verbum Dei audiunt et custodiunt.’ The gilding of the flower work and meaningless parts hurts their effect dreadfully, but on the figures it is agreeable, adding to their quaint and missal-like character. (This is important for after consideration.) The figure designs are very sweet and Giottesque; the Madonna rising in an oval glory with St. Thomas at her feet reminds one of Nino Pisano, and is very fine. The angels are all draped simply and severely, some so angular in line as to look like grasshoppers. Oppose this to the nasty fluttering of later times.”

The “subtle inscription” is from Luke xi. 27, 28, and omits the words “quin imo” (“yea rather”) before “Beati.”]

² [See the passage quoted above, on p. 297.]

Again, there is capability of representing the essential character, form, and colour of an object, without external texture. On this point much has been said by Reynolds and others,¹ and it is, indeed, perhaps the most unfailing characteristic of great manner in painting. Compare a dog of Edwin Landseer with a dog of Paul Veronese. In the first, the outward texture is wrought out with exquisite dexterity of handling, and minute attention to all the accidents of curl and gloss which can give appearance of reality; while the hue and power of the sunshine, and the truth of the shadow, on all these forms are neglected, and the large relations of the animal, as a mass of colour, to the sky or ground, or other parts of the picture, utterly lost. This is realism at the expense of ideality; it is treatment essentially unimaginative.* With Veronese, there is no curling nor crisping, nor glossiness nor sparkle, hardly even hair; a mere type of hide, laid on with a few scene-painter's touches; but the essence of dog is there; the entire, magnificent, generic animal type, muscular and living, and with broad, pure, sunny daylight upon him, and bearing his true and harmonious

* I do not mean to withdraw the praise I have given, and shall always be willing to give, to pictures, such as the Shepherd's Chief Mourner, and many others, in which the soul, if we may so call it, of animals, has been explained to us in modes hitherto unfelt and unexampled.

But Mr. Landseer is much more a natural historian than a painter; and the power of his works depends more on his knowledge and love of animals—on his understanding of their minds and ways—on his unerring notice and memory of their gestures and expressions, than on artistical or technical excellence. He never aims at colour—his composition is always weak, and sometimes unskilful; and his execution, though partially dexterous, and admirably adapted to the imitation of certain textures and surfaces, is far from being that of a great Painter attained by the mastery of every various difficulty, and changefully adapted to the treatment of every object. Compare the Addenda to this volume [p. 334.]²

¹ [See, for instance, the eleventh *Discourse* of Reynolds.]

² [Ed. I does not contain the last twelve lines of this note, and reads instead:—

“Shepherd's Chief Mourner, and to all in which the character and inner life of animals are developed. But all lovers of art must regret to find Mr. Landseer wasting his energies on such inanities as the ‘Shoeing,’ and sacrificing colour, expression, and action to an imitation of a glossy hide.”

“Shoeing” is No. 606 in the National Gallery. For other references to Landseer, see p. 334 *n.*]

relation of colour to all colour about him. This is ideal treatment.¹

The same treatment is found in the works of all the greatest men; they all paint the lion more than his mane, and the horse rather than his hide; and I think also they are often more careful to obtain the right expression of large and universal light and colour, than accuracy of features;² for the warmth of sunshine, and the force of sunlighted hue, are always sublime on whatever subject they may be exhibited; and so also are light and shade, if grandly arranged, as may be well seen in an etching of Rembrandt's of a spotted shell, which he has made altogether sublime by broad truth and large ideality of light and shade:³ and so we find frequent instances of very grand ideality in treatment of the most commonplace still life, by our own Hunt, where the petty glosses, and delicacies, and minor forms, are all merged in a broad glow of suffused colour;⁴ so also in pieces of the same kind by Etty,⁵ where, however, though the richness and play of colour are greater and the arrangement grander, there is less expression of light; neither is there anything in modern art that can be set beside some choice passages of Hunt in this respect.

Again, it is possible to represent objects capable of various accidents in a generic or symbolical form.

How far this may be done with things having necessary form, as animals, I am not prepared to say. The Lions of the Egyptian room in the British Museum, and the Fish beside Michael Angelo's Jonah,⁶ are instances; and there is imaginative power about both which we find not in the more perfectly realized Florentine

§ 12. *Abstraction or typical representation of animal form;*

¹ [For another discussion of Veronese's dogs, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 14 ff.]

² [For "accuracy of features," ed. 1 reads "local tints."]

³ [The etching is signed and dated 1650. Fine impressions of it are in the British Museum; see No. 242 in Sidney Colvin's *Guide to an Exhibition of Drawings and Etchings by Rembrandt*, 1899.]

⁴ [See preface to *Notes on Prout and Hunt*.]

⁵ [For Etty, see above, sec. i. ch. xiv. § 24, p. 197.]

⁶ [In the Sistine Chapel; see preceding volume, p. 117 n.]

boar, nor in Raffaele's fish of the Draught.¹ And yet the propriety and nobility of these types depend on the architectural use and character of the one, and on the typical meaning of the other; we should be grieved to see the forms of the Egyptian lion substituted for those of Raffaele's in its struggle with Samson,² nor would the whale of Michael Angelo be tolerated in the nets of Gennesaret. So that I think it is only when the figure of the creature stands, not for any representation of vitality, but merely for a letter or type of certain symbolical meaning, or else is adopted as a form of decoration or support in architecture, that such generalization is allowable; and in such circumstances it is perhaps necessary to adopt a typical form.³ The evil consequences of the opposite treatment are ludicrously exhibited in the St. Peter of Carlo Dolci in the Pitti Palace, which owing to the prominent, glossy-plumed, and crimson-combed cock, is liable to be taken for the portrait of a poulterer; only let it be observed that the treatment of the animal form here is offensive, not only from its realization, but from the pettiness and meanness of its realization; for it might, in other hands than Carlo Dolci's, have been a sublime cock, though a real one; but, in his, it is fit for nothing but the spit. Compare, as an example partly of symbolical treatment, partly of magnificent realization, that supernatural lion of Tintoret (in the picture of the Doge Loredano before the Madonna)⁴

¹ [The cartoon, in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum; cf. preceding volume, p. 29.]

² [The drawing of this subject by Raphael is in the collection at Oxford: see J. C. Robinson's *Critical Account of the Drawings by Michel Angelo and Raffaello in the University Galleries, Oxford*, 1870, p. 179.]

³ [Ed. I reads:—

“in such circumstances I think it necessary, always provided it be based, as in the instances given above I conceive it to be, upon thorough knowledge of the creature symbolised, and wrought out by a master hand, and these conditions being observed, I believe it to be right and necessary in architecture to modify all animal forms by a severe architectural stamp, and in symbolical use of them to adopt a typical form, to which practice the contrary and its evil consequences are ludicrously exhibited. . . .”]

⁴ [In the Ducal Palace (Collegio). Ruskin in his notes at Venice (1845) mentions particularly:—

“the painting of the blue and crimson carpet, and of the glorious plumed wings of the lion. Both these are delicious in the extreme. The lion is

with the plumes of his mighty wings clashed together in cloudlike repose, and the strength of the sea winds shut within their folding. And note, farther, the difference between the typical use of the animal, as in this case, and that of the fish of Jonah (and again the fish before mentioned¹ whose form is indicated in the clouds of the Baptism), and the actual occurrence of the creature itself, with concealed meaning, as the ass colt of the Crucifixion,² which it was necessary to paint as such, and not as an ideal form.

I cannot enter here into the question of the exact degree of severity and abstraction necessary in the forms of living things architecturally employed: my own feeling on the subject is, though I dare not lay it down as a principle (with the Parthenon pediment standing against me like the shield of Ajax), that no perfect representation of animal form is right in architectural decoration. For my own part, I had much rather see the metopes in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and the Parthenon without them, than have them together; and I would not surrender, from an architectural point of view, one mighty line of the colossal, quiet, life-in-death statue mountains of Egypt with their narrow fixed eyes and hands on their rocky limbs, nor one Romanesque façade with its porphyry mosaic of indefinable monsters,³ nor one Gothic moulding of rigid saints and grinning goblins, for ten Parthenons. And, I believe, I could show some rational ground for this seeming barbarity, if this were the place to do so; but at present I can only ask the reader to compare the effect of the so-called barbarous ancient

as grand in conception as in execution—broad dashes of crumbling white cast like flashes of lightning along the gloomy edge of the wing. The carpet is, on the other hand, a wonderful instance of the dignity which may be given to the most prosaic details by treatment at once manly, thoughtful, and truthful. (Consider, however, if this could be the case without the great element of colour—which is ennobling to all things, and is an abstract quality, equally great wherever it occurs.”)

With what Ruskin here says of colour, *cf.* above, p. 195. For another reference to the picture, see *Stones of Venice* (s. “Ducal Palace,” No. 7).]

¹ [Ch. iii. § 19, p. 270.]

² [See above, ch. iii. § 20, p. 271.]

³ [As at Lucca; see preceding volume, p. 206 *n.*]

mosaics on the front of St. Mark's (as they have been recorded, happily, by the faithfulness of the good Gentile Bellini, in one of his pictures now in the Venice Gallery)¹ with the veritably barbarous pictorial substitutions of the seventeenth century (one only of the old mosaics remains, or did remain till lately, over the northern door, but it is probably by this time torn down by some of the Venetian committees of taste);² and also I would have the old portions of the interior ceiling, or of the mosaics of Murano and Torcello,³ and the glorious Cimabue mosaic of Pisa,⁴ and the roof of the Baptistery at Parma⁵ (that of the Florence Baptistery is a bad example, owing to its crude whites and complicated mosaic of small forms), all of which are as barbarous as they can well be, in a certain sense, but mighty in their barbarism, compared with any architectural decorations whatsoever, consisting of professedly perfect animal forms, from the vile frescoes of Federigo Zuccaro at Florence⁶ to the ceiling of the Sistine; and, again, compare the professedly perfect sculpture of Milan Cathedral with the statues of the porches of Chartres; only be it always observed that it is not rudeness and ignorance of art, but intellectually awful abstraction that I would uphold: and also be it noted that in all ornament which takes place in the general effect merely as so much fretted stone, in capitals and other pieces of minute detail, the forms may be, and perhaps ought to be, elaborately imitative: and in this respect again the capitals of St. Mark's church, and at the Doge's palace at Venice, may be an example to the architects of all

§ 15. *Exception in delicate and superimposed ornament.*

¹ [See *Guide to the Venetian Academy*.]

² [See on this subject *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. iv. §§ 5, 6.]

³ [Described in *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. iii. § 34, and ch. ii. § 3.]

⁴ [In the vault of the apse: "Our Lord in Glory."]

⁵ [The paintings of the vault are supposed to have been executed soon after the completion of the building (which was commenced in 1196), or early in the thirteenth century. The subjects include the symbols of the Evangelists.]

⁶ [Zuccaro (1543–1609) "painted the cupola of the Duomo at Florence with a multitude of figures, some of the most colossal dimensions. A satire of the day concludes with these lines:—

'Poor Florence, alas! will ne'er cease to complain
Till she sees her fine cupola whitewash'd again.'

But this has never happened" (Kugler's *Italian Schools of Painting*, ed. 1887, ii. 647).]



J. Franklin

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The Ducal Palace, Venice.

(1845)

the world, in their boundless inventiveness, unfailing elegance, and elaborate finish.¹ There is more mind poured out in turning a single angle of that church than would serve to build a modern cathedral.*²

So far, then, of the abstraction proper to architecture, and to symbolical uses, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter at length,³ referring to it only at present as one of the operations of imagination contemplative; other abstractions there are which are necessarily consequent on the imperfection of materials, as of the hair in sculpture, which is necessarily treated in masses that are in no sort imitative, but only stand for hair, and have the grace, flow, and feeling of it without the texture or division; and other abstractions there are in which the form of one thing is fancifully indicated in the matter of another;

§ 16. *Abstraction necessary from imperfection of materials.*

* I have not brought forward any instances of the Imaginative power in architecture, as my object is not at present to exhibit its operation in all matter, but only to define its essence; but it may be well to note, in our New Houses of Parliament, how far a building approved by a committee of Taste may proceed without manifesting either imagination or composition. It remains to be seen how far the towers may redeem it;⁴ and I allude to it at present unwillingly, and only in the desire of influencing, so far as I may, those who have the power to prevent the adoption of a design for a bridge to take the place of that of Westminster, which was exhibited in 1844 at the Royal Academy, professing to be in harmony with the new building, but which was fit only to carry a railroad over a canal.**

** The existing bridge, to wit. [1883.]

¹ [It was in this spirit of enthusiasm that Ruskin was to return to study and describe these capitals: see *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. viii.]

² [Ed. 1 adds here:—

“modern cathedral; and of the careful finish of the work this may serve for example, that one of the capitals of the Doge’s palace is formed of eight heads of different animals, of which one is a bear’s with a honeycomb in the mouth whose carved *cells* are *hexagonal*.”

This is the twentieth capital in the description of them in *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. viii. § 118.]

³ [In *Modern Painters* the subject was again touched, though not at length, in vol. iii. ch. viii. § 6. The fuller treatment was given in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xxi.]

⁴ [Ruskin did not modify his first opinion of the new Houses of Parliament. “The absurdest and emptiest piece of filigree,” he called it, “and as it were eternal foolscap in freestone” (*Eagle’s Nest*, § 201); see also *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 6; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 220, ch. viii. § 23; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xii. § 9.]

as in phantoms and cloud shapes, the use of which, in mighty hands, is often most impressive, as in the cloudy-charioted Apollo of Nicolo Poussin in our own Gallery, which the reader may oppose to the substantial Apollo, in Wilson's Niobe;¹ and again in the phantom vignette of Turner already noticed;² only such operations of the imagination are to be held of lower kind, and dangerous consequence if frequently trusted in; for those painters only have the right imaginative power who can set the supernatural form before us, fleshed and boned like ourselves.*

§ 17. *Abstractions of things capable of varied accident are not imaginative;*

Other abstractions occur, frequently, of things which have much accidental variety of form; as of waves, on Greek sculptures in successive volutes,³ and of clouds often in supporting volumes in the sacred pictures: but these I do not look upon as results of imagination at all, but mere signs and letters; and whenever a very highly imaginative mind touches them, it always realizes as far as may be. Even Titian is content to use, at the top of his S. Pietro Martire,⁴ the conventional, round, opaque cloud, which cuts his trees open like an axe;⁵ but Tintoret, in his picture of the Golden Calf,⁶ though compelled to represent the Sinai under conventional form, in order that the receiving of the tables might be seen at the top of it, yet so soon as it is possible to give more truth, he takes a grand fold of horizontal cloud straight from the flanks of the Alps, and shows the forests of the mountains through its misty volume, like

* Comp. Ch. V. § 4 [p. 315].

¹ [Poussin's Apollo is in his "Cephalus and Aurora," No. 65; Wilson's, in "The Destruction of Niobe's Children," No. 110.]

² [Above, § 7, p. 299. See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. viii. § 7.]

³ [See on this subject *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xx. § 25, and Appendix 21.]

⁴ [See Vol. III. p. 28.]

⁵ [For "an axe," ed. 1 reads "a gouge."]

⁶ [In S. Maria dell' Orto, Venice. In his Venetian notes of 1845 (see above, p. xxxvi.) Ruskin thus describes the picture:—

"The chief point of interest in it to me is the simple treatment of the cloud-covered Sinai, which is reduced to a rock of size so comparatively small, that Moses on the top of it is half the size of life; and yet it is kept—by its gloom and by rejecting all mean detail—in the highest degree sublime. The clouds cover it in horizontal, massy, transparent, sombre flakes."

For another reference, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 2 n.]

seaweed through deep sea.* Nevertheless, when the realization is impossible, bold symbolism is of the highest value, and in religious art, as we shall presently see, even necessary, as of the rays of light in the Titian woodcut of St. Francis;¹ and sometimes the attention is directed by some such strange form to the meaning of the image, which may be missed if it remains in its natural purity (as, I suppose few, in looking at the Cephalus and Procris of Turner, note the sympathy of those faint rays that are just drawing back and dying between the trunks of the far-off forest, with the ebbing life of the nymph, unless, indeed, they happen to recollect the same sympathy marked by Shelley in the *Alastor*²); but the imagination is not shown in any such modifications; however, in some cases they may be valuable,³ and I note them merely in consequence of their peculiar use in religious art, presently to be examined.

The last mode we have here to note in which the Imagination regardant may be expressed in art is Exaggeration, of which, as it is the vice of all bad artists, and may be constantly resorted to without any warrant of imagination, it is necessary to note strictly the admissible limits.

§ 19. *Exaggeration. Its laws and limits. First, In scale of representation.*

In the first place a colossal statue is not necessarily any

* All the clouds of Tintoret are sublime; the worst that I know in art are Correggio's, especially in the Madonna della Scudella, and Duomo of Parma.⁴

¹ [Ed. 1 adds, "before noticed." See Vol. III. p. 355 *n.*]

² [For Turner's "Cephalus and Procris," see above, ch. ii. § 20; for another comparison of Shelley and Turner, see Vol. III. pp. 364, 652. The reference here is to the death of the Poet in *Alastor*:—

"Now upon the jagged hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still;
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night . . ."]

³ [Ed. 1 adds, "(in the Cephalus they would be utterly destructive)."]

⁴ [The "Madonna della Scodella" (Virgin with the cup) is in the Royal Gallery at Parma; it is engraved at p. 286 of Ricci's *Correggio* (English ed. 1896).]

more an exaggeration of what it represents, than a miniature is a diminution; it need not be a representation of a giant, but a representation, on a large scale, of a man: only it is to be observed, that as any plane intersecting the cone of rays between us and the object must receive an image smaller than the object, a small image is rationally and completely expressive of a larger one; but not a large of a small one. Hence I think that all statues above the Elgin standard, or that of Michael Angelo's Night and Morning, are, in a measure, taken by the eye for representations of giants, and I think them always disagreeable. The amount of exaggeration admitted by Michael Angelo is valuable, because it separates the emblematic from the human form, and gives greater freedom to the grand lines of the frame; for notice of his scientific system of increase of size I may refer the reader to Sir Charles Bell's remarks on the statues of the Medici chapel.¹ But there is one circumstance which Sir Charles has not noticed, and in the interpretation of which, therefore, it is likely I may be myself wrong, that the extremities are singularly small in proportion to the limbs; by which means there is an expression given of strength and activity greater than in the ordinary human type: which appears to me to be an allowance for that alteration in proportion necessitated by increase of size, which has been spoken of in Chap. VI. of the first Section, § 10, note; not but that Michael Angelo always makes the extremities comparatively small, but smallest comparatively, in his largest works: so I think, from the size of the head, it may be conjectured respecting the Theseus of the Elgins. Such adaptations are not necessary when the exaggerated image is spectral; for, as the laws of matter in that case can have no operation, we may expand the form as far as we choose, only let careful distinction be made between the size of the thing represented, and the scale of the representation. The canvas on which Sir T. Lawrence has stretched

¹ [See Essay ix. in the *Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression*, p. 205, 3rd ed. Bell points out that in these statues no one part is exaggerated: "all is magnified with so perfect a knowledge that it is just as a whole, the bone and the muscle corresponding in their proportions."]

his Satan in the schools of the Royal Academy¹ is a mere concession to inability. He might have made him look more gigantic in one of a foot square.

Another kind of Exaggeration is of things whose size is variable to a size or degree greater than that usual with them, as in waves and mountains; and there are hardly any limits to this exaggeration, so long as the laws which Nature observes in her increase be observed. Thus, for instance, the form and polished surface of a breaking ripple three inches high, are not representative of either the form or the surface of the surf of a storm, nodding ten feet above the beach; neither would the cutting ripple of a breeze upon a lake, if simply exaggerated, represent the forms of Atlantic surges: but as Nature increases her bulk, she diminishes the angles of ascent, and increases her divisions; and if we would represent surges of size greater than ever existed, which it is lawful to do, we must carry out these operations to still greater extent. Thus Turner, in his picture of the *Slave Ship*,² divides the whole sea into two masses of enormous swell, and conceals the horizon by a gradual slope of only two or three degrees. This is intellectual exaggeration. In the Academy exhibition of 1843, there was, in one of the smaller rooms, a black picture of a storm,³ in which there appeared on the near sea, just about to be overwhelmed by a⁴ breaker curling right over it, an object at first sight liable to be taken for a walnut shell, but which, on close examination, proved to be a ship with mast and sail. This is childish exaggeration, because it is impossible, by the laws of matter and motion, that such a breaker should ever exist. Again, in mountains, we have repeatedly observed the necessary building up and multitudinous division of the higher peaks, and the smallness of the slopes by which they

¹ ["Satan Calling his Legions (from the first book of Milton)," No. 170 in the Academy of 1797. Sold at the artist's sale, 1831, and now in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.]

² [See Vol. III. pp. 571–572, and Plate 12.]

³ [No. 541: "Christ stilleth the Tempest," by J. Martin.]

⁴ [Ed. 1 reads, "an enormous," and at the end of the sentence adds, "with Christ and his twelve disciples in it."]

§ 20. *Secondly, Of things capable of variety of scale.*

usually rise.¹ We may, therefore, build up the mountain as high as we please, but we must do it in nature's way, and not in impossible peaks and precipices: not but that a daring feature is admissible here and there, as the Matterhorn² is admitted by nature; but we must not compose a picture out of such exceptions; we may use them, but they must be as exceptions exhibited. I shall have much to say, when we come to treat of the sublime,³ of the various modes of treating mountain form; so that at present I shall only point to an unfortunate instance of inexcusable and effectless exaggeration* in the distance of Turner's vignette to Milton (the Temptation on the Mountain), and desire the reader to compare it with legitimate exaggeration, in his vignette to the second part of *Jacqueline*, in Rogers's poems.⁴

Another kind of Exaggeration is necessary to retain the characteristic impressions of nature on reduced scale. It is not possible, for instance, to give the leafage of trees in its proper proportion, on a small scale, without entirely losing their grace of form and curvature; of this the best proof is found in the calotype or daguerrotype,⁵ which fail in foliage, not only because the green rays are ineffective, but because, on the small scale of the image, the reduced leaves lose their organization, and look like moss attached to sticks. In order to retain, therefore, their character of flexibility, the painter is often compelled to increase the proportionate size of the leaves, and to arrange them in generic masses. Of this treatment compare the grand examples throughout the *Liber*

§ 21. *Thirdly, Necessary in expression of characteristic features on diminished scale.*

* See in Addenda, the note on my courtesies of criticism (p. 333). [1883.]

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 463.]

² [Ruskin had been for a day to Zermatt, for the first time, in 1844. He notes in his diary (July 19):—

“Clouds on the Matterhorn all day except at sunset, when there were playing crimson lights over the sky, and the Matterhorn appeared in full ruby—with a wreath of fiery cloud drifting from its top—as Gordon said, like incense from a large altar.”]

³ [See Appendix i., p. 368.]

⁴ [At p. 147; the drawing is No. 241 in the National Gallery. For another reference, see Vol. III. p. 434.]

⁵ [See Vol. III. pp. 169, 210.]

Studiosum. That it is by such means only that the ideal character of objects is to be preserved, has been observed in the 13th chapter of the first Section.¹ In all these cases exaggeration is only lawful as the sole means of arriving at truth of impression when strict fidelity is out of the question.

Other modes of Exaggeration there are, on which I shall not at present farther insist, the proper place for their discussion being in treating of the sublime; and these which I have at present instanced are enough to establish the point at issue, respecting imaginative verity, inasmuch as we find that exaggeration itself, if imaginative is referred to principles of truth, and of actual being.

We have now, I think, reviewed the various modes in which Imagination contemplative may be exhibited in § 22. *Recapitulation*. respecting the essence of the faculty: which we have found in its three functions, Associative of Truth, Penetrative of Truth, and Contemplative of Truth; and having no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity. One task, however, remains to us, namely, to observe the operation of the Theoretic and Imaginative faculties together, in the attempt at realization to the bodily sense of Beauty supernatural and divine.

¹ [§ 13, p. 173 above.]

CHAPTER V

OF THE SUPERHUMAN IDEAL

IN our investigation, in the first Section, of the laws of beauty, we confined ourselves to the observation of lower nature, or of humanity. We were prevented from proceeding to deduce conclusions respecting Divine ideality by our not having then established any principles respecting the Imaginative faculty, by which, under the discipline of the Theoretic, such ideality is conceived.¹ I had purposed to conclude the present Section by a careful examination of this subject; but as this is evidently foreign to the matter immediately under discussion, and involves questions of great intricacy respecting the development of mind among those Pagan nations who are supposed to have produced high examples of spiritual ideality, I believe it will be better to delay such inquiries until we have concluded our detailed observation of the beauty of visible nature; and I shall therefore at present take notice only of one or two principles, which were referred to, or implied, in the chapter respecting the Human ideal, and without the enunciation of which that chapter might lead to false conclusions.

§ 1. *The subject is not to be here treated in detail.*

There are four ways in which Beings supernatural may be conceived as manifesting themselves to human sense. The first, by external types, signs, or influences; as God to Moses in the flames of the bush, and to Elijah in the voice of Horeb.

§ 2. *The conceivable modes of manifestation of Spiritual Beings are four.*

The second, by the assuming of a form not properly belonging to them; as the Holy Spirit of that of a Dove; the second person of the Trinity of that of a Lamb; and so such manifestations, under Angelic or other form, of

¹ [See above, sec. i. ch. xv. § 3, p. 209.]

the first person of the Trinity, as seem to have been made to Abraham, Moses, and Ezekiel.

The third, by the manifestation of a form properly belonging to them, but not necessarily seen; as of the Risen Christ to His disciples when the doors were shut. And the fourth, by their operation on the human form which they influence or inspire; as in the shining of the face of Moses.¹

It is evident that in all these cases, wherever there is form at all, it is the form of some creature to us known. It is no new form peculiar to spirit, nor can it be. We can conceive of none. Our inquiry is simply therefore, by what modifications those creature forms to us known, as of a lamb, a bird, or a human creature, may be explained as signs or habitations of Divinity, or of angelic essence, and not creatures such as they seem.

§ 3. *And these are in or through creature forms familiar to us.*

This may be done in two ways. First, by effecting some change in the appearance of the creature inconsistent with its actual nature; as by giving it colossal size, or unnatural colour or material, as of gold, or silver, or flame, instead of flesh; or taking away its property of matter altogether, and forming it of light or shade, or in an intermediate step, of cloud or vapour; or explaining it by terrible concomitant circumstances, as of wounds in the body, or strange lights and seemings round about it; or joining of two bodies together, as in angels' wings. Of all which means of attaining supernatural character (which, though in their nature ordinary and vulgar, are yet effective and very glorious in mighty hands) we have already seen the limits in speaking of the Imagination.

§ 4. *Supernatural character may be impressed on these either by phenomena inconsistent with their common nature (compare Chap. IV. § 16),*

But the second means of obtaining supernatural character is that with which we are now concerned, namely, retaining the actual form in its full and material presence, and, without aid from any external interpretation whatsoever, to raise that form by mere inherent dignity to

§ 5. *Or by inherent dignity.*

¹ [The Bible references in § 2 are Exodus iii. 2; 1 Kings xix. 18, 19; Matthew iii. 16; John i. 29; Genesis xxii. 11; Ezekiel i. 1; John xx. 19; Exodus xxxiv. 29.]

such pitch of power and impressiveness as cannot but assert and stamp it for superhuman.

On the north side of the Campo Santo at Pisa, are a series of paintings from the Old Testament history by Benozzo Gozzoli. In the earlier of these, angelic presences, mingled with human, occur frequently, illustrated by no awfulness of light, nor incorporeal tracing. Clear revealed they move, in human forms, in the broad daylight and on the open earth, side by side, and hand in hand with men. But they never miss of the angel.¹

He who can do this, has reached the last pinnacle and utmost power of ideal, or any other art. He stands in no need, thenceforward, of cloud, or lightning, or tempest, or terror of mystery. His sublime is independent of the elements. It is of that which shall stand when they shall melt with fervent heat, and light the firmament when the sun is as sackcloth of hair.²

Let us consider by what means this has been effected, so far as they are by analysis traceable; and that is not far, for here, as always, we find that the greater part of what has been rightly accomplished has been done by faith and intense feeling, and cannot, by aid of any rules or teaching, be either tried, estimated, or imitated.

And first, of the expression of supernatural influence on forms actually human, as of Sibyl or Prophet. It is evident that not only here is it unnecessary, but we are not altogether at liberty to trust for expression to the utmost ennobling of the human form; for we cannot do more than this, when that form is to be the actual representation, and not the recipient of Divine presence. Hence, in order to retain the actual humanity definitely we must leave upon it such signs of the operation of Sin and the liability to Death as are consistent with human ideality; and often more than these, definite signs of immediate and active evil, when the prophetic spirit is to be expressed in men such as were Saul and Balaam; neither may we ever, with just discrimination, touch the

¹ [See the passage from a letter of Ruskin cited in the Introduction above, p. xxx., where the fresco, drawn by Ruskin in the plate, is described.]

² [2 Peter iii. 10; Revelations vi. 12.]



Abraham parting from the Angels.

utmost limits of beauty in human form when inspiration only is to be expressed, and not angelic or divine being; of which reserve and subjection the most instructive instances are found in the works of Angelico, who invariably uses inferior types for the features of humanity, even glorified (excepting always the Madonna), nor ever exerts his full power of beauty, either in feature or expression, except in angels, or in the Madonna, or in Christ. Now the expression of spiritual influence without supreme elevation of the bodily type we have seen to be a work of Penetrative imagination, and we found it accomplished by Michael Angelo;¹ but I think by him only. I am aware of no one else who, to my mind, has expressed the inspiration of Prophet or Sibyl;² this, however, I affirm not, but shall leave to the determination of the reader, as the principles at present to be noted refer entirely to that elevation of the creature form necessary when it is actually representative of a Spiritual being.

I have affirmed, in the conclusion of the first Section, that “of that which is more than Creature no Creature ever conceived.”³ I think this almost self-evident, for it is clear that the illimitableness of Divine attributes cannot be by matter represented (though it may be typified); and I believe that all who are acquainted with the range of sacred art will admit, not only that no representation of Christ has ever been even partially successful, but that the greatest painters fall therein below their accustomed level; Perugino and Fra Angelico especially: Leonardo has, I think, done best; but perhaps the beauty of the fragment left at Milan (for in spite of all that is said of repainting and destruction, that Cenacolo is still the finest in existence⁴) is as

§ 7. *No representation of that which is more than creature is possible.*

¹ [Above, ch. iii. § 28, p. 281.]

² [Ruskin had not at this time fallen under the spell of Botticelli, whose Sibyls he was afterwards to praise: “He it was who gave the conception of that great choir of the prophets and sibyls, of which Michael Angelo, more or less ignorantly borrowing it in the Sistine Chapel, in great part lost the meaning, while he magnified the aspect” (see *Ariadne Florentina*, ch. vi.).]

³ [Above, sec. i. ch. xv. § 2, p. 209.]

⁴ [The Cenacolo has in recent years faded away almost fatally. In the Brera Gallery there is a beautiful design in black and red chalk, believed to be a study for the head of our Lord.]

much dependent on the very untraceableness resulting from injury as on its original perfection. Of more daring attempts at representation of Divinity we need not speak; only this is to be noted respecting them, that though by the ignorant Romanists many such efforts were made under the idea of actual representation (note the way in which Cellini speaks of the seal made for the Pope),¹ by the nobler among them I suppose they were intended, and by us at any rate they may always be received, as mere symbols, the noblest that could be employed, but as much symbols still as a triangle, or the Alpha and Omega, nor do I think that the most scrupulous amongst Christians ought to desire to exchange the power obtained by the use of this symbol in Michael Angelo's creation of Adam and of Eve, for the effect which would be produced by the substitution of any other sign in place of it. Of these efforts, then, we need reason no farther, but may limit ourselves to considering the purest modes of giving a conception of superhuman but still creature form, as of angels; in equal rank with whom, perhaps, we may without offence place the mother of Christ; at least we must so regard the type of the Madonna in receiving it from Romanist painters.*

And first, much is to be done by right modification of

* I take no note of the representation of *Evil Spirits*, since throughout we have been occupied in the pursuit of Beauty; but it may be observed generally, that there is great difficulty to be overcome in attempts of this kind, because the elevation of the form necessary to give it spirituality destroys the appearance of evil; hence even the greatest painters have been reduced to receive aid from the fancy, and to eke out all they could conceive of malignity by help of horns, hoofs, and claws. Giotto's Satan in the Campo Santo,² with the

¹ [The reference seems to be to book i. ch. xliv. of Cellini's *Autobiography*, where he describes how some of his clumsy competitors had stuck a certain jewel in the middle of the heart of God the Father. He, on the other hand, had arranged it differently, and had "shown God the Father seated, leaning nobly in a sideways attitude which made a perfect composition."]

² [This is one of the frescoes of the life of Job: Satan accusing Job to God. Ruskin's account of it in his note-book (1845) is as follows:—

"The Standing of Satan before God.—This I think almost the grandest thing in the Campo Santo, the conception of Satan is indubitably the finest. The eyes of the holy figures are little arched, singularly flat in the hair of the brow, and the brow itself not finely pencilled but thick; still this gives them greater repose and grandeur, and removes them farther from mean prettiness. The principal figure is most perfect in serenity of power; no expression of indignation or passion of any kind in the look given to the

accessary circumstances, so as to express miraculous power exercised over them by the Spiritual creature. There is a beautiful instance of this in John Bellini's picture of St. Jerome at Venice.¹ The Saint sits upon a rock, his grand form defined against clear green open sky; he is reading; a noble tree springs out of a cleft in the rock, bends itself suddenly back to form a rest for the volume, then shoots up into the sky. There is something very beautiful in this obedient ministry of the lower creature; but be it observed that the sweet feeling of the whole depends upon the service being such as is consistent with its nature. It is not animated, it does not *listen* to the saint, nor bend itself towards him as if in affection; this would have been mere fancy, illegitimate and effectless. But the simple bend of the trunk to receive the book is miraculous subjection of the true nature of the tree; it is therefore imaginative, and very touching.

§ 8. *Supernatural character expressed by modification of accessories.*

Serpent gnawing the heart, is fine; so many of the fiends of Orcagna, and always those of Michael Angelo. Tintoret, in the Temptation, with his usual truth of invention, has represented the Evil Spirit under the form of a fair angel, the wings burning with crimson and silver, the face sensual and treacherous.² It is instructive to compare the results of imagination associated with powerful fancy in the demons of these great painters, or even in such nightmares as that of Salvator already spoken of (Sec. I. Chap. V. § 12 note), with the simple ugliness of idiotic distortion in the meaningless, terrorless monsters of Bronzino in the large picture of the Uffizii;³ where the painter, utterly uninventive, having assembled all that is abominable of hanging flesh, bony limbs, crane necks, staring eyes, and straggling hair, cannot yet, by the sum and substance of all, obtain as much real fearfulness as an imaginative painter could throw into the turn of a lip or the knitting of a brow.

Evil Spirit. The position of the latter is perfect; his triple wings still expanded, his arms folded tight over his breast, holding each other above the elbow, the claws fixed deep in the flesh, as with jealousy or pain; a serpent coiled round his neck buries its head in a cleft in his bosom. The right hoof lifted as if to stamp."

This series of frescoes is now commonly attributed to Francesco da Volterra; but see Ruskin's review of Lord Lindsay, *On the Old Road*, 1899, vol. i. § 61, where also the description of Satan, just quoted, is given with some revision.]

¹ [See above, sec. i. ch. xiv. § 14, p. 189. A picture of St. Jerome in the National Gallery, by Bono of Ferrara, No. 771, shows similar modifications of accessories to express supernatural character.]

² [See *Stones of Venice* (Venetian Index, s. "Rocco, Scuola di San," No. 20) for a further description of the Evil Spirit in this picture.]

³ [Cf. above, sec. i. ch. vi. § 8, p. 101.]

It is not often, however, that the religious painters even go this length: they content themselves usually with impressing on the landscape perfect symmetry and order, such as may seem consistent with, or induced by, the spiritual nature they would represent. All signs of decay, disturbance, and imperfection are also banished; and in doing this it is evident that some unnaturalness and singularity must result, inasmuch as there are no veritable forms of landscape but express or imply a state of progression or of imperfection. All mountain forms are seen to be produced by convulsion and modelled by decay; the finer forms of cloud have threatenings in them of storm; all forest grouping is wrought out with varieties of strength and growth among its several members, and bears evidences of struggle with unkind influences. All such appearances are banished in the supernatural landscape; the trees grow straight, equally branched on each side, and of such slight and feathery frame as shows them never to have encountered blight, or frost, or tempest. The mountains stand up in fantastic pinnacles; there is on them no trace of torrent, no scathe of lightning; no fallen fragments encumber their foundations, no worn ravines divide their flanks; the seas are always waveless, the skies always calm, crossed only by fair, horizontal, lightly wreathed, white clouds.

In some cases these conditions result partly from feeling, partly from ignorance of the facts of nature, or incapability of representing them, as in the first type of the treatment found in Giotto and his school; in others they are observed on principle, as by Benozzo Gozzoli, Perugino, and Raffaello. There is a beautiful instance by the former in the frescoes of the Ricardi Palace, where, behind the adoring angel groups, the landscape is governed by the most absolute symmetry; roses, and pomegranates, their leaves drawn to the last rib and vein, twine themselves in fair and perfect order about delicate trellises; broad stone pines and tall cypresses overshadow them, bright birds hover here and there in the serene sky, and groups of

§ 9. *Landscape of the religious painters. Its character is eminently symmetrical.*

§ 10. *Landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli.*

angels, hand joined with hand, and wing with wing, glide and float through the glades of the unentangled forest. But behind the human figures, behind the pomp and turbulence of the kingly procession descending from the distant hills, the spirit of the landscape is changed. Severer mountains rise in the distance, ruder prominences and less flowery vary the nearer ground, and gloomy shadows remain unbroken beneath the forest branches.¹

The landscape of Perugino, for grace, purity, and as much of nature as is consistent with the above-named conditions, is unrivalled; and the more interesting because in him, certainly, whatever limits are set to the rendering of nature proceed not from incapability. The sea is in the distance almost always, then some blue promontories and undulating dewy park ground, studded with glittering trees. In the landscape of the fresco in St^a. Maria Maddalena at Florence there is more variety than is usual with him: a gentle river winds round the bases of rocky hills, a river like our own Wye or Tees in their

§ 11. *Landscape of Perugino and Raffaele.*

¹ [The following is a portion of Ruskin's account of these frescoes in the note-book (1845) so frequently quoted. The frescoes, which are especially well preserved, represent the journey of the Magi to Jerusalem:—

"All the angels have broad golden glories with "Gloria in excelsis" written on them, their wings are superbly gilded, and are, allowing for the deadness of the fresco colour, nearly as beautiful as Angelico's. The landscape in which they are placed is nearly the model of a pure ideal. The grasses in the foreground are rich to excess, but all drawn completely and symmetrically, with scarlet and other flowers occurring among them, all drawn with botanical accuracy. Behind the angels come hedges of roses (one supported by a cross trellis work), of which every leaf and flower is drawn with the most perfect accuracy and symmetry; there is no confusion, no interrupting of one leaf by another, no obscurity nor incompleteness, all is in angelic order, the only variety being obtained by the various positions into which the five-leaved spray of the rose is thrown, its foreshortened curves given with great precision. The rays of all the leaves are drawn. Then come winding paths among clipped hedges, and rich meadows, and tall trees, chiefly palm and cypress, scattered among them, and red-roofed houses and cities with multitudinous machicolated towers. The way in which the shadows are given is very arbitrary, the trees in the middle distance cast them from their trunks very forcibly, but the tufts of grass in the foreground cast none, and the figures little, while again a pergola in the distance casts its full broad shadow clearly down the walls, and the towers of the city have all their light and shade fairly marked. Among the fields rise brown rocks, of the type seen in my study of Abraham, and high green Fiesole-like hills, and lakes, and in the distance. Note particularly *blue* mountains, though these become suddenly so, and there is no gradual difference or retiring in the green. In this respect it is like a wall paper."]

loveliest reaches; level meadows stretch away on its opposite side; mounds set with slender-stemmed foliage occupy the nearer ground, and a small village with its simple spire peeps from the forest at the bend of the valley; it is remarkable that, in architecture thus employed, neither Perugino, nor any other of the ideal painters, ever use Italian forms, but always Transalpine, both of church and castle.¹ The little landscape which forms the background of his own portrait in the Uffizii² is another highly finished and characteristic example. The landscape of Raffaele was learned from his father, and continued for some time little modified, though expressed with greater refinement. It became afterwards conventional and poor, and in some cases altogether meaningless. The haystacks and vulgar trees behind the St. Cecilia at Bologna form a painful contrast to the pure space of mountain country in the Perugino opposite.*³

* I have not thought it necessary to give farther instances at present, since I purpose hereafter to give numerous examples of this kind of ideal

¹ [The following is part of the account of this fresco in the note-book. The fresco, often considered the finest by the master, is in the former chapter-house of the monastery attached to the church. It is in three compartments: in the centre, Christ on the Cross; on the right, SS. John and Benedict; on the left, the Virgin and St. Bernard. It is the centre which is here described:—

“The distance of this compartment is exquisite. First a grassy knoll, covered with park trees of the most lovely grace, tall as ship-masts, their trunks as straight as arrows, and then softly rounded, their leaved branches mixing with each other, horizontally. Beyond this a river winds between low pastures on one side, and steep German-like rocks on the other, crowned with a hermitage, the woods richly scattered at their feet, and among them a steep roofed white village with a Gothic spire. In fact, this landscape altogether is anything but Italian; it is a fine ideal of English woods in Herefordshire or Yorkshire, with the Wye or the Greta winding in the distance, and the simple pointed spire in the distance instead of any rich architecture or palace lines, adds singularly to the sweetness and simplicity of the effect. It is a landscape that must go to any English or German heart at once. The distant hills too are less peaked and precipitous, and are the very counterpart of those that terminate the view at Bolton Abbey. The soft knolls of the grassy ground are most delicate, the grouping of the trees like Nature’s own, their retiring in the distance as true and aerial as Turner; the river winds sweetly among them, their reflections falling on it while it keeps under the bases of the rocks. The reflections usually indicated only by a rapid zig-zag stroke of the brush.”

For the circumstances of Ruskin obtaining permission to study the fresco, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 129.]

² [See above, p. 212 *n.*]

³ [“The Virgin in Glory” : figured at p. 64 of G. C. Williamson’s *Perugino*, 1900. For Raphael’s St. Cecilia, see above, p. 212, and Vol. II. p. 167.]

In all these cases, while I would uphold the landscape thus employed and treated, as worthy of all admiration, I should be sorry to advance it for imitation. What is right in its mannerism arose from keen feeling in the painter: imitated without the same feeling it would be painful; the only safe mode of following in such steps is to attain perfect knowledge of Nature herself, and then to suffer our own feelings to guide us in the selection of what is fitting for any particular purpose. Every painter ought to paint what he himself loves, not what others have loved; if his mind be pure and sweetly toned, what he loves will be lovely; if otherwise, no example can guide his selection, no precept govern his hand; and farther, let it be distinctly observed, that all this mannered landscape is only right under the supposition of its being a background to some supernatural presence; behind mortal beings it would be wrong, and by itself, as landscape, ridiculous; and farther, the chief virtue of it results from the exquisite refinement of those natural details consistent with its character; from the botanical drawing of the flowers, and the clearness and brightness of the sky.¹

§ 12. *Such landscape is not to be imitated.*

Another mode of attaining supernatural character is by purity of colour almost shadowless, no more darkness being allowed than is absolutely necessary for the explanation of the forms and the vividness of the effect, enhanced, as far as may be, by use of gilding, enamel, and other jewellery. I think the

§ 13. *Colour and decoration, their use in representations of the Supernatural.*

landscape.² Of true and noble landscape, as such, I am aware of no instances except where least they might have been expected, among the sea-bred Venetians.³ Ghirlandajo shows keen, though prosaic, sense of nature in that view of Venice behind an adoration of the Magi in the Uffizii, but he at last walled himself up among gilded entablatures. Masaccio indeed has given one grand example in the fresco of the Tribute Money, but its colour is now nearly lost.

¹ [With §§ 9–12 here, compare what is said, in partial correction, in the next volume, ch. xviii. §§ 11, 12.]

² [See vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*, ch. xviii. §§ 10 *seq.*, and Plate 11, “Latest Purism.”]

³ [See Vol. III. p. 181, and above, p. 126. For Masaccio’s “Tribute Money” *cf.* Vol. III. pp. 179, 192; and next volume, ch. xviii. § 14.]

smaller works of Angelico are perfect models in this respect; the glories about the heads being of beaten rays of gold, on which the light plays and changes as the spectator moves¹ (and which therefore throw the purest flesh colour out in dark relief); and such colour and light being obtained by the enamelling of the angel wings as, of course, is utterly unattainable by any other expedient of art; the colours of the draperies always pure and pale, blue, rose, or tender green, or brown, but never dark or gloomy; the faces of the most celestial fairness, brightly flushed; the height and glow of this flush are noticed by Constantin² as reserved by the older painters for spiritual beings, as if expressive of light seen through the body.

I cannot think it necessary, while I insist on the value of all these seemingly childish means when in the hands of a noble painter, to assert also their futility, and even absurdity, if employed by no exalted power. I think the error has commonly been on the side of scorn, and that we reject much in our foolish vanity, which, if wiser and more earnest, we should delight in. But two points it is very necessary to note in the use of such accessories.

The first, that the ornaments used by Angelico, Giotto, and Perugino, but especially by Angelico, are always of a *generic* and *abstract* character. They are not diamonds, nor brocades, nor velvets, nor gold embroideries; they are mere spots of gold or of colour, simple patterns upon *textureless* draperies; the angel wings burn with transparent crimson and purple and amber, but they are not set forth with peacocks' plumes; the golden circlets gleam with changeful light, but they are not beaded with pearls, nor set with sapphires.

In the works of Filippino Lippi, Mantegna, and many other painters following, interesting examples may be found of the opposite treatment; and as in Lippi the heads are usually very sweet, and the composition severe, the degrading

§ 14. *Decorations so used must be Generic,*

¹ [Cf. the description of Angelico's "Annunciation," above, p. 263 n.]

² [Perhaps Costantino Costantini, the author of a local guide to Perugia frequently quoted by Rio in his *Poetry of Christian Art*.]

effect of the realized decorations and imitated dress may be seen in him simply, and without any addition of painfulness from other deficiencies of feeling. The larger of the two pictures in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii,¹ but for this defect, would have been a very noble ideal work.

The second point to be observed is that brightness of colour is altogether inadmissible without purity and § 15. *And* harmony; and that the sacred painters must not be *Colour pure.* followed in their frankness of unshadowed colour, unless we can also follow them in its clearness. As far as I am acquainted with the modern schools of Germany,² they seem to be entirely ignorant of the value of colour as an assistant of feeling, and to think that hardness, dryness, and opacity are its virtues as employed in religious art; whereas I hesitate not to affirm that in such art, more than in any other, clearness, luminousness, and intensity of hue are essential to right impression; and from the walls of the Arena chapel in their rainbow play of brilliant harmonies, to the solemn purple tones of Perugino's fresco in the Albizzi Palace,³ I know not

¹ [In the second of the Tuscan rooms: No. 1268, "Madonna and Saints."]

² [Cf. preceding volume, p. 351.]

³ [This fresco, which is not now known to be accessible, is described at length in Ruskin's note-book of 1845, where, in dealing with Perugino's pictures in the Uffizi, he notes "a kind of thus-far-shalt-thou-go-and-no-further expression that in some degree checks and chills me":—

"And this I felt also in a most heavenly work which I saw to-day, June 18th, in the palace of the Albizzi, a fresco of the Entombment. The Madonna on the left, wearing, as in the convent one, a purple robe, with white veil over forehead, but in this picture a most heavenly type, the eyes soft, clear, and full of pensive under-light, the face of fine type, the very ideal of a lovely countenance at the age, subdued and resigned in habitual suffering, and the stamp of pain on the face without emaciation, paleness or contortion. The colour should be especially noticed as singularly glowing. The Christ is very beautiful and simple in type of features; it did not enrapture me, but I liked it better every time I looked. The mouth looks out of drawing from the want of the touch of light on the upper lip. The body and limbs are beautifully shaded, but the latter are much too small and give great meanness and unpleasantness to the composition. Note this in speaking of Elgins and Bandinelli.

"The Christ is supported by a St. Joseph of the very highest perfection; as a study of a head grand, and simple, and tender, and manly, full of gentle emotion, but without passion; the red cap, with its triple projection, is a beautiful bit of costume. The hair is exquisite, touched with perfect freedom and mastery and yet not curled nor heavy in flow, but restrained and light. The rich russet complexion comes dark against the sky.

"The last figure is the Magdalen, which has suffered grievously but is still very fine. The figures are all awkwardly foreshortened or cut off at the

any great work of sacred art which is not as precious in colour as in all other qualities (unless indeed it be a Crucifixion of Fra Angelico in the Florence Academy, which has just been glazed, and pumiced, and painted, and varnished by the picture cleaners until it glares from one end of the gallery to the other); only the pure white light and delicate hue of the idealists, whose colours are by preference such as we have seen to be the most beautiful in the chapter on Purity, are carefully to be distinguished from the golden light and deep-pitched hue of the school of Titian, whose virtue is the grandeur of earthly solemnity, not the glory of heavenly rejoicing.

But leaving these accessory circumstances, and touching the treatment of the bodily form, it is evident, in the first place, that whatever typical beauty the human body is capable of possessing must be bestowed upon it when it is to be understood as spiritual. And therefore those general proportions and types

§ 16. *Ideal form of the body itself; of what variety susceptible.*

bottom. The drawing of the faces is most delicate, all stippled and cross-hatched rapidly and freely, not flat painted; the dark sunk eyes of the Madonna, are all painted with strokes that run round them, apparently without much drawing; the effect comes out on retiring.

“The colour of the whole far richer and deeper than Raffaele, almost worthy of Titian. All come dark against sky. The distance peculiarly simple, level, and quiet, one cross only seen on the top of a knoll, and a few trees nearer. Still, as in the avoidance of all violent grief or passion, there is infinite grandeur on the one hand, so on the other, there is a certain degree of coldness, and in these three pictures of Perugino I feel it especially. They say here that the one in the Tribune is of his first manner and this of the Albizzi in his very finest. Raffaele has seldom done anything so fine as the St. Joseph for grace and purity, going beyond it only in intenseness of expression.”

This fresco was originally painted for a church in Florence, and is thus referred to by Vasari (ii. 316, Bohn's ed. 1871):—

“Pietro likewise received a commission to paint a figure representing the Dead Saviour, with the Madonna and San Giovanni, above the steps leading to the side door of San Pietro Maggiore, and this he executed in such a manner that, exposed as it is to wind and weather, it has nevertheless maintained such freshness as to have the appearance of being but just finished by the hand of the master.”

The Florentine editor of Vasari (1832–1838) states that “when the Church, which had shown symptoms of decay from the year 1784, was entirely demolished, the fresco was placed by the Senator Albizzi in a small chapel of his palace, where it still remains.” Eastlake, in his *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*, 1847 (ii. 126), adds that “from a document obligingly communicated by the present inheritor of the picture, it appears that the artist received a hundred gold crowns for it from Luca degl' Albizzi.” As that individual was exiled in 1478, Eastlake gives 1476–1477 as the date of the work. The fresco is mentioned in guide-books of some years later than 1847 as being still to be seen in the Casa Albizzi.]

which are deducible from comparison of the nobler individuals of the race, must be adopted and adhered to; admitting among them not, as in the human ideal, such varieties as result from past suffering, or contest with sin, but such only as are consistent with sinless nature, or are the signs of instantly or continually operative affections; for though it is conceivable that spirit should suffer, it is inconceivable that spiritual frame should retain, like the stamped inelastic human clay, the brand of sorrow past, unless fallen:

“His face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek.”¹

Yet so far forth the Angelic idea is diminished, nor could this be suffered in pictorial representation.

Again, such muscular development as is necessary to the perfect beauty of the body is to be rendered. But that which is necessary to strength, or which appears to have been the result of laborious exercise, is inadmissible. No herculean form is spiritual, for it is degrading the spiritual creature to suppose it operative through impulse of bone and sinew; its power is immaterial and constant, neither dependent on, nor developed by, exertion. Generally it is well to conceal anatomical development as far as may be; even Michael Angelo’s anatomy interferes with his divinity; in the hands of lower men the angel becomes a preparation. How far it is possible to subdue or generalize the naked form I venture not to affirm; but I believe that it is best to conceal it, as far as may be, not with light and undulating draperies, that fall in with and exhibit its principal lines, but with severe and linear draperies, such as were constantly employed before the time of Raffaello. I recollect no single instance of a naked angel that does not look boylike or childlike, and unspiritualized; even Fra Bartolomeo’s might with advantage be spared from the pictures at Lucca: and, afterwards, the sky is merely encumbered with sprawling infants; those of Domenichino in

§ 17. Anatomical development, how far admissible.

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, i. 600.]

the Madonna del Rosario, and Martyrdom of St. Agnes,¹ are peculiarly offensive, studies of bare-legged children howling and kicking in volumes of smoke. Confusion seems to exist in the minds of subsequent painters between angels and Cupids.

Farther, the qualities of symmetry and repose are of peculiar value in spiritual form. We find the former most earnestly sought by all the great painters in the arrangement of the hair,² wherein no loosely flowing nor varied form is admitted, but all restrained in undisturbed and equal ringlets; often, as in the infant Christ of Fra Angelico, supported on the forehead in forms of sculpturesque severity. The angel of Masaccio, in the Deliverance of Peter,³ grand both in countenance and motion, loses much of his spirituality because the painter has put a little too much of his own character into the hair, and left it disordered.

Of repose, and its exalting power, I have already said enough for our present purpose, though I have not insisted on the peculiar manifestation of it in the Christian ideal as opposed to the Pagan. But this, as well as all other questions relating to the particular development of the Greek mind, is foreign to the immediate inquiry, which therefore I shall here conclude, in the hope of resuming it in detail after examining the laws of beauty in the inanimate creation⁴; always, however, holding this for certain, that of whatever kind or degree the short-coming may be, it is not possible but that shortcoming should be visible in every Pagan conception, when set beside Christian: and believing, for my own part, that there is not only deficiency, but such difference in kind as must make all Greek

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 184.]

² [On the subject of the treatment of hair in art, see *Ariadne Florentina*, § 219; and *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, note on No. 50.]

³ [One of the frescoes in the Brancacci chapel in the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine, where also is the "Tribute Money" referred to at p. 323 n.; the "Liberation of Peter" is now generally attributed to Filippino Lippi.]

⁴ [An intention not carried out in *Modern Painters*, nor very systematically elsewhere, but see next note.]

conception full of danger to the student in proportion to his admiration of it; as I think has been fatally seen in its effects on the Italian schools, when its pernicious element first mingled with their solemn purity, and recently in its influence on the French historical painters; neither can I, from my present knowledge, fix upon an ancient statue which expresses by the countenance any one elevated character of soul,¹ or any single enthusiastic self-abandoning affection, much less any such majesty of feeling as might mark the features for supernatural. The Greek could not conceive a spirit; he could do nothing without limbs; his God is a finite God, talking, pursuing, and going journeys;* if at any time he was touched with a true feeling of the unseen powers around him, it was in the field of poised battle; for there is something in the near coming of the shadow of death, something in the devoted fulfilment of mortal duty, that reveals the real God, though darkly. That pause on the field of Plataea was not one of vain superstition;² the two white figures that blazed along the Delphic plain, when the earthquake and the fire led the charge from Olympus, were more than sunbeams

* I know not anything in the range of art more unspiritual than the Apollo Belvedere; the raising of the fingers of the right hand in surprise at the truth of the arrow is altogether human, and would be vulgar in a prince, much more in a deity. The sandals destroy the divinity of the foot, and the lip is curled with mortal passion.³

¹ ["I have not loved the arts of Greece," said Ruskin, "as others have" (*Lectures on Art*, § 111). He devoted, however, a good deal of study to them, as may be seen more especially in *The Queen of the Air* and *Aratra Pentelici*, and in scattered references elsewhere in his writing. He always held, however—a view which some other students are not likely to share, at least without large exceptions—that "Greek sculpture was essentially *απροσωπος*;—independent, not only of the expression, but even of the beauty of the face. Nay, independent of its being so much as seen" (*Relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret*). So again, "The Greek, as such, never expresses personal character" (*Aratra Pentelici*, § 193); and cf. *Queen of the Air*, §§ 161–177.]

² [See Plutarch: *Aristides*, c. 17 *ad fin.*; Herodotus, 9, 60. The Lacedæmonians finding themselves alone and fiercely attacked offered sacrifice. For a while the sacrifices were not favourable, and many fell or were wounded during the interval. At last Pausanias, looking towards the temple of Hera of the Plataeans, invoked the goddess, praying that they might not be disappointed of their hopes, and the omens changed.]

³ [For other references to the Apollo Belvedere, see preceding volume, pp. 118, 608, 627.]

on the battle dust;¹ the sacred cloud, with its lance light and triumph singing, that went down to brood over the masts of Salamis, was more than morning mist among the olives:² and yet what were the Greek's thoughts of his God of Battle? No spirit power was in the vision:* it was a being of clay strength, and human passion, foul, fierce, and changeful; of penetrable arms, and vulnerable flesh. Gather what we may of great from Pagan chisel or Pagan dream, and set it beside the orderer of Christian warfare, Michael the Archangel: not Milton's "with hostile brow and visage all inflamed;" not even Milton's in kingly treading of the hills of Paradise;³ not Raffaele's with the expanded wings and brandished spear;⁴ but Perugino's⁵ with his triple crest of traceless plume unshaken in heaven, his hand fallen on his crossleted sword, the truth girdle binding his undinted armour; God has put His power upon him, resistless radiance is on his limbs; no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful, and thoughtful, fearless, but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of Omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor light, the dust of principalities and powers

* This sentence of course refers to Mars, not Pallas. The false bias of the general statement is enough corrected in the "Queen of the Air." [1883.]

¹ [Olympus is here apparently a slip for Parnassus, unless it is meant only for heaven. See Herodotus, 8, 37: "When the Persians had advanced near the temple of Athena at Delphi, at that moment thunder fell on them from heaven, and two crags, broken away from Parnassus, bore down upon them with a loud crash, and killed many of them, and a loud cry and a war-shout issued from the temple. . . . Those of the barbarians who returned, as I am informed, declared that besides these they saw other miraculous things, for that two heavy-armed men, of more than human stature, followed them slaying and pursuing them."]

² [See Herodotus, 8, 65. A few days before the battle a phantom procession was seen going to Eleusis. A cloud of dust was seen, and a voice arose from it—the voice of the mystic Bacchus. Then the dust arose in a cloud, which was raised aloft and was borne towards Salamis to the encampment of the Greeks.]

³ [*Paradise Lost*, vi. 260, and see xi. 238–250.]

⁴ [In the Louvre.]

⁵ [The description seems to have been written from the figure of Michael in the "Assumption of the Virgin" in the Accademia at Florence (for a photographic reproduction, see p. 82 of G. C. Williamson's *Perugino*). For another reference to the picture, see above, p. 84 *n*. The National Gallery Perugino (No. 288)—with a similar figure (except that there is no triple crest)—was not acquired till 1856.]

beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on the far off sea shore.

It is vain to attempt to pursue the comparison; the two orders of art have in them nothing common, and the field of sacred history, the intent and scope of Christian feeling, are too wide and exalted to admit of the juxtaposition of any other sphere or order of conception; they embrace all other fields like the dome of heaven. With what comparison shall we compare the types of the martyr saints;* the St. Stephen of Fra Bartolomeo,¹ with his calm forehead crowned by the stony diadem, or the St. Catherine of Raffaele² looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day, with her lips parted in the resting from her pain; or with what the Madonnas of Francia and Pinturicchio,³ in whom the hues of the morning and the solemnity of eve, the gladness in accomplished promise, and sorrow of the sword-pierced heart, are gathered into one human Lamp of

* I will put no depreciatory comments under the honest canticle with which a book I was so happy in writing is brought to a close;⁴ though I have long ceased to care for the Madonnas of Francia, and much prefer the St. Catherine of Luini⁵ to that of Raffaele, and feel the whole passage to read more like a piece of Mrs. Jameson⁶ than of me. Perhaps I am none the better, if the wiser, in these changes of temperament: but they enable me, at all events, fully to ratify the useful censures in the following Addenda, given with the second edition of the old book, and which I conclude my editorial duty by commenting upon, at some length, in the "Epilogue." [1883.]

¹ [As in the picture in the Cappella del Santuario of the cathedral at Lucca.]

² [See above, sec. i. ch. xii. § 10, p. 159.]

³ [Ruskin may have been thinking especially of the Francia in the National Gallery: see above, p. 196 *n*. He had especially admired the Madonna by Pinturicchio in the Louvre, which he had noted in his 1844 diary as "exquisite and pure."]

⁴ [See *Ethics of the Dust*, § 87, where "Dora" asks the "Lecturer" to "read the end of the second volume of *Modern Painters*," and he replies that he has changed his mind between 27 and 40; "but," he adds, "that second volume is very good for you as far as it goes. It is a great advance and a thoroughly straight and swift one, to be led, as it is the main business of that second volume to lead you, from Dutch cattle-pieces, and ruffian-pieces, to Fra Angelico."]

⁵ [A favourite saint with Luini; see, for instance, the frescoes of the Monastero Maggiore (San Maurizio), Milan, the "Body of St. Catherine borne across the Sea to its Sepulchre" in the Brera, and the "St. Catherine of the Hermitage" (frontispiece to G. C. Williamson's *Luini*, 1899). For Ruskin's general estimate of Luini, see below, p. 355.]

⁶ [For Mrs. Jameson, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 143.]

ineffable love? or with what the angel choirs of Angelico, with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move, and the sparkles streaming from their purple wings like the glitter of many suns upon a sounding sea, listening in the pauses of alternate song, for the prolonging of the trumpet blast, and the answering of psaltery and cymbal, throughout the endless deep, and from all the star shores of heaven?¹

¹ [It is interesting to compare this passage with the first impression for it, which is given by Ruskin in a letter to his father:—

“FLORENCE, *June 5*.— . . . I spent an hour and a half before a Fra Angelico [in the Uffizi], and hadn’t enough of it neither. I learnt how *ladies* dance from Simone Memmi [in the Campo Santo at Pisa]; and I saw *angels* dancing to-day, and so I know how *they* do it. I wish you could see one of Angelico’s, either dancing or singing. One that I saw to-day had just taken the trumpet from his lips, and—with his hand lifted—listens to the blast of it passing away into heaven. And then to see another bending down to clash the cymbals, and yet looking up at the same instant all full of love. And their wings are of ruby colour and pure gold, and covered with stars, and each has a tongue of fire on his forehead, waving as he moves.”

With this “canticle” in praise of Fra Angelico, compare Ruskin’s review of Lord Lindsay, *On the Old Road*, 1899, i. §§ 90–94.]



J. Huskma after Titareot.

Allen & Co. So.

Cherubs from "The Adoration of the Magi."

ADDENDA (1848)¹

§ 1. ALTHOUGH the plan of the present portion of this work does not admit of particular criticism, it will neither be useless nor irrelevant to refer to one or two works, lately before the public in the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, which either illustrate, or present exceptions to, any of the preceding statements. I would first mention, with reference to what has been advanced respecting the functions of Associative Imagination, the very important work of Mr. Linnell, the “Eve of the Deluge;”² a picture upheld by its admirers (and these were some of the most intelligent judges of the day) for a work of consummate imaginative power; while it was pronounced by the public journals to be “a chaos of unconcocted colour.”* If the writers for the press had been aware of the kind of study pursued by Mr. Linnell through many laborious years, characterized by an observance of nature scrupulously and minutely patient, directed by the deepest sensibility, and aided by a power of drawing almost too refined for landscape subjects, and only to be understood by reference to his engravings after Michael Angelo, they

* The usual style of journalist criticism in those days, on any picture which had true colour in it at all. Neither Turner, nor Linnell, however, entrusted their fame to legal advocacy or defence. [1883.]

¹ [These Addenda are not contained in ed. 1, which has, instead, two pages of other Addenda consisting of four notes:—

(a) The note on “Railways in the Lake District” now at the end of sec. i. ch. i., p. 36;

(b) A note afterwards omitted on sec. i. ch. iv. § 6, see now p. 69 *n.* ;

(c) The latter portion of the note on the “Laocoon,” afterwards given in sec. i. ch. vii. § 6 *n.*, see now p. 121 *n.*;

(d) A long note, afterwards omitted, referring to sec. ii. ch. iii. § 33, p. 288. This note is here printed at the end of the Addenda of 1848, see p. 341.

The numbering of the paragraphs is here introduced for convenience of reference.]

² [No 620 in the Academy of 1848. Sold at Mr. Gillott’s sale (1872) for £1099; afterwards in the collection of Mr. Angus Holden; No. 8 in the Old Masters’ Exhibition of 1883. For another reference to Linnell, see Vol. III. pp. 604–605 *n.*]

would have felt it to be unlikely that the work of such a man should be entirely undeserving of respect. On the other hand, the grounds of its praise were unfortunately chosen; for, though possessing many merits, it had no claim whatever to be ranked among productions of Creative art. It would perhaps be difficult to point to a work so exalted in feeling, and so deficient in invention. The sky had been strictly taken from nature, this was evident at a glance; and as a study of sky it was every way noble. To the purpose of the picture it hardly contributed: its sublimity was that of splendour, not of terror; and its darkness that of retreating, not of gathering, storm. The features of the landscape were devoid alike of variety and probability; the division of the scene by the central valley and winding river at once theatrical and commonplace; and the foreground, on which the light was intense, alike devoid of dignity in arrangement, and of interest in detail.*

§ 2. The falseness or deficiency of colour in the works of Mr. Landseer has been remarked above, p. 302.¹ The writer has much pleasure in noticing a very beautiful exception in the picture of the “Random Shot,”² certainly the most successful rendering he has ever seen of the hue of snow

* The literary student will recognise the change of style in these notes, and the imitation of Johnson instead of Hooker. Johnson had been a much earlier model to me, and a far better and healthier tutor.³ [1883.]

¹ [It may be convenient to bring together here Ruskin’s references to Landseer. The first notice is at the beginning of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, where he describes the “Old Shepherd’s Chief Mourner” as “one of the most perfect poems or pictures which modern times have seen” (Vol. III. p. 88). By the time of the second volume Ruskin had come to see Landseer’s defects, and retracted his “implied over-praise” (Vol. III. p. xlvi. n.). Landseer, he said, was “much more a natural historian than a painter” (above, p. 302 n.). His colour was defective, and his treatment of animals, as compared with Veronese’s, was “unimaginative” (above, p. 302; sec. ii. ch. iv. § 11). In *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), § 29, Landseer’s early “watchfulness of nature” is commended. His later works were not so highly praised; cf. *Academy Notes*, 1856, No. 147, where also his “clay-colouring” is mentioned; other minor references occur in *Academy Notes*, 1857, No. 597; and 1858, No. 854. In *Modern Painters*, vol. v., Ruskin again compares Landseer’s treatment of animals with that of the Venetians and Velasquez, and criticises the trivial sentiment of the English painter (pt. ix. ch. vi. § 20). Cf. also *Academy Notes*, 1859 (s. “French Exhibition,” No. 91 a.) For another reference in this volume, see sec. i. ch. xii. § 2 n., p. 149.]

² [No. 403 in the Academy of 1848; afterwards in the collection of Mr. T. Wrigley.]

³ [See *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 151; and *Proserpina*, ii. ch. ii.]

under warm but subdued light. The subtlety of gradation from the portions of the wreath fully illumined, to those which, feebly tinged by the horizontal rays, swelled into a dome of dim purple, dark against the green evening sky; the truth of the blue shadows, with which this dome was barred, and the depth of delicate colour out of which the lights upon the footprints were raised, deserved the most earnest and serious admiration; proving, at the same time, that the errors in colour, so frequently to be regretted in the works of the painter, are the result rather of inattention than of feeble perception. A curious proof of this inattention occurs in the disposition of the shadows in the background of the "Old Cover Hack," No. 229.¹ One of its points of light is on the rusty iron handle of a pump, in the shape of an S. The sun strikes the greater part of its length, illuminating the perpendicular portion of the curve; yet shadow is only cast on the wall behind by the returning portion of the lower extremity. A smile may be excited by the notice of so trivial a circumstance; but the simplicity of the error renders it the more remarkable, and the great masters of chiaroscuro are accurate in all such minor points; a vague sense of greater truth results from this correctness, even when it is not in particulars analyzed or noted by the observer. In the small but very valuable Paul Potter in Lord West-minster's collection,² the body of one of the sheep under the hedge is for the most part in shadow, but the sunlight touches the extremity of the back. The sun is low, and the shadows feeble and distorted; yet that of the sunlighted fleece is cast exactly in its true place and proportion beyond that of the hedge. The spectator may not observe this; yet, unobserved, it is one of the circumstances which make him feel the picture to be full of sunshine.*

* I beg the reader to observe that *I could* be just, even to the Dutch school! [1883.]

¹ [Afterwards in the collection of Mr. R. Heathcote.]

² [At Grosvenor House. Painted in 1647. For details about the picture, see Mrs. Jameson's *Handbook to the Private Galleries of London*, 1844, pp. 266–267.]

§ 3. As an example of perfect colour, and of the most refined handling ever perhaps exhibited in animal painting, the Butcher's Dog in the corner of Mr. Mulready's¹ "Butt," No. 160, deserved a whole room of the Academy to himself. This, with the spaniel in the "Choosing the Wedding Gown," and the two dogs in the hay-field subject (Burchell and Sophia), displays perhaps the most wonderful, because the most dignified, finish in the expression of anatomy and covering—of muscle and hide at once,* and assuredly the most perfect unity of drawing and colour, which the entire range of ancient and modern art can exhibit. Albert Durer is indeed the only rival who might be suggested; and, though greater far in imagination, and equal in draughtsmanship, Albert Durer was less true and less delicate in hue. In sculpturesque arrangement both masters show the same degree of feeling: any of these dogs of Mulready might be taken out of the canvas and cut in alabaster, or, perhaps better, struck upon a coin. Every lock and line of the hair has been grouped as it is on a Greek die; and if this not always without some loss of ease and of action, yet this very loss is ennobling, in a period when all is generally sacrificed to the great coxcombrity of art, the affectation of ease.

§ 4. Yet Mr. Mulready himself is not always free from

* I forget these dogs now: but if they showed their muscles under their hide, they had no business to, and I should greatly prefer, now, Punch's Skye terrier with the street boys disputing over him which end was his head, and which his tail. [1883.]

¹ [Of Mulready's work on the technical side Ruskin always expressed a high opinion. In the first words of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) Ruskin refers to him as "an artist whose works, perhaps, alone, in the present day, unite perfection of drawing with resplendence of colour." See also *Modern Painters*, vol. i., Vol. III. p. 598 in this edition. He threw away, however, says Ruskin, "a consummate method of execution" on "subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation" (*Pre-Raphaelitism*, 1851, § 28). For criticisms of particular pictures in this sense, see *Academy Notes*, 1857, No. 138; 1858, No. 167. In *The Eagle's Nest* (§ 166), Ruskin condemns Mulready's life studies as vulgar. For another favourable reference to "Choosing the Wedding Dress" and "Burchell and Sophia," see *Academy Notes*, 1875, No. 265. The former picture, exhibited 1846, is now in the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum (Sheepshanks Collection); the latter was exhibited in 1847. Mulready was on friendly terms with Ruskin's father; see Epilogue, § 14, below, p. 357.]

affectation of some kind; mannerism, at least, there is in his treatment of tree trunks. There is a ghastliness about his laboured anatomies of them, as well as a want of specific character. Why need they be always flayed?* The hide of a beech tree, or of a birch, or fir, is nearly as fair a thing as an animal's; glossy as a dove's neck, barred with black like a zebra, or glowing in purple grey and velvet brown like furry cattle in sunset. Why not paint these as Mr. Mulready paints other things, as they are? that simplest, that deepest of all secrets, which gives such majesty to the ragged leaves about the edges of the pond in the "Gravel-pit" (No. 125), and imparts a strange interest to the grey ragged urchins disappearing behind the bank, that bank so low, so familiar, so sublime! What a contrast between the deep sentiment of that commonest of all common, homeliest of all homely, subjects, and the lost sentiment of Mr. Stanfield's¹ "Amalfi," the chief landscape of the year, full of exalted material, and mighty crags, and massy seas, grottoes, precipices and convents, fortress-towers and cloud-capped mountains, and all in vain, merely because that same simple secret has been despised; because nothing there is painted as it is! The picture was a most singular example of the scenic assemblage of contradictory theme which is characteristic of Picturesque, as opposed to Poetical, composition. The lines chosen from Rogers for a titular legend were

* Very properly asked. Compare "Tale of a Tub," Section IX., which settled the question as early as 1704.² But modern scientific artists wouldn't draw the prophet Isaiah, if they could help it, till they had got him sawn asunder. [1883.]

¹ [For Clarkson Stanfield, see Vol. III. p. 226 *n.* "Amalfi" was No. 217 in the Academy of 1848.]

² [The passage referred to is as follows: "In the proportion that credulity is a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity, so far preferable is that wisdom, which converses about the surface, to that pretended philosophy, which enters into the depth of things, and then comes gravely back with informations and discoveries that in the inside they are good for nothing. The two senses, to which all objects first address themselves, are the sight and the touch; these never examine further than the colour, the shape, the size, and whatever other qualities dwell, or are drawn by art upon the outward of bodies; and then comes reason officiously with tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing, offering to demonstrate that they are not of the same consistence quite through."]

full of summer, glowing with golden light, and toned with quiet melancholy:

“To him who sails
Under the shore, a few white villages,
Scattered above, below, some in the clouds,
Some on the margin of the dark blue sea,
And glittering thro’ their lemon groves, announce
The region of Amalfi. Then, half-fallen,
A lonely watch-tower on the precipice,
Their ancient landmark, comes—long may it last!
And to the seaman, in a distant age,
Though now he little thinks how large his debt,
Serve for their monument.”

§ 5. Prepared by these lines for a dream upon deep calm waters, under the shadow and scent of the close lemon leaves, the spectator found himself placed by the painter, wet through, in a noisy fishing boat, on a splashing sea, with just as much on his hands as he could manage, to keep her gunwale from being stove in against a black rock; and with a heavy grey squall to windward. (This squall, by-the-bye, was the very same which appeared in the picture of the Magra of 1847,¹ and so were the

¹ [No. 74 in the Academy of 1847: “French troops (1796) fording the Magra; Sarzana and the Carrara Mountains in the distance.” The following letter from Ruskin to the painter (contributed by his son, Mr. F. D. Stanfield) refers to the picture:—

MY DEAR SIR,—Could you favour us with your company at dinner at half-past six on Thursday next—the third?

I have had great pleasure—a very large portion of the sum-total received from the Exhibition—in looking quietly over the details of your Carrara picture—it is marvellously careful throughout—how carefully you have marked even the gleam of the bayonets when they come together as the regiment turns over the ridge of the hill. But I never saw an exhibition more execrably arranged. If the hangers had had a mustard-seed-full of sense—would they not have put two dark pictures on the right of yours—so as to join your dark sky and enclose your light. They have treated your howling storm like a naughty child, when its mother bids it look at the window and be quiet. They have served Turner worse, however; there is nothing in his picture but even colour, and they must needs put Maclise’s rainbow side by side with it—which takes part—and a very awkward and conclusive part too in its best melody. To Harding’s picture they have given its quietus too—but that, I suppose, they didn’t care about. There are two fine things in the rooms—Mulready’s couple. I hardly know which to admire most—the painting or drawing.—Ever, my dear sir, most truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

The picture by Turner (No. 180) was “The Hero of a Hundred Fights,” or “Tapping the Furnace;” now No. 551 in the National Gallery. Beside it was hung Maclise’s “Noah’s Sacrifice; the Bow is set in the Cloud” (No. 178). Harding had two pictures hung: No. 489 (“Hastings, from under the East Cliffs”) and No. 516 (“Lago Maggiore”). “Mulready’s couple” was No. 134 (“Burchell and Sophia”).]

snowy mountains above; only the squall at Amalfi entered on the left, and at the Magra on the right.) Now the scenery of Amalfi¹ is impressive alike in storm or calm, and the writer has seen the Mediterranean as majestic and as southern-looking in its rage as in its rest. But it is treating both the green water and woods unfairly to destroy their peace without expressing their power; and withdraw from them their sadness and their sun, without the substitution of any effect more terrific than that of a squall at the Nore. The snow on the distant mountains chilled what it could not elevate, and was untrue to the scene besides; there is no snow on the Monte St. Angelo in summer except what is kept for the Neapolitan confectioners. The great merit of the picture was its rock-painting; too good to have required the aid of the exaggeration of forms which satiated the eye throughout the composition.

§ 6. Mr. F. R. Pickersgill's² "Contest of Beauty" (No. 515), and Mr. Uwins's³ "Vineyard Scene in the South of France," were, after Mr. Mulready's works, among the most interesting pieces of colour in the Exhibition. The former, very rich and sweet in its harmonies, and especially happy in its contrasts of light and dark armour; nor less in the fancy of the little Love who, losing his hold of the orange boughs, was falling ignominiously without having time to open his wings. The latter was a curious example of what I have described as abstraction

¹ [Ruskin was at Amalfi in 1841. The following is his note of the place in his diary for that year:—

(NAPLES, *March* 11).—... Saw no more of Amalfi—than I sketched, but that was glorious. Far above all I ever hoped, when I first leaped off the mule—in the burning sun of the afternoon, with the light behind the mountains in the evening mist doubling their height. I never saw anything, in its way, at all comparable. Moonlight in the terrace before the inn very full of feeling—smooth sea, and white convent above, with the keen shadows of the rocks far above and sea dashing all bright in my ears—low, but impatiently and quick; I never heard waves follow each other so fast.]

² [Frederick Richard Pickersgill (1820–1890) began to exhibit at the Academy in 1839. In 1847 he was elected A.R.A., and in 1857 R.A. He was Keeper, 1873–1887. For another favourable notice of his work, see *Academy Notes*, 1856, No. 17.]

³ [Thomas Uwins (1782–1857) after being for some years a member of the Water-Colour Society, was elected A.R.A. in 1833, R.A. in 1838. From 1847 to 1855 he was Keeper of the National Gallery. The picture referred to above—No. 36: "The Vintage in the Claret Vineyards of the South of France on the banks of the Gironde"—was bought by Mr. Vernon, and passed with his collection to the National Gallery (No. 387): it is now transferred to the Dundee Gallery.]

of colour.¹ Strictly true or possible it was not; a vintage is usually a dusty and dim-looking procedure;* but there were poetry and feeling in Mr. Uwins's idealization of the sombre black of the veritable grape into a luscious ultra-marine purple, glowing among the green leaves like so much painted glass. The figures were bright and graceful in the extreme, and most happily grouped. Little else that could be called colour was to be seen upon the walls of the Exhibition with the exception of the smaller works of Mr. Etty.² Of these, the single head, "Morning Prayer" (No. 25), and the "Still Life" (No. 73), deserved, allowing for their peculiar aim, the highest praise. The larger subjects, more especially the St. John,³ were wanting in the merits peculiar to the painter; and in other respects it is alike painful and useless to allude to them. A very important and valuable work of Mr. Harding⁴ was placed, as usual, where its merits could be but ill seen, and where its chief fault, a feebleness of colour in the principal light on the distant hills, was apparent. It was one of the very few views of the year which were transcripts, nearly without exaggeration, of the features of the localities.†

§ 7. Among the less conspicuous landscapes, Mr. W. E. Dighton's "Hay-Meadow Corner"⁵ deserved especial notice; it was at once vigorous, fresh, faithful, and unpretending; the

* Nonsense. I had never seen a vintage except in the Pays de Vaud, or Burgundy, when I had been impressed by the quantity of white dust on the branches close to the ground.

It is a curious proof, to me, of the incalculable advance in the standard of painting since these notes were written, that I could find then no better pictures to praise in the whole Academy exhibition, than those here noticed. [1883.]

† See general notice of Mr. Harding's work, in the Epilogue [§ 12, p. 353 below.] [1883.]

¹ [See above, ch. iv. § 10, p. 301.]

² [For Etty, see above, pp. 197, 303, and *cf.* Vol. III. p. 266 *n.*]

³ [No. 404: "Him that crieth from the wilderness, Repent ye!"]

⁴ [No. 494: "The high Alps as seen from between Como and Lecco: the town and lake of Como at their base. The snowy mountain in the centre is the Monte Rosa; to the left of it are the Mont St. Bernard and Mont Blanc; to the right are the Mont Simplon, and the Grimsel and the St. Gothard." The picture was perhaps painted from sketches made during Ruskin's drive with Harding from Como to Lecco in 1845.]

⁵ [No. 165 in the Academy of 1848.]

management of the distance most ingenious, and the painting of the foreground, with the single exception of Mr. Mulready's, above noticed, unquestionably the best in the room. I have before had occasion¹ to notice a picture by this artist, "A Hayfield in a Shower," exhibited in the British Institution in 1847, and this year (1848) in the Scottish Academy, whose sky, in qualities of rainy, shattered, transparent grey, I have seldom seen equalled; nor the mist of its distance, expressive alike of previous heat and present beat of rain. I look with much interest for other works by this painter.²

§ 8. A hurried visit to Scotland in the spring of this year, while it enables the writer to acknowledge the ardour and genius manifested in very many of the works exhibited in the Scottish Academy, cannot be considered as furnishing him with sufficient grounds for specific criticism. He cannot, however, err in testifying his concurrence in the opinion expressed to him by several of the most distinguished members of that Academy, respecting the singular merit of the works of Mr. H. Drummond.³ A cabinet picture of "Banditti on the Watch" appeared to him one of the most masterly, unaffected, and sterling pieces of quiet painting he has ever seen from the hand of a living artist; and the other works of Mr. Drummond were alike remarkable for their manly and earnest finish, and their sweetness of feeling.

[The following is the note of 1846 referred to above (p. 333 *n.*) which appeared in ed. 1:—]

"It is painful to trace upon the walls of the Exhibitions lately opened in London, the universal evidence of the mode of study deprecated in this passage;⁴ and to observe the various kinds of wreck which are taking place in consequence with many of our most promising artists. In the British Institution I saw only three pictures in which there was evidence of desire and effort to render a loved passage of Nature faithfully. These were, first,

¹ [*i.e.* in the Addenda of ed. 1; see below, p. 342.]

² [William Edward Dighton did not live to fulfil his early promise; he died in 1853 at the age of 31. He was a pupil of William Müller and afterwards of Frederick Goodall.]

³ [So in all eds.; but "H. Drummond" should be "James Drummond" (1816–1877), Academician, and afterwards curator of the Scottish National Gallery. The picture referred to above was exhibited under the title "A Mountain Pass."]

⁴ [*i.e.*, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 33, p. 288 above.]

a hayfield in a shower (I cannot, at this moment, refer to the painter's name);¹ with a wooden bridge and a single figure in the foreground, whose sky, in rainy, shattered, transparent grey, I have seldom seen equalled, and whose distance and foreground were alike carefully studied, the one obscure with the dusty vapour rising out of the heat of the shower, the other rich in broad and luxuriant leafage; (the foaming water on the left was, however, too cold and false in its reflections). The second was a sky of Lauder's,² evidently taken straight from nature (which, with the peculiar judgment frequent in hanging committees, was placed at the top of the central room), but which was in great measure destroyed by the intrusion of a lay figure and dramatic sea; the third a forest study by Linnell.³ Among the various failures, I am sorry to have to note the prominent one of Turner's;⁴ a strange example of the way in which the greatest men may at times lose themselves, from causes it is impossible to trace. Happily, this picture cannot be construed into a sign of generally declining power, for I have seen three drawings executed at the same period, in which the artist's mind appears at its full force. Nothing, however, could be more unfortunate than the central portion of the picture in the Institution, a heavy mass of hot colour being employed in the principal shade, and a strange meaningless green spread over the delicate hues of the distance, while the shadows on the right were executed with pure and crude blue, such as I believe cannot be shown in any other work whatsoever of the great painter. I am also sorry to have to warn so good a painter as Mr. Goodall of his being altogether on a wrong road; the false chiaroscuro, exaggerated and impossible aerial perspective, and morbid prettiness and polish of complexions, in his large picture, are means of attracting vulgar notice which he certainly does not need, and which, if he continues to employ them, must end, and that speedily, in his sinking irrecoverably beneath the rank which it was the hope of all lovers of English art to see him attain and hold.⁵

"One more picture I must mention, as a refreshing and earnest study of truth, yet unexhibited, but which will appear in the Royal Academy; a seashore by Collins,⁶ where the sun, just risen and struggling through gaps of threatening cloud, is answered by the green, dark, transparent sea, with a broad flake of expanding fire. I have never seen the oppression of sunlight in clear, lurid, rainy atmosphere more perfectly or faithfully rendered, and the various portions of reflected and scattered light are all studied with equal truth and solemn feeling."

¹ [By W. E. Dighton; see above, § 7, p. 340.]

² [James Eckford Lauder (1812–1869), a member of the Royal Scottish Academy.]

³ ["A Spring Wood Scene," exhibited at the Old Masters in 1883 as "The Fallen Monarch" (No. 57). For Linnell, see above, p. 333.]

⁴ [Turner's picture in the British Institution of 1847 was "Queen Mab's Cave," now No. 548 in the National Gallery; for notes on it, see *Popular Handbook*, 6th ed., ii. 221.]

⁵ [Mr. F. Goodall's principal picture in the British Institution of 1846 was "The Brittany Conscript Leaving Home." For another reference to Mr. Goodall's work at this time, see preceding vol., p. 326 *n.*; for later references, see *Academy Notes*, 1859 and 1875.]

⁶ [In the Academy of 1846 Collins exhibited "Hall Sands, Devon" (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum), and "Early Morning."]

EPILOGUE (1883)

§ 1. THE above short pieces of criticism on contemporary art, first given, I believe, only in the second edition of *Modern Painters*,¹ have become now extremely curious to myself, in connection with points of my personal history, of which some account may perhaps lead to a more indulgent retrospect of this book; and further illustrate others written at or near this time, as well as some of my drawings and manuscripts which may be thought worth preservation hereafter.

1841. I must set down a few fastening dates. In the winter of 1840, and spring of 1841, I was at Rome, Naples, and Venice,² making a series of pencil sketches, partly in imitation of Prout, partly of David Roberts. I had not the smallest notion of *writing* about art at that time³ (many people, myself included, thought I was dying, and should never write about anything). These sketches, though full of weaknesses and vulgarities, have also much good in them; two are placed at Oxford as records of Venice,⁴ of which one was used to paint from by Prout himself; and all of them are of historical interest in their accuracy of representation. Sketching only in this way from nature, I was trying to make water-colour drawings and vignettes in imitation of Turner;⁵ which were extremely absurd and weak.

¹ [Not so. They were reprinted in all the subsequent editions.]

² [For the winter of 1840–1841, see Vol. I. pp. xxxviii.–xli., and *Præterita*, ii. ch. iii.]

³ [But see the *Letter to a College Friend* of Feb. 12, 1841: Vol. I. p. 434.]

⁴ [The two drawings are Nos. 64 and 65 in the Reference Series. No. 65 (“Casa Contarini Fasan”) is given opposite p. 212 in Vol. III. No. 64 (“Court of the Ducal Palace”) is given here in this volume, facing p. 40. For other drawings made on the same tour see Plates 13–19 in Vol. I.]

⁵ [As, for instance, the drawing of Amboise: in Vol. II. between pp. 170–171.]

§ 2. 1842. In the spring of this year, I made, by mere accident, my first drawing of leafage in natural growth—a few ivy leaves round a stump in the hedge of the Norwood road, under Tulse Hill: there is a brick built terrace of fashionable dwelling-houses now, where the hedge used to be. I never (in my drawings, however much in my writings) *imitated* anybody any more after that one sketch was made; but entered at once on the course of study which enabled me afterwards to understand Pre-Raphaelitism.¹

Few drawings, however, made in that year, now remain in my possession. A book of plant studies, given to Mr. C. E. Norton, represents the usual manner of them very perfectly. One or two studies of light and shade, and a few of trees, I still possess, and may have occasion to engrave.²

§ 3. In the same spring, Turner first showed his Swiss sketches, and offered to realize ten of them. The Splügen drawing, of which the story is told at page 74 of my Turner notes,* and which was bought for me by my friends on my recovery from illness in 1878, was made at that time, and shown with the sketches. My admiration of it afterwards directed mainly all my mountain - studies † and geological researches. I obtained in the same year the drawings of Coblenz and Lucerne town,³ which directed me into new lines of thought with respect to colour; so that it was a kind of birth-year to me, in all ways at once. In its autumn I was again on the Continent — chiefly at Chamouni;—then, returning in the full enthusiasm and rush of sap in the too

* Published by the Fine Art Society, 1878.⁴

† Not into imitation of the drawing itself, but to investigation of the mountain forms which it illustrated.

¹ [For this incident, see Vol. III. p. xxi.; and *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. §§ 74, 77, and see the Plate, No. 25, in Vol. II.]

² [See, for drawings of 1842, Plate 25 and the frontispiece in Vol. II.]

³ [See the Epilogue to the "Turner notes" of 1878; and for the Coblenz, No. 62 in the "Notes." The drawing is published in vol. ii. of *Turner and Ruskin*; the Lucerne Town in vol. i. of that work.]

⁴ [P. 74 in the later editions of that pamphlet. The reference is to the Epilogue.]

literally sapling and stripling mind of me, wrote the first volume of *Modern Painters*.¹

Next year (1843) Turner painted for me the Goldau and Dazio Grande;² drawings which have become to me, now, very curious symbols of his life, and of mine.

§ 4. In 1844 I went back to Chamouni, and worked in entirely right and profitable ways.³ A drawing of Mont Blanc with the aiguilles (Charmoz to Midi), from above Les Tines, mostly pencil, on dark grey, but with a piece of rock coloured in the foreground,* represents my power at this time sufficiently.⁴

In 1845, the first volume of *Modern Painters* having already begun to make its mark, I thought it necessary to look more carefully at some of the pictures at Florence and Venice before proceeding with the essay. My father could not spare time to go with me; so he asked me to take my Chamouni guide, Joseph Couttet, by way of pro-papa.⁵ He was a tutor, and domestic Pope's legate, of perfect fidelity and good sense: a good practical physician also; I never had occasion to call in any other; and he always after that time travelled with me when my father and mother could not, (my mother never left my father,) until Couttet's death in 1875. He was nearly fifty when, in 1845, he met me at Geneva in early April; and we travelled leisurely through Lower Savoy and Provence to Fréjus. It was starlight, after a long day's drive, as we came down towards the sea over the southern moors of wild myrtle; and I recollect teasing old Joseph considerably by humming "com' è gentil"⁶ all the way.⁷

* Now in the possession of Mrs. John Simon.

¹ [See Vol. III. p. xxvii.]

² [Nos. 65 and 58 in the *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*. Goldau was engraved for the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, Plate 50.]

³ [For extracts from his diary at Chamouni in 1844, see Vol. III. pp. xxv.-xxvii.]

⁴ [This is the drawing reproduced as the frontispiece to the present volume. Its date, however, is 1842.]

⁵ [For Couttet, see above, Introduction, p. xxv.]

⁶ ["Com' è gentil la notte," serenade in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*.]

⁷ [For the itinerary, see above, Introduction, p. xxiv. Ruskin made the stage from Digne to Draguignan in a day, which was prolonged owing to a break down in his

From Fréjus we went along the two Rivas, *slowly*, always. There must be a drawing of Albenga somewhere—I have lost it—made then; now of some importance as an historical document of the glorious old town. A study of stone pine, at Sestri, is placed in my school at Oxford.¹

The road usually taken, at that time, by travellers entering Italy from the Riviera, left the coast at Massa to avoid the Pisan Maremma, and passed through the southern valleys of the Carrara hills to Lucca.

§ 5. Where, with all my new knowledge and freshness of acceptancy, I found, as if never seen before, the inlaid architecture of San Michele,—Fra Bartolomeo's picture of the Magdalen with St. Catherine of Siena, (then in the church of San Romano, now in the Academy of Lucca,)—and the statue, by Quercia, of Ilaria di Caretto.

The inlaying of San Michele, as opposed to Gothic *pierced* lace-work, (which was all I cared for in Gothic at that time,) and the pure and severe arcades of finely proportioned columns at San Frediano, doing stern duty under vertical walls, as opposed to Gothic shafts with no end, and buttresses with no bearing,* struck me dumb with admiration and

* As in any small English late Gothic towers, and our modern British imitations of them caricatured by me afterwards in Plate VI. of the first

carriage. He gives the following account of the last part of the drive in a letter to his father (Mentone, 23rd April):—

“It grew dark as soon as we had sent back our third horse, and I shut up the carriage. Soon, however, we began to go rapidly down, and it grew warmer and warmer still, as the evening wind dropped into the night, and I was obliged to open first one pane, then another, then all, and finally to throw the carriage back and open, just as the moon rose above the olive woods of Draguignan. The road was now hard and good; the olives, mixed with stone pine, threw their twisted shadows across it, and the ruined towers of an old fortress and town, four miles on the north side of Draguignan, began to rise against the moony sky, now soft and deep and full of Italian air. The last four miles were perfectly exquisite, all the light so clear and calm, and the white clouds so soft and warm, the frogs croaking merrily and loud, and a bird—I cannot tell what it is, that shrieks and wails all the night long—heard far off among the olives. We got into Draguignan at last, about ten o'clock, and a couple of fried trout, followed by some sweet bread and asparagus, terminated very agreeably the hardest day's travelling I recollect, putting bad roads, etc., all together. I don't know what I should have done without Couttet, not being able to understand a word the people said, but he was hail fellow with them all. They took him for a Marseillaise.”]

¹ [The drawing here given: see Introduction, p. 1.]



Drawn by J. Ruskin.

Allen & Co. Sc.

Study of Stone Pine, at Sestri .

(1845.)

amazement; and then and there on the instant, I began, in the nave of San Frediano, the course of architectural study which reduced under accurate law the vague enthusiasm of my childish taste, and has been ever since a method with me, guardian of all my other work in natural and moral philosophy.

§ 6. Fra Bartolomeo's Magdalen was the first example of accomplished sacred art I had seen, since my initiation, by the later Turner drawings, into the truths of deep colour and tone. It is a picture of no original power (none of Fra Bartolomeo's are), but it sums the principles of great Italian religious art in its finest period,—serenely luminous sky,—full light on the faces; local colour the dominant power over a chiaroscuro more perfect because subordinate; absolute serenity of emotion and gesture; and rigid symmetry in composition. These technical principles, never to be forgotten (and leaving very few to be added), that single picture taught me in the course of a day's work upon it; and remains accordingly, without being the subject of special admiration, extremely dear to me.

The statue of Ilaria became at once, and has ever since remained, my ideal of Christian sculpture. It is, I will venture to say, after these forty years of further study, the most beautiful extant marble-work of the middle ages,—faultless, as far as human skill and feeling can or may be so.¹

volume of the *Stones of Venice*, by placing the elevation of one of the towers of the college at Edinburgh beside that of the campanile of St. Mark's. The college tower is not kindly represented; the St. Mark's also, unintentionally, maligned; for no photography existed at that period, and my own careless sketch omitted the entasis of the tower. But the piece of the text, explaining the points of opposition alluded to above, is worth quoting. "The Venetian tower rises 350 feet, and has no buttresses, though built of brick; the British tower rises 121 feet, and is built of stone, but is supposed to be incapable of standing without two huge buttresses on each angle. The St. Mark's tower has a high sloping roof, but carries it simply, requiring no pinnacles at its angles; the British tower has no visible roof, but has four pinnacles for ornament" (*Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xix. § 15.)

¹ [See above, p. 122.]

And beside it, I partly then felt, partly vowed, that my life must no more be spent only in the study of rocks and clouds.¹

The lesson was presently to be driven home. Arriving next at Pisa, and finding the system of twelfth century shaft and mosaic architecture typically represented there, I settled down instantly to work on the Duomo and Baptistery, little thinking, or caring, what the low building was, beyond them, across the field.

§ 7. I had scarcely read a word, then, of Italian history. Knew of the Gulf of Spezzia, only that Shelley had been drowned in it; and little more of Pisa than that Byron had lived in it. Of Dante I had never read a line, except the story of Ugolino. And of Christian art, but for the volumes of Lord Lindsay in my portmanteau,² should have known nothing whatsoever.

But though I knew nothing of Christian art, I knew much of the theory, and something of the truth, of Christianity. Account is given in *Fors*, Letters XLII.³ and LIII., of the way my mother trained me in the Bible, and in the Puritan faith; something also has been told of the way my Scottish aunt showed me its beauty. My own faults or follies only heightened my respect for the virtue and simplicity of the Scottish border race, as I then had known it; nor did either Byron or Shelley for an instant disturb my belief in John Bunyan,⁴ or my trust in the presence of an aiding God, in

¹ [Cf. *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 45, where Ruskin says that this statue turned him "from the study of landscape to that of life."]

² [Here Ruskin must be mistaken: see above, Introduction, p. xxiii. *n. Progression by Antagonism* (1846) and *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847), by Alexander William Crawford, 25th Earl of Crawford, were reviewed by Ruskin in the *Quarterly Review* for June 1847, reprinted in *On the Old Road*, eds. 1888, 1899, vol. i.]

³ [And afterwards in *Præterita*, i., ch. ii.]

⁴ [This statement requires some modification in view of the following extracts from Ruskin's letters to his mother in 1845:—

ANNECY, Sunday evening (*April* 13).— . . . What made you put that funny book of John Bunyan's in the bag. You know it is not at all in my way. It is very curious as an example of the way in which the Deity works on certain minds, but as a type of his general dealings it is a miserable one indeed. For it is physically impossible that such working should take place except in a mind of extreme ignorance and ill training, as well as of undisciplined and vigorous imagination. A man who has general knowledge has always too many subjects of thought and interest to admit of his noticing every time that a text comes jingling into his head, and a man of disciplined mind would

this world, and in the justice of His judgments in that to come. What formal obedience to my parents, and steady carrying out of my mother's way of reading, did for me, as

not suffer any such morbid fancies as Bunyan describes to take possession of him or occupy his attention for a moment. Much of Bunyan's feeling amounts to pure insanity, *i.e.* the unreined state of a strong imagination, watched and dwelt and acted upon as if its promptings were truth. His lying in bed in the morning to listen to the devil saying—Sell him, sell him (of Christ), is of this character. No man in his right senses, but would have got out of his bed and gone to work, and no man of common power of self-discipline but would have employed his mind at once in a reasonable way had he been even obliged to lie still.

Now the imagination of George Herbert is just as vigorous, and his communings with God as immediate, but they are the imagination and communings of a well bridled and disciplined mind, and therefore though he feels himself to have sold Christ over and over again for definite pieces of silver, for pleasures or promises of this world—he repents and does penance for such actual sin—he does not plague himself about a singing in his ears. There is as much difference between the writings and feelings of the two men as between the high-bred, keen, severe, thoughtful countenance of the one, and the fat, vacant, vulgar, boy's face of the other. Both are equally Christians, equally taught of God, but taught through different channels; Herbert through his brains, Bunyan through his liver.

DIGNE, Sunday, *20th April*.— . . . I have been more and more struck on re-thinking and re-reading with the singular differences between Bunyan and Herbert. Bunyan, humble and contrite enough, but always dwelling painfully and exclusively on the relations of the Deity to his own little self, not contemplating God as the God of all the earth nor loving him as such, nor so occupied with the consideration of His attributes as to forget himself in an extended gratitude, but always looking to his own interests or his own state; loving or fearing or doubting, just as he happened to fancy God was dealing with him. Herbert, on the contrary, full of faith and love, regardless of himself, outpouring his affection in all circumstances and at all times, and never *fearing*, though often weeping. Hear him speaking of such changes of feeling as Bunyan complains of:

“Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am there;
Thy power and love, my love and trust,
Make one place everywhere.”

Vide the three last lovely stanzas of ‘The Temper.’ I think Bunyan's a most dangerous book in many ways; first, because to people who do not allow for his ignorance, low birth, and sinful and idle youth, the workings of his diseased mind would give a most false impression of God's dealings; secondly, because it encourages in ill-taught religious people, such idle, fanciful, selfish, profitless modes of employing the mind as not only to bring discredit on religion generally, but give rise to all sorts of schisms, heresies, insanities, and animosities; and again, because to people of a turn of mind like mine, but who have less stability of opinion, it would at once suggest the idea of all religion being nothing more than a particular phase of indigestion, coupled with a good imagination and bad conscience.

The “funny book of John Bunyan's” was *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. For the passage about “Sell him, sell him,” see §§ 135, 136. The stanza of Herbert quoted above is the last one of the poem beginning (for there are two called “The Temper”) “How should I praise Thee, Lord?” With what Ruskin says in these letters about the undisciplined imagination, *cf.* above, p. 222.]

farther safeguards, I cannot estimate;—but the steady reading of a chapter of the Bible in the morning and evening, and at least the deliberate *utterance* of appointed prayer, with endeavour to fix my thoughts upon it (often successful—and always sincere), gave me a continually increasing knowledge of the meaning both of the Old and New Testaments, and of what prayer meant for Christians of old time: farther than this, all my love of the beauty, or sense of the majesty, of natural things was in direct ratio to conditions of devotional feeling; and I never climbed any mountain, alone, without kneeling down, by instinct, on its summit to pray. In this temper of mind, which also in that particular year was at once gloomy with penitence and ardent in purpose, the Campo Santo of Pisa was to me a veritable Palestine. Benozzo's angels of Life, and Orcagna's of Death, were at once living presences to me, and I began before the fresco, then attributed to Giotto, of the sacrifice of Job, the series of religious studies which led me steadily forward to those of the life of Moses in the Sistine Chapel, thirty years afterwards.¹

§ 8. The drawings which I made at that time in the Campo Santo, of the Sacrifice of Job; the three angels with Abraham; the three beggars praying to Death; and the conversion of St. Ranieri; are fortunately still in my possession.² That of the small Madonna, by Angelico, then in the sacristy of St^a. Maria Novella at Florence, was engraved as the frontispiece to the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, and the engraving (by Mr. Holl) gives a perfect rendering of my power and manner at that time. The original drawing was given away, but I am thankful to be able to place in my school at Oxford that of the Sacrifice of Job.³

§ 9. Very solemnly I wish it had been my fate to follow out such a series of outline drawings, from the now lost frescoes of Italy; but I had come to Italy for a given

¹ [Ruskin was at Rome in 1872, and in the following autumn delivered his course of lectures, *Ariadne Florentina*, in the sixth of which he discussed Botticelli's work in the Sistine Chapel.]

² [Of these drawings only "The Three Angels with Abraham" is now available; it is here reproduced (Plate 10, p. 316; see Introduction, p. xxx).]

³ [This drawing is not, however, at Oxford; but the "Three Angels" is.]

purpose:—nobody wanted, or cared for, outlines from the Campo Santo; and only making these few memoranda for my own instruction, I went on with the work necessary for the second volume of *Modern Painters*.

I had been obliged, in order to obtain permission to draw in the Campo Santo, to present myself to the Abbé Rosini, then the Professor of the *Belli Arti* in Pisa.¹ He was a quite zealous and honest Professor, very accessible, kind, and talkative. As, of course, he had never heard the name of any artist in England, I took with me one day when I went to call, the two Liber plates of *Cephalus* and the *Grande Chartreuse*. But the Professor happened that afternoon to be very eager that I should come to hear his own lecture “*del bello*,” and he threw the Turner engravings contemptuously aside, with a “Yes—yes. I see,—è un imitatore di Salvator,—we have plenty such.” I went to the lecture, nevertheless; and heard with the rest of the students, as I had more than once heard before, how *Apelles* painted a perfect girl by putting the head of one on the shoulders of another, and the legs of a third; and how the inimitable *Raphael* painted from the exquisite ideal in his divine mind;² and came away with a complacent conviction that I knew a good deal more about the ‘*Bello*’ than the Abbé Rosini.

In this impression I was certainly right: but the circumstance was extremely unfortunate, in adding to the conceit, and sense of self-importance, which were already much too intimately colouring and stimulating the zeal with which I pursued my new discoveries.

§ 10. These presently became more absorbing in themselves. From Pisa I went to Florence, and fortunately got lodgings in the south-east angle of the square of the *Duomo*, looking straight on *Giotto*’s tower,³ with the south transept

¹ [For whom, and for these events generally, see *Præterita*, ii., ch. vi.]

² [See above, p. 205.]

³ [Ruskin, being dissatisfied at the inn,

“went away and got me lodgings (as he writes to his father, June 2) in the Cathedral square, looking bolt on *Giotto*’s campanile, facing east, so that I have the morning sun and no other. . . . The great advantage is that I have *Giotto*’s tower and *Brunelleschi*’s dome always before me.” “It really was most fortunate for me,” he writes five days later, “that the landlord of the——

and dome beyond; so that for two months, I had it to look at by daylight and moonlight. The Dominicans at Santa Maria Novella had still their spice garden,¹—I made hay, that June, with the Franciscans, in their orchard at the “top of Fésolo,”² and San Miniato, the loveliest of lovely ruins, was yet encircled by a wilderness of wild rose. It was still possible, in these quiet places, to conceive what Florence had been, in the year of Victories.³

My main work, for those two months, was in the apse of Santa Maria Novella, on Ghirlandajo; in the Brancacci Chapel, on Masaccio and Lippi; and in St. Mark’s convent, on Angelico. And very solemnly I wish that I had gone straight home that summer, and never seen Venice,* or Tintoret! Perhaps I might have been the Catholic Archbishop of York, by this time—who knows! building my

* Seen her, that is to say, with man’s eyes. My boyhood’s first sight of her, when I was fourteen, could not have been brighter, and would not have been forgotten.⁴

was an overcharging scamp—(though we may just as well remember the fact)—for otherwise I should not have got into this very nice quarter; it is really a great luxury to see the form of the cathedral against the night sky, and to be able to saunter in the great square in the twilight without having a riverside walk home.”]

¹ [See *Præterita*, ii., ch. vii. § 127. In a letter to his mother, Ruskin gives an account of the spice-garden (June 9):—

“ . . . By-the-bye you needn’t have sent me a medicine chest. I never saw such a pretty thing in my life as the ‘spezieria’ of Santa M. Novella. The monks are the apothecaries of Florence, and there is room after room opening off the cloisters in the most exquisite order and taste,—a very toy of bottles and shelves, and a lovely garden in the middle buried in rose leaves, where they grow all they want. It is very curious to see the shelves and drawers and jars of an apothecary’s shop exactly under, and touching the bottom of—frescoes by Taddeo Gaddi, and with a vaulted roof above, and monks behind the counter.”

For another description of the Spezieria, see Ruskin’s review of Eastlake’s *History of Oil-Painting*, in *On the Old Road*, 1899, i. § 98.]

² [*Paradise Lost*, i. 289. Ruskin gives an account of his hay-making in a letter to his father (June 22):—

“ . . . I had some good exercise too last night, making hay up at Fiesole in the Franciscan convent with the monks. I assure you—when the Franciscans do work—they work to purpose. Then I rested in the garden under the cypresses of ‘the top of Fésolo’ waiting for the moon rise, ‘to descry new lands, rivers or island in her spotty globe,’ and so walked back into Florence with the fire-flies flitting about all the way.”

Ruskin quotes from memory. Milton has “Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.”]

³ [1254; see *Val d’Arno*, § 121.]

⁴ [Ruskin was, however, sixteen when he first saw Venice (1835). For his impressions of that visit, see Vol. I. p. 543.]

cathedral there, in emulation of the Cardinal's at Westminster—instead of a tiny Sheffield museum.¹

§ 11. Fate, and the unlucky task of book-writing, ordered otherwise. For *Modern Painters* could not be finished with a study of ecclesiastical history; and, as the stress of summer came on in Florence, having gained some initiatory conception of her art, with the nature that taught it, and learned to love even the yellow sand of Arno scarcely less than the white sand of Arve, I went north to my special work again, and spent the early autumn, nearly alone, in Val Anzasca. There was little more than a ch[^]let for inn, at Macugnaga, in those days.

§ 12. In September, Mr. J. D. Harding, who, after Copley Fielding, had been my master in water-colour, wrote to ask if he could join me in his autumn tour. I went down to meet him at Baveno; and thence we drove quietly in an open carriage by Como and the spurs of the Italian Alps to Venice, walking up all the hills, stopping at all the river sides, sleeping a night or two at Como, Bergamo, Brescia, and Padua,—with a week at Verona. A most happy time, for me; and, I believe, for us both.

Harding had vivid, healthy, and unerring artistic faculty, but no depth of science, and scarcely any of sentiment. I saw him once impressed by the desolation of the great hall of the Casa Foscari; but in general, if the forms of the subject were picturesque, it was all he cared for, nor would he with any patience analyze even those. So far as his art and aim went, I was able entirely to sympathize with him; and we both liked, in one way or another, exactly the same sorts of things; so that he didn't want to go and draw the marshes at Mantua when I wanted to draw Monte Monterone—but we could always sit down to work within a dozen

¹ [The Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster (for which Cardinal Manning began to collect funds in 1865), now approaching completion, was not destined to be begun till a much later date (1895). The "tiny Sheffield museum" refers to the cottage at Walkley, near Sheffield, in which the museum of the St. George's Guild was at that time housed. In 1890 the museum was transferred to the more spacious house in Meersbrook Park provided by the Sheffield Corporation.]

yards of each other, both pleased. I did not mind his laughing at me for poring into the foreground weeds, which he thought sufficiently expressed by a zigzag, and heartily admired in him the brilliancy of easy skill, which secured, and with emphasis, in an hour or two, the effect of scenes I could never have attempted.

His time in travelling was of course professionally too valuable to him to admit of much study in galleries, (which, for the rest, when a painter's manner is once fixed, usually does him more hurt than good). But he generally went with me on my exploring days in Venice, and we saw the Scuola di San Rocco together, and both of us for the first time. My companion, though by no means modest as to his own powers, was (partly for that very reason, his confidence in them being well grounded) quite frank and candid in his admiration of stronger painters; and when we had got through the upper gallery, and into the room of the Crucifixion, we both sate down and looked—not at it—but at each other,—literally the strength so taken out of us that we couldn't stand!¹

When we came away, Harding said that he felt like a whipped schoolboy. I, not having been at school so long as he, felt only that a new world was opened to me, that I had seen that day the Art of Man in its full majesty for the first time; and that there was also a strange and precious gift in myself enabling me to recognize it, and therein ennobling, not crushing me. That sense of my own gift and function as an interpreter² strengthened as I grew older; and supports, and I believe justifies me now in accepting in this last cycle of life, the responsibilities lately once more offered to me in Oxford.³

§ 13. The public estimate of me, so far as it is wise at all, and not grounded merely on my manner of writing, is, I think, chiefly as an illustrator of natural beauty. They

¹ [See above, Introduction, p. xxxvii.]

² [So in *Love's Meinie*, Lecture iii.: "My own special function . . . is, and always has been, that of the Interpreter only, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*."]

³ [Ruskin was re-appointed to the Slade Professorship in January 1883.]

had as much illustration of it before as they needed, one would have thought, and if not enough to their taste in Chaucer or Spenser, in Byron or Scott, at all events in their own contemporary poets. Tennyson's "Brook" is far beyond anything I ever did, or could have done, in beauty of description;¹ and the entire power of natural scenes on the constant feelings of the human heart is taught, (and perfectly,) by Longfellow in "Hiawatha."² But I say with pride, which it has become my duty to express openly, that it was left to me, and to me alone, first to discern, and then to teach, so far as in this hurried century any such thing *can* be taught, the excellency and supermacy of five great painters, despised until I spoke of them,—Turner, Tintoret, Luini, Botticelli, and Carpaccio.³ Despised,—nay, scarcely in any true sense

¹ [Cf. Vol. II. p. xxviii. n.]

² [For other passages showing Ruskin's admiration of Longfellow, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiii. § 10 n., vol. iv. ch. xix. § 20, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iv. § 5 n.]

³ [Cf. what Ruskin says in *Præterita*, i. ch. ix. § 180: "Tintoret was virtually unseen, Veronese unfelt, Carpaccio not so much as named, when I began to study them." His claim in the case of Turner and Tintoret needs no comment. With regard to Luini among painters—as to Chartres among cathedrals (see Vol. I. p. 377 n.)—it is noticeable that he did not write all that was in his mind or so much as might have been expected to justify the very high rank he accorded to that painter. In *Modern Painters* Luini was not mentioned: see note from *Frondees Agrestes* to *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 21. Ruskin's principal references to him are in *Queen of the Air*, § 157, and *Catalogue of the Educational Series*, No. 49.

The modern cult of Botticelli owes much to Ruskin's enthusiasm; but something must be allowed also to the essay of Pater (first published in the *Fortnightly Review* of August 1870, reprinted in *Studies in the Renaissance*, 1873). Reference should be made also to Mr. Swinburne's "Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence" (first published in the *Fortnightly Review* for July 1868), in which he speaks of "the faint and almost painful grace which gives a distinct value and curious charm to all the works of Botticelli." At an auction in 1867 D. G. Rossetti picked up a Botticelli for £20. "If he had not something to do," writes his brother, "with the vogue which soon afterwards began to attach to that fascinating master, I am under a misapprehension." Pater's essay first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of August 1870. Ruskin's first mention of Botticelli was in a lecture delivered at Oxford during the Lent Term, 1871. Carpaccio had been proclaimed in a lecture of the preceding year, and it became a standing joke among the profane to ask who was Ruskin's last "greatest painter." It was in answer thereto that Mr. Bourdillon wrote:—

"To us this star or that seems bright,
And oft some headlong meteor's flight
Holds for awhile our raptured sight.
But he discerns each noble star;
The least is only the most far,
Whose worlds, may be, the mightiest are."

Ruskin's principal references to Botticelli are in *Ariadne Florentina* and *Fors Olavigera*, Letter 22. For the previous eclipse of Botticelli's reputation, see J. P. Richter's

of the word, known. I think, before the year 1874,¹ in which I began work on the frescoes of Botticelli and Perugino in the Sistine Chapel, there will scarcely be found so much as a notice of their existence in the diary of any traveller, and there was no consciousness of their existence in the entire mind of modern Rome. They are little enough noticed *now*; and yet, in London, Turner's most precious drawings are kept in the cellar of the National Gallery:—nevertheless, my work is done; and so far as the English nation studies the Arts at all, will tell, in its due time.

§ 14. The reader who has had patience with these personal details, thus far, will understand now the temper in which, on my return to England, I wrote the second volume of *Modern Painters*, and the extreme prominence given to Tintoret, in the closing sections of it. The short Addenda which provoked this garrulous Epilogue will also, I think,

Lectures on the National Gallery, p. 46. The first picture by Botticelli bought for the National Gallery (No. 275 in 1865) cost only £159, 11s. 6d. "The Nativity" (No. 1034) cost in 1878 £1500.

The praise of Carpaccio is principally in *Guide to the Venetian Academy* and *St. Mark's Rest*. His earliest reference to Carpaccio as "faultless" and "consummate" was in 1870 (*Verona and its Rivers*, § 22; *Lectures on Art*, § 73). In *Stones of Venice* Carpaccio is referred to only for his interesting pieces of Venetian architecture. It was in revisiting Venice in 1869 that Ruskin fell under Carpaccio's sway. His "discovery" of the painter had been anticipated by Sir Edward Burne-Jones; as the following letter shows:—

VENICE, *May 13th*, 1869. MY DEAREST NED,—There's nothing here like Carpaccio! There's a little bit of humble-pie for you! Well, the fact was, I had never once looked at him, having classed him in glance and thought with Gentile Bellini, and other men of the more or less incipient and hard schools,—and Tintoret went better with clouds and hills. I don't give up my Tintoret, but his dissolution of expression into drapery and shadow is too licentious for me now. But this Carpaccio is a new world to me; only *you* have no right to be so fond of him, for he is merely what you would have been if you had been born here, and rightly trained from the beginning—and one shouldn't like oneself so much. I've only seen the Academy ones yet, and am going this morning (cloudless light) to your St. George of the Schiavoni; and I must send this word first to catch post.—Ever your loving, J. R.

This letter was first printed in its entirety in a privately printed volume (1894), *Letters on Art and Literature by John Ruskin*, edited by Thomas J. Wise, p. 41. It had previously been published, in an incomplete form, by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie in an essay on "John Ruskin" in *Harper's Magazine* for March 1890, and reprinted in her *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning*, 1892, p. 135. Carpaccio's pictures had, however, been highly esteemed before Burne-Jones and Ruskin "discovered" him; his picture in the National Gallery (No. 750) cost £3400 in 1865.]

¹ [This is a mistake for 1872; see above, p. 350 n.]

become of more interest to him, not only as indicating my earliest assumption of the office of censor to the Royal Academy! but as marking very notably the honest and frank tone of criticism itself in that day. The anonymous character of the author of *Modern Painters* was, by the time those Addenda were published, entirely waived to the general body of artists: but, whatever I chose to say of them, Prout, Stanfield, and Turner used to dine with my father on my birthday; the two first were always at home to me, and I had a happy little talk with Stanfield one day when he was at work on his last picture. Charles Robert Leslie, Mulready, and David Roberts used to come sometimes on the birthday also, and it was certainly not the Academy Notes of after years, but the Pre-Raphaelite schism, and most of all Turner's death, which broke my relations with the Royal Academy. I hope they may in future be kinder; its President¹ has just lent me two lovely drawings for the Oxford schools, and, I think, feels with me as to all the main principles of Art education.

¹ [Frederic, Lord Leighton. For the two drawings—one of them the famous "Study of a Lemon Tree"—see *Art of England*, § 76.]

APPENDIX

- I. THE MSS. OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. II., WITH ADDITIONAL PASSAGES:—
 - I. IMPRESSIONS OF BEAUTY: AT "THE FOUNTAIN OF THE BREVENT," CHAMOUNI
 2. SENSUAL BEAUTY DEFINED
 3. "NATURAL ASSOCIATION" OF IDEAS IN COLOURS
 4. ASSOCIATION AND BEAUTY: AN ARGUMENT FROM THE CAMPAGNA AND THE LAKE OF BRIENZ
 5. SUBLIMITY
 6. OF THE SUPERNATURAL AS AN ELEMENT IN THE SUBLIME
 7. THE MORBID LOVE OF HORROR
 8. THE FEELING OF AWE IN RELATION TO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER
 9. THE NOBLE CAPACITY OF TERROR
 10. "SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON TERROR ARISING FROM WEAKNESS OF HEALTH"
 11. HISTORIC ART
- II. AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER, BEING "NOTES ON A PAINTER'S PROFESSION AS ENDING IRRELIGIOUSLY"
- III. LETTERS ILLUSTRATIVE OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. II.
 - I. TO THE REV. W. L. BROWN (DEC. 20, 1843) ON COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH
 2. TO JOSEPH SEVERN (SEPT. 21, 1845) ON THE PROSPECTS OF ART IN ENGLAND
- IV. MINOR "VARIÆ LECTIONES"

I

THE MSS. OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. II., WITH ADDITIONAL PASSAGES

THERE are two sets of MSS. of this volume, or connected with it:—(I.) the Allen (now Morgan MS.: see Vol. III. p. 682). This consists of various notes and materials for the book. (II.) The Hilliard MS., given by Ruskin to the late Mrs. Hilliard, and now in the possession of Mr. Frederick Hilliard, her son. This is the MS. followed, with alterations made in revision, in the printed text. (III.) Some notes, belonging to the same set as some of (I.) above, are included in the Brantwood MSS.

(I.) The Allen MSS. include the first draft of a considerable portion of the volume, differing very largely from the text. These MSS. are loose sheets, roughly stitched together; the order is not consecutive, and the intended arrangement is not always easy to make out. Ruskin seems to have written pieces at different times for different portions of his intended volume. The whole of this portion of the MSS. appears to belong to 1843–1844, when, as we have seen (above, pp. xx.–xxi.), he was already at work on the volume. The scheme of the book is not the same as he ultimately adopted; though the leading idea was clearly seized from the first, and the style is easier and more flowing than that which he afterwards adopted, in imitation of Hooker, for this volume.

Among these sheets is the following first plan for the volume:—

Sec. I. General.

- Ch. 1. Introductory.
- 2. Observations on Typical, Functional, and Sensual Beauty.
- 3. Attack on Association.
- 4. Attack on Custom.
- 5. Attack on Fitness.
- 6. Of Functional Beauty.

Sec. II. Typical Beauty.

- Ch. 1. Infinity.
- 2. Unity.
- 3. Repose.
- 4. Simplicity.
- 5. Symmetry.

Sec. III. Beauty of Colour.

- Ch. 1. Of the Effect of Expression on Beauty.
2. Of Light.
3. Of Purity.
4. Of Expression of Divers Colours.¹

Sec. IV. Of the Sublime.

- Ch. 1. Of the Sublime generally.
2. Of Truth in its effect on the Sublime.
3. Of Size in its effect on the Sublime.
4. Of Breadth and of Colour.²
5. Of Energy.
6. Of Mystery.
7. Of Supernatural Character.

Sec. V. Of Beauty and Sublimity as they exist in nature, and should be sought in Art.³

Sec. VI. Of the Imaginative Faculty, or Creation and its abuses.

The reader will perceive, by turning back to the Synopsis of Contents of the volume in its printed form (pp. 11–21), that some of this arrangement survived, and that most of its subjects were, in one place or another, discussed. The most important variation is that in this first draft Ruskin takes count of a third division of Beauty—Sensual—which he afterwards discarded. He discarded it, no doubt, in order to emphasize his central proposition of the spiritual, as opposed to the “æsthetic,” nature of Ideas of Beauty. But in revising the volume in 1882–1883, he noted that the question of colour required more discussion than he had given to it (see above, author’s note on p. 134); in his first draft he had begun an examination of the subject, but carried it a very little way (see below, p. 368).

The leading principle of the volume appears in the first page which he seems to have written of it. This is the beginning of an introductory chapter, in which he lays it down that in the perfect state *qewria* (see above, p. 7) “may be the fulfilment of our existence.” Man’s delight in the Beauty of God’s creation will then be fulfilled. “There will be but one expression—that of Joy; one character—that of Love.” This introduction was not finished. On some later sheets, however, there is another chapter, or the peroration of a chapter, in which he again explains the theory of the Beautiful, which is the subject of the volume. This chapter contains a characteristic piece of

¹ [Here Ruskin adds, “and on this subject Field’s Chromatography”—a reference to George Field’s *Chromotography; or a Treatise on Colours and Pigments and of their Powers in Painting*: London, 1835.]

² [Here he adds, “showing the mistake of Raffaele in watered robes.”]

³ [The several chapters of sections v. and vi. are not mapped out in this initial plan. He notes, however, that “in chap. ii. of sec. v.” he is to “show especially that in Ideal Subject the giving of knowledge is injurious by occupying the attention; and that its accessories should be such as naturally rise and are conceived in the imagination of all, without effort, and generally tracing the effects of greatness, singularity,” etc.]

description, and is additionally interesting as giving the personal impressions in which the volume received its inspiration:—

[1.]¹ "It is now—no matter how long—since I was lying, one dark July evening, on a mossy rock beside the fountain of the Brevent, in the valley of Chamonix. It is not every one who has been at Chamonix—nor every one who, in the travellers' phrase, has "done" Chamonix—who will know what I mean by "the fountain of the Brevent"; for the road to it has not yet become one of the beaten ways of the valley. The access to it is too easy to be boasted of as an achievement, and the thing itself too beautiful to be sought for as a show. There is here no point de vue—no peril of approach—nothing by which the guide can justify his charge, or the guided their enthusiasm; there are here no vendors of spas or spoons, no ranges of nicknackers or costume—no miniature farms to let—with the agricultural economy of Switzerland typified by a cock at the door and a cat on the window sill. And therefore are there here no apparitions of shawl or knapsack—basket or bottle—ringlet—or moustachio—no combinations of appetite and sentiment—of poetry and perspiration.² Here only the sobbing of the fountain from beneath its arch of rock is interrupted by the less audible tread of the goats as they stoop to drink; and sometimes a single peasant girl, with a rough garment of skins thrown across her shoulders,—and the wind and sun playing about her braided hair and open forehead, may be seen plying her knitting needles, as she watches and follows the wandering of her flock.

"The fountain of the Brevent lies half way between the Prieuré³ and the hamlet of Les Tines—nearly opposite the foot of the Tapia. Its waters rise with a murmur scarcely audible, from the foot of a crag of grey mica slate, whose splintered surfaces gleam like sheets of silver about the bright and circular pool. Only the dancing domes upon its silent surface indicate the young life of the stream—only those and the rippling sound of its motion over the lip of the basin as it threads its way among white pebbles, and through nets of verdant moss. It winds glittering down the valley, through a grove of birch and alder, catching—on a hundred pools, through the shuddering of their leaves, the quiet image of the frozen mountains, and is lost—too soon—in the gigantic turbulence of the Arve.

"I was lying by this fountain—on a dark evening of July, dark not with night, but with storm. The precipice above me lost itself in the air within fifty feet of my head—not in cloud—but in the dark, motionless atmosphere. The lower boughs of its pines shook like black plumes against the shade; their pointed tops faded into its body—faint as if woven of gossamer—spectral shadows of colossal strength. The valley lay for leagues on either side—roofed with the impenetrable gloom—walled with the steep bases of its hill—one boundless chamber—lighted only as it seemed, by the white foam of the forked Arve—cast like a stream of lightning along its floor. Through the veil of

¹ [The passages given in this Appendix are numbered for convenience of reference.]

² [Cf. the passage from the MS. of *The Poetry of Architecture*, given at Vol. I. p. 31.]

³ [*i.e.* the modern village of Chamouni itself.]

cloud, the presence of the great mountains was indicated only by the sound of their forests, by the sharp, sudden stroke—like a human cry,—the wail of the glacier upon its path of pain, and the gust—rising by fits and falling—of the wind, or the waves, the ear knew not which—among their chasms.

“So it had been throughout the day—no rain—no motion—no light. One roof—one level veil, as of God’s Holy Place, and the voices of the mountains from behind it and above.

“I lay beside the fountain—watching the motion of its soundless domes, and the entangling within its depth of the green blades with their own shadows. From the rock above, a single oozy drop fell at intervals into the pool, with a sound like that of a passing bell far away. Among the thick herbage at its edge the grasshoppers, heavy and faint in the chill and darkness, climbed freely up the jointed stalks, staring about them with their black beaded eyes, and fell, rustling,—unable to lift their scarlet wings. It was as if the sun had been taken away from the world, and the life of the earth were ebbing away, groan by groan.

“Suddenly, there came in the direction of Dome du Goûter a crash—of prolonged thunder; and when I looked up, I saw the cloud cloven, as it were by the avalanche itself, whose white stream came bounding down the eastern slope of the mountain, like slow lightning. The vapour parted before its fall, pierced by the whirlwind of its motion; the gap widened, the dark shade melted away on either side; and, like a risen spirit casting off its garment of corruption, and flushed with eternity of life, the Aiguilles of the south broke through the black foam of the storm clouds. One by one, pyramid above pyramid, the mighty range of its companions shot off their shrouds, and took to themselves their glory—all fire—no shade—no dimness. Spire of ice—dome of snow—wedge of rock—*all* fire in the light of the sunset, sank into the hollows of the crags—and pierced through the prisms of the glaciers, and dwelt within them—as it does in clouds. The ponderous storm writhed and moaned beneath them, the forests wailed and waved in the evening wind, the steep river flashed and leaped along the valley; but the mighty pyramids stood calmly—in the very heart of the high heaven—a celestial city with walls of amethyst and gates of gold—filled with the light and clothed with the Peace of God. And then I learned—what till then I had not known—the real meaning of the word Beautiful. With all that I had ever seen before—there had come mingled the associations of humanity—the exertion of human power—the action of human mind. The image of self had not been effaced in that of God. It was then only beneath those glorious hills that I learned how thought itself may become ignoble and energy itself become base—when compared with the absorption of soul and spirit—the prostration of all power—and the cessation of all will—before, and in the Presence of, the manifested Deity. It was then only that I understood that to become nothing might be to become more than Man;—how without desire—without memory—without sense even of existence—the very sense of its own lost in the perception of a mightier—the immortal soul might be held for ever—impotent as a leaf—yet greater than

suddenly, then came ^{in the direction} from the Thunder Gorge a crash - as of prolonged
 thunder - and when I looked up - I saw the cloud close - as it were
 by the avalanche itself - and whose white tan lightning-like stream
 fell bounding down the eastern slope of the mountain - like slow lightning
~~out of~~ The vapour parted before its fall - pierced by the
 whirlwind of its motion - the gap widened - the dark shade
 melted away on either side - and like a risen spirit casting off its
 garment of corruption - and flushed with eternity of life - The aiguille
^{of the South} ~~and~~ ^{rose} through the black foam of the storm cloud
 one by one - pyramidal above pyramidal - the mighty range of its
 companions - shook off their ~~coiled~~ shrouds & took to themselves their
 glory - all fire - no shade - no dunnets - ~~all was ice~~ - thin pier
 down of snow - wedges of rock - all burning - fire to the height of
 the mist sank into the hollows of the creeps - and pierced through
 the ~~very~~ fissures of the glaciers - and dwelt within them - as it does
 in clouds - The ponderous storm withered and swayed beneath
 them - the presto wailed & wailed in the evening wind - the
 steep river flashed & leaped along the valley - but the mighty
 pyramids stood calmly - in the very heart of the high heaven -
~~as quiet as its base~~ - a celestial city with walls of emeralds
 & gates of gold - ^{filled} with the light & clothed with the Peace of God
 And then I learned - what ^{nothing} I had not known before - the real
 meaning of the B word Beautiful. With all that I had ever seen
 before - there had come amongst the associations of humanity - the
~~sense of reason~~ ^{erection} of human power - the action of human mind.
 The image of self had not been effaced in that of God. It was
 then ^{beauteous} that I learned how - thought itself may become ignoble
 and energy itself become low - when compared with the
 absorption of soul & spirit - the prostration of all power - & the
 cessation of all will - before & in the Presence of the manifested
 Deity. It was then only that I understood ^{that} how to become nothing

tongue can tell—wrapt in the one contemplation of the Infinite God. It was then that I understood that all which is the type of God's attributes—which in any way or in any degree—can turn the human soul from gazing upon itself—can quench in it pride—and fear—and annihilate—be it in ever so small a degree, the thoughts and feelings which have to do with this present world, and fix the spirit—in all humility—on the types of that which is to be its food for eternity;—this and this only is in the pure and right sense of the word

BEAUTIFUL."

In ch. ii. the nature of Typical and of Functional ("Vital") beauty is explained to the same effect as in the text; and the following preliminary account is given of what the author meant by "Sensual Beauty":—

[2.] "(It is) that quality or group of qualities in objects by which they become pleasant to the eye, considered merely as a sense. Pure and vivid colours, for instance, are to the eye precisely what musical sounds are to the ear, capable of intense expression, but also pleasant in themselves, and although wearisome if too long continued, possessing for a time a real charm, of which no account whatever can be rendered, but that the bodily sense is therein gratified. This is the first notion of beauty in the human mind. The child stretches its hands towards the lustre of the window and the scarlet of the coal, before it can appreciate even the light of a kind look or the melody of a tender voice. All pure colours and multitudinous harmonies which may be produced by their association,—light as such, provided it be not oppressively light, and perhaps smoothness and signs of softness, in form—may be considered as producing, by their various combinations, a certain beauty in objects, pleasing to the eye only, and in no way addressing itself to the mind, which I shall hereafter characterize by the term Sensual Beauty."

Ruskin then passed to discuss in detail various false opinions with regard to Beauty. In the text as it now stands these criticisms were condensed into a single chapter (iv., pp. 68–71), and it seems unnecessary to print his longer version *in extenso*. One or two passages, however, are worth giving.

[3.] The following passage is in illustration of "Natural or General Association," (*cf.* sec. i. ch. iv. § 8, p. 71) "being [that which must]

necessarily take place in the minds of all men, and all nations, between certain colours and forms and those qualities of which they are the usual signs in material objects. Thus blue—from its being the colour of open sky—cannot fail of suggesting ideas of purity and repose. Red, from its being the colour of fire and blood, has invariably a certain degree of fear associated with it. Purple, of purity and power. Green, being the colour of vegetation, is suggestive of freshness, vigour, coolness. Brown, of sterility and poverty. Black, of melancholy. White, of innocence. Yellow, of cheerfulness. It has been well remarked by Alison¹ that these natural or general associations may be partially interrupted by local customs; that black, for instance,

¹ [*Essays on Taste*, essay ii. ch. iii. sec. i.]

loses in the mind of a Venetian much of its sadness, and yellow in China is as suggestive of regal pride as purple in Rome. But it is nearly impossible that the natural associations should by any local habits be altogether eradicated. In a kingdom, indeed, if such can be supposed, in which funerals should be conducted in robes of scarlet and gold—in which bridal robes should be black—the dress of soldiers blue, the robes of the King brown, and those of condemned criminals white—it is evident that natural association might in process of time be destroyed.¹ But the very difficulty of conceiving such institutions may show us how strongly the natural associations are grafted into the heart, and we think we shall not be charged with too much boldness in asserting that while the world remains under the same physical laws by which it is at present governed—such institutions are morally impossible. Even in the case given by Alison—that of black as it becomes familiar to the mind of the Venetian—the natural association has not been destroyed. The veil which fills the place of the portrait of Maximo Fabrio is Black, nor is the meaning of the colour one whit destroyed because the cheerful lagoon on which the window of the palace looks, is covered with the black forms of darting gondolas.

“And therefore these natural associations become, in the hands of the artist, instruments of enormous power; and judiciously used, may impress the mind of the generality of men perhaps more than any other. Some artists are dependent on little else. If black and red were not productive of the sublime, what would become of the pictures of Martin?² But none of these associations have any power of *producing* beauty. They only give to beauty, when otherwise produced, its *character*. They make it melancholy beauty—tender beauty—or brilliant beauty, but they do not produce the beauty itself. Thus the beauty of the morning or of the night is dependent on precisely the same circumstances, the expression of infinity—repose—unity, etc., but the light and gold colours of the morning make its beauty cheerful and brilliant, and the gloom and sad colours of the night make its beauty melancholy and quiet. According to the temper of mind in which we may happen to be, one or other class of beauty will be preferred. If we are indifferent, each kind of beauty will put the mind in the state fittest for enjoying it; but it is always to be remembered that the character of the beauty does not constitute the beauty itself. The morning might be brilliant and cheerful, the night might be grey and gloomy, without either being beautiful. The beauty of both is dependent, as I shall show hereafter, on the same qualities; and they differ only by the character of those associations by which each is fitted to have its proper operation on the human mind; and to summon it, the one to energy and exertion—the other to reflection and repose.”

The following argument on the erroneous use of the term “beauty”—

¹ [In this connection see what Ruskin says, in *Val d'Arno* (§ 112), about the mistake and stupidity of men in dressing “soldiers in red clothes, and monks, or pacific persons, in black, white, or grey ones.”]

² [For Martin, see Vol. I. p. 243, and Vol. III. pp. 36, 38 *n.*]

to which error the supposed dependence of beauty upon association is traced (see above, sec. i. ch. v. § 2, p. 77)—is interesting for its descriptive passages:—

[4.] "Around us is a waste of rank, knotted, sluggish grass—not green, but of a dull, neutral tint, which looks as if it had once been brown, and had become green by putrefaction. It is tossed into rude irregular mounds and ridges, which expose at intervals white patches of a strange, calcined, porous soil—different from every other variety of earth that we have ever seen, and resembling nothing so much as fragments of burned bones. Between these ridges lie circular spaces of rushy morass, variegated about their edges with wide stains of blistry yellow—partly the iron ochre iridescence on stagnant and putrescent water, partly a sulphureous deposit from the fumes of sulphuretted hydrogen which for a league or two have flavoured the whole atmosphere of rotten eggs. A few shapeless and mouldering fragments of tufa occur at intervals in irregular heaps, among which a scattered tile or brick sometimes suggests the possibility of their having been brought there by the hand of man. A dull, purple haze hangs in the air, and the sunshine rests on the foul earth luridly, and like candle-light. Before us, emerging above a swell of this poisonous desert, is seen a single dome—which we know to be that of St. Peter's.

"So much for our first situation. Let us take a second. We are lying on the shore of the little island in the centre of the Lake of Brienz. The clear water floats in to our feet in gentle swells; each of which bears with it the image of the sun, which breaks, as the wave falls, into a shower of light. Through the clear water the white pebbles shine like pearls, and a single group of quiet water-lilies heave and fall upon its flow, in a hollow of the rocky shore. The crags [tower?] up above our head with purple clusters of violets nestling in their crannies, and starry moss gleaming upon their sides. The white stems of the tall birches glisten against the blue sky, and soft glades of turf recede from the shore under the dark boughs of aged pines.

"Now in both these situations, the mind would receive very high pleasure; in both the pleasure received would come under Mr. Alison's¹ general expression—"sublime delight," and yet there is not one single point of resemblance of parallelism, much less of a common nature, between the two kinds of pleasure respectively received. No man in his senses would dream of calling the first scene "beautiful." It would be the first word on the lips of any man, how stoical soever, who was suddenly brought before the second. In the first scene our pleasure depends on extent of knowledge, in the second on keenness of perception. In the first every sense is in pain, and our pleasure is of the intellect; in the second every sense is gratified, and our pleasure is of the heart. The emotions excited by the first scene are those of fear and pity, keen sense of human weakness, depravity, transitoriness, and fearful apprehension of Divine justice, awful approbation of the manifested judgment. The emotions excited by the second scene are those of joy, hope, trust in the Divine Love, and reverent admiration of its perpetual working for glory and for beauty. The intellectual pleasures resultant from the first scene are in a great degree based on

¹ [See *Essays on Taste*, essay i.]

the very circumstance of its not being beautiful, and yet merely because intellectual perceptions are pleasurable, as well as the emotions arising from beauty, we find Mr. Alison¹ and other such reasoners mixing up the two pleasures together in inextricable disorder, and repeating page after page, in various disguises, the bold syllogism:—Beauty causes some kind of emotion, therefore everything that causes any kind of emotion is beautiful. It might at first sight appear extraordinary that such fallacies could be maintained against the strong sentiment of nature, whatever might be the weakness of the reasoning powers. But the fact is that the power of perceiving beauty is like that of an ear for music, totally wanting in many individuals from their cradle, nor will all the advantages of education ever bestow it; while on the other hand in those who naturally possess it, it may be totally destroyed, and is usually blunted and injured in a very great degree by disadvantageous education, so that it is no wonder if, hearing others talking about qualities in objects of which they themselves have no perception, they attach to the terms such meanings as their own pleasures may suggest or supply, and take it for granted that there can be no qualities whatever in material things, but those intellectual relations which alone they themselves are capable of perceiving.”²

The next chapters in the draft (ch. vi. of its sec. i. and chs. i.–v. of its sec. ii.) correspond more nearly to the ultimate text of the book. They contain not additional matter, but a different and earlier version of chapters which appear in the book. There is, however, a good deal of matter under this head which was ultimately discarded by the author, though he used some of it in later volumes. In this original draft he illustrated his various qualities of Typical Beauty—infinity, unity, and the rest—by a long, though incomplete, chapter or chapters in which the qualities of curves and “lines of beauty” were discussed. This discussion, however, would hardly be intelligible without the diagrams and other illustrations, which are too rough for reproduction.

Of the proposed section iii. (“Beauty of Colour”) little appears to have been written. There is an unfinished chapter on “The Effect of Expression of Beauty.” This does not seem worth giving, because the author treated the subject differently and more deliberately in sec. i. ch. xiv. of the printed text (§§ 4 *seq.*). There are also some memoranda for the chapter on “The Expression of Divers Colours,” but these are rough and incomplete.

For the proposed section iv. of the original draft (“Of the Sublime”) a good deal of unpublished matter exists; but it is, for the most part, in an incomplete form. A few interesting passages may however be given. The following are from ch. i. (“Of the Sublime Generally”)³:—

[5.]“We have now explained, and in some degree illustrated, the various sources to which we think the idea of beauty may be owing. But

¹ [See above, sec. i. ch. iv. § 7, p. 70.]

² [With the latter part of this passage, *cf.* sec. i. ch. xv. § 5, p. 210.]

³ [The chapters were, however, subsequently recast, and this appears in the MS. as “Chap. 10: Of the Connection of the Beautiful with the Sublime.” For the sake of clearness, we adhere above to the original draft Synopsis. *Cf.* ch. iii. of vol. i. of *Modern Painters* (“Of the Sublime”).]

there is another idea—Sublimity—with which that of beauty is so often associated that it is impossible to enter upon any criticism without examination of it. It will readily, I believe, be admitted that many things are sublime in the highest degree, which are not in the highest degree beautiful, and *vice versa*; *i.e.* that the two ideas are distinct, and one is not merely a particular form or state of the other. It will also, I believe, be admitted on reflection that nothing can be perfectly sublime without being in some degree or way beautiful, and nothing perfectly beautiful, without being in some degree sublime; *i.e.* that the two ideas, though distinct, have yet something in common, and are not altogether separable.

"For instance. By adding to the beauty of an evil angel, we add to the sublimity of his power and crime. By taking away his beauty, and giving him the attributes of a monster, we may add to his detestableness but we destroy his sublimity.

"In the same way the sublimity of the vast forms of Egyptian sculpture is enhanced, or diminished, in proportion as the lines approach the standards of that peculiar beauty which is characteristic of them. A mere monster, however vast in size, could scarcely ever induce an impression of sublimity.

"Again, the Madonna di St. Sisto¹ which may, I think, be taken as the standard of beauty, cannot be contemplated for an instant without exciting sensations in the highest degree sublime. The same may be said, though in less degree, of the beauty of all Greek Divinities. And in every instance which can be given, I believe it will be found that the highest beauty is sublime, and the highest Sublimity beautiful, and yet the Beautiful and Sublime are totally distinct ideas. . . .

"I have already defined Sublimity to be that attribute of any object by which it expands or raises the feelings, so as to prevent them from dwelling on subjects little or momentary—the effect, in short, upon the mind of anything above it. Anything which disposes us to the contemplation of things great or generalized, of large effects of fate and spaces of time,—anything which banishes paltry interests and agitations, and gives the feelings a repose in which they are at liberty to look far and broadly and calmly into or over the great laws and masses of being—anything which being itself great makes us great by the sympathy we have with it is sublime.

"As all greatness is comparative, that greatness only is sublime which is above ordinary humanity, whether bodily or spiritual. Thus: no unusual size of a thing commonly small or less than ourselves is sublime. A butterfly cannot become sublime by any increase of size; it only becomes monstrous. A large example of a small species of lizard cannot be sublime. The crocodile or the megalosaurus become so in proportion as they pass the standard of human strength. A diamond may be colossal compared with other diamonds, but it is only the mountain which is sublime. Human power or size is the first step at which the scale of the sublime begins."

Ruskin then passes on to jot down rough notes of the different elements in the sublime—size, energy, etc., as shown in the original Synopsis. For the

¹ [Cf. Vol. III. p. 13 *n.*; and in this volume, p. 127 *n.*]
IV.

proposed chs. ii. and iii. of this section (“Of Truth” and “Of Size in its effect on the Sublime”) no materials have been found. It appears that he afterwards meant to omit ch. ii., or to run the subject into ch. i., for the chapter treating “Of Breadth in its influence on the Sublime” begins with referring to Breadth as “the first of the qualities of form which we mentioned as productive of the Sublime.” The question of Size was included in the discussion of Breadth, but this chapter is not in a sufficiently complete form for citation. A similar remark applies to the notes for the next chapter, “Of Energy as an element of the Sublime,” and “Of Mystery as productive of the Sublime.” In the chapter “Of the Supernatural as an element of the Sublime,” there is this passage on plants and flowers:—

[6.] “The wildness and worn colour of their decayed masses,—the living curves of their healthy growth,—the singular sympathies with human life and human suffering which they seem to show, are instruments by which the imagination may be strongly struck. Their shudder at the approach of storm,—their apparent rejoicing in the light and colour of heaven,—their contorted and writhing struggles in decay, are all suggestive of supernatural influence—supernatural because though, as before shown, we constantly endow plants with an inherent felicity or suffering, we endow them not with a knowledge of, or sympathy with, any external events. All appearance, therefore, of such sympathy is a sign to us of some superior power—influencing and binding together under its own mighty operation, essences the most different and apathetic. The sympathy therefore of landscape with the event represented as taking place in it, is not merely—as is commonly said, in good taste; it is not the representation of an agreeable accident, but of that which we all imagine, if not believe—the address of supernatural powers to us through insentient things; and the working together of landscape element to excite some strong ruling emotion in the human mind is always as distinctly suggestive, according to its degree, of supernatural power, as the Darkness until the ninth hour during the Crucifixion. It is not merely a demand of art, that all objects in the picture should be so harmonized as to enhance each other’s expression. If this be done throughout, a sense of more than mere harmony is obtained; a sense that such harmony could not result, among insentient beings, unless by the appearance of superior sympathies and over-ruling powers; and that the scene represented is one in which more than human energies and authorities are present.

“Nor is this feeling perhaps even wanting under the ordinary changes of skies and seasons. All the necessary effects, beneficial or destructive, of storm, might be produced—so far as we know—without those circumstances of terror which touch the feelings so strongly. Rain might be given without gloom, the tempest might be guided to its work without giving to the wind that fitful action—that wailing cry—which sways and awakes by quick sympathy human passion and human fear. The lightning might be pointed to its work without the luridness* of the heaven or the spectral building and accumulated horror of the thunder-cloud. But it is not so ordained, and with every

* “Luridness is the *minor* key of light; it has the same melancholy or awful effect on the mind which is found in the minor scale of music” (note in author’s MS.).

manifestation of destruction or overwhelming power, there are addressed to the senses such accompanying phenomena of sublime form and sound and colour that the mind instantly traces some ruling sympathy that conquers the apathy of the elements, and feels through the inanimation of nature the supernatural unity of God."

Notes follow for the further contents of this proposed chapter. Some of the points were afterwards made in the printed chapters on Imagination.

Of the proposed sections v. and vi. in the original Synopsis, only some few fragmentary passages appear to have been written.

A large quantity of interesting matter exists on the subject of Awe. Much of it is in finished form, though connecting links are sometimes missing. It is difficult to say what the author's intention here was. Several pages in the MS. give different headings. It seems from one of these¹ that the chapter or chapters were first intended for the section on the Sublime in the original Synopsis. But some at least of this discussion must have been written at a much later date, for there is a reference in it to vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*. Whether this chapter on Awe was intended for some revised version of vol. ii., or for a later volume, does not appear. Some of the points and phrases were afterwards used in vols. ii., iv., and v.; compare, for instance, on Awe, as here discussed, vol. ii. sec. i. ch. xiv. § 26; and with the love of horror, vol. iv. ch. xix. ("The Mountain Gloom") §§ 15, 16. In this unpublished chapter Ruskin appears to have begun by describing cases of morbid love of horror—such as delight in diseased conditions of living bodies:—

[7.] "The painters and writers who desire to excite horror do it (more frequently and easily than by any other expedient) by imagining life to exist in forms and states of body more or less subjected to visible decay: as in the skeleton dances of Retsch² and other such works. A 'horrible' death is one in which the laws of life are violently and unnaturally interrupted with such infliction of pain as nature usually forbids: as in the body's being torn or dashed to pieces—or burnt; the protraction of the pain and of the unnatural conditions increasing the horror. And 'horrible' places are those which give the idea of, or which more or less threaten, such unnatural death or pain—as gulphs of water among jagged rocks;—pits full of foulness and without hope of escape; and such like, of which more presently. (Then afterwards all foulness, properly so called, is nothing more than a condition of corruption; and is disgusting to us in proportion to the manifestation of its nature—the presence of it adds greatly to other forms of horribleness; and the entire absence of it, and of darkness, render horror almost impossible. A mountain torrent flows into the Lago Maggiore about six miles above Locarno,³ between rocks of the hardest white gneiss, which it has worn into broad concave surfaces as smooth as silk. The rocks rise seventy or eighty feet above the stream, which flows beneath the concave wall in narrow gulphs of green, touching the rocks with slight, hardly visible eddies, entirely without sound, and

¹ [The sheet is headed "Fear and Horror: of the elements of the Sublime."]

² [For another reference to Retsch, see above, sec. ii. ch. iii. § 12, p. 259.]

³ [Ruskin probably refers to the passage of the Maggia at Ponte Brolla, which however is not more than three miles from Locarno.]

thirty or forty feet deep;—just like so much deep green glass of perfect purity flowing between upright walls of agate. Though the stream issues from the chasm below with no very violent fall, and I suppose a good swimmer might easily extricate himself from the place, or even take delight in bathing there; any more hopeless pools for a person to fall into who could not swim, it would be difficult to imagine; yet the perfect purity of the water, and smooth whiteness of the rocks, take away from them nearly all horror; a dark mill stream under a large wheel is far more terrific.

“The violation of natural law, most horrible when it is supposed to be continuous, for then it is of course the profoundest and intensest violation; corruption tending to its own proper end and close, being in the present state of the world itself natural, is less horrible than a maintained and enduring corruption. Hence it is not merely the idea of life given to the spectre or monster, but the idea of its continuance in the monstrous state, which makes it peculiarly horrible; and when to this idea of continuance is added that of power for evil, the horror reaches its climax: as in the Frankenstein monster; and in the conception of ghouls, vampires, and other such beings.

“Disgust, properly so-called, is a minor degree of horror felt respecting things ignobly painful or offensive; it is much concerned with minor conditions of corruption affecting the touch, taste, and smell; and with the conceptions of each. It passes gradually into higher forms of horror.

“Both horror and disgust are felt occasionally towards creatures which in reality violate no natural law; but which violate in a striking degree the laws of our own human nature. It is to be noted, that when the animal seems to have no resemblance or relation to humanity, but has a nature which cannot be conceived of by us, we are not disgusted with it; but when it has members, of which the service is like the service of our own, yet arranged in some very inhuman way, it disgusts us. We have no objection to an oyster for having no legs at all, but great objection to a centipede for having more legs than we think it ought. Foulness, either of body or habit, as in flies, beetles, and caterpillars; undue and deathlike sluggishness, as in some lizards; unnatural and as it were mechanical animation, as in serpents (of which the most horrible by far is the cerastes which goes *sideways*); and power of doing strange and painful harm are the other principal elements of disgust or horror in animals, as the reader may easily discover by a little careful thought.”

Is there then—the author seems to have gone on to inquire—no legitimate place for the horrible? has the sublime no connection with the terrible? He pursues the inquiry by statements of the effect of various sensations of horror upon the individual character:—

[8.] “The first broad aspect of the matter appears to be that terrible images have *no* attractive power whatever over persons leading pure, benevolent, and wise lives; occupied as such lives must be with frequent and happy thoughts of another world. Thus throughout the works of the best religious painters, of whom Fra Angelico may be taken as the type, there cannot be found the smallest trace of sympathy with terror: there are *no* grand forms of clouds or crags—no effects

of gloom—no conceptions of ghastly form. When the nature of the subject compels them to make an effort in that direction of terror, they are so incapable of feeling it that they always end in a kind of burlesque. Angelico seems utterly unable to conceive a disagreeable expression; his demons are simply ludicrous; and his flames of the Inferno, like pretty patterns in flame-coloured taffeta. Orcagna, and the other more general and naturalistic painters of the religious schools, reach the length of being able to express rage—malice, pride, and other demoniacal passions, by firm, intellectual drawing: they arrange the teeth of their demons in good order for biting, give grisly sweep to their wings, and good holding to their claws;¹ but of real awfulness or horror involved with mystery they never give the slightest hint or passage. Then the great naturalist painters, able to do and to conceive everything, touch chords of terror here and there; just enough to show that they could do more if they liked;—but none of the greatest ones ever give anything entirely terrible—entirely disagreeable as Titian in his anatomies they become sometimes—but no quantity of the disagreeable ever frightens them—or makes them seem to think that others will be frightened. And then, thirdly, the base and vicious painters, of whom Salvator stands far ahead the basest—unapproachably and inexpressibly detestable—a very abyss of abomination²—these as a class—and Salvator chiefly as representative of them, are attracted by terror—and skilful in arousing it in others.

“That I say is the first aspect of the thing, leading us to suppose that enjoyment of terrible things must be wholly wrong. Next:—let us take the second aspect of it: Observing the conduct and tastes of men in the living world—we shall see thoughtless and frivolous persons for the most part enjoying a trim, well ordered, and entirely unafraid kind of scenery or abode;—and thoughtful, sensitive, or capacious people apt to like wild and terrible scenes:—at least for a certain time. We shall find the common kind of people content with Cheltenham or Brighton—on the whole happiest there—while Walter Scott rejoices in Loch Coriskin—Wordsworth in Borrowdale—Byron in all imaginable kinds of wild places; and most of our more powerful literary or scientific men—more or less in scenery of the same kind. Among boys, young people especially, it is a promising sign if they like to haunt lonely or wild places, and an unpromising one if they only like fine rooms and gay gardens. I believe the solution of the difficulty is to be found in the following general principles, which I shall first briefly state and then expand:—

“1. A thoughtful and sensitive person is originally capable of a pleasure in terrible objects, which a thoughtless and dull one is incapable of.

“2. If these persons are uninfluenced by moral principles, and yield to their love of excitement, they may continue to indulge in such pleasurable sensations at wrong times; to the general disturbance of their intellect and degradation of their character.

“And if at the same time they conduct themselves viciously they will become both more capable of horror, and gradually infected with a

¹ [See above, pp. 159, 201, 319 *n.*]

² [See above, pp. 213, 265.]

morbid love of it; and may, in proportion to the abuse of their gifts, sink far below persons originally of less capacity.

“3. If such persons devote themselves to active, healthy, and honest life, without any special religious principles their sense of terror will occupy a duly subordinate place, among other natural and human sensations: but will, as they advance in life, generally diminish, and yield much of its place to a pure love of facts and of beauty.

“4. But if they devote themselves to a life of specially religious sentiment or exertion, such a life generally interfering with many worldly—or in religious language—carnal—sensations—and checking the pursuit of knowledge in various directions, will ultimately in most cases utterly quench the delight in terror, as well as in the more sensual forms of beauty, and leave the person narrowly minded but finely tempered: incapable of much that others can do and feel; but capable also of some things which few could do but themselves.

“5. Throughout all these phases of change the person originally capable of delight in terror remains for ever distinct from the common-place person, originally incapable of it. The work of such common-place persons may often be good in other directions, but the absence of the capacity of awe marks them as everlastingly of an inferior caste.”

The author then passed to discuss and elaborate these five propositions in order, but the inquiry was not carried further, in this draft, than proposition (2):—

[9.] “A thoughtful and sensitive person is originally capable of a pleasure in terrible objects which inferior persons are incapable of.

“And this is by reason of the general nature of Awe, properly so-called. It is the apprehension of power superior to our own, and of the great perpetual operations of death and pain in the system of the universe—both which perceptions (*i.e.* of greater power than our own, and of the offices of death and sorrow) are either impossible, or so far as possible, repulsive to a mean mind; but both possible, and in a certain kind attractive, to a great one. The mere capacity of estimate and of measurement is the first quality of the man necessary to such a sensation;—a thoughtless and commonly-minded person can form no idea of the strength of a sea wave, and no estimate of the bulk of a rock; still less of the multitudes of waves that are necessarily connected with the existence of the first or of the forces necessary to place or maintain the rock in its visible form. The universe manifests itself to them in general merely as it affects their sensations; they are drenched by the wave, or run against the rock, and apprehend in consequence, the moisture of the one, and the hardness of the other; they conceive nothing more concerning them, so far as they can go beyond this, and apprehend the power or nature of things; they dislike the resultant humiliation and sense of their own powerlessness or littleness, and shrink from the objects causing it to those over which they have greater power, and which will not make them feel themselves little people. But your noble person particularly enjoys being made to feel himself little; the sense of diminution is to him one of great ecstasy; he laughs with delight as he apprehends his own atomical character, and begins to feel what a mighty system is all about him, and what a

glorious space there is quite outside of the evolutions of such microscopical animals as himself.

"And the intensity and pleasure of the feeling is dependent not only on capacity of estimate, but on the serene and habitual action of the reflective powers upon any object submitted to them. The various feeling with which different people regard a distant chain of mountains is mainly dependent upon this. The actually visible thing is a mere film of grey, with a jagged outline by no means so large as a piece of torn grey paper near the eye, nor, most commonly, presenting half so much beauty of colour as a cluster of mosses at the wayside. And to some people the distant mountain chain is literally nothing more than the piece of torn grey paper would be; it is simply a grey film with a ragged edge, exciting no more emotion than a piece of tinder fluttering from the bars of a grate; that is what the chain of the Alps is to the modern Italian mind. To another person the same grey film excites the most sublime sensations, merely because he entirely apprehends it for what it is. This part of our subject has been examined already in vol. iii. ch. 10, § 8, and ch. xvii. §§ 3 and 4.

"But a still greater distinction exists between the minds of the two classes of persons as regards their susceptibility to emotions of terror and sorrow. It is difficult to say whether the temper of mind which makes men despise or neglect distress is dependent most on selfishness properly so called, or on defect of intellect and incapability of conceiving the distress. Of course the two causes act and react on each other; the man who pays no attention to the sorrow of others loses daily more and more the power of comprehending it, and sympathising with it, while the increasing stupidity and want of understanding render the inattention easier and the selfish acts less painful to conscience. Without troubling ourselves to disentangle those causes we may generally characterize as at once dull and cruel the persons who are never depressed by the sense of sorrow which they cannot help, surrounding them everywhere in the world, and separate them as a class from those who are depressed and horror-struck by it. It is indeed most difficult to distinguish this so noble despondency from the common and base sadness of selfishness, since before we find one person who is sad for the sake of others, we shall find hundreds sad by their own faults in unwise covetousness, or regret, or for want of compliance with the commonest laws of health. And it is this sadness which I have had occasion to speak of often before as that so justly condemned by Dante.¹ For I believe that if the laws of health and the promptings of conscience are strictly and promptly obeyed by us, the mere strength of life in the veins and the consciousness of clear standing with God and man force cheerfulness on us, whether we will or no, and render all kinds of despondency and dread impossible; but seeing that many of us are compelled by the very conditions of our lives to break the laws of health, and more of us are always breaking for our fancies' sake, laws both of health and of conscience, despondency of all kinds must needs fasten upon us; and thus it becomes a telling distinction between one class of men and another, that these are sorrowful only for themselves, and those for others. In

¹ [See in this connection *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiv. § 38.]

times of weariness and faithlessness, and various disease of mind, it just makes all the difference whether the things that fasten their truth into us are only our own disappointments and losses; or whether the valley of the shadow be dark with other death than that of our own losses.

“I pause as I write—long and resultless. Unless one were oneself all that one should be, how can one say, or imagine, what the thoughts of others should be? I cannot tell, of any pain that I have felt, of any delight that I have enjoyed, how far I grieved or rejoiced rightly. But this at least I know,—that whether we rejoice or grieve, we ought all of us to strive more and more to gain insight into the facts of the life around us; and that those facts are, to our human sight, more than terrible. Assume what theory you will about the world;—and still, so far as the vision of the world so constituted is granted to *you*, it must be a frightful one:—the best that you can believe is that in compensation for the evil of it, there shall one day be greater good; but believing this, still the good is unseen, evil is seen. Try at least to see it. Whatever is to be the final issue for us there ought surely to be times when we feel its bitterness, and perceive this awful globe of ours as it is indeed, one pallid charnel house,—a ball strewed bright with human ashes, glaring in its poised sway to and fro beneath the sun that warms it, all blinding white with death from pole to pole.”¹

Here there is a page missing in the MS. The author apparently paused to consider the contrary, or modifying, state of cheerfulness which faith, experience, or reflection may suggest. He then proceeds:—

“It is almost certain that in early youth, such courage and good cheer, if continual, proceeds from narrowness of mind and selfishness only;—they cannot be founded on faith which life has yet done little to confirm. It is a good sign of a youth, so far as kindness of heart is concerned, if he likes to get away into desolate and terrible places; for the fascination which these exercise over him is assuredly connected with the great consciousness of human sorrow in his heart; and even as he advances in life, if his work—as in the case of a painter, leads him frequently into such scenes, it is entirely significant of goodness and greatness in him that he feels their gloom to the utmost, and that when others would see nothing more than material, for a picturesque or bold arrangement of subject, *he* is affected by an almost superstitious fear, and affects the spectator with the same fear by his treatment of the scene.

“So that you cannot ask a more significant question respecting a young landscape painter than this—‘Is any of his work terrible?’ Indeed though this should be answered favourably, we have afterwards to ask whether the terror is just morbid, true or caricatured; but in the first place we must be assured that it is there; and we shall know, if it is absent, that the man is narrow and insensitive. Nor is anything more curious than the completeness of its absence from the work of inferior painters—how black they may make their clouds, how ruinous their buildings, and how colossal their cliffs, without being able to produce—since they have not themselves felt—a single thrill of true terror.”

¹ [These words occur in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. ix. § 24.]

The contrary case—the impression of awe in the painter's mind conveyed in his work—was then, as appears from a note, to have been illustrated from Turner's *Liber Studiorum*; the MS. continues:—

“2.¹ The love of gloom, which thus far we have been considering, appears at first to differ root and branch from the desire of horror which is felt by vulgar persons . . . merely for the sake of strong sensation. The one is compassionate; the other seems merely cruel. Both are, however, as I think, the same in origin and meaning; only the bluntness of soul requires, in the one case, violent aspects of terror to stimulate it; while the tenderness of the other is touched by more subdued images. But as I believe this difference in the structure of the soul to be native and unchangeable, I do not think that the degeneracy which I have stated generally may take place in the mode of pursuing sublime images, can take place except in spirits of a grave make. When the sublime emotion has ever been truly or entirely felt in youth, I do not think it is possible for it to degenerate as life advances; it will always purify and raise itself in the manner to be examined under our third head. But if the mind be natively coarse, so as in images of terror to trace none of the collateral or consolatory elements; if on this native coarseness be superadded any definitely vicious or cruel moral tendency, so that the terrible object is contemplated not only with pleasure in the absolute strength, but even with actual enjoyment of the idea of pain,—the indulgence in the dark imageries becomes gradually more constant and more gross; and as this tendency of mind implies also necessarily irregularities and degradations of conduct, the alarmed conscience and discomfited heart begin to cast a gloom of their own over the imagination, besides that which it voluntarily seeks:—farther, in seeking for frightful things, the mind comes gradually to accustom itself also to ugly ones:—rendering all its tastes coarse, facilitating companionship with persons of ignoble features, and the endurance of unsightliness and disorder in outward circumstances. Once the downward course fairly begins there is no probability of its being checked—the life gradually becomes more reckless and wretched: the imagination more sickly and gloomy; while a bitter cynicism mingles with the debauched cruelty of the heart. A certain degree of animal courage, and a superior intellect, are necessary in order to enable the person to persist in habits of mind which must always involve much pain to themselves; the courage gives them a certain joy in enduring what is painful: while the intellect prevents them from being entirely humiliated in the state to which they reduce themselves; their pride often provoking them to exhibit their artistical power in the way most immediately striking to the multitude:—that is to say, in general, in a gross or frightful subject various conditions of slight insanity or hypochondria and dyspepsia mingle with the forms of merely overexcited imagination: and give risr to a similitude of characters which it is not worth our while to trace out even in leading type—much less in detail;—the only conclusion which we need to establish being that all melancholy or terrible forms of art, whose production has been persisted in by given painters as their especial work or trade, imply some

¹ [This number refers to Proposition 2 on p. 373 above.]

degradation or weakness in painter, and are sure to be themselves of an inferior order as works of art. There is no exception whatever to this rule. All gloomy painters are bad painters; and nearly always wicked men; if not wicked they must be in some degree insane."

The following passages, clearly from the same chapter, are taken from the Brantwood MSS. described below (III.), p. 383. The passages are headed "Supplementary Notes on Terror arising from Weakness of Health":—

[10.] "But if the mind be originally of firm make, whatever may have been its gloomy tones in youth (and, as we have seen, such tones are for the most part indicative of power), they are sure to be corrected by advancing years. True sensibility compels the man to notice all that is beautiful even in the darkest or most terrible scenes, and because in nature, there are always beautiful things in all places, no sensation of horror is ever, in a sensitive mind, untempered by joy in beauty; this joy, aided by affection and curiosity, leads the man perpetually further in the pursuit of it; and because the horror is found for the most part in what of each object is indefinite or passing away—but the beauty in what is definite and enduring (the lightning passes, shapeless—the rainbow rests in its arch) he perpetually gets full grasp of what is lovely—but only feeble hold and transient sight of what is frightful; so that, led always into longer companionship with the fair and perfect things, at last he has but little time or mind for the terrible ones; and though his sensation of them is as vivid as ever, he has recourse to them only to oppose his vision of Peace—or at all events so far only as is necessary for the full expression of the system of nature and the history of man.

"It is a certain principle therefore that all the greatest painters will in middle and advanced life, represent beautiful rather than terrible things; and the quantity of true beauty which they represent is generally a very just standard of their artistical rank. I say generally, because it is evident that we cannot make any trenchant distinctions between man and man, in the more subtle phases of character; since the outward circumstances of life must materially modify the character, whatever original perfectness of heart we may presume in the painter.

"Unhappiness of life, or unworthy treatment of him by his contemporaries, or distress, though not his own, brought frequently before him, may increase the hold of painful imagery on his mind, while a full and calm felicity of life, cheerfulness of companionship and the honour of acknowledged genius, and the wellbeing of his state or city, may lead him gradually to forget many sorrowful things, which it would have been better to have remembered. And if he is a figure painter, his power of representing must be materially dependent on the examples of it with which he is surrounded. And while these external matters may make a notable difference in the man, even supposing his own conduct virtuous, and his faith firm, much more is he certain to be affected gravely by the consequences of his vices or errors. Although I am bold to separate wicked—that is to say—cruel and basely minded men, whom I have described under the second head of this chapter—from good—that is kind, and nobly minded men, whom I am considering now, yet the good are liable to all sorts of decline and stain. I call

them good, merely because there is the material of goodness in them, however little they shape it. In those whom I call wicked, there is no substance of good, no ray of it. All apparent shape in them is of clay without bones, or breath—"clouds are they without water"—having only the darkness—not the dew:—"raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame"¹—that which springing from the passions of other men would be beautiful as Aphrodite, is with them nothing but shame—this is the Salvatorian mind. But with those whom I call good, the true light is always in the heart; and if evil be there also, then the light, playing upon this, shows it in all its horror—and thus we get some of the intensest expressions of horror which the human heart produces—horror rising within itself. It may perhaps be also providentially appointed that a mind of fine make, having no fixed faith nor power of self-command, and plunging therefore into sin, shall not be able to turn away from the dreams of terror which sin will summon, but rather throw its whole power into the examination and expression of them so as to manifest its state thoroughly to others, as well as itself. Hence the perpetual passages in Shelley and Keats of extreme horror—the description of the decay of the Garden in the 'Sensitive Plant' for instance: and the whole of the treatment as well as the choice of subject in 'Isabella,' with the gloom of 'Hyperion' and despair of 'The Eve of St. Agnes.' Evidently also mere weakness of physical health, especially if resulting from over exertion of mind, and irregular habits of life, will tend to produce painful visions, just as fever does, literally visions, not merely gloomy thoughts, but frightful spectra. In certain states of weakness of body, a painful feeling will almost always give rise to visionary appearances of a frightful kind, to unimaginative persons in dreams, to highly imaginative ones in waking vision translating itself into them, so to speak, even mere bodily discomfort giving rise to such spectra as may account to the imagination for such discomfort: oppression of breathing causing a dream of rocks being heaped upon the body; the sickness and loathing of a disordered system, sights of serpents, and caterpillars, and loathsome places; a sharp, local pain in any part of the body, the vision of an animal tearing it, or a fire consuming it, and so on: the distinctness and dreadfulness of such imagery increasing in proportion to the weakness of body and mind, and appearing, as already noticed in the fourth volume, to be especially attendant on certain states of palsy or dotage.

"Although, however—thus invariably traceable to some flaw or decay in the intellectual constitution, such conditions of emotion, when the original make of the mind has been thoroughly pure and strong, are frequently the most expressive of all its moods when declared to others; as the 'Christabel' and 'Ancient Mariner' are the most touching though the most [*sic*] of Coleridge's works;² and enable it, even by the very bitterness of its own state to convey to persons otherwise cold and un [*sic*] the truest impression of the things that are terrible in the earth. A healthy and practical farmer, meeting a viper in his field, regards it simply as one of the creatures ranged under the general term of 'vermin'—kills it—throws it over the hedge out of his way, and

¹ [Jude 12, 13.]

² [See below, p. 392.]

proceeds in his walk—whistling. A sick and sorrowful poet, meeting the same creature, pauses—watches, follows, irritates it—takes a strange pleasure in looking into its eyes, and hearing it hiss; and measuring the concentric circles of its prepared coil. Presently it uncoils itself and glides away. The youth watches the waving of the long grass over its body—proceeds to wade through said long grass for half an hour after it, half fascinated and wishing to be bitten. Goes home, and dreams of it, intensified into a fiery serpent by his mistress's last frown—rises utterly ill and miserable, and writes 'Lamia.'¹ Perhaps a thing as much worth doing as all that the farmer did in his cheerful walk—besides that the poet knows thenceforward more about vipers than the farmer ever did, or ever will. Much good may it do to the poet! whether really do good either to him or to us, I leave, not ironically, but as myself unable to form judgment in the matter, to my reader's consideration; being certain only of this, that such a question can only be raised, and poetry at all brought into questionable balance with turnips, when said poetry is of the best kind, and the mind thus spent in visions of first-rate power. Unless the resulting work, 'Lamia,' or 'Christabel' or what else it may be, be well finished in its own way, the young or old visionary had far better have concurred at once in the farmer's views on the subject of vipers, thrown the beast over the hedge, and set himself to plough, or thresh, for the rest of the day.

"It will follow from these general considerations, that so far as a mind of pure make, and powerful imagination is either (1) affected by a noble, but doubtful and faithless compassion for the agony of the world—or (2) by remorse for carnal sin, and by weakness of body, it will be liable to fits of fear, and correspondent visions of terrible things, which will also probably be intense, animated and acute, in proportion both to the vigour of its invention, and to its own intrinsic hatred of all death and evil; the things which have the nature of either, or 'the body of this death'² appearing more ghastly and vivid to the man in proportion to the separation of his own noble nature from them; and thus, unless we could find great men with no moral failing, and subject to no bodily distress, we must be prepared to find them occasionally creating pieces of horror in their work, which at first sight it will be difficult to distinguish from the perpetual and base horror of wicked men. If we do not find them doing this, unless as I said, we supposed them perfect and like the angels, we may be sure they are disguising something from us—hiding their fear, and not speaking from their hearts—in other words, that they are verily not great men, though we thought them so.

"Thus Correggio and Reynolds, both as great, considered with respect to the absolute pictorial faculty, as Titian, or Veronese, are yet subject to certain affections and insufficiencies in their modes of perceiving objects. Correggio sees too exclusively its softness—Reynolds too exclusively its grace and breadth, both of them exaggerate shadows and curves, and in other modes into which I need not enter, seek wilfully something other than the fact. Hence we find, as far as I know, no true terror in any of their designs. Still less in any of those of Raphael

¹ [Cf. *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvi. § 34, where Keats is spoken of as "sad because sickly."]

² [Romans vii. 24.]

or Poussin, who were still more wilfully conventional. Attempts at the representation of terrible things may sometimes be forced upon such men, as in Raphael's Satan, in the St. Michael of the Louvre, and Poussin's Dragon in his St. Margaret.¹ It will be the main object of this section to show how inferior all such artificial terrors are to the true work of the Naturalist. We come then, so far as we see at present, to the conclusion that while a continual delight in terrible subjects is an infallible sign of a man's being weak and wicked, the occasional dwelling upon ghastliness is an essential characteristic of great naturalist painters, at certain times of their lives, caused in them first by their compassion—secondly, by their sin; and thirdly, by their search for facts."

There are other MSS. given by Ruskin to Mr. Allen in the same bundle that contained the material for vol. ii. already described. The sheets for the most part contain mere notes and memoranda, though they include the first drafts of discussions on Mountain Sculpture—a subject afterwards treated in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*. The notes include jottings made on reading Byron's *Childe Harold* and the *Clouds* of Aristophanes; notes on Abstraction and on Chiaroscuro; the beginning of a paper on the Fall of Man; and some memoranda of sunsets and reflections in water; several other sheets are taken up with notes on Sir Charles Bell's *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting*, a work first published in 1806. Bell died in 1842, and Murray had asked Ruskin to write a notice of his works on their artistic side for the *Quarterly Review*. He accordingly took the book with him on his foreign tour in 1845. "I stipulated for a back seat," he writes to his father in describing the journey from Tonbridge to Dover (April 2), "and got one—opposite a very fine specimen of a blackguard, with his cap over one eye, and a bandage for a shirt collar. I studied him very carefully, and at last sketched him on the margin of Bell's Expressions, while we stopped at Ashford, thus obtaining a valuable addition to the illustrations of the work." The notes show that Ruskin studied the work very carefully, but after some weeks he gave up the idea of writing the article for the *Quarterly*. "I enclose a letter," he writes to his father from Florence (June 15), "which you will not like to forward, but I can't help it. It explains itself: there is, however, another reason which I cannot give Murray, that on reading Sir C. again and again, I find it loose in plan and often to my notions wrong, and Murray told me he wanted as favourable a review as possible to serve the widow, and I can't write what I don't think." One result of this abandoned *Quarterly* article remains in vol. ii. of *Modern Painters*, in the shape of frequent references (seven in all) to Bell's works.

(II.) The Hilliard MS. This is the MS. of the volume in its penultimate form, and is followed by the text, apart from the author's final corrections. Parts of it are wanting; viz., sec. i. chs. i.—vi. (§ 1); ch. xv. §§ 5–7; sec. ii. §§ 9–11, and from § 18 of ch. iv. to the end. The MS. is of 1846, and contains none of the later matter.

This MS. bears evidence similar to that in the case of the previous volume, of the great and minute care taken by the author in revision. The instances of alterations given in footnotes to the text (e.g. pp. 190, 248, 258) are typical of similar revision throughout the volume.

¹ [In the Royal Gallery at Turin.]

With this MS. are a few other sheets containing material for chapters or portions of chapters afterwards discarded. One of these appears to have been an amplification of §§ 8–11 of the present ch. i. of the volume, dividing that form and those activities of art which are the subject of the theoretic faculty from the art which is “subservient” and “useful” (see § 8, p. 33). In this connection there is an interesting passage on Historical Art—“art historically useful, the preserver of things lost and found”:

[11.] “And here we have to make a distinction between two functions of historical art commonly so called. Once, some time ago, when I was rashly using the word historical in the way it is so frequently applied to the higher branches of theoretic art, an intelligent amateur asked me suddenly for an instance of a good truth-telling, practically useful historical picture of some important fact, not taken from the Scripture histories. I have a most acute recollection of the puzzled pause that followed. Vague images swimming before me of quaint, tapestry-like, nameless panoramas of impossible fortifications, with people in blue coats and silver lace and cocked hats capering on the top of a round hill in the foreground, and when these faded away, nothing left but a black, ignoble, inevitable well of vacancy, with the names of Benjamin West and Horace Vernet¹ in phosphoric horror at the bottom of it. It is indeed singular to reflect how little historical *information* we owe to painting,—for that which is commonly called historical is little more than realization of some isolated fact of what is known and conceived from books, and even of this, there is but little by great hands, except from the Scripture histories. Allegorical representations, triumphal processions, general types of victory or peace,—the time and costume often utterly neglected by the painter, or episodes which exhibit the human emotions under circumstances peculiar to no *time*, though peculiar in themselves, and for the understanding of which we must refer to written history,—this is all that art of any standing or dignity has done with respect to the past actions of men. Of informative art we have next to nothing, for the simple reason that artists are too apt to paint the things of past time, which they must invent, instead of things of present time which they might know. They hardly call the latter historical, and yet it is the only historical painting worth having. Is Thucydides a worse historian than Mitford, fresh from his command in——?² What would we give now for the roughest sketch of the battle of Platea—done on the instant, and on the spot. It would be worth rather more than the ideals of David in the Louvre.

“Besides the delight of exercising the imagination which brings the painter constantly back to the past, there is a reason³ in the nature of his art itself. Informative historical art must be of a low kind—to map out the divisions of an army in motion, to clear away the smoke of the battle and let the eye perceive the relations of its troops,—relations which in the battle itself could not be discerned—to labour

¹ [For a reference to Vernet in this connection, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vii. § 18.]

² [Left blank in the MS. The missing word is Thrace (Thuc. iv. 104).]

³ [*i.e.*, for the preference of past to present history, or for the avoidance of informative historical art altogether.]

out details of costume, and dwell on the features of mean faces, this is not work for a great painter; he cannot submit to it, nor ought he, for this may be done by inferior hands. His business is to seize the moments of mightier interest, to dwell on the passion and the powers which are the roots and movers of all history, and which are common to all time. A picture of the battle of Austerlitz gives no idea, no information whatever about the battle; it is a picture of Napoleon and [? (word indecipherable)], both agitated by noble emotion—it is the conception of an instant which may perhaps be as well conceived and rendered a thousand years hence as now; it is not historical but theoretic.

"Art, therefore, as the recorder of *events* has hitherto done almost nothing, and can never do much. To be valuable at all, it must be true in everything—true in those passing, finite, contemptible circumstances which, as contrary to the great general truths of nature, the good artist *must* reject, and even supposing this painful truth attained, a model and a map are better story-tellers still. The model of the battle of Waterloo gave a clearer knowledge of it than all the pictures ever painted.

"But art as the recorder of character, as the exhibition of the root and moving powers of history, has done everything. More history may be written on a forehead than on sixty feet of canvas. Every earnest and loving statement of what is leading, influential, foundational in the men and things immediately present and about the artist, of their heart and inner nature, as it manifests itself in instructive, not assumed, peculiarity, is historical in the highest sense, and invaluable to future ages."

With these remarks on historical art, may be compared passages in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 21, and ch. vii. §§ 17–19.

Another additional chapter in the Hilliard MS. discusses the question of ideal character in landscape, and makes reference to the point of specific realisation "already explained in the preface," *i.e.* in the preface to the second edition of vol. i. The chapter seems to have been intended for insertion in that volume; it forestalls the enumeration, and begins the examination, of the six qualities of "typical beauty" discussed in the present volume (chs. v.–x.).

(III.) The Brantwood MS.

There are preserved at Brantwood some unpublished portions of *Modern Painters* contained in two small blue copy-books, not in Ruskin's hand. One of these is noted by him (in his later hand) on the cover thus:—"Part of unpublished old *Modern Painters*; very valuable." This note-book contains (i.) some notes on Ideas of Relation. These will be printed in Vol. VII., (vol. v. of *Modern Painters*). (ii.) Some notes on Terror. These are printed above, pp. 378–381. (iii.) The other copy-book (in the same hand) contains "Notes on a Painter's Profession as ending Irreligiously." These are printed in the next Appendix.

II

AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER

BEING “NOTES ON A PAINTER’S PROFESSION AS ENDING IRRELIGIOUSLY”

[THIS chapter, as it now stands, is much later in date than the second volume of *Modern Painters*, for it refers to the fourth volume of that book, and also to the *Stones of Venice* (see § 11). It appears, however, to be contribution to the discussion of questions raised in the second volume (sec. i. ch. xv. § 5, p. 210), and there reserved for subsequent treatment. The additional chapter is, therefore, appropriate in this place, and its inclusion here is convenient owing to the greater thickness of the later volumes. The MS. from which it is printed is described above, p. 383. The paragraphs are here numbered for convenience of reference.]

1. The first point which I would wish the reader to mark in this review is the inseparable connection of beauty with truth. We have seen that exactly in proportion as painters thirsted for truth, and were stern, laborious, undivided, and untempted in the pursuit of it—just in that proportion their sense of beauty was quickened, and their power over it confirmed. We have also seen that all beauty is typical of divine attributes, and of moral principles: it might therefore seem that no eagerness in its pursuit was blameable.

But here we are met by grave facts and difficult questions. It is, indeed, simply to be stated, and easily comprehended, that when the truth is sought first and beauty afterwards, all is wrong: when *vice versâ*, all is right. But there is more.

2. And first let us consider the bearing of the pursuit of beauty, as intensely followed out by a great painter, on what is commonly called “religion.”

Taking a broad view of the religions of the world, they may be mostly defined under these two heads. (1) Efforts to propitiate a supernatural being, either beloved for the nobleness of its own nature, or supposed to possess power over the events of our own lives; and this effort at propitiation is generally accompanied (but not necessarily so) with the other form of religion. (2) Efforts of the human mind, when discontented with its state of existence here, or with the shortness of that state, to assure itself of a better or more enduring state of existence hereafter.

The efforts at propitiation (1) with an uncertain and feeble attempt at realization at futurity (2), constitutes most heathen religions:—the attempt at realization of futurity, with uncertain and feeble efforts at propitiation, constitutes most of the spurious forms of Christianity—the two conditions of mind

united form the purest conditions of Christianity which have hitherto manifested themselves. For our present purpose, however, it is necessary to examine mainly the nature of the second form of religion—the desire of another world.

3. This desire, and the belief dependent upon it, of course arise naturally in the minds of persons who are guiltlessly unhappy in this life. Whether this unhappiness arise from external poverty, ill health, loss of friends, failure of cherished hopes, or persecution, the mind naturally has recourse to the only consolation open to it—the hope of a compensating state of future life. It hangs upon the hope of such a state; eagerly seizes every evidence which may confirm such hope—shrinks with terror and hatred from every piece of counter-evidence—and fixes its affections, with its gratitude, on the Being to whose promise it trusts for the fulfilment of its expectations. Most people are brought to God by Gratitude; not for what He has given, but what He has promised. Nearly all the purest exhibitions of religious feeling and faith have been made by persons in such circumstances.

And that such religion is wise and true, appears to be established by the words of Christ and the testimony of His disciples. Throughout the New Testament, riches and fortune and felicity are spoken of as temptations or snares:—poverty always as a blessing, and guiltless misery as a state of temporary probation, to be abundantly recompensed hereafter.

So that in times of great intensity of feeling (questionable, perhaps, times also of ignorance—we shall consider of this presently), earnest men, desirous of making themselves increasingly religious, have frequently given up their wealth, and voluntarily inflicted suffering on themselves in the form of penances and restrictions, in order to further their religious interests, or purify their religious emotions. 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

4. In cases when no suffering of this visible kind has been experienced (either voluntarily or otherwise), we find sometimes a nobler discontent with the world than can arise from any personal calamity; a discontent arising from an inner sense of sin, and from a contemplative conviction that all is not as God would have it, round about us, and that a less sinful and painful, or perhaps wholly painless and sinless state is to be desired with all our soul and pursued with all our strength—in the striving for which men are led gradually to cast aside the thoughts and treasures of the world, not by way of doing penance, but with contempt, as being impediments and hindrances to a life of labour towards Heaven.

5. A third state of religious life, in which this world is fully enjoyed, and yet the next mainly looked for, is conceivable, and may have been led by one or two religious persons out of a thousand; perhaps by more, for as it is almost impossible to distinguish it from the commonest of all states of mind of persons concerned with religion,—the state in which this world is nominally second and actually first,—it is unsafe to assert with any definiteness either its rarity or frequency. Since however it cannot be held by very ardent persons, nor by very imaginative ones (such being sure to “sell that they have” and *all* that they have as soon as they catch sight of Christ or of eternity—never keeping back any of the Price of the Pearl), and as the persons of whom we are at present speaking, painters and others concerned with the arts, are necessarily ardent and imaginative, we need not reason about this third form of the religious life, with any regard to them.

6. Finally, there is yet a fourth form of the religious life conceivable, in which this world may be enjoyed and laboured in, without any regard to the Next. That is to say, in which a man may consider it his duty to concern himself at present about the place which God has for the present put him in; being quite ready—if God should ever see good to put him into another place, to concern himself then about that;—as though a man’s servant should say to himself, My master has at present put me in the kitchen, I presume therefore he means me to attend to the kitchen stuff;—if afterwards he promote me to be his treasurer, or receive me as his guest, I will then do my best to keep his accounts clear, or look to be entertained in a goodly manner at his high table; for the present my business is clearly in the kitchen, and I may as well make myself comfortable there. This form of religious life has also, as far as I can see, been a notably rare one hitherto; we will return to it presently; in the meantime let us consider the relations to the artist of the two first and commonest forms of religious life, which arise mainly out of Discontent with the world.¹

7. Observe first that a great painter must necessarily be a man of strong and perfect physical constitution. He must be intensely sensitive, active, and vigorous in all powers whatever; gifted especially with a redundant nervous energy, able to sustain his eye and hand in unbroken continuousness of perception and effort. I do not stay to prove this. It will be found a fact by those who care to enquire into the matter. And this being so, your great painter can only under the most extraordinary circumstances be liable to fits of physical exhaustion or depression, and assuredly he is never liable to any morbid conditions of either; he may be healthily tired when he has worked hard, and will be all right again after he has rationally rested; he may be profoundly vexed, or thrown into fierce passion, but he will never mistake his own vexation for a gloomy state of the universe, nor expect to find consolation or calm by any supernatural help; he will set himself to forget his vexation, and conquer his passion, as small irksome pieces of entirely his own business, precisely in the way he would set himself to mend a hole in his canvass, or cool a pan of dangerously hot varnish. Farther, he is gifted by his exquisite sensibility with continual power of pleasure in eye, ear, and fancy; and his business consists, one half of it, in the pursuit of that pleasure, and the other half in the pursuit of facts, which pursuit is another kind of pleasure, as great, and besides sharp and refreshing when the other is at all deadened by repetition.

8. Farther, it not only is his business to seek this pleasure, but he has no trouble in seeking it, it is everywhere ready to his hand, as ever fruit was in Paradise. Nothing exists in the world about him that is not beautiful in his eyes, in one degree or another; so far as not beautiful it is serviceable to set off beauty; nothing can possibly present itself to him that is not either lovely, or tractable, and shapeable into loveliness; there is no Evil in his eyes;—only Good, and that which displays good. Light is lovely to him; but not a whit more precious than shadow—white is pleasant to him, as it is to you and me; but he differs from you and me in having no less delight in black, when black is where black should be. Graceful and soft forms are indeed a luxury to him;

¹ [With this passage on religion contrast *Crown of Wild Olive*, Introduction, § 12 *seq.* Here Ruskin does not conceive the “non-religious” life; there he states that life may be well-ordered on either basis.]

but he would not thank you for them unless you allowed him also rugged ones. Feasting is consolatory to his system, as to yours and mine, but he differs from us in feeling also an exquisite complacency in Fasting, and taking infinite satisfaction in Emptiness. You can excite his intense gratitude by the gift of Anything, and if you have Nothing to give him, you will find that Nothing is exactly the thing he most wants, and that he will immediately proceed to make half a picture out of it. How can you make such a man as this Discontented with the world? There are Three colours in it—he wants no fourth—finds three quite as much as he can manage. There's good firm ground to set easels on in it—he is not sure that they would stand so firm upon clouds, or that he could paint flying. But the world is a passing, dreamy, visionary state of things! Do you then want them to be always the same—how could one vary one's picture if that were so? But people lose their beauty and get old in the world! Then they have long beards, nothing can be more picturesque. But people die out of the world! How else would there be room for the Children in it, and how could one paint without children? But how unhappy people are in the world. It must be their own fault surely, I'm not. But how thin and ugly their grief makes them—don't you mourn for the departure of the bloom of youth? Not at all—I like painting thin people as well as fat ones—one can see their skulls better. But how wicked people are in the world! is it not dreadful to see such wickedness? Not at all—it varies the expression of their faces; there would be no pleasure in painting if they all looked alike. Besides, if there were no wicked people there would be no fighting—no heroes—no armour—no triumphs—one might as well not be a painter at all. But don't you want to mend the world then? No—I don't see that it wants mending—unless, perhaps, it might be better with fewer fogs in it; but I don't know, and I daresay fogs are all our own fault for not draining better; at all events—the best you can do for me at present is to stand out of the light, and let me go on painting.

9. What can be done with such a man? How are you to make him care about future things? Even if misfortunes fall upon him, such as would make other people religious, he will not seek for consolation in Heaven. He will seek it in his painting-room. So long as he can paint, nothing will crush him. Nothing short of blindness—nothing, that is, but his ceasing to be a painter, will enable him to contemplate futurity.

10. Nay;—it may be replied—may he not be led, without suffering, but in his own work and his own way to that happy religion which you have admitted to be possible, in which this world may be enjoyed without forgetting the next? No; by no manner of means—at least of means hitherto brought to bear in this world's history. As far as we have seen, hitherto, all happy religious life has consisted in the fulfilment of direct social duty—in pure and calm domestic relations—in active charity, or in simply useful occupations, trades, husbandry, such as leave the mind free to dwell on matters connected with the spiritual life. You may have religious shepherds, labourers, farmers, merchants, shopmen, manufacturers—and Religious painters, so far as they make themselves manufacturers—so far as they remain painter—no.

11. For consider the first business of a painter; half, as I said, of his business in this world must consist in simply seeking his own pleasure, and that, in the main, a sensual pleasure. I don't mean a degrading one, but a bodily, not a spiritual pleasure. Seeing a fine red, or a beautiful line is a bodily and

selfish pleasure, at least as compared with Gratitude or Love—or the other feelings called into play by social action. And moreover, this bodily pleasure must be sought for Itself and Himself. Not for anybody else's sake. Unless a painter works wholly to please himself, he will please nobody;—he must not be thinking while he is at work of any human creature's likings, but his own. He must not benevolently desire to please any more than ambitiously—neither in kindness, nor in pride, may he defer to other people's sensations. "I alone here, on my inch of earth, paint his thing for my own sole joy, and according to my own sole mind. So I should paint it, if no other human being existed but myself. Let who will get good or ill from this—I am not concerned therewith. Thus I must do it, for thus I see it, and thus I like it, woe be to me if I paint as other people see or like." This is the first law of the painter's being; ruthless and selfish—cutting him entirely away from all love of his fellow-creatures, till the work is done. When done he may open the door to them, saying calmly "If you like this—well, I am glad. If you like it not, away with you, I've nothing for you." No great exertion of benevolence, even in this. But farther. In order to the pursuit of this beauty rightly, our great painter must not shrink in a timid way from any form of vice or ugliness. He must know them to the full, or he cannot understand the relations of beauty and virtue to them. I have written enough in other places to explain the perceptive function of a great naturalist in this respect—the reader should compare especially what is said of Shakespeare, vol. iv., and *Stones of Venice*.¹

12. And this being so, as the great painter is not allowed to be indignant or exclusive, it is not possible for him to nourish his (so called) spiritual desires, as it is to an ordinarily virtuous person. Your ordinarily good man absolutely avoids, either for fear of getting harm, or because he has no pleasure in such places or people, all scenes that foster vice, and all companies that delight in it. He spends his summer evenings on his own quiet lawn, listening to the blackbirds or singing hymns with his children. But you can't learn to paint of blackbirds, nor by singing hymns. You must be in the wildness of the midnight masque—in the misery of the dark street at dawn—in the crowd when it rages fiercest against law—in the council-chamber when it devises worst² against the people—on the moor with the wanderer, or the robber—in the boudoir with the delicate recklessness of female guilt—and all this, without being angry at any of these things—without ever losing your temper so much as to make your hand shake, or getting so much of the mist of sorrow in your eyes, as will at all interfere with your matching of colours; never even allowing yourself to disapprove of anything that anybody enjoys, so far as not to enter into their enjoyment. Does a man get drunk, you must be ready to pledge him. Is he preparing to cut purses—you must go to Gadshill with him³—nothing doubting—no wise thinking yourself bound to play the Justice, yet always cool yourself as you either look on, or take any necessary part in the play. Cool, and strong-willed—moveless in observant soul. Does a man die at your feet—your business is not to help him, but to note the colour of his lips; does a woman embrace her destruction before you, your business is

¹ [*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 28 seq.; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 53 seq.]

² [A word is left blank in the MS. here.]

³ [*1 Henry the Fourth*, i. 2.]

not to save her, but to watch how she bends her arms. Not a specially religious or spiritual business this, it might appear.

13. And then, lastly. Not only is your painter thus concerned wholly and indiscriminately with the affairs of this world, but the mechanism of his own business is one which must occupy nearly all the thoughts of his leisure or seclusion. Whatever time others give to meditation, or other beneficial mental exercise, he must give to mere practice of touch, and study of hue. Painting cannot be learned in any other way. So many hours a day of steady practice—all your mind and nervous energy put into it—or no good painting. No genius will exempt you from this law of toil; a painter's genius especially signifies the love of beauty which will never let him rest in the effort to realize it. A man of science may, if he choose, rest content at any moment with the knowledge he has attained, for however much more he learns, he will be as far from knowing All, as ever he was; but to a painter, absolute perfectness of skill is an approachable, though not an attainable goal: every hour that he gives to his work, brings him nearer a conceivable faculty of laying on the exact colour he wants in the exact shape he wants; he feels himself every day able to do more and more as he would; and though he knows he can never be absolutely perfect, any more than a continually enlarging circle can become an infinite straight line, still, the straight line is before his eyes, and forces him for ever to strive to reach it more and more nearly. This continual mechanical toil, this fixed physical aim, occupies his intellect and energy at every spare moment—blunts his sorrows, restrains his enthusiasms, limits his speculations, takes away all common chances of his being affected by the feelings or imaginations which lead other men to religion.

III

LETTERS ILLUSTRATIVE OF “MODERN PAINTERS,” VOL. II

1. TO THE REV. W. L. BROWN

ON COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH

[It will have been observed how closely Ruskin had read Wordsworth before writing this volume; there are references also showing his familiarity with Coleridge. The following letter, belonging to the period, seems, therefore, appropriate here. It is of further interest for its protest against inversions in diction—a practice into which, on writing his volume two years later, Ruskin himself fell, and for which in later years he criticised himself severely: see his note of 1883 on p. 50, above. For the Rev. W. L. Brown, Ruskin's college tutor, see Vol. I. p. 464, and II. p. 223. The letter is here printed for the first time from a copy preserved at Brantwood: it is in the volume of 1827–1844, No. xi. of the Poetical MSS. (see Vol. II. p. 534).]

Dec. 20th, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,—I ought before to have thanked you for the valuable information contained in your condescending answers to my impudent animadversions: they are of course entirely satisfactory except that I must take the liberty of still falling foul of transposition. The line of Shakespeare you quote¹ I always considered a *bad* line—because an obscure one—because although there is a great deal of the uninteresting, there is nothing of the *impossible* in the man's knowing his horse; and since any thought which becomes ditchwater by being *clearly* expressed, must be something worse by being *muddily* expressed, I think nothing can be worth saying which will not stand on its own legs, and which requires to be bolstered up by unnatural expression;—not that I would alter Shakespeare, because the words used are the shortest possible, melodiously arranged and perfectly clear in all points but this one unavoidable transposition; and because also in a description of that which is pompous and artificial, artificial language is not only admissible but even agreeable. But look how much finer the following speech of York

¹ [See *King Richard II.*, Act v. Sc. 2:—
“Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know.”]

is—in which there is not *one* transposition from beginning to end, and just try the effect of a few—

“So—or with more contemning did men’s eyes
On Richard scowl. No man God save him cried,
No joyful tongue him home his welcome gave;
But dust upon his sacred head was thrown,” etc.¹

You see in a passage like this where there is deep feeling, Shakespeare prefers writing a line which will not scan (Did scowl on Richard, etc.) to using the least transposition. Neither is it any excuse for transposition to say that such in a *perfect* language would be the natural order of the words. The imperfection of our language compels us to express the government by the order of the words, and in an English poem that order of words is natural which is suited to the genius of the language, and which a person not thinking about his words would use, and that is *unnatural* which a person thinking about the philosophy of language instead of its meaning would use. If it is my habit to say “I want an apple” it is vain to tell me that apple is the principal idea in my mind and that it would be natural to say “Apple I want.” It is natural in every language to use the customary forms, and philosophical language never could be the language of passion, unless it became fragmentary. The unruly child at the dessert does indeed roar Apple, but the *want* is wanting altogether.

I never heard of the Coleridge and Wordsworth dispute (where can I find an account of it?²) but I should think from the character of the two poets that their dispute was not about the *expression*, but about the proper *matter* of poetry;—the one requiring elevated and imaginative subject, the other nothing more than sticks and wallets; for, so far as I can see, both act on precisely the same principles of language; neither of them can use a long word when a short one will do, nor a *recherché* word where a simple one will do, nor a philosophical transposition where plain English will do. What can possibly be simpler than every word of the “Ancient Mariner”? It is a short difficult stanza and sometimes the poet is compelled to allow himself so much transposition as “out of the sea came he,” a simple and everyday structure; but in general he will rather end a line with a contemptible word than transpose—just write him out straight and it is all plain prose—“And every tongue through utter drought was withered at the root—We could not speak, no more than if we had been choked with soot”—surely this is natural enough? I think nothing can be more perfect than all the versification of this poem—for the very reason that it *is* absolute pure—common English. There is only one bad line in it and that is a transposed one—“Eftsoons his hand dropped he.”

But when you say that you would rather have written this than all Wordsworth ever perpetrated, I begin to be surprised. I love Coleridge, and I believe I know nearly every line of both the “Ancient Mariner” and “Christabel”—not to speak

¹ [The original lines are:—

“Even so, or with much more contempt, men’s eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried ‘God save him!’
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head.”]

² [Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria* (1817); see especially ch. xvii. Coleridge’s objections to Wordsworth’s theory (which, however, he distinguished from his friend’s practice) were somewhat wider in their scope than Ruskin supposed.]

of the “Three Graves” and the “Hymn in Chamouni,” and the “Dejection,” and I am very willing to allow that he has more imagination than Wordsworth, and more of the real poet. But after all Coleridge is nothing more than an intellectual opium-eater—a man of many crude though lovely thoughts—of confused though brilliant imagination, liable to much error—error even of the heart, very sensual in many of his ideas of pleasure—indolent to a degree, and evidently and always thinking without discipline; letting the fine brains which God gave him work themselves irregularly and without end or object—and carry him whither they will. Wordsworth has a grand, consistent, perfectly disciplined, all grasping, intellect—for which nothing is too small, nothing too great, arranging everything in due relations, divinely pure in its conceptions of pleasure, majestic in the equanimity of its benevolence—intense as white fire with chastised feeling. Coleridge may be the greater poet, but surely it admits of no question which is the greatest *man*. Wordsworth often appears to want *energy* because he has so much *judgment*, and because he never enunciates any truth but with full views of many points which diminish the extent of its application, while Coleridge and others say more boldly what they see more partially. I believe Coleridge has very little moral influence on the world; his writings are those of a benevolent man in a fever. Wordsworth may be trusted as a guide in everything, he feels nothing but what we ought all to feel—what every mind in pure moral health *must* feel, he says nothing but what we all ought to believe—what all strong intellects *must* believe. He has written some things trifling, some verses which might be omitted—but none to be *regretted*. He could not by any possibility—have entertained even for an instant such feelings as are shown in Coleridge’s “Fire, Famine and Slaughter”—not that he would not have pitied the sufferers equally but he would have looked on the inflictor with a judging charity—and if we compare poem with poem, which is the greatest—truest, and most beautiful statement of God’s Providence? “The Ancient Mariner” or the “Hartleap Well”?¹ Both are written with precisely the same intent. In the one poem the crime is a mere piece of inconsiderateness, and is followed by the most preposterous chain of ghostly consequences; in the other the crime is a deliberate basing of man’s pleasure on the pain of God’s creatures, and the consequences are gradual, natural, not necessarily or indisputably connected with the crime, but yet sufficiently so to be felt a lesson and a revelation by a believing mind. This is absolute, perfect truth; it is the law of God’s daily providence, no diseased dream of a heated imagination. The “Christabel” again is a mere rhapsody—a poetical clothing of an old superstition. There is no moral truth, no system or meaning in it from beginning to end. A lady dreams something unpleasant—she must go to a *wood* at *midnight* to pray. What is the use of this? Hadn’t she better have gone to Chapel in the *morning*? In the wood she meets the devil dressed as a lady, she brings him home “for love and charitie”—and in return is mesmerized all night. What sense or good is there to be got out of this? How different is Wordsworth’s “White Doe of Rylstone,” a poem of equal grace and imagination; but how pure, how just, how chaste in its *truth*, how high in its end, showing “how anguish—wild as dreams of restless sleep, is tempered and allayed by sympathies aloft ascending and descending deep.” Coleridge’s finest poem—to me—is the “Three Graves.”²

¹ [The two pieces are quoted together in this volume; see above, p. 149.]

² [Written in 1805–1806.]

The first stanzas of its fourth part are, I think, entirely the consequence of Coleridge's acquaintance with Wordsworth. They are very exquisite and indeed nothing can be finer than the whole poem. But what impression does it leave? The miserable sense that people may be reduced to the utmost limit of agony without crime, while the *Holiness* of the Mother is shown not by the influence of her love but by her hatred. Just compare with this the noble notion of parental love which is given by the story of "Michael," one equally deep in tragedy—but a true, real, everyday character of Tragedy—and teaching us throughout the noble lesson that "There is a comfort in the strength of *love* 'twill make a thing endurable—which else would overset the brain—or break the heart." Or if you want pure pathos take "The Brothers," the most really affecting, most perfect piece of natural feeling in the English language. The two last lines of it are, to my mind, the most exquisite close that ever poet wrote. And then read the "Affliction of Margaret," and the "Female Vagrant," and "Lucie Gray," and "She dwelt among the untrodden ways,"—and then with the magnificent comprehension—faultless majesty of the "Excursion," to crown all—my dear sir—how *could* you say what you did? It is very late, I haven't time to write more—pray excuse me if I have been too presuming. We hope Mrs. Brown continues better, all join in kindest regards to her and you

Ever, my dear Sir,
etc., etc., etc.

2. TO JOSEPH SEVERN

ON THE PROSPECTS OF ART IN ENGLAND

[THE following letter was written by Ruskin from Venice in September 1845, and shows some of the enthusiasms, interests, and concerns which were to be expressed in his second volume. In a letter to his father from Venice (September 30, 1845) Ruskin writes:—

"I send you a scrawled and sulky letter to Mr. Severn—I am half ashamed to send it, but cannot delay longer. I don't want to damp him, but it is monstrously absurd in him to speak of inoculating England with the love of *Fresco* as if that were all she wanted, and men could be sublime on a wall who were idiots on canvas. Fresco does indeed afford glorious *room* for a man who wants it; it is a splendid sea for the strong swimmer, but you might as well throw a covey of chickens into the Atlantic as our R. A.'s into fresco. . . ."

For Joseph Severn, whom he had come to know through George Richmond, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. ii.; Severn had gained a prize in the cartoon competition for the Westminster frescoes (for which see Vol. III. p. 230). The letter is here reprinted from *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp, 1892, pp. 205–207; the date is there wrongly given as 1843.]

VENICE, *September 21st*, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sure you will excuse my not having answered your kind letter before, when I tell you that I have been altogether unhinged by the condition in which I have found Venice,¹ and that every time I stir out

¹ [See above, p. 41 *n.*]

of doors I return too insensible to write or almost to speak to any one. But I cannot longer defer expressing my sincere gladness at your well deserved success, and my sympathy in all the enthusiasm of your hopes, so far as regards your own aims and prospects, and I am also glad for the sake of our national honour, that you are to be one of its supporters. But with your hopes for the elevation of English art by means of fresco, I cannot sympathise. I have not the remotest hope of anything of the kind. It is not the material nor the space that can give us thoughts, passions, or powers. I see on our Academy walls nothing but what is ignoble in small pictures, and would be disgusting in large ones. I never hear one word of genuine feeling issue from any one's mouth but yours, and the two Richmonds', and if it did, I don't believe the public of the present day would understand it. It is not the love of *fresco* that we want: it is the love of God and his creatures; it is humility, and charity, and self-denial, and fasting, and prayer; it is a total change of character. We want more faith and less reasoning; less strength and more trust. You, neither want walls, nor plaster nor colours—*ça ne fait rien à l'affaire*¹—it is Giotto and Ghirlandajo and Angelico that you want, and that you will and must want, until this disgusting nineteenth century has, I can't say breathed, but steamed, its last. You want a serious love of art in the people, and a faithful love of art in the artist, not a desire to be a R. A., and to dine with the Queen; and you want something like decent teaching in the Academy itself, good training of the thoughts, not of the fingers, and good inpouring of knowledge not of knocks. Never tell, or think to tell, your lank-cockney, leaden-headed pupil what great art is, but make a great man of him, and he'll find out. And a pretty way, by-the-bye, Mr. Eastlake takes to teach our British public a love of the right thing, going and buying a disgusting, rubbishy, good-for-nothing, bad-for-everything Rubens,² and two brutal Guidos, when we haven't got a Perugino to bless ourselves with. But it don't matter, not a straw's balance. I see what the world is coming to. We shall put it into a chain-armour of railroad, and then everybody will go everywhere every day, until every place is like every other place, and then when they are tired of changing stations and police, they will congregate in knots in great cities, which will consist of club-houses, coffee-houses, and newspaper-offices; the churches will be turned into assembly rooms; and people will eat, sleep, and gamble to their graves.

It isn't of any use to try and do anything for such an age as this. We are a different race altogether from the men of old time; we live in drawing-rooms instead of deserts; and work by the light of chandeliers instead of volcanoes. I have been perfectly prostrated these two or three days back by my first acquaintance with Tintoret;³ but then I feel as if I had got introduced to a being from a planet a million of miles nearer the sun, not to a mere earthly painter. As for our little bits of R. A.'s, calling themselves painters, it ought to be stopped directly. One might make a mosaic of R. A.'s, perhaps; with a good magnifying glass, big enough for Tintoret to stand with one leg upon . . . (Sept. 29th), if he balanced himself like a gondolier.

¹ [For the quotation from Molière, see Vol. III. p. 122.]

² ["The Judgment of Paris," No. 194; Ruskin attacked this purchase in a later letter to the *Times*; see *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 65. For the Guidos, see Vol. III. p. 670.]

³ [See above, Introduction, p. xxxvii., and Epilogue, § 12, p. 354.]

I thought the mischief was chiefly confined to the architecture here, but Tintoret is going quite as fast. The Emperor of Austria is his George Robins.¹ I went to the Scuola di San Rocco the other day, in heavy rain, and found the floor half under water, from large pools from droppings *through* the *pictures* on the ceiling, not through the sides or mouldings, but the pictures themselves.² They won't take care of them, nor sell them, nor let anybody take care of them.

I am glad to hear that the subjects of our frescoes are to be selected from poets instead of historians; but I don't like the selection of poets. I think in a national work one ought not to allow any appearance of acknowledgment of irreligious principle, and we ought to select those poets chiefly who have best illustrated English character or have contributed to form the prevailing tones of the English mind. Byron and Shelley I think inadmissible. I should substitute Wordsworth, and Keats or Coleridge, and put Scott instead of Pope, whom one doesn't want with Dryden. I think the "Ancient Mariner" would afford the highest and most imaginative method of touching on England's sea character. From Wordsworth you get her pastoral and patriarchal character; from Scott her chivalresque; I don't know what you would get from either Dryden or Pope, but I suppose you must have *one* of them. However, anything is better than history, the most insipid of subjects. One often talks of *historical* painting, but I mean *religious* always, for how often does one see a picture of history worth a straw? I declare I cannot at this instant think of any one historical work that ever interested me.³

I beg your pardon very much for this hurried sulky scrawl, but conceive how little one is fit for when one finds them covering the marble palaces with stucco, and painting them in *stripes*!

Allow me again to thank you exceedingly for your kind letter, and to express my delight at the good news it contains, and believe me, with compliments to Mrs. Severn,

Ever most truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

¹ [George Henry Robins (1778–1847), the famous crier of "going, going, gone" of the day. His most notable sale, that of Horace Walpole's collections at Strawberry Hill, had taken place in 1842.]

² [See above, p. 40.]

³ [See above, p. 382.]

IV

MINOR “VARIE LECTIONES”

ALL the more important and substantial variations between the various editions of *Modern Painters*, vol. ii., have already been given as footnotes to the text or otherwise. For the sake of completeness, the remaining variations are here given. Differences of capitals for small letters, small changes of punctuation and of spelling (such as “canvass” for “canvas,” “Raphael” for “Raffaelle,” etc.), are not, however, always noted; nor are some obvious misprints (transposition of letters, etc.), included. See also p. liii. above for list of errata noted in the first edition; they are not included in the following collation.

Preface to the Re-arranged edition (1883).—§ 6, third line from end, “the conception of any invisible one” was misprinted “the conception of any visible one” in the small complete edition. § 7, the reference to “the untranslated quotation from Aristotle” was wrongly given in the 1883 ed. as pp. 83 and 218, instead of pp. 85 and 225.

Sec. i. ch. i. § 3, line 1. Ed. 1 reads “Only as” instead of “Because that”; ed. 2, “Only that I fear that . . .” § 4, line 12, eds. 1 and 2 had a full point after “us.” § 5, eds. 1–3 and 1873, did not capitalise “His,” “He.” § 6, line 9, ed. 1, reads “the” before “endurance,” “fortitude,” “deliverance,” and “faith.” § 7, “He,” “His,” “Him,” not capitalised in eds. 1–3. § 7 (author’s footnote, now at pp. 37–41), “Beauvais” misprinted “Beauvois” in eds. 1 and 2, which did not contain “at the corner of the market-place.” In the paragraph on Pisa, the words “to some private person” came after “the lower part of the wall,” and “Giotto” was misspelt “Giott” (so also lower down in the note). Towards the end of the note, for “taking the place of” eds. 1 and 2 read “replacing.” There were also some minor differences in punctuation. § 8, line 24, for “whatever,” ed. 1 reads “whatsoever”; line 31, eds. 1 and 2 have a semicolon instead of a full point before “only”; in ed. 3 the long sentence was broken up (see Ruskin’s notes on pp. 49, 53). § 10, last line but 2, the words “in considering” inserted in ed. 3. In the note eds. 1 and 2 read “St.” for “San Lorenzo.”

Ch. ii. § 4, line 5, for “and therefore” ed. 1 reads “and so are actually *akolastoi*,” and in line 6, for “do not lower,” “lower not”; line 8, “its own” italicised in 1883 ed.; lines 15, 16, “though . . . feebleness” bracketed in eds. 1 and 2; line 20, after “passion” ed. 1 adds “and impulse”; last line but 3, after “intemperate” ed. 1 inserts “or *akolastoV*,” and in the next line omits the words “for the time.” There are also some differences of punctuation in this §. § 8, line 17, for “or” eds. 1 and 2 read “nor.” § 9, line 2, no inverted commas to ‘taste’ till 1883; line 4, all eds. before 1883 read “and” before “plant groves”; line 11, eds. 1 and 2 had a semicolon after “they had,” and ed. 1 reads “for I know not” instead of “I do not know.” The word “heart” in the last line was not italicised till 1883 ed. § 10, line 6, eds. 1 and 2 omit “in” before “what is kind.”

Ch. iii. § 1, lines 25, 26, the inverted commas and brackets introduced in 1883 ed. § 2, line 2, eds. 1 and 2 read right, ed. 3 “right,” § 2, the italics (*deceptive*, *will*, and *ultimate*) introduced in the 1883 ed.; line 13, eds. 1 and 2 insert “either” before “that which he himself”; § 5, the italics (*variation and unity*) introduced in the 1883 ed.; line 8, eds. 1 and 2 begin a new sentence after “the experienced”; § 6, the numerals (1), (2), (3) introduced in the 1883 ed.; § 6, line 14, “coexistent” is “co-existent” in eds. 1 and 2. § 8, line 3, eds. 1 and 2 insert “many” between “for” and “beneficent”; § 9, line 2, for “better” eds. 1 and 2 read “best”; § 11, line 17, for “all things. The complaint so often heard from . . .” ed. 1 reads “all things, and

therefore the complaint so often made by . . .” § 14, line 6, eds. 1 and 2 bracket the words “and they . . . God.” § 15, last line but 1, eds. 1 and 2 read “and” for “or.” § 16, lines 17, 18, eds. 1 and 2 read “. . . in men. And this kind . . . the word ‘beautiful’ to other . . .”

Ch. iv. § 1 (A), line 3, for “giving” eds. 1 and 2 read “allowing” (the lettering A, B, C, and D added in 1883); § 4, lines 1 and 3, for “the one to deaden . . . the other to endear,” ed. 2 reads “it deadens, . . . while it endears”; line 6, for “last” ed. 2 reads “latter”; § 5, line 8, for “flavours together; but” eds. 1 and 2 read “flavours together. But”; § 6, note 2 on p. 69, last line but one, for “remembered,” ed. 1 reads “held in mind”; § 7, the italics (*overcoming that very other power*) introduced in the 1883 ed.; § 9, last line but 8, the 1873 ed. (only) reads “had” for “has.”

Ch. v. § 2, last line but 2, for “has” ed. 1 reads “have.” § 6, the italics (*heaven light* and *object light*) introduced in 1883 ed.; § 8, line 8, for “venture” eds. 1–3 read “ventures”; § 11, line 2, for “the Venetians did through love” ed. 1 reads “was done by the Venetians through intense love”; § 16, line 11, for “For instance,” ed. 1 reads “Hence for instances,” and 6 lines lower, for “veins” “veining”; § 17, lines 2 and 3, for “refuses in painting to understand a shadow which . . .”; ed. 1 reads “refuses in art to understand anything as either which . . .”; line 12, for “most observable character,” ed. 1 reads “most observable and characteristic part”; § 17, last line, for “strong” ed. 1 reads “high”; § 19, line 3, eds. 1 and 2 omit “by” before “their distinctness”; line 9, for “not” ed. 1 reads “no.”

Ch. vi. § 1, line 1, eds. 1 and 2 bracket “God only excepted”; line 11, “or” was misprinted “of” in 1873 ed.; § 2, three lines from end, all eds. to 1873 have a full stop after “appear”; § 3, line 11, for “impulse” ed. 1 reads “inspiration”; line 24, eds. 1 and 2 have a full stop after “times”; § 5, line 3, for “surface” eds. 1–3 read “surfaces”; line 5, eds. 1 and 2 omit “by”; § 5 (author’s footnote †), the italics (*various*) introduced in 1883 ed., as also (*Uniformity*) in the next note; § 6, line 20, ed. 1 reads “becomes” for “become”; § 8, 9 lines from end, “offensiveness” was “offensivenesses”; in eds. 1, 2, 3, and 1873, and in the line above eds. 1, 2, and 3 read “nothingnesses”; § 8, author’s footnote, after “Santa Maria Novella” ed. 1 added “(Chapelle des Espagnols)”; § 10 (A), line 3, for “amongst” eds. 1 and 2 read “between”; (B), line 3, “(necessarily)” inserted in 1883 ed., as also the lettering “(A)” and “(B)”; § 10, author’s footnote, the italics (*is, large, small*) introduced in the 1883 ed.; the italics (*bulk, strength, constant must*) introduced in ed. 2; § 10, fourth line from end, for “takes” ed. 1 reads “take”; in the next line, the ed. of 1883 altered “The third, denial,” etc., to “And the third, the denial,” etc.; § 12, line 6, ed. 1 inserts “gradual” before “acceleration”; sixth line from end, eds. 1 and 2 insert “both” before “on its age”; § 14, the italics (*infinitely variable*) introduced in 1883 ed.; § 14, last line, eds. 1, 2, 3 read “animals” for “animal.”

Ch. vii. § 1, lines 4 and 5, ed. 1 inserts “and” before “yet” and “mere” before “matter”; § 2, line 16, ed. 1 inserts “under” before “fern”; line 22, ed. 1 reads “Hence Wordsworth of the cloud, which in itself having too much of changefulness for his purpose is spoken of as one,” etc. § 2, in ed. 1 the three quotations appear in the ordinary text; in ed. 2 the first one is set out, and in ed. 3 the other two also; § 6, author’s footnote, line 12, for “the” eds. 1 and 2 read “a.”

Ch. viii. § 3, third line from end, ed. 1 omits “and” before “constant.”

Ch. ix. § 2, line 9, the italics (*puerer*) introduced in ed. 2; § 7, line 8, ed. 1 inserts “the” before “rock,” and “I say” after “singularly”; § 8, line 3, ed. 1 reads “whereof” for “of which”; line 12, ed. 1 reads “of the Deity in matter through which,” etc.; § 9, fifth line from end, ed. 1 reads “Thus in the description of the Apocalypse, it is its purity that fits it,” etc.; § 9, author’s first footnote, all eds. before 1883 read “for all melodies are not,” etc.

Ch. x. § 3, author’s second footnote, lines 16–19, eds. 1 and 2 bracket “although . . . chiselling” and have no stop there; line 28, eds. 1 and 2 read “large” for “wide”; the italics (*indolent, intellectual, and more to do*) introduced in ed. 2; line 30, eds. 1 and 2 read “or” for “and”; line 33, eds. 1 and 2 read “new built” for “newly-built”; § 7, line 5, “least” in eds. 1–3 and 1883; other eds. read “less”; § 8, last word printed in small caps. in ed. 1.

Ch. xi. § 4, line 14, ed. 1 omits “higher”; line 23, for “may we not see” ed. 1 reads “it cannot be but that there is.”

Ch. xii. § 1, line 25, ed. 1 inserts “besides” before “is”; § 2, line 12, for “But even” ed. 1, beginning a new paragraph, reads “Wherefore it is evident that even”; § 2, ed. 1 has the two quotations in the ordinary text; § 6, line 1, for “clearer” ed. 1 reads “more distinct”; line 15, the italics (*animal*) introduced in 1883 ed.; § 7, line 15, for “consistent” ed. 1 reads “uniform”; § 8, the italics (*happiness* and *moral functions*) introduced in ed. 2; line 8, for “will” ed. 1 read “it shall”; § 9, the italics (*there is . . . animal*) introduced in 1883 ed., though *slothful* was italicised in ed. 2; § 9, line 8, eds. 1–3 and 1873 read “but” for “while”; line 20, ed. 1 omits “sometimes”; § 9, last line but one, ed. 1 inserts “of” before “love”; § 10, line 5, ed. 1 reads “eye” for “eyes”; line 15, for “in” ed. 1 reads “by means of”; line 16, ed. 1 inserts “to these” after “next”; line 33, for “much” ed. 1 reads “more,” adding after “mandibles” the words “than is commonly supposed”; line 36, for “their beauty” ed. 1 reads “that beauty they have,” the brackets being added in ed. 2; line 39, for “the principle is less traceable,” ed. 1 reads “there is less traceableness of the principle”; ninth line from end, the italics (*virtue*) introduced in ed. 2.

Ch. xiii. § 1, the italics introduced in ed. 2; § 2, last line, for “Second Section of the present Part,” 1883 ed. read “next volume” and added the footnote “(Of this edition; being the close of the second volume of the original work)”; § 3, line 3, for “apply the word” ed. 1 reads “use the word to signify”; § 5, line 1, for “It is well” ed. 1 reads “Now it is better”; § 6, line 4, for “its” ed. 1 reads “their”; § 10, line 5, for “idea,” eds. 1–3 read “ideal”; line 22, ed. 1 inserts “unequalled” after “endurance”; line 23, ed. 1 misreads “feeling” for “feeding”; line 28, ed. 1 reads “it” for “He”; § 13, lines 3 and 4, for “peculiar virtues, duties and characters” ed. 1 reads “characters, habits and peculiar virtues and duties”; § 13, last line, ed. 1 reads “it” for “their”; § 14, line 5, ed. 1 begins a new paragraph with “The pursuit.”

Ch. xiv. § 1, line 14, 1873 ed. misprints “their” for “there”; line 16, for “by” ed. 1 reads “with”; § 2, six lines from end of first paragraph, for “the ideal of the good and perfect soul, as it is seen in the features” ed. 1 reads “so the ideal of the features, as the good and perfect soul is seen in them”; next line, for “so sunk as not . . . to feel,” ed. 1 reads “but that it shall feel”; § 3, line 8, ed. 1 inserts “twists and” before “straining dexterities”; § 4, first two lines, ed. 1 reads “The visible operation of the mind upon the body, and evidence of it thereon, may be considered under the following three general heads”; line 12, for “described” ed. 1 reads “noted”; § 5, line 24, ed. 1 reads “exercise of both is in a sort impossible, for which cause we occasionally,” etc.; line 26, for “expansion” ed. 1 reads “expanding”; the quotation from Wordsworth, ed. 1 printed as one line, and did not italicise “thought”; next line, ed. 1 omitted “perhaps” and read “only, I think that if,” etc.; three lines lower, ed. 1 inserts, “that” before “though,” and in the next line does not italicise “reason”; seven lines lower, ed. 1 reads “that speaks” for “speaking”; § 6 is misprinted 5 in 1873 ed.; § 11, first three lines, ed. 1 reads “Hence, then, be it observed, that what we must determinedly banish . . . our seeking of its ideal, is not everything,” etc.; line 10, ed. 1 inserts “ever” before “that of Paradise”; § 12, line 11, for “since” ed. 1 reads “because”; lower down, ed. 1 italicises only the word “every”; § 13, line 4, for “general” ed. 1 reads “usual”; § 14, eleven lines from end, for “among” ed. 1 reads “for”; seven lines from end, ed. 1 omits “has done”; § 18, line 21, the brackets introduced in 1883 ed.; § 20, last word, not italicised in ed. 1; § 21, line 1, ed. 1 adds “and colourless” after “clay cold,” and for “life of flesh” reads “value of flesh”; § 23, last line before quotation, ed. 1 reads “to illustrate that of Spencer” (*sic*); § 29, first word, “Wherefore” in ed. 1; line 6, for “as” ed. 1 reads “for as much as”; § 30, first three lines in ed. 1 read “. . . passions whose presence, in any degree on the human face is degradation. But of all passion it is to be generally observed,” etc.

Ch. xv. § 1, line 4, ed. 1 omits “ones”; line 13, for “the” ed. 1 reads “that”; § 6, line 12, for “spring” ed. 1–3 read “springing”; line 18, for “are” eds. 1 and 2 read “is”; line 23, for “fall” ed. 1 reads “stoop”; last lines, for “partial want”

ed. 1 reads "want in measure," and for "exhibited," "showing itself"; § 10, at the beginning, for "mere" ed. 1 reads "bare."

Introductory Note (1883) to *Sec. ii.*—§ 2, line 24, small complete ed. reads "special" for "especial."

Sec. ii. ch. i. § 1, line 13, for "received" ed. 1 reads "presented"; line 26, for "not" ed. 1 reads "no"; § 4, line 6, for "where" ed. 1 reads "in which."

Ch. ii. § 1, line 15, ed. 1 reads "but voluntarily visible, as it being white, or having," etc.; § 2, lines 3 and 4, for "renders to visible knowledge" ed. 1 reads "renders so visible"; § 2, author's second footnote, third line, for "use" ed. 1 reads "necessity"; § 3, line 6, ed. 1-3 misprint "add" for "and"; § 4, line 4, ed. 1 inserts "of" before "the kind"; § 6, line 7, for "It has been said" ed. 1 reads "We have seen"; line 10, for "secures" eds. 1 and 2 read "secure"; line 14, no italics in ed. 1; § 7, line 14, "separately wrong" not italicised in ed. 1; § 7, line 17, for "is" eds. 1 and 2 reads "are"; § 9, line 1, for "This" ed. 1 reads "Now, this"; § 10, line 3, "absolutely" not italicised in ed. 1; § 21, line 4, 1873 ed. reads "artist" for "artists."

Ch. iii. § 1, line 5, for "choose" ed. 1 reads "chose"; § 2, seventh line from end, for "or" eds. 1 and 2 read "nor"; § 3, line 9, for "therein" ed. 1 reads "there"; § 6, lines 13 and 14, italics introduced in 1883 ed.; § 10, line 5, ed. 1 inserts "or" before "failing"; § 14, line 19, for "mind" ed. 1 reads "imagination"; line 25, ed. 1 reads "Turner's" for "Turner"; line 28, ed. 1 inserts "false and" before "unlike," and in the next line reads, "and in" for "or in"; line 38, ed. 1 reads "no" for "not"; § 17, line 14, ed. 1 reads "her chamber with its" for "a chamber with a"; § 18, 12 lines from end, eds. 1 and 2 read "Christo" for "Cristo"; § 23, fourth line from end, for "single group" ed. 1 reads "dozen people at a time"; § 24, fifth line from end, ed. 1 inserts "farther" before "and higher"; § 28, fourteen lines from end, for "from" ed. 1 reads "among."

Ch. iv. § 2, line 19, "Spenser" misprinted "Spencer" in ed. 1; seventh line from end, no italics in ed. 1; § 6, tenth line from end, for "perhaps the most" ed. 1 reads "which I consider the most"; § 7, line 14, ed. 1 inserts "various" before "disturbances"; § 11, line 11, for "are" ed. 1 reads "is necessarily"; § 14, fourth line from end, "compared" omitted by error in ed. 1; § 15, author's footnote, line 5, for "manifesting either" ed. 1 reads "manifestation either of"; § 17, author's note, eds. 1 and 2 read "dome" for "Duomo"; § 19, line 7, for "not necessarily any" ed. 1 reads "necessarily no"; § 21, lines 15 and 16, ed. 1 reads "It is by such means . . . preserved, as we before observed," etc.

Ch. v. § 3, last line, "as" omitted by error in eds. 1 and 2; § 11, line 8, eds. 1 and 2 have a semicolon only after "trees"; § 21, author's note, 1883 ed. misreads "Mr. Jamieson" for "Mrs."

Headings.—In the Synopsis, eds. 1 and 2 read:—

Chapter XII. Of Vital Beauty.—First, as Relative.

Chapter XIII. Of Vital Beauty.—Secondly, as Generic.

Chapter XIV. Of Vital Beauty.—Thirdly, in Man.

Ed. 3 reads:—

Chapter XII. Of Vital Beauty.—I. Of Relative Vital Beauty.

Chapter XIII. II. Of Generic Vital Beauty.

Chapter XIV. III. Of Vital Beauty in Man.

In the headings of the chapters Ed. 2 follows Ed. 3 above, and not Ed. 1.



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THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

Two thousand and sixty-two copies of this edition—of which two thousand are for sale in England and America—have been printed at the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh, and the type has been distributed.



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THE WORKS OF

JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO

1904

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LIBRARY EDITION

VOLUME V

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

CONTAINING

PART IV

OF MANY THINGS

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

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

WORDSWORTH

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
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1904

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TWO PAGES OF THE MS. OF "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. III. (Ch. iv

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pp.80 and 292-293

Note.—The frontispiece and the numbered plates (1–17) appeared in the original editions. In eds. 1–3 Plate 7 was chromo-lithographed by Henry Shaw; in the edition of 1888 by Messrs. Hanhart; in the small complete edition (on reduced scale) by Messrs. Maclagan & Cumming, who have also executed the present plate. In the edition of 1888 and later, Plate 12 was reproduced in photogravure by Messrs. Bousod, Valadon & Co.; in this edition, it is reproduced in the same process by Messrs. Allen & Co. In eds. 1–3 Plates 14 and 15 were printed from mezzotints by Thomas Lupton; in the edition of 1888 and later from mezzotints by George Allen; in the present edition Lupton's mezzotints are reproduced by photogravure. With regard to the remaining plates, Nos. 6, 9, and 13 are here printed from the original plates; the others are reduced (by about one quarter) in photogravure from early impressions of the originals. The lettered Plates (A to H) and Plate 17A. are added in this edition.

The drawing of Plate A was reproduced by half-tone process in *The Artist* for July 1897, and again, March 1900; that of Plate B, on a somewhat larger scale than here, in *Studies in Both Arts* (Plate ix.), where a passage from *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xiii., was given with it, under the title of "The Aiguilles and their Pedestal"; and that of Plate F, by autotype, in the large paper edition of *Studies in Ruskin* (1890), Plate 5, and again, by half-tone process, in *The Artist* for July 1897.

The following drawings were exhibited at the Ruskin Exhibition at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1901: Plate 12, No. 243; Plate 13, No. 114; Plate 14, No. 310; Plate 15, No. 205. The drawings of Plates 12 and 13 were also exhibited at the Coniston Exhibition in 1900 (Nos. 102 and 54); and that of Plate G at Manchester in 1904 (No. 371).

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. V

(In the chronological order, Vol. IV. is followed in succession by Vols. VIII.- XII.; the present Introduction should thus be read after that to Vol. XII.)

THE second volume of *Modern Painters* was published in April, 1846; the third and fourth volumes appeared in the early part of 1856. The story of Ruskin's life and work during the intervening decade is told in the Introductions to Vols. VIII. to XII. We have now to pick up the thread of the interrupted book, and as the third and fourth volumes were written and published much at the same time, it will be convenient to treat them together here.

We left Ruskin, with *The Stones of Venice* and much occasional work well off his hands, setting out once more with his parents for Switzerland (Vol. XII. p. xxxvii.). His father, as we have said (*ibid.*, p. xxvii.), was impatient to see the great book continued. The good-humoured chaff of friends pointed the author in the same direction. "*Modern Painters*, I tell him," wrote Rossetti, "will be old masters before the work is ended."¹ He needed change of thought and scene, and amid the stillness of the Alpine meadows, and the solemn silence of the hills, he resumed his interrupted work.

In his final epilogue to *Modern Painters*, Ruskin (as already mentioned) speaks of the whole book as inspired by the beauty and guided by the strength of the snows of Chamouni. We have seen that this was the case with the first volume (Vol. III. p. xxv.), which was written after a Swiss tour in 1842. The second volume similarly followed upon his foreign tour in 1845. He was in Switzerland again in 1846 and 1849, and for a shorter time in 1851. On all these occasions he was collecting impressions, observations, and memories which were to be utilised in the later volumes of the book. To these earlier tours we must, therefore, revert, before we can take up the

¹ *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham*, p. 171.

thread in 1854. The book, though interrupted by other tasks, was never out of the author's mind, and in every sojourn among the mountains he was preparing himself, by "walking with Nature" and "offering his heart a daily sacrifice to Truth," to affirm the lessons which he had learnt. Even amidst his work at Venice, his mind was set on his earlier task, and we have seen his satisfaction in finding a point of contact between *Modern Painters* and his architectural work.¹ The study of the Renaissance suggested to him the thought that the formalism of the classical architecture had killed the love of nature which had been conspicuous in the earlier Gothic art, and that the romantic movement, making the landscape of Turner possible, was a revolt against the imprisonment of the spirit within the Five Orders. So, too, when at Venice the news of Turner's death had reached him, he went on indeed with his immediate task, but registered a vow to use his increased knowledge to the greater honour of the Master. "I will make *Modern Painters*," he wrote to his father (January 1, 1852), "so complete a monument of him, *D. V.*, that there will be nothing left for the Life but when he was born, and where he lived, and whom he dined with on this or that occasion. All which may be stated by anybody."

Already in 1845 Ruskin had commenced the studies necessary for the later volumes. He returned home in that year by the St. Gothard, as already related (Vol. IV. p. xxxv.), in order to find the sites or scenes of some of Turner's later drawings. He described his studies in letters to his father:—

"FAIDO, *Friday, August 15.*—I have found his [Turner's] subject² or the materials of it here; and I shall devote to-morrow to examining them, and seeing how he has put them together. The stones, road, and bridge are all true; but the mountains, compared with Turner's colossal conception, look pigmy and poor. Nevertheless, Turner has given their actual, not their apparent size. . . . I have got two sketches to-day (Saturday) of Mr. Turner's subject, and a specimen of the stones of the torrent—gneiss coloured by iron ochre proceeding from decomposing garnets. The road on the left is the old one, which has been carried away in the pass, and that on the right is the new one, which crosses the stream by the shabby temporary bridge. It has been carried away twice, so that there are

¹ See Vol. X. pp. xlvii., 207 *n.*

² That is, for the drawing in Ruskin's possession of "The Pass of Faido," engraved as the frontispiece to *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ("The Gates of the Hills"), and analysed in that volume, ch. ii. and Plates 20 and 21.

the remains of two roads and two bridges, and three new bridges of wood, which Turner has cut out, keeping the one he wanted. The gallery on the left is nearly destroyed—it protected the road from a cataract which has now taken another line, and has left the worn channel you see.”

“FAIDO, *Sunday, 17th.*— . . . On looking at my two sketches, made yesterday, I find them wonderfully like the picture, but it is beautiful to see the way Turner has arranged and cut out. I never could have dreamed of taking such a subject.”¹

These were the studies and drawings used in the chapter (ii.) of the fourth volume on “Turnerian Topography.”

In the following year Ruskin was again in Switzerland, and he has described in *Præterita* (ii. §§ 189, 190), with illustrative extracts from his diary, how he occupied himself with watching phases of the sunset, and the forms and colours of trees, rocks, and clouds. But it was in the Swiss tour of 1849, partly with his parents and partly by himself, that the principal studies for the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters* were made; for that reason, an account of the tour was reserved (Vol. IX. p. xxiii.) for the present place.² His diaries and letters of the period are indeed on almost every page a commentary on the book. The scenes which left the deepest impress were Vevay, Chamouni, the Rhone Valley, and Zermatt. Nearly all the most beautiful and the most important passages in the third and fourth volumes embody impressions received or observations recorded at one or other of those places. They went first to Vevay, and it was there, among the narcissus meadows, then scarce touched by villas and railways,

¹ See also Vol. IV. p. xxiv. *n.*

² The itinerary of the tour of 1849 was as follows: Folkestone (April 15–18), Boulogne, by rail to Paris (April 24), Sens (April 25), Mont Bard (April 26), Dijon, Champagnole (April 29), Geneva (April 30), Chambéry (May 2), the Grande Chartreuse, St. Laurent (May 4), Chambéry (May 5), and thence to Geneva and Vevay. Leaving his parents there, Ruskin went on a short tour with Richard Fall (for whom see Vol. II. p. 429) to Chamouni (May 12) and Martigny (May 17), returning to Vevay (May 18). Thence to St. Martin’s; a month later, he went with his parents, by Sallenches (June 10), to Chamouni (June 13). There they stayed a month, returning to Geneva (July 18). Leaving it again after a brief stay, they spent some days at St. Martin’s and went on to St. Gervais, whence Ruskin started off by himself, beginning with the Tour of Mont Blanc from Chamouni over the Col de Bonhomme to Chapiu (July 27), and thence over the Col de la Seigne to Courmayeur (July 28). Crossing the Col de Ferret to Martigny he went next to Zermatt (Aug. 2), and after a few days there, returned by St. Nicholas (Aug. 10) to Chamouni (Aug. 15). He spent three nights at the inn on the Montenvers (Aug. 22) and returned to Chamouni (Aug. 25), thence proceeding by Sion and Martigny to Visp and Leuk (whence he ascended the Gemmi Pass), and so to Geneva (Aug. 30), where he rejoined his parents, and Dijon (Sept. 4) to Paris (Sept. 8), Amiens (Sept. 14) and Calais (Sept. 16).

that Ruskin stored up the impressions which he cast into his prose poem to the grass of the field. Everybody knows the passage; it is the one which Matthew Arnold cited as an example of Ruskin's genius in its best and most original exercise.¹ The first thought of the passage occurs in his diary of 1849:—

“VEVAY, *Sunday, June 3.*—... Such grass, for strength, and height, and loveliness, I never saw—all blue too with masses of salvia, and flamed with gold, yet quiet and solemn in its own green depth; the air was full of the scent of the living grass and new-mown hay, the sweet breathing of the honeysuckle and narcissus shed upon it at intervals, mixed with the sound of streams, and the clear thrill of birds' voices far away. The sun's rays (as it fell from behind a western cloud) rose gradually up towards the cottage Pleiades,² casting the shadows of the pines far across its avenue of turf—that indescribable turf, soft like some rich, smooth fur, running in bays and inlets and bright straits and shadowy creeks and gulphs, in among the forest, calm, upright, unentangled forest, itself scattered in groups like a happy crowd—with isolated tufted trees here and there, and then two or three together, and then many; graceful as clouds in summer sky—no wildness, nor crowding; no withering; each serene in his place and quiet pride. I looked at the slope of distant grass on the hill; and then at the waving heads near me. What a gift of God that is, I thought. Who could have dreamed of such a soft, green, continual, tender clothing for the dark earth—the food of cattle, and of man. Think what poetry has come of its pastoral influence, what happiness from its everyday ministering, what life from its sustenance. Bread that strengtheneth man's heart—ah, well may the Psalmist number among God's excellencies, ‘He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.’ ”

It was on the same walk that another thought came to him, which finds expression in a passage of the present volume,³ and elsewhere in his writings:—

“VEVAY, *Sunday, June 3.*—I walked up this afternoon to Blonay,⁴ very happy, and yet full of some sad thoughts; how perhaps I should not be again among those lovely scenes; as I was now and had ever been, a youth with his parents—it seemed that the sunset

¹ Ch. xiv. § 51, p. 289, below.

² Presumably a cottage on the slopes of the Pleyaux, or Pleiades, a mountain above Vevay.

³ See below, p. 183.

⁴ The Castle of Blonay, two miles above Vevay to the north-east; an hour's walk from the Castle leads to the top of the Pleiades.



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Vevay in Spring

of to-day sunk upon me like the departure of youth. First I had a hot march among the vines, and between their dead stone walls; once or twice I flagged a little, and began to think it tiresome; then I put my *mind* into the scene, instead of suffering the body only to make report of it; and looked at it with the possession-taking grasp of the imagination—the true one; it gilded all the dead walls, and I felt a charm in every vine tendril that hung over them. It required an effort to maintain the feeling: it was poetry while it lasted, and I felt that it was only while under it that one could draw, or invent, or give glory to, any part of such a landscape. I repeated ‘I am in *Switzerland*’ over and over again, till the name brought back the true group of associations, and I felt I had a soul, like my boy’s soul, once again. I have not insisted enough on this source of all great contemplative art. The whole scene without it was but sticks and stones and steep dusty road.

“I tried the same experiment again on a group of old cottage and tower near Blonay, in coming down; the tower, as I found afterwards, dated 1609 on a stone forming the top of one of its quaint windows, as opposite [reference to a sketch], but, seen in the distance, remarkable only for its upper open window, letting a bit of the far-off blue mountains of Meillerie clear through it, and its conical roof mingling with their peaks. All this I longed to draw, but said to myself that ‘the bit of fence and field underneath would not do.’ A minute after I corrected myself, and by throwing my mind full into the fence and field, as if I had nothing else but them to deal with, I found light and power, and loveliness, a Rogers vignette character put into them directly. I felt that the human soul was all—the subject nothing.

“Not so, when I passed ‘a little further on’¹ past the low chapel that I drew last time I was here, with its neighbouring gate, inscribed ‘pense a ta fin’; and came down among the meadows, covered half a fathom deep with the emblem by which God suggests that thought.”²

A little later, on the way to Chamouni, the same experience came to him:—

“SALLENCHES, *June* 1849.—I had a pleasant walk up the hill towards St. Gervais this afternoon. . . . I felt in this walk, being somewhat tired, very forcibly again how much the power of nature depended upon the quantity of mind which one could give to her. I had an exquisite winding path—a road—with bits of rocky bank,

¹ Milton: *Samson Agonistes*, line 2.

² Here, in the diary, follows the passage on the grass just given.

and flowery pasture, and cottages and chapels. I had the whole valley of the Arve, from the Grotte de Balme to St. Gervais. I had the Doron and its range behind me, the mighty cliffs of the Varens beside me, the Nant d'Arpenaz like a pillar of cloud at their feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles with the Verte and Argentière in front of me; marvellous blocks of granite and pines beside me, and yet with all this I enjoyed it no more than a walk on Denmark Hill. Setting myself to find out the reason of this, I discovered that when I confined myself to one thing—as to the grass or stones, or the Doron, or the Nant d'Arpenaz, or the Mont Blanc—I began to enjoy directly; because then I had mind enough to put into the thing, and my enjoyment arose from the quantity of mental and imaginative energy which I could give it; but when I looked at all together, I had not, in my then state of weariness, mind enough to give to all, and none were therefore of any value. I thought this a most instructive lesson; both showing how the majesty of nature depends upon the force of human spirit, and how each spirit can only embrace at a time so much of what has been appointed for its food, and may therefore rest contented with little, knowing that if it throw its full energy into that little, it will be more than enough; and that an over-supply of food would only be an over-tax upon its energies. This crushing of the mind by overweight is finely given by Forbes.”¹

This experience was utilised, and some of the notes from the diary embodied, in the present volume (p. 183, below). A month at Chamouni followed, and this, for *Modern Painters*, was among the most fruitful times in Ruskin's life. With the faithful Couttet for his guide, he rambled during long days among the glaciers, or sauntered in the valley, examining, observing, sketching.² And at evening time we may see him leaning, as he says in his diary (July 8), “on the blocks of lichen wall beside the road, exchanging good-nights with the passers-by, and listening as their voices left me to the filling of the valley by, the sound of the waves of the Arve, mixed with cattle bells and many strange and dim mountain sounds, mingled in confusion like the grey stones of the wall I leaned upon.” Thus did “beauty born of murmuring sound” pass into his thoughts and words. But in company with the hours of restful thought came strenuous labours.

He worked upon the stones of Chamouni as diligently as upon

¹ *Travels through the Alps*, ch. iv., pp. 56–57 in Coolidge's reprint of 1900.

² For an extract from his diary at this time, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. § 30 (author's note); for his measurements of mountain angles, *ibid.* ch. xviii. § 15 (author's note).



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Chamouni

View from the Hotel de l'Union

the *Stones of Venice*. He noted all the angles of the Aiguilles, observed every fleeting effect of cloud, examined the rocks, collected the minerals, gathered the flowers, and weighed the sand in the streams.¹ His observations were entered up in his diaries and notebooks as carefully as were his architectural studies at Venice (Vol. IX. p. xxiv.). His industry in drawing was as great. Two characteristic drawings of Chamouni are here given. At a later time, when he was examining his materials for the composition of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, he made a catalogue of his sketches at Chamouni. This is given below as showing the amount of work he did; it will be seen that no less than forty-seven drawings belong to the period of study which we are now describing.² An extract from his diary will show how his days were spent:—

“CHAMOUNI, 28th day (and for this year, last,—unless I return from Zermatt): *Evening, July 10.*—It has been a glorious one; I was working from Mont Blanc before breakfast, out immediately afterwards; made some notes of Aiguille Bouchard, went on to the

¹ See Vol. XI. p. 237.

² The following “Catalogue of Sketches in neighbourhood of Mont Blanc” is from his diary of 1854. “1849 B” refers to a second and shorter stay at Chamouni when he was on his way to Venice in the autumn of that year (see Vol. IX. p. xxiv.):—

1.	Mont Blanc and its aiguilles, from Geneva	1849
2.	Same sketch continued, with the Buet and Sixt mountains, and camera lucida outlines of Mole below; on the back, camera lucida of Salève	1849
3.	The Brezon, from inn window, Bonneville	1849 B
4.	End of Bonneville on the other side of the bridge	1849
5.	Limestone promontories of the Brezon, a little beyond last sketch; on the back an elaborate sketch of Mont Blanc de St. Gervais, and an oven at St. Martin’s	1849
6.	Valley of Cluse, and Aiguille de Varens	1849
7.	Ravine near Maglans	1849
8.	Cottage at Maglans; on the back, limestone cliffs at entrance of Valley of Cluse	1849
9.	Top of Mont du Reposoir, above Sallenches	1849
10.	Valley of Cluse, looking back from Sallenches	1846
11.	Mont Blanc, from St. Martin’s	1849
12.	Mont Blanc, from St. Martin’s, in storm	1849
13.	Aiguille Sans Nom, from Les Montets	1844
14.	Aiguilles of Chamouni, from Les Ouches	1842
15.	Aiguilles of Chamouni, from near Bossons	1844
16.	Camera lucida outlines of Mont Blanc, from Chamouni	1849
17.	Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni	1849
18.	Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud	1849
19.	Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud	1849
20.	Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud	1849
21.	Top of Mont Blanc, from Chamouni	1849
22.	Autumn on the bases of the Aiguilles	1849 B
23.	The Aiguilles of Chamouni, from the village	1849
24.	Camera lucida outline of the same; on the back, camera lucida of Jorasses and Aiguille Dru, and most important sketch of Blaitière	1849
25.	Large eye-sketch of Aiguilles of Chamouni, from Chamouni	1849
26.	Aiguille Dru, from Chamouni	1849

Source beside the Arveron, somewhat closer than usual, it having changed its bed entirely within the last three days, and running four feet deep where I used to walk; took slopes of Dru, from just beside the Arveron bridge; then climbed the avalanche with Couttet to foot of rocks near Montanvert; could not get upon them; awkward chasm between the ice and them; and at the only place where we could get upon them, another at the other side which made it a risk to pass the ridge. Got on them at last, however, higher up, and took from them specimens 27, 28 . . . [notes on these, and on the geology of the rocks]. After examining the rocks here—note that the one under the cascade is called the Rocher du Chataigne—we climbed to one almost isolated promontory of pines immediately on the right of the bare rocks. At the top of it the glacier was seen against the sky through the most fantastic pines, and the grand rocks falling to the Source, nodding forwards (like a wave about to break¹), and the great cascade bounding from its narrow way, with the look of a wildly revolving wheel—I was irresistibly reminded by its action of the gesture of the leapers into

27.	Shoulders of Charmoz, from Chamouni	1849
28.	Aiguille du Plan, from foot of Breven, half a mile beyond village of Chamouni	1849
29.	Aiguille Charmoz, from bottom of valley, beneath it	1849
30.	Angles of Aiguille Dru; and on back, reflections in Lake of Geneva	1849
31.	Aiguille Bouchard, from valley	1849
32.	Aiguille Bouchard and Glacier du Bois	1849
33.	Aiguilles of Chamouni, from foot of Flegère	1849
34.	General contours of the same	1849
35.	The same, from ascent beyond Glacier des Bois	1844
36.	Aiguille Charmoz, from window of the "Union"	1849
37.	Outlines of Aiguille du Plan	1849
38.	Aiguille du Plan, from its base	1849
39.	Continuation of the same sketch	1849
40.	Aiguille Blaitière, from near its base	1849
41–43.	Views of the spur of Aiguille Blaitière	1849
44.	Aiguille Blaitière, from the foot of its glacier	1849
45.	Details of Aiguille Charmoz	1849
46.	Aiguille Charmoz, from Montanvert	1849
47.	Cleavage of Petit Charmoz	1849
48.	Aiguille Verte, from near Flegère	1844
49.	Shadow of Aiguille Dru on cloud, from Montanvert	1849
50.	Aiguilles with Mont Blanc, from Aiguille Bouchard	1844
51.	Col du Géant, from Aiguille Bouchard	1844
52.	Aiguille d'Argentière, from flank of Buet	1844
53.	Top of Montagne de la Côte, from the flank of Mont Blanc	1844
54.	Pines close to Glacier des Bois	1849
55.	Pines at foot of Montanvert	1849
56.	Rocks near Les Ouches (above Les Montets)	1844
57.	Aiguilles Rouges, from window of "Union"	1849
58.	Side of the Breven	1849
59.	Aiguilles Rouges, from Source of Arveron	1844
60.	Limestones of the Valley of Sixt	1844
61.	The same, better drawn (at head of valley)	1849
62.	View from my window at Chapiu; on the back, Aiguille de Varens in cloud	1849
63.	View from the top of the Col de la Seigne	1849
64.	Mont Blanc, from the Allée Blanche	1849

¹ Ruskin uses this image in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xv. § 2.



J. Ruskin

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La Cascade de la Folie, Chamouni

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

the lake, especially the man waving his hat in Cruikshank's illustrations to Pee-wit.¹ There is something in its great weight of water which makes it differ in its fling from all other cascades I have ever seen—its waves bound like masses of stone, and nearly all the way down, the solid water is seen yellowish among the small clouds of blue spray which beat down with it. . . . [References follow to diagrams of the curves of the falling water and of the angles of the rocks.] I never saw a more wonderful scene than the glen at this point with its small, but steep torrent, its mighty stones cast down from the moraine above, and its vertical walls, shutting us in to the glacier and the awful cataract beneath it. Nor have I yet seen a more noble and burning sunset than was on the Charmoz and lower Verte to-night—a hot, almost sanguine, but solemn crimson. . . . I have much to thank God for, now and ever.”

Laborare est orare. Ruskin's thankfulness found its expression in those careful and loving studies, in words and drawings, of the Chamouni aiguilles which fill so large a portion of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*.

His first month at Chamouni was now over, and his parents returned from the Alps to Geneva. He, meanwhile, attended by Couttet and George, was permitted to have another month to pursue his mountain-studies. First, he made the familiar Tour of Mont Blanc, proceeding by St. Gervais and Contamines over the Col du Bonhomme to Chapiu, and thence over the Col de la Seigne to Courmayeur. The first two days are described in a letter to his father:²—

“COURMAYEUR, *Sunday afternoon.*
“[*July 29th, 1849*].

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—(Put the three sheets in order first, 1, 2, 3; then read this front and *back*, and then 2, and then 3, front and back.)

“You and my mother were doubtless very happy when you saw the day clear up as you left St. Martin's. Truly it was impossible that any day could be more perfect towards its close; we reached Nant Borrant at twelve o'clock—or a little before; and, Couttet having given his sanction to my wish to get on, we started again soon after one, and reached the top of the Col de Bonhomme about five.

¹ The frontispiece to the second volume (1826) of *German Popular Stories*, with etchings by Cruikshank. In J. C. Hotten's edition (1869), for which Ruskin wrote an introduction (reprinted in a later volume of this edition), the illustration referred to faces p. 202.

² Portions of this letter are printed in W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, pp. 113–115.

You would have been delighted with that view—it is one of those lovely seas of blue mountain, one behind the other, of which one never tires—this, fortunately, westward, so that all the blue ridges and ranges above Conflans and Beaufort were dark against the afternoon sky, though misty with its light; while eastward, a range of snowy crests, of which the most important was the Mont Iseran, caught the sunlight full upon them. The sun was as warm, and the air as mild on the place where the English travellers sank and perished,¹ as in our garden at Denmark Hill on the summer evenings.

“There is, however, no small excuse for a man’s losing courage on that pass, if the weather were foul. I never saw one so literally pathless—so void of all guide and help from the lie of the ground—so embarrassing from the distance which one has to wind round mere brows of craggy precipice without knowing the direction in which one is moving, while the path is perpetually lost in heaps of shale or among clusters of crags, even when it is free of snow. All however when I passed was serene, and even beautiful, owing to the glow which the red rocks had in the sun. We got down to Chapiu about seven, itself one of the most desolately placed villages I ever saw in the Alps. Scotland is in no place that I have seen so barren or so lonely. Ever since I passed Shap Fells, when a child,² I have had an excessive love for this kind of desolation, and I enjoyed my little square châlet window and my châlet supper exceedingly (mutton with garlic). I fell asleep the moment I lay down, in spite of sheep bells and mule scents beneath me, and was never more surprised in my life than at waking at midnight with a very sharp and well-defined sore throat. I thought I must be dreaming of sore throat at first, but it wouldn’t go away, and when I woke in the morning it was worse.”

He consulted his symptoms, however, and determined to press on to Courmayeur:—

“So we started at half-past six up the wildest Scottish-looking valley, with a glacier in front of us, not at all the sort of thing which one would especially select for the morning ride of a patient with a sore throat. It was too cold to sit on the mule, so I got off and walked until we got into the sun, and then rode up to the

¹ The higher slopes of the Col du Bonhomme are occasionally swept by violent winds and snow-eddies; this was the case on September 13, 1830, when two Englishmen, with guides, perished from cold and exhaustion on the Pass. In fine weather guides delight to point out the scene of the disaster, to give their charges a pleasing sense of adventure.

² See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvii. § 13, and Vol. XII. p. xxi.

Col. When we got up, the last cloud—except a small group on the Monts Combin and Velan far away—had melted; Mont Blanc and his whole company of hills were clear, and after again consulting my feelings and pulse, I unpacked my sketch-book, sat down under a stone, and made a memorandum which I do not intend to touch hereafter—as I fancy few artists can show a careful sketch in colour, made at 8000 feet above the sea when suffering under violent sore throat.”

The view from the Col de la Seigne sadly disappointed the artist with the sore throat:—

“I made this memorandum (he continues) because I never want to pass that Col again; it is without exception the ugliest and most barren Alpine view, and the most degrading to all the noble objects it encloses, I have ever seen; and, even if I did pass it again, I might pass it twenty times without having the hills so perfectly clear, or the sun so exactly in the right place to show their structure.

“I was still more disappointed for some time as I descended; a glorious white stream of ice at last appeared on the left, and I began to recover my good humour. I walked down the greatest part of the first descent of the Col—like that from the Col de la Blame to Tour.”

The traveller halted to refresh himself, and then:—

“We pushed on towards and past the Lac de Combal—a lake of which you will instantly form a strong opinion when I tell you that it is banked up by a heap of débris at one end and choked up by a valleyful of débris at the other. The moraine of the great glacier¹ of the Allée Blanche after this chokes up the valley altogether for a length of at least two miles: I never saw such a mighty heap of stones and dust; the glacier itself is quite invisible from the road (and I had no mind for extra work or scrambling) except just at the bottom, where the ice appears in one or two places; being exactly of the colour of the heaps of waste coal at the Newcastle pits; and admirably adapted therefore to realise one’s brightest anticipations of the character and style of the Allée *Blanche*.

“The heap of its moraine conceals, for the two miles of its extent, the entire range of Mont Blanc from the eye. At last you weather the mighty promontory, cross the torrent which issues from its base, and find yourself suddenly at the very foot of the vast

¹ See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xv. § 16.

slope of torn granite, which, from a point not two hundred feet lower than the summit of Mont Blanc, sweeps down into the valley of Courmayeur.

“I am quite unable to speak with justice, or think with clearness, of this marvellous view. One is so unused to see a mass like that of Mont Blanc without any snow, that all my ideas and modes of estimating size were at fault. I only felt overpowered by it, and that, as with the porch of Rouen Cathedral, look as I would, I could not *see it*. I had not mind enough to grasp it or meet it; I tried in vain to fix some of its main features on my memory; then set the mules to graze again, and took my sketch-book and marked the outlines; but where is the use of marking contours of a mass of endless, countless, fantastic rock, twelve thousand feet sheer above the eye? Besides, one cannot have sharp sore throat for twelve hours without its bringing on some slight feverishness; and the searching Alpine sun, to which we had been exposed without an instant’s cessation from the height of the Col till now—*i.e.*, from half-past ten to three—had not mended the matter; my pulse was now beginning slightly to quicken, and my head slightly to ache, and my impression of the scene is feverish and somewhat painful; I should think like yours of the valley of Sixt.”

At Courmayeur Ruskin rested for a day, being physicked by the faithful Couttet, and consoling himself “with the view from my window, not a bad one, of an old Lombard Tower and the range of the Col du Géant.” The sketch then made is given in Vol. XII. (Plate vi.). From Courmayeur he went over the Col Ferret to Martigny. The Val Ferret pleased and interested him far more than his walk through the Allée Blanche and the Val de Vény. The following passages are from his diary (Courmayeur, July 28):—

“The most magnificent piece of ruin I have yet seen in the Alps is that opposite the embouchure of the lower glacier of the Val de Ferret, near Courmayeur; the pines are small indeed, but they are hurled hither and thither; twisted and mingled in all conditions of form and all phases of expiring life, with the chaos of massy rocks which the glacier has quashed down or the opposite mountain hurled. And yet, further on, at the head of the valley, there is another in its way as wonderful, less picturesque, but wilder still, the remains of the *éboulement* of the Glacier de Triolet, caused by a fall of an aiguille near the Petites Jorasses—the most phrenzied accumulation of moraines I have ever seen, not dropped one by one into a heap and pushed forward by the ice ploughshare, but evidently borne down by some mingled torrent of ice and rock and flood, with the

swiftness of water, and the weight of stone, and thrown along the mountain sides like pebbles from a stormy sea, but the ruins of an Alp instead of the powder of a flint bed.”

Ruskin had been unfortunate in coming down from the Col de la Seigne tired and ill, for there are few walks in the Alps more lovely than that through the pastures and pine woods of the lower valley, with the snows of the Mont Blanc sparkling through the branches; but many travellers will find it hard to dispute the superiority which he attributes to the Col Ferret over the Col de la Seigne:—

“The view from the Col de Ferret I think finer, although I did not see the best of it, *i.e.*, the Grandes Jorasses, nor the top of the Combin. It is very desolate towards the Great St. Bernard; but the forms of mountain under the Grandes Jorasses are so bold and sweeping, and the distant Col de Seigne with the mountains beyond the Crammont so immeasurably superior to the Col de Ferret itself as a distant object, that I have no hesitation in saying it would be much wiser to cross the Col de Ferret from Martigny and go up as far as the Lac de Combal, or perhaps the Glacier de l’Allée Blanche from Courmayeur, and so return by Val d’Aosta, than to make the tour of Mont Blanc.”

Ruskin passed through the Val Ferret in the morning; in evening light the walk in the reverse direction offers some of the sublimest aspects in the Alps; there is none which illustrates more effectively Ruskin’s comparison of mountains to cathedrals¹ than the spectacle of the huge shoulder of the Aiguille de Péteret as seen from this point.

From Martigny Ruskin went up to Zermatt for some days, and there made the studies on the cliffs of the Matterhorn which occupy several pages in his fourth volume. One of his numerous drawings of the mountain is here given (Plate D). It is curious, as a contrast with present times, to find that, though it was August, Ruskin had the inn pretty much to himself. “No one has been here,” he writes (August 6), “but a party of French and Germans going over the Cervin, and various German botanists and students.” He writes his first impressions to his father; possibly we must read a little diplomacy between the lines, for Ruskin, it will be seen, wanted his leave of absence somewhat extended:—

“[ZERMATT, August 6.]—. . . I have had glorious weather, and on Friday I had such a day as I have only once or twice had the like of among the Alps. I got up to a promontory projecting from

¹ *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 9.

the foot of the Matterhorn, and lay on the rocks and drew it at my ease. I was about three hours at work, as quietly as if in my study at Denmark Hill, though on a peak of barren crag above a glacier, and at least 9000 feet above sea; but the Matterhorn, after all, is not so fine a thing as the Aiguille Dru, nor as any of the aiguilles of Chamouni. For one thing, it is all of secondary rock . . . [a tear in the paper here]; quite rotten and shaly; but there are other causes for the difference in impressiveness which I am endeavouring to analyse. I find considerable embarrassment in doing so; there seems no sufficient reason why an isolated obelisk, one fourth higher than any of them, should not be at least as sublime as they in their dependent grouping; but it assuredly is not. For this reason, as well as because I have not found here the near studies of primitive rock I expected—for to my great surprise, I find the whole group of mountains, mighty as they are, except the inaccessible Monte Rosa, of secondary limestones or slates—I should like, if it were possible, to spend a couple of days more on the Montanvert, and at the bases of the Chamouni aiguilles—sleeping at the Montanvert. My month from the time I left you at St. Martin's, 26th July, is only up this day three weeks; so that I hope it will do if I am with you at Geneva on Monday evening the 27th. . . .”

Ruskin obtained an extension of time, but not without some alarm on the part of his parents on account of his illness at Courmayeur, and some remonstrances on the score of a temporary interruption of communications.¹ He made good use of his leave in continuing his work among the aiguilles:—

Monday evening [August 20].

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—I have to-night a packet of back letters from Viège . . . but I have hardly time to read them to-night, I had so many notes to secure when I came from the hills. I walk up every day to the bases of the aiguilles without the slightest sense of fatigue (just as I used to walk to [the] Source of Arveron); work there all day, hammering and sketching, and walk down in the evening. As far as days by myself can be happy, they are so; for

¹ Mr. Collingwood (*Life*, p. 115) has printed a portion of a letter from Ruskin to his father bearing on this subject. Pfister was a courier who had been sent by the elder Ruskin to meet his son at Martigny: “(Zermatt, *August* 8), I have your three letters, with pleasant accounts of critiques, etc., and painful accounts of your anxieties. I certainly never thought of putting in a letter at Sion, as I arrived there about three hours after Pfister left me, it being only two stages from Martigny; and besides, I had enough to do that morning in thinking what I should want at Zermatt, and was engaged at Sion, while we changed horses, in buying wax candles and rice. It was unlucky that I lost post at Visp,” etc.



J. Burkin

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Matterhorn

(1849)

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

I love the places with all my heart—I have no over-fatigue or labour, and plenty of time. By-the-bye, though in most respects they are incapable of improvement, I recollect that I thought to-day, as I was breaking last night's ice away from the rocks of which I wanted a specimen, with a sharpish wind and small pepper-and-salt-like sleet beating in my face, that a hot chop and a glass of sherry, if they were to be had round the corner, would make the thing more perfect. There was, however, nothing to be had round the corner but some Iceland moss which belonged to the chamois; and an extra allowance of north wind."¹

One of Ruskin's haunts was the glacier at the foot of the Aiguille Blaitière (see vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 16; and Plate 31); from there he scribbled a note:—

“GLACIER OF GREPPOND [*August 21*].]

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—I am sitting on a grey stone in the middle of the glacier, waiting till the fog goes away. I believe I *may* wait. I write this line in my pocket-book to thank my mother for hers which I did not acknowledge last night. I am glad and sorry that she depends so much on my letters for her comfort. I am sending them now every day by the people who go down, for the diligence is stopped. You may run the chance of missing one or two therefore. I am quite well and very comfortable—sitting on Joseph's knapsack laid on the stone. The fog is about as thick as that of London in November—only white, and I see nothing near me but fields of dampish snow with black stones in it.”

Three days at the inn on the Montanvert² especially pleased him. He had never yet seen anything, he says in his book (vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 6), to equal the view from that spot. The following are extracts from his diary:—

“*August 22*.—I think I never enjoyed any evening so much as this in my life, unless it were one at Champagnole in 1845.³ I had no idea what this place was, until I sat at the window quietly to-day watching the sunset and the vast flow of the ice, welling down the gorge—a dark and billowy river—yet with the mountainous swell

¹ W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 116.

² This was the old inn, built in 1840, at the expense of the Commune of Chamouni, replacing the previous cabin (known as the “Temple de la Nature”) itself replaced in 1879 by the present hotel. At Chamouni, Ruskin always stayed at the Union: see Vol. II. p. 426.

³ Described in a letter, given in Vol. IV. p. xxvii.

INTRODUCTION

and lifted crests that the iron rocks have round it. I have been nearly all day drawing at the Aiguille Blaitière.”

“*August 25.*—I have certainly not lately, nor often in old times, felt stronger emotion than in watching the dawn from the Montanvert these three mornings past. Yesterday I saw it when it was still very dark, and Orion burning beyond the Grandes Jorasses; and the whole river of heaven between the hills full of stars; and again, later, when I was watching the increase of the serene clear cold morning light, a beacon intensely bright flashed out on the summit of the Dru; it was the morning star.”

And so, too, he writes to his father:—

“MONTANVERT (*August 22*).

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—I have been of late taking the same walk regularly every day, to a point a little higher than the top of the Breven and down again—yesterday for very nearly nothing. I shortened the descent to-day by coming here, and I do not know that I ever enjoyed any coming so much in my life. I had no idea what the place was, until I sat at the window quietly to-night, and saw the ice-waves grow dark in the twilight, and the wild ranges of the Aiguilles Rouges relieved against the western sky. Nor have you any idea of it either—in daylight it is white and fragmentary, but the peaks of the Aiguilles Rouges in the sunset and the glow on the Grandes Jorasses would be after your own heart. I am going to stay here till Saturday; I shall send George down to-morrow with this letter, and after that, guides. Dearest love to my mother. I am quite well and have had a most prosperous day, though I cannot say that on the whole the aiguilles have treated me well. I went up Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday to their feet, and never obtained audience until to-day, and then they retired at twelve o’clock, but I have got a most valuable memorandum.

“Ever my dearest Father,

“Your most affectionate son,

“J. RUSKIN.”

He spent some more happy and busy days at Chamouni—“with a ghost-hunt to-day and a crystal hunt to-morrow;”¹ but at last it was time to leave:—

“CHAMOUNI, *Tuesday evening (August 28)*.

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—It was too cloudy to do for aiguilles to-day, but I have been as busy as an ant, and have done a great

¹ W. G. Collingwood’s *Life of Ruskin*, p. 118.

deal. But how fast the time does go. I have taken my place in diligence for Thursday, and hope to be with you in good time. But I quite feel as if I were leaving home to go on a journey. I shall not be melancholy however, for I have really had a good spell of it; and, this last week, I have tried to get enough of it to last me for some time to come; and I think I have. I had nearly a little too much yesterday. I don't know whether it was hot at Geneva, but I was on a high glacier where there was no wind, and the sun scorched me till I was forced to turn back, and to carry an umbrella besides whenever I had a hand free, to which I was never reduced even in Italy. I don't know anything more wonderful in the Alps than the feeling of this insufferable sunshine, with all the crevices in the snow about one filled with icicles. I am quite well, however. Dearest love to my mother. I don't intend to write again."

"As busy as an ant": that is a true description of Ruskin's life; and if it be the case that an ant's mode of progression is not always direct from point to point, of Ruskin also it is true that he took his arduous divagations.

With the summer tour of 1849 Ruskin's direct studies for *Modern Painters* were intermitted until 1854, though he was at Chamouni again for a few days later in 1849. In the winter of 1849–1850, he was at work in Venice; in 1850–1851 he was writing the first volume of *The Stones*; in 1851–1852 he was again at work in Venice; in 1852–1853 he was writing the second and third volumes of *The Stones*, and in 1853–1854 he was engaged in the miscellaneous occupations described in the Introduction to Vol. XII. The early summer of 1854 saw him setting out once more for Switzerland,¹ and the moment he was in sight of Calais—the port of entry to his Alpine paradise, the studies for *Modern Painters* were resumed. It was on the steampacket that he made the study of its job which is reproduced in *Præterita*; nothing, in his diary, the beauty of its curves; and this too was the last of his approaches to Calais before he wrote the "glorious thing"² on the old tower with which the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*

¹ Ruskin's itinerary on this tour was as follows: Calais (May 10), Amiens (May 11), Beauvais (May 13), Gisors (May 16), Chartres (May 24), Champagnole (June 2), Geneva (June 4), Vevay through the Simmenthal to Thun (June 18), Interlachen (June 20), Thun (June 24), Lucerne (July 2), St. Martin's (July 9), Chamouni (July 10), St. Martin's (July 26), Geneva (July 28), Chamouni (August 15), Sion (September 5), Martigny (September 12), Champagnole (September 17), Paris (September 28), Dover (October 2). At some point in the earlier part of the tour Ruskin was at the Swiss Fribourg, but there is no entry in the diary fixing the date.

² *D. G. Rossetti's Letters to William Allingham*, p. 181.

opens. On the road from Calais to Amiens he notes the beauty of the tree-scenery, and this also was the foundation of a passage in the third volume.¹ A passage from his diary at Amiens, describing a walk “among the branching currents of the Somme,” was given in the fourth volume.² Then he revisited some of his favourite cathedrals, afterwards making his way, by Champagnole, as always, to Geneva. At Vevay they stopped some days, and here he was already at work on *Modern Painters*. “I am writing,” he says in the first chapter of the third volume, “at a window which commands a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva,”³ and it was there that he penned his definition of poetry⁴ and his analysis of “the grand style.” From Vevay he proceeded through the Simmenthal to Thun, and on the journey wrote the pamphlet on the Opening of the Crystal Palace (see Vol. XII. p. 417). The Simmenthal and the country about Fribourg inspired a passage in the fourth volume.⁵ Beautiful in itself, it exerts, he says, an added charm as containing “far-away promise” of scenery yet greater and more impressive, and is thus peculiarly calculated to excite “the expectant imagination.” Something of the same idea was expressed by a later poet in describing the same scenery:—

“Far off the old snows ever new
With silver edges cleft the blue
Aloft, alone, divine;
The sunny meadows silent slept,
Silence the sombre armies kept,
The vanguard of the pine.”⁶

At Fribourg he spent some time in sketching its walls and towers, for one of his purposes on this foreign tour was to study Swiss history, and in connexion therewith “to engrave a series of drawings of the following Swiss towns: Geneva, Fribourg, Basle, Thun, Baden, and Schaffhausen.”⁷ This work was never completed, but many such drawings are made, some of which are reproduced in this edition. A drawing of the Towers of Fribourg made at this time is engraved as Plate 24 in the fourth volume. Next, Ruskin spent two or three weeks in the Bernese Oberland, and at Lucerne. Some sketches at Lucerne were utilised to

¹ See the extract from his diary quoted in a note below.

² See ch. i. § 12 *n*.

³ See the Plate opposite.

⁴ See *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 10.

⁵ Ch. xi. §§ 8–10.

⁶ F. W. H. Myers: “Simmenthal.”

⁷ *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. §§ 10, 12.



J. Rankin

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The Head of the Lake of Geneva

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

illustrate “The Law of Evanescence” in the fourth volume.¹ A drawing of the valley of Lauterbrunnen is here given (Plate H); he notes his observations in that valley in the fourth volume (ch. xii. § 18). His diary at this time shows once more the spirit of religious solemnity in which he approached his task. He was “Nature’s Priest,” appointed by a direct call to testify to the Divinity of Nature and of Truth; a steward of the mysteries, bound in duty and in gratitude to reveal the holiness and the beauty which he was privileged to see:—

“*June 24.*—My father called me at half-past four this morning at Interlachen. I was out as the clock struck five, and climbed as steadily as I could among the woods north of the valley, for an hour and a half, then emerging on the pure green pasture of the upper mountains. The Jungfrau and two Eigers were clear and soft in the intense mountain light; a field of silver cloud filled the valley above the lake of Brienz; the eastern hills fused in mist, splendid in the white warmth of morning. I stood long, praying that these happy hours and holy sights might be of more use to me than they have been, and might be remembered by me in hours of temptation or mortification.”²

“LUCERNE, *July 2*, 1854.—Third Sunday after Trinity. I hope to keep this day a festival for ever, having received my third call from God,³ in answer to much distressful prayer. May He give grace, to walk hereafter with Him in newness of life, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

In the same spirit is his first entry on finding himself once more in his happy valley:—

“CHAMOUNI, *July 10.*—Thank God, here once more, and feeling it more deeply than ever. I have been up to my stone upon the Breven,⁴ all unchanged and happy. It is curious that the first book I took up here, after my New Testament, was the ‘*Christian Year*, and it opened at the poem for the 20th Sunday after Trinity, which I had never read before.”

“*18th July.*—Every day here I seem to see further into nature, and into myself—and into futurity.”

¹ Plate 26, illustrating ch. v., “Of Turnerian Mystery.”

² The reader will recall Ruskin’s saying in the Epilogue to vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 350), that he “never climbed any mountain, alone, without kneeling down, by instinct, on its summit to pray.”

³ For Ruskin’s first call, see probably Vol. IV. p. 348 (Lucca, 1845); for his second (at Venice in 1852), Vol. X. p. xxxix.

⁴ For his description of this “mossy rock beside the fountain of the Brevent,” see Vol. IV. p. 363.

The reader will remember the poem which harmonises so perfectly with Ruskin's mood and mission:—

“Where is Thy favour'd haunt, eternal Voice,
The region of thy choice,
Where, undisturb'd by sin and earth, the soul
Owns Thine entire control?—
'Tis on the mountain's summit dark and high,
When storms are hurrying by:
'Tis mid the strong foundations of the earth,
Where torrents have their birth.”

It was amid such scenes—and “such sounds as make deep silence in the heart, For Thought to do her part”—that, during a busy and happy fortnight at Chamouni, Ruskin revived the impressions and completed the studies which informed the greater portion of his fourth volume. It was during this visit to Chamouni that he made, in particular, the experiments in light which are explained in its third chapter. His diary shows also that he was very busy in collecting and studying the Alpine flowers. It is significant of the mood in which these studies were made that the portions of the Bible now selected for his daily annotation were the Beatitudes and the Revelation.

Another entry in the diary shows the peace and health which he found in these pursuits:—

“SALLENCHES, 13th August.—How little I thought God would bring me here again just now; and I am here, stronger in health, higher in hope, deeper in peace, than I have been for years. The green pastures and pine forests of the Varens softly seen through the light of my window. I cannot be thankful enough, nor happy enough. Psalm lxvi. 8–20.”

From the “Mountain Glory” Ruskin passed to the “Mountain Gloom.” It was at Sion, as appears from a long entry in his diary for September 5, 1854, that he made the notes afterwards expanded in the nineteenth chapter of the fourth volume (§§ 31–33). But his impressions of the Rhone valley were not all of gloom. Here is an impression of a morning effect (Martigny, September 12):—

“Remember effect of tufted valley of Rhone, seen in the morning from Martigny; an infinite space of rounded spots [sketch] dying away into inconceivable faintness of bloomy distance—the Gemmi and the Alps gleaming pure in the distant dawn, and soft dark outlines of side hills coming nearer and nearer, relieved against intense silver flakes of



J. Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

Fribourg, Switzerland

horizontal cloud. I cannot find words to express the grandeur and delicacy united of the great dying blue space of wooded plain, and the white mist that absorbed it—and the noble crested castle, half-way between Martigny and Sion on the left.”

He was now on his way home, and after spending a day or two in Paris to make some further studies in the Louvre,¹ reached Dover on October 2. The contrast between the primness of England and the picturesqueness of the Continent struck him once more very strongly:—

“DOVER, *2nd October, Monday*.—Dover to Canterbury, and very happy—a heavenly day of warm sunshine. It is impossible to describe the singular effect of the minuteness of the English town after the Continent, especially Chamouni and the Valais. The Doll’s house look of the principal street almost ridiculous; the peculiar red-bricked, smooth-shaven, yet old-fashioned simplicity of smallness; the perfection of establishment on a scale of six feet wide by fifteen high—the entirely organized houses—parlour, kitchen, and all (with knockers and bells, as if people were to be summoned from the other end of the world), and roof with garret windows in it; and a bow, perhaps, in the second story, and all so minute that three such houses would go into the space of one of the cottages of Unterseen as opposite [reference to a sketch]. All so neat and homely and happy, and yet so utterly vulgar—such an air of ale and tobacco and sanded floors about it all (first-rate ale, and sweet tobacco in pipes—no segars). And tea and pleasant homely talk, moral and narrow, to the uttermost. One cannot conceive anybody living in Canterbury to have any ideas of advance, or change, or anything in the world out of Canterbury.”

“READING, *October 11*.—There is one thing very noticeable in England as compared with France. In France one never sees such an inscription as ‘To let, a Genteel house up this road.’ There is no gentility in France. One sees ‘Une belle maison,’ ‘Une jolie chambre commode,’ ‘propre,’ but never anything corresponding to our ‘genteel.’ I think they try to rise in France; but not to appear to have risen. They have ambition, not pretension. Neither is there anything, in the small cottage dwellings, of nomenclature such as with us—‘Balmoral Cottage,’ ‘Saxe-Coburg’—Villas, etc., to places ten feet square. The French have a gloomy dignity quite beyond this—a self-assertion probably in truth founded on a greater pride and selfishness. There was sympathy with, and regard for, the Queen, as well as conceit of himself, in the man who named his cottage ‘Balmoral.’ ”

¹ Printed in Vol. XII. pp. 471–473.

And so forth; the reader will already have recognised here the notes for the opening passage in the fourth volume.

It will thus be seen that by the time Ruskin reached home at the beginning of October 1854, his mind, his note-books, and his sketch-books were well filled with materials for the forthcoming volumes of *Modern Painters*; but he had a long row to hoe before those materials could be planted in their proper places, and everything fitted into a connected scheme. He had made a beginning on the work in Scotland in 1853. He writes to his father on November 23, in that year, that he had “really and truly *begun*” the first chapter; but it was not till a year later that he made much way. The work of writing the third and fourth volumes took him from fifteen to eighteen months—by no means a long time considering their bulk, and the care with which he always composed, and the fifty plates with which the volumes were illustrated. But now, as always, he had many other interests and some diversions.

Ruskin was never entirely a recluse or a student. He wanted to do, as well as to write. He would have agreed with that fine saying by Edward Fitzgerald on the beauty of good action—“even as a matter of Art”—out of which Tennyson made his poem “Romney’s Remorse”; and Ruskin himself felt increasingly the desire to supplement writing by personal effort. “One may do more with a man,” he says, “by getting ten words spoken with him face to face, than by the black lettering of a whole life’s thought.”¹ We have seen how the æsthetic and the moral sides of his nature were already beginning to be at strife,² and how, too, his studies among books and in nature were coming to be mingled with urgent thoughts of political and personal benevolence. He could not thus be entirely satisfied with quiet work in his study at Denmark Hill; he wanted his actions, as well as his written words, to advance the Kingdom. One scope for practical work he found, as already related, in lectures and classes to artisans at the Architectural Museum; another, and a more continuously absorbing, in the Working Men’s College. The College was one of many institutions which owe their origin to the co-operative movement, promoted by a small group of men inspired by the leadership of Frederick Denison Maurice. “There was then, it must be remembered, no means by which a working man or a poor man could get, in a systematic way, any education going beyond the bare elements of knowledge.”³ School Boards had not been heard of. The churches and chapels did

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 17.

² Vol. XII. p. lxix.

³ R. B. Litchfield: *The Beginnings of the Working Men’s College*.

much for elementary education, but their efforts touched only a fraction of the people. The masses were agitating for political rights, but they were as yet ill-equipped for their exercise. "Mechanics' Institutes" had existed for some years, but, said Dickens, "I have never seen with these eyes of mine a mechanic in any recognised position on the platform of a Mechanics' Institute." Here and there, too, Evening Classes had been established, but they aimed at nothing higher than the three R's. The Working Men's College was a pioneer in a different kind of work. It aimed at bringing within the reach of the working-classes the same *kind* of education that the upper classes enjoyed. It saw in education a means of life, as well as of livelihood. It sought not to help working-men to "get on" and "rise out of their class," but to improve themselves by satisfying the needs of their mental and spiritual natures. It was to provide, too, something more than lectures; it was to give teaching and also personal contact between the teacher and the taught. All this sounds like a commonplace to-day, but at the time it was new and revolutionary. It precisely fitted in with the ideas at which Ruskin had been arriving, and it was his chapter "On the Nature of Gothic" that was distributed, as we have seen, as a sort of manifesto at the opening of the College on October 31, 1854. Its habitat was then, and until 1857, at No. 31 Red Lion Square; Maurice himself lived close by in Queen Square. Dr. Furnivall had sent Ruskin a copy of the circulars about the College; Ruskin's sympathy went out to the scheme at once, and he wrote to Maurice offering to take charge of the art-teaching. "His volunteered adhesion," writes an historian of the College, "was of immense service. It not only gave a splendid start to the Art teaching, but helped the enterprise as a whole by letting the world know that one of the greatest Englishmen of the time was in active sympathy with it. It was through him that not long afterwards we had the help in the Art School of Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown, and other artists. Mr. Lowes Dickinson, who continued to teach for some sixteen years, was one of our original founders."¹ Of Ruskin's teaching at the College we shall often hear in later volumes, and especially in that containing his correspondence with D. G. Rossetti, Mr. William Ward, and others; but some general account must here be given, as the work occupied a considerable part of his time and thoughts during the years in which he was writing the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*.

¹ R. B. Litchfield. The first announcement of the classes contained this item:—
"Thursday, 7-9. . . Drawing. . . Mr. Ruskin."

At first Ruskin, Rossetti, and Mr. Lowes Dickinson worked together every Thursday evening. "There is no fear about teaching," wrote Ruskin to Rossetti in enlisting his services; "all that the men want is to *see* a few touches done, and to be told where and why they are wrong in their work, in the simplest possible way."¹ In the Easter term, 1855, the class was subdivided; Rossetti teaching the figure, Ruskin and Mr. Dickinson taking the elementary and landscape class, which in turn was afterwards subdivided, Ruskin taking a class by himself. "There were four terms," Mr. Collingwood explains, "in the Working Men's College year; the only vacation, except for the fortnight at Christmas, being from the beginning of August to the end of October. Mr. Ruskin did not always attend throughout the Summer term, though sometimes his class came down to him into the country to sketch."² He kept up the work without other intermission until May 1858. . . . In the spring of 1860, he was back at his old post for a term; but after that he discontinued regular attendance, and went to the Working Men's College only at intervals, to give addresses or informal lectures to students and friends."³ It will thus be seen that Ruskin's help to the Working Men's College was much more than a spasm of sympathy or an indulgence in the presently fashionable occupation of "East-ending."

To the man who came within range of him there, his teaching was a revelation and an inspiration. He never did anything by halves. Whatever he had, he shared; and he threw into his classes all the wealth of his enthusiasm. Among his first pupils was Mr. George Allen, who now contributes the following reminiscences:—

"My first meeting with Mr. Ruskin was in the Art class-room at Red Lion Square in 1854, shortly after the College was opened. At first Mr. Ruskin only spoke to me as a student, in turn with the others—he used to

¹ *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 52.

² The following letter refers to these sketching-parties:—

"DENMARK HILL, *September 9th*, 1855.

"DEAR FURNIVALL,—How long it is since we have seen each other! I think you would like to come out with one of my sketching-parties. I am only going to have two more, the next, *D.V.*, on Saturday next. Cabs at Camberwell Green, at half-past three. Tea at the Greyhound Inn, Dulwich, at seven. Come early or late as you find convenient, if you can come at all. At all events I hope to see you soon.

"Ever affectionately yours,
"J. RUSKIN."

(*Letters from John Ruskin to F.J. Furnivall; privately printed*, 1897, p. 58.)

³ *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 153.

come round to each one to correct their drawings. Some time during the early part of 1856 I made a copy in sepia of the Mildmay sea-piece (one of the *Liber Studiorum*) which pleased Mr. Ruskin greatly, and his father—by way of encouragement to me—afterwards bought the copy. Later on, I became Mr. Ruskin's assistant drawing-master in connexion with the classes. This was a year or two before I joined him definitely as his own assistant.

“Mr. Ruskin did not confine his work with the men to mere teaching. He gave the easels for them to work at, and from time to time furnished them with examples for drawing—always trying their powers at first with a round plaster ball pendent from a string, then going on to plaster casts of natural leaves (all of which were paid for by him). Also, he frequently brought drawings by various artists, belonging to him, for the purpose of showing how certain effects were got, *e.g.*, the rounding of a pear by William Hunt. (This drawing was eventually spoilt by being exposed to the fumes of the gas in the class-room.) Mr. Ruskin was always pleased to bring anything associated with any work of his in progress, if he thought it would interest the men. I remember, one evening, his showing proofs of ‘The Lombard Apennine’ and ‘St. George of the Seaweed,’ then just engraved by Thomas Lupton for vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*. Another time, when he wanted the men, for a change of subject, to draw cordage, he sent me down to a shipbreaker's at Rotherhithe to buy some old ships' hempen cable.

“Mr. Ruskin was always ready to encourage those of the students who showed some talent, but always discouraged them from working there with a view of becoming artists, and was severe on any kind of conceit. On one occasion a new student—who fancied himself and a drawing of foliage (very badly done) which he had brought for Mr. Ruskin to see—had placed this where it should catch Mr. Ruskin's eye on entering the room. Not content with this, he laid hold of Mr. Ruskin's arm, observing, ‘Does it not have a beautiful effect from here, sir?’ to which Mr. Ruskin simply replied ‘Not to my mind,’ and passed on.”

Another pupil, from the first, was the late Mr. Thomas Sulman;¹ he too has recorded his grateful memories:—

“Never without an afterglow of grateful memory will the first art-class of the Working Men's College be remembered by those few living who were privileged to belong to it. . . . It was a foggy November night when three friends presented themselves at the dingy old rooms in Red Lion Square. One of the three was the late too little known artist and thinker, James Smetham.² We sat upon a school bench and matriculated. The

¹ An engraver; he cut the woodblocks for Augustus Hare's works.

² Compare Vol. III. p. 231 *n.*, and Vol. IV. p. xlvii. *n.*

examination was not rigorous. We read a paragraph from a newspaper, wrote a few sentences from dictation, and worked a short division sum. But simple as it was, Smetham, who read Horace and Aristotle in the original, broke down three times in the arithmetic. We then went up to the studio. On the third floor two small rooms had been broken into one; they were so closely packed with easels as to deny elbow-room. Our master had most generously provided materials and copies. We began to work. I cannot hope to describe the delights of those evenings. He taught each of us separately, studying the capacities of each student. . . . For one pupil he would put a cairngorm pebble or fluor-spar into a tumbler of water, and set him to trace their tangled veins of crimson and amethyst. For another he would bring lichen and fungi from Anerley Woods. Once, to fill us with despair of colour, he bought a case of West Indian birds unstuffed, as the collector had stored them, all rubies and emeralds. Sometimes it was a fifteenth-century [more probably, thirteenth-century] Gothic missal, when he set us counting the order of the coloured leaves in each spray of the MS. At other times it was a splendid Albert Dürer woodcut, that we might copy a square inch or two of herbage, and identify the columbines and cyclamens. He talked much to the class, discursively but radiantly. . . .

“The pole-star of his artistic heaven was Turner. One by one, he brought for us to examine his marvels of water-colour art from Denmark Hill. He would point out the subtleties and felicities in their composition, analysing on a blackboard their line schemes. Sometimes he would make us copy minute portions of a ‘Liber,’ some line of footsteps or the handle of a plough. . . . How generous he was! He had reams of the best stout drawing-paper made specially for us, supplying every convenience the little rooms would hold. He commissioned William Hunt of the Old Water-Colour Society to paint two subjects for the class, and both were masterpieces. One was a golden, metallic, dried herring and some open mussel-shells; and the other, some eggs and yellow onions; to show how brilliant the humblest subjects might become in a master’s hands. He used to say, if you gave one man the pigments of every tint of the rainbow, he would paint you a dull picture; but give another little whitening, or a little slate and brick-dust, and he will produce a brilliant and harmonious one. . . . His face would light up when he saw a piece of honest or delicate work; it was, perhaps, his greatest fault as a teacher that he was sometimes too lavish of his praise. . . . Ruskin never knew himself how much he did for many of us. It is not too much to say that the whole of our following lives have been enriched by these hours we spent with him.”¹

¹ “A Memorable Art Class,” in *Good Words* for August 1897. The same article contains interesting reminiscences of Rossetti. Some reminiscences by Mr. E. Cooke of Ruskin’s teaching at the College are given in Mr. Collingwood’s *Life*, p. 153

It was “a memorable art class.” indeed, in which the students were thus privileged to sit at the feet of Ruskin, Rossetti, and Burne-Jones.

To the National Gallery Site Commission in 1857—in the course of evidence reprinted in Vol. XIII.—Ruskin described his object in thus teaching at the Working Men’s College. “My efforts are directed,” he said, “not to making a carpenter an artist, but to making him happier as a carpenter.” But the native bent was sometimes too strong to be denied, while on the other hand, Ruskin’s encouragement may in other cases have led a man to over-rate his powers, or to abuse his master’s generosity. The record of his classes is, however, a worthy one. “George Allen as a mezzotint engraver, Arthur Burgess as a draughtsman and wood-cutter, John Bunney as a painter of architectural detail, W. Jeffrey as an artistic photographer, E. Cooke as a teacher, William Ward as a facsimile copyist, have all done work whose value deserves acknowledgment, all the more because it was not aimed at popular effect.”¹

Ruskin’s weekly class at the Working Men’s College, with the incidental correspondence and good offices on his part which it entailed, did not exhaust his unselfish activities at this time. He had conceived a great admiration for Rossetti’s genius, as well as a warm affection for him personally. As he had befriended Millais and Holman Hunt, so now he devoted himself to assisting Rossetti. He had already done the painter a useful service by commending his work to M’Cracken,² who thereupon bought the water-colour (now at Oxford) of “Dante drawing an angel in memory of Beatrice.” This led to Ruskin’s personal acquaintance with Rossetti, as appears from a letter of the latter to Madox Brown, dated April 14, 1854:—

“M’Cracken of course sent my drawing to Ruskin, who the other day wrote me an incredible letter about it, remaining mine respectfully (! !), and wanting to call. I of course stroked him down in my answer, and yesterday he called. His manner was more agreeable than I had always expected. . . . He seems in a mood to make my fortune.”³

Immediately after this, Ruskin went abroad; there was correspondence between him and Rossetti, as will be seen in a later volume; on

¹ W. G. Collingwood’s *Life of Ruskin*, p. 155.

² See Vol. IV. p. 38 *n*.

³ *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: his Family Letters, with a Memoir*, by William Michael Rossetti, 1895, i. 180. In a later letter to Brown, Rossetti wrote (May 13, 1854): “Millais has written to me that Gambart wants me to paint something, so I imagine Ruskin is beginning to bear fruit” (*Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 9).

his return, he set about, if not making Rossetti's fortune, at any rate relieving him from financial anxiety. "He undertook to buy," says Mr. W. M. Rossetti, "if he happened to like it, whatever Rossetti produced, at a range of prices, such as the latter would have asked from any other purchaser, and up to a certain maximum of expenditure on his own part. If he did not relish a work, Rossetti could offer it to any one else. I cannot imagine any arrangement more convenient to my brother, who thus secured a safe market for his performances, and could even rely upon not being teased to do on the nail, work for which he received payment in whole or in part."¹ Ruskin's considerate generosity did not end there. Rossetti was at this time engaged to Miss Siddal, called familiarly "Guggum" by him and his circle, and "Ida" by Ruskin, who took the name no doubt from Tennyson's *Princess*. She had been down to spend a day with Ruskin and his parents at Denmark Hill. "All the Ruskins," wrote Rossetti to Madox Brown (April 13, 1855), "were most delighted with Guggum. John Ruskin said she was a noble, glorious creature, and his father said, by her look and manner, she might have been a Countess." Miss Siddal also was a designer, and Ruskin was greatly struck with her talent. He arranged to settle on her an annual sum of £150, "taking in exchange her various works up to that value and retaining them, or (if preferred) selling some of them, and handing over to her any extra proceeds."² In a later volume, Ruskin's letters to Rossetti and Miss Siddal are collected, but one of the earliest of the series must here be given for its autobiographical interest. It is undated, but must have been written late in 1854 or early in 1855:—

"DEAR ROSSETTI,—I daresay you do not quite like to answer my somewhat blunt question in my last letter; I was somewhat too brief in putting it; I was unwell, and could not write at length. My motive in asking you was simply that I did not know how best to act for you, and what to propose about sending Miss S[iddal] to Wales or Jersey, or anywhere else that might not in some way be disagreeable to you; and also because I thought that the whole thing might perhaps be much better managed in another way, and your own powers of art more healthily developed, and your own life made happier.

"I daresay our letters may now cross; but it does not matter,

¹ *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, i. 181.

² *Ibid.*, i. 184.

for, whatever may be the contents of yours, I am sure there will be one feeling apparent in it, and that will be a dislike of putting yourself under obligation to any one in carrying out any main purpose of your life.

“I think it well, therefore, to tell you something about myself, and what you really ought to feel about me in this matter.

“You constantly hear a great many people saying I am very bad, and perhaps you have been yourself disposed lately to think me very good. I am neither the one nor the other. I am very self-indulgent, very proud, very obstinate, and *very* resentful; on the other side, I am very upright—nearly as just as I suppose it is possible for man to be in this world—exceedingly fond of making people happy, and devotedly reverent to all true mental or moral power. I never betrayed a trust—never wilfully did an unkind thing—and never, in little or large matters, depreciated another that I might raise myself. I believe I once had affections as warm as most people; but partly from evil chance, and partly from foolish misplacing of them, they have got tumbled down and broken to pieces. It is a very great, in the long-run the greatest, misfortune of my life that, on the whole, my relations, cousins and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy, and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of the people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships, and no loves.

“Now you know the best and worst of me; and you may rely upon it it is the truth. If you hear people say I am utterly hard and cold, depend upon it it is untrue. Though I have no friendships and no loves, I cannot read the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylæ with a steady voice to the end; and there is an old glove in one of my drawers that has lain there these eighteen years, which is worth something to me yet. If, on the other hand, you ever feel disposed to think me particularly good, you will be just as wrong as most people are on the other side. My pleasures are in seeing, thinking, reading, and making people happy (if I can, consistently with my own comfort). And I *take* these pleasures. And I suppose, if my pleasures were in smoking, betting, dicing, and giving pain, I should take *those* pleasures. It seems to me that one man is made one way, and one another—the measure of effort and self-denial can never be known, except by each conscience to itself. Mine is small enough.

“But, besides taking pleasure thus where I happen to find it, I have a theory of life which it seems to me impossible as a rational being to be altogether without—namely, that we are all sent into the world to be of such use to each other as we can, and also that

my particular use is likely to be in the things that I know something about—that is to say, in matters connected with painting.

“Thus then it stands. It seems to me that, amongst all the painters I know, you on the whole have the greatest genius, and you appear to me also to be—as far as I can make out—a very good sort of person. I see that you are unhappy, and that you can’t bring out your genius as you should. It seems to me then the proper and *necessary* thing, if I can, to make you more happy, and that I should be more really useful in enabling you to paint properly and keep your room in order than in any other way.

“If it were necessary for me to deny myself, or to make any mighty exertion to do this, of course it might to you be a subject of gratitude, or a question if you should accept it or not. But, as I don’t happen to have any other objects in life, and as I have a comfortable room and all I want in it (and more), it seems to me just as natural I should try to be of use to you as that I should offer you a cup of tea if I saw you were thirsty, and there was plenty in the teapot, and I had got all I wanted.

“I am not going to make you any offer till you tell me, if you are willing to do so, what your wishes and circumstances really are. What I meant was to ask if an agreement to paint for me regularly, up to a certain value, would put you more at your ease; but I will not enter into more particulars at present, for I hardly know, till I have settled some business with my father, what my circumstances really are. It provokingly happens that, although I have three times as much as is really necessary to enable me to carry out my¹ purposes, I have all this winter been launching out in a very heedless way, buying missals and Albert Dürers—not expecting any call upon me—so that it may be a month or two yet before I can send you what I should like; but after that all will go on quite smoothly. Meantime I hope this letter will put you more at your ease, and that you will believe me

“Always affectionately yours,

“J. RUSKIN.

“One thing, by-the-bye, I hope you will not permit even for a moment to slide into your head. That anything I am doing for workmen, or for anybody, is in any wise an endeavour to *regain* position in public opinion. I *am* what I always was; I am doing what I always proposed to do, and what I have been hindered by untoward circumstances from doing hitherto; and the only temptation which is brought upon me by calumny is, not to fawn for

¹ Printed “any” hitherto.

public favour, but to give up trying to do the public any good, and enjoy myself misanthropically.

“I forgot to say also that I really do *covet* your drawings as much as I covet Turner’s; only it is useless self-indulgence to buy Turner’s, and useful self-indulgence to buy yours. Only I won’t have them after they have been more than nine times rubbed entirely out, remember that.”¹

Ruskin was also, it may be added, a great admirer of Rossetti’s poetry, and paid for the publication of his translations from *Early Italian Poets*. Their friendship continued for some years, but gradually cooled: the part of disciple was not one which Rossetti was fitted to play, even to a master so delicate in his patronage as Ruskin.

Another young artist whose acquaintance Ruskin made at this time, was Frederic Leighton. In 1855 Ruskin issued the first of an annual series of *Notes on some of the Principal Pictures exhibited in the Rooms of the Royal Academy* (see Vol. XIV.). By this time his repute as a critic stood almost at its highest point; friends, and even amateurs personally unknown to him, were in the habit of seeking his opinion and advice on the pictures of the year; and he began the publication of these *Notes* as a sort of open “circular letter.” Among the pictures of 1855 was Leighton’s “Cimabue’s Madonna carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence.” Ruskin was greatly struck by it and praised it warmly in the *Notes*, and the picture was bought by Queen Victoria. The painter was at this time little known in art circles in London, for he studied and worked abroad. He had become acquainted with Robert Browning, and the poet asked leave to bring his young friend to Denmark Hill. “We spent an evening with Mr. Ruskin,” wrote Mrs. Browning to a friend, “who was gracious and generous, and strengthened all my good impressions. Robert took our young friend Leighton’s to see him afterwards, and was as kindly received.”² Leighton’s art was to develop along lines with which, in some respects, Ruskin had imperfect sympathy, but in later years he paid graceful compliments to the President’s gifts and achievements.³

Browning’s intercourse with Ruskin at this period may not have been without effect on the studies in poetry, which were to occupy some space in the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*. In the latter volume Ruskin refers to the poet’s “unerring” insight into the mind of the Middle Ages, and notices his “seemingly careless and

¹ Reprinted from *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, pp. 70–76.

² *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, vol. ii. p. 210.

³ *The Art of England*, Lecture iii.

too rugged lines." In 1855 Browning had published his *Men and Women*, which found an appreciative reader in Ruskin. The poet writes to Rossetti of having received "a dear, too dear, and good letter from Mr. Ruskin."¹ But Ruskin had confessed his occasional bewilderment, and in particular had criticised, it seems, the poem entitled "Popularity," and beginning "Stand still, true poet that you are!" The substance of Ruskin's criticism can be gathered from Browning's reply:—

"We don't read poetry by the same way, by the same law; it is too clear. I cannot begin writing poetry till my imaginary reader has conceded licences to me which you demur at altogether. . . . You ought, I think, to keep pace with the thought tripping from ledge to ledge of my 'glaciers,' as you call them; not stand poking your alpenstock into the holes, and demonstrating that no foot could have stood there;—suppose it sprang over there? . . . Why, you look at my little song as if it were Hobbs' or Nobbs' lease of his house, a testament of his devising, wherein, I grant you, not a 'then and there,' 'to him and his heirs,' 'to have and to hold,' and so on, would be superfluous; and so you begin: 'Stand still,—why?' For the reason indicated in the verse, to be sure,—*to let me draw him*. . . . The last charge I cannot answer, for you may be right in preferring it, however unwitting I am of the fact. I *may* put Robert Browning into Pippa and other men and maids. If so, *peccavi*; but I don't see myself in them, at all events.

"Do you think poetry was ever generally understood—or can be? Is the business of it to tell people what they know already, as they know it, and so precisely that they shall be able to cry out—'Here you should supply *this—that*, you evidently pass over, and I'll help you from my own stock?' It is all teaching, on the contrary, and the people hate to be taught. They say otherwise,—make foolish fables about Orpheus enchanting stocks and stones, poets standing up and being worshipped,—all nonsense and impossible dreaming. A poet's affair is with God,—to whom he is accountable, and of whom is his reward; look elsewhere, and you find misery enough. Do you believe people understand *Hamlet*? . . ."²

It may be recalled that Ruskin, in an early letter, makes on his own behalf much of the same defence as is here adduced by Browning, and in later essays he often refers to the enigmatic character of the greatest poets.³

"We went to Denmark Hill yesterday," wrote Mrs. Browning of

¹ *Letters from Robert Browning to Various Correspondents*. Edited by Thomas J. Wise. Privately printed, 1895, vol. i. p. 21.

² The whole letter is printed by Mr. Collingwood in his *Life of Ruskin*, pp. 163–167. See also Vol. I. p. 444 n.

³ See Vol. I. pp. 443, 444, and the references given in the note there.

an earlier visit (September 1852), “to have luncheon with the Ruskins, and see the Turners, which, by the way, are divine. I like Mr. Ruskin much, and so does Robert. Very gentle, yet earnest,—refined and truthful. We count him among the valuable acquaintances made this year in England.”¹ Another poet whose personal acquaintance Ruskin made at this time was Tennyson, who also desired to see the famous collection at Denmark Hill. Kingsley also was among his visitors (see p. 429). The following is Ruskin’s letter of invitation to Tennyson:—

“DENMARK HILL, CAMBERWELL,
21st March, 1855.

“DEAR MR. TENNYSON,—I venture to write to you, because as I was talking about you with Mr. Woolner yesterday, he gave me more pleasure than I can express by telling me that you wished to see my Turners.

“By several untoward chances I have been too long hindered from telling you face to face how much I owe you. So you see at last I seize the wheel of fortune by its nearest spoke, begging you, with the heartiest entreaty I can, to tell me when you are likely to be in London, and to fix a day if possible that I may keep it wholly for you, and prepare my Turners to look their rosier and best. Capricious they are as enchanted opals, but they must surely shine for you.

“Any day will do for me if you give me notice two or three days before; but please come soon, for I have much to say to you, and am eager to say it, above all to tell you how for a thousand things I am gratefully and respectfully yours,

“J. RUSKIN.”²

Of Ruskin’s charm on occasions such as these, no better account has been written than that by James Smetham. He was, as we have seen, a pupil at the Working Men’s College, and was asked to dine at Denmark Hill. He describes the visit in a letter to a friend:—

“5th February, 1855.

“I walked there through the wintry weather and got in about dusk. One or two gossiping details will interest you before I give you what I care for; and so I will tell you that he has a large house with a lodge, and a valet and a footman and coachman, and grand rooms glittering with pictures, chiefly Turner’s, and that his father and mother live with him, or he with them. . . .

“His father is a fine old gentleman, who has a lot of bushy grey hair, and eyebrows sticking up all rough and knowing, with a comfortable

¹ *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, vol. ii. p. 87.

² *Alfred Lord Tennyson: a Memoir*, by his Son, 1897, vol. i. p. 383.

way of coming up to you with his hands in his pockets, and making *you* comfortable, and saying, in answer to your remark, that ‘John’s’ prose works are pretty good. His mother is a ruddy, dignified, richly-dressed old gentlewoman of seventy-five, who knows Chamouni better than Camberwell: evidently a *good* old lady, with the *Christian Treasury* tossing about on the table.

“She puts ‘John’ down and holds her own opinions, and flatly contradicts him; and he receives all her opinions with a soft reverence and gentleness that is pleasant to witness.

“The old gentleman amused me twice during the evening by standing over me and enlightening me on the subject of my own merits, with the air of a man who thought that I had not the remotest conception of my own abilities, and had therefore come to ‘threat me down about them.’ . . .

“The old lady was as quaintly kind. ‘Has John showed this?’ ‘Has he showed you the other?’ ‘John, fetch Couttet’s for Mr. Smetham to see:’ and to all her sudden injunctions he replied by waiting on me in a way to make one ashamed. ‘You must come in the daylight, John has heaps of things to show you, and—can you get away when you please?’ etc. As these are in reality traits in ‘John’s’ character, I have given you them at length. I wish I could reproduce a good impression of John for you, to give you the notion of his ‘perfect gentleness and lowliness.’

“He certainly bursts out with a remark, and in a contradictory way, but only because he believes it, with no air of dogmatism or conceit. He is different at home from that which he is in a lecture before a mixed audience, and there is a spiritual sweetness in the half-timid expression of his eyes, and in bowing to you, as in taking wine, with (if I heard aright) ‘I drink to thee,’ he had a look that has followed me, a look bordering on tearful.

“He spent some time in this way. Unhanging a Turner from the wall of a distant room, he brought it to the table and put it into my hands; then we talked; then he went up into his study to fetch down some illustrative print or drawing; in one case, a literal view which he had travelled fifty miles to make, in order to compare with the picture. And so he kept on gliding all over the house, hanging and unhanging, and stopping a few minutes to talk. There would have been, if I had not seen from the first moment that he *knew* me well, something embarrassing in the chivalrous, hovering, way he had; as it was, I felt much otherwise, quite as free and open as with you in your little study. . . . I was in a sort of soft dream all the way home; nor has the fragrance, which, like the June sunset,

‘Dwells in heaven half the night,’
left my spirit yet.”¹

¹ *Letters of James Smetham*, pp. 52–55.



J. Kaslin

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Walls of Lucerne

From the drawing in the possession of Fritchard Gordon, Esq.

What with entertaining friends and pupils, and writing his *Notes* on the exhibitions of the year, Ruskin found that *Modern Painters* was again getting into arrears. Rossetti towards the end of the summer suggested that they should take a holiday together; Ruskin could not spare the time:—

“DEAR ROSSETTI,—I am truly sorry to hear of your illness, and all your vexations. *Nothing* would give me more pleasure than to take a little holiday with you, and ramble about sketching and talking. You know I do not say this, or anything else, without meaning it. But this pleasure I must at present deny myself. I am deep in difficult chapters of *Modern Painters*. I cannot be disturbed even by my best friends or greatest pleasures. When I have to work out a chapter on a difficult subject, it is precisely the same to me as a mathematical calculation—to break into it is to throw it all down—back to the beginning. I do as much in dreamy and solitary lanes as I do at home. I could not have a companion.

“I want you next year to take a little run to Switzerland. I will either go with you or meet you, if our times should not suit for starting. And then we will do some Alpine roses and other things which the World has no notion of. Will you come? . . .”

That expedition was never to be made, and Ruskin meanwhile continued at his task. The multifariousness of his interests—reflected in the very title of the third volume, “Of Many Things”—is well hit off in a letter of vivacity and humour to Mrs. Carlyle:—

“Not that I have not been busy—and very busy, too. I have written, since May, good 600 pages, had them rewritten, cut up, corrected, and got fairly ready for press—and am going to press with the first of them on Gunpowder Plot Day; with a great hope of disturbing the Public Peace in various directions. Also, I have prepared above thirty drawings for engravers this year, retouched the engravings (generally the worst part of the business), and etched some on steel myself. In the course of the 600 pages I have had to make various remarks on German Metaphysics, on Poetry, Political Economy, Cookery, Music, Geology, Dress, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Navigation, all which subjects I have had to ‘read up’ accordingly, and this takes time. Moreover, I have had my class of workmen out sketching every week in the fields, during the summer; and have been studying Spanish proverbs with my father’s partner, who came over from Spain to see the great Exhibition. I have also designed and drawn a window for the Museum

at Oxford; and have every now and then had to look over a parcel of five or six new designs for fronts and backs to the said Museum. During my above mentioned studies of Horticulture I became dissatisfied with the Linnæan, Jussieuan, and Everybody-elsian arrangement of plants, and have accordingly arranged a system of my own; and unbound my botanical book, and rebound it in brighter green, with all the pages through other, and backside foremost—so as to cut off the old paging numerals; and am now printing my new arrangement in a legible manner, on interleaved foolscap. I consider this arrangement one of my great achievements of the year. My studies of political economy have induced me to think also that nobody knows anything about that, and I am at present engaged in an investigation, on independent principles, of the Natures of Money, Rent, and Taxes, in an abstract form, which sometimes keeps me awake all night. My studies of German metaphysics have also induced me to think that the Germans don't know anything about *them*; and to engage in a serious inquiry into the meaning of Bunsen's great sentence in the beginning of the second volume of Hippolytus, about the Finite realization of the Infinity;¹ which has given me some trouble. The course of my studies of navigation necessitated my going to Deal to look at the Deal boats; and those of Geology to rearrange all my minerals (and wash a good many, which, I am sorry to say, I found wanted it). I have also several pupils, far and near, in the art of illumination, an American young lady to direct in the study of landscape painting, and a Yorkshire young lady to direct in the purchase of Turners²—and various little bye things besides.

“But I am coming to see you.”³

The letter gives “a striking picture,” as Professor Norton says, “of the astonishing activity of his intelligence, and the medley of his occupations.” It is not surprising that his health was unequal to the strain, and we are now in a position to understand the entry in *Præterita*, referring to the year 1855:—

“I get cough which lasts for two months, till I go down to Tunbridge Wells, to my doctor cousin, William Richardson, who puts me to bed, gives me some syrup, cures me in three days, and calls me a fool for not coming to him before, with some rather angry

¹ See below, p. 424.

² Miss Heaton, of Leeds, with whom we shall meet in Ruskin's letters to Rossetti of this period; Ruskin encouraged her to buy Rossettis also.

³ Printed by Professor Charles Eliot Norton in his Introduction to the American “Brantwood Edition” of *Aratra Pentelici*—“true not alone,” he says, “of the year in which the letter was written [1855], but as well of year after year down as late as the time of these Oxford lectures.”

warnings that I had better not keep a cough for two months again.”¹

This visit to Tunbridge Wells, and the other above spoken of to Deal, where he made the studies of ships, presently to be used in his Preface to *The Harbours of England*, were his only holidays in 1855; and thus was the third volume completed. It was published on January 15, 1856. A further spell of hard work during the winter of 1855–1856, disposed of the fourth volume, which appeared three months later, on April 14.

The structure of a book thus resumed after an interval of ten years—and ten years, be it remembered, which had seen the author pass almost from boyhood to manhood—naturally showed differences and developments. Naturally, too, the later part of the book was not at all what the author had intended. To begin with, the conclusion of the book was to have been one volume; it became three. An idea of Ruskin’s earliest design may be gathered from a review of the second volume, by a friendly critic (probably Dr. Croly or W. H. Harrison): “This volume,” he wrote, “is to be followed by a third, detailing the merits of the great schools of foreign painting. From so acute an observer who, though not an artist by profession, is obviously an artist by nature, we expect a highly valuable and intelligent work. It is proposed to give pictorial illustrations of the various styles, and it is to be hoped that it will be accompanied by the author’s ‘Tour.’”² There were many tours in it, as we have seen, and the scheme grew and grew, though even in 1853 Ruskin imagined that a single volume would suffice.³ Again, in resuming his book, Ruskin adopted, as he here says (p. 18), a less systematic method. He discarded the elaborate synopsis of contents, and did not force his chapters into a rigidly consecutive scheme. He had begun, as he adds, to distrust systems and system-mongers. He had already expressed this feeling in his Review of Lord Lindsay (see Vol. XII. p. 175), and he presently dwelt upon it more fully.⁴

The fact is that though there is throughout *Modern Painters* an underlying unity of purpose and consistency of thought, yet if it is to be understood aright, it must be regarded as five different books, the division into which does not entirely correspond either with the division into volumes or with the framework mapped out at the

¹ *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 11.

² *Britannia*, June 6, 1846.

³ See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 62 (Vol. X. p. 229).

⁴ See *A Joy for Ever*, § 128.

beginning of the book. (1) The First Volume is a defence of Turner, against the charge that his later pictures were “unnatural.” This volume was, as Ruskin says,¹ the expansion of a magazine article, and was written in all the heat and haste of youthful enthusiasm. (2) Then came a pause, during which the author’s principal study was among the early Italian painters and Tintoretto. Both alike commanded his passionate admiration. The Second Volume thus became in part a hymn of praise, inspired by the religious ideal of Giotto and his circle; and in part an essay upon the Imagination, inspired by Tintoret’s works in the Scuola di San Rocco. (3) Ten years now intervened—years of widened and deepened study in many directions. The earlier chapters of the Third Volume are an interlude, necessary in order to establish a harmony between what had preceded and what was to follow. (4) The Fourth Volume and the first two Parts of the Fifth (vi. and vii., in the arrangement of the whole book) are an essay on the Beauty of Mountains, Trees, and Clouds; while, lastly, (5) the remainder of that final volume, written four years later,² is a treatise on “the relations of Art to God and man.”

We are first concerned here with what we have called the interlude. In looking back over his first two volumes, and forward to what he had yet to say, Ruskin was struck with obvious difficulties and apparent contradictions. He had started with defining the greatest art as that which contained the greatest ideas; he had thus insisted on the spiritual side of art. Then he had turned to his defence of Turner; and there, owing to the nature of the attacks he had to meet, his principal object was to prove that Turner had given more material and actual truth than other painters. Then why did not his pictures convey the same impression of truth to ordinary spectators? But, again, in his second volume, he had been led to praise in terms hardly less enthusiastic than those applied to Turner, the frescoes of the Italian “primitives,” so *naifs*, so limited in imitative resources, though representing so beautifully a religious ideal. Then what are the true limits of idealism in art? Sometimes in defending Turner, Ruskin seemed to be pleading for idealism as against the material imitation of the Dutch painters; at other times, to be pleading for realism as against the ideal compositions of the school of Claude. He perceived the difficulties which all this presents to careless readers, and the appearance of contradiction to which it exposed him. He

¹ Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 7.

² It is probable that Parts vi. and vii. in the Fifth Volume were written, at any rate in the first draft, at about the same time as the Fourth Volume, but were held over, owing to the bulk of that volume.

states the case very clearly in the hitherto unpublished piece, which is now given in the Introduction to Volume XI., and to which the reader will do well to turn at this point. And yet, once more: since the Second Volume of *Modern Painters* appeared, Ruskin had been prominently before the public as the champion of the Pre-Raphaelites, whose early work was distinguished among other characteristics by its elaborate finish and minuteness of detail. The critics with one consent fell upon Ruskin for his inconsistency in admiring at once the closely manipulated foregrounds of Millais in his early works and the misty distances of Turner. What, then, was it, in final analysis, in which the greatness of Turner consisted—in truths that he recorded, or in visions that he invented? Is it—as we have already asked (Vol. III. p. xix.)—the material, numberable beauties of nature that he puts before us, or is he great for adding

“the gleam,
The light that never was on land or sea,
The consecration and the poet’s dream?”

It was to resolve such questions, to clear up these ambiguities, that was Ruskin’s first object in resuming *Modern Painters*. The reader will observe throughout the earlier chapters of the present volume a recurring refrain of allusion to hostile criticisms and apparent contradictions.¹ To some extent Ruskin never sought to deny the existence of self-contradictions in his work. He confessed, and even gloried, in them: for two reasons. First, as we have already said, and as must constantly be borne in mind in reading Ruskin, his principal book was written at intervals during seventeen years; he was twenty-four when he began it, and forty-one when he ended it. It is idle to seek in a book thus composed for the same fixity of standpoint or consistency of view that is expected in a single treatise. “All true opinions,” he says, “are living, and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change.”² And, secondly, though Truth is one, yet since Error is various, the statements of the truth must be as many-sided as the faults which it has to correct. Ruskin illustrates this thought in his diary of 1849 from his supreme arbiter—the text of the Bible:—

“It will be found that throughout the Scriptures there are on every subject two opposite groups of texts; and a middle group, which contains the truth that rests between the two others. The opposite texts are guards against the abuse of the central texts—guards set in opposite directions; and if these guards are considered

¹ See Vol. XII. p. li.

² Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 8; and compare *Ethics of the Dust*, § 87.

as themselves containing the truth, instead of being a mere fence against some form of error, all manner of falsehood may be supported in scriptural language. But on the other hand, this complicated structure, while it betrays the careless, rewards the faithful reader; and when it is fully understood presents a form of security against error such as could not in any otherwise have been attained (like the Mont Blanc set between opponent fan-shaped strata)—a security which every thoughtful and earnest reader has felt. For instance, ‘Rejoice evermore’ and ‘Blessed are they that mourn’ are two guarding and contradictory texts; and the truth they guard is the central text ‘But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye.’¹

Fortified by these reflections, Ruskin often gloried in the charge that he was apt to contradict himself. “I hope,” he says, “I am exceedingly apt to do so. . . . I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times.”² “I shall endeavour for the future,” he writes elsewhere, “to put my self-contradictions in short sentences and direct terms, in order to save sagacious persons the trouble of looking for them.”³ It is possible by taking passages from their context, and isolating them from the statements to which they are severally opposed, to represent Ruskin in turn as preaching distinctness and indistinctness in art, finish and incompleteness, idealism and realism, minuteness and breadth. But, having in the first two volumes of *Modern Painters* stated at different places different sides of the polygon of truth as he conceived it, he now set himself in this third volume—not, as he says,⁴ methodically, but yet with a steady aim—to define his central position on many of the vexed questions which have been indicated above. “In the main aim and principle” of *Modern Painters*, as he says elsewhere,⁵ “there is no variation from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with, or subjection to that.” In the application of this general principle to particular questions, Ruskin’s central position, as defined in the earlier chapters of this volume, may perhaps be stated somewhat as follows: That art is the greatest which expresses the

¹ The Bible references are—1 Thessalonians v. 16; Matthew v. 4; 1 Peter iii. 14. With Ruskin’s point here, compare p. 169 below.

² *Inaugural Address at the Cambridge School of Art*, § 13.

³ *Two Paths*, § 86 n., and in the same book, see Appendix i. See also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 22 n. (Vol. XII. p. 44 n.), and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 21 n.

⁴ See below, ch. i. § 2, p. 18.

⁵ Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 8.

greatest number of the noblest ideas. Art is the expression of an artist's soul. A man may have soul and not be able to paint, in which case he ought not to be a painter. But be his manipulation never so perfect, he is not a great artist unless he is also capable of receiving and imparting noble impressions. In this third volume, "nominally treating of 'Many Things,' will be found," says Ruskin himself, "the full expression of what I knew best; namely, that all 'things,' many or few, which we ought to paint, must be first distinguished boldly from the nothings which we ought not."¹ The business of the landscape-painter is to paint his impressions. The noblest impressions derivable from natural scenery are not those which lend themselves most easily to deceptive imitation. The way to receive noble impressions from Nature is first to study her with unquestioning fidelity. Imagination is a form of vision; it is idle and unprofitable unless it is of things seen by the mind's eye as truthfully, as precisely, as much in accordance with ideal truths as if seen by the corporeal eye. Finish in art is relative to the object pursued. It may be wasted on unworthy objects and thrown away on secondary matters; it is never right unless it is the means of giving an additional truth. Such are some of the leading propositions which may be gathered from the earlier chapters of this volume. "There is nothing that can be labelled in any of this," perhaps some may say; "this body of doctrine is not exactly realism, nor idealism, nor impressionism, and Ruskinism cannot be identified with any of them." That is true, and is perhaps what Ruskin meant when he said that no true disciple of his would ever be a Ruskinian,² for what he taught was only what he had learnt from the good and great of many different ages and many diverse schools.

The first few chapters of the Fourth Volume (i.-v.) follow, according to the analysis here suggested, upon the earlier chapters in the Third; for their purpose is to clear up other difficulties connected with the practice of Turner; marking the proper meaning and sphere of the picturesque; contrasting topographical accuracy with essential truth of impression; explaining Turner's principles of light, and the truths which are revealed in "Turnerian mystery."

The second portion of the Third Volume (chapter xi. onwards) has a somewhat different purpose, and Ruskin here adopts a different treatment. His method now becomes historical, and the subject-matter of the chapters is the History of Landscape as deducible from art and literature—the History, that is, of men's feelings towards natural

¹ *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* (1878), § 16.

² *St. Mark's Rest*, § 209.

scenery—a subject which is resumed at the end of the Fourth Volume, in the chapters on “The Mountain Gloom” and “The Mountain Glory,” wherein Ruskin discusses the influence of mountains on the life and character of peoples. These ten chapters (the last eight of the Third, and the last two of the Fourth) form, in subject-matter, a separate treatise; they have a most attractive theme, which Ruskin was the first to treat. The subject is a very large one; its proper discussion would require, says Ruskin, “knowledge of the entire history of two great ages of the world,” and he does not claim for his chapters more than helpfulness in suggestion.¹ At a later time he admitted that the logic of his conclusions had not entirely satisfied himself. What is the cause or nature of love of mountains? If it is all that Ruskin claimed for it, why does it not affect all noble minds alike, and why must the account between Gloom and Glory be so evenly balanced? “The more I analysed,” he says, “the less I could either understand or justify,” and “the less I felt able to deny the claim of prosaic and ignobly-minded persons to be allowed to like the land level.” “In the end,” he adds, “I found there was nothing for it but simply to assure those recusant and grovelling persons that they were perfectly wrong, and that nothing could be expected, either in art or literature, from people who liked to live among snipes and widgeons.”² But if Ruskin’s historical and literary sketch of the Influence of Landscape cannot claim to have said the last word on the subject of which it treats, it abounds in suggestive thoughts; it has attracted many inquirers on to the same field,³ and the title of one of the chapters—“Of the Pathetic Fallacy”—has become a stock phrase in subsequent literary criticism. The analyses of poetry, incidentally contained in this volume, together with those in the Second Volume, form, indeed, a singularly stimulating and suggestive essay in literary criticism. His particular judgments are indeed open to question; what judgments which are individual and genuine are not? Thus Rossetti

¹ See below, Preface, § 4, p. 7.

² *The Art of England* (1883), § 174. At this one point, then, at least, Ruskin may be held to have confirmed a criticism which Matthew Arnold made, upon reading the book in 1856—“full of excellent *aperçus*,” he called it, but wanting in “the *ordo concatenatioque veri*” (*Letters of Matthew Arnold*, i. 51).

³ As, for instance, Philip Gilbert Hamerton’s *Landscape* (1885) and *Imagination in Landscape Painting* (1887); Josiah Gilbert’s *Landscape in Art* (1885); and F. T. Palgrave’s *Landscape in Poetry* (1897). On the subject of Classical Landscape, Ruskin’s chapter has been followed by numerous essays; see, for instance, the chapter “Music and Painting” in J. P. Mahaffy’s *Rambles and Studies in Greece* (1876), and W. R. Hardie’s *Lectures on Classical Subjects* (1903). In German the great work on the subject is L. Friedländer’s *Sittengeschichte Roms*, vol. ii. pp. 95–291; published in 1862. (6th ed. 1889.)

quarrelled with Ruskin's praise of Longfellow's *Golden Legend*, as also with the extracts from Browning, in the Fourth Volume (ch. xx. §§ 32, 33). "Really," he wrote, "the omissions in Browning's passage are awful, and the union with Longfellow worse. How I loathe *Wishi-washi*,—of course without reading it."¹ So, again, Matthew Arnold in his Oxford lectures *On Translating Homer* found fault with Ruskin for reading into the *Iliad* more sentiment than in fact exists there.² Other critics at the time objected to this or that judgment.³ Yet Ruskin's sense of the excellent was so keen and so strong, and his analysis of his individual impressions so subtle, that few men can read these chapters without stimulus. "I never read anything," says Sir Leslie Stephen, of Ruskin's analysis of the imaginative faculty, "which seemed to me to do more to make clear the true characteristics of good poetry."⁴

Whether or not Ruskin succeeded in establishing a logical basis for mountain-lovers, he certainly did much to increase their number and supply noble grounds for their love. The chapters on "Mountain Beauty" which occupy the greater part of the Fourth Volume were the result, as we have seen, of studies and observations carried on during many years; and if, as he somewhere says, the greatest service in art or literature is to see accurately and report faithfully, these records of what he had seen among the mountains must be accounted among the most important portions of his work. This was Ruskin's own opinion. "The subject of the sculpture of mountains into the forms of perpetual beauty which they miraculously receive from God was," he says, "first taken up by me in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, and the elementary principles of it, there stated, form the most valuable and least faultful part of the book."⁵ And the reader will remember that these mountain chapters were to have been republished by Ruskin—a design, however, which he only partially fulfilled.⁶ "His power of seeing the phenomena vividly was as remarkable," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "as his power, not always shared by scientific writers, of making description interesting. I owe him a personal debt. Many people had tried their hands upon Alpine descriptions since Saussure; but Ruskin's chapters seemed to have the freshness of a new revelation.

¹ *Letters to William Allingham*, p. 181.

² But with regard to this criticism, see below, p. 213 *n*.

³ See, for instance, *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1856, vol. 53, pp. 648–659, a review of the Third Volume, entitled "Ruskin on the Ancient and the Modern Poets."

⁴ *The National Review*, April 1900.

⁵ Introduction to W. G. Collingwood's *Limestone Alps of Savoy*, 1884.

⁶ See the account of *In Montibus Sanctis*, Vol. III. p. 678.

The fourth volume of *Modern Painters* infected me and other early members of the Alpine Club with an enthusiasm for which, I hope, we are still grateful. Our prophet indeed ridiculed his disciples for treating Mont Blanc as a greased pole. We might well forgive our satirist, for he had revealed a new pleasure which we might mix with ingredients which he did not fully appreciate.”¹ The Alpine Club, it should be stated, was not yet in existence, nor had any attempt as yet been made to scale the Matterhorn. Ruskin was not a climber in the Alpine Club’s sense of the word, but he knew and loved the mountains as few other men have done, and in one respect at least he was an Alpine pioneer. He was the first to draw the Matterhorn accurately—the first, too, he says, to photograph it,² and the plates, no less than the descriptive chapters, in the fourth volume, may well have acted as a revelation and an incitement to the original founders of the Alpine Club—men who, as Sir Leslie Stephen says, had learnt, in part from Ruskin, to find in climbing scientific and artistic interests as well as athletic exercise. Another past President of the Club, Mr. Douglas Freshfield, has borne testimony to Ruskin’s services in this respect. Ruskin, he says, “saw and understood mountains, and taught our generation to understand them in a way no one—none even of those who had been born under their shadow—had ever understood them before. To begin with, he had a faculty of precise observation, the basis of all scientific research, which made him the most formidable of critics to any man of science whose eyesight might be temporarily affected by some preconceived theory. But this appreciation of detail in no way interfered with Ruskin’s romantic delight in the whole, in the sentiment and spirit of mountain landscapes. In some minds mountains take the place of cathedrals as a source of an emotion that may be called—in the wide sense of the word—religious. Ruskin was so happily constituted that he drew equal delight and inspiration both from architecture and scenery. No writer has added so much to our enjoyment of Alpine scenery as Ruskin.”³ His own emotions amid the mountains were, as we have seen in many a passage from his diaries, intensely religious. The verse which he quotes from the Psalms in the Fourth Volume (ch. xx. § 45) was the expression of personal experience: “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help.”

¹ *The National Review*, April 1900.

² Introduction to W. G. Collingwood’s *Limestone Alps of Savoy*.

³ *The Alpine Journal*, May 1900, vol. xx. p. 127. Ruskin was a member of the Club from 1869 to 1882. Some correspondence and reminiscences in connexion with it are given in a later volume.



J. Ruskin.

Allen & Co. DC.

The Valley of Lauterbrunnen
from the Castle of Manfred.

In Ruskin's mind, however, there was a deeper object in view than to arouse interest in Alpine scenery. The human interest was never long absent from his thoughts when contemplating scenes of natural beauty or grandeur. It was not only that he moralised the mountains. Matthew Arnold says of the nature-poetry of Wordsworth that it enables us, not so much to front "the cloud of mortal destiny," as to "put it by."¹ To Ruskin, the study of nature was a call to action. It has been suggested above that, from one point of view, the chapters of the fourth volume on "The Mountain Glory" and "The Mountain Gloom" belong to the analysis of landscape-sentiment which is given in the third volume; and that is true, but their actual place was essential in Ruskin's scheme: they contained the practical gist, as he intended it, of his mountain-studies. "All the investigations undertaken by me at this time were connected in my own mind," he says, "with the practical hope of arousing the attention of the Swiss and Italian mountain peasantry to an intelligent administration of the natural treasures of their woods and streams."² He refers in this connexion to the Letters (given in a later volume of this edition) on the subject of Inundations, and, as we shall see in a subsequent Introduction, he formed schemes a few years afterwards for coming himself to live among the Alps, and trying his hand at relieving the Mountain Gloom. And here, in these volumes, he begs his readers, if they condemn the seclusion of the anchorites, to show themselves worthier by seeking inspiration for practical benevolence from the mountain solitudes; he desires to interest them in the hard struggles of the peasant-life, and bids them remember how much might be done by well-devised charity "to fill a whole Alpine valley with happiness."³

The attractiveness of his themes, the addition of the illustrations, and the splendour of his style—chastened in these later volumes, and freed from the affectations of the second, assured them an appreciative welcome. He found, too, that his words on other subjects were beginning to be listened to. His appendices in *Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters* on Education attracted far more attention, he says, because part of his architectural and pictorial work, than ever afterwards his exclusively commercial and social analyses. He found interested listeners even in official circles, and a year or two later Royal Commissions and Select Committees called him before them.⁴ Meanwhile reviews in the press were numerous, and, on the whole,

¹ *Memorial Verses*.

² *Deucalion*, ii. ("Revision.")

³ Vol. iv. ch. xx. § 49, ch. xix. §§ 6, 32.

⁴ See his account of a visit to Lord Palmerston in *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 29.

very complimentary; his increasing popularity brought, on the other hand, some of the heavier organs into the field against him. But Ruskin's literary reputation was by this time so well established that it would not be of interest any longer to cite passages from the reviews whether favourable or the reverse.¹ One of the attacks upon him, however—that in the *Quarterly Review* for March 1856—requires mention as having called forth in reply one of the few productions of Burne-Jones's pen. This was an article entitled "Ruskin and the *Quarterly*," which he contributed to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* for June 1856, and which represented the joint feelings and views of himself and William Morris.² They repudiate with scorn the counterassertion of the *Quarterly* "that the function of art is not to express thought but to make pretty things," and describe how from the dead-level of criticism given over to worship of the conventional and the merely pretty, "this man John Ruskin rose, seeming to us like a Luther of the arts." An earlier article in the same magazine had referred to Ruskin as "speaking, if ever man spoke, by the spirit and approval of heaven."³ These volumes, said George Eliot a little later, of the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*, "contain, I think, some of the finest writing of the age. He is strongly akin to the sublimest part of Wordsworth."⁴ "I gave him my grateful thanks," wrote Edward Thring in after years; "it is a noble book, and did noble work at the time, and will continue to do so. It did what I should

¹ The following list of reviews, additional to those mentioned in the text (which, however, does not claim to be exhaustive), will show how widely and fully the Third and Fourth Volumes of *Modern Painters* were noticed in the press:—

Volume iii.—*Athenæum*, January 26, 1856; *Critic*, February 15; *London Literary Journal*, February 15; *Weekly Despatch*, February 17; *Leader*, February 23; *Saturday Review*, February 23, March 8, March 29; *Economist*, March 1; *Idler* (edited by E. Wilberforce), May 1856 (pp. 229–235); *British Quarterly Review*, April 1856, vol. 23, pp. 442–467; *Nonconformist*, April 16; *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, May 1856, vol. 7, pp. 490–500; *Eclectic Review*, June 1856, vol. 11, N. S., pp. 545–563; *The Press*, June 14; *Blackwood's Magazine*, November 1856, vol. 80, pp. 503–527 ("Mr. Ruskin and his Theories—Sublime and Ridiculous"); *North American Review*, January 1857, vol. 84, pp. 379–406 (by Charles C. Everett).

Volume iv.—*Daily News*, April 21, 1856; *Literary Gazette*, April 26; *Athenæum*, May 10; *Critic*, May 15, June 2; *Leader*, May 31, June 14, June 17; *The Press*, June 28; *Eclectic Review*, August 1856, vol. 12, N. S., pp. 107–130.

Both volumes together.—*Quarterly Review*, March 1856, vol. 98, pp. 384–433; *Edinburgh Review*, April 1856, vol. 103, pp. 535–557 (by G. F. Chorley); *Examiner*, May 31, 1856; *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1857, vol. 55, pp. 619–635 (by "Shirley," i.e., J. Skelton); *New Quarterly Review*, July 1856, vol. 5, pp. 257–262.

² The article is attributed to Morris in Mr. H. Buxton Forman's *The Books of William Morris* (1897, p. 27); but Mr. Mackail informs me that, while representing the opinions of both Morris and Burne-Jones, it was for the most part written by the latter.

³ April 1856, pp. 212–225.

⁴ Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Jan. 17, 1858, in *George Eliot's Life*, ii. 7.

have thought impossible; it smashed up for ever the narrow technicalities of artists, and altered the point of view not only for them, but for the whole world, and gave the seeing eye, and thought, and feeling a practical reality which they will never lose but never had before. . . . I am grateful to him for having put me into a new world of observation, beauty, power, and progressive thought which amounted to what I have called it—a new world; and every day adds to the obligation.”¹

The *text* of the Third Volume of *Modern Painters* does not present the same variations as in the case of the two earlier volumes. It was never revised by the author in any of the published editions, and for the most part such variations as occur are of the nature only of press corrections or misprints.

In this edition, however, a few alterations have either been made in the text, or are noted beneath it; these alterations are in accordance with the author’s markings in his own copy of the volume which he read for revision, about the year 1884, when he had some thought of re-casting the whole book. Several notes by the author of a later date than the original publication of the volume are, also, here given below the text; these were added by him to passages selected for publication in *Frondees Agrestes* in 1875. References to *Frondees* are only given where such notes occur; a general collation of the passages included in that volume having been already supplied (Vol. III. p. lxi.).

The *manuscripts* of the Third Volume to which the editors have had access, are described below (Appendix V., p. 433). They afford the same evidence as the MSS. of earlier volumes, of re-writing and revision. *Facsimiles* of two pages are given (pp. 80, 292–293). The MSS. include also several unpublished passages or discarded drafts. Extracts from these have occasionally been given in notes below the text (see, *e.g.*, pp. 21, 43, 44, 124, 149, 213); and two longer passages of some interest are printed in an Appendix (pp. 433–439).

The *illustrations* call for some notice. The third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856) was the first of that work to be illustrated, and the introduction of engravings had caused an enlargement of the page.² Some general remarks on the engravers employed by Ruskin are made in the Introduction to *The Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (1851), the earliest of his volumes in which he utilised their services. The engravers principally employed for that work—Lupton, Cuff, Armytage, and Boys—were again employed on *Modern Painters*; for a notice of them the

¹ *Life and Letters of Edward Thring*, by G. R. Parkin, 1898, vol. ii. pp. 245–246.

² See Vol. IV. p. xi.

reader is referred to the Introduction just mentioned (Vol. IX. p. 1.). Additional engravers were also employed. First among them was John Henry Le Keux,¹ who executed some of the most beautiful plates in Ruskin's book, and to whom, in conjunction with J. C. Armytage, the author pays a particular tribute in the Preface to this volume.² Le Keux (1812–1896) came of a family of engravers, and in his turn was employed by Ruskin to instruct Mr. Allen in the art.³ Shortly after the publication of *Modern Painters* he became connected by marriage with a firm of booksellers at Durham, where he resided for the remainder of his life; interesting himself further in archæology and floriculture, and being for many years secretary of the Durham School of Art. In the Preface to this volume, Ruskin mentions as his "assistant," Mr. J. J. Laing. He was at the time when Ruskin made his acquaintance an assistant in an architect's office, and had taken many prizes in schools of art. Many of Ruskin's letters to him have been published; these are collected in a later volume, and form an interesting series, as showing the trouble Ruskin took in acting as guide, philosopher, and friend to those who sought his counsel, and in whom he detected genuine ability. Mr. Laing was employed to draw figures and designs from illuminated manuscripts for the illustration of the present volume. Ruskin also utilised his services in various ways in connexion with the drawing-class at the Working Men's college. A few years later (1861) he revised and enlarged Bradley and Goodwin's *Manual of Illumination*, adding "Practical Notes" and a new series of illustrations on wood from illuminated MSS. in the British Museum and elsewhere. Some of Laing's drawings for this volume were cut on wood by Miss Byfield, who also did much work of the same kind for the later volumes; the same skilful wood-cutter engraved the ornament for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Ruskin pays his tribute to her skill both here (p. 12, below) and in the Fifth Volume (Preface, § 6 n.). Another helper, whose services Ruskin here acknowledges (p. 12), was Mr. Henry Shaw (1800–1873), antiquary and draughtsman, and author of a *Handbook of the Art of Illumination*.

It remains to describe the illustrations as given in the present volume. In some cases (Plates 6, 9, 13) the original steel plates have been used; for Plate 7 a new chromo-lithograph has been prepared; the rest of the original illustrations it has been necessary to reduce by photogravure, in order to suit the page of this edition. One steel plate,

¹ Le Keux engraved also six plates in *The Stones of Venice*, vol. ii., and two in vol. iii.

² See below, p. 10.

³ See Ruskin's letters to Le Keux, reprinted in a later volume from pp. 38–41 of the privately-printed (1892) *Letters from John Ruskin to Various Correspondents*.

engraved by Le Keux and not hitherto published, which Ruskin entrusted some years ago to Mr. Allen, has been added as further illustrating the author's comparisons between mediæval and modern landscape (p. 406). The subject of the frontispiece, and the place of Plates 14 and 15 are, it should be noted, explained by Ruskin in the Preface to the next volume (Vol. VI. p. 4).

Besides the engraving just referred to, eight additional illustrations are given, all of them being photogravures from Ruskin's drawings made during the years when he was writing the volume.

Plate A is a drawing of "Vevay in Spring," where some of this volume was written. The drawing, which is at Oxford (Educational Series, No. 298), is in water-colour on tinted paper ($6\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$).

Plate B is a general view of the mountain side at Chamouni. The drawing, which is deservedly ranked among the best of Ruskin's mountain studies, is at Brantwood. It is in pen and colour ($14\frac{1}{2} \times 12$).

Plate C shows in more detail the central portion of the same scene. The drawing, which is in pencil, pen, and wash ($14\frac{1}{2} \times 12$), is in the collection of Sir John Simon, K.C.B. It is of one of Ruskin's favourite haunts—"La Cascade de la Folie and its Uplands," he calls it, "as seen from the old Hotel de l'Union, Chamouni."

Plate D is one of Ruskin's studies for the analysis of the forms of the Matterhorn, given in the Fourth Volume; compare the engravings, Plates 38 and 39. The drawing, which is in water-colour ($13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$), is also in Sir John Simon's collection.

Plate E is a view of the mountains at the head of the Lake of Geneva, looking into the valley of the Rhone; the view is referred to in this volume (see p. 24). The drawing, which is in water-colour ($18\frac{1}{2} \times 8$), is in the same collection.

Plate F is a sketch at Fribourg (see above, p. xxxii.); the drawing, which is at Oxford (Educational Series, No. 114), is in pen ($5\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$).

Plate G is a drawing of the Walls of Lucerne (see above, p. xxxiii.); it is in water-colour ($19\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$), and is in the collection of Mr. Pritchard Gordon.

Plate H is from a drawing of the Valley of Lauterbrunnen—"between the village and Interlaken," is Ruskin's description, "a bit of the view from the Castle of Manfred." The reference is of course to Byron's poem. The castle is situated about a mile from Interlaken, a little beyond Matten on the direct road to Zweilütschinen and Lauterbrunnen. Its owners were the barons of Unspunnen, and it is supposed to have been the building which Byron had in his eye as the Castle of Manfred. The drawing, which is in pen and colour ($7\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$), is at Brantwood.

E. T. C.

[*Bibliographical Note*.—Enumeration is here made of the separate editions of *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. For the bibliography of the complete work, and of selections from it, see Vol. III. pp. lviii.-lxiii.

First Edition (1856).—The title-page was as follows:—

Modern Painters. | Volume III. | Containing | Part IV. | Of Many
Things. | By John Ruskin, M.A. | Author of “The Stones of Venice,” “The
Seven Lamps of Architecture,” etc. etc. | [*Quotation from Wordsworth, as in
vols. i. and ii.*] | London: | Smith, Elder, & Co., 65, Cornhill. | 1856
| [*The Author reserves the right of translation.*]

Imperial 8vo, pp. xix. +348. The Dedication printed in the former volumes was omitted. The Preface occupied pp. v.-xvi.; Contents, pp. xvii.-xviii.; List of Plates, p. xix.; Text, pp. 1–339; Appendix, pp. 341–348. The imprint at the foot of the last page, and of the reverse of the half-title, is “London: Printed by Spottiswoode & Co., New Street Square.” Issued on January 15, 1856, in green ornamental cloth boards, uniform with vol. ii. Price, 38s.

Second Edition (1867).—This was an exact reprint of the First (although there were two or three misprints), except for the alteration of the date, and the addition of the words “Second Edition,” on the title-page. No other editions of the volume were issued separately. “Edition 3” below means the first edition of the volume in the complete book (1873).

Variæ Lectiones.—As this volume was not revised for the press by the author after its first appearance, the various readings are of very small moment; but the usual collation of all the editions is given for the sake of completeness.

List of Plates—called “List of Plates to Vol. III.” in previous editions. The list here, p. xiii., is modelled on that in the original editions; but in No. 7 eds. 1 and 2 give, in the “engraved by” column, the names “Cuff; H. Swan”; and the 1888 edition “Messrs. Hanhart,” which also in No. 12 has “Boussod, Valadon & Co.,” and in Nos. 14 and 15 “George Allen.” The small complete edition has in No. 7 “Maclagan & Cumming,” and in Nos. 12, 14, 15, the same as in 1888. The list of woodcuts is here added.

Ch. ii. § 5, line 14 (see p. 38); quotation from Dante, eds. 1–3 read “Carey” for “Cary.”

Ch. iii. § 2, author’s note, the line of Dante has hitherto been incorrectly printed “Del ‘nò,’ per li danar, vi ‘si’ far ita”; § 4, line 12, ed. 3 reads “principle” for “principal”; § 12, note, second paragraph, line 6, eds. 1–3 read “line or colour” for “lines or colours.”

Ch. iv. § 9, line 7, “the next” altered to “this” in the present edition; § 16, line 33, “that” misprinted “what” in small complete edition; last words (see p. 90).

Ch. v. § 4, last line, ed. 3 reads “Corregio” for “Correggio”; § 6, eight lines from end, eds. 1–3 read “or grief” for “and grief.”

Ch. vii. § 8, first line of the Shakespeare quotation, eds. 1–3 read “invoke”; in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), and all later editions, the correct word “awake” is substituted.

Ch. viii. § 3, line 1, ed. 3 reads “former” for “form”; § 6, last line but three, “Medici” hitherto printed “Medicis”; § 7, line 28, “Tanto” hitherto printed “Tanta.”

Ch. ix. § 7, line 20, eds. 1–3 read “Dolce” for “Dolci”; § 9, line 25, ed. 3 reads “place” for “plate”; § 13, line 9, the word “opposite” is omitted in this edition after “Plate 5”; § 17, line 18, eds. 1–3 read “muscle-shells” for “mussel-shells.”

Ch. xii. § 4, second note, eds. 1–3 read “Wendel” for “Wendell”; § 13 (quotation from Delavigne), see p. 213 *n.*; § 15 *n.*, eds. 1–3 read “Maude” for “Maud.”

Ch. xiii. § 25, eight lines from end, all editions hitherto give wrongly the reference to “Od. ii.”; it should be “Od. xi.”; § 28, twenty-one lines from the end eds. 2 and 3 read “Scot” for “Scot”; in the third line of the terminal quotation from Shenstone, the MS. and eds. 1 and 2, 1873, 1888, read correctly “herds”; misprinted “herbs” in 1892 and subsequent editions.

Ch. xiv. § 10, line 13, ed. 2 reads “mediation” for “meditation”; § 26, in the small complete edition, Plate 9 was by mistake duplicated.

Ch. xvi. § 42, line 2, eds. 1–3 read “except” for “expect.”

Ch. xvii. §§ 7, 27, “Mrs. Radcliffe” hitherto printed “Mrs. Radclyffe”; § 9 *n.*, line 16, the second “with” is omitted in eds. 1–3.

Ch. xviii. §§ 33–39: these paragraphs are not numbered in eds. 1–3.]

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

v.

A

PREFACE

1. As this preface is nearly all about myself, no one need take the trouble of reading it, unless he happens to be desirous of knowing—what I, at least, am bound to state—the circumstances which have caused the long delay of the work, as well as the alterations which will be noticed in its form.

The first and second volumes were written to check, as far as I could, the attacks upon Turner which prevented the public from honouring his genius, at the time when his power was greatest. The check was partially given, but too late; Turner was seized by painful illness not long after the second volume appeared; his works, towards the close of the year 1845, showed a conclusive failure of power; and I saw that nothing remained for me to write, but his epitaph.¹

The critics had done their proper and appointed work; they had embittered, more than those who did not know Turner intimately could have believed possible, the closing years of his life;² and had blinded the world in general (as it appears ordained by Fate that the world always *shall* be blinded) to the presence of a great spirit among them, till the hour of its departure. With them, and their successful work, I had nothing more to do; the account of gain and loss, of gifts and gratitude, between Turner and his

¹ [The second volume appeared in 1846. In the Academy of that year Turner had several pictures; in 1847, only one; in 1848, none; in 1849, two; and in 1850, four; but all these latest works showed clear signs of failing powers: in 1846 both his mind and his sight partially failed—see Ruskin's outline of Turner's period in the *Notes on the Turner Collection*, 1856 (Vol. XIII.).]

² [See, again, the *Notes on the Turner Collection* (No. 530), where Ruskin gives a personal reminiscence to this effect.]

countrymen, was for ever closed. *He* could only be left to his quiet death at Chelsea,—the sun upon his face;¹ *they* to dispose a length of funeral through Ludgate, and bury, with threefold honour, his body in St. Paul's, his pictures at Charing Cross, and his purposes in Chancery. But with respect to the illustration and preservation of those of his works which remained unburied, I felt that much might yet be done, if I could at all succeed in proving that these works had some nobleness in them, and were worth preservation. I pursued my task, therefore, as I had at first proposed, with this only difference in method,—that instead of writing in continued haste, such as I had been forced into at first by the urgency of the occasion, I set myself to do the work as well as I could, and to collect materials for the complete examination of the canons of art received among us.

2. I have now given ten years of my life² to the single purpose of enabling myself to judge rightly of art, and spent them in labour as earnest and continuous as men usually undertake to gain position, or accumulate fortune. It is true, that the public still call me an “amateur”; nor have I ever been able to persuade them that it was possible to work steadily and hard with any other motive than that of gaining bread, or to give up a fixed number of hours every day to the furtherance of an object unconnected with personal interests. I have, however, given up so much of life to this object; earnestly desiring to ascertain, and be able to teach, the truth respecting art; and also knowing that this truth was, by time and labour, definitely ascertainable.

It is an idea too frequently entertained, by persons who

¹ [See *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 106 (Vol. XII. p. 133). For particulars of the controversy which arose on Turner's will, see Introduction to Vol. XIII.]

² [*i.e.*, from 1845; from the study of Italian art during his tour of that year Ruskin dated the beginning of his “man's work”: see Vol. IV. p. xxxiv. With § 2 here compare a similar passage in “The Mystery of Life and its Arts” in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 101.]

are not much interested in art, that there are no laws of right or wrong concerning it; and that the best art is that which pleases most widely. Hence the constant allegation of “dogmatism” against any one who states unhesitatingly either preference or principle, respecting pictures. There are, however, laws of truth and right in painting, just as fixed as those of harmony in music, or of affinity in chemistry. Those laws are perfectly ascertainable by labour, and ascertainable no otherwise. It is as ridiculous for any one to speak positively about painting who has not given a great part of his life to its study, as it would be for a person who had never studied chemistry to give a lecture on affinities of elements; but it is also as ridiculous for a person to speak hesitatingly about laws of painting who has conscientiously given his time to their ascertainment, as it would be for Mr. Faraday to announce in a dubious manner that iron had an affinity for oxygen, and to put the question to the vote of his audience whether it had or not.¹ Of course there are many things, in all stages of knowledge, which cannot be dogmatically stated; and it will be found, by any candid reader, either of what I have before written, or of this book, that, in many cases, I am *not* dogmatic. The phrase, “I think so,” or, “it seems so to me,” will be met with continually; and I pray the reader to believe that I use such expression always in seriousness, never as matter of form.

3. It may perhaps be thought that, considering the not very elaborate structure of the following volumes, they

¹ [So in a letter to Dr. Furnivall, Ruskin writes:—

“VEVAY, *June 9th*, 1854.— . . . I don’t say I wouldn’t care for reputation if I had it, but until people are ready to receive all I say about art as ‘unquestionable,’ just as they receive what Faraday tells them about chemistry, I don’t consider myself to have any reputation at all worth caring about.”

The letter, from which this is an extract, is among (pp. 30–33) the privately-printed (1897) *Letters from John Ruskin to Frederick J. Furnivall*, and is reprinted in a later volume of this edition. For the respect in which Ruskin held “good Professor Faraday” (1791–1867), see *Deucalion*, ch. iii.; and *Mornings in Florence*, § 33. Faraday was on the National Gallery Commission of 1857, before which Ruskin gave evidence (see Vol. XIII.).]

might have been finished sooner. But it will be found, on reflection, that the ranges of inquiry engaged in demanded, even for their slight investigation, time and pains which are quite unrepresented in the result. It often required a week or two's hard walking to determine some geological problem, now dismissed in an unnoticed sentence; and it constantly needed examination and thought, prolonged during many days in the picture gallery, to form opinions which the reader may suppose to be dictated by caprice, and will hear only to dispute.¹

A more serious disadvantage, resulting from the necessary breadth of subject, was the chance of making mistakes in minor and accessory points. For the labour of a critic who sincerely desires to be just, extends into more fields than it is possible for any single hand to furrow straightly. He has to take *some* note of many physical sciences; of optics, geometry, geology, botany, and anatomy; he must acquaint himself with the works of all great artists, and with the temper and history of the times in which they lived; he must be a fair metaphysician, and a careful observer of the phenomena of natural scenery.² It is not possible to extend the range of work thus widely, without running the chance of occasionally making mistakes; and if I carefully guarded against that chance, I should be compelled both to shorten my powers of usefulness in many directions, and to lose much time over what work I undertook. All that I can secure, therefore, is rightness in main points and main tendencies; for it is perfectly possible to protect oneself against small errors, and yet to make great and final error in the sum of work: on the other hand, it is equally possible to fall into many small errors, and yet be right in tendency all the while, and entirely

¹ [See the "Notes on the Louvre," given in Vol. XII. pp. 448–473, in order to exemplify the detailed studies of pictures on their technical side which Ruskin was in the habit of making.]

² [See in this connexion Ruskin's letter to Mrs. Carlyle, given in the Introduction, above, p. xlix.]

right in the end. In this respect, some men may be compared to careful travellers, who neither stumble at stones, nor slip in sloughs, but have, from the beginning of their journey to its close, chosen the wrong road; and others to those who, however slipping or stumbling at the wayside, have yet their eyes fixed on the true gate and goal (stumbling, perhaps, even the more because they have), and will not fail of reaching them. Such are assuredly the safer guides: he who follows them may avoid their slips, and be their companion in attainment.

Although, therefore, it is not possible but that, in the discussion of so many subjects as are necessarily introduced in the following pages, here and there a chance should arise of minor mistake or misconception, the reader need not be disturbed by the detection of any such. He will find always that they do not affect the matter mainly in hand.

4. I refer especially in these remarks to the chapters on Classical and Mediæval Landscape. It is certain, that in many respects, the views there stated must be inaccurate or incomplete; for how should it be otherwise when the subject is one whose proper discussion would require knowledge of the entire history of two great ages of the world? But I am well assured that the suggestions in those chapters are useful; and that even if, after farther study of the subject, the reader should find cause to differ from me in this or the other speciality, he will yet thank me for helping him to a certain length in the investigation, and confess, perhaps, that he could not at last have been right, if I had not first ventured to be wrong.

And of one thing he may be certified, that any error I fall into will not be in an illogical deduction: I may mistake the meaning of a symbol, or the angle of a rockcleavage, but not draw an inconsequent conclusion. I state this, because it has often been said that I am not logical, by persons who do not so much as know what logic means. Next to imagination, the power of perceiving logical relation

is one of the rarest among men: certainly, of those with whom I have conversed, I have found always ten who had deep feeling, quick wit, or extended knowledge, for one who could set down a syllogism without a flaw; and for ten who could set down a syllogism, only one who could *entirely* understand that a square has four sides. Even as I am sending these sheets to press, a work is put into my hand, written to prove (I would, from the depth of my heart, it could prove) that there was no ground for what I said in *The Stones of Venice* respecting the logical probability of the continuity of evil. It seems learned, temperate, thoughtful, everything in feeling and aim that a book should be, and yet it begins with this sentence:—

“The question cited in our preface, ‘Why not infinite good out of infinite evil?’ must be taken to imply—for it else can have no weight,—that in order to the production of infinite good, the existence of infinite evil is indispensable.”¹

So, if I had said that there was no reason why honey should not be sucked out of a rock, and oil out of a flinty rock, the writer would have told me this sentence must be taken to imply—for it else could have no weight,—that in order to the production of honey, the existence of rocks is indispensable. No less intense and marvellous are the logical errors into which our best writers are continually falling, owing to the notion that laws of logic will help them better than common sense. Whereas any man who can reason at all, does it instinctively, and takes leaps over intermediate syllogisms by the score, yet never misses his footing at the end of the leap; but he who cannot instinctively argue, might as well, with the gout in both feet, try to follow a chamois hunter by the help of crutches, as to follow, by

¹ [*On the Duration of Evil: an Essay*, 1855. The writer states in his preface (pp. iii., iv.) that among the reasons inducing him to restate the arguments for the finiteness of evil “is the circumstance—noticed by several friends—that a layman of admired ability, in whose cordial respect for religion they truly rejoice, has stepped aside, when treating of other topics, to cast a weapon at those opinions.” He then quotes from *The Stones of Venice* the last words of vol. iii. ch. iii. § 42 and the author’s footnote thereto (Vol. XI. p. 165).]

the help of syllogism, a person who has the right use of his reason. I should not, however, have thought it necessary to allude to this common charge against my writings,¹ but that it happens to confirm some views I have long entertained, and which the reader will find glanced at in their proper place,² respecting the necessity of a more *practically* logical education for our youth. Of other various charges I need take no note, because they are always answered the one by the other. The complaint made against me to-day for being narrow and exclusive, is met to-morrow by indignation that I should admire schools whose characters cannot be reconciled;³ and the assertion of one critic, that I am always contradicting myself, is balanced by the vexation of another, at my ten years' obstinacies in error.

5. I once intended the illustrations to these volumes to be more numerous and elaborate, but the art of photography now enables any reader to obtain as many memoranda of the facts of nature as he needs; and, in the course of my ten years' pause, I have formed plans for the representation of some of the works of Turner on their own scale; so that it would have been quite useless to spend time in reducing drawings to the size of this page, which were afterwards to be engraved of their own size.* I have therefore here only given illustrations enough to enable the reader,

* I should be very grateful to proprietors of pictures or drawings by Turner, if they would send me lists of the works in their possession; as I am desirous of forming a systematic catalogue of all his works.⁴

¹ [See above, Introduction, pp. liii.–liv.]

² [See Appendix iii. in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*.]

³ [See below, ch. x. § 5 *n.*, p. 173.]

⁴ [This scheme has been already referred to: see Vol. XII. p. 370 *n.* The systematic catalogue was never made by Ruskin, though in various places he cast typical works by Turner into various groups: see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. (where the *Liber Studiorum* is thus classified); *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, 1856; *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, 1878. The plans for the representation of some of Turner's works "on their own scale" were not carried out either; though, a few years later, Ruskin made a beginning towards its realisation, with the assistance of Mr. George Allen: see the reproductions (on a reduced scale) of some of the drawings thus treated in Vol. XIII.]

who has not access to the works of Turner, to understand the principles laid down in the text, and apply them to such art as may be within his reach. And I owe sincere thanks to the various engravers who have worked with me, for the zeal and care with which they have carried out the requirements in each case, and overcome difficulties of a nature often widely differing from those involved by their habitual practice. I would not make invidious distinction, where all have done well; but may perhaps be permitted to point, as examples of what I mean, to the 3rd and 6th Plates in this volume (the 6th being left unlettered in order not to injure the effect of its ground), in which Mr. Le Keux and Mr. Armytage have exactly facsimiled, in line engraving, drawings of mine made on a grey ground touched with white, and have given even the *loaded* look of the body colour. The power of thus imitating actual touches of colour with pure lines will be, I believe, of great future importance in rendering Turner's work on a large scale. As for the merit or demerit of these or other drawings of my own, which I am obliged now for the sake of illustration often to engrave, I believe I could speak of it impartially, and should unreluctantly do so; but I leave, as most readers will think I ought, such judgment to them, merely begging them to remember that there are two general principles to be kept in mind in examining the drawings of any writer on art: the first, that they ought at least to show such ordinary skill in draughtsmanship, as to prove that the writer knows *what* the good qualities of drawing *are*;¹ the second, that they are never to be expected to equal, in either execution or conception, the work of accomplished artists—for the simple reason that in order to do *anything* thoroughly well, the whole mind, and the whole available time, must be given to that single art. It is probable, for reasons which will be noted in the following pages, that the critical and executive faculties are

¹ [On this matter compare *Inaugural Address* at the Cambridge School of Art, § 7: "no man ever was a thorough judge of painting who could not draw."]

in great part independent of each other; so that it is nearly as great an absurdity to require of any critic that he should equal in execution even the work which he condemns, as to require of the audience which hisses a piece of vocal music that they should instantly chant it in truer harmony themselves. But whether this be true or not (it is at least untrue to this extent, that a certain power of drawing is *indispensable* to the critic of art), and supposing that the executive and critical powers always exist in some correspondent degree in the same person, still they cannot be cultivated to the same extent. The attention required for the development of a theory is necessarily withdrawn from the design of a drawing, and the time devoted to the realization of a form is lost to the solution of a problem. Choice *must* at last be made between one and the other power, as the principal aim of life; and if the painter should find it necessary sometimes to explain one of his pictures in words, or the writer to illustrate his meaning with a drawing, the skill of the one need not be doubted because his logic is feeble, nor the sense of the other because his pencil is listless.

6. As, however, it is sometimes alleged by the opponents of my principles, that I have never *done anything*, it is proper that the reader should know exactly the amount of work for which I am answerable in these illustrations. When an example is given from any of the works of Turner, it is either etched by myself from the original drawing, or engraved from a drawing of mine, translating Turner's work out of colour into black and white, as, for instance, the frontispiece to the fourth volume. When a Plate is inscribed as "*after*" such and such a master, I have always myself made the drawing, in black and white, from the original picture; as, for instance, Plate 11 in this volume. If it has been made from a previously existing engraving, it is inscribed with the name of the first engraver at the left-hand lowest corner; as, for instance, Plate 18 in vol. iv. Outline etchings are either by my

own hand on the steel, as Plate 12 here,¹ and 20, 21 in vol. iv.; or copies from my pen drawings, etched by Mr. Boys, with a fidelity for which I sincerely thank him; one, Plate 22, vol. iv., is both drawn and etched by Mr. Boys from an old engraving. Most of the other illustrations are engraved from my own studies from nature. The coloured Plate (7 in this volume) is from a drawing executed with great skill by my assistant, Mr. J. J. Laing, from MSS. in the British Museum; and the lithography of it has been kindly superintended by Mr. Henry Shaw, whose renderings of mediæval ornaments stand, as far as I know, quite unrivalled in modern art.² The two woodcuts of mediæval design, Figs. 1 and 3, are also from drawings by Mr. Laing, admirably cut by Miss Byfield.³ I use this word “admirably,” not with reference to mere delicacy of execution, which can usually be had for money, but to the perfect fidelity of facsimile, which is in general *not* to be had for money, and by which Miss Byfield has saved me all trouble with respect to the numerous woodcuts in the fourth volume; first, by her excellent renderings of various portions of Albert Dürer’s woodcuts; and, secondly, by reproducing, to their last dot or scratch, my own pen diagrams, drawn in general so roughly that few wood-engravers would have condescended to cut them with care, and yet always involving some points in which care was indispensable. One or two changes have been permitted in the arrangement of the book, which make the text in these volumes not altogether a symmetrical continuation of that in former ones. Thus, I thought it better to put the numbers of paragraphs always at the left-hand side of the page;⁴ and as the summaries, in small type, appeared to

¹ [In this edition reduced by photogravure. For a later reference to these and some other plates, as enabling the reader “to ascertain how far I can draw or not,” see *Two Paths*, Appendix v. (reprinted in this edition from the first edition of that book).]

² [In this edition reproduced by Messrs. Maclagan & Cumming.]

³ [See also Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v., and pt. vi. ch. x. § 9. For other notes on Ruskin’s engravers, see above, Introduction, p. lxii.]

⁴ [In this edition at the beginning of each paragraph.]

me for the most part cumbrous and useless, I have banished them, except where there were complicated divisions of subject which it seemed convenient to indicate at the margin. I am not sorry thus to carry out my own principle of the sacrifice of architectural or constructive symmetry to practical service.¹ The Plates are, in a somewhat unusual way, numbered consecutively through the two volumes, as I intend them to be also through the fifth. This plan saves much trouble in references.

I have only to express, in conclusion, my regret that it has been impossible to finish the work within the limits first proposed. Having, of late, found my designs always requiring enlargement in process of execution, I will take care, in future, to set no limits whatsoever to any good intentions. In the present instance I trust the reader will pardon me, as the later efforts of our schools of art have necessarily introduced many new topics of discussion.

And so I wish him heartily a happy New Year.

DENMARK HILL, *Jan.* 1856.

¹ [For a similar remark in connexion with another rearrangement, see Explanatory Note to the "Venetian Index" in *The Stones of Venice* (Vol. XI. pp. 355–356).]

PART IV
OF MANY THINGS

CHAPTER I

OF THE RECEIVED OPINIONS TOUCHING THE "GRAND STYLE"

§ 1. IN taking up the clue of an inquiry, now intermitted for nearly ten years,¹ it may be well to do as a traveller would, who had to recommence an interrupted journey in a guideless country; and, ascending, as it were, some little hill beside our road, note how far we have already advanced, and what pleasantest ways we may choose for farther progress.

I endeavoured, in the beginning of the first volume, to divide the sources of pleasure open to us in Art into certain groups, which might conveniently be studied in succession. After some preliminary discussion, it was concluded (Part I. Sec. II. Chap. III. § 6,) that these groups were, in the main, three; consisting, first, of the pleasures taken in perceiving simple resemblance to Nature (Ideas of Truth); secondly, of the pleasures taken in the beauty of the things chosen to be painted (Ideas of Beauty); and, lastly, of pleasures taken in the meanings and relations of these things (Ideas of Relation).

The first volume, treating of the Ideas of Truth, was chiefly occupied with an inquiry into the various success with which different artists had represented the facts of Nature,—an inquiry necessarily conducted very imperfectly, owing to the want of pictorial illustration.

The second volume merely opened the inquiry into the nature of ideas of Beauty and Relation, by analysing (as far as I was able to do so) the two faculties of the human

¹ [The second volume of *Modern Painters* was published in April 1846; the third in January 1856.]

mind which mainly seized such ideas; namely, the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

It remains for us to examine the various success of artists, especially of the great landscape-painter whose works have been throughout our principal subject, in addressing these faculties of the human mind, and to consider who among them has conveyed the noblest ideas of beauty, and touched the deepest sources of thought.

§ 2. I do not intend, however, now to pursue the inquiry in a method so laboriously systematic; for the subject may, it seems to me, be more usefully treated by pursuing the different questions which arise out of it just as they occur to us, without too great scrupulousness in marking connections, or insisting on sequences. Much time is wasted by human beings, in general, on establishment of systems;¹ and it often takes more labour to master the intricacies of an artificial connection, than to remember the separate facts which are so carefully connected. I suspect that system-makers, in general, are not of much more use, each in his own domain, than, in that of Pomona, the old women who tie cherries upon sticks, for the more convenient portableness of the same. To cultivate well, and choose well, your cherries, is of some importance; but if they can be had in their own wild way of clustering about their crabbed stalk, it is a better connection for them than any other; and, if they cannot, then, so that they be not bruised, it makes to a boy of a practical disposition not much difference whether he gets them by handfuls, or in beaded symmetry on the exalting stick. I purpose, therefore, henceforward to trouble myself little with sticks or twine, but to arrange my chapters with a view to convenient reference, rather than to any careful division of subjects, and to follow out, in any by-ways that may open, on right hand or left, whatever question it seems useful at any moment to settle.

§ 3. And, in the outset, I find myself met by one which I ought to have touched upon before—one of especial

¹ [Compare the Introduction, above, p. li., and below, p. 385 *n.*]

interest in the present state of the Arts. I have said that the art is greatest which includes the greatest ideas;¹ but I have not endeavoured to define the nature of this greatness in the ideas themselves. We speak of great truths, of great beauties, great thoughts. What is it which makes one truth greater than another, one thought greater than another? This question is, I repeat, of peculiar importance at the present time; for, during a period now of some hundred and fifty years, all writers on Art who have pretended to eminence, have insisted much on a supposed distinction between what they call the Great and the Low Schools; using the terms "High Art,"² "Great or Ideal Style," and other such, as descriptive of a certain noble manner of painting, which it was desirable that all students of Art should be early led to reverence and adopt; and characterising as "vulgar," or "low," or "realist," another manner of painting and conceiving, which it was equally necessary that all students should be taught to avoid.

But lately this established teaching, never very intelligible, has been gravely called in question. The advocates and self-supposed practisers of "High Art" are beginning to be looked upon with doubt, and their peculiar phraseology to be treated with even a certain degree of ridicule. And other forms of Art are partly developed among us, which do not pretend to be high, but rather to be strong, healthy, and humble. This matter of "highness" in Art, therefore, deserves our most careful consideration. Has it been, or is it, a true highness, a true princeliness, or only a show of it, consisting in courtly manners and robes of

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i., last words of ch. ii. (Vol. III. p. 92).]

² [The earliest use of the phrase "high art" given in Murray's *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* is in Kingsley's *Plays and Puritans* (1856, p. 31); but the phrase was certainly a current jest in 1846, when Wyatt's huge equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington was hoisted on to the arch at the top of Constitution Hill, from which it was removed in 1883. See also C. R. Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters* (1855, p. 60): "Latterly, the term 'High' has generally been exchanged for 'Religious,' which means Art of which the subjects are from the Bible or the legends of the Church. I should make no objection to the definition as a matter of convenience, and if understood no otherwise than of Art of which the theme is religious. But, I fear, it is too much received, and intended as defining a style necessarily differing from other styles."]

state? Is it rocky height or cloudy height, adamant or vapour, on which the sun of praise so long has risen and set? It will be well at once to consider this.

§ 4. And first, let us get, as quickly as may be, at the exact meaning with which the advocates of “High Art” use that somewhat obscure and figurative term.

I do not know that the principles in question are anywhere more distinctly expressed than in two papers in the *Idler*, written by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of course under the immediate sanction of Johnson; and which may thus be considered as the utterance of the views then held upon the subject by the artists of chief skill, and critics of most sense, arranged in a form so brief and clear, as to admit of their being brought before the public for a morning’s entertainment. I cannot, therefore, it seems to me, do better than quote these two letters, or at least the important parts of them, examining the exact meaning of each passage as it occurs. There are, in all, in the *Idler* three letters on painting, Nos. 76, 79, and 82; of these, the first is directed only against the impertinences of pretended connoisseurs, and is as notable for its faithfulness, as for its wit, in the description of the several modes of criticism in an artificial and ignorant state of society: it is only, therefore, in the two last papers that we find the expression of the doctrines which it is our business to examine.

No. 79 (Saturday, Oct. 20th, 1759) begins, after a short preamble, with the following passage:—

“Amongst the Painters, and the writers on Painting, there is one maxim universally admitted and continually inculcated. *Imitate nature* is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the consequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense—that objects are represented naturally, when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered, that,

if the excellency of a Painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, Painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to Poetry: this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the Painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the Art to claim kindred with Poetry, but by its power over the imagination? To this power the Painter of genius directs him; in this sense he studies Nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural in the confined sense of the word.

“The grand style of Painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of Poetry from that of History. (Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterise History; but the very being of Poetry consists in departing from this plain narrative, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination.*) To desire to see the excellences of each style united—to mingle the Dutch with the Italian school, is to join contrarieties which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other.”¹

§ 5. We find, first, from this interesting passage, that the writer considers the Dutch and Italian masters as severally

* I have put this sentence in a parenthesis, because it is inconsistent with the rest of the statement, and with the general teaching of the paper; since that which “attends only to the invariable,” cannot certainly adopt “every ornament that will warm the imagination.”

¹ [In one draft of the chapter Ruskin here pauses to point out at once “a dangerous obscurity in the author’s language. There are two kinds of imitative art: one, clumsy and coarse, which nevertheless attains very easily nearly a deceptive resemblance of reality, as in the common instances of game painted hanging up on boards, figures leaning over picture-frames, common scene-painting, and such like. The other kind of imitative art represents a great deal more of the details of the object, but by no means reaches a deceptive resemblance of it; as, for instance, a striking engraving by Albert Dürer, which no one would actually mistake for the scene or object represented. On the relations and possible unity of these two branches of imitative art, I shall have much to say presently; meanwhile I only wish to point out that Reynolds, or whoever this writer is,

representative of the low and high schools; next, that he considers the Dutch painters as excelling in a mechanical imitation, “in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best;” and, thirdly, that he considers the Italian painters as excelling in a style which corresponds to that of imaginative poetry in literature, and which has an exclusive right to be called the grand style.

I wish that it were in my power entirely to concur with the writer, and to enforce this opinion thus distinctly stated. I have never been a zealous partisan of the Dutch school, and should rejoice in claiming Reynolds’s authority for the assertion, that their manner was one “in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best.” But before his authority can be so claimed, we must observe exactly the meaning of the assertion itself, and separate it from the company of some others not perhaps so admissible. First, I say, we must observe Reynolds’s exact meaning, for (though the assertion may at first appear singular) a man who uses accurate language is always more liable to misinterpretation than one who is careless in his expressions. We may assume that the latter means very nearly what we at first suppose him to mean, for words which have been uttered without thought may be received without examination. But when a writer or speaker may be fairly supposed to have considered his expressions carefully, and, after having revolved a number of terms in his mind, to have chosen the one which *exactly* means the thing he intends to say, we may be assured that what costs him time to select, will require from us time to understand; and that we shall do him wrong, unless we pause to reflect how the word which he has actually employed differs from other words which it seems he *might* have employed. It thus constantly happens that persons themselves unaccustomed to think clearly, or

carelessly confuses the two; that he, in so doing, does injustice to many members of the imitative schools by speaking of them as if they all had no other aim than that of imitative relief; and he does too much honour to other members, who had indeed no other aim than this, by talking of them as on a level with writers of history, thus putting Paul Potter and . . . [name indecipherable] in the same rank with Thucydides.”]

speak correctly, misunderstand a logical and careful writer, and are actually in more danger of being misled by language which is measured and precise, than by that which is loose and inaccurate.¹

§ 6. Now, in the instance before us, a person not accustomed to good writing might very rashly conclude that when Reynolds spoke of the Dutch School as one "in which the slowest intellect was sure to succeed best," he meant to say that every successful Dutch painter was a fool. We have no right to take his assertion in that sense. He says, the *slowest* intellect. We have no right to assume that he meant the *weakest*. For it is true, that in order to succeed in the Dutch style, a man has need of qualities of mind eminently deliberate and sustained. He must be possessed of patience rather than of power; and must feel no weariness in contemplating the expression of a single thought for several months together. As opposed to the changeful energies of the imagination, these mental characters may be properly spoken of as under the general term—slowness of intellect. But it by no means follows that they are necessarily those of weak or foolish men.

We observe, however, farther, that the imitation which Reynolds supposes to be characteristic of the Dutch School is that which gives to objects such relief that they seem real, and that he then speaks of this art of realistic imitation as corresponding to *history* in literature.

§ 7. Reynolds, therefore, seems to class these dull works of the Dutch School under a general head, to which they are not commonly referred—that of *Historical* painting; while he speaks of the works of the Italian School not as historical, but as *poetical* painting. His next sentence will farther manifest his meaning.

"The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal

¹ [On this subject, in connexion with Ruskin himself, see *A Joy for Ever*, § 140.]

Nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth, and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of Nature modified by accident. The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, which ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other.

“If my opinion were asked concerning the works of Michael Angelo, whether they would receive any advantage from possessing this mechanical merit, I should not scruple to say, they would not only receive no advantage, but would lose, in a great measure, the effect which they now have on every mind susceptible of great and noble ideas. His works may be said to be all genius and soul; and why should they be loaded with heavy matter, which can only counteract his purpose by retarding the progress of the imagination?”

Examining carefully this and the preceding passage, we find the author’s unmistakable meaning to be, that Dutch painting is *history*; attending to literal truth and “minute exactness in the details of nature modified by accident.” That Italian painting is *poetry*, attending only to the invariable; and that works which attend only to the invariable are full of genius and soul; but that literal truth and exact detail are “heavy matter which retards the progress of the imagination.”

§ 8. This being then indisputably what Reynolds means to tell us, let us think a little whether he is in all respects right. And first, as he compares his two kinds of painting to history and poetry, let us see how poetry and history themselves differ, in their use of *variable* and *invariable* details. I am writing at a window which commands a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva; and as I look up from my paper, to consider this point, I see, beyond it, a blue breadth of softly moving water, and the outline of the

mountains above Chillon, bathed in morning mist. The first verses which naturally come into my mind are—

“A thousand feet in depth below
The massy waters meet and flow;
So far the fathom line was sent
From Chillon’s snow-white battlement.”¹

Let us see in what manner this poetical statement is distinguished from a historical one.

It is distinguished from a truly historical statement, first, in being simply false. The water under the Castle of Chillon is not a thousand feet deep, nor anything like it.* Herein, certainly, these lines fulfil Reynolds’s first requirement in poetry, “that it should be inattentive to literal truth and minute exactness in detail.” In order, however, to make our comparison more closely in other points, let us assume that what is stated is indeed a fact, and that it was to be recorded, first historically, and then poetically.

Historically stating it, then, we should say: “The lake was sounded from the walls of the Castle of Chillon, and found to be a thousand feet deep.”

Now, if Reynolds be right in his idea of the difference between history and poetry, we shall find that Byron leaves out of this statement certain *unnecessary* details, and retains only the invariable,—that is to say, the points which the Lake of Geneva and Castle of Chillon have in common with all other lakes and castles.

Let us hear, therefore.

“A thousand feet in depth below.”

“Below?” Here is, at all events, a word added (instead

* “MM. Mallet et Pictet, se trouvant sur le lac auprès du château de Chillon, le 6 Août, 1774, plongèrent à la profondeur de 312 pieds un thermomètre,” etc.—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. ii. § 33. It appears from the next paragraph that the thermometer was “au fond du lac.”

¹ [“The Prisoner of Chillon,” stanza vi. Ruskin quotes from memory; in the second line Byron wrote, “*Its massy waters,*” and in the next, “*Thus much the fathom-line.*”]

of anything being taken away); invariable, certainly in the case of lakes, but not absolutely necessary.

“The massy waters meet and flow.”

“Massy!” why massy? Because deep water is heavy. The word is a good word, but it is assuredly an added detail, and expresses a character, not which the Lake of Geneva has in common with all other lakes, but which it has in distinction from those which are narrow, or shallow.

§ 9. “Meet and flow.” Why meet and flow? Partly to make up a rhyme; partly to tell us that the waters are forceful as well as massy, and changeful as well as deep. Observe, a farther addition of details, and of details more or less peculiar to the spot, or, according to Reynolds’s definition, of “heavy matter, retarding the progress of the imagination.”

“So far the fathom line was sent.”

Why fathom line? All lines for sounding are not fathom lines. If the lake was ever sounded from Chillon, it was probably sounded in mètres, not fathoms. This is an addition of another particular detail, in which the only compliance with Reynolds’s requirement is, that there is some chance of its being an inaccurate one.

“From Chillon’s snow-white battlement.”

Why snow-white? Because castle battlements are not usually snow-white. This is another added detail, and a detail quite peculiar to Chillon, and therefore exactly the most striking word in the whole passage.

“Battlement!” Why battlement? Because all walls have not battlements, and the addition of the term marks the castle to be not merely a prison, but a fortress.

This is a curious result. Instead of finding, as we expected, the poetry distinguished from the history by the omission of details, we find it consist entirely in the *addition* of details; and instead of being characterised by regard only

of the invariable, we find its whole power to consist in the clear expression of what is singular and particular!

§ 10. The reader may pursue the investigation for himself in other instances. He will find in every case that a poetical is distinguished from a merely historical statement, not by being more vague, but more specific; and it might, therefore, at first appear that our author's comparison should be simply reversed, and that the Dutch School should be called poetical, and the Italian historical. But the term poetical does not appear very applicable to the generality of Dutch painting; and a little reflection will show us, that if the Italians represent only the invariable, they cannot be properly compared even to historians. For that which is incapable of change has no history, and records which state only the invariable need not be written, and could not be read.

§ 11. It is evident, therefore, that our author has entangled himself in some grave fallacy, by introducing this idea of invariableness as forming a distinction between poetical and historical art. What the fallacy is, we shall discover as we proceed; but as an invading army should not leave an untaken fortress in its rear, we must not go on with our inquiry into the views of Reynolds until we have settled satisfactorily the question already suggested to us, in what the essence of poetical treatment really consists. For though, as we have seen, it certainly involves the addition of specific details, it cannot be simply that addition which turns the history into poetry. For it is perfectly possible to add any number of details to a historical statement, and to make it more prosaic with every added word. As, for instance, "The lake was sounded out of a flat-bottomed boat, near the crab-tree at the corner of the kitchen-garden, and was found to be a thousand feet nine inches deep, with a muddy bottom." It thus appears that it is not the multiplication of details which constitutes poetry; nor their subtraction which constitutes history, but that there must be something either in the nature of the

details themselves, or the method of using them, which invests them with poetical power or historical propriety.

§ 12. It seems to me, and may seem to the reader, strange that we should need to ask the question, "What is poetry?" Here is a word we have been using all our lives, and, I suppose, with a very distinct idea attached to it; and when I am now called upon to give a definition of this idea, I find myself at a pause. What is more singular, I do not at present recollect hearing the question often asked, though surely it is a very natural one; and I never recollect hearing it answered, or even attempted to be answered. In general, people shelter themselves under metaphors, and while we hear poetry described as an utterance of the soul, an effusion of Divinity, or voice of nature, or in other terms equally elevated and obscure, we never attain anything like a definite explanation of the character which actually distinguishes it from prose.

§ 13. I come, after some embarrassment, to the conclusion, that poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions."¹ I mean, by the noble emotions, those four principal sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy (this latter especially, if unselfish);² and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief,—this last, when unselfish, becoming Compassion. These passions in their various combinations constitute what is called "poetical feeling," when they are felt on noble grounds, that is, on great and true grounds. Indignation, for instance, is a poetical feeling, if excited by serious injury; but it is not a poetical feeling if entertained on being cheated out of a small sum of money.³ It is very possible the manner of the cheat may have been

¹ ["1854 . . . Definition of Poetry, written at Vevay, looking across lake to Chillon. It leaves out rhythm, which I now consider a defect in said definition; otherwise good": see *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 10.]

² [Compare the line from Wordsworth—one of Ruskin's favourite lines from that poet—quoted in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 29), in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 5, in *The Art of England*, § 38; see also *Unto this Last*, § 77.]

³ [On Righteous Anger, see also *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 45); *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 226); *Lectures on Art*, § 89.]

such as to justify considerable indignation; but the feeling is nevertheless not poetical unless the grounds of it be large as well as just. In like manner, energetic admiration may be excited in certain minds by a display of fireworks, or a street of handsome shops; but the feeling is not poetical, because the grounds of it are false, and therefore ignoble. There is in reality nothing to deserve admiration either in the firing of packets of gunpowder, or in the display of the stocks of warehouses. But admiration excited by the budding of a flower is a poetical feeling, because it is impossible that this manifestation of spiritual power and vital beauty can ever be enough admired.

§ 14. Farther, it is necessary to the existence of poetry that the grounds of these feelings should be *furnished by the imagination*. Poetical feeling, that is to say, mere noble emotion, is not poetry. It is happily inherent in all human nature deserving the name, and is found often to be purest in the least sophisticated. But the power of assembling, by *the help of the imagination*, such images as will excite these feelings, is the power of the poet or literally of the "Maker."*

* Take, for instance, the beautiful stanza in the "Affliction of Margaret":

"I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said
That ever there was intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then, I should have sight
Of him I wait for, day and night,
With love and longing infinite."

This we call Poetry, because it is invented or *made* by the writer, entering into the mind of a supposed person. Next, take an instance of the actual feeling truly experienced and simply expressed by a real person.

"Nothing surprised me more than a woman of Argentière, whose cottage I went into to ask for milk, as I came down from the glacier of Argentière, in the month of March, 1764. An epidemic dysentery had prevailed in the village, and, a few months before, had taken away from her, her father, her husband, and her brothers, so that she was left alone, with three children in the cradle. Her face had something noble in it, and its expression bore the seal of a calm and profound sorrow. After having given me milk, she asked me whence I came, and what I came there to do, so early

Now this power of exciting the emotions depends of course on the richness of the imagination, and on its choice of those images which, in combination, will be most effective, or, for the particular work to be done, most fit. And it is altogether impossible for a writer not endowed with invention to conceive what tools a true poet will make use of, or in what way he will apply them, or what unexpected results he will bring out by them; so that it is vain to say that the details of poetry ought to possess, or ever do possess, any *definite* character. Generally speaking, poetry runs into finer and more delicate details than prose; but the details are not poetical because they are more delicate, but because they are employed so as to bring out an affecting result. For instance, no one but a true poet would have thought of exciting our pity for a bereaved father by describing his way of locking the door of his house:

“Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
 ‘The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead.’
 But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
 And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.”¹

In like manner, in painting, it is altogether impossible

in the year. When she knew that I was of Geneva, she said to me, ‘she could not believe that all Protestants were lost souls; that there were many honest people among us, and that God was too good and too great to condemn all without distinction.’ Then, after a moment of reflection, she added, in shaking her head, ‘But that which is very strange is that of so many who have gone away, none have ever returned. I,’ she added, with an expression of grief, ‘who have so mourned my husband and my brothers, who have never ceased to think of them, who every night conjure them with beseechings to tell me where they are, and in what state they are! Ah, surely, if they lived anywhere, they would not leave me thus! But, perhaps,’ she added, ‘I am not worthy of this kindness, perhaps the pure and innocent spirits of these children,’ and she looked at the cradle, ‘may have their presence, and the joy which is denied to me.’”—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. xxiv.

This we do not call Poetry, merely because it is not invented, but the true utterance of a real person.

¹ [Wordsworth: the last lines of “The Childless Father.”]

to say beforehand what details a great painter may make poetical by his use of them to excite noble emotions: and we shall, therefore, find presently that a painting is to be classed in the great or inferior schools, not according to the kind of details which it represents, but according to the uses for which it employs them.

§ 15. It is only farther to be noticed, that infinite confusion has been introduced into this subject by the careless and illogical custom of opposing painting to poetry, instead of regarding poetry as consisting in a noble use, whether of colours or words. Painting is properly to be opposed to *speaking* or *writing*, but not to *poetry*. Both painting and speaking are methods of expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes.

§ 16. This question being thus far determined, we may proceed with our paper in the *Idler*.

“It is very difficult to determine the exact degree of enthusiasm that the arts of Painting and Poetry may admit. There may, perhaps, be too great an indulgence as well as too great a restraint of imagination; if the one produces incoherent monsters, the other produces what is full as bad, lifeless insipidity. An intimate knowledge of the passions, and good sense, but not common sense, must at last determine its limits. It has been thought, and I believe with reason, that Michael Angelo sometimes transgressed those limits; and, I think, I have seen figures of him of which it was very difficult to determine whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous. Such faults may be said to be the ebullitions of genius; but at least he had this merit, that he never was insipid; and whatever passion his works may excite, they will always escape contempt.

“What I have had under consideration is the sublimest style, particularly that of Michael Angelo, the Homer of painting. Other kinds may admit of this naturalness, which of the lowest kind is the chief merit; but in painting,

as in poetry, the highest style has the least of common nature.”

From this passage we gather three important indications of the supposed nature of the Great Style. That it is the work of men in a state of enthusiasm. That it is like the writing of Homer; and that it has as little as possible of “common nature” in it.

§ 17. First, it is produced by men in a state of enthusiasm. That is, by men who feel *strongly* and *nobly*; for we do not call a strong feeling of envy, jealousy, or ambition, enthusiasm. That is, therefore, by men who feel poetically. This much we may admit, I think, with perfect safety. Great art is produced by men who feel acutely and nobly; and it is in some sort an expression of this personal feeling. We can easily conceive that there may be a sufficiently marked distinction between such art, and that which is produced by men who do not feel at all, but who reproduce, though ever so accurately, yet coldly, like human mirrors, the scenes which pass before their eyes.

§ 18. Secondly, Great Art is like the writing of Homer, and this chiefly because it has little of “common nature” in it. We are not clearly informed what is meant by common nature in this passage. Homer seems to describe a great deal of what is common:—cookery, for instance, very carefully in all its processes.¹ I suppose the passage in the *Iliad* which, on the whole, has excited most admiration, is that which describes a wife’s sorrow at parting from her husband, and a child’s fright at its father’s helmet;² and I hope, at least, the former feeling may be considered “common nature.” But the true greatness of Homer’s style is, doubtless, held by our author to consist in his imaginations of things not only uncommon but impossible (such as spirits in brazen armour, or monsters with heads of men and bodies of beasts), and in his occasional delineations of

¹ [See, for instance, *Iliad*, i. 463 *seq.*]

² [*Iliad*, vi. 468.]

the human character and form in their utmost, or heroic, strength and beauty. We gather then on the whole, that a painter in the Great Style must be enthusiastic, or full of emotion, and must paint the human form in its utmost strength and beauty, and perhaps certain impossible forms besides, liable by persons not in an equally enthusiastic state of mind to be looked upon as in some degree absurd. This I presume to be Reynolds’s meaning, and to be all that he intends us to gather from his comparison of the Great Style with the writings of Homer. But if that comparison be a just one in all respects, surely two other corollaries ought to be drawn from it, namely,—first, that these Heroic or Impossible images are to be mingled with others very unheroic and very possible; and, secondly, that in the representation of the Heroic or Impossible forms, the greatest care must be taken in *finishing the details*, so that a painter must not be satisfied with painting well the countenance and the body of his hero, but ought to spend the greatest part of his time (as Homer the greatest number of verses) in elaborating the sculptured pattern on his shield.

§ 19. Let us, however, proceed with our paper.

“One may very safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern Painters; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age. The Italians seem to have been continually declining in this respect from the time of Michael Angelo to that of Carlo Maratti,¹ and from thence to the very bathos of insipidity to which they are now sunk; so that there is no need of remarking, that where I mentioned the Italian painters in opposition to the Dutch, I mean not the moderns, but the heads of the old Roman and Bolognian Schools; nor did I mean to include, in my idea of an Italian painter, the Venetian school, *which may be said to be the Dutch part of the Italian genius*.

¹ [Called also Carlo delle Madonne, 1625–1713. There is a portrait by him in the National Gallery, No. 174.]

I have only to add a word of advice to the Painters,—that, however excellent they may be in painting naturally, they would not flatter themselves very much upon it; and to the Connoisseurs, that when they see a cat or a fiddle painted so finely, that, as the phrase is, it looks as if you could take it up, they would not for that reason immediately compare the Painter to Raffaele and Michael Angelo.”

In this passage there are four points chiefly to be remarked. The first, that in the year 1759 the Italian painters were, in our author’s opinion, sunk in the very bathos of insipidity. The second, that the Venetian painters, *i.e.*, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese, are, in our author’s opinion, to be classed with the Dutch; that is to say, are painters in a style “in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best.” Thirdly, that painting naturally is not a difficult thing, nor one on which a painter should pride himself. And, finally, that connoisseurs, seeing a cat or a fiddle successfully painted, ought not therefore immediately to compare the painter to Raphael or Michael Angelo.

Yet Raphael painted fiddles very carefully in the foreground of his St. Cecilia,—so carefully, that they quite look as if they might be taken up. So carefully, that I never yet looked at the picture without wishing that somebody *would* take them up, and out of the way.¹ And I am under a very strong persuasion that Raphael did not think painting “naturally” an easy thing. It will be well to examine into this point a little; and for the present, with the reader’s permission, we will pass over the first two statements in this passage (touching the character of Italian art in 1759, and of Venetian art in general), and immediately examine some of the evidence existing as to the real dignity of “natural” painting—that is to say, of painting carried to the point at which it reaches a deceptive appearance of reality.

¹ [See again, below, ch. ii. § 1; and for other references to the picture, Vol. IV. p. 212.]

CHAPTER II

OF REALIZATION

§ 1. IN the outset of this inquiry, the reader must thoroughly understand that we are not now considering *what* is to be painted, but *how far* it is to be painted. Not whether Raphael does right in representing angels playing upon violins, or whether Veronese does right in allowing cats and monkeys to join the company of kings:¹ but whether, supposing the subjects rightly chosen, they ought on the canvas to look like real angels with real violins, and substantial cats looking at veritable kings; or only like imaginary angels with soundless violins, ideal cats, and unsubstantial kings.

Now, from the first moment when painting began to be a subject of literary inquiry and general criticism, I cannot remember any writer, not professedly artistical, who has not, more or less, in one part of his book or another, countenanced the idea that the great end of art is to produce a deceptive resemblance of reality. It may be, indeed, that we shall find the writers, through many pages, explaining principles of ideal beauty, and professing great delight in the evidences of imagination. But whenever a picture is to be definitely described,—whenever the writer desires to convey to others some impression of an extraordinary excellence, all praise is wound up with some such statements as these: “It was so exquisitely painted that you expected the figures to move and speak; you approached the flowers to enjoy their smell, and stretched your hand towards the fruit which had fallen from the branches. You shrunk back lest

¹ [For Veronese’s own view of this matter, see the passage quoted by Ruskin in an appendix to his *Guide to the Academy at Venice*.]

the sword of the warrior should indeed descend, and turned away your head that you might not witness the agonies of the expiring martyr.”

§ 2. In a large number of instances, language such as this will be found to be merely a clumsy effort to convey to others a sense of the admiration, of which the writer does not understand the real cause in himself. A person is attracted to a picture by the beauty of its colour, interested by the liveliness of its story, and touched by certain countenances or details which remind him of friends whom he loved, or scenes in which he delighted. He naturally supposes that what gives him so much pleasure must be a notable example of the painter's skill; but he is ashamed to confess, or perhaps does not know, that he is so much a child as to be fond of bright colours and amusing incidents; and he is quite unconscious of the associations which have so secret and inevitable a power over his heart. He casts about for the cause of his delight, and can discover no other than that he thought the picture like reality.

§ 3. In another, perhaps, a still larger number of cases, such language will be found to be that of simple ignorance—the ignorance of persons whose position in life compels them to speak of art, without having any real enjoyment of it. It is inexcusably required from people of the world that they should see merit in Claudes and Titians; and the only merit which many persons can either see or conceive in them is, that they must be “like nature.”

§ 4. In other cases, the deceptive power of the art is really felt to be a source of interest and amusement. This is the case with a large number of the collectors of Dutch pictures. They enjoy seeing what is flat made to look round, exactly as a child enjoys a trick of legerdemain: they rejoice in flies which the spectator vainly attempts to brush away,¹ and in dew which he endeavours to dry by

¹ [See Ruskin's remarks on Vasari's anecdote of the fly supposed to have been painted by Giotto upon the nose of one of Cimabue's pictures, “Review of Lord Lindsay,” § 45 (Vol. XII. p. 213). On the subject of pictures as windows, see

putting the picture in the sun. They take it for the greatest compliment to their treasures that they should be mistaken for windows; and think the parting of Abraham and Hagar adequately represented if Hagar seems to be really crying.

It is against critics and connoisseurs of this latter stamp (of whom in the year 1759, the juries of art were for the most part composed) that the essay of Reynolds, which we have been examining, was justly directed. But Reynolds had not sufficiently considered that neither the men of this class, nor of the two other classes above described, constitute the entire body of those who praise Art for its realization; and that the holding of this apparently shallow and vulgar opinion cannot, in all cases, be attributed to the want either of penetration, sincerity, or sense. The collector of Gerard Dows and Hobbimas may be passed by with a smile; and the affectations of Walpole and simplicities of Vasari¹ dismissed with contempt or with compassion. But very different men from these have held precisely the same language; and one, amongst the rest, whose authority is absolutely, and in all points, overwhelming.

§ 5. There was probably never a period in which the influence of art over the minds of men seemed to depend less on its merely *imitative* power, than the close of the thirteenth century. No painting or sculpture at that time reached more than a rude resemblance of reality. Its despised perspective, imperfect chiaroscuro, and unrestrained flights of fantastic imagination, separated the artist's work from nature by an interval which there was no attempt to disguise, and little to diminish. And yet, at this very period, the greatest poet of that, or perhaps of any other age, and the attached friend of its greatest painter,² who

below, ch. x., pp. 171–173. The picture of Abraham and Hagar, often praised for its accurate delineation of a tear-drop, is the one by Guercino in the Brera at Milan: see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 203 n.).]

¹ [For Ruskin's opinion of Vasari, see note on Vol. XII. p. 258 n.]

² [So in the *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin calls Dante "the central man of all the world": see Vol. XI. p. 187, and compare Vol. XII. p. 477. For the relations of Dante and Giotto, see *Modern Painters*, Vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 188), and in this volume, ch. xviii. § 2; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 400); *Ariadne Florentina*, § 58; and *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 2, 6, 26, 48, 53.]

must over and over again have held full and free conversation with him respecting the objects of his art, speaks in the following terms of painting and sculpture,¹ supposed to be carried to its highest perfection:—

“Qual di pannel fu maestro, e di stile,
 Che ritraesse l’ ombre e i tratti, ch’ ivi
 Mirar farieno uno ingegno sottile?
 Morti li morti, e i vivi parean vivi:
 Non vide me’ di me, chi vide il vero,
 Quant’ io calcai, fin che chinato givi.”
 —DANTE, *Purgatorio*, canto xii. l. 64.

“What master of the pencil, or the style,
 Had traced the shades and lines that might have made
 The subtlest workman wonder? *Dead, the dead,*
The living seemed alive; with clearer view,
His eye beheld not, who beheld the truth,
 Than mine what I did tread on, while I went
 Low bending.” —CARY.

Dante has here clearly no other idea of the highest art than that it should bring back, as a mirror or vision, the aspect of things passed or absent.² The scenes of which he speaks are, on the pavement, for ever represented by angelic power, so that the souls which traverse this circle of the rock may see them, as if the years of the world had been rolled back, and they again stood beside the actors in the moment of action. Nor do I think that Dante’s authority is absolutely necessary to compel us to admit that such art as this *might*, indeed, be the highest possible. Whatever delight we may have been in the habit of taking in pictures, if it were but truly offered to us, to remove at our will the canvas from the frame, and in lieu of it to behold, fixed for ever, the image of some of those mighty scenes which it has been our way to make mere themes for the artist’s fancy; if, for instance, we could again behold the Magdalene receiving her pardon at Christ’s feet, or the disciples sitting with Him at the table of Emmaus; and this,

¹ [The words “and sculpture” are here inserted in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision. He no doubt remembered that in the passage quoted Dante is describing not paintings but sculpture, or rather “graffiti.” In the first line of the quotation “o di stile” is now the accepted reading.]

² [See, for example, *Purgatorio*, x. 31 *seq.*]

not feebly nor fancifully, but as if some silver mirror that had leaned against the wall of the chamber, had been miraculously commanded to retain for ever the colours that had flashed upon it for an instant,—would we not part with our picture—Titian’s or Veronese’s though it might be?¹

§ 6. Yes, the reader answers, in the instance of such scenes as these, but not if the scene represented were uninteresting. Not, indeed, if it were utterly vulgar or painful; but we are not yet certain that the art which represents what is vulgar or painful is itself of much value; and with respect to the art whose aim is beauty, even of an inferior order, it seems that Dante’s idea of its perfection has still much evidence in its favour. For among persons of native good sense, and courage enough to speak their minds, we shall often find a considerable degree of doubt as to the use of art, in consequence of their habitual comparison of it with reality. “What is the use, to me, of the painted landscape?” they will ask: “I see more beautiful and perfect landscapes every day of my life in my forenoon walk.” “What is the use, to me, of the painted effigy of hero or beauty? I can see a stamp of higher heroism, and light of purer beauty, on the faces round me, utterly inexpressible by the highest human skill.”² Now, it is evident that to persons of this temper the only valuable pictures would, indeed, be *mirrors*, reflecting permanently the images of the things in which they took delight, and of the faces that they loved.³ “Nay,” but the reader interrupts

¹ [For the particular works by Veronese referred to, see § 10 of the next chapter; for Titian’s “Emmaus” see “Notes on the Louvre” in Vol. XII. p. 451, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 13.]

² [In one draft of the chapter Ruskin here continued:—

“And, indeed, I think these persons much in the right. They know little of rural nature, who cannot see, in every hundred yards of her wild roads, landscapes more fair than were ever painted by human hand. They know little of humanity, whose only conceptions of heroism are formed from statues, and whose sympathy or reverence is excitable only by arched eyebrows and well turned limbs.”]

³ [In his copy for revision Ruskin notes here, “Quote Carlyle on Frederick picture.” The reference is to *Friedrich*, book iv. ch. vi.: “Why it is, probably, that Pictures exist in this world, and to what end the divine art of Painting was bestowed, by the earnest gods, upon poor mankind? I could advise it, once, for

(if he is of the Idealist school), “I deny that more beautiful things are to be seen in nature than in art; on the contrary, everything in nature is faulty, and art represents nature as perfected.” Be it so. Must, therefore, this perfected nature be imperfectly represented? Is it absolutely required of the painter, who has conceived perfection, that he should so paint it as to look only like a picture? Or is not Dante’s view of the matter right even here, and would it not be well that the perfect conception of Pallas should be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than merely like a picture of Pallas?¹

§ 7. It is not easy for us to answer this question rightly, owing to the difficulty of imagining any art which should reach the perfection supposed. Our actual powers of imitation are so feeble that wherever deception is attempted, a subject of a comparatively low or confined order must be chosen. I do not enter at present into the inquiry how far the powers of imitation extend; but assuredly up to the present period they have been so limited that it is hardly possible for us to conceive a deceptive art embracing a high range of subject. But let the reader make the effort, and consider seriously what he would give at any moment to have the power of arresting the fairest scenes, those which so often rise before him only to vanish; to stay the cloud in its fading, the leaf in its trembling, and the shadows in their changing; to bid the fitful foam be fixed upon the river, and the ripples be everlasting upon the lake; and then to bear away with him no darkened or feeble sun-stain (though even that is beautiful), but a counterfeit which should seem no counterfeit—the true and perfect image of life indeed.² Or rather (for the full majesty of such a power is not thus sufficiently expressed) let him consider that it

a little! . . . I say, Here withal is one not phantasmal; of indisputable certainty. . . . Welcome, like one tiny islet of Reality amid the shoreless sea of Phantasms, to the reflective mind, seriously loving and seeking what is worthy and memorable, seriously hating and avoiding what is the reverse, and intent not to play the dilettante in this world.”]

¹ [See *Purgatorio*, xii. 31.]

² [Compare *Lectures on Art*, § 187, where Ruskin quotes and applies this passage.]

would be in effect nothing else than a capacity of transporting himself at any moment into any scene—a gift as great as can be possessed by a disembodied spirit: and suppose, also, this necromancy embracing not only the present but the past, and enabling us seemingly to enter into the very bodily presence of men long since gathered to the dust; to behold them in act as they lived, but—with greater privilege than ever was granted to the companions of those transient acts of life—to see them fastened at our will in the gesture and expression of an instant, and stayed, on the eve of some great deed, in immortality of burning purpose. Conceive, so far as it is possible, such power as this, and then say whether the art which conferred it is to be spoken lightly of, or whether we should not rather reverence, as half divine, a gift which would go so far as to raise us into the rank, and invest us with the felicities, of angels?¹

Yet such would imitative art be in its perfection. Not by any means an easy thing, as Reynolds supposes it. Far from being easy, it is so utterly beyond all human power that we have difficulty even in conceiving its nature or results—the best art we as yet possess comes so far short of it.

§ 8. But we must not rashly come to the conclusion that such art would, indeed, be the highest possible. There is much to be considered hereafter on the other side; the only conclusion we are as yet warranted in forming is, that Reynolds had no right to speak lightly or contemptuously of imitative art; that in fact, when he did so, he had not conceived its entire nature, but was thinking of some vulgar conditions of it, which were the only ones known to him,

¹ [In *Fronde Agrestes*, Section ii., “Power and Office of Imagination,” a passage from chapter iv. (§ 5, below, p. 72) is first given (§ 9 in *Fronde*); then (at the beginning of § 10) the following words are inserted as a connecting link: “Yet because we thus reverence the power and art of imagination, let none of us despise the power and art of memory;” and then the passage here follows: “Let the reader consider seriously what he would give . . .” down to “felicities of angels,” at which latter point Ruskin adds in *Fronde* (1875), the following note:—

“Passage written in opposition to the vulgar notion that the ‘mere imitation’ of nature is easy, and useless.”]

and that, therefore, his whole endeavour to explain the difference between great and mean art has been disappointed; that he has involved himself in a crowd of theories, whose issue he had not foreseen, and committed himself to conclusions which he never intended. There is an instinctive consciousness in his own mind of the difference between high and low art; but he is utterly incapable of explaining it, and every effort which he makes to do so involves him in unexpected fallacy and absurdity. It is *not* true that Poetry does not concern herself with minute details. It is *not* true that high art seeks only the Invariable. It is *not* true that imitative art is an easy thing. It is *not* true that the faithful rendering of nature is an employment in which “the slowest intellect is likely to succeed best.” All these successive assertions are utterly false and untenable, while the plain truth, a truth lying at the very door, has all the while escaped him,—that which was incidentally stated in the preceding chapter,—namely, that the difference between great and mean art lies, not in definable methods of handling, or styles of representation, or choices of subjects, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed. We cannot say that a painter is great because he paints boldly, or paints delicately; because he generalizes or particularizes; because he loves detail, or because he disdains it. He is great if, by any of these means, he has laid open noble truths, or aroused noble emotions. It does not matter whether he paint the petal of a rose, or the chasms of a precipice, so that Love and Admiration attend him as he labours, and wait for ever upon his work. It does not matter whether he toil for months upon a few inches of his canvas, or cover a palace front with colour in a day, so only that it be with a solemn purpose that he has filled his heart with patience, or urged his hand to haste. And it does not matter whether he seek for his subjects among peasants or nobles, among the heroic or the simple, in courts or in fields, so only that he behold all things with a thirst for beauty, and a hatred

of meanness and vice. There are, indeed, certain methods of representation which are usually adopted by the most active minds, and certain characters of subject usually delighted in by the noblest hearts; but it is quite possible, quite easy, to adopt the manner of painting without sharing the activity of mind, and to imitate the choice of subject without possessing the nobility of spirit; while, on the other hand, it is altogether impossible to foretell on what strange objects the strength of a great man will sometimes be concentrated, or by what strange means he will sometimes express himself. So that true criticism of art never can consist in the mere application of rules; it can be just only when it is founded on quick sympathy with the innumerable instincts and changeful efforts of human nature, chastened and guided by unchanging love of all things that God has created to be beautiful, and pronounced to be good.¹

¹ [An earlier draft of the concluding portion of this chapter is different:—

“Let either the artist base his efforts, or the critic his opinion, on a *desire to be great*, and they are as sure to fall into a spurious art, and a false judgment, as if they had deliberately chosen the paths of Darkness. Both of them must love what is beautiful and right for its own sake, and must follow it, and judge of it, by instinct. . . . They may rest assured that they are never right but when they were working for enjoyment, or judging by enjoyment; if they enjoy what is wrong, they may discipline themselves, so as to enjoy something else, but if they once pretend that they enjoy what they do not, it is all over with them. One honest question, therefore, will always keep both artists and critics right: ‘Do I heartily love this? Am I doing it for love of it? Am I praising it for love of it? If not, I will not do it, I will not praise it.’ ”

This earlier draft much resembles a passage in *The Two Paths*, § 49.]

CHAPTER III

OF THE REAL NATURE OF GREATNESS OF STYLE

§ 1. I DOUBT not that the reader was ill-satisfied with the conclusion arrived at in the last chapter. That “great art” is art which represents what is beautiful and good, may not seem a very profound discovery; and the main question may be thought to have been all the time lost sight of, namely, “What is beautiful, and what is good?” No; those are not the main, at least not the first questions; on the contrary, our subject becomes at once opened and simplified as soon as we have left those the *only* questions.¹ For observe, our present task, according to our old plan, is merely to investigate the relative degrees of the *beautiful* in the art of different masters; and it is an encouragement to be convinced, first of all, that what is lovely will also be great, and what is pleasing, noble. Nor is the conclusion so much a matter of course as it at first appears, for, surprising as the statement may seem, all the confusion into which Reynolds has plunged both himself and his readers, in the essay we have been examining, results primarily from a doubt in his own mind *as to the existence of beauty*

¹ [In a previous draft of the chapter Ruskin here says that the conclusion already reached at any rate had the advantage of widening our scope of admiration:—

“If it was determined to hold with the writer whose opinion we have been examining that Michael Angelo’s was the great manner, we should have been compelled to pass by Angelico and Rembrandt with contempt. If we allowed ourselves to be convinced by any of the arguments adduced in favour of merely imitative art, and assumed realization to be the test of powers, a few cabinet pictures of Mieris might have been constituted the types, and fixed the limits of our admiration. But our present conclusion, though somewhat vague, is at least liberal; and though it may seem to multiply the chances of mistake, multiplies also the permissions of enjoyment. It is curious how much mankind stand in need of such permission:—how they ask one another’s leave to follow their own instincts.”]

at all. In the next paper I alluded to, No. 82 (which needs not, however, to be examined at so great length), he calmly attributes the whole influence of beauty to custom, saying, that “he has no doubt, if we were more used to deformity than to beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if the whole world should agree that Yes and No should change their meanings; Yes would then deny, and No would affirm!”

§ 2. The world does, indeed, succeed—oftener than is, perhaps, altogether well for the world—in making Yes mean No, and No mean Yes.* But the world has never succeeded, nor ever will, in making itself delight in black clouds more than in blue sky, or love the dark earth better than the rose that grows from it. Happily for mankind, beauty and ugliness are as positive in their nature as physical pain and pleasure, as light and darkness, or as life and death; and though they may be denied or misunderstood in many fantastic ways, the most subtle reasoner will at last find that colour and sweetness are still attractive to him, and that no logic will enable him to think the rainbow sombre, or the violet scentless. But the theory that beauty was merely a result of custom was very common in Johnson’s time. Goldsmith has, I think, expressed it with more force and wit than any other writer, in various passages of the *Citizen of the World*.¹ And it was, indeed, a curious retribution of the folly of the world of art, which for some three centuries had given itself recklessly to the

* De no per li denar vi si far “ita.”²

¹ [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 67), where (in a note of 1883) *The Citizen of the World* is again referred to in this connexion. See especially Letter 3 *ad fin.*: “To speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horribly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; they no way resemble the beauties of China; the Europeans have a quite different idea of beauty from us. When I reflect on the small-footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long . . . and teeth of a most odious whiteness.”]

² [Dante: *Inferno*, xxi. 42: “Of ‘no’ for lucre there an ‘ay’ is quickly made” (Cary).]

pursuit of beauty, that at last it should be led to deny the very existence of what it had so morbidly and passionately sought. It was as if a child should leave its home to pursue the rainbow, and then, breathless and hopeless, declare that it did not exist. Nor is the lesson less useful which may be gained in observing the adoption of such a theory by Reynolds himself. It shows how completely an artist may be unconscious of the principles of his own work, and how he may be led by instinct to *do* all that is right, while he is misled by false logic to *say* all that is wrong. For nearly every word that Reynolds wrote was contrary to his own practice; he seems to have been born to teach all error by his precept, and all excellence by his example;¹ he enforced with his lips generalization and idealism, while with his pencil he was tracing the patterns of the dresses of the belles of his day; he exhorted his pupils to attend only to the invariable, while he himself was occupied in distinguishing every variation of womanly temper; and he denied the existence of the beautiful, at the same instant that he arrested it as it passed, and perpetuated it for ever.

§ 3. But we must not quit the subject here. However inconsistently or dimly expressed, there is, indeed, some truth in that commonly accepted, distinction between high and low art.² That a thing should be beautiful is not enough; there is, as we said in the outset, a higher and lower range of beauty, and some ground for separating into various and unequal ranks painters who have, nevertheless, each in his several way, represented something that was beautiful or good.

Nor, if we would, can we get rid of this conviction.

¹ [In his Oxford lectures (1875) on “The *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds”—of which the MS. notes are printed in a later volume of this edition—Ruskin cited this passage at once to confirm and to correct it. Reynolds, he said, “seems to have been born to teach all error by his example; but that is because the only errors that were to be found in his precept were seized upon as its essence by scholars determined to err.”]

² [See Appendix v., below, p. 433, for some additional matter on the subject of “greatness.”]

We have at all times some instinctive sense that the function of one painter is greater than of another, even supposing each equally successful in his own way; and we feel that, if it were possible to conquer prejudice, and do away with the iniquities of personal feeling, and the insufficiencies of limited knowledge, we should all agree in this estimate, and be able to place each painter in his right rank, measuring them by a true scale of nobleness. We feel that the men in the higher classes of the scale would be, in the full sense of the word, Great,—men whom one would give much to see the faces of but for an instant; and that those in the lower classes of the scale (though none were admitted but who had true merit of some kind) would be very small men, not greatly exciting either reverence or curiosity. And with this fixed instinct in our minds, we permit our teachers daily to exhort their pupils to the cultivation of “great art,”—neither they nor we having any very clear notion as to what the greatness consists in: but sometimes inclining to think it must depend on the space of the canvas, and that art on a scale of six feet by ten is something spiritually separated from that on a scale of three feet by five;—sometimes holding it to consist in painting the nude body, rather than the body decently clothed;—sometimes being convinced that it is connected with the study of past history, and that the art is only great which represents what the painter never saw, and about which he knows nothing;—and sometimes being firmly persuaded that it consists in generally finding fault with, and endeavouring to mend, whatsoever the Divine wisdom has made. All which various errors, having yet some notes and atoms of truth in the make of each of them, deserve some attentive analysis, for they come under that general law,—that “the corruption of the best is the worst.”¹ There are not *worse* errors going than these four; and yet the truth they contain, and the instinct which urges

¹ [For other passages in which Ruskin dwells (in various relations) on this proverbial saying, see *Time and Tide*, §§ 52, 53, 139; and *Munera Pulveris*, § 100.]

many to preach them, are at the root of all healthy growth in art. We ruin one young painter after another by telling him to follow great art, without knowing ourselves what greatness is; and yet the feeling that it verily *is* something, and that there are depths and breadths, shallows and narrows, in the matter, is all that we have to look to, if we would ever make our art serviceable to ourselves or others. To follow art for the sake of being a great man, and therefore to cast about continually for some means of achieving position or attracting admiration, is the surest way of ending in total extinction.¹ And yet it is only by honest reverence for art itself, and by great self-respect in the practice of it, that it can be rescued from dilettanteism, raised to approved honourableness, and brought to the proper work it has to accomplish in the service of man.

§ 4. Let us therefore look into the facts of the thing, not with any metaphysical, or otherwise vain and troublesome effort at acuteness, but in a plain way; for the facts themselves are plain enough, and may be plainly stated, only the difficulty is, that out of these facts, right and left, the different forms of misapprehension branch into grievous complexity, and branch so far and wide, that if once we try to follow them, they will lead us quite from our mark into other separate, though not less interesting discussions. The best way will be, therefore, I think, to sketch out at once in this chapter, the different characters which really constitute “greatness” of style, and to indicate the principal directions of the outbranching misapprehensions of them; then, in the succeeding chapters, to take up in succession those which need more talk about them, and follow out at leisure whatever inquiries they may suggest.

§ 5. I. CHOICE OF NOBLE SUBJECT.—Greatness of style consists, then: first, in the habitual choice of subjects of thought which involve wide interests and profound passions,

¹ [Compare *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 55, where Ruskin says that when Turner fails, it is because he “set himself to excel himself” (Vol. XII. p. 385).]

as opposed to those which involve narrow interests and slight passions. The style is greater or less in exact proportion to the nobleness of the interests and passions involved in the subject. The habitual choice of sacred subjects, such as the Nativity, Transfiguration, Crucifixion (if the choice be sincere), implies that the painter has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable; it constitutes him so far forth a painter of the highest order, as, for instance, Leonardo, in his painting of the Last Supper: he who delights in representing the acts or meditations of great men, as, for instance, Raphael painting the School of Athens, is, so far forth, a painter of the second order: he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life, of the third. And in this ordinary life, he who represents deep thoughts and sorrows, as, for instance, Hunt, in his *Claudio and Isabella*,¹ and such other works, is of the highest rank in his sphere; and he who represents the slight malignities and passions of the drawing-room, as, for instance, Leslie, of the second rank; he who represents the sports of boys, or simplicities of clowns, as Webster or Teniers, of the third rank; and he who represents brutalities and vices (for delight in them, and not for rebuke of them), of no rank at all, or rather of a negative rank, holding a certain order in the abyss.

§ 6. The reader will, I hope, understand how much importance is to be attached to the sentence in the first parenthesis, “if the choice be sincere;” for choice of subject is, of course, only available as a criterion of the rank of the painter, when it is made from the heart. Indeed, in the lower orders of painting, the choice is always made from such a heart as the painter has; for his selection of the brawls of peasants or sports of children can, of course,

¹ [For Ruskin’s notices of this picture by Holman Hunt (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853), see Vol. XII. p. 160; for his appreciation of C. R. Leslie’s mastery “of the phases of such delicate expression on the human face as may be excited by the slight passions and humours of the drawing-room,” *Academy Notes*, 1855 (supplement); and for a notice of Webster, *Academy Notes*, 1858 (No. 119). For Teniers, see General Index.]

proceed only from the fact that he has more sympathy with such brawls or pastimes than with nobler subjects. But the choice of the higher kind of subjects is often insincere; and may, therefore, afford no real criterion of the painter's rank. The greater number of men who have lately painted religious or heroic subjects have done so in mere ambition, because they had been taught that it was a good thing to be a "high art" painter; and the fact is that in nine cases out of ten, the so-called historical or "high art" painter is a person infinitely inferior to the painter of flowers or still life. He is, in modern times, nearly always a man who has great vanity without pictorial capacity, and differs from the landscape or fruit painter merely in misunderstanding and over-estimating his own powers. He mistakes his vanity for inspiration, his ambition for greatness of soul, and takes pleasure in what he calls "the ideal," merely because he has neither humility nor capacity enough to comprehend the real.

§ 7. But also observe, it is not enough even that the choice be sincere. It must also be wise. It happens very often that a man of weak intellect, sincerely desiring to do what is good and useful, will devote himself to high art subjects because he thinks them the only ones on which time and toil can be usefully spent, or, sometimes, because they are really the only ones he has pleasure in contemplating. But not having intellect enough to enter into the minds of truly great men, or to imagine great events as they really happened, he cannot become a great painter; he degrades the subjects he intended to honour, and his work is more utterly thrown away, and his rank as an artist in reality lower, than if he had devoted himself to the imitation of the simplest objects of natural history. The works of Overbeck are a most notable instance of this form of error.¹

¹ [For a further criticism of Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869), the leader of the modern religious movement in German art, see *Lectures on Landscape* (1871), § 83.]

§ 8. It must also be remembered, that in nearly all the great periods of art the choice of subject has not been left to the painter. His employer,—abbot, baron, or monarch,—determined for him whether he should earn his bread by making cloisters bright with choirs of saints, painting coats of arms on leaves of romances, or decorating presence chambers with complimentary mythology; and his own personal feelings are ascertainable only by watching, in the themes assigned to him, what are the points in which he seems to take most pleasure. Thus, in the prolonged ranges of varied subjects with which Benozzo Gozzoli decorated the cloisters of Pisa, it is easy to see that love of simple domestic incident, sweet landscape, and glittering ornament, prevails slightly over the solemn elements of religious feeling, which, nevertheless, the spirit of the age instilled into him in such measure as to form a very lovely and noble mind, though still one of the second order. In the work of Orcagna, an intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels,¹ and his rank among the first of the sons of men; while Correggio, in the sidelong grace, artificial smiles, and purple languors of his saints, indicates the inferior instinct which would have guided his choice in quite other directions, had it not been for the fashion of the age, and the need of the day.²

§ 9. It will follow, of course, from the above considerations, that the choice which characterizes the school of high art is seen as much in the treatment of a subject as in its selection, and that the expression of the thoughts of the persons represented will always be the first thing considered by the painter who worthily enters that highest school.

¹ [For "Orcagna" ("archangel") see "Review of Lord Lindsay," § 53 (Vol. XII. p. 223).]

² [For the work of Gozzoli and Orcagna, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. *passim*, and the "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII, pp. 227, 229. For the place in the hierarchy of painters allotted by Ruskin to Correggio, see below, § 12, and Ruskin's letter to his father, in Vol. IV. pp. xxxiv.—xxxv.]

For the artist who sincerely chooses the noblest subject will also choose chiefly to represent what makes that subject noble, namely, the various heroism or other noble emotions of the persons represented. If, instead of this, the artist seeks only to make his picture agreeable by the composition of its masses and colours, or by any other merely pictorial merit, as fine drawing of limbs, it is evident, not only that any other subject would have answered his purpose as well, but that he is unfit to approach the subject he has chosen, because he cannot enter into its deepest meaning, and therefore cannot in reality have chosen it for that meaning. Nevertheless, while the expression is always to be the first thing considered, all other merits must be added to the utmost of the painter's power; for until he can both colour and draw beautifully he has no business to consider himself a painter at all, far less to attempt the noblest subjects of painting;¹ and, when he has once possessed himself of these powers, he will naturally and fitly employ them to deepen and perfect the impression made by the sentiment of his subject.

The perfect unison of expression, as the painter's main purpose, with the full and natural exertion of his pictorial power in the details of the work, is found only in the old Pre-Raphaelite periods, and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school. In the works of Giotto, Angelico, Orcagna, John Bellini, and one or two more, these two conditions of high art are entirely fulfilled, so far the knowledge of those days enabled them to be fulfilled; and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school they are fulfilled nearly to the uttermost. Hunt's *Light of the World*, is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced.²

§ 10. Now in the Post-Raphaelite period of ancient art,

¹ [This is a point frequently enforced by Ruskin (see, *e.g.*, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 24), but also frequently ignored in criticisms of him and sometimes (as he says) by disciples (see *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 59).]

² [For Ruskin's detailed notice of this picture, see Vol. XII. pp. 328–331; see also below, Appendix iii., p. 429.]

and in the spurious high art of modern times, two broad forms of error divide the schools; the one consisting in (A) the superseding of expression by technical excellence, and the other in (B) the superseding of technical excellence by expression.

(A.) Superseding expression by technical excellence.—This takes place most frankly, and therefore most innocently, in the work of the Venetians. They very nearly ignore expression altogether, directing their aim exclusively to the rendering of external truths of colour and form. Paul Veronese will make the Magdalene wash the feet of Christ with a countenance as absolutely unmoved as that of any ordinary servant bringing a ewer to her master, and will introduce the supper at Emmaus as a background to the portraits of two children playing with a dog. Of the wrongness or rightness of such a proceeding we shall reason in another place;¹ at present we have to note it merely as displacing the Venetian work from the highest or expressional rank of art. But the error is generally made in a more subtle and dangerous way. The artist deceives himself into the idea that he is doing all he can to elevate his subject by treating it under rules of art, introducing into it accurate science, and collecting for it the beauties of (so called) ideal form; whereas he may, in reality, be all the while sacrificing his subject to his own vanity or pleasure, and losing truth, nobleness, and impressiveness for the sake of delightful lines or creditable pedantries.

§ 11. (B.) Superseding technical excellence by expression.—This is usually done under the influence of another kind of vanity. The artist desires that men should think he has an elevated soul, affects to despise the ordinary excellence of art, contemplates with separated egotism the course of his own imaginations or sensations, and refuses to look at the real facts round about him, in order that he may adore at

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 18; and for the two pictures by Veronese above referred to, see the "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. pp. 451, 452; and compare ch. ii. § 5, above, p. 38; and below, ch. iv. § 24, p. 89.]

leisure the shadow of himself. He lives in an element of what he calls tender emotions and lofty aspirations; which are, in fact, nothing more than very ordinary weaknesses or instincts, contemplated through a mist of pride. A large range of modern German art comes under this head.¹

A more interesting and respectable form of this error is fallen into by some truly earnest men, who, finding their powers not adequate to the attainment of great artistical excellence, but adequate to rendering, up to a certain point, the expression of the human countenance, devote themselves to that object alone, abandoning effort in other directions, and executing the accessories of their pictures feebly or carelessly. With these are associated another group of philosophical painters, who suppose the artistical merits of other parts *adverse* to the expression, as drawing the spectator's attention away from it, and who paint in grey colour, and imperfect light and shade, by way of enforcing the purity of their conceptions. Both these classes of conscientious but narrow-minded artists labour under the same grievous mistake of imagining that wilful fallacy can ever be either pardonable or helpful. They forget that colour, if used at all, must be either true or false, and that what *they* call chastity, dignity, and reserve is, to the eye of any person accustomed to nature, pure, bold, and impertinent falsehood. It does not in the eyes of any soundly minded man, exalt the expression of a female face that the cheeks should be painted of the colour of clay, nor does it in the least enhance his reverence for a saint to find the scenery around him deprived, by his presence, of sunshine. It is an important consolation, however, to reflect that no artist ever fell into any of these last three errors (under head B) who had really the capacity of becoming a great painter. No man ever despised colour who could produce it; and the error of these sentimentalists and philosophers is not so much in the choice of their manner of painting, as in supposing themselves capable of painting at all. Some of them might have

¹ [For Ruskin on German art, see below, Appendix ii., p. 424.]

made efficient sculptors, but the greater number had their mission in some other sphere than that of art, and would have found, in works of practical charity, better employment for their gentleness and sentimentalism, than in denying to human beauty its colour, and to natural scenery its light; in depriving heaven of its blue, and earth of its bloom, valour of its glow, and modesty of its blush.

§ 12. II. LOVE OF BEAUTY.¹—The second characteristic of the great school of art is, that it introduces in the conception of its subject as much beauty as is possible, consistently with truth.*

* As here, for the first time, I am obliged to use the terms Truth and Beauty in a kind of opposition, I must therefore stop for a moment to state clearly the relation of these two qualities of art; and to protest against the vulgar and foolish habit of confusing truth and beauty with each other. People with shallow powers of thought, desiring to flatter themselves with the sensation of having attained profundity, are continually doing the most serious mischief by introducing confusion into plain matters, and then valuing themselves on being confounded.² Nothing is more common than to hear people who desire to be thought philosophical, declare that “beauty is truth,” and “truth is beauty.” I would most earnestly beg every sensible person who hears such an assertion made, to nip the germinating philosopher in his ambiguous bud; and beg him, if he really believes his own assertion, never henceforward to use two words for the same thing. The fact is, truth and beauty are entirely distinct, though often related, things. One is a property of statements, the other of objects. The statement that “two and two make four” is true, but it is neither beautiful nor ugly, for it is invisible; a rose is lovely, but it is neither true nor false, for it is silent. That which shows nothing cannot be fair, and that which asserts nothing cannot be false. Even the ordinary use of the words false and true, as applied to artificial and real things, is inaccurate. An artificial rose is not a “false” rose, it is not a rose at all. The falseness is in the person who states, or induces the belief, that it *is* a rose.

Now, therefore, in things concerning art, the words true and false are only to be rightly used while the picture is considered as a statement of facts. The painter asserts that this which he has painted is the form of a dog, a man, or a tree. If it be *not* the form of a dog, a man, or a tree, the painter’s statement is false; and, therefore, we justly speak of a false line, or false colour; not that any lines or colours can in themselves be

¹ [In his copy for revision, Ruskin marked the following passage with special approval, making the note “Greatly valuable. Insist on.” So, again, he marked § 17 as “Essential”; § 19 “Magnitude—most valuable”; § 20 was also marked as specially important.]

² [Compare Vol. IV. p. 66.]

For instance, in any subject consisting of a number of figures, it will make as many of those figures beautiful as the faithful representation of humanity will admit. It will not deny the facts of ugliness or decrepitude, or relative inferiority and superiority of feature as necessarily manifested in a crowd, but it will, so far as it is in its power, seek for and dwell upon the fairest forms, and in all things insist on the beauty that is in them, not on the ugliness. In this respect, schools of art become higher in exact proportion to the degree in which they apprehend and love the beautiful. Thus, Angelico, intensely loving all spiritual beauty, will be of the highest rank;¹ and Paul Veronese and Correggio, intensely loving physical and corporeal beauty, of the second rank; and Albert Dürer, Rubens, and in general the Northern artists, apparently insensible to beauty, and caring only for truth, whether shapely or not, of the third rank; and Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved, of no rank, or as we said before,² of a certain order in the abyss.

§ 13. The corruption of the schools of high art, so far as

false, but they become so when they convey a statement that they resemble something which they do *not* resemble. But the beauty of the lines or colours is wholly independent of any such statement. They may be beautiful lines, though quite inaccurate, and ugly lines though quite faithful. A picture may be frightfully ugly, which represents with fidelity some base circumstance of daily life; and a painted window may be exquisitely beautiful, which represents men with eagles' faces, and dogs with blue heads and crimson tails (though, by the way, this is not in the strict sense *false* art, as we shall see hereafter, inasmuch as it means no assertion that men ever *had* eagles' faces). If this were not so, it would be impossible to sacrifice truth to beauty; for to attain the one would always be to attain the other. But, unfortunately, this sacrifice is exceedingly possible, and it is chiefly this which characterizes the false schools of high art, so far as high art consists in the pursuit of beauty. For although truth and beauty are independent of each other, it does not follow that we are at liberty to pursue whichever we please. They are indeed separable, but it is wrong to separate them; they are to be sought together in the order of their worthiness; that is to say, truth first, and beauty afterwards. High art differs from low art in possessing an excess of beauty in addition to its truth, not in possessing excess of beauty inconsistent with truth.

¹ [See the "Review of Lord Lindsay," §§ 44, 66 (Vol. XII. pp. 212, 236).]

² [Above, § 5, p. 49.]

this particular quality is concerned, consists in the sacrifice of truth to beauty. Great art dwells on all that is beautiful; but false art omits or changes all that is ugly. Great art accepts Nature as she is, but directs the eyes and thoughts to what is most perfect in her; false art saves itself the trouble of direction by removing or altering whatever it thinks objectionable. The evil results of which proceeding are twofold.

§ 14. First. That beauty deprived of its proper foils and adjuncts ceases to be enjoyed as beauty, just as light deprived of all shadow ceases to be enjoyed as light. A white canvas cannot produce an effect of sunshine; the painter must darken it in some places before he can make it look luminous in others; nor can an uninterrupted succession of beauty produce the true effect of beauty; it must be foiled by inferiority before its own power can be developed. Nature has for the most part mingled her inferior and noble elements as she mingles sunshine with shade, giving due use and influence to both, and the painter who chooses to remove the shadow, perishes in the burning desert he has created. The truly high and beautiful art of Angelico is continually refreshed and strengthened by his frank portraiture of the most ordinary features of his brother monks and of the recorded peculiarities of ungainly sanctity; but the modern German and Raphaelesque schools lose all honour and nobleness in barber-like admiration of handsome faces, and have, in fact, no real faith except in straight noses, and curled hair. Paul Veronese opposes the dwarf to the soldier,¹ and the negress to the queen; Shakspeare places Caliban beside Miranda, and Autolycus beside Perdita;² but the vulgar idealist withdraws his beauty to the safety of the saloon, and his innocence to the seclusion of the cloister; he pretends that he does this in delicacy of choice and purity of sentiment,

¹ [In his picture of "The Family of Darius" in the National Gallery; compare ch. vii. § 2, below, p. 112.]

² [On Caliban and Miranda, see also *Lectures on Art*, § 81, and *Munera Pulveris*, §§ 133–134. For Ruskin's analysis of the *Tempest*, see *Munera, l.c.*, and *Time and Tide*, § 167.]

while in truth he has neither courage to front the monster, nor wit enough to furnish the knave.

§ 15. It is only by the habit of representing faithfully all things, that we can truly learn what is beautiful, and what is not. The ugliest objects contain some element of beauty; and in all it is an element peculiar to themselves, which cannot be separated from their ugliness, but must either be enjoyed together with it or not at all. The more a painter accepts nature as he finds it, the more unexpected beauty he discovers in what he at first despised; but once let him arrogate the right of rejection, and he will gradually contract his circle of enjoyment, until what he supposed to be nobleness of selection ends in narrowness of perception. Dwelling perpetually upon one class of ideas, his art becomes at once monstrous and morbid; until at last he cannot faithfully represent even what he chooses to retain; his discrimination contracts into darkness, and his fastidiousness fades into fatuity.

High art, therefore, consists neither in altering, nor in improving nature; but in seeking throughout nature for “whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are pure”;¹ in loving these, in displaying to the utmost of the painter’s power such loveliness as is in them, and directing the thoughts of others to them by winning art or gentle emphasis. Of the degree in which this can be done, and in which it may be permitted to gather together, without falsifying, the finest forms or thoughts, so as to create a sort of perfect vision, we shall have to speak hereafter: at present, it is enough to remember that art (*cæteris paribus*) is great in exact proportion to the love of beauty shown by the painter, provided that love of beauty forfeit no atom of truth.

§ 16. III. SINCERITY.—The next* characteristic of great

* I name them in order of *increasing*, not decreasing importance.

¹ [Philippians iv. 8.]

art is that it includes the largest possible quantity of Truth in the most perfect possible harmony. If it were possible for art to give all the truths of nature it ought to do it. But this is not possible. Choice must always be made of some facts which *can* be represented, from among others which must be passed by in silence, or even, in some respects, misrepresented. The inferior artist chooses unimportant and scattered truths; the great artist chooses the most necessary first, and afterwards the most consistent with these, so as to obtain the greatest possible and most harmonious *sum*. For instance, Rembrandt always chooses to represent the exact force with which the light on the most illumined part of an object is opposed to its obscurer portions. In order to obtain this, in most cases, not very important truth, he sacrifices the light and colour of five-sixths of his picture, and the expression of every character of objects which depends on tenderness of shape or tint. But he obtains his single truth, and what picturesque and forcible expression is dependent upon it, with magnificent skill and subtlety. Veronese, on the contrary, chooses to represent the great relations of visible things to each others, to the heaven above, and to the earth beneath¹ them. He holds it more important to show how a figure stands relieved from delicate air, or marble wall; how as a red, or purple, or white figure, it separates itself, in clear discernibility, from things not red, nor purple, nor white; how infinite daylight shines round it; how innumerable veils of faint shadow invest it; how its blackness and darkness are, in the excess of their nature, just as limited and local as its intensity of light; all this, I say, he feels to be more important than showing merely the exact *measure* of the spark of sunshine that gleams on a dagger-hilt, or glows on a jewel. All this, moreover, he feels to be harmonious,—capable of being joined in one great system of spacious truth. And with inevitable watchfulness, inestimable subtlety, he unites all this in tenderest balance, noting in each

¹ [Exodus xx. 4.]

hair's-breadth of colour, not merely what its rightness or wrongness is in itself, but what its relation is to every other on his canvas; restraining, for truth's sake, his exhaustless energy, reining back, for truth's sake, his fiery strength; veiling, before truth, the vanity of brightness; penetrating, for truth, the discouragement of gloom; ruling his restless invention with a rod of iron; pardoning no error; no thoughtlessness, no forgetfulness; and subduing all his powers, impulses, and imaginations, to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity.

I give this instance with respect to colour and shade: but, in the whole field of art, the difference between the great and inferior artists is of the same kind, and may be determined at once by the question, which of them conveys the largest sum of truth?

§ 17. It follows from this principle, that in general all *great drawing is distinct* drawing; for truths which are rendered indistinctly might, for the most part, as well not be rendered at all. There are, indeed, certain facts of mystery, and facts of indistinctness, in all objects, which must have their proper place in the general harmony, and the reader will presently find me, when we come to that part of our investigation, telling him that all good drawing must in some sort be *in-distinct*.¹ We may, however, understand this apparent contradiction, by reflecting that the highest knowledge always involves a more advanced perception of the fields of the unknown; and, therefore, it may most truly be said, that to know anything well involves a profound sensation of ignorance, while yet it is equally true that good and noble knowledge is distinguished from vain and useless knowledge chiefly by its clearness and distinctness, and by the vigorous consciousness of what is known and what is not.

So in art. The best drawing involves a wonderful perception and expression of indistinctness; and yet all noble drawing is separated from the ignoble by its distinctness,

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 1 ("Of Turnerian Mystery").]

by its fine expression and firm assertion of *Something*; whereas the bad drawing, without either firmness or fineness, expresses and asserts *Nothing*. The first thing, therefore, to be looked for as a sign of noble art, is a clear consciousness of what is drawn and what is not; the bold statement, and frank confession—“*This I know,*” “*that I know not*”; and, generally speaking, all haste, slurring, obscurity, indecision, are signs of low art, and all calmness, distinctness, luminousness, and positiveness, of high art.

§ 18. It follows, secondly, from this principle, that as the great painter is always attending to the sum and harmony of his truths rather than to one or the other of any group, a quality of Grasp is visible in his work, like the power of a great reasoner over his subject, or a great poet over his conception, manifesting itself very often in missing out certain details or less truths (which, though good in themselves, he finds are in the way of others), and in a sweeping manner of getting the beginnings and ends of things shown at once, and the squares and depths rather than the surfaces: hence, on the whole, a habit of looking at large masses rather than small ones; and even a physical largeness of handling, and love of working, if possible, on a large scale;¹ and various other qualities, more or less imperfectly expressed by such technical terms as breadth, massing, unity, boldness, etc., all of which are, indeed, great qualities, when they mean breadth of truth, weight of truth, unity of truth, and courageous assertion of truth; but which have all their correlative errors and mockeries, almost universally mistaken for them,—the breadth which has no contents, the weight which has no value, the unity which plots deception, and the boldness which faces out fallacy.

Corollary 2nd:
Great art is
generally large
in masses and in
scale.

§ 19. And it is to be noted especially respecting largeness of scale, that though for the most part it is characteristic of the more powerful masters, they having both more invention wherewith to fill space (as Ghirlandajo wished

¹ [See further on this subject, Appendix v., pp. 433–436.]

that he might paint all the walls of Florence),¹ and, often, an impetuosity of mind which makes them like free play for hand and arm (besides that they usually desire to paint everything in the foreground of their picture of the natural size), yet, as this largeness of scale involves the placing of the picture at a considerable distance from the eye, and this distance involves the loss of many delicate details, and especially of the subtle lines of expression in features, it follows that the masters of refined detail and human expression are apt to prefer a small scale to work upon; so that the chief masterpieces of expression which the world possesses are small pictures by Angelico, in which the figures are rarely more than six or seven inches high;² in the best works of Raphael and Leonardo the figures are almost always less than life, and the best works of Turner do not exceed the size of 18 inches by 12.

§ 20. As its greatness depends on the sum of truth, and this sum of truth can always be increased by delicacy of handling, it follows that all great art must have this delicacy to the utmost possible degree. This rule is infallible and inflexible. All coarse work is the sign of low art. Only, it is to be remembered, that coarseness must be estimated by the distance from the eye; it being necessary to consult this distance, when great, by laying on touches which appear coarse when seen near; but which, so far from being coarse, are, in reality, more delicate in a master's work than the finest close handling, for they involve a calculation of result, and are laid on with a subtlety of sense precisely correspondent to that with which a good archer draws his bow; the spectator seeing in the

Corollary 3rd:
Great art is
always delicate.

¹ ["When household cares were laid upon him, he complained bitterly, and committed the charge of all expenditure to his brother David, saying to him, 'Leave me to work, and do thou provide, for now that I have begun to get into the spirit and comprehend the method of this art, I grudge that they do not commission me to paint the whole circuit of the walls of Florence with stories" (Vasari's *Lives*, ii. 215, Bohn's ed., 1855).]

² [For the comparative failure of Angelico's larger works, see the "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII. p. 235; the following statement in the text here expresses the opinion often given by Ruskin that Turner's greatest works are his water-colours (see, for instance, *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, 1856).]

action nothing but the strain of the strong arm, while there is in reality, in the finger and eye, an ineffably delicate estimate of distance, and touch on the arrow plume. And, indeed, this delicacy is generally quite perceptible to those who know what the truth is, for strokes by Tintoret or Paul Veronese, which were done in an instant, and look to an ignorant spectator merely like a violent dash of loaded colour (and are, as such, imitated by blundering artists), are, in fact, modulated by the brush and finger to that degree of delicacy that no single grain of the colour could be taken from the touch without injury; and little golden particles of it, not the size of a gnat's head, have important share and function in the balances of light in a picture perhaps fifty feet long.¹ Nearly *every* other rule applicable to art has some exception but this. This has absolutely none. All great art is delicate art, and all coarse art is bad art.² Nay, even, to a certain extent, all *bold* art is bad art; for boldness is not the proper word to apply to the courage and swiftness of a great master, based on knowledge, and coupled with fear and love. There is as much difference between the boldness of the true and the false masters, as there is between the courage of a sure woman and the shamelessness of a lost one.

§ 21. IV. INVENTION.—The last characteristic of great art is that it must be inventive, that is, be produced by the imagination. In this respect, it must precisely fulfil the definition already given of poetry;³ and not only present grounds for noble emotion, but furnish these grounds by *imaginative power*. Hence there is at once a great bar fixed between the two schools of Lower and Higher art. The lower merely copies what is set before it, whether in portrait, landscape, or still-life; the higher either entirely imagines its subject, or arranges the materials presented to it, so as to manifest the imaginative power in all the three phases which have been already explained in the second volume.

¹ [On this subject, compare *The Two Paths*, Appendix iv. ("Subtlety of Hand").]

² [Compare *Elements of Drawing*, preface, § 7, where this rule is again enforced.]

³ [Above, p. 28.]

And this was the truth which was confusedly present in Reynolds's mind when he spoke, as above quoted,¹ of the difference between Historical and Poetical Painting. *Every relation of the plain facts which the painter saw is proper historical painting.** If those facts are unimportant (as that he saw a gambler quarrel with another gambler, or a sot enjoying himself with another sot), then the history is trivial; if the facts are important (as that he saw such and such a great man look thus, or act thus, at such a time), then the history is noble: in each case perfect truth of narrative being supposed, otherwise the whole thing is worthless, being neither history nor poetry, but plain falsehood. And farther, as greater or less elegance and precision are manifested in the relation or painting of the incidents, the merit of the work varies; so that, what with difference of subject, and what with difference of treatment, historical painting falls or rises in changeful eminence, from Dutch trivialities to a Velasquez portrait, just as historical talking or writing varies in eminence, from an old woman's story-telling up to Herodotus. Besides which, certain operations of the imagination come into play inevitably, here and there, so as to touch the history with some light of poetry, that is, with some light shot forth of the narrator's mind, or brought out by the way he has put the accidents together: and wherever the imagination has thus had anything to do with the matter at all (and it must be somewhat cold work where it has not), then, the confines of the lower and higher schools touching each other, the work is coloured by both; but there is no reason why, therefore, we should in the least confuse the historical and poetical characters, any more than that we should confuse blue with crimson, because they may overlap each other, and produce purple.

§ 22. Now, historical or simply narrative art is very

* Compare my Edinburgh Lectures, lecture iv. p. 218 *et seq.* (2nd edition).²

¹ [Above, p. 21.]

² [In this edition, Vol. XII. pp. 151–153.]

precious in its proper place and way, but it is never *great* art until the poetical or imaginative power touches it; and in proportion to the stronger manifestation of this power, it becomes greater and greater, while the highest art is purely imaginative, all its materials being wrought into their form by invention; and it differs, therefore, from the simple historical painting, exactly as Wordsworth's stanza, above quoted,¹ differs from Saussure's plain narrative of the parallel fact; and the imaginative painter differs from the historical painter in the manner that Wordsworth differs from Saussure.

§ 23. Farther, imaginative art always *includes* historical art; so that, strictly speaking, according to the analogy above used, we meet with the pure blue, and with the crimson ruling the blue and changing it into kingly purple, but not with the pure crimson: for all imagination must deal with the knowledge it has before accumulated; it never produces anything but by combination or contemplation. Creation, in the full sense, is impossible to it. And the mode in which the historical faculties are included by it is often quite simple, and easily seen. Thus, in Hunt's great poetical picture of the Light of the World, the whole thought and arrangement of the picture being imaginative, the several details of it are wrought out with simple portraiture; the ivy, the jewels, the creeping plants, and the moonlight being calmly studied or remembered from the things themselves. But of all these special ways in which the invention works with plain facts, we shall have to treat farther afterwards.²

§ 24. And now, finally, since this poetical power includes the historical, if we glance back to the other qualities required in great art, and put all together, we find that the sum of them is simply the sum of all the powers of man. For as (1) the choice of the high subject involves all conditions of right moral choice, and as (2) the love of beauty

¹ [Above, p. 29.]

² [See below, ch. vii.]

involves all conditions of right admiration, and as (3) the grasp of truth involves all strength of sense, evenness of judgment, and honesty of purpose, and as (4) the poetical power involves all swiftness of invention, and accuracy of historical memory, the sum of all these powers is the sum of the human soul. Hence we see why the word “Great” is used of this art. It is literally great. It compasses and calls forth the entire human spirit, whereas any other kind of art, being more or less small or narrow, compasses and calls forth only *part* of the human spirit. Hence the idea of its magnitude is a literal and just one, the art being simply less or greater in proportion to the number of faculties it exercises and addresses.* And this is the ultimate meaning of the definition I gave of it long ago, as containing the “greatest number of the greatest ideas.”¹

§ 25. Such, then, being the characters required in order to constitute high art, if the reader will think over them a little, and over the various ways in which they may be falsely assumed, he will easily perceive how spacious and dangerous a field of discussion they open to the ambitious critic, and of error to the ambitious artist; he will see how difficult it must be, either to distinguish what is truly great art from the mockeries of it, or to rank the real artists in anything like a progressive system of greater and less. For it will have been observed that the various qualities which form greatness are partly inconsistent with each other (as some virtues are, docility and firmness for instance), and partly independent of each other; and the fact is, that artists differ not more by mere capacity, than by the component *elements* of their capacity, each possessing in very different proportions the several attributes of greatness; so that, classed by one kind of merit, as, for instance, purity of expression, Angelico will stand highest;

* Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. chap. iv. § 7 and § 21.²

¹ [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 92).]

² [Vol. XI. pp. 203, 213.]

classed by another, sincerity of manner, Veronese will stand highest; classed by another, love of beauty, Leonardo¹ will stand highest; and so on:² hence arise continual disputes and misunderstandings among those who think that high art must always be one and the same, and that great artists ought to unite all great attributes in an equal degree.

§ 26. In one of the exquisitely finished tales of Marmontel, a company of critics are received at dinner by the hero of the story, an old gentleman, somewhat vain of his *acquired* taste, and his niece, by whose incorrigible *natural* taste he is seriously disturbed and tormented. During the entertainment, “On parcourut tous les genres de littérature, et pour donner plus d’essor à l’érudition et à la critique, on mit sur le tapis cette question toute neuve, sçavoir, lequel méritoit la préférence de Corneille ou de Racine. L’on disoit même là-dessus les plus belles choses du monde, lorsque la petite nièce, qui n’avoit pas dit un mot, s’avisa de demander naïvement lequel des deux fruits, de l’orange ou de la pêche, avoit le goût le plus exquis et méritoit le plus d’éloges. Son oncle rougit de sa simplicité, et les convives baissèrent tous les yeux sans daigner répondre à cette bêtise. Ma nièce, dit Fintac, à votre âge, il faut sçavoir écouter, et se taire.”³

I cannot close this chapter with shorter or better advice to the reader, than merely, whenever he hears discussions about the relative merits of great masters, to remember the young lady’s question. It is, indeed, true that there *is* a relative merit, that a peach is nobler than a hawthorn berry, and still more a hawthorn berry than a bead of the nightshade; but in each rank of fruits, as in each rank of

¹ [In his copy for revision, Ruskin in later years struck out “Leonardo” and wrote “Luini.” Luini was one of his later favourites: see below, p. 87 *n.*]

² [For one other such classification, see the letter of Ruskin quoted in Vol. IV. p. xxxv.]

³ [This passage from “The Connoisseur” will be found at p. 213 of Mr. G. Saintsbury’s edition of *Marmontel’s Moral Tales* (1895). For an earlier quotation from Marmontel, see Vol. III. p. 166 and *n.*]

masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the colouring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Dürer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his labour to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine.

§ 27. And from these considerations one most important practical corollary is to be deduced, with the good help of Mademoiselle Agathe's simile, namely, that the greatness or smallness of a man is, in the most conclusive sense, determined for him at his birth, as strictly as it is determined for a fruit whether it is to be a currant or an apricot. Education, favourable circumstances, resolution, and industry can do much; in a certain sense they do *everything*; that is to say, they determine whether the poor apricot shall fall in the form of a green bead, blighted by the east wind, and be trodden under foot, or whether it shall expand into tender pride, and sweet brightness of golden velvet.¹ But apricot out of currant,—great man out of small,—did never yet art or effort make; and, in a general way, men have their excellence nearly fixed for them when they are born; a little cramped and frost-bitten on one side, a little sun-burnt and fortune-spotted on the other, they reach, between good and evil chances, such size and taste as generally belong to the men of their calibre, and, the small in their serviceable bunches, the great in their golden isolation, have, these no cause for regret, nor those for disdain.

§ 28. Therefore it is, that every system of teaching is false which holds forth "great art" as in any wise to be taught to students, or even to be aimed at by them.

¹ [The MS. here supplies a good instance of the felicities which often occurred to Ruskin in revising. He had first written "expand into tender pride, and win prizes at garden shows."]

Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught,¹ it is pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men; so that the only wholesome teaching is that which simply endeavours to fix those characters of nobleness in the pupil's mind, of which it seems easily susceptible; and without holding out to him, as a possible or even probable result, that he should ever paint like Titian, or carve like Michael Angelo, enforces upon him the manifest possibility, and assured duty, of endeavouring to draw in a manner at least honest and intelligible; and cultivates in him those general charities of heart, sincerities of thought, and graces of habit which are likely to lead him, throughout life, to prefer openness to affectation, realities to shadows, and beauty to corruption.

¹ [Compare what is said in *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 16, about imagination and invention being unteachable (Vol. XII. p. 352.)]

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FALSE IDEAL:—FIRST, RELIGIOUS¹

§ 1. HAVING now gained some general notion of the meaning of “great art,” we may, without risk of confusing ourselves, take up the questions suggested incidentally in the preceding chapter, and pursue them at leisure. Of these, two principal ones are closely connected with each other, to wit, that put in the 12th paragraph—How may beauty be sought in defiance of truth? and that in the 23rd paragraph—How does the imagination show itself in dealing with truth? These two, therefore, which are, besides, the most important of all, and, if well answered, will answer many others inclusively, we shall find it most convenient to deal with at once.

§ 2. The pursuit, by the imagination, of beautiful and strange thoughts or subjects, to the exclusion of painful or common ones, is called among us, in these modern days, the pursuit of “*the ideal*”; nor does any subject deserve more attentive examination than the manner in which this pursuit is entered upon by the modern mind. The reader must pardon me for making in the outset one or two statements which may appear to him somewhat wide of the matter, but which, (if he admits their truth,) he will, I think, presently perceive to reach to the root of it. Namely,

That men’s proper business in this world falls mainly into three divisions:²

¹ [In his copy for revision, Ruskin wrote here “Give all this chapter as root of Pre-Raphaelitism.”]

² [Compare Vol. XI. p. 258, for a similar statement in connexion with principles of education.]

First, to know themselves, and the existing state of the things they have to do with.

Secondly, to be happy in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to mend themselves, and the existing state of things, as far as either are marred and mendable.

These, I say, are the three plain divisions of proper human business on this earth. For these three, the following are usually substituted and adopted by human creatures:

First, to be totally ignorant of themselves, and the existing state of things.

Secondly, to be miserable in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to let themselves, and the existing state of things, alone (at least, in the way of correction).

§ 3. The dispositions which induce us to manage, thus wisely, the affairs of this life seem to be:

First, a fear of disagreeable facts, and conscious shrinking from clearness of light, which keep us from examining ourselves, and increase gradually into a species of instinctive terror at all truth, and love of glosses, veils, and decorative lies of every sort.

Secondly, a general readiness to take delight in anything past, future, far off, or somewhere else, rather than in things now, near, and here; leading us gradually to place our pleasure principally in the exercise of the imagination, and to build all our satisfaction on things as they are *not*. Which power being one not accorded to the lower animals, and having indeed, when disciplined, a very noble use, we pride ourselves upon it, whether disciplined or not, and pass our lives complacently, in substantial discontent, and visionary satisfaction.

§ 4. Now *nearly* all artistical and poetical seeking after the ideal is only one branch of this base habit—the abuse of the imagination in allowing it to find its whole delight in the impossible and untrue; while the faithful pursuit of

the ideal is an honest use of the imagination, giving full power and presence to the possible and true.

It is the difference between these two uses of it which we have to examine.

§ 5. And, first, consider what are the legitimate uses of the imagination, that is to say, of the power of perceiving, or conceiving with the mind, things which cannot be perceived by the senses.

Its first and noblest use is,¹ to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things which are recorded as belonging to our future state, or as invisibly surrounding us in this.² It is given us, that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses³ in heaven and earth, and see, as if they were now present, the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven, and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with for ever; that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of angels beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round; but, above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer. Its second and ordinary use is to empower us to traverse the scenes of all other history, and force the facts to become again visible, so as to make upon us the same impression which they would have made if we had witnessed them: and in the minor necessities of life, to enable us, out of any present good, to gather the utmost measure of enjoyment by investing it with happy associations, and, in any present evil, to lighten

¹ [In his copy for revision, Ruskin alters this to "has hitherto been."]

² [As already stated (above, p. 41 *n*), § 5 here is § 9 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following note:—

"I should be glad if the reader who is interested in the question here raised, would read, as illustrative of the subsequent statement, the account of Tintoret's 'Paradise,' in the close of my Oxford lecture on Michael Angelo and Tintoret, which I have printed separately to make it generally accessible."

The lecture was afterwards incorporated in *Aratra Pentelici*: see §§ 241–243.]

³ [Hebrews xii. 1. Other expressions in § 5 are from Wisdom iii. 1; Isaiah lxvi. 15.]

it, by summoning back the images of other hours; and, also, to give to all mental truths some visible type in allegory, simile, or personification, which shall more deeply enforce them; and finally, when the mind is utterly outwearied, to refresh it with such innocent play as shall be most in harmony with the suggestive voices of natural things, permitting it to possess living companionship instead of silent beauty, and create for itself fairies in the grass and naiads in the wave.

§ 6. These being the uses of imagination, its abuses are either in creating, for mere pleasure, false images, where it is its *duty* to create true ones; or in turning what was intended for the mere refreshment of the heart into its daily food, and changing the innocent pastime of an hour into the guilty occupation of a life.

Let us examine the principal forms of this misuse, one by one.

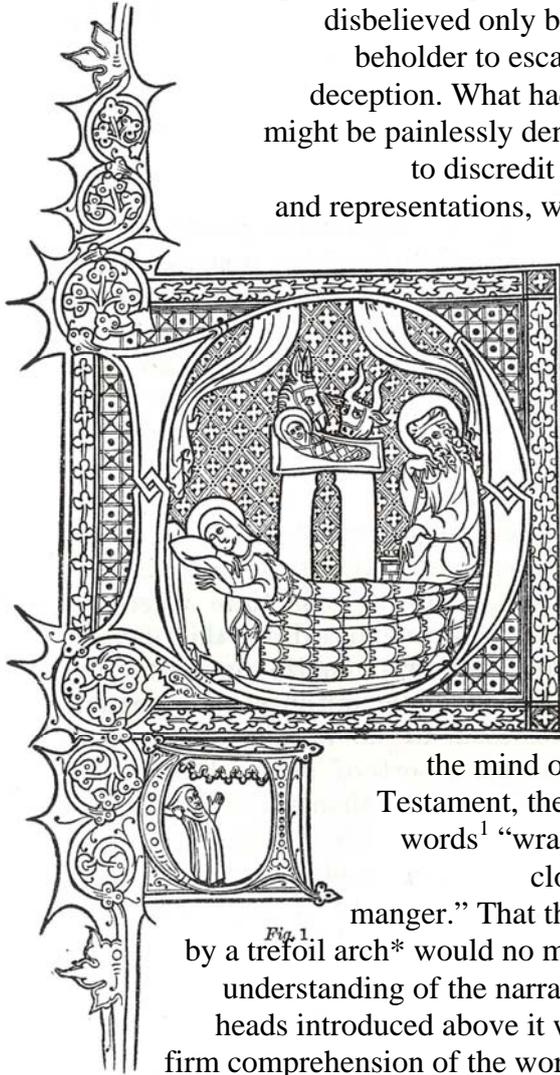
§ 7. First, then, the imagination is chiefly warped and dishonoured by being allowed to create false images, where it is its duty to create true ones. And this most dangerously in matters of religion. For a long time when art was in its infancy, it remained unexposed to this danger, because it could not, with any power, realize or create *any* thing. It consisted merely in simple outlines and pleasant colours, which were understood to be nothing more than signs of the thing thought of, a sort of pictorial letter for it, no more pretending to represent it than the written characters of its name. Such art excited the imagination, while it pleased the eye. But it *asserted* nothing, for it could realize nothing. The reader glanced at it as a glittering symbol, and went on to form truer images for himself. This act of the mind may be still seen in daily operation in children, as they look at brightly coloured pictures in their story-books. Such pictures neither deceive them nor satisfy them; they only set their own inventive powers to work in the directions required.

§ 8. But as soon as art obtained the power of realization,

it obtained also that of *assertion*. As fast as the painter advanced in skill he gained also in credibility, and that which he perfectly represented was perfectly believed, or could be disbelieved only by an actual effort of the beholder to escape from the fascinating deception. What had been faintly declared, might be painlessly denied; but it was difficult to discredit things forcibly alleged; and representations, which had been innocent

in discrepancy, became guilty in consistency

.§ 9. For instance, when in the thirteenth century, the Nativity was habitually represented by such a symbol as that on this page, Fig. 1, there was not the smallest possibility that such a picture could disturb, in



the mind of the reader of the New Testament, the simple meaning of the words¹ “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.” That this manger was typified by a trefoil arch* would no more prevent his distinct understanding of the narrative, than the grotesque heads introduced above it would interfere with his firm comprehension of the words “ox” or “ass”; while if there were anything in the action of the principal

* The curious inequality of the little trefoil is not a mistake; it is faithfully copied by the draughtsman from the MS. Perhaps the actual date of the

¹ [Luke ii. 7.]

figures suggestive of real feeling, that suggestion he would accept, together with the general pleasantness of the lines and colours in the decorative letter; but without having his faith in the unrepresented and actual scene obscured for a moment. But it was far otherwise when Francia or Perugino, with exquisite power of representing the human form, and high knowledge of the mysteries of art, devoted all their skill to the delineation of an impossible scene; and painted, for their subjects of the Nativity, a beautiful and queenly lady, her dress embroidered with gold, and with a crown of jewels upon her hair, kneeling, on a floor of inlaid and precious marble, before a crowned child, laid under a portico of Lombardic* architecture; with a sweet, verdurous, and vivid landscape in the distance, full of winding rivers, village spires, and baronial towers.† It is quite true that the frank absurdity of the thought prevented its being received as a deliberate contradiction of the truths of Scripture; but it is no less certain, that the continual presentment to the mind of this beautiful and fully realized imagery more and more chilled its power of apprehending the real truth; and that when pictures of this description met the eye in every corner of every chapel, it was physically impossible to dwell distinctly upon facts the direct reverse of those represented. The word “Virgin” or “Madonna,” instead of calling up the vision of a simple Jewish girl, bearing the calamities of poverty, and the dishonours of inferior station, summoned instantly the idea of a graceful princess, crowned with gems, and surrounded by obsequious ministry of kings and saints. The fallacy which was presented to the imagination was

illumination may be a year or two past the thirteenth century, *i.e.*, 1300–1310; but it is quite characteristic of the thirteenth century treatment in the figures.¹

* Lombardic, *i.e.* in the style of Pietro and Tullio Lombardo,² in the fifteenth century (not *Lombard*).

† All this, it will be observed, is that seeking for beauty at the cost of truth which we have generally noted in the last chapter.

¹ [This illustration is from folio 76 of the Book of Hours noted at Vol. XI. p. 9.]

² [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 354).]

indeed discredited, but also the fact which was *not* presented to the imagination was forgotten; all true grounds of faith were gradually undermined, and the beholder was either enticed into mere luxury of fanciful enjoyment, believing nothing; or left, in his confusion of mind, the prey of vain tales and traditions; while in his best feelings he was unconsciously subject to the power of the fallacious picture, and, with no sense of the real cause of his error, bowed himself, in prayer or adoration, to the lovely lady on her golden throne, when he would never have dreamed of doing so to the Jewish girl in her outcast poverty, or, in her simple household, to the carpenter's wife.

§ 10. But a shadow of increasing darkness fell upon the human mind as art proceeded to still more perfect realization. These fantasies of the earlier painters, though they darkened faith, never hardened *feeling*; on the contrary, the frankness of their unlikelihood proceeded mainly from the endeavour on the part of the painter to express, not the actual fact, but the enthusiastic state of his own feelings about the fact; he covers the Virgin's dress with gold, not with any idea of representing the Virgin as she ever was, or ever will be seen, but with a burning desire to show what his love and reverence would think fittest for her. He erects for the stable a Lombardic portico, not because he supposes the Lombardi to have built stables in Palestine in the days of Tiberius, but to show that the manger in which Christ was laid is, in his eyes, nobler than the greatest architecture in the world. He fills his landscape with church spires and silver streams, not because he supposes that either were in sight at Bethlehem, but to remind the beholder of the peaceful course and succeeding power of Christianity. And, regarded with due sympathy and clear understanding of these thoughts of the artist, such pictures remain most impressive and touching, even to this day. I shall refer to them in future,¹ in general terms,

¹ [As, for instance, in § 20 below.]

as the pictures of the “Angelican Ideal”—Angelico being the central master of the school.

§ 11. It was far otherwise in the next step of the Realistic progress. The greater his powers became, the more the mind of the painter was absorbed in their attainment, and complacent in their display. The early arts of laying on bright colours smoothly, of burnishing golden ornaments, or tracing, leaf by leaf, the outlines of flowers, were not so difficult as that they should materially occupy the thoughts of the artist, or furnish foundation for his conceit; he learned these rudiments of his work without pain, and employed them without pride, his spirit being left free to express, so far as it was capable of them, the reaches of higher thought. But when accurate shade, and subtle colour, and perfect anatomy, and complicated perspective, became necessary to the work, the artist’s whole energy was employed in learning the laws of these, and his whole pleasure consisted in exhibiting them. His life was devoted, not to the objects of art, but to the cunning of it; and the sciences of composition and light and shade were pursued as if there were abstract good in them;—as if, like astronomy or mathematics, they were ends in themselves, irrespective of anything to be effected by them. And without perception, on the part of any one, of the abyss to which all were hastening, a fatal change of aim took place throughout the whole world of art. In early times *art was employed for the display of religious facts*; now, *religious facts were employed for the display of art*. The transition, though imperceptible, was consummate; it involved the entire destiny of painting. It was passing from the paths of life to the paths of death.¹

§ 12. And this change was all the more fatal, because at first veiled by an appearance of greater dignity and sincerity than were possessed by the older art. One of the earliest results of the new knowledge was the putting away the

¹ [Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 125–127 (Vol. XII. pp. 148–150).]

greater part of the *unlikelihoods* and fineries of the ancient pictures, and an apparently closer following of nature and probability. All the fantasy which I have just been blaming as disturbant of the simplicity of faith, was first subdued,—then despised and cast aside. The appearances of nature were more closely followed in everything; and the crowned Queen—Virgin of Perugino sank into a simple Italian mother in Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair*.¹

§ 13. Was not this, then, a healthy change? No. It *would* have been healthy if it had been effected with a pure motive, and the new truths would have been precious if they had been sought for truth's sake. But they were not sought for truth's sake, but for pride's; and truth which is sought for display may be just as harmful as truth which is spoken in malice. The glittering childishness of the old art was rejected, not because it was false, but because it was easy; and, still more, because the painter had no longer any religious passion to express. He could think of the *Madonna* now very calmly, with no desire to pour out the treasures of earth at her feet, or crown her brows with the golden shafts of heaven. He could think of her as an available subject for the display of transparent shadows, skilful tints, and scientific foreshortenings,—as a fair woman, forming, if well painted, a pleasant piece of furniture for the corner of a boudoir, and best imagined by combination of the beauties of the prettiest *contadinas*. He could think of her, in her last maternal agony, with academical discrimination; sketch in first her skeleton, invest her, in serene science, with the muscles of misery and the fibres of sorrow; then cast the grace of antique drapery over the nakedness of her desolation, and fulfil, with studious lustre of tears and delicately painted pallor, the perfect type of the "*Mater Dolorosa*."

§ 14. It was thus that Raphael thought of the *Madonna*.*

* This is one form of the sacrifice of expression to technical merit, generally noted at the end of the 10th paragraph of the last chapter.

¹ [For another reference to the *Madonna della Seggiola*, see Vol. IV. p. 85 and *n.*]

Now observe, when the subject was thus scientifically completed, it became necessary, as we have just said, to the full display of all the power of the artist, that it should in many respects be more faithfully imagined than it had been hitherto. "Keeping,"¹ "Expression," "Historical Unity," and such other requirements, were enforced on the painter, in the same tone, and with the same purpose, as the purity of his oil and the accuracy of his perspective. He was told that the figure of Christ should be "dignified," those of the Apostles "expressive," that of the Virgin "modest," and those of children "innocent." All this was perfectly true; and in obedience to such directions, the painter proceeded to manufacture certain arrangements of apostolic sublimity, virginal mildness, and infantine innocence, which, being free from the quaint imperfection and contradictoriness of the early art, were looked upon by the European public as true things, and trustworthy representations of the events of religious history. The pictures of Francia and Bellini had been received as pleasant visions. But the cartoons of Raphael were received as representations of historical fact.

§ 15. Now, neither they, nor any other work of the period, were representations either of historical or of possible fact. They were, in the strictest sense of the word, "compositions,"—cold arrangements of propriety and agreeableness, according to academical formulas, the painter never in any case making the slightest effort to conceive the thing as it really must have happened, but only to gather together graceful lines and beautiful faces, in such compliance with commonplace ideas of the subject as might obtain for the whole an "epic unity," or some such other form of scholastic perfectness.

§ 16. Take a very important instance.

¹ [A term very common in the art-criticism of the eighteenth century, meaning the maintenance of the proper relations between nearer and more distant objects. Thus Goldsmith, parodying the art-slang of his day: "What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? There's the true keeping in it" (*Citizen of the World*, lv.).]

I suppose there is no event in the whole life of Christ to which, in hours of doubt or fear, men turn with more anxious thirst to know the close facts of it, or with more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every syllable of its recorded narrative, than Christ's showing Himself to His disciples at the lake of Galilee. There is something pre-eminently open, natural, full fronting our disbelief, in this manifestation. The others, recorded after the resurrection, were sudden, phantom-like, occurring to men in profound sorrow and wearied agitation of heart; not, it might seem, safe judges of what they saw. But the agitation was now over. They had gone back to their daily work, thinking still their business lay net-wards, unmeshed from the literal rope and drag. "Simon Peter saith unto them, 'I go a fishing.' They say unto him, 'We also go with thee.'" True words enough, and having far echo beyond those Galilean hills. That night they caught nothing; but when the morning came, in the clear light of it, behold, a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruitless hauls. They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything. They said No; and it tells them to cast yet again. And John shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hand, to look who it is; and though the glinting of the sea, too, dazzles him, he makes out who it is, at last; and poor Simon, not to be outrun this time, tightens his fisher's coat about him, and dashes in, over the nets. One would have liked to see him swim those hundred yards, and stagger to his knees on the beach.

Well, the others get to the beach, too, in time, in such slow way as men in general do get, in this world, to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful "dragging the net with fishes"; but they get there—seven of them in all;—first the Denier, and then the slowest believer, and then the quickest believer, and then the two throne-seekers, and two more, we know not who.

They sit down on the shore face to face with Him,

and eat their broiled fish as He bids. And then, to Peter, all dripping still, shivering and amazed, staring at Christ in the sun,¹ on the other side of the coal fire,—thinking a little, perhaps, of what happened by another coal fire, when it was colder, and having had no word once changed with him by his Master since that look of His,—to him, so amazed, comes the question, “Simon, lovest thou Me?” Try to feel that a little, and think of it till it is true to you; and then, take up that infinite monstrosity and hypocrisy—Raphael’s cartoon of the Charge to Peter.² Note, first, the bold fallacy—the putting *all* the Apostles there, a mere lie to serve the Papal heresy of the Petric supremacy, by putting them all in the background while Peter receives the charge, and making them all witnesses to it. Note the handsomely curled hair and neatly tied sandals of the men who had been out all night in the sea-mists and on the slimy decks. Note their convenient dresses for going a-fishing, with trains that lie a yard along the ground, and goodly fringes,—all made to match, an apostolic fishing costume.* Note how Peter especially (whose chief glory was in his wet coat *girt* about him, and naked limbs) is enveloped in folds and fringes, so as to kneel and hold his keys with grace. No fire of coals at all, nor lonely mountain shore, but a pleasant Italian landscape, full of villas and churches, and a flock of sheep to be pointed at; and the whole group of Apostles, not round Christ, as they would have been naturally, but straggling away in a line, that they may all be shown.

* I suppose Raphael intended a reference to Numbers xv. 38; but if he did, the *blue* riband, or “vitta,” as it is in the Vulgate, should have been on the borders too.

¹ [In the second of his lectures on *The Art of England* (1883), Ruskin referred to this passage as a study in “literal and close realization”—“not in the least intending any symbolism either in the coat or the dripping water, or the morning sunshine; but merely and straitly striving to put the facts before the reader’s eyes as positively as if he had seen the thing come to pass on Brighton beach” (§ 32) See also Introduction above, p. lx. The Bible references are to John xxi.]

² [In the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

The simple truth is, that the moment we look at the picture we feel our belief of the whole thing taken away. There is, visibly, no possibility of that group ever having existed, in any place, or on any occasion. It is all a mere mythic absurdity, and faded concoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads of Greek philosophers.

§ 17. Now, the evil consequences of the acceptance of this kind of religious idealism for true, were instant and manifold.¹ So far as it was received and trusted in by thoughtful persons, it only served to chill all the conceptions of sacred history which they might otherwise have obtained. Whatever they could have fancied for themselves about the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ, was blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael: the rough Galilean pilot, the orderly custom receiver, and all the questioning wonder and fire of uneducated apostleship, were obscured under an antique mask of philosophical faces and long robes. The feeble, subtle, suffering, ceaseless energy and humiliation of St. Paul were confused with an idea of a meditative Hercules leaning on a sweeping sword;* and the mighty presences of Moses and Elias were softened by introductions of delicate grace, adopted from dancing nymphs and rising Auroras.†

Now, no vigorously minded religious person could possibly receive pleasure or help from such art as this; and the necessary result was the instant rejection of it by the healthy religion of the world. Raphael ministered, with

* In the St. Cecilia of Bologna.²

† In the Transfiguration. Do but try to believe that Moses and Elias are really there talking with Christ. Moses in the loveliest heart and midst of the land which once it had been denied him to behold,—Elijah treading the earth again, from which he had been swept to heaven in fire; both now with a mightier message than ever they had given in life,—mightier,

¹[Ruskin quoted §§ 17, 18, with some further comments, in the second of his papers (1878) entitled *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* (§ 15).]

² [In the Accademia; St. Cecilia in ecstasy; the figure of St. Paul fills one corner of the picture. For references to the figure of Cecilia, see Vol. II. p. 167, Vol. IV. p. 212.]

applause, to the impious luxury of the Vatican, but was trampled under foot at once by every believing and advancing Christian of his own and subsequent times; and thenceforward pure Christianity and “high art” took separate roads, and fared on, as best they might, independently of each other.

§ 18. But although Calvin, and Knox, and Luther, and their flocks, with all the hardest-headed and truest-hearted faithful left in Christendom, thus spurned away the spurious art, and all art with it, (not without harm to themselves, such as a man must needs sustain in cutting off a decayed limb,*) certain conditions of weaker Christianity suffered the false system to retain influence over them; and to this day, the clear and tasteless poison of the art of Raphael infects with sleep of infidelity the hearts of millions of Christians. It is the first cause of all that pre-eminent *dulness* which characterises what Protestants call sacred art; a dulness not merely baneful in making religion distasteful to the young, but in sickening, as we have seen, all vital belief of religion in the old. A dim sense of impossibility attaches itself always to the graceful emptiness of the representation; we feel instinctively that the painted Christ and painted apostle are not beings that ever did or could exist; and this fatal sense of fair fabulousness, and well-composed impossibility, steals gradually from the picture into the history, until we find ourselves reading St. Mark

in closing their own mission,—mightier, in speaking to Christ “of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.”¹ They, men of like passions once with us, appointed to speak to the Redeemer of His death.

And, then, look at Raphael’s kicking gracefulnesses.²

* Luther had no dislike of religious art on principle. Even the stove in his chamber was wrought with sacred subjects. See Mrs. Stowe’s *Sunny Memories*.³

¹ [Luke ix. 21.]

² [See, again, *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* for a further criticism of the figures of Moses and Elias, and for another reference to Raphael’s “Transfiguration” (in the Vatican Gallery), see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 23.]

³ [*Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, “Letter xlv. Wittenberg,” 1854, p. 265. The book is referred to in *Seven Lamps* (2nd edition, 1855), Vol. VIII. p. 9 n.]

or St. Luke with the same admiring, but uninterested, incredulity, with which we contemplate Raphael.

§ 19. On a certain class of minds, however, these Raphaellesque and other sacred paintings of high order, have had, of late years, another kind of influence, much resembling that which they had at first on the most pious Romanists. They are used to excite certain conditions of religious dream or reverie; being again, as in earliest times, regarded not as representations of fact, but as expressions of sentiment respecting the fact. In this way the best of them have unquestionably much purifying and enchanting power; and they are helpful opponents to sinful passion and weakness of every kind. A fit of unjust anger, petty malice, unreasonable vexation, or dark passion, cannot certainly, in a mind of ordinary sensibility, hold its own in the presence of a good engraving from any work of Angelico, Memling, or Perugino. But I nevertheless believe, that he who trusts much to such helps will find them fail him at his need; and that the dependence, in any great degree, on the presence or power of a picture, indicates a wonderfully feeble sense of the presence and power of God. I do not think that any man, who is thoroughly certain that Christ is in the room, will care what sort of pictures of Christ he has on its walls; and, in the plurality of cases, the delight taken in art of this kind is, in reality, nothing more than a form of graceful indulgence of those sensibilities which the habits of a disciplined life restrain in other directions. Such art is, in a word, the opera and drama of the monk. Sometimes it is worse than this, and the love of it is the mask under which a general thirst for morbid excitement will pass itself for religion. The young lady who rises in the middle of the day, jaded by her last night's ball, and utterly incapable of any simple or wholesome religious exercise, can still gaze into the dark eyes of the Madonna di San Sisto, or dream over the whiteness of an ivory crucifix, and returns to the course of her daily life in full persuasion that her morning's feverishness has atoned for

her evening's folly. And all the while, the art which possesses these very doubtful advantages is acting for undoubted detriment, in the various ways above examined, on the inmost fastnesses of faith; it is throwing subtle endearments round foolish traditions, confusing sweet fancies with sound doctrines, obscuring real events with unlikely semblances, and enforcing false assertions with pleasant circumstantiality, until, to the usual, and assuredly sufficient, difficulties standing in the way of belief, its votaries have added a habit of sentimentally changing what they know to be true, and of dearly loving what they confess to be false.

§ 20. Has there, then (the reader asks emphatically), been *no* true religious ideal? Has religious art never been of any service to mankind? I fear, on the whole, not. Of true religious ideal, representing events historically recorded, with solemn effort at a sincere and unartificial conception, there exist, as yet, hardly any examples. Nearly all good religious pictures fall into one or other branch of the false ideal already examined, either into the Angelican (passionate ideal) or the Raphaelesque (philosophical ideal). But there is one true form of religious art, nevertheless, in the pictures of the passionate ideal which represent imaginary beings of another world. Since it is evidently right that we should try to imagine the glories of the next world, and as this imagination must be, in each separate mind, more or less different, and unconfined by any laws of material fact, the passionate ideal has not only full scope here, but it becomes our duty to urge its powers to its utmost, so that every condition of beautiful form and colour may be employed to invest these scenes with greater delightfulness (the whole being, of course, received as an assertion of possibility, not of absolute fact). All the paradises imagined by the religious painters—the choirs of glorified saints, angels, and spiritual powers, when painted with full belief in this possibility of their existence, are true ideals; and so far from our having dwelt on these too much, I believe, rather, we have not trusted them enough,

nor accepted them enough, as possible statements of most precious truth. Nothing but unmixed good can accrue to any mind from the contemplation of Orcagna's Last Judgment or his Triumph of Death, or Angelico's Last Judgment and Paradise,¹ or any of the scenes laid in heaven by the other faithful religious masters; and the more they are considered, not as works of art, but as real visions of real things, more or less imperfectly set down, the more good will be got by dwelling upon them. The same is true of all representations of Christ as a living presence among us now, as in Hunt's Light of the World.²

§ 21. For the rest, there is a reality of conception in some of the works of Benozzo Gozzoli, Ghirlandajo, and Giotto, which approaches to a true ideal, even of recorded facts. But the examination of the various degrees in which sacred art has reached its proper power is not to our present purpose; still less, to investigate the infinitely difficult question of its past operation on the Christian mind. I hope to prosecute my inquiry into this subject in another work; it being enough here to mark the forms of ideal error, without historically tracing their extent, and to state generally that my impression is, up to the present moment, that the best religious art has been *hitherto* rather a fruit, and attendant sign, of sincere Christianity than a promoter of or help to it. More, I think, has always been done for God by few words than many pictures, and more by few acts than many words.

§ 22. I must not, however, quit the subject without insisting on the chief practical consequence of what we have observed, namely, that sacred art, so far from being exhausted, has yet to attain the development of its highest branches; and the task, or privilege, yet remains for mankind, to produce an art which shall be at once entirely

¹ [For Orcagna's "Last Judgment," see Vol. IV. p. 275 *n.*, and for his "Triumph of Death," Lord Lindsay's description quoted in Ruskin's Review, Vol. XII. p. 224 (§ 53), and compare below, ch. viii. § 6, p. 134. For Angelico's "Last Judgment" and "Paradise," Vol. IV. p. 275.]

² [See above, pp. 52, 65.]

skilful and entirely *sincere*. All the histories of the Bible are, in my judgment, yet waiting to be painted. Moses has never been painted; Elijah never; David never (except as a mere ruddy stripling); Deborah never; Gideon never; Isaiah never.¹ What single example does the reader remember of painting which suggested so much as the faintest shadow of these people, or of their deeds? Strong men in armour, or aged men with flowing beards, he *may* remember, who, when he looked at his Louvre or Uffizii catalogue, he found were intended to stand for David or for Moses. But does he suppose that, if these pictures had suggested to him the feeblest image of the presence of such men, he would have passed on, as he assuredly did, to the next picture,—representing, doubtless, Diana and Actæon, or Cupid and the Graces, or a gambling quarrel in a pothouse,—with no sense of pain, or surprise? Let him meditate over the matter, and he will find ultimately that what I say is true, and that religious art, at once complete and sincere, never yet has existed.

§ 23. It will exist: nay, I believe the era of its birth has come, and that those bright Turnerian imageries, which the European public declared to be “dotage,” and those calm Pre-Raphaelite studies which, in like manner, it pronounced “puerility,” form the first foundation that has been ever laid for true sacred art. Of this we shall presently reason farther. But, be it as it may, if we would cherish the hope that sacred art may, indeed, arise for *us*, two separate cautions are to be addressed to the two opposed

¹ [The passage from “All the histories of the Bible . . .” down to the end of § 22 is § 8 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following note:—

“I knew nothing, when I wrote this passage, of Luini, Filippo Lippi, or Sandro Botticelli; and had not capacity to enter into the deeper feelings even of the men whom I was chiefly studying,—Tintoret and Fra Angelico. But the British public is at present as little acquainted with the greater Florentines as I was then, and the passage, for *them*, remains true.”

In connexion with the remarks in the text on paintings of religious subjects, compare the criticism of Millais’ “Joshua” (exhibited 1871) in *Ariadne Florentina*, § 152, and the subsequent remarks on Botticelli’s Life of Moses. For Ruskin’s discovery of Luini, see Vol. IV. p. 355 and *n.*]

classes of religionists whose influence will chiefly retard that hope's accomplishment. The group calling themselves Evangelical ought no longer to render their religion an offence to men of the world by associating it only with the most vulgar forms of art. It is not necessary that they should admit either music or painting into religious service; but, if they admit either the one or the other, let it not be bad music nor bad painting: it is certainly in nowise more for Christ's honour that His praise should be sung discordantly, or His miracles painted discreditably, than that His word should be preached ungrammatically. Some Evangelicals, however, seem to take a morbid pride in the triple degradation.*

§ 24. The opposite class of men, whose natural instincts lead them to mingle the refinements of art with all the offices and practices of religion, are to be warned, on the contrary, how they mistake their enjoyments for their duties, or confound poetry with faith. I admit that it is impossible for one man to judge another in this matter, and that it can never be said with certainty how far what seems frivolity may be force, and what seems the indulgence of the heart may be, indeed, its dedication. I am ready to believe that Metastasio, expiring in a canzonet, may have died better than if his prayer had been in unmeasured

* I do not know anything more humiliating to a man of common sense, than to open what is called an "Illustrated Bible" of modern days. See, for instance, the plates in Brown's Bible (octavo: Edinburgh, 1840), a standard evangelical edition. Our habit of reducing the Psalms to doggerel before we will condescend to sing them, is a parallel abuse. It is marvellous to think that human creatures with tongues and souls should refuse to chant the verse: "Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up Thy strength, and come and help us;" preferring this:—

"Behold how Benjamin expects,
With Ephraim and Manasseh join'd,
In their deliverance, the effects
Of Thy resistless strength to find!"¹

¹ [Tate and Brady, Psalm 80.]

syllables.* But, for the most part, it is assuredly much to be feared lest we mistake a surrender to the charms of art for one to the service of God; and, in the art which we permit, lest we substitute sentiment for sense, grace for utility. And for us all there is in this matter even a deeper danger than that of indulgence. There is the danger of Artistical Pharisaism. Of all the forms of pride and vanity, as there are none more subtle, so I believe there are none more sinful, than those which are manifested by the Pharisees of art. To be proud of birth, of place, of wit, of bodily beauty, is comparatively innocent, just because such pride is more natural, and more easily detected. But to be proud of our sanctities; to pour contempt upon our fellows, because, forsooth, we like to look at Madonnas in bowers of roses, better than at plain pictures of plain things; and to make this religious art of ours the expression of our own perpetual self-complacency,—congratulating ourselves, day by day, on our purities, proprieties, elevations, and inspirations, as above the reach of common mortals,—this I believe to be one of the wickedest and foolishest forms of human egotism; and, truly, I had rather, with great, thoughtless, humble Paul Veronese, make the Supper at Emmaus a background for two children playing with a dog¹

* “En 1780, âgé de quatre-vingt-deux ans, au moment de recevoir le viatique, il rassembla ses forces, et chanta à son Créateur:

‘Eterno Genitor,
Io t’ offro il proprio figlio
Che in pegno del tuo amor
Si vuole a me donar.
A lui rivolgi il eiglio,
Mira chi t’ offro; e poi,
Niega, Signor, se puoi,
Niega di perdonar.’ ”

—DE STENDHAL, *Vie de Metastasio*.²

¹ [See above, ch. ii. § 5, p. 38; ch. iii. § 10 (A), p. 53, and “Notes on the Louvre,” § 8 (in Vol. XII. p. 451).]

² [On page 308 of the book cited on p. 120.]

(as, God knows, men do usually put it in the background to everything, if not out of sight altogether), than join that school of modern Germanism which wears its pieties for decoration as women wear their diamonds, and spreads the dry fleeces of its sanctities between its dust and the dew of heaven.¹

¹ [The concluding words have hitherto been “. . . and flaunts the dry fleeces of its phylacteries . . .” Ruskin altered as above in his copy for revision.]

CHAPTER V

OF THE FALSE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, PROFANE

§ 1. SUCH having been the effects of the pursuit of ideal beauty on the religious mind of Europe, we might be tempted next to consider in what way the same movement affected the art which concerned itself with profane subject, and, through that art, the whole temper of modern civilization.

I shall, however, merely glance at this question. It is a very painful and a very wide one. Its discussion cannot come properly within the limits, or even within the aim, of a work like this; it ought to be made the subject of a separate essay, and that essay should be written by some one who had passed less of his life than I have among mountains, and more of it among men. But one or two points may be suggested for the reader to reflect upon at his leisure.

§ 2. I said just now that we might be tempted to consider how this pursuit of the ideal *affected* profane art. Strictly speaking, it brought that art into existence. As long as men sought for truth first, and beauty secondarily, they cared chiefly, of course, for the *chief* truth, and all art was instinctively religious. But as soon as they sought for beauty first, and truth secondarily, they were punished by losing sight of spiritual truth altogether, and the profane (properly so called) schools of art were instantly developed.

The perfect human beauty, which, to a large part of the community, was by far the most interesting feature in the work of the rising school, might indeed be in some degree consistent with the agony of Madonnas, and the repentance of Magdalenes; but could not be exhibited in fulness, when

the subjects, however irreverently treated, nevertheless demanded some decency in the artist, and some gravity in the spectator. The newly acquired powers of rounding limbs, and tinting lips, had too little scope in the sanctities even of the softest womanhood; and the newly acquired conceptions of the nobility of nakedness, could in no wise be expressed beneath the robes of the prelate or the sackcloth of the recluse. But the source from which these ideas had been received afforded also full field for their expression; the heathen mythology, which had furnished the examples of these heights of art, might again become the subject of the inspirations it had kindled;—with the additional advantage that it could now be delighted in, without being believed; that its errors might be indulged, unrepressed by its awe; and those of its deities whose function was temptation might be worshipped, in scorn of those whose hands were charged with chastisement.

So, at least, men dreamed in their foolishness,—to find, as the ages wore on, that the returning Apollo bore not only his lyre, but his arrows; and that at the instant of Cytherea's resurrection to the sunshine, Persephone had reascended her throne in the deep.

§ 3. Little thinking this, they gave themselves up fearlessly to the chase of the new delight, and exhausted themselves in the pursuit of an ideal now doubly false. Formerly, though they attempted to reach an unnatural beauty, it was yet in representing historical facts and real persons; *now* they sought for the same unnatural beauty in representing tales which they knew to be fictitious, and personages who, they knew, had never existed. Such a state of things had never before been found in any nation. Every people till then had painted the acts of their kings, the triumphs of their armies, the beauty of their race, or the glory of their gods. They showed the things they had seen or done; the beings they truly loved or faithfully adored. But the ideal art of modern Europe was the shadow of a shadow; and, with mechanism substituted for perception, and bodily

beauty for spiritual life, it set itself to represent men it had never seen, customs it had never practised, and gods in whom it had never believed.

§ 4. Such art could, of course, have no help from the virtues, nor claim on the energies of men. It necessarily rooted itself in their vices and their idleness; and of their vices principally in two, pride and sensuality. To the pride was attached eminently the art of architecture; to the sensuality, those of painting and sculpture. Of the fall of architecture, as resultant from the formalist pride of its patrons and designers, I have spoken elsewhere.¹ The sensualist ideal, as seen in painting and sculpture, remains to be examined here. But one interesting circumstance is to be observed with respect to the manner of the separation of these arts. Pride, being wholly a vice, and in every phase inexcusable, wholly betrayed and destroyed the art which was founded on it. But passion, having some root and use in healthy nature, and only becoming guilty in excess, did not altogether destroy the art founded upon it. The architecture of Palladio is wholly virtueless and despicable. Not so the Venus of Titian, nor the Antiope of Correggio.²

§ 5. We find, then, at the close of the sixteenth century, the arts of painting and sculpture wholly devoted to entertain the indolent and satiate the luxurious. To effect these noble ends, they took a thousand different forms; painting, however, of course being the most complying, aiming sometimes at mere amusement by deception in landscapes, or minute imitation of natural objects; sometimes giving more piquant excitement in battle-pieces full of slaughter, or revels deep in drunkenness; sometimes entering upon serious subject, for the sake of grotesque fiends and picturesque infernos, or that it might introduce pretty

¹ [*Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. §§ 6–86.]

² [For the architecture of Palladio, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 31, *Stones of Venice*, *passim*: see General Index. For Titian's Venus and Correggio's Antiope, compare Vol. XII. p. 145; and for the latter, see also *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 227).]

children as cherubs, and handsome women as Magdalenes, and Maries of Egypt, or portraits of patrons in the character of the more decorous saints: but more frequently, for direct flatteries of this kind, recurring to pagan mythology, and painting frail ladies as goddesses or graces, and foolish kings in radiant apotheosis; while, for the earthly delight of the persons whom it honoured as divine, it ransacked the records of luscious fable, and brought back in fullest depth of dye and flame of fancy, the impurest dreams of the un-Christian ages.

§ 6. Meanwhile, the art of sculpture, less capable of ministering to mere amusement, was more or less reserved for the affectations of taste; and the study of the classical statues introduced various ideas on the subjects of “purity,” “chastity,” and “dignity,” such as it was possible for people to entertain who were themselves impure, luxurious, and ridiculous. It is a matter of extreme difficulty to explain the exact character of this modern sculpturesque ideal; but its relation to the true ideal may be best understood by considering it as in exact parallelism with the relation of the word “taste” to the word “love.” Wherever the word “taste” is used with respect to matters of art, it indicates either that the thing spoken of belongs to some inferior class of objects, or that the person speaking has a false conception of its nature. For, consider the exact sense in which a work of art is said to be “in good or bad taste.” It does not mean that it is true or false; that it is beautiful or ugly: but that it does or does not comply either with the laws of choice, which are enforced by certain modes of life, or the habits of mind produced by a particular sort of education. It does not mean merely fashionable, that is, complying with a momentary caprice of the upper classes; but it means agreeing with the habitual sense which the most refined education, common to those upper classes at the period, gives to their whole mind. Now, therefore, so far as that education does indeed tend to make the senses delicate, and the perceptions accurate, and thus

enables people to be pleased with quiet instead of gaudy colour, and with graceful instead of coarse form; and, by long acquaintance with the best things, to discern quickly what is fine from what is common;—so far, acquired taste is an honourable faculty, and it is true praise of anything to say it is “in good taste.” But¹ so far as this higher education has a tendency to narrow the sympathies and harden the heart, diminishing the interest of all beautiful things by familiarity, until even what is best can hardly please, and what is brightest hardly entertain;—so far as it fosters pride, and leads men to find the pleasure they take in anything, not on the worthiness of the thing, but on the degree in which it indicates some greatness of their own (as people build marble porticoes, and inlay marble floors, not so much because they like the colours of marble, or find it pleasant to the foot, as because such porches and floors are costly, and separated in all human eyes from plain entrances of stone and timber);—so far as it leads people to prefer gracefulness of dress, manner, and aspect, to value of substance and heart, liking a well *said* thing better than a true thing, and a well-trained manner better than a sincere one, and a delicately formed face better than a good-natured one, and in all other ways and things setting custom and semblance above everlasting truth;—so far, finally, as it induces a sense of inherent distinction between class and class, and causes everything to be more or less despised which has no social rank, so that the affection, pleasure, and grief of a clown are looked upon as of no interest compared with the affection and grief of a

¹ [The passage—beginning a few lines above “So far as education does indeed tend . . .” down to nearly the end of § 6 “. . . to the understanding of noble art”—is § 6 in *Fronde Agrestes*, where Ruskin, ante-dating it, put the following footnote:—

“Nobody need begin this second volume sentence unless they are breathed like the Graeme:—

‘Right up Ben Ledi could be press,
And not a sob his toil confess.’ ”

The quotation is from *The Lady of the Lake*, canto ii. 25 (“Right up Ben Lomond,” etc.)]

well-bred man;—just so far, in all these several ways, the feeling induced by what is called a “liberal education” is utterly adverse to the understanding of noble art; and the name which is given to the feeling,—Taste, Goût, Gusto,—in all languages indicates the baseness of it, for it implies that art gives only a kind of pleasure analogous to that derived from eating by the palate.

§ 7. Modern education, not in art only, but in all other things referable to the same standard, has invariably given taste in this bad sense; it has given fastidiousness of choice without judgment, superciliousness of manner without dignity, refinement of habit without purity, grace of expression without sincerity, and desire of loveliness without love; and the modern “ideal” of high art is a curious mingling of the gracefulness and reserve of the drawing-room with a certain measure of classical sensuality. Of this last element, and the singular artifices by which vice succeeds in combining it with what appears to be pure and severe, it would take us long to reason fully: I would rather leave the reader to follow out for himself the consideration of the influence, in this direction, of statues, bronzes, and paintings, as at present employed by the upper circles of London, and (especially) Paris; and this is not so much in the works which are really fine, as in the multiplied coarse copies of them; taking the widest range, from Dannaeker’s *Ariadne*¹ down to the amorous shepherd and shepherdess in china on the drawing-room time-piece, rigidly questioning, in each case, how far the charm of the art does indeed depend on some appeal to the inferior passions. Let it be considered, for instance, exactly how far the value of a picture of a girl’s head by Greuze would be lowered in the market if the dress, which now leaves the bosom bare, were raised to the neck; and how far, in the commonest lithograph of some utterly popular subject,—for instance, the

¹ [This much-copied marble of *Ariadne on the Panther* is in the *Ariadneum*, or *Bethmann’s Museum*, at Frankfort. It is the chief work (1813) of Dannaeker (1758–1836), a sculptor of Stuttgart.]

teaching of Uncle Tom by Eva,¹—the sentiment which is supposed to be excited by the exhibition of Christianity in youth is complicated with that which depends upon Eva's having a dainty foot and a well-made satin slipper;—and then, having completely determined for himself how far the element exists, consider farther whether, when art is thus frequent (for frequent he will assuredly find it to be) in its appeal to the lower passions, it is likely to attain the highest order of merit, or be judged by the truest standards of judgment. For, of all the causes which have combined, in modern times, to lower the rank of art, I believe this to be one of the most fatal; while, reciprocally, it may be questioned how far society suffers, in its turn, from the influences possessed over it by the arts it has degraded. It seems to me a subject of the very deepest interest to determine what has been the effect upon the European nations of the great change by which art became again capable of ministering delicately to the lower passions, as it had in the worst days of Rome; how far, indeed, in all ages, the fall of nations may be attributed to art's arriving at this particular stage among them. I do not mean that, in any of its stages, it is incapable of being employed for evil, but that assuredly an Egyptian, Spartan, or Norman was unexposed to the kind of temptation which is continually offered by the delicate painting and sculpture of modern days; and, although the diseased imagination might complete the imperfect image of beauty from the coloured image on the wall,* or the most revolting thoughts be suggested by the mocking barbarism of the Gothic sculpture, their hard outline and rude execution were free from all the subtle treachery which now fills the flushed canvas and the rounded marble.

§ 8. I cannot, however, pursue this inquiry here. For our present purpose it is enough to note that the feeling,

* Ezek. xxiii. 14.

¹ [The scene of "Tom and Eva in the arbour": see p. 223 of the edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* illustrated by Cruikshank, 1852.]

in itself so debased, branches upwards into that of which, while no one has cause to be ashamed, no one, on the other hand, has cause to be proud, namely, the admiration of physical beauty in the human form as distinguished from expression of character. Every one can easily appreciate the merit of regular features and well-formed limbs, but it requires some attention, sympathy, and sense, to detect the charm of passing expression, or life-disciplined character. The beauty of the Apollo Belvidere,¹ or Venus de' Medici, is perfectly palpable to any shallow fine lady or fine gentleman, though they would have perceived none in the face of an old weather-beaten St. Peter, or a grey-haired "Grand-mother Lois."² The knowledge that long study is necessary to produce these regular types of the human form renders the facile admiration matter of eager self-complacency; the shallow spectator, delighted that he can really, and without hypocrisy, admire what required much thought to produce, supposes himself endowed with the highest critical faculties, and easily lets himself be carried into rhapsodies about the "ideal," which, when all is said, if they be accurately examined, will be found literally to mean nothing more than that the figure has got handsome calves to its legs, and a straight nose.

§ 9. That they do mean, in reality, nothing more than this may be easily ascertained by watching the taste of the same persons in other things. The fashionable lady who will write five or six pages in her diary respecting the effect upon her mind of such and such an "ideal" in marble, will have her drawing-room table covered with Books of Beauty, in which the engravings represent the human form in every possible aspect of distortion and affectation; and the connoisseur who, in the morning, pretends to the most exquisite taste in the antique, will be seen, in the evening, in his opera-stall, applauding the least graceful gestures of the least modest figurante.

¹ [For the Apollo Belvidere, see Vol. III. pp. 118, 608, 627; Vol. IV. p. 329 *n.*]

² [2 Timothy i. 5.]

§ 10. But even this vulgar pursuit of physical beauty (vulgar in the profoundest sense, for there is no vulgarity like the vulgarity of education) would be less contemptible if it really succeeded in its object; but, like all pursuits carried to inordinate lengths, it defeats itself. Physical beauty *is* a noble thing when it is seen in perfectness; but the manner in which the moderns pursue their ideal prevents their ever really seeing what they are always seeking; for, requiring that all forms should be regular and faultless, they permit, or even compel, their painters and sculptors to work chiefly by rule, altering their models to fit their preconceived notions of what is right. When such artists look at a face, they do not give it the attention necessary to discern what beauty is already in its peculiar features; but only to see how best it may be altered into something for which they have themselves laid down the laws. Nature never unveils her beauty to such a gaze. She keeps whatever she has done best, close sealed, until it is regarded with reverence. To the painter who honours her, she will open a revelation in the face of a street mendicant; but in the work of a painter who alters her, she will make Portia become ignoble, and Perdita graceless.

§ 11. Nor is the effect less for evil on the mind of the general observer. The lover of ideal beauty, with all his conceptions narrowed by rule, never looks carefully enough upon the features which do not come under his law (or any others), to discern the inner beauty in them. The strange intricacies about the lines of the lips, and marvellous shadows and watchfires of the eye, and wavering trceries of the eyelash, and infinite modulations of the brow, wherein high humanity is embodied, are all invisible to him. He finds himself driven back at last, with all his idealism, to the lionne of the ball-room, whom youth and passion can as easily distinguish as his utmost critical science; whereas, the observer who has accustomed himself to take human faces as God made them, will often find as much beauty on a village green as in the proudest room of state, and as much

in the free seats of a church aisle, as in all the sacred paintings of the Vatican or the Pitti.

§ 12. Then, farther, the habit of disdainful ordinary truth, and seeking to alter it so as to fit the fancy of the beholder, gradually infects the mind in all its other operations; so that it begins to propose to itself an ideal in history, an ideal in general narration, an ideal in portraiture and description, and in everything else where truth may be painful or uninteresting; with the necessary result of more or less weakness, wickedness, and uselessness in all that is done or said, with the desire of concealing this painful truth. And, finally, even when truth is not intentionally concealed, the pursuer of idealism will pass his days in false and useless trains of thought, pluming himself, all the while, upon his superiority therein to the rest of mankind. A modern German, without either invention or sense, seeing a rapid in a river, will immediately devote the remainder of the day to the composition of dialogues between amorous water nymphs and unhappy mariners; while the man of true invention, power, and sense will, instead, set himself to consider whether the rocks in the river could have their points knocked off, or the boats upon it be made with stronger bottoms.

§ 13. Of this final baseness of the false ideal, its miserable waste of the time, strength, and available intellect of man, by turning, as I have said above, innocence of pastime into seriousness of occupation, it is, of course, hardly possible to sketch out even so much as the leading manifestations. The vain and haughty projects of youth for future life; the giddy reveries of insatiable self-exaltation; the discontented dreams of what might have been or should be, instead of the thankful understanding of what is; the casting about for sources of interest in senseless fiction, instead of the real human histories of the people round us; the prolongation from age to age of romantic historical deceptions instead of sifted truth; the pleasures taken in fanciful portraits of rural or romantic life in poetry and on

the stage, without the smallest effort to rescue the living rural population of the world from its ignorance or misery; the excitement of the feelings by laboured imagination of spirits, fairies, monsters, and demons, issuing in total blindness of heart and sight to the true presences of beneficent or destructive spiritual powers around us; in fine, the constant abandonment of all the straightforward paths of sense and duty, for fear of losing some of the enticement of ghostly joys, or trampling somewhat “sopra lor vanità, che par persona;”¹ all these various forms of false idealism have so entangled the modern mind, often called, I suppose ironically, practical, that truly I believe there never yet was idolatry of stock or staff so utterly unholy as this our idolatry of shadows; nor can I think that, of those who burnt incense under oaks, and poplars, and elms, because “the shadow thereof was good,” it could in any wise be more justly or sternly declared than of us—“The wind hath bound them up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.”*

* Hosea, chap. iv. 12, 13, and 19.

¹ [*Inferno*, vi. 36; quoted also in “Review of Lord Lindsay,” Vol. XII. p. 170.]

CHAPTER VI

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—FIRST, PURIST¹

§ 1. HAVING thus glanced at the principal modes in which the imagination works for evil, we must rapidly note also the principal directions in which its operation is admissible, even in changing or strangely combining what is brought within its sphere.

For hitherto we have spoken as if every change wilfully wrought by the imagination was an error; apparently implying that its only proper work was to summon up the memories of past events, and the anticipations of future ones, under aspects which would bear the sternest tests of historical investigation, or abstract reasoning. And in general this is, indeed, its noblest work. Nevertheless, it has also permissible functions peculiarly its own, and certain rights of feigning, adorning, and fancifully arranging, inalienable from its nature. Everything that is natural is, within certain limits, right; and we must take care not, in over-severity, to deprive ourselves of any refreshing or animating power ordained to be in us for our help.

§ 2. (A.) It was noted in speaking above of the Angelican or passionate ideal, that there was a certain virtue in it dependent on the expression of its loving enthusiasm. (Chap. IV. § 10.)

(B.) In speaking of the pursuit of beauty as one of the characteristics of the highest art, it was also said that there were certain ways of showing this beauty by gathering together, without altering, the finest forms, and marking them by gentle emphasis. (Chap. III. § 15.)

¹ [For a note by Ruskin on this chapter, see Vol. IV. p. 190 *n.*]

(C.) And in speaking of the true uses of imagination, it was said, that we might be allowed to create for ourselves, in innocent play, fairies and naiads, and other such fictitious creatures. (Chap. IV. § 5.)

Now this loving enthusiasm, which seeks for a beauty fit to be the object of eternal love; this inventive skill, which kindly displays what exists around us in the world; and this playful energy of thought which delights in various conditions of the impossible, are three forms of idealism more or less connected with the three tendencies of the artistical mind which I had occasion to explain in the chapter on the Nature of Gothic, in the *Stones of Venice*.¹ It was there pointed out, that, the things around us containing mixed good and evil, certain men chose the good and left the evil (thence properly called Purists); others received both good and evil together (thence properly called Naturalists); and others had a tendency to choose the evil and leave the good, whom, for convenience' sake, I termed Sensualists. I do not mean to say that painters of fairies and naiads must belong to this last and lowest class, or habitually choose the evil and leave the good; but there is, nevertheless a strange connection between the reinless play of the imagination, and a sense of the presence of evil, which is usually more or less developed in those creations of the imagination to which we properly attach the word *Grotesque*.

For this reason, we shall find it convenient to arrange what we have to note respecting true idealism under the three heads—

- A. Purist Idealism.
- B. Naturalist Idealism.
- C. Grotesque Idealism.

§ 3. A. Purist Idealism.—It results from the unwillingness of men whose dispositions are more than ordinarily tender and holy, to contemplate the various forms of definite

¹ [Vol. X. ch. vi. § 56.]

evil which necessarily occur in the daily aspects of the world around them. They shrink from them as from pollution, and endeavour to create for themselves an imaginary state, in which pain and imperfection either do not exist, or exist in some edgeless and enfeebled condition.

As, however, pain and imperfection are, by eternal laws, bound up with existence, so far as it is visible to us, the endeavour to cast them away invariably indicates a comparative childishness of mind, and produces a childish form of art. In general, the effort is most successful when it is most naïve, and when the ignorance of the draughtsman is in some frank proportion to his innocence. For instance, one of the modes of treatment, the most conducive to this ideal expression, is simply drawing everything without shadows, as if the sun were everywhere at once. This, in the present state of our knowledge, we could not do with grace, because we could not do it without fear or shame. But an artist of the thirteenth century did it with no disturbance of conscience,—knowing no better, or rather, in some sense, we might say, knowing no worse. It is, however, evident, at the first thought, that all representations of nature without evil must either be ideals of a future world, or be false ideals, if they are understood to be representations of facts. They can only be classed among the branches of the true ideal, in so far as they are understood to be nothing more than expressions of the painter's personal affections or hopes.

§ 4. Let us take one or two instances in order clearly to explain our meaning.

The life of Angelico was almost entirely spent in the endeavour to imagine the beings belonging to another world. By purity of life, habitual elevation of thought, and natural sweetness of disposition, he was enabled to express the sacred affections upon the human countenance as no one ever did before or since. In order to effect clearer distinction between heavenly beings and those of this world, he represents the former as clothed in draperies of the

purest colour, crowned with glories of burnished gold, and entirely shadowless. With exquisite choice of gesture, and disposition of folds of drapery, this mode of treatment gives, perhaps, the best idea of spiritual beings which the human mind is capable of forming. It is, therefore, a true ideal;* but the mode in which it is arrived at (being so far mechanical and contradictory of the appearances of nature) necessarily precludes those who practise it from being complete masters of their art. It is always childish, but beautiful in its childishness.¹

§ 5. The works of our own Stothard are examples of the operation of another mind, singular in gentleness and purity, upon mere worldly subject. It seems as if Stothard could not conceive wickedness, coarseness, or baseness; every one of his figures looks as if it had been copied from some creature who had never harboured an unkind thought, or permitted itself in an ignoble action. With this intense love of mental purity is joined, in Stothard, a love of mere physical smoothness and softness, so that he lived in a universe of soft grass and stainless fountains, tender trees, and stones at which no foot could stumble.

All this is very beautiful, and may sometimes urge us to an endeavour to make the world itself more like the conception of the painter. At least, in the midst of its malice, misery, and baseness, it is often a relief to glance at the graceful shadows, and take, for momentary companionship, creatures full only of love, gladness, and honour. But the perfect truth will at last vindicate itself against the partial truth; the help which we can gain from the unsubstantial vision will be only like that which we may sometimes receive, in weariness, from the scent of a flower or the passing of a breeze. For all firm aid, and steady use, we must look

* As noted above in chap. iv. § 20.

¹ [For other references to the "purism" of Fra Angelico and Stothard, see Vol. X. p. 222 *n.*]

to harder realities; and as far as the painter himself is regarded, we can only receive such work as the sign of an amiable imbecility. It is indeed ideal; but ideal as a fair dream is in the dawn of morning, before the faculties are astir. The apparent completeness of grace can never be attained without much definite falsification as well as omission; stones over which we cannot stumble, must be illdrawn stones; trees, which are all gentleness and softness, cannot be trees of wood; nor companies without evil in them, companies of flesh and blood. The habit of falsification (with whatever aim) begins always in dulness and ends always in incapacity: nothing can be more pitiable than any endeavour by Stothard to express facts beyond his own sphere of soft pathos or graceful mirth, and nothing more unwise than the aim at a similar ideality by any painter who has power to render a sincerer truth.

§ 6. I remember another interesting example of ideality on this same root, but belonging to another branch of it, in the works of a young German painter, which I saw some time ago in a London drawing-room. He had been travelling in Italy, and had brought home a portfolio of sketches remarkable alike for their fidelity and purity. Every one was a laborious and accurate study of some particular spot. Every cottage, every cliff, every tree, at the site chosen, had been drawn, and drawn with palpable sincerity of portraiture, and yet in such a spirit that it was impossible to conceive that any sin or misery had ever entered into one of the scenes he had represented; and the volcanic horrors of Radicofani,¹ the pestilent gloom of the Pontines, and the boundless despondency of the Campagna, became, under his hand, only various appearances of Paradise.

It was very interesting to observe the minute emendations or omissions by which this was effected. To set the tiles the slightest degree more in order upon a cottage

¹ [To Ruskin, who was there in 1840, "a terrific memory": see *Præterita*, ii. § 30.]

roof; to insist upon the vine-leaves at the window, and let the shadow which fell from them naturally conceal the rent in the wall; to draw all the flowers in the foreground, and miss the weeds; to draw all the folds of the white clouds, and miss those of the black ones; to mark the graceful branches of the trees, and, in one way or another, beguile the eye from those which were ungainly; to give every peasant-girl whose face was visible the expression of an angel, and every one whose back was turned the bearing of a princess; finally, to give a general look of light, clear organization and serene vitality to every feature in the landscape;—such were his artifices, and such his delights. It was impossible not to sympathise deeply with the spirit of such a painter; and it was just cause for gratitude to be permitted to travel, as it were, through Italy with such a friend. But his work had, nevertheless, its stern limitations and marks of everlasting inferiority. Always soothing and pathetic, it could never be sublime, never perfectly nor entrancingly beautiful; for the narrow spirit of correction could not cast itself fully into any scene; the calm cheerfulness which shrank from the shadow of the cypress and the distortion of the olive, could not enter into the brightness of the sky that they pierced, nor the softness of the bloom that they bore: for every sorrow that his heart turned from, he lost a consolation; for every fear which he dared not confront, he lost a portion of his hardness; the unscathed sweep of the storm-clouds, the fair freedom of glancing shower and flickering sunbeam, sank into sweet rectitudes and decent formalisms; and, before eyes that refused to be dazzled or darkened, the hours of sunset wreathed their rays unheeded, and the mists of the Apennines spread their blue veils in vain.

§ 7. To this inherent shortcoming and narrowness of reach the farther defect was added, that this work gave no useful representation of the state of facts in the country which it pretended to contemplate. It was not only wanting in all the higher elements of beauty, but wholly

unavailable for instruction of any kind beyond that which exists in pleasureableness of pure emotion. And considering what cost of labour was devoted to the series of drawings, it could not but be matter for grave blame, as well as for partial contempt, that a man of amiable feeling and considerable intellectual power should thus expend his life in the declaration of his own petty pieties and pleasant reveries, leaving the burden of human sorrow unwitnessed, and the power of God's judgments unconfessed; and, while poor Italy lay wounded and moaning at his feet, pass by, in priestly calm, lest the whiteness of his decent vesture should be spotted with unhallowed blood.

§ 8. Of several other forms of Purism I shall have to speak hereafter, more especially of that exhibited in the landscapes of the early religious painters;¹ but these examples are enough, for the present, to show the general principle that the purist ideal, though in some measure true, in so far as it springs from the true longings of an earnest mind, is yet necessarily in many things deficient or blameable, and *always* an indication of some degree of weakness in the mind pursuing it. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that entire scorn of this purist ideal is the sign of a far greater weakness. Multitudes of petty artists, incapable of any noble sensation whatever, but acquainted, in a dim way, with the technicalities of the schools, mock at the art whose depths they cannot fathom, and whose motives they cannot comprehend, but of which they can easily detect the imperfections, and deride the simplicities. Thus poor fumigatory Fuseli, with an art composed of the tinsel of the stage and the panics of the nursery, speaks contemptuously of the name of Angelico as "dearer to sanctity than to art."² And a large portion of the resistance to the noble Pre-Raphaelite movement of our own days has been offered by men who suppose the

¹ [See below, ch. xviii. §§ 11, 12, pp. 393–394.]

² [The reference is apparently to Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*, new edition by Fuseli, 1805, where Fra Angelico is dismissed as "as much (if not more) respected for his piety as for his painting."]

entire function of the artist in this world to consist in laying on colour with a large brush, and surrounding dashes of flake white with bituminous brown; men whose entire capacities of brain, soul, and sympathy, applied industriously to the end of their lives, would not enable them, at last, to paint so much as one of the leaves of the nettles at the bottom of Hunt's picture of the Light of the World.*

§ 9. It is finally to be remembered, therefore, that Purism is always noble when it is *instinctive*. It is not the greatest thing that can be done, but it is probably the greatest thing that the man who does it can do, provided it comes from his heart. True, it is a sign of weakness, but it is not in our choice whether we will be weak or strong; and there is a certain strength which can only be made perfect in weakness. If he is working in humility, fear of evil, desire of beauty, and sincere purity of purpose and thought, he will produce good and helpful things; but he must be much on his guard against supposing himself to be greater than his fellows, because he has shut himself into this calm and cloistered sphere. His only safety lies in knowing himself to be, on the contrary, *less* than his fellows, and in always striving, so far as he can find it in his heart, to extend his delicate narrowness towards the great naturalist ideal. The whole group of modern German purists have lost themselves, because they founded their work not on humility, nor on religion, but on small self-conceit. Incapable of understanding the great Venetians, or any other masters of true imaginative power, and having fed what mind they had with weak poetry and false philosophy, they thought themselves the best and greatest of artistic mankind, and expected to found a new school of painting in pious plagiarism and delicate pride. It is difficult at first to

* Not that the Pre-Raphaelite is a purist movement, it is stern naturalist; but its unfortunate opposers, who neither know what nature is nor what purism is, have mistaken the simple nature for morbid purism, and therefore cried out against it.

decide which is the more worthless, the spiritual affectation of the petty German, or the composition and chiaroscuro of the petty Englishman; on the whole, however, the latter have lightest weight, for the pseudo-religious painter must, at all events, pass much of his time in meditation upon solemn subjects, and in examining venerable models; and may sometimes even cast a little useful reflected light, or touch the heart with a pleasant echo.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, NATURALIST

§ 1. WE now enter on the consideration of that central and highest branch of ideal art which concerns itself simply with things as they ARE, and accepts, in all of them, alike the evil and the good. The question is, therefore, how the art which represents things simply as they are, can be called ideal at all. How does it meet that requirement stated in Chap. III. § 24, as imperative on all great art, that it shall be inventive, and a product of the imagination? It meets it pre-eminently by that power of arrangement which I have endeavoured, at great length and with great pains, to define accurately in the chapter on Imagination associative in the second volume.¹ That is to say, accepting the weaknesses, faults, and wrongnesses in all things that it sees, it so places and harmonizes them that they form a noble whole, in which the imperfection of each several part is not only harmless, but absolutely essential, and yet in which whatever is good in each several part shall be completely displayed.

§ 2. This operation of true idealism holds, from the least things to the greatest. For instance, in the arrangement of the smallest masses of colour, the false idealist, or even the purist, depends upon perfecting each separate hue, and raises them all, as far as he can, into costly brilliancy; but the naturalist takes the coarsest and feeblest colours of the things around him, and so interweaves and opposes them that they become more lovely than if they had all been bright. So in the treatment of the human form. The naturalist will take it as he finds it; but, with such examples as his picture may rationally admit of more or less

¹ [In this edition, Vol. IV. pp. 229–248.]

exalted beauty, he will associate inferior forms, so as not only to set off those which are most beautiful, but to bring out clearly what good there is in the inferior forms themselves; finally using such measure of absolute evil as there is commonly in nature, both for teaching and for contrast.

In Tintoret's Adoration of the Magi,¹ the Madonna is not an enthroned queen, but a fair girl, full of simplicity and almost childish sweetness. To her are opposed (as Magi) two of the noblest and most thoughtful of the Venetian senators in extreme old age,—the utmost manly dignity, in its decline, being set beside the utmost feminine simplicity, in its dawn. The steep foreheads and refined features of the nobles are, again, opposed to the head of a negro servant, and of an Indian; both, however, noble of their kind. On the other side of the picture, the delicacy of the Madonna is farther enhanced by contrast with a largely made farm-servant, leaning on a basket. All these figures are in repose; outside, the troop of the attendants of the Magi is seen coming up at the gallop.

§ 3. I bring forward this picture, observe, not as an example of the ideal in conception of religious subject, but of the general ideal treatment of the human form; in which the peculiarity is, that the beauty of each figure is displayed to the utmost, while yet, taken separately, the Madonna is an unaltered portrait of a Venetian girl, the Magi are unaltered Venetian senators, and the figure with the basket, an unaltered market-woman of Mestre.

And the greater the master of the ideal, the more perfectly true in *portraiture* will his individual figures be always found, the more subtle and bold his arts of harmony and contrast. This is a universal principle, common to all great art. Consider, in Shakspeare, how Prince Henry is opposed to Falstaff, Falstaff to Shallow, Titania to Bottom, Cordelia to Regan, Imogen to Cloten, and so on;² while all

¹ [In the Scuola di San Rocco: see Vol. XI. p. 406; see also below, ch. ix. § 18, and vol. iv. ch. ii. § 9 *n.*, ch. iv. § 15. Ruskin's copies and studies from this picture are in Vol. IV., opposite pp. 248, 288, 332.]

² [Compare the other instances given above, p. 57.]

the meaner idealists disdain the naturalism, and are shocked at the contrasts. The fact is, a man who can see truth at all, sees it wholly, and neither desires nor dares to mutilate it.

§ 4. It is evident that *within* this faithful idealism, and as one branch of it only, will arrange itself the representation of the human form and mind in perfection, when this perfection is rationally to be supposed or introduced,—that is to say, in the highest personages of the story. The careless habit of confining the term “ideal” to such representations, and not understanding the imperfect ones to be *equally* ideal in their place, has greatly added to the embarrassment and multiplied the errors of artists.* Thersites is just as ideal as Achilles, and Alecto as Helen; and, what is more, all the nobleness of the beautiful ideal depends upon its being just as probable and natural as the ugly one, and having in itself, occasionally or partially, both faults and familiarities. If the next painter who desires to illustrate the character of Homer’s Achilles, would represent him cutting pork chops for Ulysses,† he would enable the public to understand the Homeric ideal better than they have done for several centuries. For it is to be kept in mind that the *naturalist ideal* has always in it, to the full, the power expressed by those two words. It is naturalist, because studied from nature, and ideal, because it is mentally arranged in a certain manner. Achilles must be represented cutting pork chops, because that was one of the things which the nature of Achilles involved his doing: he could not be shown wholly as Achilles, if he were not shown doing that. But he shall do it at such time and place as Homer chooses.

§ 5. Now, therefore, observe the main conclusions which follow from these two conditions, attached always to art of

* The word “ideal” is used in this limited sense in the chapter on Generic Beauty in the second volume, but under protest. See § 4 in that chapter.

† *Il.* ix. 209.

v.

this kind. First, it is to be taken straight from nature: it is to be the plain narration of something the painter or writer saw. Herein is the chief practical difference between the higher and lower artists; a difference which I feel more and more every day that I give to the study of art. All the great men *see* what they paint before they paint it,—see it in a perfectly passive manner,—cannot help seeing it if they would; whether in their mind's eye, or in bodily fact, does not matter; very often the mental vision is, I believe, in men of imagination, clearer than the bodily one; but vision it is, of one kind or another,—the whole scene, character, or incident passing before them as in second sight, whether they will or no, and requiring them to paint it as they see it; they not daring, under the might of its presence, to alter* one jot or tittle of it as they write it down or paint it down; it being to them in its own kind and degree always a true vision or Apocalypse, and invariably accompanied in their hearts by a feeling correspondent to the words,—“Write the things *which thou hast seen*, and the things which *are*.”¹

And the whole power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what we call an ideal thing, depends upon its being thus, to him, not an ideal, but a *real* thing. No man ever did or ever will work well, but either from actual sight or sight of faith; and all that we call ideal in Greek or any other art, because to us it is false and visionary, was, to the makers of it, true and existent. The heroes of Phidias are simply representations of such noble human persons as he every day saw, and the gods of Phidias simply representations of such noble divine persons as he thoroughly believed to exist, and did in mental vision truly behold. Hence I said in the second preface to the *Seven Lamps of*

* “And yet you have just said it shall be at such time and place as Homer chooses. Is not this *altering*?” No; wait a little, and read on.

¹ [Revelation i. 19.]

Architecture: "All great art represents something that it sees or believes in;—nothing unseen or uncredited."¹

§ 6. And just because it is always something that it sees or believes in, there is the peculiar character above noted, almost unmistakable, in all high and true ideals, of having been as it were studied from the life, and involving pieces of sudden familiarity, and close *specific* painting which never would have been admitted or even thought of, had not the painter drawn either from the bodily life or from the life of faith. For instance, Dante's centaur, Chiron, dividing his beard with his arrow before he can speak,² is a thing that no mortal would ever have thought of, if he had not actually seen the centaur do it. They might have composed handsome bodies of men and horses in all possible ways, through a whole life of pseudo-idealism, and yet never dreamed of any such thing. But the real living centaur actually trotted across Dante's brain, and he saw him do it.

§ 7. And on account of this reality it is, that the great idealists venture into all kinds of what, to the pseudo-idealists, are "vulgarities." Nay, *venturing* is the wrong word; the great men have no choice in the matter; they do not know or care whether the things they describe are vulgarities or not. They *saw* them; they are the facts of the case. If they had merely composed what they describe, they would have had it at their will to refuse this circumstance or add that. But they did not compose it. It came to them ready fashioned; they were too much impressed by it to think what was vulgar or not vulgar in it. It might be a very wrong thing in a centaur to have so much beard; but so it was. And, therefore, among the various ready tests of true greatness there is not any more certain than this daring reference to, or use of, mean and little things—mean and little, that is, to mean and little minds; but, when used by the great men, evidently part of the noble whole which is authoritatively present before them.

¹ [Vol. VIII. p. 11.]

² [*Inferno*, xii. 77–80. With what is said here, compare Vol. VI. p. 42.]

Thus, in the highest poetry, as partly above noted in the first chapter,¹ there is no word so familiar but a great man will bring good out of it, or rather, it will bring good to him, and answer some end for which no other word would have done equally well.²

§ 8. A common person, for instance, would be mightily puzzled to apply the word “whelp” to any one, with a view of flattering him. There is a certain freshness and energy in the term, which gives it agreeableness; but it seems difficult, at first hearing, to use it complimentarily. If the person spoken of be a prince, the difficulty seems increased; and when, farther, he is at one and the same moment to be called a “whelp” and contemplated as a hero, it seems that a common idealist might well be brought to a pause. But hear Shakspeare do it:—

“Awake his warlike spirit,
And your great uncle’s, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground play’d a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
While his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling, to behold his lion’s whelp
Forge in blood of French nobility.”³

So a common idealist would have been rather alarmed at the thought of introducing the name of a street in Paris—Straw Street—Rue de Fouarre—into the midst of a description of the highest heavens. Not so Dante,—

“Beyond thou mayst the flaming lustre scan
Of Isidore, of Bede, and that Richart
Who was in contemplation more than man.

¹ [See especially p. 30.]

² [With § 7 here, on the involuntariness of true vision, compare *Queen of the Air*, § 17, where Ruskin uses the word “involuntary,” more in the sense, however, of “inevitable”; the exercise of the imagination, that is to say, is voluntary, but the imagination then records passively what it sees. See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 221–222), where Ruskin distinguishes between the morbid (and “involuntary”) action of the imagination and its healthy use. On the involuntariness of true imagination in the sense here meant, see again below, §§ 10, 12. The point is made clear by a passage in *Ethics of the Dust* (Preface to ed. 2, § 3), where Ruskin distinguishes between deliberately composed metaphors and “the real powers of vision” (inevitable and involuntary) of true poets. Compare also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 42).]

³ [*Henry V.*, i. 2.]

And he, from whom thy looks returning are
 To me, a spirit was, that in austere
 Deep musings often thought death kept too far.
 That is the light eternal of Sigier,
 Who while in Rue de Fouarre his days he wore,
 Has argued hateful truths in haughtiest ear."¹—CAYLEY.

What did it matter to Dante, up in heaven there, whether the mob below thought him vulgar or not? Sigier *had* read in Straw Street; that was the fact, and he had to say so, and there an end.

§ 9. There is, indeed, perhaps, no greater sign of innate and *real* vulgarity of mind or defective education than the want of power to understand the universality of the ideal truth; the absence of sympathy with the colossal grasp of those intellects, which have in them so much of divine, that nothing is small to them, and nothing large; but with equal and unoffended vision they take in the sum of the world,—Straw Street and the seventh heaven,—in the same instant. A certain portion of this divine spirit is visible even in the lower examples of all the true men; it is, indeed, perhaps, the clearest test of their belonging to the true and great group, that they are continually touching what to the multitude appear vulgarities. The higher a man stands, the more the word “vulgar” becomes unintelligible to him. Vulgar? what, that poor farmer’s girl of William Hunt’s, bred in the stable, putting on her Sunday gown, and pinning her best cap out of the green and red pin-cushion!² Not so; she may be straight on the road to those high heavens, and may shine hereafter as one of the stars in the firmament for ever. Nay, even that lady in the satin bodice with her arm laid over a balustrade to show it, and her eyes turned up to heaven to show them; and the sportsman waving his rifle for the terror of beasts, and displaying his perfect dress for the delight of men, are kept, by the very misery and vanity of them, in the thoughts

¹ [*Paradiso*, x. 125–134.]

² [For another notice of this drawing—known as “Sunday Morning”—see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 12.]

of a great painter, at a sorrowful level, somewhat above vulgarity. It is only when the minor painter takes them on his easel, that they become things for the universe to be ashamed of.

We may dismiss this matter of vulgarity in plain and few words, at least as far as regards art. There is never vulgarity in a *whole* truth, however commonplace. It may be unimportant or painful. It cannot be vulgar. Vulgarity is only in concealment of truth, or in affectation.¹

§ 10. “Well, but,” (at this point the reader asks doubtfully,) “if then your great central idealist is to show all truth, low as well as lovely, receiving it in this passive way, what becomes of all your principles of selection, and of setting in the right place, which you were talking about up to the end of your fourth paragraph? How is Homer to enforce upon Achilles the cutting of the pork chops ‘only at such time as Homer chooses,’ if Homer is to have *no* choice, but merely to see the thing done, and sing it as he sees it?” Why, the choice, as well as the vision, is *manifested* to Homer. The vision comes to him in its chosen order. Chosen *for* him, not *by* him, but yet full of visible and exquisite choice, just as a sweet and perfect dream will come to a sweet and perfect person, so that, in some sense, they may be said to have chosen their dream, or composed it; and yet they could not help dreaming it so, and in no otherwise. Thus, exactly thus, in all results of true inventive power, the whole harmony of the thing done seems as if it had been wrought by the most exquisite rules. But to him who did it, it presented itself so, and his will, and knowledge, and personality, for the moment went for nothing; he became simply a scribe, and wrote what he heard and saw.

And all efforts to do things of a similar kind by rule or by thought, and all efforts to mend or rearrange the first order of the vision, are not inventive; on the contrary,

¹ [For a fuller discussion of vulgarity, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii.; and compare the definition of it in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 28, as “want of sensation”; and in *Academy Notes*, 1859, as a combination of “insensibility with insincerity.”]

they ignore and deny invention. If any man, seeing certain forms laid on the canvas, does by his reasoning power determine that certain changes wrought in them would mend or enforce them, that is not only uninventive, but contrary to invention, which must be the involuntary occurrence of certain forms or fancies to the mind in the order they are to be portrayed. Thus the knowing of rules and the exertion of judgment have a tendency to check and confuse the fancy in its flow; so that it will follow, that, in exact proportion as a master knows anything about rules of right and wrong, he is likely to be uninventive; and, in exact proportion as he holds higher rank and has nobler inventive power, he will know less of rules; not despising them, but simply feeling that between him and them there is nothing in common,—that dreams cannot be ruled—that as they come, so they must be caught, and they cannot be caught in any other shape than that they come in; and that he might as well attempt to rule a rainbow into rectitude, or cut notches in a moth's wing to hold it by, as in any wise attempt to modify, by rule, the forms of the involuntary vision.

§ 11. And this, which by reason we have thus anticipated, is in reality universally so. There is no exception. The great men never know how or why they do things. They have no rules; cannot comprehend the nature of rules;—do not, usually, even know, in what they do, what is best or what is worst: to them it is all the same; something they cannot help saying or doing,—one piece of it as good as another, and none of it (it seems to *them*) worth much. The moment any man begins to talk about rules, in whatsoever art, you may know him for a second-rate man; and, if he talks about them *much*, he is a third-rate, or not an artist at all. To *this* rule there is no exception in any art; but it is perhaps better to be illustrated in the art of music than in that of painting. I fell by chance the other day upon a work of De Stendhal's, *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart, et de Metastase*, fuller of common sense than any

book I ever read on the arts;¹ though I see by the slight references made occasionally to painting, that the author's knowledge therein is warped and limited by the elements of general teaching in the schools around him; and I have not yet, therefore, looked at what he has separately written on painting. But one or two passages out of this book on music are closely to our present purpose.

“Counterpoint is related to mathematics: a fool, with patience, becomes a respectable savant in that; but for the part of genius, melody, it has no rules. No art is so utterly deprived of precepts for the production of the beautiful. So much the better for it and for us. Cimarosa, when first at Prague his air was executed, *Pria che spunti in ciel l'Aurora*, never heard the pedants say to him, ‘Your air is fine, because you have followed such and such a rule established by Pergolesi in such an one of his airs; but it would be finer still if you had conformed yourself to such another rule from which Galuppi never deviated.’”

Yes: “so much the better for it, and for us;” but I trust the time will soon come when melody in painting will be understood, no less than in music, and when people will find that, there also, the great melodists have no rules, and cannot have any, and that there are in this, as in sound, “no precepts for the production of the beautiful.”

§ 12. Again. “Behold, my friend, an example of that simple way of answering which embarrasses much. One asked him (Haydn) the *reason* for a harmony—for a passage's being assigned to one instrument rather than another; but all he ever answered was, ‘I have done it, because it does well.’” Farther on, De Stendhal relates an anecdote of

¹ [The book by De Stendhal (pseudonym of Henri Beyle, 1783–1842) was first published in 1814, under a different title and pseudonym, and was translated into English in 1817—*The Life of Haydn in a series of Letters written at Vienna, followed by a Life of Mozart, with Observations on Metastasio*, translated (by W. Gardiner) from the French of L. A. C. Bombet. Another edition, under the title given in the text, was included in a complete edition of De Stendhal's works in 1854. Ruskin read the book at Geneva in 1854, and made many notes on it in his diary; compare the “Lectures on Colour,” Vol. XII. pp. 500–501, where the last of the passages here given (§ 12, below) is again cited. The quotations here (translated by Ruskin from the 1854 edition) are at pp. 168, 74, and 122–123 (in the 1817 English edition, pp. 273–274, 108, 187–188.)

Haydn; I believe one well known, but so much to our purpose that I repeat it. Haydn had agreed to give some lessons in counterpoint to an English nobleman. “‘For our first lesson,’ said the pupil, already learned in the art—drawing at the same time a quatuor of Haydn’s from his pocket, ‘for our first lesson may we examine this quatuor; and will you tell me the reasons of certain modulations, which I cannot entirely approve because they are contrary to the principles?’ Haydn, a little surprised, declared himself ready to answer. The nobleman began; and at the very first measures found matter for objection. Haydn, *who invented habitually*, and who was the contrary of a pedant, found himself much embarrassed, and answered always, ‘I have done that because it has a good effect. I put that passage there because it does well.’ The Englishman, who judged that these answers proved nothing, recommenced his proofs, and demonstrated to him, by very good reasons, that this quatuor was good for nothing. ‘But, my lord, arrange this quatuor then to your fancy,—play it so, and you will see which of the two ways is the best.’ ‘But why is yours the best which is contrary to the rules?’ ‘Because it is the pleasantest.’ The nobleman replied. Haydn at last lost patience, and said, ‘I see, my lord, it is you who have the goodness to give lessons to me, and truly I am forced to confess to you that I do not deserve the honour.’ The partizan of the rules departed, still astonished that in following the rules to the letter one cannot infallibly produce a ‘*Matrimonio Segreto*.’ ”

This anecdote, whether in all points true or not, is in its tendency most instructive, except only in that it makes *one* false inference or admission, namely, that a good composition can be *contrary* to the rules. It may be contrary to certain principles, supposed in ignorance to be general; but every great composition is in perfect harmony with all true rules, and involves thousands too delicate for ear, or eye, or thought, to trace; still it is possible to reason, with infinite pleasure and profit, about these principles, when the

thing is once done; only, all our reasoning will not enable any one to do another thing like it, because all reasoning falls infinitely short of the divine instinct. Thus we may reason wisely over the way a bee builds its comb, and be profited by finding out certain things about the angles of it. But the bee knows nothing about those matters. It builds its comb in a far more inevitable way. And, from a bee to Paul Veronese, all master-workers work with this awful, this inspired unconsciousness.

§ 13. I said just now that there was no exception to *this* law, that the great men never knew how or why they did things. It is, of course, only with caution that such a broad statement should be made; but I have seen much of different kinds of artists, and I have always found the knowledge of, and attention to, rules so *accurately* in the inverse ratio to the power of the painter, that I have myself no doubt that the law is constant, and that men's smallness may be trigonometrically estimated by the attention which, in their work, they pay to principles, especially principles of composition. The general way in which the great men speak is of "*trying* to do" this or that, just as a child would tell of something he had seen and could not utter. Thus, in speaking of the drawing of which I have given an etching farther on (a scene on the St. Gothard*), Turner asked if I had been to see "that litter of stones which I *endeavoured* to represent;" and William Hunt, when I asked him one day as he was painting, why he put on such and such a colour, answered, "I don't know; I am just *aiming* at it;"¹ and Turner, and he, and all the other men I have known who could paint, always spoke

* See Plate 21, in chap. iii. vol. iv.

¹ [In his diary of 1854, referring to Haydn's definition of harmony without melody as "bruit bien travaillé," Ruskin records this conversation a little more fully:—

"Compare Hunt's answers to my questions why he did this or that, 'Well, I don't know'—(and saying so, he lifted his head, and looked at the thing, as if the idea had just struck him that there might be a reason)—'I don't know, I'm just aimin' at it; and again: 'Well, I think a little burnt sienna would be very *desirable* there.'"

Compare Vol. XII. p. 500.]

and speak in the same way; not in any selfish restraint of their knowledge, but in pure simplicity. While all the men whom I know, who *cannot* paint, are ready with admirable reasons for everything they have done; and can show, in the most conclusive way, that Turner is wrong, and how he might be improved.

§ 14. And this is the reason for the somewhat singular, but very palpable truth that the Chinese, and Indians, and other semi-civilized nations, can colour better than we do,¹ and that an Indian shawl and China vase are still, in invention of colour, inimitable by us. It is their glorious ignorance of all rules that does it; the pure and true instincts have play, and do their work,—instincts so subtle, that the least warping or compression breaks or blunts them; and the moment we begin teaching people any rules about colour, and make them do this or that, we crush the instinct, generally for ever. Hence, hitherto, it has been an actual necessity, in order to obtain power of colouring, that a nation should be half savage: everybody could colour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but we were ruled and legalized into grey in the fifteenth;—only a little salt simplicity of their sea natures at Venice still keeping their precious, shell-fishy purpleness and power; and now that is gone; and nobody can colour anywhere, except the Hindoos and Chinese; but that need not be so, and will not be so long; for, in a little while, people will find out their mistake, and give up talking about rules of colour, and then everybody will colour again, as easily as they now talk.

§ 15. Such, then, being the generally passive or instinctive character of right invention,² it may be asked how these unmanageable instincts are to be rendered practically serviceable in historical or poetical painting,—especially historical, in which given facts are to be represented. Simply by the sense and self-control of the whole

¹ [Compare on this subject *The Two Paths*, § 3 *seq.*]

² [On the place of invention in art, see, among other passages, ch. xvi. § 26; *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. i. § 20, ch. iv. § 16; and *Eagle's Nest*, § 140.]

man; not by control of the particular fancy or vision. He who habituates himself, in his daily life, to seek for the stern facts in whatever he hears or sees, will have these facts again brought before him by the involuntary imaginative power in their noblest associations; and he who seeks for frivolities and fallacies, will have frivolities and fallacies again presented to him in his dreams.¹ Thus if, in reading history for the purpose of painting from it, the painter severely seeks for the accurate circumstances of every event; as, for instance, determining the exact spot of ground on which his hero fell, the way he must have been looking at the moment, the height the sun was at (by the hour of the day), and the way in which the light must have fallen upon his face, the actual number and individuality of the persons by him at the moment, and such other veritable details, ascertaining and dwelling upon them without the slightest care for any desirableness or poetic propriety in them, but for their own truth's sake; then these truths will afterwards rise up and form the body of his imaginative vision, perfected and united as his inspiration may teach. But if, in reading the history, he does not regard these facts, but thinks only how it might all most prettily, and properly, and impressively have happened, then there is nothing but prettiness and propriety to form the body of his future imagination, and his whole ideal becomes false.² So, in the

¹ [The passage "He who habituates himself . . ." down to ". . . in his dreams" is § 7 in *Frondees Agrestes*, where Ruskin adds the following note:—

"Very good. Few people have any idea how much more important the government of the mind is, than the force of its exertion. Nearly all the world flog their horses, without ever looking where they are going."

² [In an earlier draft of this chapter Ruskin gives some particular instances:—

"The only valuable historical painting is the sincere effort of good painters to paint the great men and interesting events of their own time, or of a time so little distant as to enable them thoroughly to conceive it. Paul Delaroche's 'Napoleon crossing the St. Bernard' comes nearer in conception to the ideal of a true historical picture than anything done in art yet; but then it is ill-painted—ill-coloured, that is (which, strictly speaking, deprives it of the rank of a picture at all). So also some of Horace Vernet's scenes in the French African campaigns; only these, it appeared to me, were of subjects with no interest or nobleness in them—chosen to display the painter's power of throwing the body into different positions—egotism still defeating itself, as in old times, and lowering the rank of the

higher or expressive part of the work, the whole virtue of it depends on his being able to quit his own personality, and enter successively into the hearts and thoughts of each person; and in all this he is still passive: in gathering the truth he is passive, not determining what the truth to be gathered shall be, and in the after vision he is passive, not determining, but as his dreams will have it, what the truth to be represented shall be; only according to his own nobleness is his power of entering into the hearts of noble persons, and the general character of his dream of them.*

§ 16. It follows from all this, evidently, that a great idealist never can be egotistic. The whole of his power depends upon his losing sight and feeling of his own existence, and becoming a mere witness and mirror of truth, and a scribe of visions,—always passive in sight, passive in utterance,—lamenting continually that he cannot completely reflect nor clearly utter all he has seen—not by any means a proud state for a man to be in. But the man who has no invention is always setting things in order, and putting the world to rights, and mending, and beautifying, and pluming himself on his doings as supreme in all ways.¹

§ 17. There is still the question open. What are the principal directions in which this ideal faculty is to exercise itself most usefully for mankind?

* The reader should, of course, refer for fuller details on this subject to the chapters on Imagination in vol. ii., of which I am only glancing now at the practical results.

whole work. English art, as far as I know, has never yet produced an historical picture; West is too feeble an artist to permit his designs to be mentioned as pictures at all—otherwise his 'Death of General Wolfe' might have been named as an approximation of the thing needed."

Delaroche's picture was exhibited in 1848, in which year Ruskin was in Paris. Horace Vernet's are at Versailles. West's "Death of Wolfe" is at Grosvenor House.]

¹ [§ 16 here is § 5 in *Frondes Agristes* (1875), where Ruskin adds the following note:—

"I am now a comic illustration of this sentence myself. I have not a ray of invention in all my brains; but am intensely rational and orderly, and have resolutely begun to set the world to rights."]

This question, however, is not to the purpose of our present work, which respects landscape-painting only; it must be one of those left open to the reader's thoughts, and for future inquiry in another place.¹ One or two essential points I briefly notice.

In Chap. VI. § 5 it was said, that one of the first functions of imagination was traversing the scenes of history, and forcing the facts to become again visible. But there is so little of such force in written history, that it is no marvel there should be none hitherto in painting. There does not exist, as far as I know, in the world a single example of a good historical picture (that is to say, of one which, allowing for necessary dimness in art as compared with nature, yet answers nearly the same ends in our minds as the sight of the real event would have answered); the reason being, the universal endeavour to get *effects* instead of facts, already shown as the root of false idealism. True historical ideal, founded on sense, correctness of knowledge, and purpose of usefulness, does not yet exist; the production of it is a task which the closing nineteenth century may propose to itself.²

§ 18. Another point is to be observed. I do not, as the reader may have lately perceived, insist on the distinction between historical and poetical painting, because, as noted in the 22nd paragraph of the third chapter, all great painting must be both.

Nevertheless, a certain distinction must generally exist between men who, like Horace Vernet, David, or Domenico Tintoret,³ would employ themselves in painting, more or less graphically, the outward verities of passing events—battles, councils, etc.—of their day (who, supposing them to work worthily of their mission, would become, properly so called, historical or narrative painters); and

¹ [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 6; *Lectures on Art*, § 30.]

² [On this subject compare Vol. IV. p. 382.]

³ [For this painter, to be distinguished from his illustrious father, see Vol. XI. p. 373. For Vernet (1789–1863), see above, p. 124 *n.*; for David, Vol. XII. p. 398.]

men who sought, in scenes of perhaps less outward importance, “noble grounds for noble emotions;”¹—who would be, in a certain separate sense, *poetical* painters, some of them taking for subjects events which had actually happened, and others themes from the poets; or, better still, becoming poets themselves in the entire sense, and inventing the story as they painted it. Painting seems to me only just to be beginning, in this sense also, to take its proper position beside literature, and the pictures of the “Awakening Conscience,” “Huguenot,” and such others, to be the first fruits of its new effort.²

§ 19. Finally, as far as I can observe, it is a constant law that the greatest men, whether poets or historians, live entirely in their own age, and that the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age. Dante paints Italy in the thirteenth century; Chaucer, England in the fourteenth; Masaccio, Florence in the fifteenth; Tintoret, Venice in the sixteenth; all of them utterly regardless of anachronism and minor error of every kind, but getting always vital truth out of the vital present.³

§ 20. If it be said that Shakspeare wrote perfect historical plays on subjects belonging to the preceding centuries, I answer that they *are* perfect plays just because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognize for the human life of all time; and this it is, not because Shakspeare sought to give universal truth, but because, painting honestly and completely from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is indeed constant enough,—a rogue in the fifteenth century being, *at heart*, what a rogue is in the nineteenth and was in the twelfth; and an honest or a knightly man being, in like manner, very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of these great idealists is, therefore, always universal; not because it is *not portrait*, but because it is

¹ [See above, p. 28.]

² [For these pictures, see Vol. XII. p. 333; Vol. XI. p. 59.]

³ [On this subject compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Vol. XII. p. 153.]

complete portrait down to the heart, which is the same in all ages; and the work of the mean idealists is *not* universal, not because it is portrait, but because it is *half* portrait,—of the outside, the manners and the dress, not of the heart. Thus Tintoret and Shakspeare paint, both of them, simply Venetian and English nature as they saw it in their time, down to the root; and it does for *all* time; but as for any care to cast themselves into the particular ways and tones of thought, or custom, of past time in their historical work, you will find it in neither of them,¹ nor in any other perfectly great man that I know of.

§ 21. If there had been no vital truth in their present, it is hard to say what these men could have done. I suppose, primarily, they would not have existed; that they, and the matter they have to treat of, are given together, and that the strength of the nation and its historians correlatively rise and fall—Herodotus springing out of the dust of Marathon. It is also hard to say how far our better general acquaintance with minor details of past history may make us able to turn the shadow on the imaginative dial backwards, and naturally to live, and even live strongly if we choose, in past periods; but this main truth will always be unshaken, that the only historical painting deserving the name is portraiture of our own living men and our own passing times,* and that all efforts to summon up the events of bygone periods, though often useful and touching, must come under an inferior class of poetical painting; nor will it, I believe, ever be much followed as their main work by the strongest

* See Edinburgh *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, p. 217. [In this edition, Vol. XII. p. 151.]

¹ [§§ 19, 20 here are § 12 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“What vestige of Egyptian character is there, for instance, in Cleopatra?—of Athenian in Theseus or Timon?—of old British in Imogen or Cordelia?—of old Scottish in Macbeth?—or even of mediæval Italian in Petruccio, the Merchant of Venice, or Desdemona? And the Roman plays appear definitely Roman only because the strength of Rome was the eternal strength of the world,—pure family life, sustained by agriculture, and defended by simple and fearless manhood.”

See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 30.]

men, but only by the weaker and comparatively sentimental (rather than imaginative) groups. This marvellous first half of the nineteenth century has in this matter, as in nearly all others, been making a double blunder. It has, under the name of improvement, done all it could to EFFACE THE RECORDS which departed ages have left of themselves, while it has declared the FORGERY OF FALSE RECORDS of these same ages to be the great work of its historical painters! I trust that in a few years more we shall come somewhat to our senses in the matter, and begin to perceive that our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves also what shall be true for the future. Let us strive with just veneration for that future, first to do what is worthy to be spoken, and then to speak it faithfully; and, with veneration for the past, recognize that it is indeed in the power of love to preserve the monument, but not of incantation to raise the dead.¹

¹ [On this subject compare "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," Vol. XII. p. 432.]
v. I

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—THIRDLY, GROTESQUE

§ 1. I HAVE already, in the *Stones of Venice*, had occasion to analyze, as far as I was able, the noble nature and power of grotesque conception: I am not sorry occasionally to refer the reader to that work, the fact being that it and this are parts of one whole, divided merely as I had occasion to follow out one or other of its branches;¹ for I have always considered architecture as an essential part of land-scape; and I think the study of its best styles and real meaning one of the necessary functions of the landscape-painter; as, in like manner, the architect cannot be a master-workman until all his designs are guided by understanding of the wilder beauty of pure nature.² But, be this as it may, the discussion of the grotesque element belonged most properly to the essay on architecture, in which that element must always find its fullest development.

§ 2. The Grotesque is in that chapter* divided principally into three kinds:

(A.) Art arising from healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest.

(B.) Art arising from irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general.

(C.) Art arising from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp.

* On the Grotesque Renaissance, vol. iii.³

¹ [See in this connexion the Introduction to Vol. X. p. xlvii.]

² [And so, as Ruskin says elsewhere, an architect "should live as little in cities as a painter" (*Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. p. 136), and be an all-round artist like Giotto (*Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Preface and § 61, Vol. XII. pp. 8, 85).]

³ [Ch. iii. In this edition, Vol. XI. pp. 135 *seq.*]

It is the central form of this art, arising from contemplation of evil, which forms the link of connection between it and the sensualist ideals, as pointed out above in the second paragraph of the sixth chapter, the fact being that the imagination, when at play, is curiously like bad children, and likes to play with fire: in its entirely serious moods it dwells by preference on beautiful and sacred images, but in its mocking or playful moods it is apt to jest, sometimes bitterly, with under-current of sternest pathos, sometimes waywardly, sometimes slightly and wickedly, with death and sin; hence an enormous mass of grotesque art, some most noble and useful, as Holbein's Dance of Death,¹ and Albert Dürer's Knight and Death,* going down gradually through various conditions of less and less seriousness into an art whose only end is that of mere excitement, or amusement by terror, like a child making mouths at another, more or less redeemed by the degree of wit or fancy in the grimace it makes, as in the demons of Teniers and such others; and, lower still, in the demonology of the stage.

§ 3. The form arising from an entirely healthful and open play of the imagination, as in Shakspeare's Ariel and Titania, and in Scott's White Lady,² is comparatively rare. It hardly ever is free from some slight taint of the inclination to evil; still more rarely is it, when so free, natural to the mind; for the moment we begin to contemplate sinless beauty we are apt to get serious; and moral fairy tales, and such other innocent work, are hardly ever truly, that is to say, naturally, imaginative; but for the most part laborious inductions and compositions. The moment any real vitality enters them, they are nearly sure to become

* See Appendix i. vol. iv.: "Modern Grotesque."

¹ [Holbein's "Dance of Death" is again referred to, and is in part described, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 53 and 63; for Dürer's "Knight and Death," see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 172); *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv. §§ 10, 16; *Lectures on Art*, § 47; *Catalogue of the Standard Series*, No. 9; *Ariadne Florentina*, § 37, and General Index, under "Dürer."]

² [For references to the *Tempest*, see above, p. 57 n.; *Time and Tide*, § 68, and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 51, 65. For other references to *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and for the White Lady of Avenel (*The Monastery*), see General Index.]

satirical, or slightly gloomy, and so connect themselves with the evil-enjoying branch.

§ 4. The third form of the Grotesque is a thoroughly noble one. It is that which arises out of the use or fancy of tangible signs to set forth an otherwise less expressible truth; including nearly the whole range of symbolical and allegorical art and poetry. Its nobleness has been sufficiently insisted upon in the place before referred to. (Chapter on Grotesque Renaissance, §§ LXIII. LXIV., etc.) Of its practical use, especially in painting, deeply despised among us, because grossly misunderstood, a few words must be added here.

A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character.

§ 5. For instance, Spenser desires to tell us, (1) that envy is the most untamable and unappeasable of the passions, not to be soothed by any kindness; (2) that with continual labour it invents evil thoughts out of its own heart; (3) that even in this, its power of doing harm is partly hindered by the decaying and corrupting nature of the evil it lives in; (4) that it looks every way, and that whatever it sees is altered and discoloured by its own nature; (5) which discolouring, however, is to it a veil, or disgraceful dress, in the sight of others; (6) and that it never is free from the most bitter suffering, (7) which cramps all its acts and movements, enfolding and crushing it while it torments. All this it has required a somewhat long and languid sentence for me to say in unsymbolical terms,—not, by the way, that they *are* unsymbolical altogether, for I have been forced, whether I would or not, to use *some* figurative words; but even with this help the sentence is long and tiresome, and does not with any vigour represent the truth.

It would take some prolonged enforcement of each sentence to make it felt, in ordinary ways of talking. But Spenser puts it all into a grotesque, and it is done shortly and at once, so that we feel it fully, and see it, and never forget it.¹ I have numbered above the statements which had to be made. I now number them with the same numbers, as they occur in the several pieces of the grotesque:—

- “And next to him malicious Envy rode
- (1) Upon a ravenous wolfe, and (2, 3) still did chaw
Between his cankred* teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
- (4, 5) All in a kirtle of discoloured say
He clothed was, y-paynted full of eies;
- (6) And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hateful snake, the which his taile uptyes
- (7) In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.”²

There is the whole thing in nine lines; or, rather in one image, which will hardly occupy any room at all on the mind's shelves, but can be lifted out, whole, whenever we want it. All noble grotesques are concentrations of this kind, and the noblest convey truths which nothing else could convey; and not only so, but convey them, in minor cases with a delightfulness,—in the higher instances with an awfulness,—which no mere utterance of the symbolised truth would have possessed, but which belongs to the effort of the mind to unweave the riddle, or to the sense it has of there being an infinite power and meaning in the thing seen, beyond all that is apparent therein, giving the highest sublimity even to the most trivial object so presented and so contemplated.

“Jeremiah, what seest thou?”

‘I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.’

‘Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.’ ”³

* Cankred—because he cannot then bite hard.

¹ [Compare the “Lectures on Colour,” § 23 (Vol. XII. p. 496), where other examples of the grotesque in Spenser are cited.]

² [*Faerie Queene*, book i. canto iv. 30, 31. Compare Vol. X. p. 406, where the lines are again quoted.]

³ [Jeremiah i. 13, 14.]

And thus in all ages and among all nations, grotesque idealism has been the element through which the most appalling and eventful truth has been wisely conveyed, from the most sublime words of true Revelation, to the “*all ot an hmionoV basileuV*,” etc., of the oracles,¹ and the more or less doubtful teaching of dreams; and so down to ordinary poetry. No element of imagination has a wider range, a more magnificent use, or so colossal a grasp of sacred truth.

§ 6. How, then, is this noble power best to be employed in the art of painting?

We hear it not unfrequently asserted that symbolism or personification should not be introduced in painting at all. Such assertions are in their grounds unintelligible, and in their substance absurd. Whatever is in words described as visible, may with all logical fitness* be rendered so by colours, and not only is this a legitimate branch of ideal art, but I believe there is hardly any other so widely useful and instructive; and I heartily wish that every great allegory which the poets ever invented were powerfully put on canvas, and easily accessible by all men, and that our artists were perpetually exciting themselves to invent more. And as far as authority bears on the question, the simple fact is that allegorical painting has been the delight of the greatest men and of the wisest multitudes, from the beginning of art, and will be till art expires. Orcagna’s Triumph of Death; Simon Memmi’s frescoes in the Spanish Chapel; Giotto’s principal works at Assisi, and partly at the Arena; Michael Angelo’s two best statues, the Night and Day; Albert Dürer’s noble Melancholy, and hundreds more of his best works; a full third, I should think, of the works of Tintoret and Veronese, and nearly as large a portion of those of Raphael and Rubens, are entirely symbolical or personifant; and, except in the case of the last-named

* Though, perhaps, only in a subordinate degree. See farther on, § 8.

¹ [Herodotus, i. 55.]

painter, are always among the most interesting works the painters executed.¹ The greater and more thoughtful the artists, the more they delight in symbolism, and the more fearlessly they employ it. Dead symbolism, second-hand symbolism, pointless symbolism, are indeed objectionable enough; but so are most other things that are dead, second-hand, and pointless. It is also true that both symbolism and personification are somewhat more apt than most things to have their edges taken off by too much handling; and what with our modern Fames, Justices, and various metaphorical ideals largely used for signs and other such purposes, there is some excuse for our not well knowing what the real power of personification is. But that power is gigantic and inexhaustible, and ever to be grasped with peculiar joy by the painter, because it permits him to introduce picturesque elements and flights of fancy into his work, which otherwise would be utterly inadmissible;—to bring the wild beasts of the desert into the room of state, fill the air with inhabitants as well as the earth, and render the least (visibly) interesting incidents themes for the most thrilling drama. Even Tintoret might sometimes have been hard put to it, when he had to fill a large panel in the Ducal Palace with the portrait of a nowise interesting Doge, unless he had been able to lay a winged lion beside him, ten feet long from the nose to the tail, asleep upon the Turkey carpet;² and Rubens could certainly have made his flatteries of Mary of Medici palatable to no one but herself, without the help of rosy-cheeked goddesses of abundance, and seven-headed hydras of rebellion.

§ 7. For observe, not only does the introduction of these imaginary beings permit greater fantasticism of *incident*, but also infinite fantasticism of *treatment*; and, I

¹ [On the subject of symbolism and personification in art, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 377).]

² [See Vol. XI. p. 375, and for the Medici Series by Rubens, in the Louvre, Vol. XII. p. 473, and *Harbours of England*, § 30 n.]

believe, so far from the pursuit of the false ideal having in any wise exhausted the realms of fantastic imagination, those realms have hardly yet been entered, and that a universe of noble dream-land lies before us, yet to be conquered. For, hitherto, when fantastic creatures have been introduced, either the masters have been so realistic in temper that they made the spirits as substantial as their figures of flesh and blood,—as Rubens, and, for the most part, Tintoret; or else they have been weak and unpractised in realization, and have painted transparent or cloudy spirits because they had no power of painting grand ones. But if a really great painter, thoroughly capable of giving substantial truth, and master of the elements of pictorial effect which have been developed by modern art, would solemnly, and yet fearlessly, cast his fancy free in the spiritual world, and faithfully follow out such masters of that world as Dante and Spenser, there seems no limit to the splendour of thought which painting might express. Consider, for instance, how the ordinary personifications of Charity oscillate between the mere nurse of many children, of Reynolds, and the somewhat painfully conceived figure with flames issuing from the heart, of Giotto;¹ and how much more significance might be given to the representative of Love, by amplifying with tenderness the thought of Dante, “Tanto rossa, Che a pena fora dentro al foco nota,”* that is to say, by representing the loveliness of her face and form as all flushed with glow of crimson light, and, as she descended through heaven, all its clouds coloured by her presence as they are by sunset. In the hands of a feeble painter, such an attempt would end in mere caricature; but suppose it taken up by Correggio,

* “So red, that in the midst of the fire she could hardly have been seen.”²

¹ [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 397); Reynolds’ “Charity” is in the window of New College, Oxford; the study for it is in the University Gallery. For another reference to it see Vol. X. p. 378.]

² [*Purgatorio*, xxix. 122–123; quoted again at Vol. X. p. 378.]

adding to his power of flesh-painting the (not inconsistent) feeling of Angelico in design, and a portion of Turner's knowledge of the clouds. There is nothing impossible in such a conjunction as this. Correggio, trained in another school, might have even himself shown some such extent of grasp; and in Turner's picture of the Dragon of the Hesperides, Jason, vignette to Voyage of Columbus ("slowly along the evening sky they went"),¹ and such others, as well as in many of the works of Watts and Rossetti,² is already visible, as I trust, the dawn of a new era of art, in a true unison of the grotesque with the realistic power.

§ 8. There is, however, unquestionably, a severe limit, in the case of all inferior masters, to the degree in which they may venture to realize grotesque conception, and partly, also, a limit in the nature of the thing itself; there being many grotesque ideas which may be with safety suggested dimly by words or slight lines, but which will hardly bear being painted into perfect definiteness. It is very difficult, in reasoning on this matter, to divest ourselves of the prejudices which have been forced upon us by the base grotesque of men like Bronzino, who, having no true imagination, are apt, more than others, to try by startling realism to enforce the monstrosity that has no terror in itself. But it is nevertheless true, that, unless in the hands of the very greatest men, the grotesque seems better to be expressed merely in line, or light and shade, or mere abstract colour, so as to mark it for a thought rather than a substantial fact. Even if Albert Dürer had perfectly painted his Knight and Death, I question if we should feel it so great a thought as we do in the dark engraving. Blake, perfectly powerful in the etched grotesque

¹ [For Turner's "Hesperides" (National Gallery, No. 477), see *Notes on the Turner Gallery; Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. x. ("The Nereids' Guard"); and *Lectures on Landscape*, §§ 69–71. For "Jason" (National Gallery, No. 471), and (drawing) No. 461, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 259–261). For the Vignette (National Gallery, drawing No. 395)—illustrating the line quoted above from Rogers' *Voyage of Columbus—ibid.*, p. 299.]

² [For an earlier reference to Watts, see Vol. XI. p. 30 *n.*; and for earlier references to Rossetti, Vol. XI. p. 36 *n.*, Vol. XII. p. 162.]

of the book of Job, fails always more or less as soon as he adds colour; not merely for want of power (his eye for colour being naturally good), but because his subjects seem, in a sort, insusceptible of completion:¹ and the two inexpressibly noble and pathetic woodcut grotesques of Alfred Rethel's, *Death the Avenger*, and *Death the Friend*, could not, I think, but with disadvantage, be advanced into pictorial colour.

And what is thus doubtfully true of the pathetic grotesque, is assuredly and always true of the jesting grotesque. So far as it expresses any transient flash of wit or satire, the less labour of line, or colour, given to its expression the better; elaborate jesting being always intensely painful.

§ 9. For these several reasons, it seems not only permissible, but even desirable, that the art by which the grotesque is expressed should be more or less imperfect, and this seems a most beneficial ordinance, as respects the human race in general. For the grotesque being not only a most forceful instrument of teaching, but a most natural manner of expression, springing as it does at once from any tendency to playfulness in minds highly comprehensive of truth; and being also one of the readiest ways in which such satire or wit as may be possessed by men of any inferior rank of mind can be for perpetuity expressed, it becomes on all grounds desirable that what is suggested in times of play should be rightly sayable without toil; and what occurs to men of inferior power or knowledge, sayable without any high degree of skill. Hence it is an infinite good to mankind when there is full acceptance of the grotesque, slightly sketched or expressed; and, if field for such expression be frankly granted, an enormous mass of intellectual power is turned to everlasting use, which, in

¹ [For Blake, see also below, ch. xvi. § 10 *n.*, p. 323; for his Book of Job, *Art of England*, § 101; and for other references see Vol. VIII. p. 256 *n.* The drawings for a "Dance of Death" by the German artist, Alfred Rethel (1816–1859), are often referred to by Ruskin: see "Lectures on Colour," § 15 (Vol. XII. p. 489); *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. App. 1, § 5; *Elements of Drawing*, App. 2 ("Things to be Studied," 4); and *Art of England*, § 100.]

this present century of ours, evaporates in street gibing or vain revelling; all the good wit and satire expiring in daily talk, (like foam on wine,) which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a permitted and useful expression in the arts of sculpture and illumination, like foam fixed into chalcedony. It is with a view (not the least important among many others bearing upon art) to the reopening of this great field of human intelligence, long entirely closed, that I am striving to introduce Gothic architecture into daily domestic use; and to revive the art of illumination, properly so called;¹ not the art of miniature-painting in books, or on vellum, which has ridiculously been confused with it; but of making *writing*, simple writing, beautiful to the eye, by investing it with the great chord of perfect colour, blue, purple, scarlet, white, and gold, and in that chord of colour, permitting the continual play of the fancy of the writer in every species of grotesque imagination, carefully excluding shadow; the distinctive difference between illumination and painting proper, being, that illumination admits *no* shadows, but only gradations of pure colour. And it is in this respect that illumination is specially fitted for grotesque expression; for, when I used the term "*pictorial* colour," just now, in speaking of the completion of the grotesque of Death the Avenger, I meant to distinguish such colour from the abstract shadeless hues which are eminently fitted for grotesque thought. The requirement, respecting the slighter grotesque, is only that it shall be *incompletely* expressed. It may have light and shade without colour (as in etching and sculpture), or colour without light and shade (illumination), but must not, except in the hands of the greatest masters, have both. And for some conditions of the playful grotesque, the abstract colour is a much more delightful element of expression than the abstract light and shade.

§ 10. Such being the manifold and precious uses of the

¹ [See Vol. XII. p. 483.]

true grotesque, it only remains for us to note carefully how it is to be distinguished from the false and vicious grotesque which results from idleness, instead of noble rest; from malice, instead of the solemn contemplation of necessary evil; and from general degradation of the human spirit, instead of its subjection, or confusion, by thoughts too high for it. It is easy for the reader to conceive how different the fruits of two such different states of mind *must* be; and yet how like in many respects, and apt to be mistaken, one for the other;—how the jest which springs from mere fatuity, and vacant want of penetration or purpose, is everlastingly, infinitely separated from, and yet may sometimes be mistaken for, the bright, playful, fond, farsighted jest of Plato, or the bitter, purposeful, sorrowing jest of Aristophanes;—how, again, the horror which springs from guilty love of foulness and sin, may be often mistaken for the inevitable horror which a great mind must sometimes feel in the full and penetrative sense of their presence;—how, finally, the vague and foolish inconsistencies of undisciplined dream or reverie may be mistaken for the compelled inconsistencies of thoughts too great to be well sustained, or clearly uttered. It is easy, I say, to understand what a difference there must indeed be between these; and yet how difficult it may be always to define it, or lay down laws for the discovery of it, except by the just instinct of minds set habitually in all things to discern right from wrong.

§ 11. Nevertheless, one good and characteristic instance may be of service in marking the leading directions in which the contrast is discernible. On the opposite page, Plate 1, I have put, beside each other, a piece of true grotesque, from the Lombard-Gothic, and of false grotesque from classical (Roman) architecture.¹ They are both griffins: the one on the left carries on his back one of the main

¹ [The griffin from Verona sustains the pillar on the north side of the western entrance; for other references to it, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 439), and *Verona and its Rivers*, § 14. For further remarks on the naturalness of noble grotesque, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (1856), s. No. 477 *ad fin.*]



J. Ruskin.

R. P.uff.



From Lithograph.

R. P.uff.
Allen & Co. So.

1. True and False Griffins.

Mediaeval

Classical.

pillars of the porch of the cathedral of Verona; the one on the right is on the frieze of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina at Rome, much celebrated by Renaissance and bad modern architects.

In some respects, however, this classical griffin deserves its reputation. It is exceedingly fine in lines of composition, and, I believe (I have not examined the original closely), very exquisite in execution. For these reasons, it is all the better for our purpose. I do not want to compare the worst false grotesque with the best true, but rather, on the contrary, the best false with the simplest true, in order to see how the delicately wrought lie fails in the presence of the rough truth; for rough truth in the present case it is, the Lombard sculpture being altogether untoward and imperfect in execution.*

§ 12. "Well, but," the reader says, "what do you mean by calling *either* of them true? There never were such beasts in the world as either of these?"

No, never: but the difference is, that the Lombard workman did really see a griffin in his imagination, and carved it from the life, meaning to declare to all ages that he had verily seen with his immortal eyes such a griffin as that; but the classical workman never saw a griffin at all, nor anything else; but put the whole thing together by line and rule.

§ 13. "How do you know that?"

Very easily. Look at the two, and think over them. You know a griffin is a beast composed of lion and eagle. The classical workman set himself to fit these together in the most ornamental way possible. He accordingly carves a sufficiently satisfactory lion's body, then attaches very gracefully cut wings to the sides: then, because he cannot get the eagle's head on the broad lion's shoulders, fits

* If there be any inaccuracy in the right-hand griffin, I am sorry, but am not answerable for it, as the plate has been faithfully reduced from a large French lithograph, the best I could find. The other is from a sketch of my own.

the two together by something like a horse's neck (some griffins being wholly composed of horse and eagle), then, finding the horse's neck look weak and unformidable, he strengthens it by a series of bosses, like vertebræ, in front, and by a series of spiny cusps, instead of a mane, on the ridge; next, not to lose the whole leonine character about the neck, he gives a remnant of the lion's beard, turned into a sort of griffin's whisker, and nicely curled and pointed; then an eye, probably meant to look grand and abstracted, and therefore neither lion's nor eagle's; and, finally, an eagle's beak, very sufficiently studied from a real one. The whole head being, it seems to him, still somewhat wanting in weight and power, he brings forward the right wing behind it, so as to enclose it with a broad line. This is the finest thing in the composition, and very masterly, both in thought, and in choice of the exactly right point where the lines of wing and beak should intersect (and it may be noticed in passing, that all men, who can compose at all, have this habit of encompassing or governing broken lines with broad ones, wherever it is possible, of which we shall see many instances hereafter). The whole griffin, thus gracefully composed, being, nevertheless, when all is done, a very composed griffin, is set to very quiet work, and raising his left foot, to balance his right wing, sets it on the tendril of a flower so lightly as not even to bend it down, though, in order to reach it, his left leg is made half as long again as his right.

§ 14. We may be pretty sure, if the carver had ever seen a griffin, he would have reported of him as doing something else than *that* with his feet. Let us see what the Lombardic workman saw him doing.

Remember, first, the griffin, though part lion and part eagle, has the united *power of both*. He is not merely a bit of lion and a bit of eagle, but whole lion incorporate with whole eagle. So when we really see one, we may be quite sure we shall not find him wanting in anything necessary to the might either of beast or bird.

Well, among things essential to the might of a lion, perhaps, on the whole, the most essential are his *teeth*. He could get on pretty well even without his claws, usually striking his prey down with a blow, woundless; but he could by no means get on without his teeth. Accordingly, we see that the real or Lombardic griffin has the carnivorous teeth bare to the root, and the peculiar hanging of the jaw at the back, which marks the flexible and gaping mouth of the devouring tribes.

Again; among things essential to the might of an eagle, next to his wings (which are of course prominent in both examples), are his *claws*. It is no use his being able to tear anything with his beak, if he cannot first hold it in his claws; he has comparatively no leonine power of striking with his feet, but a magnificent power of grip with them. Accordingly, we see that the real griffin, while his feet are heavy enough to strike like a lion's, has them also extended far enough to give them the eagle's grip with the back claw; and has, moreover, some of the bird-like wrinkled skin over the whole foot, marking this binding power the more: and that he has besides verily got something to hold with his feet, other than a flower; of which more presently.

§ 15. Now, observe, the Lombardic workman did not do all this because he had thought it out, as you and I are doing together; he never thought a bit about it. He simply saw the beast; saw it as plainly as you see the writing on this page, and of course could not be wrong in anything he told us of it.

Well, what more does he tell us? Another thing, remember, essential to an eagle is that it should fly *fast*. It is no use its having wings at all if it is to be impeded in the use of them. Now it would be difficult to impede him more thoroughly than by giving him two cocked ears to catch the wind.

Look, again, at the two beasts. You see the false griffin *has* them so set, and, consequently, as he flew, there would be a continual humming of the wind on each side of his

head, and he would have an infallible ear-ache when he got home. But the real griffin has his ears flat to his head, and all the hair of them blown back, even to a point, by his fast flying, and the aperture is downwards, that he may hear anything going on upon the earth, where his prey is. In the false griffin the aperture is upwards.

§ 16. Well, what more? As he is made up of the natures of lion and eagle, we may be very certain that a real griffin is, on the whole, fond of eating, and that his throat will look as if he occasionally took rather large pieces, besides being flexible enough to let him bend and stretch his head in every direction as he flies.

Look again at the two beasts. You see the false one has got those bosses upon his neck like vertebræ, which must be infinitely in his way when he is swallowing, and which are evidently inseparable, so that he cannot *stretch* his neck any more than a horse. But the real griffin is all loose about the neck, evidently being able to make it almost as much longer as he likes; to stretch and bend it anywhere, and swallow anything, besides having some of the grand strength of the bull's dewlap in it when at rest.

§ 17. What more? Having both lion and eagle in him, it is probable that the real griffin will have an infinite look of repose as well as power of activity. One of the notablest things about a lion is his magnificent *indolence*, his look of utter disdain of trouble when there is no occasion for it; as, also, one of the notablest things about an eagle is his look of inevitable vigilance, even when quietest. Look again at the two beasts. You see the false griffin is quite sleepy and dead in the eye, thus contradicting his eagle's nature, but is putting himself to a great deal of unnecessary trouble with his paws, holding one in a most painful position merely to touch a flower, and bearing the whole weight of his body on the other, thus contradicting his lion's nature.

But the real griffin is primarily, with his eagle's nature, wide awake; evidently quite ready for whatever may happen; and with his lion's nature, laid all his length on his belly,

prone and ponderous; his two paws as simply put out before him as a drowsy puppy's on a drawing-room hearth-rug; not but that he has got something to do with them, worthy of such paws; but he takes not one whit more trouble about it than is absolutely necessary. He has merely got a poisonous winged dragon to hold, and for such a little matter as that, he may as well do it lying down and at his ease, looking out at the same time for any other piece of work in his way. He takes the dragon by the middle, one paw under the wing, another above, gathers him up into a knot, puts two or three of his claws well into his back, crashing through the scales of it and wrinkling all the flesh up from the wound, flattens him down against the ground, and so lets him do what he likes. The dragon tries to bite him, but can only bring his head round far enough to get hold of his own wing, which he bites in agony instead; flapping the griffin's dewlap with it, and wriggling his tail up against the griffin's throat; the griffin being, as to these minor proceedings, entirely indifferent, sure that the dragon's body cannot drag itself one hair's breadth off those ghastly claws, and that its head can do no harm but to itself.

§ 18. Now observe how in all this, through every separate part and action of the creature, the imagination is *always* right. It evidently *cannot* err; it meets every one of our requirements respecting the griffin as simply as if it were gathering up the bones of the real creature out of some ancient rock. It does not itself know or care, any more than the peasant labouring with his spade and axe, what is wanted to meet our theories or fancies. It knows simply what is there, and brings out the positive creature, errorless, unquestionable. So it is throughout art, and in all that the imagination does; if anything be wrong it is not the imagination's fault, but some inferior faculty's, which would have its foolish say in the matter, and meddled with the imagination, and said, the bones ought to be put together tail first, or upside down.

§ 19. This, however, we need not be amazed at, because

the very essence of the imagination is already defined¹ to be the seeing to the heart; and it is not therefore wonderful that it should never err; but it is wonderful, on the other hand, how the composing legalism does *nothing else* than err. One would have thought that, by mere chance, in this or the other element of griffin, the griffin-composer might have struck out a truth; that he might have had the luck to set the ears back, or to give some grasp to the claw. But no; from beginning to end it is evidently impossible for him to be anything but wrong; his whole soul is instinct with lies; no veracity can come within hail of him; to him all regions of right and life are for ever closed.

§ 20. And another notable point is, that while the imagination receives truth in this simple way, it is all the while receiving statutes of composition also, far more noble than those for the sake of which the truth was lost by the legalist. The ornamental lines in the classical griffin appear at first finer than in the other; but they only appear so because they are more commonplace and more palpable. The subtlety of the sweeping and rolling curves in the real griffin, the way they waver and change and fold, down the neck, and along the wing, and in and out among the serpent coils, is incomparably grander, merely as grouping of ornamental line, than anything in the other; nor is it fine as ornamental only, but as massively useful, giving weight of stone enough to answer the entire purpose of pedestal sculpture. Note, especially, the insertion of the three plumes of the dragon's broken wing in the outer angle, just under the large coil of his body; this filling of the gap being one of the necessities, not of the pedestal block merely, but a means of getting mass and breadth, which all composers desire more or less, but which they seldom so perfectly accomplish.

So that, taking the truth first, the honest imagination gains everything; it has its griffinism, and grace, and usefulness, all at once: but the false composer, caring for nothing

¹ [In *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 253). On knowledge deadening the imagination, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 65).]

but himself and his rules, loses everything,—griffinism, grace, and all.

§ 21. I believe the reader will now sufficiently see how the terms “true” and “false” are in the most accurate sense attachable to the opposite branches of what might appear at first, in both cases, the merest wildness of inconsistent reverie. But they are even to be attached, in a deeper sense than that in which we have hitherto used them, to these two compositions. For the imagination hardly ever works in this intense way, unencumbered by the inferior faculties, unless it be under the influence of some solemn purpose or sentiment. And to all the falseness and all the verity of these two ideal creatures this farther falsehood and verity have yet to be added, that the classical griffin has, at least in this place, no other intent than that of covering a level surface with entertaining form; but the Lombardic griffin is a profound expression of the most passionate symbolism. Under its eagle’s wings are two wheels,* which mark it as connected, in the mind of him who wrought it, with the living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel: “When they went, the wheels went by them,” and “whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; and the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.”¹ Thus signed, the winged shade becomes at once one of the acknowledged symbols of the divine power; and, in its unity of lion and eagle, the workmen of the Middle Ages always meant to set forth the unity of the human and divine natures.† In this unity it bears up the pillars of the Church, set for ever as the corner-stone. And the

* At the extremities of the wings,—not seen in the plate.²

† Compare the *Purgatorio*, canto xxix., etc.³

¹ [Ezekiel i. 19, 20.]

² [In his copy for revision, Ruskin marks this statement as wrong of the Veronese griffin, but refers to instances at Ferrara and Padua both with and without wheels.]

³ [The reference is to the griffin in the mystical procession in the terrestrial paradise (commonly understood to be symbolical of Christ, human and divine): see *Purgatorio*, xxix. 108; xxx. 8; xxxi. 80, 113, 120, 122; xxxii. 26, 43, 47, 89, 96.]

faithful and true imagination beholds it, in this unity, with everlasting vigilance and calm omnipotence, restrain the seed of the serpent crushed upon the earth; leaving the head of it free, only for a time, that it may inflict in its fury profounder destruction upon itself,—in this also full of deep meaning. The divine power does not slay the evil creature. It wounds and restrains it only. Its final and *deadly* wound is inflicted by itself.

CHAPTER IX OF FINISH¹

§ 1. I AM afraid the reader must be, by this time, almost tired of hearing about truth. But I cannot help this; the more I have examined the various forms of art, and exercised myself in receiving their differently intended impressions, the more I have found this truthfulness a final test, and the only test of lasting power; and, although our concern in this part of our inquiry is, professedly, with the beauty which blossoms out of truth, still I find myself

¹ [In the original draft, this chapter formed a further subdivision of the general division which comprises the last three chapters—thus “Of the True Ideal: the Executive Ideal”: a heading thus amplified in a note “or, what is agreeable in technical matters, or colour and composition,” a reference being supplied to the end of the first part in the first volume (Vol. III. p. 130). In correspondence with this arrangement, the chapter began with the following remarks:—

“It was noticed in the chapter on greatness of style in art [see above, ch. iii. §§ 10, 11], that one form of failing arose from the sacrifice of expression to technical excellence, another from that of technical excellence to expression. Now, strictly speaking, all merit displayed in this work is ‘artistic merit’; but the peculiar qualities meant by the expression in that place form a separate branch of the ideal which we have here to examine. Hitherto, it will be observed, we have been speaking of the thing conceived, and of ideal character as shown in its conception; now we have to speak of the thing executed, and of ideal character shown in its execution, or the ideas belonging to the language itself: see page 10 of vol. i. [in this edition Vol. III. p. 91]. Everything imperfectly realised (as, for an instance, by a mere outline of a tree) necessarily makes us think not only of the thing itself, but of the sort of stroke or mark which represents it. If art were perfect, so that it could not be distinguished from the reality, of course the idea of merit in execution would have no place in our minds; the picture would either deceive and be right, or not deceive and be wrong. But, imitation being necessarily imperfect, we habitually regard these means, by which it is effected, according to their success, and take pleasure in examining and inquiring into them. To do as much as possible with small means, and other such excellence, becomes therefore an ideal aim with respect to execution.”

The draft next outlines—in rough notes only—a second branch of “the executive ideal,” namely, “the intrinsic beauty of the colours and lines of the picture irrespective of what they represent,” and then passes on to a discussion of “Finish,” as in the text.]

compelled always to gather it by the stalk, not by the petals. I cannot hold the beauty, nor be sure of it for a moment, but by feeling for that strong stem.

We have, in the preceding chapters, glanced through the various operations of the imaginative power of man; with this almost painfully monotonous result, that its greatness and honour were always simply in proportion to the quantity of truth it grasped. And now the question, left undetermined some hundred pages back (Chap. II. § 6), recurs to us in a simpler form than it could before. How far is this true imagination to be truly represented? How far should the perfect conception of Pallas be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than like the picture of Pallas?

§ 2. A question, this, at present of notable interest, and demanding instant attention. For it seemed to us, in reasoning about Dante's views of art,¹ that he was, or might be, right in desiring realistic completeness; and yet, in what we have just seen of the grotesque ideal, it seemed there was a certain desirableness in incompleteness. And the schools of art in Europe are, at this moment, set in two hostile ranks,—not nobly hostile, but spitefully and scornfully; having for one of the main grounds of their dispute the apparently simple question, how far a picture may be carried forward in detail, or how soon it may be considered as finished.

I purpose, therefore, in the present chapter, to examine, as thoroughly as I can, the real signification of this word, Finish, as applied to art, and to see if in this, as in other matters, our almost tiresome test is not the only right one; whether there be not a *fallacious* finish and a *faithful* finish, and whether the dispute, which seems to be only about completion and incompleteness, has not therefore, at the bottom of it, the old and deep grounds of fallacy and fidelity.

§ 3. Observe, first, there are two great and separate

¹ [See above, p. 38.]

senses in which we call a thing finished, or well-finished. One, which refers to the mere neatness and completeness of the actual work, as we speak of a well-finished knife-handle or ivory toy (as opposed to ill-cut ones); and secondly, a sense which refers to the effect produced by the thing done, as we call a picture well-finished if it is so full in its details, as to produce the effect of reality on the spectator. And, in England, we seem at present to value highly the first sort of finish which belongs to *workmanship*, in our manufactures and general doings of any kind, but to despise totally the impressive finish which belongs to the *work*; and therefore we like smooth ivories better than rough ones,—but careless scrawls or daubs better than the most complete paintings. Now, I believe that we exactly reverse the fitness of judgment in this matter, and that we ought, on the contrary, to despise the finish of *workmanship*, which is done for vanity's sake, and to love the finish of *work*, which is done for truth's sake,—that we ought, in a word, to finish our ivory toys more roughly, and our pictures more delicately.

Let us think over this matter.

§ 4. Perhaps one of the most remarkable points of difference between the English and Continental nations is in the degree of finish given to their ordinary work.¹ It is enough to cross from Dover to Calais to feel this difference: and to travel farther only increases the sense of it. English windows for the most part fit their sashes, and their woodwork is neatly planed and smoothed: French windows are larger, heavier, and framed with wood that looks as if it had been cut to its shape with a hatchet; they have curious and cumbrous fastenings, and can only be forced asunder not properly. So with everything else—French, Italian, and German, and, as far as I know, Continental. Foreign drawers

¹ [This contrast occurred to Ruskin on returning from the Continent in 1854: compare the passage from his diary cited in the Introduction above, p. xxxv., and see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. i. § 4.]

do not slide as well as ours; foreign knives do not cut so well; foreign wheels do not turn so well; and we commonly plume ourselves much upon this, believing that generally the English people do their work better and more thoroughly, or as they say, "turn it out of their hands in better style," than foreigners. I do not know how far this is really the case. There may be a flimsy neatness as well as a substantial roughness; it does not necessarily follow that the window which shuts easiest will last the longest, or that the harness which glitters the most is assuredly made of the toughest leather. I am afraid, that if this peculiar character of finish in our workmanship ever arose from a greater heartiness and thoroughness in our ways of doing things, it does so only now in the case of our best manufactures; and that a great deal of the work done in England, however good in appearance, is but treacherous and rotten in substance. Still, I think that there is really in the English mind, for the most part, a stronger desire to do things as well as they can be done, and less inclination to put up with inferiorities or insufficiencies, than in general characterize the temper of foreigners. There is in this conclusion no ground for national vanity; for though the desire to do things as well as they can be done at first appears like a virtue, it is certainly not so in all its forms. On the contrary, it proceeds in nine cases out of ten more from vanity than conscientiousness; and that, moreover, often a weak vanity. I suppose that as much finish is displayed in the fittings of the private carriages of our young rich men as in any other department of English manufacture; and that our St. James's Street cabs, dogcarts, and liveries are singularly perfect in their way. But the feeling with which this perfection is insisted upon (however desirable as a sign of energy of purpose) is not in itself a peculiarly amiable or noble feeling; neither is it an ignoble disposition which would induce a country gentleman to put up with certain deficiencies in the appearance of his country-made carriage. It is true that such philosophy may degenerate into negligence, and that much

thought and long discussion would be needed before we could determine satisfactorily the limiting lines between virtuous contentment and faultful carelessness; but at all events we have no right at once to pronounce ourselves the wisest people because we like to do all things in the best way. There are many little things which to do admirably is to waste both time and cost; and the real question is not so much whether we have done a given thing as well as possible, as whether we have turned a given quantity of labour to the best account.

§ 5. Now, so far from the labour's being turned to good account which is given to our English "finishing," I believe it to be usually destructive of the best powers of our workmen's minds. For it is evident, in the first place, that there is almost always a useful and a useless finish; the hammering and welding which are necessary to produce a sword blade of the best quality, are useful finishing; the polish of its surface, useless.* In nearly all work this distinction will, more or less, take place between substantial finish and apparent finish, or what may be briefly characterized as "Make" and "Polish." And so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "make," I have nothing to say against it. Even the vanity which displays itself in giving strength to our work is rather a virtue than a vice. But so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "polish," there is much to be said against it; this first, and very strongly, that the qualities aimed at in common finishing, namely, smoothness, delicacy, or fineness, *cannot* in reality *exist*, in a degree worth admiring, in anything done by human hands. Our best finishing is but coarse and blundering work after all. We

* "With his Yemen sword for aid;
Ornament it carried none,
But the notches on the blade."¹

¹ [*The Death Feud: an Arab War Song*, anonymous translation from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1850. Ruskin perhaps came across the lines in Helps' *Companions of my Solitude*, p. 248, where they are quoted.]

may smooth, and soften, and sharpen till we are sick at heart; but take a good magnifying-glass to our miracle of skill, and the invisible edge is a jagged saw, and the silky thread a rugged cable, and the soft surface a granite desert. Let all the ingenuity and all the art of the human race be brought to bear upon the attainment of the utmost possible finish, and they could not do what is done in the foot of a fly, or the film of a bubble. God alone can finish;¹ and the more intelligent the human mind becomes, the more the infiniteness of interval is felt between human and divine work in this respect. So then it is not a little absurd to weary ourselves in struggling towards a point which we never can reach, and to exhaust our strength in vain endeavours to produce qualities which exist inimitably and inexhaustibly in the commonest things around us.

§ 6. But more than this: the fact is, that in multitudes of instances, instead of gaining greater fineness of finish by our work, we are only destroying the fine finish of nature, and substituting coarseness and imperfection. For instance, when a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way; first, she takes wonderful pains about its forms, sculpturing it into exquisite variety of dint and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours, which for fineness no human hand can follow; then she colours it; and every one of her touches of colour, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a minute forest of living trees, glorious in strength and beauty, and concealing wonders of structure which in all probability are mysteries even to the eyes of angels. Man comes, and digs up this finished and marvellous piece of work, which in his ignorance he calls a "rough stone." He proceeds to finish it in *his* fashion, that is, to split it in two, rend it into ragged blocks, and, finally, to chisel its surface into a large number of lumps and knobs, all equally

¹ [Compare *Modern Painters*, (vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 138), where Ruskin speaks of God's "infinite finish."]

shapeless, colourless, deathful, and frightful.* And the block thus disfigured he calls “finished,” and proceeds to build therewith, and thinks himself great, forsooth, and an intelligent animal. Whereas, all that he has really done is, to destroy with utter ravage a piece of divine art, which, under the laws appointed by the Deity to regulate His work in this world, it must take good twenty years to produce the like of again. This he has destroyed, and has himself given in its place a piece of work which needs no more intelligence to do than a pholas has, or a worm, or the spirit which throughout the world has authority over rending, rottenness, and decay. I do not say that stone must not be cut; it needs to be cut for certain uses; only I say that the cutting is not “finishing,” but *unfinishing*, it; and that so far as the mere fact of chiselling goes, the stone is ruined by the human touch. It is with it as with the stones of the Jewish altar: “If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.”¹ In like manner, a tree is a finished thing. But a plank, though ever so polished, is not. We need stones and planks, as we need food; but we no more bestow an additional admirableness upon stone in hewing it, or upon a tree in sawing it, than upon an animal in killing it.

§ 7. Well, but it will be said, there is certainly a kind of finish in stone-cutting, and in every other art, which *is* meritorious, and which consists in smoothing and refining as much as possible. Yes, assuredly there is a meritorious finish. First, as it has just been said, that which fits a thing for its uses,—as a stone to lie well in its place, or a cog of an engine-wheel to play well on another; and, secondly, a finish belonging properly to the arts; but *that* finish does not consist in smoothing or polishing, but in the *completeness of the expression of ideas*. For in painting

* See the base of the new Army and Navy Clubhouse.²

¹ [Exodus xx. 25.]

² [See Vol. IX. p. 348 *n.*; and for another criticism of the building, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 35 (Vol. XII. p. 58).]

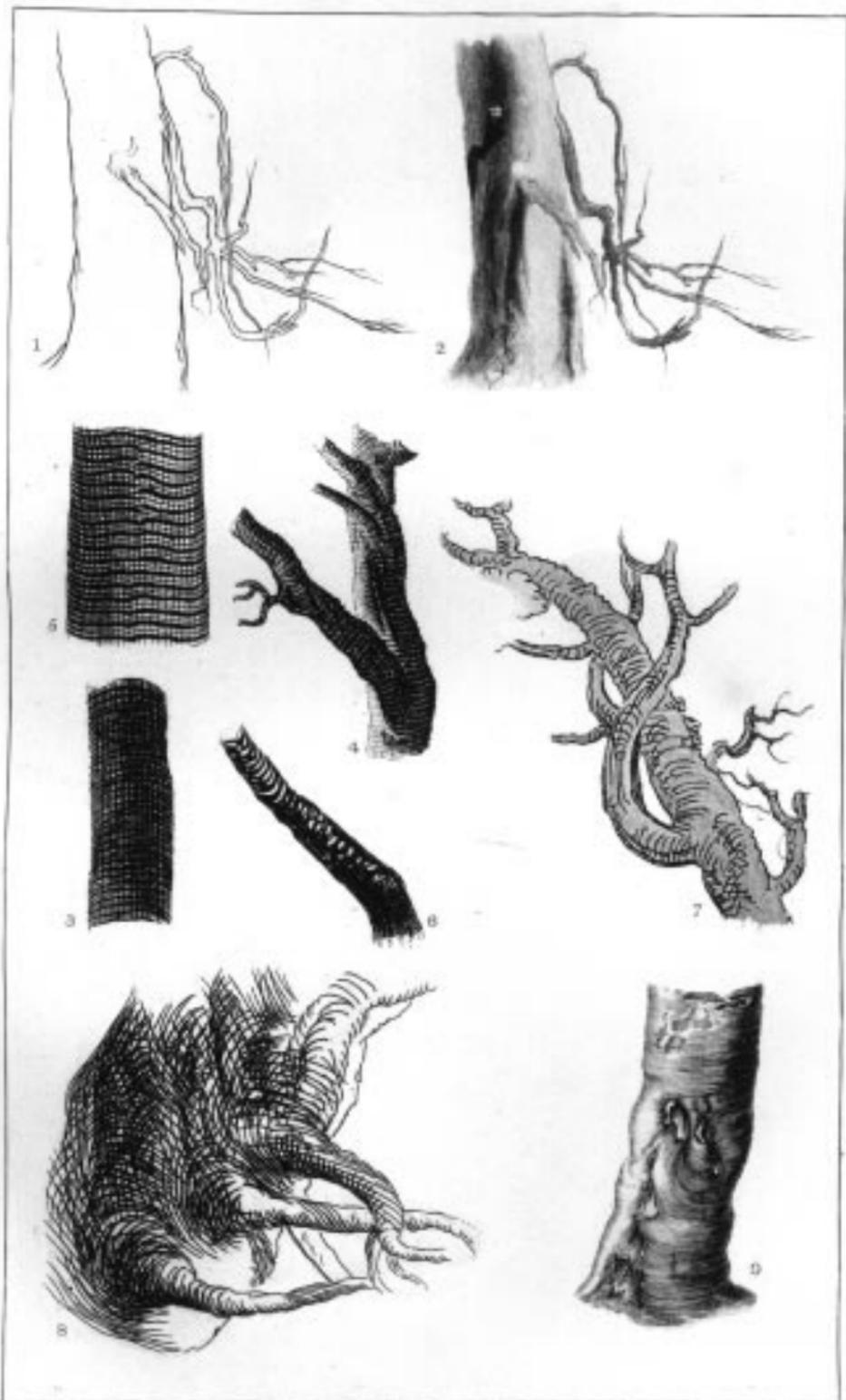
there is precisely the same difference between the ends proposed in finishing that there is in manufacture. Some artists finish for the finish' sake;¹ dot their pictures all over, as in some kinds of miniature painting (when a wash of colour would have produced as good an effect); or polish their pictures all over, making the execution so delicate that the touch of the brush cannot be seen, for the sake of the smoothness merely, and of the credit they may thus get for great labour; which kind of execution, seen in great perfection in many works of the Dutch school, and in those of Carlo Dolci,² is that polished "language" against which I have spoken at length in various portions of the first volume; nor is it possible to speak of it with too great severity or contempt, where it has been made an ultimate end.

But other artists finish for the impression's sake, not to show their skill, nor to produce a smooth piece of work, but that they may, with each stroke, render clearer the expression of knowledge. And this sort of finish is not, properly speaking, so much *completing* the picture as *adding* to it. It is not that what is painted is more delicately done, but that infinitely *more* is painted. This finish is always noble, and, like all other noblest things, hardly ever understood or appreciated. I must here endeavour, more especially with respect to the state of quarrel between the schools of living painters, to illustrate it thoroughly.

§ 8. In sketching the outline, suppose of the trunk of a tree, as in Plate 2 (opposite), fig. 1, it matters comparatively little whether the outline be given with a bold or a delicate line, so long as it is *outline only*. The work is not more "finished" in one case than in the other; it is only prepared for being seen at a greater or less distance. The real refinement or finish of the line depends, not on its thinness, but on its truly following the contours of the tree, which it conventionally represents; conventionally, I say, because there is no such line round the tree in reality;

¹ [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 197).]

² [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 91).]



and it is set down not as an *imitation*, but a *limitation* of the form. But if we are to add shade to it, as in fig. 2, the outline must instantly be made proportionately delicate, not for the sake of delicacy, as such, but because the outline will now, in many parts, stand not for limitation of form merely, but for a portion of the *shadow* within that form. Now, as a limitation it was true, but as a shadow it would be false, for there is no line of black shadow at the edge of the stem. It must, therefore, be made so delicate as not to detach itself from the rest of the shadow where shadow exists, and only to be seen in the light where limitation is still necessary.

Observe, then, the “finish” of fig. 2 as compared with fig. 1 consists, not in its greater delicacy, but in the addition of a truth (shadow), and the removal, in a great degree, of a conventionalism (outline). All true finish consists in one or other of these things. Now, therefore, if we are to “finish” farther, we must *know* more or *see* more about the tree. And as the plurality of persons who draw trees know nothing of them, and will not look at them, it results necessarily that the effort to finish is not only vain, but unfinished—does mischief. In the lower part of the plate, figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6 are facsimiles of pieces of line engraving, meant to represent trunks of trees; 3 and 4 are the commonly accredited types of tree-drawing among engravers in the eighteenth century, 5 and 6 are quite modern; 3 is from a large and important plate by Boydell, from Claude’s *Molten Calf*, dated 1781; 4 by Boydell in 1776, from Rubens’s *Waggoner*; 5 from a bombastic engraving, published about twenty years ago by Meulemeester, of Brussels, from Raphael’s *Moses at the Burning Bush*; and 6 from the foreground of Miller’s *Modern Italy*, after Turner.*

* I take this example from Miller, because, on the whole, he is the best engraver of Turner whom we have.¹

¹ [William Miller (1796–1882) engraved several of Turner’s pictures, as well as many of his drawings for Scott, Campbell, Rogers, “*Rivers of France*,” and

All these represent, as far as the engraving goes, simply *nothing*. They are not “finished” in any sense but this,—that the paper has been covered with lines.¹ 4 is the best, because, in the original work of Rubens, the lines of the boughs, and their manner of insertion in the trunk, have been so strongly marked, that no engraving could quite efface them; and, inasmuch as it represents these facts in the boughs, that piece of engraving is more finished than the other examples, while its own network texture is still false and absurd: for there is no texture of this knitted-socking-like description on boughs; and if there were, it would not be seen in the shadow, but in the light. Miller’s is spirited and looks lustrous, but has no resemblance to the original bough of Turner’s, which is pale, and does not glitter. The Netherlands work is, on the whole, the worst, because in its ridiculous double lines, it adds affectation and conceit to its incapacity. But in all these cases the engravers have worked in total ignorance both of what is meant by “drawing,” and of the form of a tree, covering their paper with certain lines, which they have been taught to plough in copper, as a husbandman ploughs in clay.

§ 9. In the next three examples we have instances of endeavours at finish by the hands of artists themselves, marking three stages of knowledge or insight, and three relative stages of finish. Fig. 7 is Claude’s (*Liber Veritatis*, No. 140, facsimile by Boydell).² It still displays an appealing ignorance of the forms of trees, but yet is, in mode of

“England and Wales.” The “Modern Italy” (exhibited 1838) was engraved by him for *The Turner Gallery*. John Boydell (1719–1804), well known as an engraver, and still better as a printseller and proprietor of “The Shakespeare Gallery”; Lord Mayor in 1790. Claude’s “Worship of the Golden Calf” was engraved by Daniel Larpiniere (1745–1785), and published by Boydell; the design is analysed in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 14. Rubens’ “Waggoner” was engraved by John Browne (1719–1790), and published by Boydell. Raphael’s “Moses at the Burning Bush” is one of the frescoes in the Stanza d’Elidoro in the Vatican; engraved by Joseph Carl Meulemeester (*b.* 1775).]

¹ [In an earlier draft, Ruskin added:—

“Though much additional labour has been bestowed upon the work, it is no more finished than if the engraver had spent his time in dancing round the tree instead of scratching over it.”]

² [See, for another piece of this tree, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 127 and Plate xiii. (Vol. XII. p. 127).]

execution, better—that is, more finished—than the engravings, because not *altogether* mechanical, and showing some dim, far-away, blundering memory of a few facts in stems, such as their variations of texture and roundness, and bits of young shoots of leaves. 8 is Salvator's, facsimiled from part of his original etching of the Finding of (Edipus).¹ It displays considerable power of handling—not mechanical, but free and firm, and is just so much more finished than any of the others as it displays more intelligence about the way in which boughs gather themselves out of the stem, and about the varying character of their curves. Finally, fig. 9 is good work. It is the root of the apple-tree in Albert Dürer's Adam and Eve,² and fairly represents the wrinkles of the bark, the smooth portions emergent beneath, and the general anatomy of growth. All the lines used conduce to the representation of these facts; and the work is therefore highly finished. It still, however, leaves out, as not to be represented by such kind of lines, the more delicate gradations of light and shade. I shall now "finish" a little farther, in the next plate (3), the mere *insertion of the two boughs* outlined in fig. 1. I do this simply by adding assertions of more facts. First, I say that the whole trunk is dark, as compared with the distant sky. Secondly, I say that it is rounded by gradations of shadow, in the various forms shown. And, lastly, I say that (this being a bit of old pine stripped by storm of its bark) the wood is fissured in certain directions, showing its grain, or *muscle*, seen in complicated contortions at the insertion of the arm and elsewhere.

§ 10. Now this piece of work, though yet far from complete (we will better it presently), is yet more finished than any of the others, not because it is more delicate or more skilful, but simply because it tells more truth, and admits

¹ [Other pieces of this etching are reproduced in Plate 57 and Fig. 57 in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 7.]

² [For Dürer's "Adam and Eve," compare *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 149); *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 172 and n.); and *Ariadne Florentina*, §§ 128, 129, 169.]



J. Fowler.

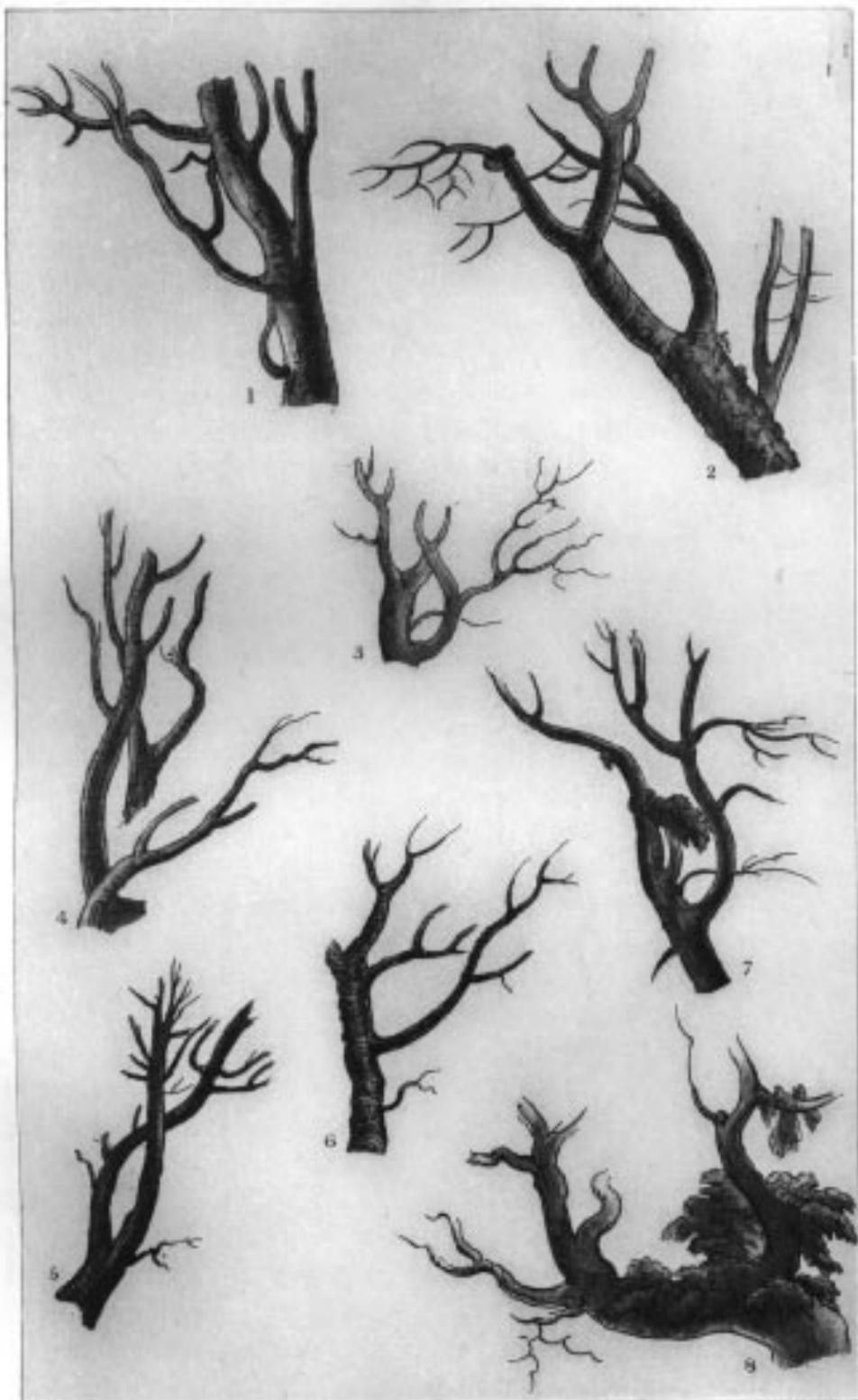
J.H. Le Roy.
Allen & Co. Co.

3. Strength of old Pine.

fewer fallacies. That which conveys most information, with least inaccuracy, is always the highest finish; and the question whether we prefer art so finished, to art unfinished, is not one of taste at all. It is simply a question whether we like to know much or little; to see accurately or see falsely; and those whose *taste* in art (if they choose so to call it) leads them to like blindness better than sight, and fallacy better than fact, would do well to set themselves to some other pursuit than that of art.

§ 11. In the above place we have examined chiefly the grain and surface of the boughs; we have not yet noticed the finish of their curvature. If the reader will look back to the No. 7 (Plate 2), which, in this respect, is the worst of all the set, he will immediately observe the exemplification it gives of Claude's principal theory about trees; namely, that the boughs always parted from each other, two at a time, in the manner of the prongs of an ill-made table-fork. It may, perhaps, not be at once believed that this is indeed Claude's theory respecting tree-structure, without some farther examples of his practice. I have, therefore, assembled on the opposite page, Plate 4, some of the most characteristic passages of ramification in the *Liber Veritatis*; the plates themselves are sufficiently cheap (as they should be) and accessible to nearly every one, so that the accuracy of the facsimiles may be easily tested. I have given in Appendix I.¹ the numbers of the plates from which the examples are taken, and it will be found that they have been rather improved than libelled, only omitting, of course, the surrounding leafage, in order to show accurately the branch outlines, with which alone we are at present concerned. And it would be difficult to bring together a series more totally futile and foolish, more singularly wrong (as the false griffin was), every way at once: they are stiff, and yet have no strength; curved, and yet have no flexibility; monotonous, and yet disorderly; unnatural, and yet uninventive. They are, in fact, of that

¹ [See below, p. 422.]



Claude.

J. H. Le Koux.
Allen & Co. N.Y.

4. Ramification, according to Claude.

commonest kind of tree bough which a child or beginner first draws experimentally; nay, I am well assured, that if this set of branches had been drawn by a schoolboy, "out of his own head," his master would hardly have cared to show them as signs of any promise in him.

§ 12. "Well, but do not the trunks of trees fork, and fork mostly into two arms at a time?"

Yes; but under as stern anatomical¹ law as the limbs of an animal: and those hooked junctions in Plate 4 are just as accurately representative of the branching of wood as this (fig. 2) is of a neck and shoulders. We should object to such a representation of shoulders, because we have some interest in, and knowledge of, human form; we do not object to Claude's trees, because we have no interest in, nor knowledge of, trees. And if it be still alleged that such work is nevertheless enough to give any one an "idea" of a tree, I answer that it never gave, nor ever will give, an idea of a tree to any one who loves trees; and that, moreover, no idea, whatever its pleasantness, is of the smallest value, which is not founded on simple facts. What pleasantness may be in *wrong* ideas we do not here inquire; the only question for us has always been, and must always be, What are the facts?



§ 13. And assuredly those boughs of Claude's are not facts; and every one of their contours is, in the worst sense, unfinished, without even the expectation or faint hope of possible refinement ever coming into them. I do not mean to enter here into the discussion of the characters of ramification; that must be in our separate inquiry into tree-structure generally;² but I will merely give one piece of Turner's tree-drawing as an example of what finished work really is, even in outline. In Plate 5, fig. 1 is the

¹ [For Ruskin's explanation of this term, see the letter in Appendix iv. below, p. 432.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. part vi.]

contour (stripped, like Claude's, of its foliage) of one of the distant tree-stems in the drawing of Bolton Abbey.¹ In order to show its perfectness better by contrast with bad work (as we have had, I imagine, enough of Claude), I will take a bit of Constable; fig. 2 is the principal tree out of the engraving of the Lock on the Stour (Leslie's *Life of Constable*).² It differs from the Claude outlines merely in being the kind of work which is produced by an uninventive person dashing about idly, with a brush, instead of dreaqing determinately wrong, with a pen: on the one hand worse than Claude's, in being lazier; on the other a little better, in being more free, but, as representative of tree form, of course still wholly barbarous. It is worth while to turn back to the description of the uninventive painter at work on a tree (Vol. II. chapter on Imaginative Association, § 11³), for this trunk of Constable's is curiously illustrative of it. One can almost see him, first bending it to the right; then, having gone long enough to the right, turning to the left; then, having gone long enough to the left, away to the right again; then dividing it; and "because there is another tree in the picture with two long branches (in this case there really is), he knows that this ought to have three or four, which must undulate or go backwards and forwards," etc., etc.

§ 14. Then study the bit of Turner work; note first its quietness, unattractiveness, apparent carelessness whether you look at it or not; next note the subtle curvatures within the narrowest limits, and, when it branches, the unexpected, out of the way things it does, just what nobody could have thought of its doing; shooting out like a letter Y, with a nearly straight branch, and then correcting its stiffness with a zig-zag behind, so that the boughs, ugly

¹ [This drawing was in Ruskin's collection; see Vol. XIII. The right-hand portion of it is etched in Plate 12 in this volume, and mezzotinted in Plate 12A in the next volume. The trees have already been mentioned in *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 586).]

² [*Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 1843, p. 43 (the plates are in that, the first, edition only).]

³ [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 238.]



Turner, Constable.

J. Corser.
Allen & Co. So.

individually, are beautiful in unison. (In what I have hereafter to say about trees, I shall need to dwell much on this character of *unexpectedness*.¹ A bough is never drawn rightly if it is not wayward, so that although, as just now said, quiet at first, not caring to be looked at, the moment it *is* looked at, it seems bent on astonishing you, and doing the last things you expect it to do.) But our present purpose is only to note the *finish* of the Turner *curves*, which, though they seem straight and stiff at first, are, when you look long, seen to be all tremulous, perpetually waving along every edge into endless melody of change. This is finish in line, in exactly the same sense that a fine melody is finished in the association of its notes.

§ 15. And now, farther, let us take a little bit of the Turnerian tree in light and shade. I said above I would better the drawing of that pine trunk, which, though it has incipient shade, and muscular action, has no texture, nor local colour. Now I take about an inch and a half of Turner's ash trunks (one of the nearer ones in this same drawing of Bolton Abbey) (fig. 3, Plate 5), and *this* I cannot better; this is perfectly finished; it is not possible to add more truth to it on that scale. Texture of bark, anatomy of muscle beneath, reflected lights in recessed hollows, stains of dark moss, and flickering shadows from the foliage above, all are there, as clearly as the human hand can mark them. I place a bit of trunk by Constable (fig. 5),* from another plate in Leslie's *Life of him* (a dell in Helmingham Park, Suffolk), for the sake of the same

* Fig. 5 is not, however, so lustrous as Constable's; I cannot help this, having given the original plate to my good friend Mr. Cousen, with strict charge to facsimile it faithfully; but the figure is all the fairer, as a representation of Constable's art, for those mezzotints in Leslie's *Life of him* have many qualities of drawing which are quite wanting in Constable's blots of colour. The comparison shall be made elaborately, between picture and picture, in the section on Vegetation.²

¹ [See especially in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 11.]

² [The plate, "Helmingham Park," faces p. 6 in Leslie's *Life of Constable*. The comparison here promised was not made; but see the further remarks on Constable's drawing of trees in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 19.]

comparison in shade that we have above in contour. You see Constable does not know whether he is drawing moss or shadow; those dark touches in the middle are confused in his mind between the dark stains on the trunk and its dark side; there is no anatomy, no cast shadow, nothing but idle sweeps of the brush, vaguely circular. The thing is much darker than Turner's, but it is not, therefore, finished; it is only blackened. And "to blacken" is indeed the proper word for all attempts at finish without knowledge. All true finish is *added fact*; and Turner's word for finishing a picture was always this significant one, "carry forward." But labour without added knowledge can only blacken or stain a picture, it cannot finish it.

§ 16. And this is especially to be remembered, as we pass from comparatively large and distant objects such as this single trunk, to the more divided and nearer features of foreground. Some degree of ignorance may be hidden, in completing what is far away; but there is no concealment possible in close work, and darkening instead of finishing becomes then the engraver's only possible resource. It has always been a wonderful thing to me to hear people talk of making foregrounds "vigorous," "marked," "forcible," and so on. If you will lie down on your breast on the next bank you come to¹ (which is bringing it *close* enough, I should think, to give it all the force it is capable of), you will see, in the cluster of leaves and grass close to your face, something as delicate as this, which I have actually so drawn, on the opposite page,² a mystery of soft shadow in the depths of the grass, with indefinite forms of leaves, which you cannot trace nor count, within it, and

¹ [Mrs. Arthur Severn, in a speech to the girls at Whitelands Training College, gave a reminiscence which is characteristic of Ruskin's own observation in this sort. "When I was very young, I was once walking through a garden with Mr. Ruskin, when I observed him to stoop low down and glance sidewise at the sky. Wondering at this movement of his, I heard him say, 'Do you put your head down here, and you will see what I see.' So I bent down also, and saw what he had discovered—the wondrous loveliness of a tree's buds against the sky" (*Standard*, May 3, 1886: "Mr. Ruskin's Queen of the May").]

² [For a note on this drawing, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 19 n.]



out of that, the nearer leaves coming in every subtle gradation of tender light and flickering form, quite beyond all delicacy of pencilling to follow; and yet you will rise up from that bank (certainly not making it appear coarser by drawing a little back from it), and profess to represent it by a few blots of “forcible” foreground colour. “Well, but I cannot draw every leaf that I see on the bank.” No, for as we saw, at the beginning of this chapter, that no human work could be finished so as to express the *delicacy* of nature, so neither can it be finished so as to express the *redundance* of nature. Accept that necessity; but do not deny it; do not call your work finished, when you have, in engraving, substituted a confusion of coarse black scratches, or in water-colour a few edgy blots, for ineffable organic beauty. Follow that beauty as far as you can, remembering that just as far as you see, know, and represent it, just so far your work is finished; as far as you fall short of it, your work is *unfinished*, and as far as you substitute any other thing for it, your work is spoiled.

§ 17. How far Turner followed it, is not easily shown; for his finish is so delicate as to be nearly uncopiable. I have just said it was not possible to finish that ash trunk of his, farther, on such a scale.* By using a magnifying-glass and giving the same help to the spectator, it might perhaps be possible to add and exhibit a few more details; but even as it is, I cannot by line engraving express all that there is in that piece of tree-trunk, on the same scale. I *have* therefore magnified the upper part of it in fig. 4 (Plate 5), so that the reader may better see the beautiful lines of curvature into which even its slightest shades and spots are cast. Every quarter of an inch of Turner’s drawings will bear magnifying in the same way; much of the finer work in them can hardly be traced, except by the

* It is of the exact size of the original, the whole drawing being about 15½ inches by 11 inches.¹

¹ [Reduced by about one-fourth in this edition.]

keenest sight, until it is magnified. In his painting of Ivy Bridge,* the veins are drawn on the wings of a butterfly, not above three lines in diameter; and in one of his smaller drawings of Scarborough,¹ in my own possession, the musselshells on the beach are rounded, and some shown as shut, some as open, though none are as large as one of the letters of this type; and yet this is the man who was thought to belong to the “dashing” school, literally because most people had not patience or delicacy of sight enough to trace his endless detail.

§ 18. “Suppose it was so,” perhaps the reader replies; “still I do not like detail so delicate that it can hardly be seen.” Then you like nothing in Nature (for you will find she always carries her detail too far to be traced). This point, however, we shall examine hereafter;² it is not the question now whether we *like* finish or not; our only inquiry here is, what finish *means*; and I trust the reader is beginning to be satisfied that it does indeed mean nothing but consummate and accumulated truth, and that our old monotonous test must still serve us here as elsewhere. And it will become us to consider seriously why (if indeed it be so) we dislike this kind of finish—dislike an accumulation of truth. For assuredly all authority is against us, and—*no truly great name can be named in the arts—but it is that of one who finished to his utmost*. Take Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael for a triad, to begin with. *They* all completed their detail with such subtlety of touch and gradation, that, in a careful drawing by any of the three, you cannot see where the pencil ceased to touch the paper;³

* An oil painting (about 3 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.), and very broad in its masses. In the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq.⁴

¹ [For the “Scarboroughs” in Ruskin’s collection, see Vol. XIII.; and compare Vol. XII. p. 382.]

² [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. ii. §§ 7, 23.]

³ [See the appendix to *Two Paths* on “Subtlety of Hand,” and Ruskin’s letter to the *Literary Gazette* (November 13, 1858) in Vol. XIII.]

⁴ [Now in the collection of Mr. Pandeli Ralli, shown at the Guildhall in 1899 (No. 21). The detail of the butterfly is noticed more fully in *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (see Vol. III. p. 244 and *n.*)]

the stroke of it is so tender, that, when you look close to the drawing you can see nothing; you only see the effect of it a little way back! Thus tender in execution, and so complete in detail, that Leonardo must needs draw *every several vein in the little agates* and pebbles of the gravel under the feet of the St. Anne in the Louvre.¹ Take a quartett after a triad—Titian, Tintoret, Bellini, and Veronese. Examine the vine-leaves of the Bacchus and Ariadne (Titian's), in the National Gallery; examine the borage blossoms, painted petal by petal, though lying loose on the table, in Titian's Supper at Emmaus, in the Louvre, or the snail-shells on the ground in his Entombment;* examine the separately designed patterns on every drapery of Veronese, in his Marriage in Cana; go to Venice and see how Tintoret paints the strips of black bark on the birch trunk that sustains the platform in his Adoration of the Magi,² how Bellini fills the rents of his ruined walls with the most exquisite clusters of the Erba della Madonna.† You will find them all in a tale. Take a quintett after the quartett—Francia, Angelico, Dürer, Memling, Perugino,—and still the witness is one, still the same striving in all to such utmost perfection as their knowledge and hand could reach.

Who shall gainsay these men? Above all, who shall gainsay them when they and Nature say precisely the same thing? for where does Nature pause in *her* finishing—that finishing which consists not in the smoothing of surface, but the filling of space, and the multiplication of life and thought?

* These snail-shells are very notable, occurring as they do in, perhaps, the very grandest and broadest of all Titian's compositions.

† *Linaria Cymbalaria*, the ivy-leaved toadflax of English gardens.³

¹ [For this detail, and others that follow, see the "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. pp. 460, 473. For the detail in Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," see *Academy Notes*, 1855, No. 240, and *Elements of Drawing*, § 77; for Tintoret's "Adoration of the Magi," Vol. XI. p. 406.]

² [See above, ch. vii. § 2, p. 112.]

³ [For this plant, see Vol. XI. p. 336, and *Queen of the Air*, § 87.]

Who shall gainsay them? I, for one, dare not; but accept their teaching, with Nature's, in all humbleness.

“But is there, then, no good in any work which does not pretend to perfectness? Is there no saving clause from this terrible requirement of completion? And if there be none, what is the meaning of all you have said elsewhere about rudeness as the glory of Gothic work, and, even a few pages back,¹ about the danger of finishing, for our modern workmen?”

Indeed there are many saving clauses, and there is much good in imperfect work. But we had better cast the consideration of these drawbacks and exceptions into another chapter, and close this one, without obscuring, in any wise, our broad conclusion that “finishing” means in art simply “telling more truth”; and that whatever we have in any sort begun wisely, it is good to finish thoroughly.²

¹ [See p. 152; and for the rudeness of Gothic, *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 184–204).]

² [In his copy for revision, Ruskin here indicated that he meant to transfer § 5 of the next chapter to the end of ch. ix.]

CHAPTER X

OF THE USE OF PICTURES¹

§ 1. I AM afraid this will be a difficult chapter; one of drawbacks, qualifications, and exceptions. But the more I see of useful truths, the more I find that, like human beings, they are eminently biped; and, although, as far as apprehended by human intelligence, they are usually seen in a crane-like posture, standing on one leg, whenever they are to be stated so as to maintain themselves against all attack it is quite necessary they should stand on two, and have their complete balance on opposite fulcra.²

§ 2. I doubt not that one objection with which, as well as with another, we may begin, has struck the reader very forcibly, after comparing the illustrations above given from Turner, Constable, and Claude. He will wonder how it was that Turner, finishing in this exquisite way, and giving truths by the thousand, where other painters gave only one or two, yet, of all painters, seemed to obtain least acknowledgeable resemblance to nature, so that the world cried out upon him for a madman, at the moment when he was giving exactly the highest and most consummate truth that had ever been seen in landscape.

And he will wonder why still there seems reason for this outcry. Still, after what analysis and proof of his being right have as yet been given, the reader may perhaps be saying to himself: "All this reasoning is of no use to me. Turner does *not* give me the idea of nature; I do not feel before one of his pictures as I should in a real scene.

¹ [Here Ruskin wrote at the head, "I can't better this chapter"; he did, however, mark some intended rearrangements and add a few explanatory notes.]

² [Compare the passage from Ruskin's diary quoted above, Introduction, pp. liii.-liv.]

Constable takes me out into the shower,¹ and Claude into the sun; and De Wint makes me feel as if I were walking in the fields; but Turner keeps me in the house, and I know always that I am looking at a picture.”

I might answer to this: Well, what else *should* he do? If you want to feel as if you were in a shower, cannot you go and get wet without help from Constable? If you want to feel as if you were walking in the fields, cannot you go and walk in them without help from De Wint? But if you want to sit in your room and look at a beautiful picture, why should you blame the artist for giving you one? This *was* the answer actually made to me by various journalists, when first I showed that Turner was truer than other painters: “Nay,” said they, “we do not want truth, we want something else than truth; we would not have nature, but something better than nature.”²

§ 3. I do not mean to accept that answer, although it seems at this moment to make for me: I have never accepted it. As I raise my eyes from the paper, to think over the curious mingling in it, of direct error, and faraway truth, I see upon the room-walls,³ first, Turner’s drawing of the chain of the Alps from the Superga above Turin; then a study of a block of gneiss at Chamouni, with the purple Aiguilles Rouges behind it; another of the towers of the Swiss Fribourg, with a cluster of pine forest behind them; then another Turner, *Isola Bella*, with the

¹ [Compare Fuseli’s saying, Vol. III. p. 191. For De Wint, see Vol. I. p. 426, Vol. III. p. 199.]

² [A paraphrase of the criticisms in the *Athenæum* and *Blackwood’s Magazine* upon the first volume of *Modern Painters*: see Vol. III. p. 52.]

³ [The walls, that is, of his study, which was on the first floor of the house at Denmark Hill, at the back looking on to the garden. Turner’s drawing of the view from the Superga is described (No. 17) in Ruskin’s *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*; for another reference to it, see *Elements of Drawing*, § 220. A copy of it made for Ruskin by Mr. W. Hackstoun is in the Museum at Sheffield. The other Turner, “*Isola Bella*,” is described (No. 16) in the same *Notes*. The “study” at Chamouni and “the towers of Fribourg” are drawings by Ruskin—the latter is engraved as Plate 24 in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*; for the former, see Nos. 57, 59 in the list on p. xxii. *n.*, above. The “bit of illumination” was a page which he had cut out and framed from one of his manuscripts (see Vol. XII. p. lxx.).]

blue opening to the St. Gothard in the distance; and then a fair bit of thirteenth-century illumination, depicting, at the top of the page, the Salutation; and beneath, the painter who painted it, sitting in his little convent cell, with a legend above him to this effect:—

“ego johes sepsi hunc librum.”

I, John, wrote this book.

None of these things are bad pieces of art; and yet,—if it were offered me to have, instead of them, so many windows, out of which I should see, first, the real chain of the Alps from the Superga; then the real block of gneiss, and Aiguilles Rouges; then the real towers of Fribourg, and pine forest; the real Isola Bella; and, finally, the true Mary and Elizabeth; and beneath them, the actual old monk at work in his cell,—I would very unhesitatingly change my five pictures for the five windows; and so, I apprehend, would most people, not, it seems to me, unwisely.

“Well, then,” the reader goes on to question me, “the more closely the picture resembles such a window, the better it must be?”

Yes.

“Then, if Turner does not give me the impression of such a window, that is, of Nature, there must be something wrong in Turner?”

Yes.

“And if Constable and De Wint give me the impression of such a window, there must be something right in Constable and De Wint?”

Yes.

“And something more right than in Turner?”

No.

“Will you explain yourself?”

I *have* explained myself, long ago, and that fully; perhaps too fully for the simple sum of the explanation to be remembered. If the reader will glance back to, and in the present state of our inquiry, reconsider in the first volume, Part I. Sec. I. Chap. v., and Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII.,

he will find our present difficulties anticipated.¹ There are some truths, easily obtained, which give a deceptive resemblance to Nature; others only to be obtained with difficulty, which cause no deception, but give inner and deeper resemblance. These two classes of truths cannot be obtained together; choice must be made between them. The bad painter gives the cheap deceptive resemblance. The good painter gives the precious non-deceptive resemblance. Constable perceives in a landscape that the grass is wet, the meadows flat, and the boughs shady; that is to say, about as much as, I suppose, might in general be apprehended, between them, by an intelligent fawn, and a skylark. Turner perceives at a glance the whole sum of visible truth open to human intelligence. So Berghem perceives nothing in a figure, beyond the flashes of light on the folds of its dress; but Michael Angelo perceives every flash of thought that is passing through its spirit: and Constable and Berghem may imitate windows; Turner and Michael Angelo can by no means imitate windows. But Turner and Michael Angelo are nevertheless the best.

§ 4. “Well but,” the reader persists, “you admitted just now that because Turner did not get his work to look like a window there was something wrong in him.”

I did so; if he were quite right he would have *all* truth, low as well as high; that is, he would be Nature and not Turner, but that is impossible to man. There is much that is wrong in him; much that is infinitely wrong in all human effort. But, nevertheless, in some an infinity of Betterness above other human effort.

“Well, but you said you would change your Turners for windows; why not, therefore, for Constables?”

Nay, I did not say that I would change them for windows *merely*, but for windows which commanded the chain of the Alps and Isola Bella. That is to say, for all the truth that there is in Turner, and all the truth besides

¹ [The references in this edition are to Vol. III. pp. 108, 163–168.]

which is not in him; but I would not change them for Constables, to have a small piece of truth which is not in Turner, and none of the mighty truth which there is.

§ 5. Thus far, then, though the subject is one requiring somewhat lengthy explanation, it involves no real difficulty. There is not the slightest inconsistency in the mode in which, throughout this work, I have desired the relative merits of painters to be judged. I have always said, he who is closest to Nature is best. All rules are useless, all genius is useless, all labour is useless, if you do not give facts; the more facts you give, the greater you are; and there is no fact so unimportant as to be prudently despised, if it be possible to represent it. Nor, but that I have long known the truth of Herbert's lines,

“Some men are
Full of themselves, and answer their own notion,”¹

would it have been without intense surprise that I heard querulous readers asking, “how it was possible” that I could praise Pre-Raphaelitism and Turner also.² For, from the beginning of this book to this page of it, I have never praised Turner highly for any other cause than that he *gave facts* more *delicately*, more Pre-Raphaelitically, than other men. Careless readers, who dashed at the descriptions and missed the arguments, took up their own conceptions of the cause of my liking Turner, and said to themselves: “Turner cannot draw, Turner is generalizing, vague, visionary; and the Pre-Raphaelites are hard and distinct. How can any one like both?”* But *I* never said that Turner could not

* People of any sense, however, confined themselves to wonder. I think it was only in the *Art Journal* of September 1st, 1854, that any writer had the meanness to charge me with insincerity. “The pictures of Turner and the works of the Pre-Raphaelites are the very antipodes of each other; it is, therefore, impossible that one and the same individual can with any *show of sincerity* [Note, by the way, the Art Union has no idea that real

¹ [*The Church Porch*, liv.]

² [On this subject, see Introduction to Vol. XII. p. li.]

draw. *I* never said that he was vague or visionary. What *I* said was, that nobody had ever drawn so well: that nobody was so certain, so *un*-visionary; that nobody had ever given so many hard and downright facts. Glance back to the first volume, and note the expression now. “He is the only painter who ever drew a mountain or a stone;* the only painter who can draw the stem of a tree; the only painter who has ever drawn the sky, previous artists having only drawn it typically or partially, but he absolutely and universally.” Note how he is praised in his rock drawing for “not selecting a pretty or interesting morsel here or there, but giving the whole truth, with all the relations of its parts.”† Observe how the *great virtue* of the landscape of Cima da Conegliano and the early sacred painters is said to be giving “entire, exquisite, humble realization—a strawberry plant in the foreground with a blossom, *and a berry just set, and one half ripe, and one ripe*, all patiently and innocently painted from the *real thing, and therefore most*

sincerity is a thing existent or possible at all. All that it expects or hopes of human nature is, that it should have *show* of sincerity.] stand forth as the thick and thin [I perceive the writer intends to teach me English, as well as honesty.] eulogist of both. With a certain knowledge of art, such as may be possessed by the author of *English Painters*, [Note, farther, that the eminent critic does not so much as know the title of the book he is criticising.] it is not difficult to praise any bad or mediocre picture that may be qualified with extravagance or mysticism. This author owes the public a heavy debt of explanation, which a lifetime spent in ingenious reconciliations would not suffice to discharge. A fervent admiration of certain pictures by Turner, and, at the same time, of some of the severest productions of Pre-Raphaelites, presents an insuperable problem to persons whose taste in art is regulated by definite principles.”¹

* Part II. sec. i. chap. vii. § 46. [Vol. III. p. 252.]

† Part II. sec. iv. chap. iv. § 23, and Part II. sec. i. chap. vii. § 9. [Vol. III. pp. 488, 175.] The whole of the Preface to the Second Edition is written to maintain this one point of specific detail against the advocates of generalization.

¹ [This passage comes from an article in the *Art Journal* for September 1854, pp. 253–256, entitled “The Progress of Painting, The Author of English (*sic*) Painters, and Pre-Raffaelism” (*sic*). The writer notices Ruskin’s Letters to the *Times* on The Pre-Raphaelites (Vol. XII. pp. 319–335), and finally concludes that those painters and Ruskin alike would speedily be forgotten.]

divine.” Then re-read the following paragraph (§ 10), carefully, and note its conclusion, that the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who have never despised anything, however small, of God’s making; with the instance given of Wordsworth’s daisy casting its shadow on a stone; and the following sentence, “Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty.” And yet, when our painters *did* come to this, did do their duty, and did paint the daisy with its shadow (this passage having been written years before Pre-Raphaelitism was thought of), people wondered how I could possibly like what was neither more or less than the precise fulfilment of my own most earnest exhortations and highest hopes.

§ 6. Thus far, then, all I have been saying is absolutely consistent, and tending to one simple end. Turner is praised for his truth and finish; that truth of which I am beginning to give examples. Pre-Raphaelitism is praised for its truth and finish; and the whole duty inculcated upon the artist is that of being in all respects as like Nature as possible.

And yet this is not all I have to do. There is more than this to be inculcated upon the student, more than this to be admitted or established, before the foundations of just judgment can be laid.

For, observe, although I believe any sensible person would exchange his pictures, however good, for windows, he would not feel, and ought not to feel, that the arrangement was *entirely* gainful to him. He would feel it was an exchange of a less good of one kind, for a greater of another kind, but that it was definitely *exchange*, not pure gain, not merely getting more truth instead of less. The picture would be a serious loss; something gone which the actual landscape could never restore, though it might give something better in its place, as age may give to the heart something better than its youthful delusion, but cannot give again the sweetness of that delusion.

§ 7. What is this in the picture which is precious to us, and yet is not natural? Hitherto our arguments have tended, on the whole, somewhat to the depreciation of art; and the reader may every now and then, so far as he has been convinced by them, have been inclined to say, "Why not give up this whole science of Mockery at once, since its only virtue is in representing facts, and it cannot, at best, represent them completely, besides being liable to all manner of shortcomings and dishonesties,—why not keep to the facts, to real fields, and hills and men, and let this dangerous painting alone?"

No, it would not be well to do this. Painting has its peculiar virtues, not only consistent with, but even resulting from, its shortcomings and weaknesses. Let us see what these virtues are.

§ 8. I must ask permission, as I have sometimes done before, to begin apparently a long way from the point.¹

Not long ago, as I was leaving one of the towns of Switzerland, early in the morning, I saw in the clouds behind the houses an Alp which I did not know, a grander Alp than any I knew, nobler than the Schreckhorn or the Mönch; terminated, as it seemed, on one side by a precipice of almost unimaginable height; on the other, sloping away for leagues in one field of lustrous ice, clear and fair and blue, flashing here and there into silver under the morning sun. For a moment I received a sensation of as much sublimity as any natural object could possibly excite; the next moment, I saw that my unknown Alp was the glass roof of one of the work-shops of the town rising above its nearer houses and rendered aerial and indistinct by some pure blue wood smoke which rose from intervening chimneys.

It is evident, that so far as the mere delight of the eye was concerned, the glass roof was here equal, or at least equal for a moment, to the Alp. Whether the power of the object over the heart was to be small or great, depended altogether upon what it was understood for, upon

¹ [As, for instance, at the beginning of this volume, p. 17.]

its being taken possession of and apprehended in its full nature, either as a granite mountain or a group of panes of glass; and thus, always, the real majesty of the appearance of the thing to us, depends upon the degree in which we ourselves possess the power of understanding it,—that penetrating, possession-taking power of the imagination, which has been long ago defined* as the very life of the man, considered as a *seeing* creature. For though the casement had indeed been an Alp, there are many persons on whose minds it would have produced no more effect than the glass roof. It would have been to them a glittering object of a certain apparent length and breadth, and whether of glass or ice, whether twenty feet in length, or twenty leagues, would have made no difference to them; or, rather, would not have been in any wise conceived or considered by them. Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alp, and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge. First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head: nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field; nor the road by which you are travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gifts and glories of the Alps, the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls,

* Vol. ii. Chapter on Penetrative Imagination. [Vol. IV. p. 251.]

and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châteaux that gleam among its clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky.

These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alp. You may not trace them in your heart, for there is a great deal more in your heart, of evil and good, than you ever can trace; but they stir you and quicken you for all that. Assuredly, so far as you feel more at beholding the snowy mountain than any other object of the same sweet silvery grey, these are the kind of images which cause you to do so; and, observe, these are nothing more than a greater apprehension of the *facts* of the thing. We call the power "Imagination," because it imagines or conceives; but it is only noble imagination if it imagines or conceives *the truth*. And, according to the degree of knowledge possessed, and of sensibility to the pathetic or impressive character of the things known, will be the degree of this imaginative delight.

§ 9. But the main point to be noted at present is, that if the imagination can be excited to this its peculiar work, it matters comparatively little what it is excited by. If the smoke had not cleared partially away, the glass roof might have pleased me as well as an Alp, until I had quite lost sight of it; and if, in a picture, the imagination can be once caught, and, without absolute affront from some glaring fallacy, set to work in its own field, the imperfection of the historical details themselves is, to the spectator's enjoyment, of small consequence.

Hence it is, that poets, and men of strong feeling in general, are apt to be among the very worst judges of painting. The slightest hint is enough for them. Tell them

that a white stroke means a ship, and a black stain, a thunderstorm, and they will be perfectly satisfied with both, and immediately proceed to remember all that they ever felt about ships and thunderstorms, attributing the whole current and fulness of their own feelings to the painter's work; while probably, if the picture be really good, and full of stern fact, the poet, or man of feeling, will find some of its fact *in his way*, out of the particular course of his own thoughts,—be offended at it, take to criticizing and wondering at it, detect, at last, some imperfection in it, such as must be inherent in all human work,—and so finally quarrel with, and reject the whole thing. Thus, Wordsworth writes many sonnets to Sir George Beaumont and Haydon; none to Sir Joshua or to Turner.

§ 10. Hence, also, the error into which many superficial artists fall, in speaking of “addressing the imagination” as the only end of art. It is quite true that the imagination must be addressed; but it may be very sufficiently addressed by the stain left by an ink-bottle thrown at the wall. The thrower has little credit, though an imaginative observer may find, perhaps, more to amuse him in the erratic nigrescence than in many a laboured picture. And thus, in a slovenly or ill-finished picture, it is no credit to the artist that he has “addressed the imagination;” nor is the success of such an appeal any criterion whatever of the merit of the work. The duty of an artist is not only to address and awaken, but to *guide* the imagination; and there is no safe guidance but that of simple concurrence with fact. It is no matter that the picture takes the fancy of A. or B., that C. writes sonnets to it, and D. feels it to be divine. This is still the only question for the artist, or for us:—“Is it a fact? Are things really so?” Is the picture an Alp among pictures, full, firm, eternal; or only a glass house, frail, hollow, contemptible, demolishable; calling, at all honest hands, for detection and demolition?

§ 11. Hence it is also that so much grievous difficulty stands in the way of obtaining *real opinion* about pictures

at all. Tell any man, of the slightest imaginative power, that such and such a picture is good, and means this or that: tell him, for instance, that a Claude is good, and that it means trees, and grass, and water; and forthwith, whatever faith, virtue, humility, and imagination there are in the man, rise up to help Claude, and to declare that indeed it is all “excellent good, i’faith;”¹ and whatever in the course of his life he has felt of pleasure in trees and grass, he will begin to reflect upon and enjoy anew, supposing all the while it is the picture he is enjoying. Hence, when once a painter’s reputation is accredited, it must be a stubborn kind of person indeed whom he will not please, or seem to please; for all the vain and weak people pretend to be pleased with him, for their own credit’s sake, and all the humble and imaginative people seriously and honestly fancy they *are* pleased with him, deriving indeed, very certainly, delight from his work, but a delight which, if they were kept in the same temper, they would equally derive (and, indeed, constantly do derive) from the grossest daub that can be manufactured in imitation by the pawnbroker. Is, therefore, the pawnbroker’s imitation as good as the original? Not so. There is the certain test of goodness and badness, which I am always striving to get people to use. As long as they are satisfied if they find their feelings pleasantly stirred and their fancy gaily occupied, so long there is for them no good, no bad. Anything may please, or anything displease, them; and their entire manner of thought and talking about art is mockery, and all their judgments are laborious injustices. But let them, in the teeth of their pleasure or displeasure, simply put the calm question,—Is it so? Is that the way a stone is shaped, the way a cloud is wreathed, the way a leaf is veined? and they are safe. They will do no more injustice to themselves nor to other men; they will learn to whose guidance they may trust their imagination, and from whom they must for ever withhold its reins.

¹ [*Twelfth Night*, ii. 3.]

§ 12. “Well, but why have you dragged in this poor spectator’s imagination at all, if you have nothing more to say for it than this; if you are merely going to abuse it, and go back to your tiresome facts?”

Nay; I am not going to abuse it. On the contrary, I have to assert, in a temper profoundly venerant of it, that though we must not suppose everything is right when this is aroused, we may be sure that something is wrong when this is *not* aroused. The something wrong may be in the spectator or in the picture; and if the picture be demonstrably in accordance with truth, the odds are, that it is in the spectator; but there is wrong somewhere; for the work of the picture is indeed eminently to get at this imaginative power in the beholder, and all its facts are of no use whatever if it does not. No matter how much truth it tells if the hearer be asleep. Its first work is to wake him, then to teach him.

§ 13. Now, observe, while, as it penetrates into the nature of things, the imagination is pre-eminently a beholder of things, *as they are*, it is, in its creative function, an eminent beholder of things *when* and *where* they are NOT; a seer, that is, in the prophetic sense, calling “the things that are not as though they were,”¹ and for ever delighting to dwell on that which is not tangibly present. And its great function being the calling forth, or back, that which is not visible to bodily sense, it has of course been made to take delight in the fulfilment of its proper function, and pre-eminently to enjoy, and spend its energy on, things past and future, or out of sight, rather than things present, or in sight. So that if the imagination is to be called to take delight in any object, it will not be always well, if we can help it, to put the *real* object there, before it. The imagination would on the whole rather have it *not* there;—the reality and substance are rather in the imagination’s way; it would think a good deal more of the

¹ [See 1 Corinthians i. 28, and Revelation i. 19.]

thing if it could not see it. Hence, that strange and sometimes fatal charm, which there is in all things as long as we wait for them, and the moment we have lost them; but which fades while we possess them;—that sweet bloom of all that is far away, which perishes under our touch. Yet the feeling of this is not a weakness; it is one of the most glorious gifts of the human mind, making the whole infinite future, and imperishable past, a richer inheritance, if faithfully inherited, than the changeful, frail, fleeting present: it is also one of the many witnesses in us to the truth that these present and tangible things are not meant to satisfy us. The instinct becomes a weakness only when it is weakly indulged, and when the faculty which was intended by God to give back to us what we have lost, and gild for us what is to come, is so perverted as only to darken what we possess. But, perverted or pure, the instinct itself is everlasting, and the substantial presence even of the things which we love the best, will inevitably and for ever be found wanting in *one* strange and tender charm, which belonged to the dreams of them.

§ 14. Another character of the imagination is equally constant, and, to our present inquiry, of yet greater importance. It is eminently a *wearable* faculty, eminently delicate, and incapable of bearing fatigue;¹ so that if we give it too many objects at a time to employ itself upon, or very grand ones for a long time together, it fails under the effort, becomes jaded, exactly as the limbs do by bodily fatigue, and incapable of answering any farther appeal till it has had rest. And this is the real nature of the weariness which is so often felt in travelling, from seeing too much. It is not that the monotony and number of the beautiful things seen have made them valueless, but that the imaginative power has been overtaxed; and, instead of letting it rest, the traveller, wondering to find himself dull,

¹ [Compare *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, No. 505, where Ruskin refers to this passage in connexion with a certain overfullness in some of Turner's pictures.]

and incapable of admiration, seeks for something more admirable, excites and torments, and drags the poor fainting imagination up by the shoulders: "Look at this, and look at that, and this more wonderful still!"—until the imaginative faculty faints utterly away, beyond all further torment, or pleasure, dead for many a day to come; and the despairing prodigal takes to horse-racing in the Campagna, good now for nothing else than that; whereas, if the imagination had only been laid down on the grass, among simple things, and left quiet for a little while, it would have come to itself gradually, recovered its strength and colour, and soon been fit for work again. So that, whenever the imagination is tired, it is necessary to find for it something, not *more* admirable but *less* admirable; such as in that weak state it can deal with; then give it peace, and it will recover.

§ 15. I well recollect the walk on which I first found out this; it was on the winding road from Sallenches, sloping up the hills towards St. Gervais, one cloudless Sunday afternoon.¹ The road circles softly between bits of rocky bank and mounded pasture; little cottages and chapels gleaming out from among the trees at every turn. Behind me, some leagues in length, rose the jagged range of the mountains of the Réposoir; on the other side of the valley, the mass of the Aiguille de Varens, heaving its seven thousand feet of cliff into the air at a single effort, its gentle gift of waterfall, the Nant d'Arpenaz, like a pillar of cloud at its feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles, one silver flame, in front of me; marvellous blocks of mossy granite and dark glades of pine around me; but I could enjoy nothing, and could not for a long while make out what was the matter with me, until at last I discovered that if I confined myself to one thing,—and that a little thing,—a tuft of moss or a single crag at the top of the Varens, or a wreath or two of foam at the bottom of the Nant d'Arpenaz, I began to enjoy it directly, because then I had mind enough

¹ [It was in June 1849; see the passage from Ruskin's diary given above, in the Introduction, pp. xix.–xx.]

to put into the thing, and the enjoyment arose from the quantity of the imaginative energy I could bring to bear upon it; but when I looked at or thought of all together, moss, stones, Varens, Nant d'Arpenaz, and Mont Blanc, I had not mind enough to give to all, and none were of any value. The conclusion which would have been formed, upon this, by a German philosopher, would have been that the Mont Blanc *was* of no value; that he and his imagination only were of value; that the Mont Blanc, in fact, except so far as he was able to look at it, could not be considered as having any existence.¹ But the only conclusion which occurred to me as reasonable under the circumstances (I have seen no ground for altering it since) was, that I was an exceedingly small creature, much tired, and, at the moment, not a little stupid; for whom a blade of grass, or a wreath of foam, was quite food enough and to spare, and that if I tried to take any more, I should make myself ill. Whereupon, associating myself fraternally with some ants, who were deeply interested in the conveyance of some small sticks over the road, and rather, as I think they generally are, in too great a hurry about it, I returned home in a little while with great contentment; thinking how well it was ordered that, as Mont Blanc and his pine forests could not be everywhere, nor all the world come to see them, the human mind, on the whole, should enjoy itself most surely, in an ant-like manner, and be happy and busy with the bits of sticks and grains of crystal that fall in its way to be handled, in daily duty.

§ 16. It follows evidently from the first of these characters of the imagination, its dislike of substance and presence, that a picture has in some measure even an advantage with us in not being real. The imagination rejoices in having something to do, springs up with all its willing power, flattered and happy; and ready with its fairest colours and most tender pencilling, to prove itself worthy

¹ [See below, ch. xii. § 1, pp. 201–202.]

of the trust, and exalt into sweet supremacy the shadow that has been confided to its fondness. And thus, so far from its being at all an object to the painter to make his work look real, he ought to dread such a consummation as the loss of one of its most precious claims upon the heart. So far from striving to convince the beholder that what he sees is substance, his mind should be to what he paints as the fire to the body on the pile, burning away the ashes, leaving the unconquerable shade—an immortal dream. So certain is this, that the slightest local success in giving the deceptive appearance of reality—the imitation, for instance, of the texture of a bit of wood, with its grain in relief—will instantly destroy the charm of a whole picture; the imagination feels itself insulted and injured, and passes by with cold contempt; nay, however beautiful the whole scene may be, as of late in much of our highly wrought painting for the stage, the mere fact of its being deceptively real is enough to make us tire of it; we may be surprised and pleased for a moment, but the imagination will not on those terms be persuaded to give any of its help, and, in a quarter of an hour we wish the scene would change.

§ 17. “Well, but then, what becomes of all these long dogmatic chapters of yours about giving nothing but the truth, and as much truth as possible?”

The chapters are all quite right. “Nothing but the Truth,” I say still. “As much Truth as possible,” I say still. But truth so presented that it will need the help of the imagination to make it real.¹ Between the painter and the beholder, each doing his proper part, the reality should be sustained; and after the beholding imagination has come forward and done its best, then, with its help and in the full action of it, the beholder should be able to say, I feel as if I were at the real place, or seeing the real incident. But not without that help.

§ 18. Farther, in consequence of that other character of

¹ [In his copy for revision, Ruskin writes here in the margin—“I go beyond this now and say perfect reality.” See, for instance, *Aratra Pentelici*, §§ 10, 122.]

the imagination, fatigableness, it is a great advantage to the picture that it need not present too much at once, and that what it does present may be so chosen and ordered as not only to be more easily seized, but to give the imagination rest, and, as it were, places to lie down and stretch its limbs in; kindly vacancies, beguiling it back into action, with pleasant and cautious sequence of incident; all jarring thoughts being excluded, all vain redundance denied, and all just and sweet transition permitted.

And thus it is, that, for the most part, imperfect sketches, engravings, outlines, rude sculptures, and other forms of abstraction, possess a charm which the most finished picture frequently wants. For not only does the finished picture excite the imagination less, but, like nature itself, it *taxes* it more. None of it can be enjoyed till the imagination is brought to bear upon it; and the details of the completed picture are so numerous, that it needs greater strength and willingness in the beholder to follow them all out; the redundance, perhaps, being not too great for the mind of a careful observer, but too great for a casual or careless observer. So that, although the perfection of art will always consist in the utmost *acceptable* completion, yet, as every added idea will increase the difficulty of apprehension, and every added touch advance the dangerous realism which makes the imagination languid, the difference between a noble and ignoble painter is in nothing more sharply defined than in this,—that he first wishes to put into his work as much truth as possible, and yet to keep it looking *un-real*; the second wishes to get through his work lazily, with as little truth as possible, and yet to make it look real; and, so far as they add colour to their abstract sketch, the first realizes for the sake of the colour, and the second colours for the sake of the realization.*

§ 19. And then, lastly, it is another infinite advantage

* Several other points connected with this subject have already been noticed in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. chap. iv. § 21, etc. [Vol. XI. p. 214.]

possessed by the picture, that in these various differences from reality it becomes the expression of the power and intelligence of a companionable human soul. In all this choice, arrangement, penetrative sight, and kindly guidance, we recognize a supernatural operation, and perceive, not merely the landscape or incident as in a mirror; but, besides, the presence of what, after all, may perhaps be the most wonderful piece of divine work in the whole matter—the great human spirit through which it is manifested to us. So that, although with respect to many important scenes, it might, as we saw above, be one of the most precious gifts that could be given us to see them with *our own eyes*, yet also in many things it is more desirable to be permitted to see them with the eyes of others; and although, to the small, conceited, and affected painter displaying his narrow knowledge and tiny dexterities, our only word may be, “Stand aside from between that nature and me:” yet to the great imaginative painter—greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we—our word may wisely be, “Come between this nature and me—this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me; temper it for me, interpret it to me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit.”

All the noblest pictures have this character. They are true or inspired ideals, seen in a moment to *be* ideal; that is to say, the result of all the highest powers of the imagination, engaged in the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness. They are always orderly, always one, ruled by one great purpose throughout, in the fulfilment of which every atom of the detail is called to help, and would be missed if removed; this peculiar oneness being the result, not of obedience to any teachable law, but of the magnificence of tone in the perfect mind, which accepts only what is good for its great purposes, rejects whatever is foreign or redundant, and

instinctively and instantaneously ranges whatever it accepts, in sublime subordination and helpful brotherhood.

§ 20. Then, this being the greatest art, the lowest art is the mimicry of it,—the subordination of nothing to nothing; the elaborate arrangement of sightlessness and emptiness: the order which has no object; the unity which has no life, and the law which has no love; the light which has nothing to illumine, and shadow which has nothing to relieve.*

§ 21. And then, between these two, comes the wholesome, happy, and noble—though not noblest—art of simple transcript from nature; into which, so far as our modern Pre-Raphaelitism falls, it will indeed do sacred service in ridding us of the old fallacies and componencies, but cannot itself rise above the level of simple and happy usefulness. So far as it is to be great, it must add,—and so far as it *is* great, has already added,—the great imaginative element to all its faithfulness in transcript. And for this reason, I said in the close of my Edinburgh Lectures,¹ that Pre-Raphaelitism, as long as it confined itself to the simple copying of nature, could not take the character of the highest class of art. But it has already, almost unconsciously, supplied the defect, and taken that character, in all its best results; and, so far as it ought, hereafter, it will assuredly do so, as soon as it is permitted to maintain itself in any other position than that of stern antagonism to the composition-teachers around it. I say “so far as it

* “Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have Chiaroscuro.”—CONSTABLE (in Leslie’s *Life* of him²). It is singular to reflect what that fatal Chiaroscuro has done to art, in the full extent of its influence. It has been not only shadow, but shadow of Death; passing over the face of the ancient art, as death itself might over a fair human countenance; whispering, as it reduced it to the white projections and lightless orbits of the skull, “Thy face shall have nothing else, but it shall have Chiaroscuro.”

¹ [See Vol. XII. p. 161, § 138, of the *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*.]

² [The saying occurs (slightly otherwise worded) at p. 226 of the 2nd (1845) ed. of Leslie’s *Life*. It is again quoted by Ruskin in *Academy Notes*, 1859 (*s.* “French Exhibition,” *ad fin.*), where he adds, “The sacrifice was accepted by the Fates, but the prayer denied. His pictures *had* nothing else; but they had *not* chiaroscuro.” For a note on other references to Constable, see Vol. III. p. 45.]

ought,” because, as already noticed in that same place, we have enough, and to spare, of noble *inventful* pictures: so many have we, that we let them moulder away on the walls and roofs of Italy without one regretful thought about them. But of simple transcripts from nature, till now we have had none; even Van Eyck and Albert Dürer having been strongly filled with the spirit of grotesque idealism; so that the Pre-Raphaelites have, to the letter, fulfilled Steele’s description of the author, who “determined to write in an entirely new manner, and describe things exactly as they took place.”¹

§ 22. We have now, I believe, in some sort answered most of the questions which were suggested to us during our statement of the nature of great art. I could recapitulate the answers; but perhaps the reader is already sufficiently wearied of the recurrence of the terms “Ideal,” “Nature,” “Imagination,” “Invention,” and will hardly care to see them again interchanged among each other, in the formalities of a summary. What difficulties may yet occur to him, will, I think, disappear as he either re-reads the passages which suggested them, or follows out the consideration of the subject for himself:—this very simple, but very precious conclusion being continually remembered by him as the sum of all; that greatness in art (as assuredly in all other things, but more distinctly in this than in most of them) is not a teachable² nor gainable thing, but *the expression of a mind of a God-made great man*; that teach, or preach, or labour as you will, everlasting difference is set between one man’s capacity and another’s;³ and that this God-given supremacy is the priceless thing, always just as rare in the world at one time as another. What you can manufacture or communicate, you can lower the price of, but this mental supremacy is incommunicable; you will never multiply its quantity, nor lower its price; and nearly

¹ [See No. 9 of *The Tatler*.]

² [Compare Vol. XII. p. 352.]

³ [Compare Vol. VIII. p. 167.]

the best thing that men can generally do is to set themselves, not to the attainment, but the discovery of this; learning to know gold, when we see it, from iron-glance, and diamonds from flint-sand, being for most of us a more profitable employment than trying to make diamonds out of our own charcoal. And for this God-made supremacy, I generally have used, and shall continue to use, the word Inspiration, not carelessly nor lightly, but in all logical calmness and perfect reverence. We English have many false ideas about reverence; we should be shocked, for instance, to see a market-woman come into church with a basket of eggs on her arm: we think it more reverent to lock her out till Sunday; and to surround the church with respectability of iron railings, and defend it with pacing inhabitation of beadles. I believe this to be *irreverence*; and that it is more truly reverent, when the market-woman, hot and hurried, at six in the morning, her head much confused with calculations of the probable price of eggs, can nevertheless get within church porch, and church aisle, and church chancel, lay the basket down on the very steps of the altar, and receive thereat so much of help and hope as may serve her for the day's work. In like manner we are solemnly, but I think not wisely, shocked at any one who comes hurriedly into church, in any figurative way, with his basket on his arm; and perhaps so long as we feel it so, it is better to keep the basket out. But, as for this one commodity of high mental supremacy, it cannot be kept out, for the very fountain of it is in the church wall, and there is no other right word for it but this of Inspiration; a word, indeed, often ridiculously perverted, and irreverently used of fledgling poets and pompous orators—no one being offended then: and yet cavilled at when quietly used of the spirit that is in a truly great man; cavilled at, chiefly, it seems to me, because we expect to know inspiration by the look of it. Let a man have shaggy hair, dark eyes, a rolling voice, plenty of animal energy, and a facility of rhyming

or sentencing, and—improvisatore or sentimentalist—we call him “inspired” willingly enough; but let him be a rough, quiet worker, not proclaiming himself melodiously in anywise, but familiar with us, unpretending, and letting all his littleness and feebleness be seen, unhindered,—wearing an ill-cut coat withal; and, though he be such a man as is only sent upon the earth once in five hundred years, for some special human teaching, it is irreverent to call him “inspired.” But, be it irreverent or not, this word I must always use; and the rest of what work I have here before me, is simply to prove the truth of it, with respect to the one among these mighty spirits whom we have just lost; who divided his hearers, as many an inspired speaker has done before now, into two great sects—a large and a narrow; these searching the Nature-scripture calmly, “whether those things were so,” and those standing haughtily on their Mars’ hill, asking, “What will this babbler say?”¹

¹ [Acts xvii. 11, 18.]

CHAPTER XI
OF THE NOVELTY OF LANDSCAPE

§ 1. HAVING now obtained, I trust, clear ideas, up to a certain point, of what is generally right and wrong in all art, both in conception and in workmanship, we have to apply these laws of right to the particular branch of art which is the subject of our present inquiry, namely, landscape-painting. Respecting which, after the various meditations into which we have been led on the high duties and ideals of art, it may not improbably occur to us first to ask,—whether it be worth inquiring about at all.

That question, perhaps the reader thinks, should have been asked and answered before I had written, or he read, two volumes and a half about it. So I *had* answered it in my own mind; but it seems time now to give the grounds for this answer. If, indeed, the reader has never suspected that landscape-painting was anything but good, right, and healthy work, I should be sorry to put any doubt of its being so into his mind; but if, as seems to me more likely, he, living in this busy and perhaps somewhat calamitous age, has some suspicion that landscape-painting is but an idle and empty business, not worth all our long talk about it, then, perhaps, he will be pleased to have such suspicion done away, before troubling himself farther with these disquisitions.

§ 2. I should rather be glad, than otherwise, that he *had* formed some suspicion on this matter. If he has at all admitted the truth of anything hitherto said respecting great art, and its choices of subject, it seems to me he ought, by this time, to be questioning with himself whether road-side weeds, old cottages, broken stones, and such other

materials, be worthy matters for grave men to busy themselves in the imitation of. And I should like him to probe this doubt to the deep of it, and bring all his misgivings out to the broad light, that we may see how we are to deal with them, or ascertain if indeed they are too well-founded to be dealt with.

§ 3. And to this end I would ask him now to imagine himself entering, for the first time in his life, the room of the Old Water-Colour Society:¹ and to suppose that he has entered it, not for the sake of a quiet examination of the paintings one by one, but in order to seize such ideas as it may generally suggest respecting the state and meaning of modern, as compared with elder, art. I suppose him, of course, that he may be capable of such a comparison, to be in some degree familiar with the different forms in which art has developed itself within the periods historically known to us; but never, till that moment, to have seen any completely modern work. So prepared, and so unprepared, he would, as his ideas began to arrange themselves, be first struck by the number of paintings representing blue mountains, clear lakes, and ruined castles or cathedrals, and he would say to himself: "There is something strange in the mind of these modern people! Nobody ever cared about blue mountains before, or tried to paint the broken stones of old walls." And the more he considered the subject, the more he would feel the peculiarity; and, as he thought over the art of Greeks and Romans, he would still repeat, with increasing certainty of conviction: "Mountains! I remember none. The Greeks did not seem, as artists, to know that such things were in the world. They carved, or variously represented, men, and horses, and beasts, and birds, and all kinds of living creatures,—yes, even down to cuttle-fish; and trees, in a sort of way; but not so much as the outline of a mountain; and as for lakes, they merely showed they knew the difference between salt and fresh

¹ [A favourite haunt of Ruskin's: see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 28.]
v. N

water by the fish they put into each.” Then he would pass on to mediæval art; and still he would be obliged to repeat: “Mountains! I remember none. Some careless and jagged arrangements of blue spires or spikes on the horizon, and, here and there, an attempt at representing an overhanging rock with a hole through it; but merely in order to divide the light behind some human figure. Lakes! No, nothing of the kind,—only blue bays of sea put in to fill up the background when the painter could not think of anything else. Broken-down buildings! No; for the most part very complete and well-appointed buildings, if any; and never buildings at all, but to give place or explanation to some circumstance of human conduct.” And then he would look up again to the modern pictures, observing, with an increasing astonishment, that here the human interest had, in many cases, altogether disappeared.¹ That mountains, instead of being used only as a blue ground for the relief of the heads of saints, were themselves the exclusive subjects of reverent contemplation; that their ravines, and peaks, and forests, were all painted with an appearance of as much enthusiasm as had formerly been devoted to the dimples of beauty, or the frowns of asceticism; and that all the living interest which was still supposed necessary to the scene, might be supplied by a traveller in a slouched hat, a beggar in a scarlet cloak, or, in default of these, even by a heron or a wild duck.

§ 4. And if he could entirely divest himself of his own modern habits of thought, and regard the subjects in question with the feelings of a knight or monk of the Middle Ages, it might be a question whether those feelings would not rapidly verge towards contempt. “What!” he might perhaps mutter to himself, “here are human beings spending the whole of their lives in making pictures of bits of stone and runlets of water, withered sticks and flying

¹ [Compare the briefer account of the rise of landscape art in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 84 *seq.*, Vol. XII. pp. 109–123.]

fogs, and actually not a picture of the gods or the heroes! none of the saints or the martyrs! none of the angels and demons! none of councils or battles, or any other single thing worth the thought of a man! Trees and clouds indeed! as if I should not see as many trees as I cared to see, and more, in the first half of my day's journey tomorrow, or as if it mattered to any man whether the sky were clear or cloudy, so long as his armour did not get too hot in the sun!"

§ 5. There can be no question that this would have been somewhat the tone of thought with which either a Lacedæmonian, a soldier of Rome in her strength, or a knight of the thirteenth century, would have been apt to regard these particular forms of our present art. Nor can there be any question that, in many respects, their judgment would have been just. It is true that the indignation of the Spartan or Roman would have been equally excited against any appearance of luxurious industry; but the mediæval knight would, to the full, have admitted the nobleness of art; only he would have had it employed in decorating his church or his prayer-book, not in imitating moors and clouds. And the feelings of all the three would have agreed in this,—that their main ground of offence must have been the want of *seriousness* and *purpose* in what they saw. They would all have admitted the nobleness of whatever conduced to the honour of the gods, or the power of the nation; but they would not have understood how the skill of human life could be wisely spent in that which did no honour either to Jupiter or to the Virgin; and which in no wise tended, apparently, either to the accumulation of wealth, the excitement of patriotism, or the advancement of morality.

§ 6. And exactly so far forth their judgment would be just, as the landscape-painting could indeed be shown, for others as well as for them, to be art of this nugatory kind; and so far forth unjust, as that painting could be shown to depend upon, or cultivate, certain sensibilities which neither the Greek nor mediæval knight possessed, and which

have resulted from some extraordinary change in human nature since their time. We have no right to assume, without very accurate examination of it, that this change has been an ennobling one. The simple fact, that we are, in some strange way, different from all the great races that have existed before us, cannot at once be received as the proof of our own greatness; nor can it be granted, without any question, that we have a legitimate subject of complacency in being under the influence of feelings, with which neither Miltiades nor the Black Prince, neither Homer nor Dante, neither Socrates nor St. Francis, could for an instant have sympathized.

§ 7. Whether, however, this fact be one to excite our pride or not, it is assuredly one to excite our deepest interest. The fact itself is certain. For nearly six thousand years the energies of man have pursued certain beaten paths, manifesting some constancy of feeling throughout all that period, and involving some fellowship at heart, among the various nations who by turns succeeded or surpassed each other in the several aims of art or policy. So that, for these thousands of years, the whole human race might be to some extent described in general terms. Man was a creature separated from all others by his instinctive sense of an Existence superior to his own, invariably manifesting this sense of the being of a God more strongly in proportion to his own perfectness of mind and body; and making enormous and self-denying efforts, in order to obtain some persuasion of the immediate presence or approval of the Divinity. So that, on the whole, the best things he did were done as in the presence, or for the honour, of his gods; and, whether in statues, to help him to imagine them, or temples raised to their honour, or acts of self-sacrifice done in the hope of their love, he brought whatever was best and skilfullest in him into their service, and lived in a perpetual subjection to their unseen power. Also, he was always anxious to know something definite about them; and his chief books, songs, and pictures were filled

with legends about them, or specially devoted to illustration of their lives and nature.

§ 8. Next to these gods he was always anxious to know something about his human ancestors; fond of exalting the memory, and telling or painting the history of old rulers and benefactors; yet full of an enthusiastic confidence in himself, as having in many ways advanced beyond the best efforts of past time; and eager to record his own doings for future fame. He was a creature eminently warlike, placing his principal pride in dominion; eminently beautiful, and having great delight in his own beauty; setting forth this beauty by every species of invention in dress, and rendering his arms and accoutrements superbly decorative of his form. He took, however, very little interest in anything but what belonged to humanity; caring in no wise for the external world, except as it influenced his own destiny; honouring the lightning because it could strike him, the sea because it could drown him, the fountains because they gave him drink, and the grass because it yielded him seed; but utterly incapable of feeling any special happiness in the love of such things, or any earnest emotion about them, considered as separate from man; therefore giving no time to the study of them;—knowing little of herbs, except only which were hurtful and which healing; of stones, only which would glitter brightest in a crown, or last the longest in a wall: of the wild beasts, which were best for food, and which the stoutest quarry for the hunter;—thus spending only on the lower creatures and inanimate things his waste energy, his dullest thoughts, his most languid emotions, and reserving all his acuter intellect for researches into his own nature and that of the gods; all his strength of will for the acquirement of political or moral power; all his sense of beauty for things immediately connected with his own person and life; and all his deep affections for domestic or divine companionship.

Such, in broad light and brief terms, was man for five thousand years. Such he is no longer. Let us consider

what he is now, comparing the descriptions clause by clause.

§ 9. I. He *was* invariably sensible of the existence of gods, and went about all his speculations or works holding this as an acknowledged fact, making his best efforts in their service. *Now* he is capable of going through life with hardly any positive idea on this subject,—doubting, fearing, suspecting, analyzing,—doing everything, in fact, *but* believing; hardly ever getting quite up to that point which hitherto was wont to be the starting-point for all generations. And human work has accordingly hardly any reference to spiritual beings, but is done either from a patriotic or personal interest,—either to benefit mankind, or reach some selfish end, not (I speak of human work in the broad sense) to please the gods.¹

II. He *was* a beautiful creature, setting forth this beauty by all means in his power, and depending upon it for much of his authority over his fellows. So that the ruddy cheek of David, and the ivory skin of Atrides, and the towering presence of Saul, and the blue eyes of Cœur de Lion, were among chief reasons why they should be kings; and it was one of the aims of all education, and of all dress, to make the presence of the human form stately and lovely. *Now* it has become the task of grave philosophy partly to depreciate or conceal this bodily beauty; and even by those who esteem it in their hearts, it is not made one of the great ends of education; man has become, upon the whole, an ugly animal, and is not ashamed of his ugliness.

III. He *was* eminently warlike. He is *now* gradually becoming more and more ashamed of all the arts and aims of battle. So that the desire of dominion, which was once frankly confessed or boasted of as a heroic passion, is now sternly reprobated or cunningly disclaimed.

IV. He *used* to take no interest in anything but what immediately concerned himself. *Now*, he has deep interest

¹ [Here, again, compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 113 *seq.*, Vol. XII. pp. 138–145.]

in the abstract nature of things, inquires as eagerly into the laws which regulate the economy of the material world, as into those of his own being, and manifests a passionate admiration of inanimate objects, closely resembling, in its elevation and tenderness, the affection which he bears to those living souls with which he is brought into the nearest fellowship.

§ 10. It is this last change only which is to be the subject of our present inquiry; but it cannot be doubted that it is closely connected with all the others, and that we can only thoroughly understand its nature by considering it in this connection. For, regarded by itself, we might, perhaps, too rashly assume it to be a natural consequence of the progress of the race. There appears to be a diminution of selfishness in it, and a more extended and heartfelt desire of understanding the manner of God's working; and this the more, because one of the permanent characters of this change is a greater accuracy in the statement of external facts. When the eyes of men were fixed first upon themselves, and upon nature solely and secondarily as bearing upon their interests, it was of less consequence to them what the ultimate laws of nature were, than what their immediate effects were upon human beings. Hence they could rest satisfied with phenomena instead of principles, and accepted without scrutiny every fable which seemed sufficiently or gracefully to account for those phenomena. But so far as the eyes of men are now withdrawn from themselves, and turned upon the inanimate things about them, the results cease to be of importance, and the laws become essential.

§ 11. In these respects, it might easily appear to us that this change was assuredly one of steady and natural advance. But when we contemplate the others above noted, of which it is clearly one of the branches or consequences, we may suspect ourselves of over-rashness in our self-congratulation, and admit the necessity of a scrupulous analysis both of the feeling itself and of its tendencies.

Of course a complete analysis, or anything like it, would

involve a treatise on the whole history of the world. I shall merely endeavour to note some of the leading and more interesting circumstances bearing on the subject, and to show sufficient practical ground for the conclusion, that landscape-painting is indeed a noble and useful art, though one not long known by man. I shall therefore examine, as best I can, the effect of landscape, 1st, on the Classical mind; 2ndly, on the Mediæval mind; and lastly, on the Modern mind. But there is one point of some interest respecting the effect of it on *any* mind, which must be settled first; and this I will endeavour to do in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY

§ 1. GERMAN dulness, and English affectation, have of late much multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the trouble-someness of metaphysicians,—namely, “Objective,” and “Subjective.”¹

No words can be more exquisitely, and in all points, useless; and I merely speak of them that I may, at once and for ever, get them out of my way, and out of my reader’s. But to get that done, they must be explained.

The word “Blue,” say certain philosophers, means the sensation of colour which the human eye receives in looking at the open sky, or at a bell gentian.

Now, say they farther, as this sensation can only be felt when the eye is turned to the object, and as, therefore, no such sensation is produced by the object when nobody looks at it, therefore the thing, when it is not looked at, is not blue; and thus (say they) there are many qualities of things which depend as much on something else as on themselves. To be sweet, a thing must have a taster; it is only sweet while it is being tasted, and if the tongue had not the capacity of taste, then the sugar would not have the quality of sweetness.

And then they agree that the qualities of things which thus depend upon our perception of them, and upon our

¹ [The words in the modern philosophical sense were “re-introduced” by Coleridge (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817, ch. x.); De Quincey, writing in the same year as Ruskin here (1856), remarks, in using the word “objective,” that “this term, so nearly unintelligible in 1821, so intensely scholastic, and, consequently, when surrounded by familiar and vernacular words, so apparently pedantic, yet, on the other hand, so indispensable to accurate thinking, and to wide thinking, has since 1821 become too common to need any apology” (*Confessions of an Opium Eater*).]

human nature as affected by them, shall be called Subjective; and the qualities of things which they always have, irrespective of any other nature, as roundness or squareness, shall be called Objective.

From these ingenious views the step is very easy to a farther opinion, that it does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us; and that the only real truth of them is their appearance to, or effect upon, us. From which position, with a hearty desire for mystification, and much egotism, selfishness, shallowness, and impertinence, a philosopher may easily go so far as to believe, and say, that everything in the world depends upon his seeing or thinking of it, and that nothing, therefore, exists, but what he sees or thinks of.¹

§ 2. Now, to get rid of all these ambiguities and troublesome words at once, be it observed that the word “Blue” does *not* mean the *sensation* caused by a gentian on the human eye; but it means the *power* of producing that sensation: and this power is always there, in the thing, whether we are there to experience it or not, and would remain there though there were not left a man on the face of the earth. Precisely in the same way gunpowder has a power of exploding. It will not explode if you put no match to it. But it has always the power of so exploding, and is therefore called an explosive compound, which it very positively and assuredly is, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary.

In like manner, a gentian does not produce the sensation of blueness, if you don't look at it. But it has always the power of doing so; its particles being everlastingly so arranged by its Maker. And, therefore, the gentian and the sky are always verily blue, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary; and if you do not see them blue when you look at them, it is not their fault, but yours.*

* It is quite true, that in all qualities involving sensation, there may be a doubt whether different people receive the same sensation from the same

¹ [Compare p. 184, above.]

§ 3. Hence I would say to these philosophers: If, instead of using the sonorous phrase, "It is objectively so," you will use the plain old phrase, "It *is* so," and if instead of the sonorous phrase, "It is subjectively so," you will say, in plain old English, "It does so," or "It seems so to me," you will, on the whole, be more intelligible to your fellow-creatures; and besides, if you find that a thing which generally "does so" to other people (as a gentian looks blue to most men), does *not* so to you, on any particular occasion, you will not fall into the impertinence of saying, that the thing is not so, or did not so, but you will say simply (what you will be all the better for speedily finding out), that something is the matter with you. If you find that you cannot explode the gunpowder, you will not declare that all gunpowder is subjective, and all explosion imaginary, but you will simply suspect and declare yourself to be an ill-made match. Which, on the whole, though there may be a distant chance of a mistake about it, is, nevertheless, the wisest conclusion you can come to until further experiment.*

thing (compare Part II. sect. i. ch. v. § 6¹); but, though this makes such facts not distinctly explicable, it does not alter the facts themselves. I derive a certain sensation, which I call sweetness, from sugar. That is a fact. Another person feels a sensation, which *he* also calls sweetness, from sugar. That is also a fact. The sugar's power to produce these two sensations, which we suppose to be, and which are, in all probability, very nearly the same in both of us, and, on the whole, in the human race, is its sweetness.

* In fact (for I may as well, for once, meet our German friends in their own style), all that has been objected to us on the subject seems subject to this great objection; that the subjection of all things (subject to no exceptions) to senses which are, in us, both subject and object, and objects of perpetual contempt, cannot but make it our ultimate object to subject *ourselves* to the senses, and to remove whatever objections existed to such subjection. So that, finally, that which is the subject of examination or object of attention, uniting thus in itself the characters of subness and obness (so that, that which has no obness in it should be called sub-subjective, or a sub-subject, and that which has no subness in it should be called upper or ober-objective, or an ob-object); and we also, who suppose ourselves the objects of every arrangement, and are certainly the subjects of every sensual impression, thus uniting

¹ [In this edition, Vol. III. p. 160.]

§ 4. Now, therefore, putting these tiresome and absurd words quite out of our way, we may go on at our ease to examine the point in question,—namely, the difference between the ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion, or contemplative fancy;* false appearances, I say, as being entirely unconnected with any real power or character in the object, and only imputed to it by us.

For instance—

“The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold.”†

This is very beautiful, and yet very untrue. The crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron. How is it that we enjoy so much the having it put into our heads that it is anything else than a plain crocus?

It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry, which is nevertheless *untrue*. And what is more, if we think over our favourite poetry, we shall find it full

in ourselves, in an obverse or adverse manner, the characters of obness and subness, must both become metaphysically dejected or rejected, nothing remaining in *us* objective, but subjectivity, and the very objectivity of the object being lost in the abyss of this subjectivity of the Human.

There is, however, some meaning in the above sentence, if the reader cares to make it out; but in a pure German sentence of the highest style there is often none whatever. See Appendix II., “German Philosophy” [p. 424.]¹

* Contemplative, in the sense explained in Part III. sec. ii. chap. iv. [Vol. IV. pp. 289 *seq.*]

† Holmes (Oliver Wendell), quoted by Miss Mitford in her *Recollections of a Literary Life*.²

¹ [See also for Ruskin’s dislike of such philosophising, *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 252.]

² [The lines are from *Astræa, a Poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale College*: Boston, 1850. They are quoted in vol. iii. ch. 2 of Miss Mitford’s *Recollections* (1852).]

of this kind of fallacy, and that we like it all the more for being so.

§ 5. It will appear also, on consideration of the matter, that this fallacy is of two principal kinds. Either, as in this case of the crocus, it is the fallacy of wilful fancy, which involves no real expectation that it will be believed; or else it is a fallacy caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational. Of the cheating of the fancy we shall have to speak presently;¹ but in this chapter, I want to examine the nature of the other error, that which the mind admits when affected strongly by emotion. Thus, for instance, in *Alton Locke*,—

“They rowed her in across the rolling foam—
The cruel, crawling foam.”²

The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the “pathetic fallacy.”

§ 6. Now we are in the habit of considering this fallacy as eminently a character of poetical description, and the temper of mind in which we allow it, as one eminently poetical, because passionate. But I believe, if we look well into the matter, that we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness,—that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it.*

* I admit two orders of poets, but no third; and by these two orders I mean the creative (Shakspeare, Homer, Dante), and Reflective or Perceptive (Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson). But both of these must be *first-rate* in their range, though their range is different; and with poetry second-rate

¹ [See below, ch. xiii. § 13, p. 231.]

² [Kingsley's song first appeared in ch. xxvi. of *Alton Locke* (1850); for another reference to the expression “crawling foam,” see *Val d'Arno*, § 170.]

Thus, when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron “as dead leaves flutter from a bough,”¹ he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves; he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

“The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,”²

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so far false, idea about the leaf; he fancies a life in it, and will, which there are

in *quality* no one ought to be allowed to trouble mankind. There is quite enough of the best,—much more than we can ever read or enjoy in the length of a life; and it is a literal wrong or sin in any person to encumber us with inferior work. I have no patience with apologies made by young pseudo-poets, “that they believe there is *some* good in what they have written: that they hope to do better in time,” etc. *Some* good! If there is not *all* good, there is no good. If they ever hope to do better, why do they trouble us now? Let them rather courageously burn all they have done, and wait for the better days. There are few men, ordinarily educated, who in moments of strong feeling could not strike out a poetical thought, and afterwards polish it so as to be presentable. But men of sense know better than so to waste their time; and those who sincerely love poetry, know the touch of the master’s hand on the chords too well to fumble among them after him. Nay, more than this, all inferior poetry is an injury to the good, inasmuch as it takes away the freshness of rhymes, blunders upon and gives a wretched commonalty to good thoughts; and, in general, adds to the weight of human weariness in a most woful and culpable manner. There are few thoughts likely to come across ordinary men, which have not already been expressed by greater men in the best possible way; and it is a wiser, more generous, more noble thing to remember and point out the perfect words, than to invent poorer ones, wherewith to encumber temporarily the world.³

¹ [“Come d’autunno si levan le foglie”: *Inferno*, iii. 112.]

² [*Christabel*, part i.]

³ [In the MS. Ruskin adds an illustration:—

“That thought about streams and human life, for instance, which everybody must hit upon sometimes—here it is, expressed gravely by Metastasio, lightly by Tennyson. The man must think much of himself who dares meddle with it more.”

He adds a reference to the passages—“Aqua . . . fin che ritorna” in Metastasio, and “p. 104 of *Maud*,” *i.e.* the lines in “The Brook” (first published with *Maud* in 1855): “For men may come and men may go, But I go on for ever.”]

not; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. Here, however, there is some beauty, even in the morbid passage; but take an instance in Homer and Pope. Without the knowledge of Ulysses, Elpenor, his youngest follower, has fallen from an upper chamber in the Circean palace, and has been left dead, unmissed by his leader or companions, in the haste of their departure. They cross the sea to the Cimmerian land; and Ulysses summons the shades from Tartarus. The first which appears is that of the lost Elpenor. Ulysses, amazed, and in exactly the spirit of bitter and terrified lightness which is seen in Hamlet,* addresses the spirit with the simple, startled words:—

“Elpenor! How camest thou under the shadowy darkness? Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship?”¹

Which Pope renders thus:—

“O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?”

I sincerely hope the reader finds no pleasure here, either in the nimbleness of the sail, or the laziness of the wind! And yet how is it that these conceits are so painful now, when they have been pleasant to us in the other instances?

§ 7. For a very simple reason. They are not a *pathetic* fallacy at all, for they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion—a passion which never could possibly have spoken them—agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the very last thing his mind could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in any wise what was *not* a fact. The delay in the first three lines, and

* “Well said, old mole! canst work i’ the ground so fast?”

¹ [*Odyssey*, xi. 56, 57; *Hamlet*, i. 5.]

conceit in the last, jar upon us instantly like the most frightful discord in music. No poet of true imaginative power could possibly have written the passage.*

Therefore we see that the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy. Coleridge's fallacy has no discord in it, but Pope's has set our teeth on edge. Without farther questioning, I will endeavour to state the main bearings of this matter.

§ 8. The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, as I said above, that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has induced it. For it is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.

* It is worth while comparing the way a similar question is put by the exquisite sincerity of Keats:—

“He wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus, with half-shut, suffused eyes, he stood;
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said,
'How camest thou over the unfooted sea?'”¹

¹ [*Hyperion*, book iii.]

So, then, we have the three ranks: the man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it. Then, secondly, the man who perceives wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose: a star, or a sun, or a fairy's shield, or a forsaken maiden. And then, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is for ever nothing else than itself—a little flower apprehended in the very plain and leafy fact of it, whatever and how many soever the associations and passions may be that crowd around it. And, in general, these three classes may be rated in comparative order, as the men who are not poets at all, and the poets of the second order, and the poets of the first; only however great a man may be, there are always some subjects which *ought* to throw him off his balance; some, by which his poor human capacity of thought should be conquered, and brought into the inaccurate and vague state of perception, so that the language of the highest inspiration becomes broken, obscure, and wild in metaphor, resembling that of the weaker man, overborne by weaker things.

§ 9. And thus, in full, there are four classes: the men who feel nothing, and therefore see truly; the men who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly (second order of poets); the men who feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly (first order of poets); and the men who, strong as human creatures can be, are yet submitted to influences stronger than they, and see in a sort untruly, because what they see is inconceivably above them. This last is the usual condition of prophetic inspiration.

§ 10. I separate these classes, in order that their character may be clearly understood; but of course they are united each to the other by imperceptible transitions, and the same mind, according to the influences to which it is subjected, passes at different times into the various states. Still, the difference between the great and less man is, on

the whole, chiefly in this point of *alterability*. That is to say, the one knows too much, and perceives and feels too much of the past and future, and of all things beside and around that which immediately affects him, to be in any wise shaken by it. His mind is made up; his thoughts have an accustomed current; his ways are steadfast; it is not this or that new sight which will at once unbalance him. He is tender to impression at the surface, like a rock with deep moss upon it; but there is too much mass of him to be moved. The smaller man, with the same degree of sensibility, is at once carried off his feet; he wants to do something he did not want to do before; he views all the universe in a new light through his tears; he is gay or enthusiastic, melancholy or passionate, as things come and go to him. Therefore the high creative poet might even be thought, to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving indeed all feelings to the full, but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were, from afar off.

Dante, in his most intense moods, has entire command of himself, and can look around calmly, at all moments, for the image or the word that will best tell what he sees to the upper or lower world.¹ But Keats and Tennyson, and the poets of the second order, are generally themselves subdued by the feelings under which they write, or, at least, write as choosing to be so; and therefore admit certain expressions and modes of thought which are in some sort diseased or false.

§ 11. Now so long as we see that the *feeling* is true, we pardon, or are even pleased by, the confessed fallacy of sight which it induces: we are pleased, for instance, with those lines of Kingsley's above quoted, not because they fallaciously describe foam, but because they faithfully describe sorrow. But the moment the mind of the speaker becomes cold, that moment every such expression becomes

¹ [See, for a characteristic instance, the smile of the tailor, *Paradiso*, xxxii. 110-111.]

untrue, as being for ever untrue in the external facts. And there is no greater baseness in literature than the habit of using these metaphorical expressions in cool blood. An inspired writer, in full impetuosity of passion, may speak wisely and truly of “raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame”;¹ but it is only the basest writer who cannot speak of the sea without talking of “raging waves,” “remorseless floods,” “ravenous billows,” etc.; and it is one of the signs of the highest power in a writer to check all such habits of thought, and to keep his eyes fixed firmly on the *pure fact*, out of which if any feeling comes to him or his reader, he knows it must be a true one.

To keep to the waves, I forget who it is who represents a man in despair desiring that his body may be cast into the sea,

*“Whose changing mound, and foam that passed away,
Might mock the eyes that questioned where I lay.”*²

Observe, there is not here a single false, or even over-charged, expression. “Mound” of the sea wave is perfectly simple and true; “changing” is as familiar as may be; “foam that passed away,” strictly literal; and the whole line descriptive of the reality with a degree of accuracy which I know not any other verse, in the range of poetry, that altogether equals. For most people have not a distinct idea of the clumsiness and massiveness of a large wave. The word “wave” is used too generally of ripples and breakers, and bendings in light drapery or grass: it does not by itself convey a perfect image. But the word “mound” is heavy, large, dark, definite; there is no mistaking the kind of waves meant, nor missing the sight of it. Then the term “changing” has a peculiar force also. Most people think of waves as rising and falling. But if they look at the sea carefully, they will perceive that the waves do not rise and fall. They change. Change both place and form,

¹ [Jude 13.]

² [The editors have not been able to discover the authorship of these lines]

but they do not fall; one wave goes on, and on, and still on; now lower, now higher, now tossing its mane like a horse, now building itself together like a wall, now shaking, now steady, but still the same wave, till at last it seems struck by something, and changes, one knows not how,—becomes another wave.

The close of the line insists on this image, and paints it still more perfectly,—“foam that passed away.” Not merely melting, disappearing, but passing on, out of sight, on the career of the wave. Then, having put the absolute ocean fact as far as he may before our eyes, the poet leaves us to feel about it as we may, and to trace for ourselves the opposite fact,—the image of the green mounds that do not change, and the white and written stones that do not pass away; and thence to follow out also the associated images of the calm life with the quiet grave, and the despairing life with the fading foam—

“Let no man move his bones.”

“As for Samaria, her king is cut off like the foam upon the water.”¹

But nothing of this is actually told or pointed out, and the expressions, as they stand, are perfectly severe and accurate, utterly uninfluenced by the firmly governed emotion of the writer. Even the word “mock” is hardly an exception, as it may stand merely for “deceive” or “defeat,” without implying any impersonation of the waves.

§ 12. It may be well, perhaps, to give one or two more instances to show the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages, which thus limit their expression to the pure fact, and leave the hearer to gather what he can from it. Here is a notable one from the *Iliad*. Helen, looking from the Scæan gate of Troy over the Grecian host, and telling Priam the names of its captains, says at last:—

“I see all the other dark-eyed Greeks; but two I cannot see,—Castor and Pollux,—whom one mother bore with me. Have they not followed from

¹ [2 Kings xxiii. 18; Hosea x. 7.]

fair Lacedæmon, or have they indeed come in their sea-wandering ships, but now will not enter into the battle of men, fearing the shame and the scorn that is in Me?"

Then Homer:—

"So she spoke. But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedæmon, in the dear fatherland."¹

Note, here, the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving. These are the facts of the thing. I see nothing else than these. Make what you will of them.

§ 13. Take another very notable instance from Casimir de la Vigne's² terrible ballad, "La Toilette de Constance." I must quote a few lines out of it here and there, to enable the reader who has not the book by him, to understand its close.

"Vite, Anna! vite; au miroir!
Plus vite, Anna. L'heure s'avance,
Et je vais au bal ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Y pensez-vous? ils sont fanés, ces nœuds;
Ils sont d'hier; mon Dieu, comme tout passe!

¹ [*Iliad*, iii. 243. In the MS. Ruskin notes, "the unsurpassably tender irony in the epithet—'life-giving earth'—of the grave"; and then adds another illustration:—

"Compare the hammer-stroke at the close of the [32nd] chapter of *Vanity Fair*—'The darkness came down on the field and city, and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.' A great deal might have been said about it. The writer is very sorry for Amelia, neither does he want faith in prayer. He knows as well as any of us that prayer must be answered in some sort; but those are the facts. The man and woman sixteen miles apart—one on her knees on the floor, the other on his face in the clay. So much love in her heart, so much lead in his. Make what you can of it."

For a different view of this passage, at a later period, see *The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*. Matthew Arnold, in criticising (in the first of his lectures *On Translating Homer*) the passage in the text, isolates it from the context, terminating his citation with the words, "is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving"; he thus makes Ruskin attribute to Homer more "sentimentality" than is in fact suggested: see below, p. 222.]

² [The poem is from the *Œuvres Posthumes—Derniers Chants: Poèmes et Ballades sur l'Italie* (1855) of Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843): see again below, p. 224. The second refrain (omitted in previous editions) is here supplied. After the second stanza, three refrains and stanzas are omitted.]

Que du réseau qui retient mes cheveux
 Les glands d'azur retombent avec grâce.
 Plus haut! Plus bas! Vous ne comprenez rien!
 Que sur mon front ce saphir étincelle:
 Vous me piquez, maladroite. Ah, c'est bien,
 Bien,—chère Anna! Je t'aime, je suis belle.

Vite, j'en crois mon miroir,
 Et mon cœur bat d'espérance.
 Vite, Anna, je vais ce soir
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Celui qu'en vain je voudrais oublier . . .
 (Anna, ma robe) il y sera, j'espère.
 (Ah, fi! profane, est-ce là mon collier?
 Quoi! ces grains d'or bénits par le Saint-Père!)
 Il y sera; Dieu, s'il pressait ma main,
 En y pensant à peine je respire:
 Frère Anselmo doit m'entendre demain,
 Comment ferai-je, Anna, pour tout lui dire? . . .

Vite! un coup d'œil au miroir,
 Le dernier.—J'ai l'assurance
 Qu'on va m'adorer ce soir
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.”

Près du foyer, Constance s'admirait.
 Dieu! sur sa robe il vole une étincelle!
 Au feu! Courez! Quand l'espoir l'enivrait
 Tout perdre ainsi! Quoi! Mourir,—et si belle!
 L'horrible feu ronge avec volupté
 Ses bras, son sein, et l'entoure, et s'élève,
 Et sans pitié dévore sa beauté,
 Ses dix-huit ans, hélas, et son doux rêve!

Adieu, bal, plaisir, amour!
 On se dit, Pauvre Constance!
 Et l'on dansa, jusqu'au jour,
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.”

Yes, that is the fact of it. Right or wrong, the poet does not say. What you may think about it, he does not know. He has nothing to do with that. There lie the ashes of the dead girl in her chamber. There they danced, till the morning, at the Ambassador's of France. Make what you will of it.

If the reader will look through the ballad, of which I

have quoted only about the third part, he will find that there is not, from beginning to end of it, a single poetical (so called) expression, except in one stanza. The girl speaks as simple prose as may be; there is not a word she would not have actually used as she was dressing. The poet stands by, impassive as a statue, recording her words just as they come. At last the doom seizes her, and in the very presence of death, for an instant, his own emotions conquer him. He records no longer the facts only, but the facts as they seem to him. The fire gnaws *with voluptuousness—without pity*. It is soon past. The fate is fixed for ever; and he retires into his pale and crystalline atmosphere of truth. He closes all with the calm veracity,

“They said, ‘Poor Constance!’ ”

§ 14. Now in this there is the exact type of the consummate poetical temperament. For, be it clearly and constantly remembered, that the greatness of a poet depends upon the two faculties, acuteness of feeling, and command of it. A poet is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which it would be inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this government, and, therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes just and true. Thus the destruction of the kingdom of Assyria cannot be contemplated firmly by a prophet of Israel. The fact is too great, too wonderful. It overthrows him, dashes him into a confused element of dreams. All the world is, to his stunned thought, full of strange voices. “Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, ‘Since thou art gone down to the grave, no feller is come up against us.’ ”¹ So, still more, the thought of the presence of Deity cannot be borne without this great astonishment.

¹ [Isaiah xiv. 8. The passage is commented on again in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 79 (Vol. XII. p. 105).]

“The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”¹

§ 15. But by how much this feeling is noble when it is justified by the strength of its cause, by so much it is ignoble when there is not cause enough for it; and beyond all other ignobleness is the mere affectation of it, in hardness of heart. Simply bad writing may almost always, as above noticed, be known by its adoption of these fanciful metaphorical expressions as a sort of current coin; yet there is even a worse, at least a more harmful condition of writing than this, in which such expressions are not ignorantly and feelinglessly caught up, but, by some master, skilful in handling, yet insincere, deliberately wrought out with chill and studied fancy; as if we should try to make an old lava-stream look red hot again, by covering it with dead leaves, or white-hot, with hoar-frost.

When Young is lost in veneration, as he dwells on the character of a truly good and holy man, he permits himself for a moment to be overborne by the feeling so far as to exclaim—

“Where shall I find him? angels, tell me where.
You know him; he is near you; point him out.
Shall I see glories beaming from his brow,
Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?”²

This emotion has a worthy cause, and is thus true and right. But now hear the cold-hearted³ Pope say to a shepherd girl—

“Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;⁴
Your praise the birds shall chant in every grove,
And winds shall waft it to the powers above.

¹ [Isaiah lv. 12.]

² [*Night Thoughts*, ii. 345.]

³ [“Cold-hearted” only in writing the *Pastorals*: see the qualification in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 5 n.]

⁴ [See a reference to this line in *Præterita*, i. ch. viii. § 172.]

But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,
 The wondering forests soon should dance again;
 The moving mountains hear the powerful call,
 And headlong streams hang, listening, in their fall."¹

This is not, nor could it for a moment be mistaken for, the language of passion. It is simple falsehood, uttered by hypocrisy; definite absurdity, rooted in affectation, and coldly asserted in the teeth of nature and fact. Passion will indeed go far in deceiving itself; but it must be a strong passion, not the simple wish of a lover to tempt his mistress to sing. Compare a very closely parallel passage in Wordsworth, in which the lover has lost his mistress:

“Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid,
 When thus his moan he made:—

 ‘Oh, move, thou cottage, from behind yon oak,
 Or let the ancient tree uprooted lie,
 That in some other way you smoke
 May mount into the sky.
 If still behind yon pine-tree's ragged bough,
 Headlong, the waterfall must come,
 Oh, let it, then, be dumb—
 Be anything, sweet stream, but that which thou art now.’ ”²

Here is a cottage to be moved, if not a mountain, and a waterfall to be silent, if it is not to hang listening: but with what different relation to the mind that contemplates them! Here, in the extremity of its agony, the soul cries out wildly for relief, which at the same moment it partly knows to be impossible, but partly believes possible, in a vague impression that a miracle *might* be wrought to give relief even to a less sore distress,—that nature is kind, and God is kind, and that grief is strong: it knows not well what *is* possible to such grief. To silence a stream, to move a cottage wall,—one might think it could do as much as that!

¹ [*Pastorals*: “Summer, or Alexis.” Four lines are omitted after the second in Ruskin's quotation.]

² [The piece beginning “’Tis said, That some have died for love.” Ruskin, as was his custom, quotes from memory. He runs together two stanzas, and several words are different in the poet's text.]

I believe these instances are enough to illustrate the main point I insist upon respecting the pathetic fallacy,—that so far as it *is* a fallacy, it is always the sign of a morbid state of mind, and comparatively of a weak one. Even in the most inspired prophet it is a sign of the incapacity of his human sight or thought to bear what has been revealed to it. In ordinary poetry, if it is found in the thoughts of the poet himself, it is at once a sign of his belonging to the inferior school; if in the thoughts of the characters imagined by him, it is right or wrong according to the genuineness of the emotion from which it springs; always, however, implying necessarily *some* degree of weakness in the character.

Take two most exquisite instances from master hands. The Jessy of Shenstone, and the Ellen of Wordsworth, have both been betrayed and deserted. Jessy, in the course of her most touching complaint, says:

“If through the garden’s flowery tribes I stray,
Where bloom the jasmynes that could once allure,
‘Hope not to find delight in us,’ they say,
‘For we are spotless, Jessy; we are pure.’ ”¹

Compare this with some of the words of Ellen:

“ ‘Ah, why,’ said Ellen, sighing to herself,
‘Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge,
And nature, that is kind in woman’s breast,
And reason, that in man is wise and good,
And fear of Him Who is a righteous Judge,—
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together, that began
Their springtime with one love, and that have need
Of mutual pity and forgiveness sweet
To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
O, come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
Been faithless, hear him;—though a lowly creature,
One of God’s simple children that yet know not
The Universal Parent, *how* he sings!
As if he wished the firmament of heaven

¹ [Ruskin quotes these lines again in his description of Holman Hunt’s picture “The Awakening Conscience”: see Vol. XII. p. 335.]

Should listen, and give back to him the voice
 Of his triumphant constancy and love;
 The proclamation that he makes, how far
 His darkness doth transcend our fickle light.' ”¹

The perfection of both these passages, as far as regards truth and tenderness of imagination in the two poets, is quite insuperable. But of the two characters imagined, Jessy is weaker than Ellen, exactly in so far as something appears to her to be in nature which is not. The flowers do not really reproach her. God meant them to comfort her, not to taunt her; they would do so if she saw them rightly.

Ellen, on the other hand, is quite above the slightest erring emotion. There is not the barest film of fallacy in all her thoughts. She reasons as calmly as if she did not feel. And, although the singing of the bird suggests to her the idea of its desiring to be heard in heaven, she does not for an instant admit any veracity in the thought. “As if,” she says,—“I know he means nothing of the kind; but it does verily seem as if.” The reader will find, by examining the rest of the poem, that Ellen’s character is throughout consistent in this clear though passionate strength.*

* I cannot quit this subject without giving two more instances, both exquisite, of the pathetic fallacy, which I have just come upon, in *Maud*:²—

“For a great speculation had fail’d;
 And ever he mutter’d and madden’d, and ever wann’d with
 despair;
 And out he walk’d, when the wind like a broken worlding wail’d,
 And the *flying gold of the ruin’d woodlands drove thro’ the air.*”

“There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
The red rose cries, ‘She is near, she is near!’
And the white rose weeps, ‘She is late.’
The larkspur listens, ‘I hear, I hear!’
And the lily whispers, ‘I wait.’ ”

¹ [*The Excursion*, book vi. (p. 494 of J. Morley’s edition).]

² [The passages are from Part i., i. 3, and Part i., xxii. 10. A letter from Ruskin to Tennyson in appreciation of *Maud* (November 12, 1855) is given in a later volume of this edition. Ruskin referred incidentally to another “pathetic fallacy” in the poem in *Sesame and Lilies*, §§ 93–94; see the note there for the poet’s reply to the criticism.]

It then being, I hope, now made clear to the reader in all respects that the pathetic fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic, feeble so far as it is fallacious, and, therefore, that the dominion of Truth is entire, over this, as over every other natural and just state of the human mind, we may go on to the subject for the dealing with which this prefatory inquiry became necessary; and why necessary, we shall see forthwith.

CHAPTER XIII

OF CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE

§ 1. MY reason for asking the reader to give so much of his time to the examination of the pathetic fallacy was, that, whether in literature or in art, he will find it eminently characteristic of the modern mind; and in the landscape, whether of literature or art, he will also find the modern painter endeavouring to express something which he, as a living creature, imagines in the lifeless object, while the classical and mediæval painters were content with expressing the unimaginary and actual qualities of the object itself. It will be observed that, according to the principle stated long ago, I use the words painter and poet quite indifferently, including in our inquiry the landscape of literature, as well as that of painting; and this the more because the spirit of classical landscape has hardly been expressed in any other way than by words.

§ 2. Taking, therefore, this wide field, it is surely a very notable circumstance, to begin with, that this pathetic fallacy is eminently characteristic of modern painting. For instance, Keats, describing a wave breaking out at sea, says of it—

“Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.”¹

That is quite perfect, as an example of the modern manner. The idea of the peculiar action with which foam rolls down a long, large wave could not have been given by any other words so well as by this “wayward indolence.” But Homer would never have written, never thought of,

¹ [*Endymion*, book ii. 350.]

such words. He could not by any possibility have lost sight of the great fact that the wave, from the beginning to the end of it, do what it might, was still nothing else than salt water; and that salt water could not be either wayward or indolent. He will call the waves “over-roofed,” “full-charged,” “monstrous,” “compact-black,” “dark-clear,” “violet-coloured,” “wine-coloured,” and so on.¹ But every one of these epithets is descriptive of pure physical nature. “Over-roofed” is the term he invariably uses of anything—rock, house, or wave—that nods over at the brow; the other terms need no explanation; they are as accurate and intense in truth as words can be, but they never show the slightest feeling of anything animated in the ocean. Black or clear, monstrous or violet-coloured, cold salt water it is always, and nothing but that.

§ 3. “Well, but the modern writer, by his admission of the tinge of fallacy, has given an idea of something in the action of the wave which Homer could not, and surely, therefore, has made a step in advance? Also there appears to be a degree of sympathy and feeling in the one writer, which there is not in the other; and as it has been received for a first principle that writers are great in proportion to the intensity of their feelings, and Homer seems to have no feelings about the sea but that it is black and deep, surely in this respect also the modern writer is the greater?”

Stay a moment. Homer *had* some feeling about the sea; a faith in the animation of it much stronger than Keats’s. But all this sense of something living in it, he separates in his mind into a great abstract image of a Sea Power. He never says the waves rage, or the waves

¹ [“Over-roofed,” *kathrefhV* (*Od.* v. 367); “full-charged,” *trofoeiV* (*Il.* xi. 307; xv. 621); “monstrous,” *pelwrioV* (*Od.* iii. 290); “violet-coloured,” *ioeidhs* (*Il.* xi. 298); “wine-coloured,” *oinoj* (*Il.* ii. 613). It is not clear to what epithets Ruskin alluded in “compact-black;” “dark-clear.” In one of his diaries, he jots down the epithet *phgoV* (compact) (*Od.* v. 388); with regard to which word as applied to waves, Liddell and Scott note that old interpreters translate it either as “black” or as “white”; Ruskin puts against it in his diary, “icy clear black;” with a note of exclamation—on the uncertainty of its meaning. It seems not improbable that an “or” should be inserted between “compact-black” and “dark-clear,” both expressions referring to the uncertain *phgoV*.]

are idle. But he says there is somewhat in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and *that* he calls a god.

§ 4. I do not think we ever enough endeavour to enter into what a Greek's real notion of a god was. We are so accustomed to the modern mockeries of the classical religion, so accustomed to hear and see the Greek gods introduced as living personages, or invoked for help, by men who believe neither in them nor in any other gods, that we seem to have infected the Greek ages themselves with the breath, and dimmed them with the shade, of our hypocrisy; and are apt to think that Homer, as we know that Pope, was merely an ingenious fabulist; nay, more than this, that all the nations of past time were ingenious fabulists also, to whom the universe was a lyrical drama, and by whom whatsoever was said about it was merely a witty allegory, or a graceful lie, of which the entire upshot and consummation was a pretty statue in the middle of the court, or at the end of the garden.

This, at least, is one of our forms of opinion about Greek faith; not, indeed, possible altogether to any man of honesty or ordinary powers of thought; but still so venomously inherent in the modern philosophy that all the pure lightning of Carlyle¹ cannot as yet quite burn it out of any of us. And then, side by side with this mere infidel folly, stands the bitter short-sightedness of Puritanism, holding the classical god to be either simply an idol,—a block of stone ignorantly, though sincerely, worshipped—or else an actual diabolic or betraying power, usurping the place of God.

§ 5. Both these Puritanical estimates of Greek deity are of course to some extent true. The corruption of classical worship is barren idolatry; and that corruption was deepened, and variously directed to their own purposes, by the evil angels. But this was neither the whole, nor the principal part, of Pagan worship. Pallas was not, in the pure Greek

¹ [See the essay entitled "Biography" in the fourth volume of Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, p. 56 in the "Popular Edition" of 1872.]

mind, merely a powerful piece of ivory in a temple at Athens; neither was the choice of Leonidas between the alternatives granted him by the oracle, of personal death, or ruin to his country,¹ altogether a work of the Devil's prompting.

§ 6. What, then, was actually the Greek god? In what way were these two ideas of human form, and divine power, credibly associated in the ancient heart, so as to become a subject of true faith irrespective equally of fable, allegory, superstitious trust in stone, and demoniacal influence?

It seems to me that the Greek had exactly the same instinctive feeling about the elements that we have ourselves; that to Homer, as much as to Casimir de la Vigne, fire seemed ravenous and pitiless; to Homer, as much as to Keats, the sea-wave appeared wayward or idle, or whatever else it may be to the poetical passion. But then the Greek reasoned upon this sensation, saying to himself: "I can light the fire, and put it out; I can dry this water up, or drink it. It cannot be the fire or the water that rages, or that is wayward. But it must be something *in* this fire and *in* the water, which I cannot destroy by extinguishing the one, or evaporating the other, any more than I destroy myself by cutting off my finger; *I was in* my finger,—something of me at least was; I had a power over it and felt pain in it, though I am still as much myself when it is gone. So there may be a power in the water which is not water, but to which the water is as a body;—which can strike with it, move in it, suffer in it, yet not be destroyed with it. This something, this Great Water Spirit, I must not confuse with the waves, which are only its body. *They* may flow hither and thither, increase or diminish. *That* must be indivisible—imperishable—a god. So of fire also; those rays which I can stop, and in the midst of which I cast a shadow, cannot be divine, nor greater

¹ [Herodotus, vii. 220. For other references to Leonidas, see note on Vol. XII. p. 138. The meaning of Pallas in the Greek mind was worked out by Ruskin in *The Queen of the Air.*]

than I. They cannot feel, but there may be something in them that feels,—a glorious intelligence, as much nobler and more swift than mine, as these rays, which are its body, are nobler and swifter than my flesh;—the spirit of all light, and truth, and melody, and revolving hours.”

§ 7. It was easy to conceive, farther, that such spirits should be able to assume at will a human form, in order to hold intercourse with men, or to perform any act for which their proper body, whether of fire, earth, or air, was unfitted. And it would have been to place them beneath, instead of above, humanity, if, assuming the form of man, they could not also have tasted his pleasures. Hence the easy step to the more or less material ideas of deities, which are apt at first to shock us, but which are indeed only dishonourable so far as they represent the gods as false and unholy. It is not the materialism, but the vice, which degrades the conception; for the materialism itself is never positive, or complete. There is always some sense of exaltation in the spiritual and immortal body; and of a power proceeding from the visible form through all the infinity of the element ruled by the particular god. The precise nature of the idea is well seen in the passage of the *Iliad* which describes the river Scamander defending the Trojans against Achilles.¹ In order to remonstrate with the hero, the god assumes a human form, which nevertheless is in some way or other instantly recognized by Achilles as that of the river-god: it is addressed at once as a river, not as a man; and its voice is the voice of a river “out of the deep whirlpools.”* Achilles refuses to obey its commands; and from the human form it returns instantly into its natural or divine one, and endeavours to overwhelm him with waves. Vulcan defends

* Compare Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto i. stanza 15, and canto v. stanza 2. In the first instance, the river-spirit is accurately the Homeric god, only Homer would have believed in it,—Scott did not: at least not altogether.

¹ [*Iliad*, xxi. 212–360. The river-god in his wrath arises “out of the deep whirlpool” (βαρεῖν δ ἐκφρεγξάτο δινῆν, 213); Achilles addresses him as the Scamander (223). Hephæstus sends fire against the river (349). The “strength,” or “nerve of the river” (ἰVpotamoio) feels the fire (356), and begs for respite (357–360).]

Achilles, and sends fire against the river, which suffers in its water-body, till it is able to bear no more. At last even the “nerve of the river,” or “strength of the river” (note the expression), feels the fire, and this “strength of the river” addresses Vulcan in supplications for respite. There is in this precisely the idea of a vital part of the river-body, which acted and felt, to which, if the fire reached, it was death, just as would be the case if it touched a vital part of the human body. Throughout the passage the manner of conception is perfectly clear and consistent; and if, in other places, the exact connection between the ruling spirit and the thing ruled is not so manifest, it is only because it is almost impossible for the human mind to dwell long upon such subjects without falling into inconsistencies, and gradually slackening its effort to grasp the entire truth; until the more spiritual part of it slips from its hold, and only the human form of the god is left, to be conceived and described as subject to all the errors of humanity. But I do not believe that the idea ever weakens itself down to mere allegory. When Pallas is said to attack and strike down Mars, it does not mean merely that Wisdom at that moment prevailed against Wrath. It means that there are, indeed, two great spirits, one entrusted to guide the human soul to wisdom and chastity, the other to kindle wrath and prompt to battle. It means that these two spirits, on the spot where, and at the moment when, a great contest was to be decided between all that they each governed in man, then and there (assumed) human form, and human weapons, and did verily and materially strike at each other, until the Spirit of Wrath was crushed. And when Diana is said to hunt with her nymphs in the woods, it does not mean merely, as Wordsworth puts it,¹ that the poet or shepherd saw the moon and stars glancing between the branches of the trees, and wished to say so figuratively. It means that there is a living spirit, to which the light of the moon is a body; which takes delight in glancing between the clouds and

¹ [The reference is to the *Excursion*, book iv. lines 847–887.]

following the wild beasts as they wander through the night; and that this spirit sometimes assumes a perfect human form, and in this form, with real arrows, pursues and slays the wild beasts, which with its mere arrows of moonlight it could not slay; retaining, nevertheless, all the while, its power and being in the moonlight, and in all else that it rules.

§ 8. There is not the smallest inconsistency or unspirituality in this conception. If there were, it would attach equally to the appearance of the angels to Jacob, Abraham, Joshua, or Manoah.¹ In all those instances the highest authority which governs our own faith requires us to conceive divine power clothed with a human form (a form so real that it is recognized for superhuman only by its “doing wondrously”), and retaining, nevertheless, sovereignty and omnipresence in all the world. This is precisely, as I understand it, the heathen idea of a God; and it is impossible to comprehend any single part of the Greek mind until we grasp this faithfully, not endeavouring to explain it away in any wise, but accepting, with frank decision and definition, the tangible existence of its deities;—blue-eyed—white-fleshed—human-hearted,—capable at their choice of meeting man absolutely in his own nature—feasting with him—talking with him—fighting with him, eye to eye, or breast to breast, as Mars with Diomed;² or else, dealing with him in a more retired spirituality, as Apollo sending the plague upon the Greeks, when his quiver rattles at his shoulders as he moves, and yet the darts sent forth of it strike not as arrows, but as plague; or, finally, retiring completely into the material universe which they properly inhabit, and dealing with man through that, as Scamander with Achilles, through his waves.

§ 9. Nor is there anything whatever in the various actions recorded of the gods, however apparently ignoble, to indicate weakness of belief in them. Very frequently

¹ [Genesis xxxii. 1, xxii. 11; Joshua v. 13; Judges xiii. 19 (“and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on”).]

² [*Iliad*, v. 846; the next reference is *Iliad*, i. 43.]

things which appear to us ignoble are merely the simplicities of a pure and truthful age. When Juno beats Diana about the ears with her own quiver,¹ for instance, we start at first, as if Homer could not have believed that they were both real goddesses. But what should Juno have done? Killed Diana with a look? Nay, she neither wished to do so, nor could she have done so, by the very faith of Diana's goddess-ship. Diana is as immortal as herself. Frowned Diana into submission? But Diana has come expressly to try conclusions with her, and will by no means be frowned into submission. Wounded her with a celestial lance? That sounds more poetical, but it is in reality partly more savage and partly more absurd, than Homer. More savage, for it makes Juno more cruel, therefore less divine; and more absurd, for it only seems elevated in tone, because we use the word "celestial," which means nothing. What sort of a thing is a "celestial," lance? Not a wooden one. Of what then? Of moonbeams, or clouds, or mist. Well, therefore, Diana's arrows were of mist too; and her quiver, and herself, and Juno, with her lance, and all, vanish into mist. Why not have said at once, if that is all you mean, that two mists met, and one drove the other back? That would have been rational and intelligible, but not to talk of celestial lances. Homer had no such misty fancy; he believed the two goddesses were there in true bodies, with true weapons, on the true earth; and still I ask, what should Juno have done? Not beaten Diana? No; for it is unlady-like. Un-English-lady-like, yes; but by no means un-Greek-lady-like, nor even un-natural-lady-like. If a modern lady does *not* beat her servant or her rival about the ears, it is oftener because she is too weak, or too proud, than because she is of purer mind than Homer's Juno. She will not strike them; but she will overwork the one or slander the other without pity; and Homer would not have thought that one whit more goddess-like than striking them with her open hand.

¹ [*Iliad*, xxi. 489.]

§ 10. If, however, the reader likes to suppose that while the two goddesses in personal presence thus fought with arrow and quiver, there was also a broader and vaster contest supposed by Homer between the elements they ruled; and that the goddess of the heavens, as she struck the goddess of the moon on the flushing cheek, was at the same instant exercising omnipresent power in the heavens themselves, and gathering clouds, with which, filled with the moon's own arrows or beams, she was encumbering and concealing the moon; he is welcome to this outcarrying of the idea, provided that he does not pretend to make it an interpretation instead of a mere extension, nor think to explain away my real, running, beautiful beaten Diana, into a moon behind clouds.*

§ 11. It is only farther to be noted, that the Greek conception of Godhead, as it was much more real than we usually suppose, so it was much more bold and familiar than to a modern mind would be possible. I shall have something more to observe,¹ in a little while, of the danger of our modern habit of endeavouring to raise ourselves to something like comprehension of the truth of divinity, instead of simply believing the words in which the Deity reveals Himself to us. The Greek erred rather on the other side, making hardly any effort to conceive divine mind as above the human; and no more shrinking from frank intercourse with a divine being, or dreading its immediate presence, than that of the simplest of mortals. Thus Atrides, enraged at his sword's breaking in his hand upon the helmet of Paris, after he had expressly invoked the assistance

* Compare the exquisite lines of Longfellow on the sunset in *The Golden Legend*:—
“The day is done, and slowly from the scene
The stooping sun upgathers his spent shafts,
And puts them back into his golden quiver.”²

¹ [See in the next volume, ch. vi. §§ 6, 7, pp. 109–110.]

² [The lines occur in Part I., “The Castle of Vautsberg on the Rhine.” *The Golden Legend* was a favourite poem with Ruskin; see his quotations from it in the “Lectures on Colour” in Vol. XII. p. 485, and the reference in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 32.]

of Jupiter, exclaims aloud as he would to a king who had betrayed him, "Jove, Father, there is not another god more evil-minded than thou!"¹ and Helen, provoked at Paris's defeat, and oppressed with pouting shame both for him and for herself, when Venus appears at her side, and would lead her back to the delivered Paris, impatiently tells the goddess to "go and take care of Paris herself."

§ 12. The modern mind is naturally, but vulgarly and unjustly, shocked by this kind of familiarity. Rightly understood, it is not so much a sign of misunderstanding of the divine nature as of good understanding of the human. The Greek lived, in all things, a healthy, and, in a certain degree, a perfect, life. He had no morbid or sickly feeling of any kind. He was accustomed to face death without the slightest shrinking, to undergo all kinds of bodily hardship without complaint, and to do what he supposed right and honourable, in most cases, as a matter of course. Confident of his own immortality, and of the power of abstract justice, he expected to be dealt with in the next world as was right, and left the matter much in his god's hands; but being thus immortal, and finding in his own soul something which it seemed quite as difficult to master, as to rule the elements, he did not feel that it was an appalling superiority in those gods to have bodies of water, or fire, instead of flesh, and to have various work to do among the clouds and waves, out of his human way; or sometimes, even in a sort of service to himself. Was not the nourishment of herbs and flowers a kind of ministering to his wants; were not the gods in some sort his husbandmen, and spirit-servants? Their mere strength or omnipresence did not seem to him a distinction absolutely terrific. It might be the nature of one being to be in two places at once, and of another to be only in one; but that did not seem of itself to infer any absolute lordliness of one nature above the other, any more than an insect must be a nobler creature than a man,

¹ [*Iliad*, iii. 365; the next reference is *Iliad*, iii. 406.]

because it can see on four sides of its head, and the man only in front. They could kill him or torture him, it was true; but even that not unjustly, or not for ever. There was a fate, and a Divine Justice, greater than they; so that if they did wrong, and he right, he might fight it out with them, and have the better of them at last. In a general way, they were wiser, stronger, and better than he; and to ask counsel of them, to obey them, to sacrifice to them, to thank them for all good, this was well: but to be utterly downcast before them, or not to tell them his mind in plain Greek if they seemed to him to be conducting themselves in an ungodly manner—this would not be well.

§ 13. Such being their general idea of the gods, we can now easily understand the habitual tone of their feelings towards what was beautiful in nature. With us, observe, the idea of the Divinity is apt to get separated from the life of nature; and imagining our God upon a cloudy throne, far above the earth, and not in the flowers or waters, we approach those visible things with a theory that they are dead; governed by physical laws, and so forth. But coming to them, we find the theory fail; that they are not dead; that, say what we choose about them, the instinctive sense of their being alive is too strong for us; and in scorn of all physical law, the wilful fountain sings, and the kindly flowers rejoice. And then, puzzled, and yet happy; pleased, and yet ashamed of being so; accepting sympathy from nature, which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives,—mixing, besides, all manner of purposeful play and conceit with these involuntary fellowships,—we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature. But the Greek never removed his god out of nature at all; never attempted for a moment to contradict his instinctive sense that God was everywhere. “The tree *is* glad,” said he, “I know it is; I can cut it down: no matter, there was a nymph in it. The water *does* sing,”

said he; "I can dry it up; but no matter, there was a naiad in it." But in thus clearly defining his belief, observe, he threw it entirely into a human form, and gave his faith to nothing but the image of his own humanity. What sympathy and fellowship he had, were always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream; always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood. Content with this human sympathy, he approached the actual waves and woody fibres with no sympathy at all. The spirit that ruled them, he received as a plain fact. Them, also, ruled and material, he received as plain facts; they, without their spirit, were dead enough. A rose was good for scent, and a stream for sound and coolness; for the rest, one was no more than leaves, the other no more than water; he could not make anything else of them; and the divine power, which was involved in their existence, having been all distilled away by him into an independent Flora or Thetis, the poor leaves or waves were left, in mere corporeality, to make the most of their being discernibly red and soft, clear and wet, and unacknowledged in any other power whatsoever.

§ 14. Then, observe farther, the Greeks lived in the midst of the most beautiful nature, and were as familiar with blue sea, clear air, and sweet outlines of mountain, as we are with brick walls, black smoke, and level fields. This perfect familiarity rendered all such scenes of natural beauty unexciting, if not indifferent to them, by lulling and over-wearying the imagination as far as it was concerned with such things; but there was another kind of beauty which they found it required effort to obtain, and which, when thoroughly obtained, seemed more glorious than any of this wild loveliness—the beauty of the human countenance and form. This, they perceived, could only be reached by continual exercise of virtue; and it was in Heaven's sight, and theirs, all the more beautiful because it needed this selfdenial to obtain it. So they set themselves to reach this, and having gained it, gave it their principal thoughts, and set it off with beautiful dress as best they might. But

making this their object, they were obliged to pass their lives in simple exercise and disciplined employments. Living wholesomely, giving themselves no fever fits, either by fasting or over-eating, constantly in the open air, and full of animal spirit and physical power, they became incapable of every morbid condition of mental emotion. Unhappy love, disappointed ambition, spiritual despondency, or any other disturbing sensation, had little power over the well-braced nerves, and healthy flow of the blood; and what bitterness might yet fasten on them was soon boxed or raced out of a boy, and spun or woven out of a girl, or danced out of both. They had indeed their sorrows, true and deep, but still, more like children's sorrows than ours, whether bursting into open cry of pain, or hid with shuddering under the veil, still passing over the soul as clouds do over heaven, not sullyng it, not mingling with it;—darkening it perhaps long or utterly, but still not becoming one with it, and for the most part passing away in dashing rain of tears, and leaving the man unchanged: in nowise affecting, as our sorrow does, the whole tone of his thought and imagination thence-forward.

How far our melancholy may be deeper and wider than theirs in its roots and view, and therefore nobler, we shall consider presently;¹ but at all events, they had the advantage of us in being entirely free from all those dim and feverish sensations which result from unhealthy state of the body. I believe that a large amount of the dreamy and sentimental sadness, tendency to reverie, and general pathologicalness of modern life results merely from derangement of stomach; holding to the Greek life the same relation that the feverish night of an adult does to a child's sleep.

§ 15. Farther, the human beauty, which, whether in its bodily being or in imagined divinity, had become, for the reasons we have seen, the principal object of culture and sympathy to these Greeks, was, in its perfection, eminently orderly, symmetrical, and tender. Hence, contemplating it

¹ [See below, p. 352, and ch. xvii.]

constantly in this state, they could not but feel a proportionate fear of all that was disorderly, unbalanced, and rugged. Having trained their stoutest soldiers into a strength so delicate and lovely, that their white flesh, with their blood upon it, should look like ivory stained with purple;* and having always around them, in the motion and majesty of this beauty, enough for the full employment of their imagination, they shrank with dread or hatred from all the ruggedness of lower nature,—from the wrinkled forest bark, the jagged hill-crest, and irregular, inorganic storm of sky; looking to these for the most part as adverse powers, and taking pleasure only in such portions of the lower world as were at once conducive to the rest and health of the human frame, and in harmony with the laws of its gentler beauty.

§ 16. Thus, as far as I recollect, without a single exception, every Homeric landscape, intended to be beautiful, is composed of a fountain, a meadow, and a shady grove. This ideal is very interestingly marked, as intended for a perfect one, in the fifth book of the *Odyssey*; when Mercury himself stops for a moment, though on a message, to look at a landscape “which even an immortal might be gladdened to behold.”¹ This landscape consists of a cave covered with a running vine, all blooming into grapes, and surrounded by a grove of alder, poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress. Four fountains of white (foaming) water, springing *in succession* (mark the orderliness), and close to one another, flow away in different directions, through a meadow full of violets and parsley (parsley, to mark its moisture, being elsewhere called “marsh-nourished,” and associated with the lotus†); the air is perfumed not only by these violets, and by the sweet cypress, but by Calypso’s fire of finely chopped cedar-wood, which sends a smoke, as of incense, through the island; Calypso herself is singing; and finally, upon the trees are

* *Iliad*, iv. 141.

† *Iliad*, ii. 776.

¹ [*Odyssey*, v. 58–74.]

resting, or roosting, owls, hawks, and “long-tongued seacrows.” Whether these last are considered as a part of the ideal landscape, as marine singing birds, I know not; but the approval of Mercury appears to be elicited chiefly by the fountains and violet meadow.

§ 17. Now the notable things in this description are, first, the evident subservience of the whole landscape to human comfort, to the foot, the taste, or the smell; and, secondly, that throughout the passage there is not a single figurative word expressive of the things being in any wise other than plain glass, fruit, or flower. I have used the term “spring” of the fountains, because, without doubt, Homer means that they sprang forth brightly, having their source at the foot of the rocks (as copious fountains nearly always have); but Homer does not say “spring,” he says simply flow, and uses only one word for “growing softly,” or “richly,” of the tall trees, the vine, and the violets.¹ There is, however, some expression of sympathy with the sea-birds; he speaks of them in precisely the same terms, as in other places of naval nations, saying they “have care of the works of the sea.”²

§ 18. If we glance through the references to pleasant landscape which occur in other parts of the *Odyssey*, we shall always be struck by this quiet subjection of their every feature to human service, and by the excessive similarity in the scenes. Perhaps the spot intended, after this, to be most perfect, may be the garden of Alcinous, where the principal ideas are, still more definitely, order, symmetry, and fruitfulness;³ the beds being duly ranged between rows of vines, which, as well as the pear, apple, and fig-trees, bear fruit continually, some grapes being yet sour, while others are getting black; there are plenty of “orderly square beds of herbs,” chiefly leeks, and two fountains, one running

¹ [*teqhlei de stapmlhsin
krhnai d exeihV pisureV reon udati leukw. . .
ampi de leimwnes malakoi tou hde selinon
qhleon.*]

² [*thin te qalannia erga mhlen, Odyssey* v. 67. The same phrase is used of men *Iliad*, ii. 614.]

³ [*Odyssey*, vii. 112–135.]

through the garden, and one under the pavement of the palace, to a reservoir for the citizens. Ulysses, pausing to contemplate this scene, is described nearly in the same terms as Mercury pausing to contemplate the wilder meadow; and it is interesting to observe, that, in spite of all Homer's love of symmetry, the god's admiration is excited by the free fountains, wild violets, and wandering vine; but the mortal's, by the vines in rows, the leeks in beds, and the fountains in pipes.

Ulysses has, however, one touching reason for loving vines in rows. His father had given him fifty rows for himself, when he was a boy, with corn between them (just as it now grows in Italy). Proving his identity afterwards to his father, whom he finds at work in his garden, "with thick gloves on, to keep his hands from the thorns," he reminds him of these fifty rows of vines, and of the "thirteen peartrees and ten apple-trees" which he had given him: and Laertes faints upon his neck.¹

§ 19. If Ulysses had not been so much of a gardener, it might have been received as a sign of considerable feeling for landscape beauty, that, intending to pay the very highest possible compliment to the Princess Nausicaa (and having, indeed, the moment before gravely asked her whether she was a goddess or not), he says that he feels, at seeing her, exactly as he did when he saw the young palm-tree growing at Apollo's shrine at Delos.² But I think the taste for trim hedges and upright trunks has its usual influence over him here also, and that he merely means to tell the princess that she is delightfully tall and straight.

§ 20. The princess is, however, pleased by his address, and tells him to wait outside the town, till she can speak to her father about him. The spot to which she directs him is another ideal piece of landscape, composed of a "beautiful grove of aspen poplars, a fountain, and a meadow,"³ near the road-side: in fact, as nearly as possible such a scene as

¹ [*Odyssey*, xxiv. 340.]

² [*Odyssey*, vi. 149, 162.]

³ [*Odyssey*, vi. 292.]

meets the eye of the traveller every instant on the much-despised lines of road through lowland France; for instance, on the railway between Arras and Amiens;—scenes, to my mind, quite exquisite in the various grouping and grace of their innumerable poplar avenues, casting sweet, tremulous shadows over their level meadows and labyrinthine streams.¹ We know that the princess means aspen poplars, because soon afterwards we find her fifty maid-servants at the palace, all spinning and in perpetual motion, compared to the “leaves of the tall poplar;”² and it is with exquisite feeling that it is made afterwards* the chief tree in the groves of Proserpine; its light and quivering leafage having exactly the melancholy expression of fragility, faintness, and inconstancy which the ancients attributed to the disembodied spirit.† The likeness to the poplars by the streams of Amiens is more marked still in the *Iliad*, where the young Simois, struck by Ajax, falls to the earth “like an aspen that has grown in an irrigated meadow, smooth-trunked, the soft shoots springing from its top, which some coach-making

* *Odyssey*, x. 510.

† Compare the passage in Dante referred to above, chap. xii. § 6 [p. 206].

¹ [Ruskin had been specially struck by this scenery in 1854, as is shown by the following entry in his diary:—

“AMIENS, *May 11*.—Came round to-day by Lille, leaving Calais at 8 in the morning and arriving here at 2. The country for about twenty miles before arriving here is singularly lovely, to my mind; owing to its abundance of trees, tall aspens, ranged in all manner of groups among the fields; long double lines, with little ditches full of reeds between them, single lines, squares, circles—always definite arrangement of some sort, but full-crowded, covering acre after acre of meadowland, every tree lovely beyond expression—the commonest and poorest of them throwing out its branches more perfectly than Turner’s best work. I suppose they are grown for firing, for they occupy a vast quantity of the land; it is of course all pasture between them, and they form a kind of park-forest, quite unlike anything in England, or indeed any other country that I have seen—running up with undulating trunks fifty or sixty feet, then branching into light plummy heads; pollard willows, of course, mingled among them, and groups of lower trees, but somehow or other always *groups*; never patches and scattered as with us. I was impressed beyond measure with the beauty of their boughs even the moment I left Calais; not the meanest bush but was a study for its grace and inventive lines, I suppose growing faster than in England. But even allowing for this, it seems a mystery to me. Is it that in trees, as in drawing, the line drawn with the greatest swiftness is the best?”]

² [*Odyssey*, vii. 106.]

man has cut down with his keen iron, that he may fit a wheel of it to a fair chariot, and it lies parching by the side of the stream.”¹ It is sufficiently notable that Homer, living in mountainous and rocky countries, dwells thus delightedly on all the *flat* bits; and so I think invariably the inhabitants of mountain countries do, but the inhabitants of the plains do not, in any similar way, dwell delightedly on mountains. The Dutch painters are perfectly contented with their flat fields and pollards; Rubens, though he had seen the Alps, usually composes his landscapes of a hayfield or two, plenty of pollards and willows, a distant spire, a Dutch house with a moat about it, a windmill, and a ditch. The Flemish sacred painters are the only ones who introduce mountains in the distance, as we shall see presently;² but rather in a formal way than with any appearance of enjoyment. So Shakspeare never speaks of mountains with the slightest joy, but only of lowland flowers, flat fields, and Warwickshire streams.³ And if we talk to the mountaineer, he will usually characterise his own country to us as a “pays affreux,” or in some equivalent, perhaps even more violent, German term: but the lowland peasant does not think his country frightful; he either will have no ideas beyond it, or about it; or will think it a very perfect country, and be apt to regard any deviation from its general principle of flatness with extreme disfavour; as the Lincolnshire farmer in *Alton Locke*: “I’ll shaw’ee some’at like a field o’ beans, I wool—none o’ this here darned ups and downs o’ hills, to shake a body’s victuals out of his inwards—all so vlat as a barn’s vloor, for vorty mile on end—there’s the country to live in!”⁴

I do not say whether this be altogether right (though certainly not wholly wrong), but it seems to me that there

¹ [*Iliad*, iv. 482.]

² [See in the next volume, ch. xx. § 16.]

³ [On Shakespeare’s love of the meadows, see below, ch. xiv. § 51, p. 289; and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. §§ 27–29, 37, 38.]

⁴ [Chapter xii. Some words are omitted after “some’at like” and also after “o’ hills.”]

must be in the simple freshness and fruitfulness of level land, in its pale upright trees, and gentle lapse of silent streams, enough for the satisfaction of the human mind in general; and I so far agree with Homer, that, if I had to educate an artist to the full perception of the meaning of the word “gracefulness” in landscape, I should send him neither to Italy nor to Greece, but simply to those poplar groves between Arras and Amiens.

§ 21. But to return more definitely to our Homeric landscape. When it is perfect, we have, as in the above instances, the foliage and meadows together; when imperfect, it is always either the foliage or the meadow; pre-eminently the meadow, or arable field. Thus, meadows of asphodel are prepared for the happier dead; and even Orion, a hunter among the mountains in his lifetime, pursues the ghosts of beasts in these asphodel meadows after death.* So the sirens sing in a meadow;¹ and throughout the *Odyssey* there is a general tendency to the depreciation of poor Ithaca, because it is rocky, and only fit for goats, and has “no meadows;”² for which reason Telemachus refuses Atrides’s present of horses, congratulating the Spartan king at the same time on ruling over a plain which has “plenty of lotus in it, and rushes,” with corn and barley. Note this constant dwelling on the marsh plants, or, at least, those which grow in flat and well-irrigated land, or beside streams: when Scamander, for instance, is restrained by Vulcan, Homer says, very sorrowfully, that “all his lotus, and reeds, and rushes were burnt;”³ and thus Ulysses, after being shipwrecked and nearly drowned, and beaten about the sea for many days and nights, on raft and mast, at last getting ashore at the mouth of a large river, casts himself down first upon its *rushes*, and then, in thankfulness, kisses the

* *Odyssey*, xi. 572, xxiv. 13. The couch of Ceres, with Homer’s usual faithfulness, is made of a *ploughed* field, v. 127.

¹ [*Odyssey*, xii. 45.]

² [*Odyssey*, iv. 601.]

³ [*Iliad*, xxi. 351.]

“corn-giving land,” as most opposed, in his heart, to the fruitless and devouring sea.*

§ 22. In this same passage, also, we find some peculiar expressions of the delight which the Greeks had in trees; for, when Ulysses first comes in sight of land, which gladdens him “as the reviving of a father from his sickness gladdens his children,” it is not merely the sight of the land itself which gives him such pleasure, but of the “land and *wood*.”¹ Homer never throws away any words, at least in such a place as this; and what in another poet would have been merely the filling up of the deficient line with an otherwise useless word, is in him the expression of the general Greek sense, that land of any kind was in nowise grateful or acceptable till there was *wood* upon it (or corn; but the corn, in the flats, could not be seen so far as the black masses of forest on the hill sides), and that, as in being rushy and corn-giving, the low land, so in being woody, the high land was most grateful to the mind of the man who for days and nights had been wearied on the engulfing sea. And this general idea of wood and corn, as the types of the fatness of the whole earth, is beautifully marked in another place of the *Odyssey*,[†] where the sailors in a desert island, having no flour of corn to offer as a meat offering with their sacrifices, take the leaves of the trees, and scatter them over the burnt offering instead.

§ 23. But still, every expression of the pleasure which Ulysses has in this landing and resting, contains uninterruptedly the reference to the utility and sensible pleasantness of all things, not to their beauty. After his first grateful kiss given to the corn-growing land, he considers immediately how he is to pass the night; for some minutes hesitating whether it will be best to expose himself to the misty chill from the river, or run the risk of wild beasts

* *Odyssey*, v. 398, 463.

† *Odyssey*, xii. 357.

¹ [*Odyssey*, v. 395, 398.]

in the wood. He decides for the wood, and finds in it a bower formed by a sweet and a wild olive tree, interlacing their branches, or—perhaps more accurately translating Homer’s intensely graphic expression—“changing their branches with each other” (it is very curious how often, in an entanglement of wood, one supposes the branches to belong to the wrong trees) and forming a roof penetrated by neither rain, sun, nor wind. Under this bower Ulysses collects the “*vain* (or *frustrate*) outpouring of the dead leaves”—another exquisite expression, used elsewhere of useless grief or shedding of tears;—and, having got enough together, makes his bed of them, and goes to sleep, having covered himself up with them, “as embers are covered up with ashes.”¹

Nothing can possibly be more intensely possessive of the *facts* than this whole passage; the sense of utter deadness and emptiness, and frustrate fall in the leaves; of dormant life in the human body,—the fire, and heroism, and strength of it, lulled under the dead brown heap, as embers under ashes, and the knitting of interchanged and close strength of living boughs above. But there is not the smallest apparent sense of there being *beauty* elsewhere than in the human being. The wreathed wood is admired simply as being a perfect roof for it; the fallen leaves only as being a perfect bed for it; and there is literally no more excitement of emotion in Homer, as he describes them, nor does he expect us to be more excited or touched by hearing about them, than if he had been telling us how the chambermaid at the Bull aired the four-poster, and put on two extra blankets.

§ 24. Now, exactly this same contemplation of subservience to human use makes the Greek take some pleasure in *rocks*, when they assume one particular form, but one only—that of a *cave*. They are evidently quite frightful things to him under any other condition, and most of all if they

¹ [*Odyssey*, v. 481–489; and for the “exquisite expression, used elsewhere,” see *Odyssey*, xiv. 215.]

are rough and jagged; but if smooth, looking “sculptured,”¹ like the sides of a ship, and forming a cave or shelter for him, he begins to think them enduring. Hence, associating the ideas of rich and sheltering wood, sea, becalmed and made useful as a port by projecting promontories of rock, and smoothed caves or grottoes in the rocks themselves, we get the pleasantest idea which the Greek could form of a landscape, next to a marsh with poplars in it; not, indeed, if possible, ever to be without these last; thus, in commending the Cyclops’ country as one possessed of every perfection, Homer first says: “They have soft *marshy* meadows near the sea, and good, rich, crumbling, ploughing-land, giving fine deep crops, and vines always giving fruit;” then, “a port so quiet, that they have no need of cables in it; and at the head of the port, a beautiful clear spring just *under a cave*, and *aspen poplars all round it*.”*

§ 25. This, it will be seen, is very nearly Homer’s usual “ideal;” but, going into the middle of the island, Ulysses comes on a rougher and less agreeable bit, though still fulfilling certain required conditions of endurableness; a “cave shaded with laurels,” which, having no poplars about it, is, however, meant to be somewhat frightful, and only fit to be inhabited by a Cyclops.² So in the country of the Læstrygons, Homer, preparing his reader gradually for something very disagreeable, represents the rocks as bare and “exposed to the sun;” only with some smooth and slippery roads over them, by which the trucks bring down wood from the higher hills. Any one familiar with Swiss slopes of hills must remember how often he has descended,

* *Odyssey*, ix. 132, etc. Hence Milton’s
 “From haunted spring, and dale,
 Edged with poplar pale.”³

¹ [glafqroV: *II*. ii. 88, etc.: see below, pp. 305–306.]

² [*Odyssey*, ix. 183; the next reference is *Odyssey*, x. 88.]

³ [*Hymn on Christ’s Nativity*, 184.]

sometimes faster than was altogether intentional, by these same slippery woodman's truck roads.

And thus, in general, whenever the landscape is intended to be lovely, it verges towards the ploughed land and poplars; or, at worst, to *woody* rocks; but, if intended to be painful, the rocks are bare and "sharp."¹ This last epithet, constantly used by Homer for mountains, does not altogether correspond, in Greek, to the English term, nor is it intended merely to characterize the sharp mountain summits; for it never would be applied simply to the edge or point of a sword, but signifies rather "harsh," "bitter," or "painful," being applied habitually to fate, death, and in *Od.* xi. 333 to a halter; and, as expressive of general objectionableness and unpleasantness, to all high, dangerous, or peaked mountains, as the Maleian promontory (a much dreaded one), the crest of Parnassus, the Tereian mountain, and a grim or untoward, though, by keeping off the force of the sea, protective, rock at the mouth of the Jordanus; as well as habitually to inaccessible or impregnable fortresses built on heights.

§ 26. In all this I cannot too strongly mark the utter absence of any trace of the feeling for what we call the picturesque, and the constant dwelling of the writer's mind on what was available, pleasant, or useful; his ideas respecting all landscape being not uncharacteristically summed, finally, by Pallas herself; when, meeting Ulysses, who after his long wandering does not recognize his own country, and meaning to describe it as politely and soothingly as possible, she says:—"This Ithaca of ours is, indeed, a rough country enough, and not good for driving in; but, still, things might be worse: it has plenty of corn, and good wine, and *always rain*, and soft nourishing dew, and it has good feeding for

* *Odyssey*, xiii. 236, etc.

¹ [αἰπυῦν: applied to the Maleian promontory, *Od.* iii. 287; Parnassus, *Od.* xix. 431; Tereian mountain, *II.* ii. 829; Jordanus, *Od.* iii. 293; and habitually, *II.* ii. 603, v. 367, etc.]

goats and oxen, and all manner of wood, and springs fit to drink at all the year round.”

We shall see presently¹ how the blundering, pseudo-picturesque, pseudo-classical minds of Claude and the Renaissance landscape-painters, wholly missing Homer’s practical common sense, and equally incapable of feeling the quiet natural grace and sweetness of his asphodel meadows, tender aspen poplars, or running vines,—fastened on his *ports* and *caves*, as the only available features of his scenery; and appointed the type of “classical landscape” thenceforward to consist in a bay of insipid sea, and a rock with a hole through it.*

§ 27. It may indeed be thought that I am assuming too hastily that this was the general view of the Greeks respecting landscape, because it was Homer’s. But I believe the true mind of a nation, at any period, is always best ascertainable by examining that of its greatest men; and that simpler and truer results will be attainable for us by simply comparing Homer, Dante, and Walter Scott than by attempting (what my limits must have rendered absurdly inadequate, and in which, also, both my time and knowledge must have failed me) an analysis of the landscape in the range of contemporary literature. All that I can do, is to state the general impression, which has been made upon me by my desultory reading, and to mark accurately the grounds for this impression in the works of the greatest men. Now it is quite true that in others of the Greeks, especially in Æschylus and Aristophanes, there is infinitely more of modern feeling, of pathetic fallacy, love of picturesque or beautiful form, and other such elements, than there is in

* Educated, as we shall see hereafter, first in this school, Turner gave the hackneyed composition a strange power and freshness, in his *Glaucus and Scylla*.²

¹ [See in the next volume, ch. xvi. §§ 36, 37.]

² [For the fondness of some painters for “rocks with holes,” see “Notes on the Louvre,” Vol. XII. p. 472. “Glaucus and Scylla” was a subject engraved for (but not published in) *Liber Studiorum*; the drawing is No. 882 in the National Gallery.]

Homer; but then these appear to me just the parts of them which were not Greek, the elements of their minds by which (as one division of the human race always must be with subsequent ones) they are connected with the mediævals and moderns. And without doubt, in his influence over future mankind, Homer is eminently the Greek of Greeks: if I were to associate any one with him it would be Herodotus, and I believe all I have said of the Homeric landscape will be found equally true of the Herodotean, as assuredly it will be of the Platonic;—the contempt, which Plato sometimes expresses by the mouth of Socrates, for the country in general, except so far as it is shady, and has cicadas and running streams to make pleasant noises in it, being almost ludicrous.¹ But Homer is the great type, and the more notable one because of his influence on Virgil, and, through him, on Dante, and all the after ages: and, in like manner, if we can get the abstract of mediæval landscape out of Dante, it will serve us as well as if we had read all the songs of the troubadours, and help us to the farther changes in derivative temper, down to all modern time.

§ 28. I think, therefore, the reader may safely accept the conclusions about Greek landscape which I have got for him out of Homer; and in these he will certainly perceive something very different from the usual imaginations we form of Greek feelings. We think of the Greeks as poetical, ideal, imaginative, in a way that a modern poet or novelist is; supposing that their thoughts about their mythology and world were as visionary and artificial as ours are: but I think the passages I have quoted show that it was not so, although it may be difficult for us to apprehend the strange minglings in them of the elements of faith, which, in our days, have been blended with other parts of human nature in a totally different guise. Perhaps the Greek mind may be best imagined by taking, as its groundwork, that of a good, conscientious, but illiterate Scotch Presbyterian Border farmer of a century or two back, having perfect

¹ [See, for instance, *Phædrus*, 230.]

faith in the bodily appearances of Satan and his imps; and in all kelpies, brownies, and fairies. Substitute for the indignant terrors in this man's mind, a general persuasion of the *Divinity*, more or less beneficent, yet faultful, of all these beings; that is to say, take away his belief in the demoniacal malignity of the fallen spiritual world, and lower, in the same degree, his conceptions of the angelical, retaining for him the same firm faith in both; keep his ideas about flowers and beautiful scenery much as they are,—his delight in regular ploughed land and meadows, and a neat garden (only with rows of gooseberry bushes instead of vines), being, in all probability, about accurately representative of the feelings of Ulysses; then, let the military spirit that is in him, glowing against the Border forager, or the foe of old Flodden and Chevy-Chase, be made more principal, with a higher sense of nobleness in soldiership, not as a careless excitement, but a knightly duty; and increased by high cultivation of every personal quality, not of mere shaggy strength, but graceful strength, aided by a softer climate, and educated in all proper harmony of sight and sound; finally, instead of an informed Christian, suppose him to have only the patriarchal Jewish knowledge of the Deity, and even this obscured by tradition, but still thoroughly solemn and faithful, requiring his continual service as a priest of burnt sacrifice and meat offering; and I think we shall get a pretty close approximation to the vital being of a true old Greek; some slight difference still existing in a feeling which the Scotch farmer would have of a pleasantness in blue hills and running streams, wholly wanting in the Greek mind; and perhaps also some difference of views on the subjects of truth and honesty. But the main points, the easy, athletic, strongly logical and argumentative, yet fanciful and credulous, characters of mind, would be very similar in both; and the most serious change in the substance of the stuff among the modifications above suggested as necessary to turn the Scot into the Greek, is that effect of softer climate and surrounding luxury,

inducing the practice of various forms of polished art,—the more polished, because the practical and realistic tendency of the Hellenic mind (if my interpretation of it be right) would quite prevent it from taking pleasure in any irregularities of form, or imitations of the weeds and wildnesses of that mountain nature with which it thought itself born to contend. In its utmost refinement of work, it sought eminently for orderliness; carried the principle of the leeks in squares, and fountains in pipes, perfectly out in its streets and temples; formalized whatever decoration it put into its minor architectural mouldings, and reserved its whole heart and power to represent the action of living men, or gods, though not unconscious, meanwhile, of

“The simple, the sincere delight;
The habitual scene of hill and dale;
The rural herds, the vernal gale;
The tangled vetches’ purple bloom;
The fragrance of the bean’s perfume,—
Theirs, theirs alone, who cultivate the soil,
And drink the cup of thirst, and eat the bread of toil.”¹

¹ [Shenstone: *Rural Elegance, an Ode to the late Duchess of Somerest*, written 1750, stanza 17. Ruskin does not give the *ipsissima verba*. The first line is “Adieu the simple,” etc.; in line 4, “vetch’s”; and line 6 is “Be theirs alone,” etc.]

CHAPTER XIV

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—FIRST, THE FIELDS

§ 1. IN our examination of the spirit of classical landscape, we were obliged to confine ourselves to what is left to us in written description. Some interesting results might indeed have been obtained by examining the Egyptian and Ninevite landscape sculpture,¹ but in nowise conclusive enough to be worth the pains of the inquiry; for the landscape of sculpture is necessarily confined in range, and usually inexpressive of the complete feelings of the workman, being introduced rather to explain the place and circumstances of events, than for its own sake. In the Middle Ages, however, the case is widely different. We have written landscape, sculptured landscape, and painted landscape, all bearing united testimony to the tone of the national mind in almost every remarkable locality of Europe.

§ 2. That testimony, taken in its breadth, is very curiously conclusive. It marks the mediæval mind as agreeing altogether with the ancients, in holding that flat land, brooks, and groves of aspens, compose the pleasant places of the earth, and that rocks and mountains are, for inhabitation, altogether to be reprobated and detested; but as disagreeing with the classical mind totally in this other most important respect, that the pleasant flat land is never a ploughed field, nor a rich lotus meadow good for pasture, but *garden* ground covered with flowers, and divided by fragrant hedges, with a castle in the middle of it. The aspens are delighted in, not because they are good for

¹ [For a reference to Ninevite landscape sculpture, see *Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. p. 170.]

“coach-making men”¹ to make cart-wheels of, but because they are shady and graceful; and the fruit-trees, covered with delicious fruit, especially apple and orange, occupy still more important positions in the scenery. Singing birds—not “sea crows,”² but nightingales*—perched on every bough: and the ideal occupation of mankind is not to cultivate either the garden or the meadow, but to gather roses and eat oranges in the one, and ride out hawking over the other.

Finally, mountain scenery, though considered as disagreeable for general inhabitation, is always introduced as being proper to meditate in, or to encourage communion with higher beings; and in the ideal landscape of daily life, mountains are considered agreeable things enough, so that they be far enough away.

In this great change there are three vital points to be noticed.

§ 3. The first, the disdain of agricultural pursuits by the nobility; a fatal change, and one gradually bringing about the ruin of that nobility. It is expressed in the mediæval landscape by the eminently pleasurable and horticultural character of everything; by the fences, hedges, castle walls, and masses of useless, but lovely flowers, especially roses. The knights and ladies are represented always as singing, or making love, in these pleasant places. The idea of setting an old knight, like Laertes (whatever his state of fallen fortune), “with thick gloves on to keep his hands from the thorns,”⁴ to prune a row of vines, would have been regarded as the most monstrous violation of the decencies

*Three essential characters; 1. Pride in idleness.*³

* The peculiar dislike felt by the mediævals for the *sea*, is so interesting a subject of inquiry, that I have reserved it for separate discussion in another work, in present preparation, *Harbours of England*.⁵

¹ [armatophgoV anpr: *Iliad*, iv. 485.]

² [A reference to the sea-crows in Calypso’s cave, *Odyssey*, v. 66.]

³ [Ruskin here resumes the marginal summaries, as explained above, p. 12.]

⁴ [See above, p. 236.]

⁵ [See §§ 8–12 of that work, in Vol. XIII.]

of life; and a senator, once detected in the home employments of Cincinnatus, could, I suppose, thenceforward hardly have appeared in society.

§ 4. The second vital point is the evidence of a more sentimental enjoyment of external nature. A Greek, wishing really to enjoy himself, shut himself into a beautiful atrium, with an excellent dinner, and a society of philosophical or musical friends. But a mediæval knight went into his pleasance, to gather roses and hear the birds sing; or rode out hunting or hawking. His evening feast, though riotous enough sometimes, was not the height of his day's enjoyment; and if the attractions of the world are to be shown typically to him, as opposed to the horrors of death, they are never represented by a full feast in a chamber, but by a delicate dessert in an orange grove, with musicians under the trees; or a ride on a May morning, hawk on fist.

This change is evidently a healthy, and a very interesting one.

§ 5. The third vital point is the marked sense that this hawking and apple-eating are not altogether right; that there is something else to be done in the world than that; and that the mountains, as opposed to the pleasant garden-ground, are places where that other something may best be learned; which is evidently a piece of infinite and new respect for the mountains, and another healthy change in the tone of the human heart.

Let us glance at the signs and various results of these changes one by one.

§ 6. The two first named, evil and good as they are, are very closely connected. The more poetical delight in external nature proceeds just from the fact that it is no longer looked upon with the eye of the farmer; and in proportion as the herbs and flowers cease to be regarded as useful, they are felt to be charming. Leeks are not now the most important objects in the garden, but lilies and roses: the herbage which

2. Poetical observance of nature.

3. Disturbed conscience.

Derivative characters: 1. Love of flowers.

a Greek would have looked at only with a view to the number of horses it would feed, is regarded by the mediæval knight as a green carpet for fair feet to dance upon, and the beauty of its softness and colour is proportionally felt by him; while the brook, which the Greek rejoiced to dismiss into a reservoir under the palace threshold, would be, by the mediæval, distributed into pleasant pools, or forced into fountains; and regarded alternately as a mirror for fair faces, and a witchery to ensnare the sunbeams and the rainbow.

§ 7. And this change of feeling involves two others, very important. When the flowers and grass were regarded as means of life, and therefore (as the thoughtful labourer of the soil must always regard them) with the reverence due to those gifts of God which were most necessary to his existence; although their own beauty was less felt, their proceeding from the Divine hand was more seriously acknowledged, and the herb yielding seed, the fruit-tree yielding fruit, though in themselves less admired, were yet solemnly connected in the heart with the reverence of Ceres, Pomona, or Pan. But when the sense of these necessary uses was more or less lost, among the upper classes, by the delegation of the art of husbandry to the hands of the peasant, the flower and fruit, whose bloom or richness thus became a mere source of pleasure, were regarded with less solemn sense of the Divine gift in them; and were converted rather into toys than treasures, chance gifts for gaiety, rather than promised rewards of labour; so that while the Greek could hardly have trodden the formal furrow, or plucked the clusters from the trellised vine, without reverent thoughts of the deities of field and leaf, who gave the seed to fructify, and the bloom to darken, the mediæval knight plucked the violet to wreath in his lady's hair, or strewed the idle rose on the turf at her feet, with little sense of anything in the nature that gave them, but a frail, accidental, involuntary exuberance; while also the Jewish sacrificial system being now done away, as well

as the Pagan mythology, and, with it, the whole conception of meat offering or firstfruits offering, the chiefest seriousnesses of all the thoughts connected with the gifts of nature faded from the minds of the classes of men concerned with art and literature; while the peasant, reduced to serf level, was incapable of imaginative thought, owing to his want of general cultivation. But on the other hand, exactly in proportion as the idea of definite spiritual presence in material nature was lost, the mysterious sense of *unaccountable* life in the things themselves would be increased, and the mind would instantly be laid open to all those currents of fallacious, but pensive and pathetic sympathy, which we have seen to be characteristic of modern times.¹

§ 8. Farther: a singular difference would necessarily result from the far greater loneliness of baronial life, deprived as it was of all interest in agricultural pursuits. The palace of a Greek leader in early times might have gardens, fields, and farms around it, but was sure to be near some busy city or sea-port: in later times, the city itself became the principal dwelling-place, and the country was visited only to see how the farm went on, or traversed in a line of march. Far other was the life of the mediæval baron, nested on his solitary jut of crag; entering into cities only occasionally for some grave political or warrior's purpose, and, for the most part, passing the years of his life in lion-like isolation; the village inhabited by his retainers straggling indeed about the slopes of the rocks at his feet, but his own dwelling standing gloomily apart, between them and the uncompanionable clouds, commanding, from sunset to sunrise, the flowing flame of some calm unvoyaged river, and the endless undulation of the untraversable hills. How different must the thoughts about nature have been, of the noble who lived among the bright marble porticoes of the Greek groups of temple or palace,—in the midst of a

3. *Gloom, caused by enforced solitude.*

¹ [Above, § 4 and ch. xii.; with regard to § 7, see the note on § 40, below.]

plain covered with corn and olives, and by the shore of a sparkling and freighted sea,—from those of the master of some mountain promontory in the green recesses of Northern Europe, watching night by night, from amongst his heaps of storm-broken stone, rounded into towers, the lightning of the lonely sea flash round the sands of Harlech, or the mists changing their shapes for ever, among the changeless pines that fringe the crests of Jura.

§ 9. Nor was it without similar effect on the minds of men that their journeyings and pilgrimages became more frequent than those of the Greek, the extent of ground traversed in the course of them larger, and the mode of travel more companionless. To the Greek, a voyage to Egypt, or the Hellespont, was the subject of lasting fame and fable, and the forests of the Danube and the rocks of Sicily closed for him the gates of the intelligible world. What parts of that narrow world he crossed were crossed with fleets or armies; the camp always populous on the plain, and the ships drawn in cautious symmetry around the shore. But to the mediæval knight, from Scottish moor to Syrian sand, the world was one great exercise ground, or field of adventure; the staunch pacing of his charger penetrated the pathlessness of outmost forest, and sustained the sultriness of the most secret desert. Frequently alone,—or, if accompanied, for the most part only by retainers of lower rank, incapable of entering into complete sympathy with any of his thoughts, he must have been compelled often to enter into dim companionship with the silent nature around him, and must assuredly sometimes have talked to the wayside flowers of his love, and to the fading clouds of his ambition.

§ 10. But, on the other hand, the idea of retirement from the world for the sake of self-mortification, of combat with demons, or communion with angels, and with their King,—authoritatively commended as it was to all men by the continual practice of Christ Himself,—gave to all mountain solitude at once a sanctity and

a terror, in the mediæval mind, which were altogether different from anything that it had possessed in the unChristian periods. On the one side, there was an idea of sanctity attached to rocky wilderness, because it had always been among hills that the Deity had manifested Himself most intimately to men, and to the hills that His saints had nearly always retired for meditation, for especial communion with Him, and to prepare for death. Men acquainted with the history of Moses, alone at Horeb, or with Israel at Sinai,—of Elijah by the brook Cherith, and in the Horeb cave; of the deaths of Moses and Aaron on Hor and Nebo; of the preparation of Jephthah's daughter for her death among the Judæa mountains; of the continual retirement of Christ Himself to the mountains for prayer, His temptation in the desert of the Dead Sea, His sermon on the hills of Capernaum, His transfiguration on Mount Hermon, and His evening and morning walks over Olivet for the four or five days preceding His crucifixion,¹—were not likely to look with irreverent or unloving eyes upon the blue hills that girded their golden horizon, or drew down upon them the mysterious clouds out of the height of the darker heaven. But with this impression of their greater sanctity was involved also that of a peculiar terror. In all this,—their haunting by the memories of prophets, the presences of angels, and the everlasting thoughts and words of the Redeemer,—the mountains ranges seemed separated from the active world, and only to be fitly approached by hearts which were condemnatory of it. Just in so much as it appeared necessary for the noblest men to retire to the hill-recesses before their missions could be accomplished, or their spirits perfected, in so far did the daily world seem by comparison to be pronounced profane and dangerous; and to those who loved that world, and its

¹ [The Bible references here are—Exodus iii. 12; Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2; 1 Kings xvii. 5; Deuteronomy xxxiv. 5; Numbers xx. 28; Judges xi. 37; Matthew iv. 1–4, v.–vii. 27, xvii. 1, 2; Luke ix. 28–36; Matthew xxvi. 30; Luke xxii. 39.]

work, the mountains were thus voiceful with perpetual rebuke, and necessarily contemplated with a kind of pain and fear, such as a man engrossed by vanity feels at being by some accident forced to hear a startling sermon, or to assist at a funeral service. Every association of this kind was deepened by the practice and the precept of the time; and thousands of hearts, which might otherwise have felt that there was loveliness in the wild landscape, shrank from it in dread, because they knew that the monk retired to it for penance, and the hermit for contemplation. The horror which the Greek had felt for hills only when they were uninhabitable and barren, attached itself now to many of the sweetest spots of earth; the feeling was conquered by political interests, but never by admiration; military ambition seized the frontier rock, or maintained itself in the unassailable pass; but it was only for their punishment, or in their despair, that men consented to tread the crooked slopes of the Chartreuse,¹ or the soft glades and dewy pastures of Vallombrosa.

§ 11. In all these modifications of temper and principle there appears much which tends to a passionate, affectionate, or awe-struck observance of the features of natural scenery, closely resembling, in all but this superstitious dread of mountains, our feelings at the present day. But *one* character which the mediævals had in common with the ancients, and that exactly the most eminent character in both, opposed itself steadily to all the feelings we have hitherto been examining,—the admiration, namely, and constant watchfulness of human beauty. Exercised in nearly the same manner as the Greeks, from their youth upwards, their countenances were cast even in a higher mould; for, although somewhat less regular in feature, and affected by minglings of Northern bluntness and stolidity of general expression, together with greater thinness of lip and shaggy formlessness of brow, these less sculpturesque features were,

¹ [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 17.]

nevertheless, touched with a seriousness and refinement proceeding first from the modes of thought inculcated by the Christian religion, and secondly from their more romantic and various life. Hence a degree of personal beauty, both male and female, was attained in the Middle Ages, with which classical periods could show nothing for a moment comparable; and this beauty was set forth by the most perfect splendour, united with grace, in dress, which the human race have hitherto invented. The strength of their art-genius was directed in great part to this object; and their best workmen and most brilliant fanciers were employed in wreathing the mail or embroidering the robe. The exquisite arts of enamelling and chasing metal enabled them to make the armour as radiant and delicate as the plumage of a tropical bird; and the most various and vivid imaginations were displayed in the alternations of colour, and fiery freaks of form, on shield and crest: so that of all the beautiful things which the eyes of men could fall upon, in the world about them, the most beautiful must have been a young knight riding out in morning sunshine, and in faithful hope.

“His broad, clear brow in sunlight glow’d;
 On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flow’d
 His coal-black curls, as on he rode.
 All in the blue, unclouded weather,
 Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather;
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn’d like one burning flame together;
 The gemmy bridle glitter’d free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the Golden Galaxy.”¹

§ 12. Now, the effect of this superb presence of human beauty on men in general was, exactly as it had been in Greek times, first to turn their thoughts and glances in great part away from all other

5. Care for human beauty.

¹ [Tennyson: *The Lady of Shalott*, part iii. (portions of verses 3, 2, and 1 strung together).]

beauty but that, and to make the grass of the field take to them always more or less the aspect of a carpet to dance upon, a lawn to tilt upon, or a serviceable crop of hay; and, secondly, in what attention they paid to this lower nature, to make them dwell exclusively on what was graceful, symmetrical, and bright in colour. All that was rugged, rough, dark, wild, untermated, they rejected at once, as the domain of “salvage men”¹ and monstrous giants: all that they admired was tender, bright, balanced, enclosed, symmetrical—only symmetrical in the noble and free sense: for what we moderns call “symmetry,” or “balance,” differs as much from mediæval symmetry as the poise of a grocer’s scales, or the balance of an Egyptian mummy with its hands tied to its sides, does from the balance of a knight on his horse, striking with the battle-axe, at the gallop; the mummy’s balance looking wonderfully perfect, and yet sure to be one-sided if you weigh the dust of it,—the knight’s balance swaying and changing like the wind, and yet as true and accurate as the laws of life.

§ 13. And this love of symmetry was still further enhanced by the peculiar duties required of art at the time; for, in order to fit a flower or leaf for inlaying in armour, or showing clearly in glass, it was absolutely necessary to take away its complexity, and reduce it to the condition of a disciplined and orderly pattern; and this the more, because, for all military purposes, the device, whatever it was, had to be distinctly intelligible at extreme distance. That it should be a good imitation of nature, when seen near, was of no moment; but it was of highest moment that when first the knight’s banner flashed in the sun at the turn of the mountain road, or rose, torn and bloody, through the drift of the battle dust, it should still be discernible what the bearing was.

¹ [The modern and different meaning of “salvage” has driven it out of use in its original meaning “savage,” as, for instance, in Scott (*Guy Mannering*, ch. xli.): “on either side stood as supporters, in full human size, or larger, a salvage man *proper*, to use the language of heraldry, *wreathed and cinctured*, and holding in his hand an oak tree *eradicated*.”]

"At length the freshening western blast
 Aside the shroud of battle cast;
 And first the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew;
 Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
 The broken billows of the war.
 Wide raged the battle on the plain;
 Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain;
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
 Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.
 Amidst the scene of tumult, high,
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly,
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
*And Edmund Howard's lion bright."*¹

It was needed, not merely that they should see it was a falcon, but Lord Marmion's falcon; not only a lion, but the Howard's lion. Hence, to the one imperative end of *intelligibility*, every minor resemblance to nature was sacrificed, and above all, the *curved*, which are chiefly the confusing lines; so that the straight, elongated back, doubly elongated tail, projected and separate claws, and other rectilinear unnaturalnesses of form, became the means by which the leopard was, in midst of the mist and storm of battle, distinguished from the dog, or the lion from the wolf; the most admirable fierceness and vitality being, in spite of these necessary changes (so often shallowly sneered at by the modern workman), obtained by the old designer.

Farther, it was necessary to the brilliant harmony of colour, and clear setting forth of everything, that all confusing shadows, all dim and doubtful lines should be rejected: hence at once an utter denial of natural appearances by the great body of workmen; and a calm rest in a practice of representation which would make either boar or lion blue, scarlet, or golden, according to the device of the knight, or the need of such and such a colour in that place of the pattern; and which wholly denied that any

¹ [*Marmion* canto vi. 26; three lines are omitted after "The broken billows of the war."]

substance ever cast a shadow, or was affected by any kind of obscurity.

§ 14. All this was in its way, and for its end, absolutely right, admirable, and delightful; and those who despise it, laugh at it, or derive no pleasure from it, are utterly ignorant of the highest principles of art, and are mere tyros and beginners in the practice of colour. But, admirable though it might be, one necessary result of it was a farther withdrawal of the observation of men from the refined and subtle beauty of nature; so that the workman who first was led to think *lightly* of natural beauty, as being subservient to human, was next led to think *inaccurately* of natural beauty, because he had continually to alter and simplify it for his practical purposes.

7. Therefore, in accurate rendering of nature.

§ 15. Now, assembling all these different sources of the peculiar mediæval feeling towards nature in one view, we have:

- 1st. Love of the garden instead of love of the farm, leading to a sentimental contemplation of nature, instead of a practical and agricultural one. (§§ 3, 4, 6.)
- 2nd. Loss of sense of actual Divine presence, leading to fancies of fallacious animation, in herbs, flowers, clouds, etc. (§ 7.)
- 3rd. Perpetual, and more or less undisturbed, companionship with wild nature. (§§ 8, 9.)
- 4th. Apprehension of demoniacal and angelic presence among mountains, leading to a reverent dread of them. (§ 10.)
- 5th. Principalness of delight in human beauty, leading to comparative contempt of natural objects. (§ 11.)
- 6th. Consequent love of order, light, intelligibility, and symmetry, leading to dislike of the wildness, darkness, and mystery of nature. (§ 12.)
- 7th. Inaccuracy of observance of nature, induced by the habitual practice of change on its forms. (§ 13.)

From these mingled elements, we should necessarily expect to find resulting, as the characteristic of mediæval landscape art, compared with Greek, a far higher sentiment about it, and affection for it, more or less subdued by still greater respect for the loveliness of man, and therefore subordinated entirely to human interests; mingled with curious traces of terror, piety, or superstition, and cramped by various formalisms,—some wise and necessary, some feeble, and some exhibiting needless ignorance and inaccuracy.

Under these lights, let us examine the facts.

§ 16. The landscape of the Middle Ages is represented in a central manner by the illuminations of the MSS. of Romances, executed about the middle of the fifteenth century. On one side of these stands the earlier landscape work, more or less treated as simple decoration; on the other, the later landscape work, becoming more or less affected with modern ideas and modes of imitation.

These central fifteenth century landscapes are almost invariably composed of a grove or two tall trees, a winding river, and a castle, or a garden: the peculiar feature of both these last being *trimness*; the artist always dwelling especially on the fences; wreathing the espaliers indeed prettily with sweetbriar, and putting pots of orange-trees on the tops of the walls, but taking great care that there shall be no loose bricks in the one, nor broken stake in the other,—the trouble and ceaseless warfare of the times having rendered security one of the first elements of pleasantness, and making it impossible for any artist to conceive Paradise but as surrounded by a moat, or to distinguish the road to it better than by its narrow wicket gate, and watchful porter.

§ 17. One of these landscapes is thus described by Macaulay:—“We have an exact square, enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the centre; rectangular beds of flowers; a long canal neatly bricked and railed in; the tree of knowledge, clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuileries,

standing in the centre of the grand alley; the snake turned around it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round them.”¹

All this is perfectly true; and seems in the description very curiously foolish. The only curious folly, however, in the matter is the exquisite *naïveté* of the historian, in supposing that the quaint landscape indicates in the understanding of the painter so marvellous an inferiority to his own; whereas, it is altogether his own wit that is at fault, in not comprehending that nations, whose youth had been decimated among the sands and serpents of Syria, knew probably nearly as much about Eastern scenery as youths trained in the schools of the modern Royal Academy; and that this curious symmetry was entirely symbolic, only more or less modified by the various instincts which I have traced above. Mr. Macaulay is evidently quite unaware that the serpent with the human head, and body twisted round the tree, was the universally-accepted symbol of the evil angel, from the dawn of art up to Michael Angelo; that the greatest sacred artists invariably place the man on the one side of the tree, the woman on the other, in order to denote the enthroned and balanced dominion about to fall by temptation; that the beasts are ranged (when they *are* so, though this is much more seldom the case,) in a circle round them, expressly to mark that they were then not wild, but obedient, intelligent, and orderly beasts; and that the four rivers are trenched and enclosed on the four sides, to mark that the waters which now wander in waste, and destroy in fury, had then for their principal office to “water the garden” of God.² The description is, however, sufficiently apposite and interesting as bearing upon what I have noted respecting the eminent *fence*-loving spirit of the mediævals.

§ 18. Together with this peculiar formality, we find an infinite delight in drawing pleasant flowers, always articulating

¹ [Macaulay's *Essays*: “Moore's Life of Lord Byron.”]

² [Genesis ii. 10.]

and outlining them completely; the sky is always blue, having only a few delicate white clouds in it, and in the distance are blue mountains, very far away, if the landscape is to be simply delightful; but brought near, and divided into quaint overhanging rocks, if it is intended to be meditative, or a place of saintly seclusion.¹ But the whole of it always,—flowers, castles, brooks, clouds, and rocks,—subordinate to the human figures in the foreground, and painted for no other end than that of explaining their adventures and occupations.

§ 19. Before the idea of landscape had been thus far developed, the representations of it had been purely typical: the objects which had to be shown in order to explain the scene of the event, being firmly outlined, usually on a pure golden or chequered colour background, not on sky. The change from the golden background (characteristic of the finest thirteenth century work) and the coloured chequer (which in like manner belongs to the finest fourteenth) to the blue sky, gradated to the horizon, takes place early in the fifteenth century, and is the *crisis* of change in the spirit of mediæval art. Strictly speaking, we might divide the art of Christian times into two great masses—Symbolic and Imitative;—the symbolic, reaching from the earliest periods down to the close of the fourteenth century, and the imitative from that close, to the present time; and then the most important circumstance indicative of the culminating point, or turn of tide, would be this of the change from chequered background to sky background. The uppermost figure in Plate 7 opposite, representing the tree of knowledge, taken from a somewhat late thirteenth century Hebrew manuscript (Additional 11, 639) in the British Museum,²

¹ [In the MS. Ruskin added here a reference to an illuminated missal:—

“Perhaps the most exquisite instance I remember of this kind of design in central landscape is the group of lilies in the garden in which Henry VI. is in prayer.”]

² [In Ruskin’s notes on the illuminated MSS. in the British Museum (see Vol. XII. p. lxviii.) is the following entry (1854):—

“Add. 11, 639. Glorious Hebrew one. See Trees at p. 330.”

The MS. is of the Pentateuch. For the other figure in Plate 7, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 16 (Vol. VI. p. 98).]



J.J. Lang

W. Lazenby & Co. London, Eds.

7. Botany of 13th Century.
(Apple tree and Cyclamen)

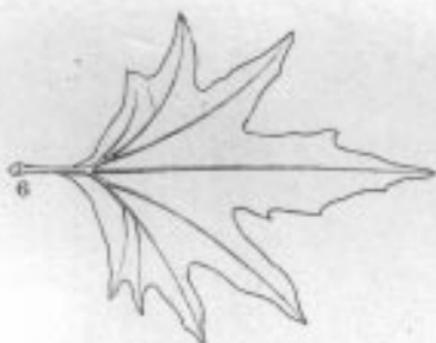
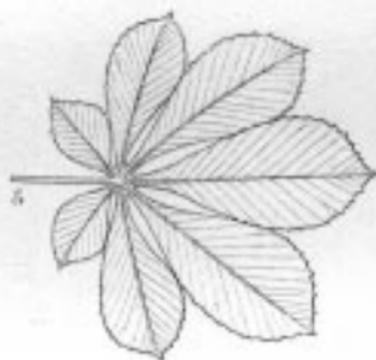
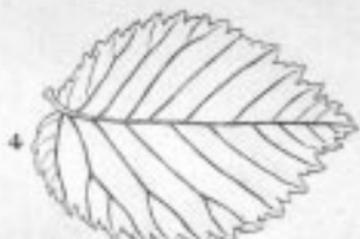
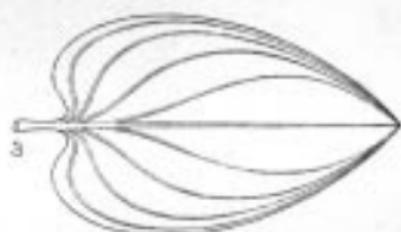
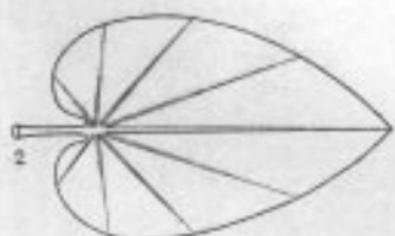
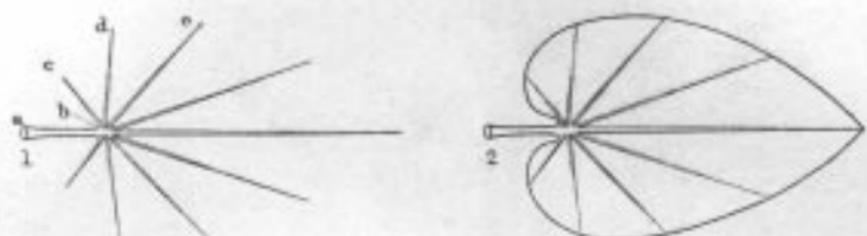
will at once illustrate Mr. Macaulay's "serpent turned round the tree," and the mode of introducing the chequered background, and will enable the reader better to understand the peculiar feeling of the period, which no more intended the formal walls or streams for an imitative representation of the Garden of Eden, than these chequers for an imitation of sky.

§ 20. The moment the sky is introduced (and it is curious how perfectly it is done *at once*, many manuscripts presenting in alternate pages, chequered backgrounds, and deep blue skies exquisitely gradated to the horizon)—the moment, I say, the sky is introduced, the spirit of art becomes for evermore changed, and thenceforward it gradually proposes imitation more and more as an end, until it reaches the Turnerian landscape. This broad division into two schools would therefore be the most true and accurate we could employ, but not the most convenient. For the great mediæval art lies in a cluster about the culminating point, including symbolism on one side, and imitation on the other, and extending like a radiant cloud upon the mountain peak of ages, partly down both sides of it, from the year 1200 to 1500; the brightest part of the cloud leaning a little backwards, and poising itself between 1250 and 1350. And therefore the most convenient arrangement is into Romanesque and barbaric art, up to 1200, mediæval art, 1200 to 1500,—and modern art, from 1500 downwards. But it is only in the earlier or symbolic mediæval art, reaching up to the close of the fourteenth century, that the peculiar modification of natural forms for decorative purposes is seen in its perfection, with all its beauty, and all its necessary shortcomings; the minds of men being accurately balanced between that honour for the superior human form which they shared with the Greek ages, and the sentimental love of nature which was peculiar to their own. The expression of the two feelings will be found to vary according to the material and place of the art; in painting, the conventional forms are more adopted, in order to obtain definition, and

brilliancy of colour, while in sculpture the life of nature is often rendered with a love and faithfulness which put modern art to shame. And in this earnest contemplation of the natural facts, united with an endeavour to simplify, for clear expression, the results of that contemplation, the ornamental artists arrived at two abstract conclusions about form, which are highly curious and interesting.

§ 21. They saw, first, that a leaf might always be considered as a sudden expansion of the stem that bore it; an uncontrollable expression of delight, on the part of the twig, that spring had come, shown in a fountain-like expiation of its tender green heart into the air. They saw that in this violent proclamation of its delight and liberty, whereas the twig had, until that moment, a disposition only to grow quietly forwards, it expressed its satisfaction and extreme pleasure in sunshine by springing out to right and left. Let *a b*, Fig. 1, Plate 8, be the twig growing forward in the direction from *a* to *b*. It reaches the point *b*, and then—spring coming,—not being able to contain itself, it bursts out in every direction, even springing backwards at first for joy; but as this backward direction is contrary to its own proper fate and nature, it cannot go on so long, and the length of each rib into which it separates is proportioned accurately to the degree in which the proceedings of that rib are in harmony with the natural destiny of the plant. Thus the rib *c*, entirely contradictory, by the direction of his life and energy, of the general intentions of the tree, is but a short-lived rib; *d*, not quite so opposite to his fate, lives longer; *e*, accommodating himself still more to the spirit of progress, attains a greater length still; and the largest rib of all is the one who has not yielded at all to the erratic disposition of the others when spring came, but, feeling quite as happy about the spring as they did, nevertheless took no holiday, minded his business, and grew straightforward.

§ 22. Fig. 6 in the same plate, which shows the disposition of the ribs in the leaf of an American Plane,



exemplifies the principle very accurately: it is indeed more notably seen in this than in most leaves, because the ribs at the base have evidently had a little fraternal quarrel about their spring holiday; and the more gaily-minded ones, getting together into trios on each side, have rather pooh-poohed and laughed at the seventh brother in the middle, who wanted to go on regularly, and attend to his work. Nevertheless, though thus starting quite by himself in life, this seventh brother, quietly pushing on in the right direction, lives longest, and makes the largest fortune, and the triple partnerships on the right and left meet with a very minor prosperity.

§ 23. Now if we enclose Fig. 1 in Plate 8 with two curves passing through the extremities of the ribs, we get Fig. 2, the central type of all leaves. Only this type is modified of course in a thousand ways by the life of the plant. If it be marsh or aquatic, instead of springing out in twigs, it is almost certain to expand in soft currents, as the liberated stream does at its mouth into the ocean, Fig. 3 (*Alisma Plantago*¹); if it be meant for one of the crowned and lovely trees of the earth, it will separate into stars, and each ray of the leaf will form a ray of light in the crown, Fig. 5 (*Horsechestnut*); and if it be a commonplace tree, rather prudent and practical than imaginative, it will not expand all at once, but throw out the ribs every now and then along the central rib, like a merchant taking his occasional and restricted holiday, Fig. 4 (*Elm*).

§ 24. Now in the bud, where all these proceedings on the leaf's part are first imagined, the young leaf is generally (always ?) doubled up in embryo, so as to present the profile of the half leaves, as Fig. 7, only in exquisite complexity of arrangement; Fig. 9, for instance, is the profile of the leaf-bud of a rose. Hence the general arrangement of line represented by Fig. 8 (in which the lower line is

¹ [Compare *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 168 and *n.*), and *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. pp. 268, 269); and for further studies of the horsechestnut, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. iii. §§ 12, 13; ch. iv. §§ 9–11; ch. x. § 12.]

slightly curved to express the bending life in the spine) is everlastingly typical of the expanding power of joyful vegetative youth; and it is of all simple forms the most exquisitely delightful to the human mind. It presents itself in a thousand different proportions and variations in the buds and profiles of leaves; those being always the loveliest in which, either by accidental perspective of position, or inherent character in the tree, it is most frequently presented to the eye. The branch of bramble, for instance, Fig. 10, at the bottom of Plate 8,

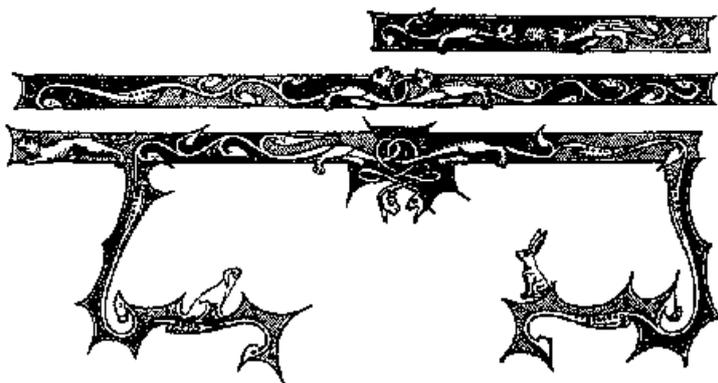


Fig. 3

owes its chief beauty to this perpetual recurrence of this typical form; and we shall find presently the enormous importance of it, even in mountain ranges, though, in these, *falling* force takes the place of *vital* force.

§ 25. This abstract conclusion the great thirteenth century artists were the first to arrive at; and whereas, before their time, ornament had been constantly refined into intricate and subdivided symmetries, they were content with this simple form as the termination of its most important features. Fig. 3, which is a scroll out of a Psalter executed in the latter half of the thirteenth century, is a sufficient example of a practice at that time absolutely universal.

§ 26. The second great discovery of the Middle Ages in

floral ornament, was that, in order completely to express the law of subordination among the leaf-ribs, two ribs were necessary, *and no more*, on each side of the leaf, forming a series of three with the central one, because proportion is between three terms at least.

That is to say, when they had only three ribs altogether, as *a*, Fig. 4, no *law* of relation was discernible between the ribs, or the leaflets they bore; but by the addition of a third on each side, as at *b*, proportion

instantly was expressible, whether arithmetical or geometrical, or of any other or of any other kind. Hence the adoption of forms more or less approximating to that at *c* to that at *c* (young ivy), or *d* (wild geranium), as the favourite elements of their floral ornament,

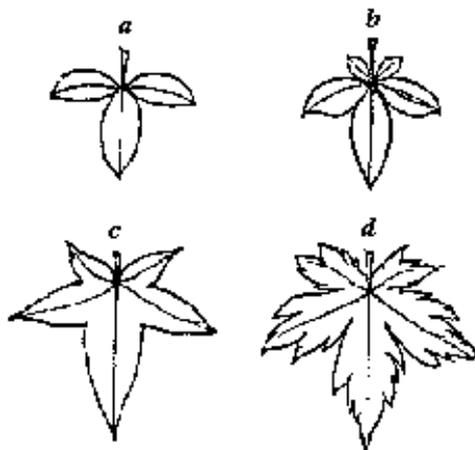


Fig. 4

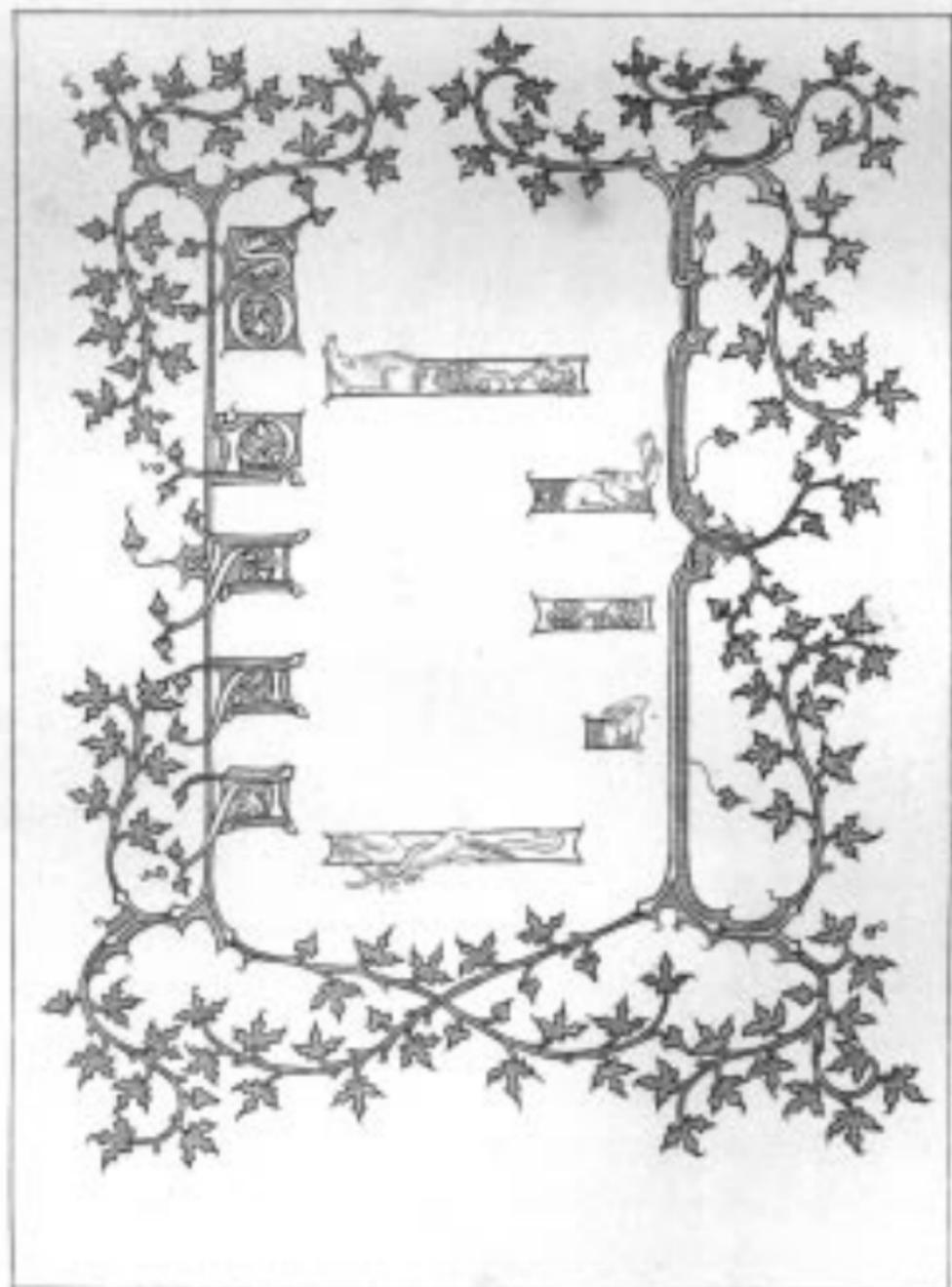
those leaves being, in their disposition of masses, the simplest which can express a perfect law of proportion just as the outline Fig. 7, Plate 8, is the simplest which can express a perfect law of growth.

Plate 9 opposite gives, in rude outline, the arrangement of the border of one of the pages of a missal in my own possession, executed for the Countess Yolande of Flanders,* in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and furnishing, in exhaustless variety, the most graceful examples I have ever seen of the favourite decoration at the period, commonly now known as the "Ivy-leaf" pattern.

§ 27. In thus reducing these two everlasting laws of

* Married to Philip, younger son of the King of Navarre, in 1352. She died in 1394.¹

¹ [This manuscript is now in the collection of Mr. Henry Yates Thompson.]



beauty to their simplest possible exponents, the mediæval workmen were the first to discern and establish the principles of decorative art to the end of time, nor of decorative art merely, but of mass arrangement in general. For the members of any great composition, arranged about a centre, are always reducible to the law of the ivy leaf, the best cathedral entrances having five porches corresponding in proportional purpose to its five lobes (three being an imperfect, and seven a superfluous number); while the loveliest groups of lines attainable in any pictorial composition are always based on the section of the leaf-bud, Fig. 7, Plate 8, or on the relation of its ribs to the convex curve enclosing them.

§ 28. These discoveries of ultimate truth are, I believe, never made philosophically, but instinctively; so that wherever we find a high abstract result of the kind, we may be almost sure it has been the work of the penetrative imagination, acting under the influence of strong affection. Accordingly, when we enter on our botanical inquiries, I shall have occasion to show¹ with what tender and loving fidelity to nature the masters of the thirteenth century always traced the leading lines of their decorations, either in missal-painting or sculpture, and how totally in this respect their methods of subduing, for the sake of distinctness, the natural forms they loved so dearly, differ from the iron formalisms to which the Greeks, careless of all that was not completely divine or completely human, reduced the thorn of the acanthus, and softness of the lily. Nevertheless, in all this perfect and loving decorative art, we have hardly any careful references to other landscape features than herbs and flowers; mountains, water, and clouds are introduced so rudely, that the representations of them can never be received for anything else than letters or signs. Thus the *sign* of clouds, in the thirteenth century, is an undulating band, usually, in painting, of blue edged with white, in sculpture, wrought so as to resemble very nearly

¹ [See in the next volume, ch. xvii. §§ 19, 20 (Vol. VI. pp. 333–334).]

the folds of a curtain closely tied, and understood for clouds only by its position, as surrounding angels or saints in heaven, opening to souls ascending at the Last Judgment, or forming canopies over the Saviour or the Virgin. Water is represented by zigzag lines, nearly resembling those employed for clouds, but distinguished, in sculpture, by having fish in it;¹ in painting, both by fish and a more continuous blue or green colour. And when these unvaried symbols are associated under the influence of that love of firm fence, moat, and every other means of definition which we have seen to be one of the prevailing characteristics of the mediæval mind, it is not possible for us to conceive, through the rigidity of the signs employed, what were the real feelings of the workman or spectator about the natural landscape. We see that the thing carved or painted is not intended in anywise to imitate the truth, or convey to us the feelings which the workman had in contemplating the truth. He has got a way of talking about it so definite and cold, and tells us with his chisel so calmly that the knight had a castle to attack, or the saint a river to cross dryshod, without making the smallest effort to describe pictorially either castle or river, that we are left wholly at fault as to the nature of the emotion with which he contemplated the real objects. But that emotion, as the intermediate step between the feelings of the Grecian and the modern, it must be our aim to ascertain as clearly as possible; and, therefore, finding it not at this period completely expressed in visible art, we must, as we did with the Greeks, take up the written landscape instead, and examine this mediæval sentiment as we find it embodied in the poem of Dante.

§ 29. The thing that must first strike us in this respect, as we turn our thoughts to the poem, is, unquestionably, the *formality* of its landscape.

Milton's effort, in all that he tells us of his Inferno, is

¹ [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 272).]

to make it indefinite; Dante's, to make it *definite*. Both, indeed, describe it as entered through gates; but, within the gate, all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having indeed its four rivers,—the last vestige of the mediæval tradition,—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by “many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.”¹ But Dante's *Inferno* is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction, trenched in a thoroughly good style of engineering from depth to depth, and divided in the “*accurate middle*” (*ditto mezzo*)² of its deepest abyss, into a concentric series of ten moats and embankments, like those about a castle, with bridges from each embankment to the next; precisely in the manner of those bridges over Hiddekel and Euphrates, which Mr. Macaulay thinks so innocently designed, apparently not aware that he is also laughing at Dante. These larger fosses are of rock, and the bridges also; but as he goes farther into detail, Dante tells us of various minor fosses and embankments, in which he anxiously points out to us not only the formality, but the neatness and perfectness, of the stonework. For instance, in describing the river Phlegethon, he tells us that it was “paved with stone at the bottom,³ and at the sides, and *over the edges of the sides*,” just as the water is at the baths of Bulicame; and for fear we should think this embankment at all *larger* than it really was, Dante adds, carefully, that it was made just like the embankments of Ghent or Bruges against the sea, or those in Lombardy which bank the Brenta, only “not so high, nor so wide,” as any of these.

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, ii. 620; *Inferno*, iii. 1–11.]

² [*Inferno*, xi. 16 *seq.*, xviii. 1 *seq.*]

³ [*Inferno*, xiv. 79:—

“Lo fondo suo, ed ambo le pendici

Fatt' eran pietra, e i margini da lato.”

In his copy for revision, Ruskin notes that his translation “paved with stones” is “Wrong. Petrified, encrusted with stone. This noble idea (he adds) of Phlegethon *petrifying* is very precious.” The other references in § 29 are *Inferno*, xv. 4–12; iv. 106 *seq.*; viii. 68 *seq.* Ecbatana is not Dante's simile, but refers to Herodotus, as cited in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 175 and *n.*.)]

And besides the trenches, we have two well-built castles; one, like Ecbatana, with seven circuits of wall (and surrounded by a fair stream), wherein the great poets and sages of antiquity live; and another, a great fortified city with walls of iron, red-hot, and a deep fosse round it, and full of "grave citizens,"—the city of Dis.

§ 30. Now, whether this be in what we moderns call "good taste," or not, I do not mean just now to inquire—Dante having nothing to do with taste, but with the facts of what he had seen; only, so far as the imaginative faculty of the two poets is concerned, note that Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence, so far as it is significative in the matter. For it does not follow, because Milton did not map out his *Inferno* as Dante did, that he *could* not have done so if he had chosen; only, it was the easier and less imaginative process to leave it vague than to define it. Imagination is always the seeing and asserting faculty;¹ that which obscures or conceals may be judgment, or feeling, but not invention. The invention, whether good or bad, is in the accurate engineering, not in the fog and uncertainty.

§ 31. When we pass with Dante from the *Inferno* to *Purgatory*, we have indeed more light and air, but no more liberty; being now confined on various ledges cut into a mountain side, with a precipice on one hand and a vertical wall on the other; and, lest here also we should make any mistake about magnitudes, we are told that the ledges were eighteen feet wide,* and that the ascent from one to the other was by steps, made like those which go up from Florence to the Church of San Miniato.†

Lastly, though in the *Paradise* there is perfect freedom and infinity of space, though for trenches we have planets, and for cornices constellations, yet there is more cadence,

* "Three times the length of the human body."—*Purg.* x. 24.

† *Purg.* xii. 102.

¹ [See above, p. 177.]

procession, and order among the redeemed souls than any other; they fly, so as to describe letters and sentences in the air, and rest in circles, like rainbows, or determinate figures, as of a cross and an eagle; in which certain of the more glorified natures are so arranged as to form the eye of the bird, while those most highly blessed are arranged with their white crowds in leaflets, so as to form the image of a white rose in the midst of heaven.¹

§ 32. Thus, throughout the poem, I conceive that the first striking character of its scenery is intense definition; precisely the reflection of that definiteness which we have already traced in pictorial art. But the second point which seems noteworthy is, that the flat ground and embanked trenches are reserved for the Inferno: and that the entire territory of the Purgatory is a mountain, thus marking the sense of that purifying and perfecting influence in mountains which we saw the mediæval mind was so ready to suggest. The same general idea is indicated at the very commencement of the poem, in which Dante is overwhelmed by fear and sorrow in passing through a dark forest, but revives on seeing the sun touch the top of a hill, afterwards called by Virgil “the pleasant mount—the cause and source of all delight.”²

§ 33. While, however, we find this greater honour paid to mountains, I think we may perceive a much greater dread and dislike of woods. We saw³ that Homer seemed to attach a pleasant idea, for the most part, to forests; regarding them as sources of wealth and places of shelter; and we find constantly an idea of sacredness attached to them, as being haunted especially by the gods; so that even the wood which surrounds the house of Circe is spoken of as a sacred thicket,⁴ or rather, as a sacred glade, or labyrinth of

¹ [The references to the *Paradiso* are as follow: (letters and sentences) xviii. 70–96; (eagle) 97–114; (cross) xiv. 100 *seq.*; (circles like rainbow) xxviii. 23–33; (eye of bird) xxi. 31–72; (white rose) xxx. 117 *seq.*]

² [*Inferno*, i. 77, 78.]

³ [See above, pp. 240, 241.]

⁴ [*Odyssey*, x. 275: *ieraV ana bhssaV*; see below, p. 282.]

glades (of the particular word used I shall have more to say presently); and so the wood is sought as a kindly shelter by Ulysses, in spite of its wild beasts; and evidently regarded with great affection by Sophocles, for, in a passage¹ which is always regarded by readers of Greek tragedy with peculiar pleasure, the aged and blind Œdipus, brought to rest in “the sweetest resting-place” in all the neighbourhood of Athens, has the spot described to him as haunted perpetually by nightingales, which sing “in the green glades and in the dark ivy, and in the thousand-fruited, sunless, and windless thickets of the god” (Bacchus); the idea of the complete shelter from wind and sun being here, as with Ulysses, the uppermost one. After this come the usual staples of landscape,—narcissus, crocus, plenty of rain, olive trees; and last, and the greatest boast of all,—“it is a good country for horses, and conveniently by the sea;” but the prominence and pleasantness of the thick wood in the thoughts of the writer are very notable; whereas to Dante the idea of a forest is exceedingly repulsive, so that, as just noticed, in the opening of his poem, he cannot express a general despair about life more strongly than by saying he was lost in a wood so savage and terrible, that “even to think or speak of it is distress,—it was so bitter,—it was something next door to death;”² and one of the saddest scenes in all the *Inferno* is in a forest, of which the trees are haunted by lost souls: while (with only one exception), whenever the country is to be beautiful, we find ourselves coming out into open air and open meadows.³

It is quite true that this is partly a characteristic, not merely of Dante, or of mediæval writers, but of *southern* writers; for the simple reason that the forest, being with them higher upon the hills, and more out of the way than in the north, was generally a type of lonely and savage

¹ [*Œdipus Coloneus*, 668–711.]

² [See *Inferno*, i. 1–7. The following reference is to *Inferno*, xiii. 94 *seq.*; the “exception” being the wood in the terrestrial paradise, *Purgatorio*, xxviii. 1 *seq.*, referred to in the next paragraph of the text.]

³ [See, for example, *Inferno*, iv. 111, 116, 118; *Purgatorio*, xxvii. 98–99.]

places; while in England, the “greenwood,” coming up to the very walls of the towns, it was possible to be “merry in the good greenwood,”¹ in a sense which an Italian could not have understood. Hence Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare send their favourites perpetually to the woods for pleasure or meditation; and trust their tender Canace,² or Rosalind, or Helena, or Silvia, or Belphebe, where Dante would have sent no one but a condemned spirit. Nevertheless, there is always traceable in the mediæval mind a dread of thick foliage, which was not present to that of a Greek; so that, even in the north, we have our sorrowful “children in the wood,” and black huntsman of the Hartz forests, and such other wood terrors; the principal reason for the difference being that a Greek, being by no means given to travelling, regarded his woods as so much valuable property; and if he ever went into them for pleasure, expected to meet one or two gods in the course of his walk, but no banditti; while a mediæval, much more of a solitary traveller, and expecting to meet with no gods in the thickets, but only with thieves, or a hostile ambush, or a bear, besides a great deal of troublesome ground for his horse, and a very serious chance, next to a certainty, of losing his way, naturally kept in the open ground as long as he could, and regarded the forests, in general, with anything but an eye of favour.

§ 34. These, I think, are the principal points which must strike us, when we first broadly think of the poem as compared with classical work. Let us now go a little more into detail.

As Homer gave us an ideal landscape, which even a god might have been pleased to behold, so Dante³ gives us, fortunately, an ideal landscape, which is specially intended for the terrestrial paradise. And it will doubtless be with some surprise, after our reflections above on the

¹ [*Lady of the Lake*, iv. 12.]

² [In *The Squire's Tale*.]

³ [In *Purgatorio*, xxviii., as mentioned on the last page; for Homer's ideal landscape, see p. 234.]

general tone of Dante's feelings, that we find ourselves here first entering a *forest*, and that even a *thick* forest. But there is a peculiar meaning in this. With any other poet than Dante, it might have been regarded as a wanton inconsistency. Not so with him: by glancing back to the two lines which explain the nature of Paradise, we shall see what he means by it. Virgil tells him, as he enters it, "Henceforward, take thine own pleasure for guide; thou art beyond the steep ways, and beyond all Art;"¹—meaning, that the perfectly purified and noble human creature, having no pleasure but in right, is past all effort, and past all *rule*. Art has no existence for such a being. Hence, the first aim of Dante, in his landscape imagery, is to show evidence of this perfect liberty, and of the purity and sinlessness of the new nature, converting pathless ways into happy ones. So that all those fences and formalisms which had been needed for him in imperfection, are removed in this paradise; and even the pathlessness of the wood, the most dreadful thing possible to him in his days of sin and shortcoming, is now a joy to him in his days of purity. And as the fencelessness and thicket of sin led to the fettered and fearful order of eternal punishment, so the fencelessness and thicket of the free virtue lead to the loving and constellated order of eternal happiness.

§ 35. This forest, then, is very like that of Colonos in several respects—in its peace and sweetness, and number of birds; it differs from it only in letting a light breeze through it, being therefore somewhat thinner than the Greek wood; the tender lines which tell of the voices of the birds mingling with the wind, and of the leaves all turning one way before it, have been more or less copied by every poet since Dante's time. They are, so far as I

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxvii. 130: "Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte." Ruskin, however, mis-translates the line, the last word of which is the adjective "narrow," and not the substantive "art": thus Cary: "Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way, O'ercome the straiter."]

know, the sweetest passage of wood description which exists in literature.¹

Before, however, Dante has gone far in this wood,—that is to say, only so far as to have lost sight of the place where he entered it, or rather, I suppose, of the light under the boughs of the outside trees, and it must have been a very thin wood indeed if he did not do this in some quarter of a mile's walk,—he comes to a little river,² three paces over, which bends the blades of grass to the left, with a meadow on the other side of it; and in this meadow

“A lady, graced with solitude, who went
Singing, and setting flower by flower apart,
By which the path she walked on was besprent.
'Ah, lady beautiful, that basking art
In beams of love, if I may trust thy face,
Which useth to bear witness of the heart,
Let liking come on thee,' said I, 'to trace
Thy path a little closer to the shore,
Where I may reap the hearing of thy lays.
Thou mindest me, how Proserpine of yore
Appeared in such a place, what time her mother
Lost her, and she the spring, for evermore.'
As, pointing downwards and to one another
Her feet, a lady bendeth in the dance,
And barely setteth one before the other,
Thus, on the scarlet and the saffron glance
Of flowers, with motion maidenlike she bent
(Her modest eyelids drooping and askance);
And there she gave my wishes their content,
Approaching, so that her sweet melodies
Arrived upon mine ear with what they meant.
When first she came amongst the blades, that rise,
Already wetted, from the goodly river,
She graced me by the lifting of her eyes.”—CAYLEY.³

§ 36. I have given this passage at length, because, for our purposes, it is by much the most important, not only in Dante, but in the whole circle of poetry. This lady, observe, stands on the opposite side of the little stream, which, presently, she explains to Dante is Lethe, having power to cause forgetfulness of all evil, and she stands just

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxviii., the opening lines.]

² [See *ibid.*, 22 *seq.*]

³ [*Ibid.*, 40–63.]

among the bent blades of grass at its edge. She is first seen gathering flower from flower, then “passing continually the multitudinous flowers through her hands,”¹ smiling at the same time so brightly, that her first address to Dante is to prevent him from wondering at her, saying, “if he will remember the verse of the ninety-second Psalm, beginning ‘Delectasti,’ he will know why she is so happy.”²

And turning to the verse of this Psalm we find it written, “Thou, Lord, hast made me glad *through Thy works*. I will triumph *in the works of Thy hands*;” or in the very words in which Dante would read it,—

“Quia delectasti me, Domine, in factura Tua,
Et in operibus manuum Tuarum exultabo.”

§ 37. Now we could not for an instant have had any difficulty in understanding this, but that, some way farther on in the poem, this lady is called Matilda, and is with reason supposed by the commentators to be the great Countess Matilda of the eleventh century; notable equally for her ceaseless activity, her brilliant political genius, her perfect piety, and her deep reverence for the see of Rome.³ This Countess Matilda is therefore Dante’s guide in the terrestrial paradise, as Beatrice is afterwards in the celestial; each of them having a spiritual and symbolic character in their glorified state, yet retaining their definite personality.

The question is, then, what is the symbolic character of the Countess Matilda, as the guiding spirit of the terrestrial paradise? Before Dante had entered this paradise he had rested on a step of shelving rock, and as he watched the stars he slept, and dreamed, and thus tells us what he saw:—

“A lady, young and beautiful, I dreamed,
Was passing o’er a lea; and, as she came,
Methought I saw her ever and anon
Bending to cull the flowers; and thus she sang:
'Know ye, whoever of my name would ask,

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxviii. 68, 69.]

² [*Ibid.*, 80, 81.]

³ [For another reference to the Countess Matilda of Tuscany (1046–1114), see *Val d’Arno*, § 20.]

That I am Leah; for my brow to weave
 A garland, these fair hands unwearied ply;
 To please me at the crystal mirror, here
 I decked me. But my sister Rachel, she
 Before her glass abides the livelong day,
 Her radiant eyes beholding, charmed no less
 Than I with this delightful task. Her joy
 In contemplation, as in labour mine.’¹

This vision of Rachel and Leah has been always, and with unquestionable truth, received as a type of the Active and Contemplative life, and as an introduction to the two divisions of the paradise which Dante is about to enter. Therefore the unwearied spirit of the Countess Matilda is understood to represent the Active life, which forms the felicity of Earth; and the spirit of Beatrice the Contemplative life, which forms the felicity of Heaven. This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain; but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe: Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *Her Own Labour*. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *Her Own Image*. These are the types of the Unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of Man. But Beatrice and Matilda are the same powers, Glorified. And how are they Glorified? Leah took delight in her own labour; but Matilda—“in operibus *manuum Tuarum*”—*in God’s labour*: Rachel in the sight of her own face; Beatrice in the sight of *God’s face*.

§ 38. And thus, when afterwards Dante sees Beatrice on her throne, and prays her that, when he himself shall die, she would receive him with kindness, Beatrice merely looks down for an instant, and answers with a single smile, then “towards the eternal fountain turns.”²

Therefore it is evident that Dante distinguishes in both cases, not between earth and heaven, but between perfect and imperfect happiness, whether in earth or heaven. The active life which has only the service of man for its end,

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxvii. 97–110. The translation here is Cary’s.]

² [*Paradiso*, xxxi. 93 (Cary).]

and therefore gathers flowers, with Leah, for its own decoration, is indeed happy, but not perfectly so; it has only the happiness of the dream, belonging essentially to the dream of human life, and passing away with it. But the active life which labours for the more and more discovery of God's work, is perfectly happy, and is the life of the terrestrial paradise, being a true foretaste of heaven, and beginning in earth, as heaven's vestibule. So also the contemplative life which is concerned with human feeling and thought and beauty—the life which is in earthly poetry and imagery of noble earthly emotion—is happy, but it is the happiness of the dream; the contemplative life which has God's person and love in Christ for its object, has the happiness of eternity. But because this higher happiness is also begun here on earth, Beatrice descends to earth; and when revealed to Dante first, he sees the image of the twofold personality of Christ reflected in her *eyes*;¹ as the flowers, which are, to the mediæval heart, the chief work of God, are for ever passing through Matilda's *hands*.

§ 39. Now, therefore, we see that Dante, as the great prophetic exponent of the heart of the Middle Ages, has, by the lips of the spirit of Matilda, declared the mediæval faith,—that all perfect active life was “the expression of man's delight *in God's work*;² and that all their political and warlike energy, as fully shown in the mortal life of Matilda, was yet inferior and impure,—the energy of the dream,—compared with that which on the opposite bank of Lethe stood “choosing flower from flower.”³ And what joy and peace there were in this work is marked by Matilda's being the person who draws Dante through the stream of Lethe, so as to make him forget all sin, and all sorrow; throwing her arms around him, she plunges his head under the waves of it; then draws him through, crying to him, “*hold me, hold me*” (tiemmi, tiemmi),⁴ and so presents him,

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxxi. 118–123.]

² [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 264), and *Purgatorio*, xxvii. 108.]

³ [See above, p. 276; *Purgatorio*, xxviii. 41.]

⁴ [*Purgatorio*, xxxi. 92; and see *Sesame and Lilies*, § 94.]

thus bathed, free from all painful memory, at the feet of the spirit of the more heavenly contemplation.

§ 40. The reader will, I think, now see, with sufficient distinctness, why I called this passage the most important, for our present purposes, in the whole circle of poetry. For it contains the first great confession of the discovery by the human race (I mean as a matter of experience, not of revelation), that their happiness was not in themselves, and that their labour was not to have their own service as its chief end. It embodies in a few syllables the *sealing* difference between the Greek and the mediæval, in that the former sought the flower and herb for his own uses, the latter for God's honour; the former, primarily and on principle, contemplated his own beauty and the workings of his own mind, and the latter, primarily and on principle, contemplated Christ's beauty and the working of the mind of Christ.¹

§ 41. I will not at present follow up this subject any farther; it being enough that we have thus got to the root of it, and have a great declaration of the central mediæval purpose, whereto we may return for solution of all future questions. I would only, therefore, desire the reader now to compare the *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. chap. xx. §§ 15, 16; the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, chap. iv. § 3; and the second volume of this work, Sec. I. Chap. II. §§ 9, 10, and Chap. III. § 10;² that he may, in these several places, observe how gradually our conclusions are knitting themselves together as we are able to determine more and more of the successive questions that come before us: and, finally, to compare the two interesting passages in Wordsworth, which, without any memory of Dante, nevertheless, as if

¹ [There is an apparent contradiction between this § 40 and § 7 above. Here it is stated that by the Greek the flower and herb were sought for his own uses, and by the mediæval for God's honour; but above (§ 7 and § 15), it is stated that the Greek associated the flower and herb directly with the Divine gift, whereas the mediæval regarded them with a less solemn sense of that gift. In a reply to a correspondent, Ruskin cleared up the difficulty: see the letter given in Appendix iv., below, p. 431.]

² [The references in this edition are Vol. IX. p. 264; Vol. VIII. p. 142; Vol. IV. p. 50.]

by some special ordaining, describe in matters of modern life exactly the soothing or felicitous powers of the two active spirits of Dante—Leah and Matilda, *Excursion*, book v. line 608 to 625, and book vi. line 102 to 214.

§ 42. Having thus received from Dante this great lesson, as to the spirit in which mediæval landscape is to be understood, what else we have to note respecting it, as seen in his poem, will be comparatively straightforward and easy. And first, we have to observe the place occupied in his mind by *colour*. It has already been shown, in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. chap. v. §§ 30–34, that colour is the most *sacred* element of all visible things.¹ Hence, as the mediæval mind contemplated them first for their sacredness, we should, beforehand, expect that the first thing it would seize would be the colour; and that we should find its expressions and renderings of colour infinitely more loving and accurate than among the Greeks.

§ 43. Accordingly, the Greek sense of colour seems to have been so comparatively dim and uncertain, that it is almost impossible to ascertain what the real idea was which they attached to any word alluding to hue: and above all, colour, though pleasant to their eyes, as to those of all human beings, seems never to have been impressive to their feelings. They liked purple, on the whole, the best;² but there was no sense of cheerfulness or pleasantness in one colour, and gloom in another, such as the mediævals had.

For instance, when Achilles goes, in great anger and sorrow, to complain to Thetis of the scorn done him by Agamemnon, the sea appears to him “wine-coloured.”³ One might think this meant that the sea looked dark and reddish-purple to him, in a kind of sympathy with his anger. But we turn to the passage of Sophocles, which has been quoted above,—a passage peculiarly intended to express peace and rest,—and we find that the birds sing

¹ [See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 23.]

² [Compare “Lectures on Colour,” § 38, Vol. XII. p. 504; and *Queen of the Air*, §§ 91, 95.]

³ [*Iliad*, i. 350, οἰνόπα πόντον (v. λ. ἀπειρόνα.)]

among “wine-coloured” ivy.¹ The uncertainty of conception of the hue itself, and entire absence of expressive character in the word, could hardly be more clearly manifested.

§ 44. Again: I said the Greek liked purple, as a general source of enjoyment, better than any other colour.² So he did; and so all healthy persons who have eye for colour, and are unprejudiced about it, do; and will to the end of time, for a reason presently to be noted.³ But so far was this instinctive preference for purple from giving, in the Greek mind, any consistently cheerful or sacred association to the colour, that Homer constantly calls death “purple death.”⁴

§ 45. Again: in the passage of Sophocles, so often spoken of, I said there was some difficulty respecting a word often translated “thickets.” I believe, myself, it means glades; literally, “going places” in the woods,—that is to say, places where, either naturally or by force, the trees separate, so as to give some accessible avenue. Now, Sophocles tells us the birds sang in these “*green* going places;”⁵ and we take up the expression gratefully, thinking the old Greek perceived and enjoyed, as we do, the sweet fall of the eminently *green* light through the leaves when they are a little thinner than in the heart of the wood. But we turn to the tragedy of Ajax, and are much shaken in our conclusion about the meaning of the word, when we are told that the body of Ajax if to lie unburied, and be eaten by sea-birds on the “*green* sand.” The formation, geologically distinguished by that title, was certainly not known to Sophocles; and the only conclusion which, it seems to me, we can come to under the circumstances,—assuming Ariel’s*

* “Come unto these *yellow* sands.”⁶

¹ [ton otnwp anxconsa kisson, *ædipus Coloneus*, 674.]

² [See above, p. 273, and compare “Lectures on Colour,” § 38, Vol. XII. p. 505.]

³ [See in the next volume, p. 69 (purple as an element in “the sacred chord of colour”), and pp. 140, 421 (prevalence of purple in natural scenery).]

⁴ [See, for instance, *Iliad*, v. 83; and compare the note in Vol. XII. p. 504.]

⁵ [*Ædipus Coloneus*, 673: clwraiV npo bassaiV; and below, the reference is to the *Ajax*, 1064: amfi clwran jamaqon.]

⁶ [See *Munera Pulveris*, § 134, where the same passage from the *Tempest* (i. 2) is cited in another connexion.]

authority as to the colour of pretty sand, and the Ancient Mariner's (or rather, his hearers'*) as to the colour of ugly sand, to be conclusive,—is that Sophocles really did not know green from yellow or brown.

§ 46. Now, without going out of the terrestrial paradise, in which Dante last left us, we shall be able at once to compare with this Greek incertitude the precision of the mediæval eye for colour. Some three arrowflights farther up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers, of a colour “less than that of roses, but more than that of violets.”¹

It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant—that of the apple-blossom. Had he employed any simple colour-phrase, as a “pale-pink,” or “violet-pink,” or any other such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue; he might perhaps have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness; but by taking the rose-leaf as a type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet grey, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable; and rightly so felt, for of all lovely things which grace the spring-time in our fair temperate zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the fairest. At all events, I find it associated in my mind with four other kinds of colour, certainly principal among the gifts of the northern earth, namely:

- 1st. Bell gentians growing close together, mixed with lilies of the valley, on the Jura pastures.
- 2nd. Alpine roses with dew upon them, under low rays of morning sunshine, touching the tops of the flowers.

* “And thou art long, and lank, and *brown*,
As is the ribbed sea sand.”

¹ [*Purgatorio*, xxxii. 58.]

3rd. Bell heather in mass, in full light, at sunset.

4th. White narcissus (red-centred) in mass, on the Vevay pastures, in sunshine after rain.

And I know not where in the group to place the wreaths of apple-blossom, in the Vevay orchards, with the far-off blue of the lake of Geneva seen between the flowers.

A Greek, however, would have regarded this blossom simply with the eyes of a Devonshire farmer, as bearing on the probable price of cider, and would have called it red, cerulean, purple, white, hyacinthine, or generally "aglaos," agreeable, as happened to suit his verse.

§ 47. Again: we have seen how fond the Greek was of composing his paradises of rather damp grass;¹ but that in this fondness for grass there was always an undercurrent of consideration for his horses; and the characters in it which pleased him most were its depth and freshness; not its colour. Now, if we remember carefully the general expressions, respecting grass, used in modern literature, I think nearly the commonest that occurs to us will be that of "enamelled" turf or sward. This phrase is usually employed by our pseudo-poets, like all their other phrases, without knowing what it means, because it has been used by other writers before them,² and because they do not know what else to say of grass. If we were to ask them what enamel was, they could not tell us; and if we asked why grass was like enamel, they could not tell us. The expression *has* a meaning, however, and one peculiarly characteristic of mediæval and modern temper.

§ 48. The first instance I know of its right use, though very probably it had been so employed before, is in Dante. The righteous spirits of the pre-Christian ages are seen by him, though in the Inferno, yet in a place open, luminous, and high, walking upon the "green enamel."³

¹ [See above, p. 242.]

² [First by Milton, "O'er the smooth enamelled green": *Arcades*.]

³ [*Inferno*, iv. 118: "sopra 'l verde smalto."]

I am very sure that Dante did not use this phrase as we use it. He knew well what enamel was; and his readers, in order to understand him thoroughly, must remember what it is,—a vitreous paste, dissolved in water, mixed with metallic oxides, to give it the opacity and the colour required, spread in a moist state on metal, and afterwards hardened by fire, so as never to change. And Dante means, in using this metaphor of the grass of the Inferno, to mark, that it is laid as a tempering and cooling substance over the dark, metallic, gloomy ground; but yet so hardened by the fire, that it is not any more fresh or living grass, but a smooth, silent, lifeless bed of eternal green. And we know how *hard* Dante's idea of it was; because afterwards, in what is perhaps the most awful passage of the whole Inferno, when the three furies rise at the top of the burning tower, and catching sight of Dante, and not being able to get at him, shriek wildly for the Gorgon to come up too, that they may turn him into stone,—the word *stone* is not hard enough for them. Stone might crumble away after it was made, or something with life might grow upon it; no, it shall not be stone; they will make enamel of him; nothing can grow out of that; it is dead for ever.*

“Venga Medusa, sì lo farem di *Smalto*.”¹

§ 49. Now, almost in the opening of the Purgatory, as there at the entrance of the Inferno, we find a company of great ones resting in a grassy place. But the idea of the grass now is very different. The word now used is not “enamel,” but “herb,” and instead of being merely green, it is covered with flowers of many colours.² With the usual mediæval accuracy, Dante insists on telling us precisely what these colours were, and how bright; which he

* Compare parallel passage, making Dante hard or changeless in good, *Purg.* viii. 114.

¹ [*Inferno*, ix. 53; quoted also at Vol. XI. p. 169, and in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 24.]

² [*Purgatorio*, vii. 73–76.]

does by naming the actual pigments used in illumination,—“Gold, and fine silver, and cochineal, and white lead, and Indian wood, serene and lucid, and fresh emerald, just broken, would have been excelled, as less is by greater, by the flowers and grass of the place.” It is evident that the “emerald” here means the emerald green of the illuminators; for a fresh emerald is no brighter than one which is not fresh, and Dante was not one to throw away his words thus.¹ Observe then, we have here the idea of the growth, life, and variegation of the “green herb,” as opposed to the “smalto” of the *Inferno*; but the colours of the variegation are illustrated and defined by the reference to actual pigments: and, observe, because the other colours are rather bright, the blue ground (Indian wood, indigo?) is sober; lucid, but serene: and presently two angels enter, who are dressed in green drapery, but of a paler green than the grass, which Dante marks, by telling us that it was “the green of leaves, just budded.”²

§ 50. In all this, I wish the reader to observe two things: first, the general carefulness of the poet in defining colour, distinguishing it precisely as a painter would (opposed to the Greek carelessness about it); and, secondly, his regarding the grass for its greenness and variegation, rather than, as a Greek would have done, for its depth and freshness. This greenness or brightness, and variegation, are taken up by later and modern poets, as the things intended to be chiefly expressed by the word “enamelled”; and, gradually, the term is taken to indicate any kind of bright and interchangeable colouring; there being always this much of propriety about it, when used of greensward, that such sward is indeed, like enamel, a coat of bright colour on a comparatively dark ground; and is thus a sort of natural jewellery and painter’s work, different from loose and large vegetation. The word is often awkwardly and falsely used,

¹ [On the subject of Dante’s definiteness in colour-notes, compare “Lectures on Colour,” § 5, Vol. XII. pp. 478–479.]

² [*Purgatorio*, viii. 28.]

by the later poets, of all kinds of growth and colour; as by Milton of the flowers of Paradise showing themselves over its wall;¹ but it retains, nevertheless, through all its jaded inanity, some half-unconscious vestige of the old sense, even to the present day.

§ 51. There are, it seems to me, several important deductions to be made from these facts. The Greek, we have seen, delighted in the grass for its usefulness; the mediæval, as also we moderns, for its colour and beauty. But both dwell on it as the *first* element of the lovely landscape; we saw its use in Homer,² we see also that Dante thinks the righteous spirits of the heathen enough comforted in Hades by having even the *image* of green grass put beneath their feet; the happy resting-place in Purgatory has no other delight than its grass and flowers; and, finally, in the terrestrial paradise, the feet of Matilda pause where the Lethe stream first bends the blades of grass. Consider a little what a depth there is in this great instinct of the human race. Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared-for example of Nature's workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven;³ and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes or good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, iv. 149.]

² [For the Homeric meadows, see above, pp. 234, 239; for the Dante reference, *Inferno*, iv. 118.]

³ [Luke xii. 28.]

God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green. It seems to me not to have been without a peculiar significance, that our Lord, when about to work the miracle which, of all that He showed, appears to have been felt by the multitude as the most impressive,—the miracle of the loaves,—commanded the people to sit down by companies “upon the green grass.”¹ He was about to feed them with the principal produce of earth and the sea, the simplest representations of the food of mankind. He gave them the *seed* of the herb; He bade them sit down upon the herb itself, which was as great a gift, in its fitness for their joy and rest, as its perfect fruit, for their sustenance; thus, in this single order and act, when rightly understood, indicating for evermore how the Creator had entrusted the comfort, consolation, and sustenance of man, to the simplest and most despised of all the leafy families of the earth. And well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields! Follow but forth for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognize in those words. All spring and summer is in them,—the walks by silent, scented paths,—the rests in noonday heat,—the joy of herds and flocks,—the power of all shepherd life and meditation,—the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and failing in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust,—pastures beside the pacing brooks,—soft banks and knolls of lowly hills,—thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea,—crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dented by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices; all these are summed in those simple words; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift in our

¹ [Mark vi. 39.]

own land; though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakspeare's peculiar joy,¹ would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring-time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, “He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.”²

§ 52. There are also several lessons symbolically connected with this subject, which we must not allow to escape us. Observe, the peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility*, and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on, and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength.

¹ [See, for instance, Sonnet xxxiii. (of the sun): “Kissing with golden face the meadows green”; and the song at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*: “And cuckoobuds of yellow hue Do paint the meadows with delight.”]

² [The first thought of this passage (§ 51) came to Ruskin at Vevay in 1849; see the passage from his diary quoted in the Introduction above, p. xviii. The last sentences of § 51 are quoted by Matthew Arnold in his essay on “The Literary Influence of Academies” (*Essays in Criticism*).]

Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless and leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar-frost.

§ 53. Now, these two characters—of humility, and joy under trial—are exactly those which most definitely distinguish the Christian from the Pagan spirit. Whatever virtue the pagan possessed was rooted in pride, and fruited with sorrow. It began in the elevation of his own nature; it ended but in the “verde smalto”—the hopeless green—of the Elysian fields. But the Christian virtue is rooted in self-debasement, and strengthened under suffering by gladness of hope. And remembering this, it is curious to observe how utterly without gladness the Greek heart appears to be in watching the flowering grass, and what strange discords of expression arise sometimes in consequence. There is one, recurring once or twice in Homer, which has always pained me. He says, “The Greek army was on the fields, as thick as flowers in the spring.”¹ It might be so; but flowers in spring-time are not the image by which Dante would have numbered soldiers on their path of battle. Dante could not have thought of the flowering of the grass but as associated with happiness. There is a still deeper significance in the passage quoted, a little while ago,² from Homer, describing Ulysses casting himself down on the *rushes* and the corn-giving land at the river shore,—the rushes and corn being to him only good for rest and sustenance,—when we compare it with that in which Dante tells us he was ordered to descend to the shore of the lake as he entered Purgatory, to gather a *rush*, and gird himself with it, it being to him the emblem not only of rest, but of humility under chastisement, the rush (or reed) being the only plant which can grow there;—“no

¹ [*Iliad*, ii. 468:—

εταν δ εν λειμwni Skamnadriw anqemoenti
mnrioi, ossa te fnlla kai anqea gignetai wrh.]

² [See above, p. 239.]

plant which bears leaves, or hardens its bark, can live on that shore, because it does not yield to the chastisement of its waves.”¹ It cannot but strike the reader singularly how deep and harmonious a significance runs through all these words of Dante—how every syllable of them, the more we penetrate it, becomes a seed of farther thought! For, follow up this image of the girding with the reed, under trial, and see to whose feet it will lead us. As the grass of the earth, thought of as the herb yielding seed, leads us to the place where our Lord commanded the multitude to sit down by companies upon the green grass; so the grass of the waters, thought of as sustaining itself among the waters of affliction, leads us to the place where a stem of it was put into our Lord’s hand for His sceptre; and in the crown of thorns, and the rod of reed,² was foreshown the everlasting truth of the Christian ages—that all glory was to be begun in suffering, and all power in humility.

Assembling the images we have traced, and adding the simplest of all, from Isaiah xl. 6, we find, the grass and flowers are types, in their passing, of the passing of human life, and, in their excellence, of the excellence of human life; and this in twofold way; first, by their Beneficence, and then, by their Endurance;—the grass of the earth, in giving the seed of corn, and in its beauty under tread of foot and stroke of scythe; and the grass of the waters, in giving its freshness to our rest, and in its bending before the wave.* But understood in the broad human and Divine sense, the “*herb yielding seed*” (as opposed to the fruit-tree yielding fruit) includes a third family of plants, and fulfils a third office to the human race. It includes the

* So also in Isa. xxxv. 7, the prevalence of righteousness and peace over all evil is thus foretold:

“In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be *grass*, with *reeds* and *rushes*.”

¹ [*Purgatorio*, i. 105.]

² [Matthew xxvii. 29, 48.]

great family of the lints and flaxes, and fulfils thus the *three* offices of giving food, raiment, and rest. Follow out this fulfilment; consider the association of the linen garment and the linen embroidery, with the priestly office, and the furniture of the Tabernacle; and consider how the rush has been, in all time, the first natural carpet thrown under the human foot. Then next observe the three virtues definitely set forth by the three families of plants; not arbitrarily or fancifully associated with them, but in all the three cases marked for us by Scriptural words:

1st. Cheerfulness, or joyful serenity; in the grass for food and beauty.—“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.”

2nd. Humility; in the grass for rest.—“A bruised reed shall He not break.”

3rd. Love; in the grass for clothing (because of its swift kindling).—“The smoking flax shall He not quench.”

And then, finally, observe the confirmation of these last two images in, I suppose, the most important prophecy, relating to the future state of the Christian Church, which occurs in the Old Testament, namely, that contained in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The measures of the Temple of God are to be taken; and because it is only by charity and humility that those measures ever can be taken, the angel has “a line of *flax* in his hand, and a measuring *reed*.”¹ The use of the line was to measure the land, and of the reed to take the dimensions of the buildings; so the buildings of the church, or its labours, are to be measured by *humility*, and its territory or land, by *love*.

The limits of the Church have, indeed, in later days, been measured, to the world’s sorrow, by another kind of flaxen line, burning with the fire of unholy zeal, not with that of Christian charity; and perhaps the best lesson which we can finally take to ourselves, in leaving these sweet

¹ [The references are Genesis i. 11; Matthew vi. 28; Isaiah xlii. 3; Matthew xii. 20; Ezekiel xl. 3.]

fields of the mediæval landscape, is the memory that, in spite of all the fettered habits of thought of his age, this great Dante, this inspired exponent of what lay deepest at the heart of the early Church, placed his terrestrial paradise where there had ceased to be fence or division, and where the grass of the earth was bowed down, in unity of direction, only by the soft waves that bore with them the forgetfulness of evil.

CHAPTER XV

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—SECONDLY, THE ROCKS

§ 1. I CLOSED the last chapter, not because our subject was exhausted, but to give the reader breathing time, and because I supposed he would hardly care to turn back suddenly from the subjects of thought last suggested, to the less pregnant matters of inquiry connected with mediæval landscape. Nor was the pause mistimed even as respects the order of our subjects; for hitherto we have been arrested chiefly by the beauty of the pastures and fields, and have followed the mediæval mind in its fond regard of leaf and flower. But now we have some hard hillclimbing to do; and the remainder of our investigation must be carried on, for the most part, on hands and knees, so that it is not ill done of us first to take breath.

§ 2. It will be remembered that in the last chapter, § 14, we supposed it probable that there would be considerable inaccuracies, in the mediæval mode of regarding nature. Hitherto, however, we have found none but, on the contrary, intense accuracy, precision, and affection. The reason of this is, that all floral and foliated beauty might be perfectly represented, as far as its form went, in the sculpture and ornamental painting of the period; hence the attention of men was thoroughly awakened to that beauty. But as mountains and clouds and large features of natural scenery could not be accurately represented, we must be prepared to find them not so carefully contemplated,—more carefully, indeed, than by the Greeks, but still in no wise as the things themselves deserve.

§ 3. It was besides noticed¹ that mountains, though regarded with reverence by the mediæval, were also the

¹ [See above, ch. xiv. §§ 2, 10, pp. 249, 253.]

subjects of a certain dislike and dread. And we have seen already¹ that in fact the place of the soul's purification, though a mountain, is yet by Dante subdued, whenever there is any pleasantness to be found upon it, from all mountainous character into grassy recesses, or slopes to rushy shore; and, in his general conception of it, resembles much more a castle mound, surrounded by terraced walks,—in the manner, for instance, of one of Turner's favourite scenes, the bank under Richmond Castle (Yorkshire); or, still more, one of the hill slopes divided by terraces, above the Rhine, in which the picturesqueness of the ground had been reduced to the form best calculated for the growing of costly wine, than any scene to which we moderns should naturally attach the term "Mountainous." On the other hand, although the *Inferno* is just as accurately measured and divided as the *Purgatory*, it is nevertheless cleft into rocky chasms which possess something of true mountain nature—nature which we moderns of the north should most of us seek with delight, but which, to the great Florentine, appeared adapted only for the punishment of lost spirits, and which, on the mind of nearly all his countrymen, would to this day produce a very closely correspondent effect; so that their graceful language, dying away on the north side of the Alps, gives its departing accents to proclaim its detestation of hardness and ruggedness; and is heard for the last time, as it bestows on the noblest defile in all the Grisons, if not in all the Alpine chain,² the name of the "*evil way*,"—"la Via Mala."

§ 4. This "*evil way*," though much deeper and more sublime, corresponds closely in general character to Dante's "*Evilpits*,"³ just as the banks of Richmond do to his mountain of *Purgatory*; and it is notable that Turner has been led to illustrate, with his whole strength, the character of both; having founded, as it seems to me, his early dreams

¹ [See above, pp. 272, 285, 290.]

² [So in *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 136, Ruskin calls the *Via Mala* "the grandest pass of the Alps." For his "placing" of some other passes, see *ibid.*, ii. ch. vii. § 131.]

³ [Malebolge, *Inferno*, xviii. 2.]

of mountain form altogether on the sweet banks of the Yorkshire streams,¹ and rooted his hardier thoughts of it in the rugged clefts of the Via Mala.

§ 5. Nor of the Via Mala only: a correspondent defile on the St. Gothard,—so terrible in one part of it, that it can, indeed, suggest no ideas but those of horror to minds either of northern or southern temper, and whose wild bridge, cast from rock to rock over a chasm as utterly hopeless and escapeless as any into which Dante gazed from the arches of Malebolge, has been, therefore, ascribed both by northern and southern lips to the master-building of the great spirit of evil,—supplied to Turner the elements of his most terrible thoughts in mountain vision, even to the close of his life. The noblest plate in the series of the *Liber Studiorum*,* one engraved by his own hand, is of that bridge; the last mountain journey he ever took was up the defile; and a rocky bank and arch, in the last mountain drawing which he ever executed with his perfect power, are remembrances of the path by which he had traversed in his youth this Malebolge of the St. Gothard.²

§ 6. It is therefore with peculiar interest, as bearing on our own proper subject, that we must examine Dante's conception of the rocks of the eighth circle. And first, as to general tone of colour: from what we have seen of the love of the mediæval for bright and variegated colour, we might guess that his chief cause of dislike to rocks would be, in Italy, their comparative colourlessness. With hardly an exception, the range of the Apennines is composed of a

* It is an unpublished plate. I know only two impressions of it.³

¹ [See on this subject, *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 233); vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 300); and *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 36 (Vol. XII. p. 371).]

² [Turner's "last mountain journey" was at some time between 1840 and 1845; see Ruskin's Epilogue to the *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*. "The last mountain drawing" is the "Pass of Faido," analysed in the next volume (ch. ii.); and see ch. xvii. § 24): compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30 n.]

³ [The "Swiss Bridge, Mont St. Gothard," called also "Via Mala." The drawing was in the collection of C. S. Bale. Of the very rare engraver's proofs, one was in Ruskin's possession: see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 73.]

stone of which some special account is given hereafter in the chapters on Materials of Mountains,¹ and of which one peculiarity, there noticed, is its monotony of hue. Our slates and granites are often of very lovely colours; but the Apennine limestone is so grey and toneless, that I know not any mountain districts so utterly melancholy as those which are composed of this rock, when unwooded. Now, as far as I can discover from the internal evidence in his poem, nearly all Dante's mountain wanderings had been upon this ground. He had journeyed once or twice among the Alps, indeed, but seems to have been impressed chiefly by the road from Garda to Trent, and that along the Cornice, both of which are either upon those limestones, or a dark serpentine, which shows hardly any colour till it is polished. It is not ascertainable that he had ever seen rock scenery of the finely coloured kind, aided by the Alpine mosses: I do not know the fall at Forlì (*Inferno*, xvi. 99), but every other scene to which he alludes is among these Apennine limestones; and when he wishes to give the idea of enormous mountain size, he names Tabernicch and Pietra-pana,—the one clearly chosen only for the sake of the last syllable of its name, in order to make a sound as of cracking ice, with the two sequent rhymes of the stanza,—and the other is an Apennine near Lucca.²

§ 7. His idea, therefore, of rock colour, founded on these experiences, is that of a dull or ashen grey, more or less stained by the brown of iron ochre, precisely as the Apennine limestones nearly always are; they grey being peculiarly cold and disagreeable. As we go down the very hill which stretches out from Pietra-pana towards Lucca, the stones

¹ [See next volume, ch. xi. § 6.]

² [*Inferno*, xxxii. 28:—

“Non fece al corso suo sì grosso velo
Di verno la Danoia in Ostericchi,
Nè 'I Tanai là sotto 'I freddo cielo,
Com' era quivi; chè' se Tabernicchi
Vi fosse su caduto, o Pietrapana,
Non avria pur dall' orlo fatto cricchi.”

The geographical position of Mount Tambernich is unknown.]

laid by the road side to mend it are of this ashen grey, with efflorescences of manganese and iron in the fissures. The whole of Malebolge is made of this rock, "All wrought in stone of iron-coloured grain."*

Perhaps the iron colour may be meant to predominate in Evilpits; but the definite grey limestone colour is stated higher up, the river Styx flowing at the base of "malignant grey cliffs"† (the word malignant being given to the iron-coloured Malebolge also); and the same whitish grey idea is given again definitely in describing the robe of the purgatorial or penance angel, which is "of the colour of ashes, or earth dug dry."¹ Ashes necessarily mean *wood*-ashes in an Italian mind, so that we get the tone very pale; and there can be no doubt whatever about the hue meant, because it is constantly seen on the sunny sides of the Italian hills, produced by the scorching of the ground, a dusty and lifeless whitish grey, utterly painful and oppressive; and I have no doubt that this colour, assumed eminently also by limestone crags in the sun, is the quality which Homer means to express by a term he applies often to bare rocks, and which is usually translated "craggy," or "rocky."² Now Homer is indeed quite capable of talking of "rocky rocks," just as he talks sometimes of "wet water"; but I think he means more by this word: it sounds as if it were derived from another, meaning "meal," or "flour," and I have little doubt it means "mealy white"; the Greek limestones being for the most part brighter in effect than the Apennine ones.

§ 8. And the fact is, that the great and pre-eminent fault of southern, as compared with northern scenery, is this rock-whiteness, which gives to distant mountain ranges, lighted by the sun, sometimes a faint and monotonous glow,

* (Cayley.) "Tutto di pietra, e di color ferrigno."—*Inf.* xviii. 2.

† "Maligne piagge grige."—*Inf.* vii. 108.

¹ [*Purgatorio*, ix. 115.]

² [παῖπαλοιV—*Iliad*, xiii. 17, etc. The derivation suggested by Ruskin is from παῖπαλῃ (meal).]

hardly detaching itself from the whiter parts of the sky, and sometimes a speckled confusion of white light with blue shadow, breaking up the whole mass of the hills, and making them look near and small; the whiteness being still distinct at the distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. The inferiority and meagreness of such effects of hill, compared with the massive purple and blue of our own heaps of crags and morass, or the solemn grass-greens and pinepurples of the Alps, have always struck me most painfully; and they have rendered it impossible for any poet or painter studying in the south, to enter with joy into hill scenery. Imagine the difference to Walter Scott, if instead of the single lovely colour which, named by itself alone, was enough to describe his hills,—

“Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots’ *blue*,”¹—

a dusty whiteness had been the image which first associated itself with a hill range, and he had been obliged, instead of “blue” Cheviots, to say “barley-meal-coloured” Cheviots.

§ 9. But although this would cause a somewhat painful shock even to a modern mind, it would be as nothing when compared with the pain occasioned by absence of colour to a mediæval one. We have been trained, by our ingenious principles of Renaissance architecture, to think that meal-colour and ash-colour are the properest colours of all; and that the most aristocratic harmonies are to be deduced out of grey mortar and creamy stucco. Any of our modern classical architects would delightedly “face” a heathery hill with Roman cement; and any Italian sacristan would, but for the cost of it, at once whitewash the Cheviots. But the mediævals had not arrived at these abstract principles of taste. They liked fresco better than whitewash; and, on the whole, thought that Nature was in the right in painting her flowers yellow, pink, and blue;—not grey. Accordingly,

¹ [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

this absence of colour from rocks, as compared with meadows and trees, was in their eyes an unredeemable defect; nor did it matter to them whether its place was supplied by the grey neutral tint, or the iron-coloured stain; for both colours, grey and brown, were, to them, hues of distress, despair, and mortification, hence adopted always for the dresses of monks; only the word "brown" bore, in their colour vocabulary, a still gloomier sense than with us. I was for some time embarrassed by Dante's use of it with respect to dark skies and water.¹ Thus, in describing a simple twilight—not a Hades twilight, but an ordinarily fair evening—(*Inf.* ii. 1) he says, the "brown" air took the animals of earth away from their fatigues;—the waves under Charon's boat are "brown" (*Inf.* iii. 118); and Lethe, which is perfectly clear and yet dark, as with oblivion, is "bruna-bruna," "brown exceeding brown."² Now, clearly in all these cases, no *warmth* is meant to be mingled in the colour. Dante had never seen one of our bog-streams, with its porter-coloured foam; and there can be no doubt that, in calling Lethe brown, he means it was dark slate grey, inclining to black; as, for instance, our clear Cumberland lakes, which, looked straight down upon where they are deep, seem to be lakes of ink. I am sure this is the colour he means; because no clear stream or lake on the Continent ever looks brown, but blue or green; and Dante, by merely taking away the pleasant colour, would get at once to this idea of grave clear grey. So, when he was talking of twilight, his eye for colour was far too good to let him call it *brown*, in our sense. Twilight is not brown, but purple, golden, or dark grey; and this last was what Dante meant. Farther, I find that this negation of colour is always the means by which Dante subdues his tones. Thus the fatal inscription on the Hades gate is written in "obscure colour,"³ and the air which torments the

¹ [On the subject of the use of "bruno" in Italian in the general sense of "dark," see *The Poems of Milton*, with notes by Thomas Keightly, 1859, vol. i. p. 65, and a letter in W. M. Rossetti's *Rossetti Papers*, 1903, pp. 79–80.]

² [*Purgatorio*, xxviii. 31.]

³ [*Inferno*, iii. 10.]

passionate spirits is “aer nero,” *black* air (*Inf.* v. 51), called presently afterwards (line 86) malignant air, just as the grey cliffs are called malignant cliffs.

§ 10. I was not, therefore, at a loss to find out what Dante meant by the word; but I was at a loss to account for his not, as it seemed, acknowledging the existence of the colour of *brown* at all; for if he called dark neutral tint “brown,” it remained a question what term he would use for things of the colour of burnt umber. But one day, just when I was puzzling myself about this, I happened to be sitting by one of our best living modern colourists, watching him at his work, when he said, suddenly, and by mere accident, after we had been talking of other things, “Do you know I have found that there is no *brown* in Nature? What we call brown is always a variety either of orange or purple. It never can be represented by umber, unless altered by contrast.”

§ 11. It is curious how far the significance of this remark extends, how exquisitely it illustrates and confirms the mediæval sense of hue;—how far, on the other hand, it cuts into the heart of the old umber idolatries of Sir George Beaumont and his colleagues, the “where do you put your *brown* tree”¹ system; the code of Cremona-violin-coloured foregrounds, of brown varnish and asphaltum; and all the old night-owl science, which, like Young’s pencil of sorrow,

“In melancholy dipped, *embrowns* the whole.”²

Nay, I do Young an injustice by associating his words with the asphalt schools; for his eye for colour was true, and like Dante’s; and I doubt not that he means dark grey, as Byron purple-grey in that night piece of the Siege of Corinth, beginning

“’Tis midnight; on the mountains *brown*
The cold, round moon looks deeply down;”

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 45 n.]

² [*Night Thoughts*, v. 74.]

and, by the way, Byron's best piece of evening colour farther certifies the hues of Dante's twilight,—it

“Dies like the dolphin, . . . as it gasps away;
The last still loveliest; till—'tis gone—and all is *grey*.”¹

§ 12. Let not, however, the reader confuse the use of brown, as an expression of a natural tint, with its use as a means of *getting other tints*. Brown is often an admirable ground, just because it is the only tint which is *not* to be in the finished picture, and because it is the best basis of many silver greys and purples utterly opposite to it in their nature. But there is infinite difference between laying a brown ground as a representation of shadow,—and as a base for light: and also an infinite difference between using brown shadows, associated with coloured lights—always the characteristic of false schools of colour,—and using brown as a warm neutral tint for general study. I shall have to pursue this subject farther hereafter, in noticing how brown is used by great colourists in their studies, not as colour, but as the pleasantest negation of colour, possessing more transparency than black, and having more pleasant and sunlike warmth. Hence Turner, in his early studies, used blue for distant neutral tint, and brown for foreground neutral tint; while, as he advanced in colour science, he gradually introduced, in the place of brown, strange purples, altogether peculiar to himself, founded, apparently, on Indian red and vermilion, and passing into various tones of russet and orange.* But, in the meantime, we must go back to Dante and his mountains.

§ 13. We find, then, that his general type of rock colour was meant, whether pale or dark, to be a colourless grey—the most melancholy hue which he supposed to exist in

* It is in these subtle purples that even the more elaborate passages of the earlier drawings are worked; as, for instance, the Highland streams, spoken of in “Pre-Raphaelitism.”² Also, Turner could, by opposition, get what colour he liked out of a brown. I have seen cases in which he had made it stand for the purest *rose* light.

¹ [*Childe Harold*, iv. 29.]

² [See Vol. XII. p. 368.]

Nature (hence the synonym for it, subsisting even till late times, in mediæval appellatives of dress, “*sad-coloured*”)—with some rusty stain from iron; or perhaps the “color ferrigno”¹ of the *Inferno* does not involve even so much of orange, but ought to be translated “iron grey.”

This being his idea of the colour of rocks, we have next to observe his conception of their substance. And I believe it will be found that the character on which he fixes first in them is *frangibility*—breakableness to bits, as opposed to wood, which can be sawn or rent, but not shattered with a hammer, and to metal, which is tough and malleable.

Thus, at the top of the abyss of the seventh circle, appointed for the “violent,” or souls who had done evil by force, we are told, first, that the edge of it was composed of “great broken stones in a circle”;² then, that the place was “Alpine”; and, becoming hereupon attentive, in order to hear what an Alpine place is like, we find that it was “like the place beyond Trent, where the rock, either by earthquake, or failure of support, has broken down to the plain, so that it gives any one at the top some means of getting down to the bottom.”³ This is not a very elevated or enthusiastic description of an Alpine scene; and it is far from mended by the following verses, in which we are told that Dante “began to go down by this great *unloading* of stones,” and that they moved often under his feet by reason of the new weight. The fact is that Dante, by many expressions throughout the poem, shows himself to have been a notably bad climber,⁴ and being fond of sitting in the sun, looking at his fair Baptistery, or walking in a dignified manner on flat pavement in a long robe, it puts him seriously out of his way when he has to take to his hands and knees, or look to his feet; so that the first strong

¹ [*Inferno*, xviii. 2.]

² [*Ibid.*, xi. 2.]

³ [*Ibid.*, xii. 4 *seq.*; and below, see *ibid.*, xii. 28, 29. Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xviii. § 25, where the former passage is cited in the Italian and in Cayley’s translation.]

⁴ [This has been doubted by some students of Dante: see *Inferno*, xxiii. 43–45, xxiv. 64, xxxiv. 86.]

impression made upon him by any Alpine scene whatever, is, clearly, that it is bad walking. When he is in a fright and hurry, and has a very steep place to go down, Virgil has to carry him altogether, and is obliged to encourage him, again and again, when they have a steep slope to go up,—the first ascent of the purgatorial mountain.¹ The similes by which he illustrates the steepness of that ascent are all taken from the Riviera of Genoa, now traversed by a good carriage road under the name of the Cornice; but as this road did not exist in Dante's time, and the steep precipices and promontories were then probably traversed by footpaths which, as they necessarily passed in many places over crumbling and slippery limestone, were doubtless not a little dangerous, and as in the manner they commanded the bays of sea below, and lay exposed to the full blaze of the south-eastern sun, they corresponded precisely to the situation of the path by which he ascends above the purgatorial sea, the image could not possibly have been taken from a better source for the fully conveying his idea to the reader: nor, by the way, is there reason to discredit, in *this* place, his powers of climbing; for, with his usual accuracy, he has taken the angle of the path for us, saying it was considerably more than forty-five.² Now a continuous mountain-slope of forty-five degrees is already quite unsafe either for ascent or descent, except by zigzag paths; and a greater slope than this could not be climbed, straightforward, but by help of crevices or jags in the rock, and great physical exertion besides.

§ 14. Throughout these passages, however, Dante's thoughts are clearly fixed altogether on the question of mere accessibility or inaccessibility. He does not show the smallest interest in the rocks, except as things to be conquered: and his description of their appearance is utterly meagre, involving no other epithets than "erto" (steep or

¹ [*Purgatorio*, iv. 36 *seq.*; and for Virgil carrying Dante, see *Inferno*, xxiii. 37 *seq.*]

² ["E la costa superba più assai,
Che da mezzo quadrante al centro lista."]

—*Purg.* iv. 41, 42.]

upright), *Inf.* xix. 131, *Purg.* iii. 47, etc.; “sconcio” (monstrous), *Inf.* xix. 131; “stagliata” (cut), *Inf.* xvii. 134; “maligno” (malignant), *Inf.* vii. 108; “duro” (hard), xx. 26; with “large” and “broken” (rotto) in various places.¹ No idea of roundness, massiveness, or pleasant form of any kind appears for a moment to enter his mind; and the different names which are given to the rocks in various places seem merely to refer to variations in size: thus a “rocco” is part of a “scoglio,” *Inf.* xx. 25 and xxvi. 17; a “scheggio” (xxi. 60 and xxvi. 17) is a less fragment yet; a “petrone,” or “sasso,” is a large stone or boulder (*Purg.* iv. 101, 104), and “pietra,” a less stone,—both of these last terms, especially “sasso,” being used for any large mountainous mass, as in *Par.* xxi. 106; and the vagueness of the word “monte” itself, like that of the French “montagne,” applicable either to a hill on a post-road requiring the drag to be put on,—or to the Mont Blanc, marks a peculiar carelessness in both nations, at the time of the formation of their languages, as to the sublimity of the higher hills; so that the effect produced on an English ear by the word “mountain,” signifying always a mass of a certain large size, cannot be conveyed either in French or Italian.

§ 15. In all these modes of regarding rocks we find (rocks being in themselves, as we shall see presently,² by no means monstrous or frightful things) exactly that inaccuracy in the mediæval mind which we had been led to expect, in its bearings on things contrary to the spirit of that symmetrical and perfect humanity which had formed its ideal; and it is very curious to observe how closely in the terms he uses, and the feelings they indicate, Dante here agrees with Homer. For the word *stagliata* (cut) corresponds very nearly to a favourite term of Homer’s respecting rocks “sculptured,” used by him also of ships’

¹ [For instance, *Inferno*, xi. 2, xxiii. 136; *Purgatorio*, iv. 31.]

² [See in the next volume, ch. xvi. (“Precipices”), ch. xviii. (“Stones”), etc.]
v. U

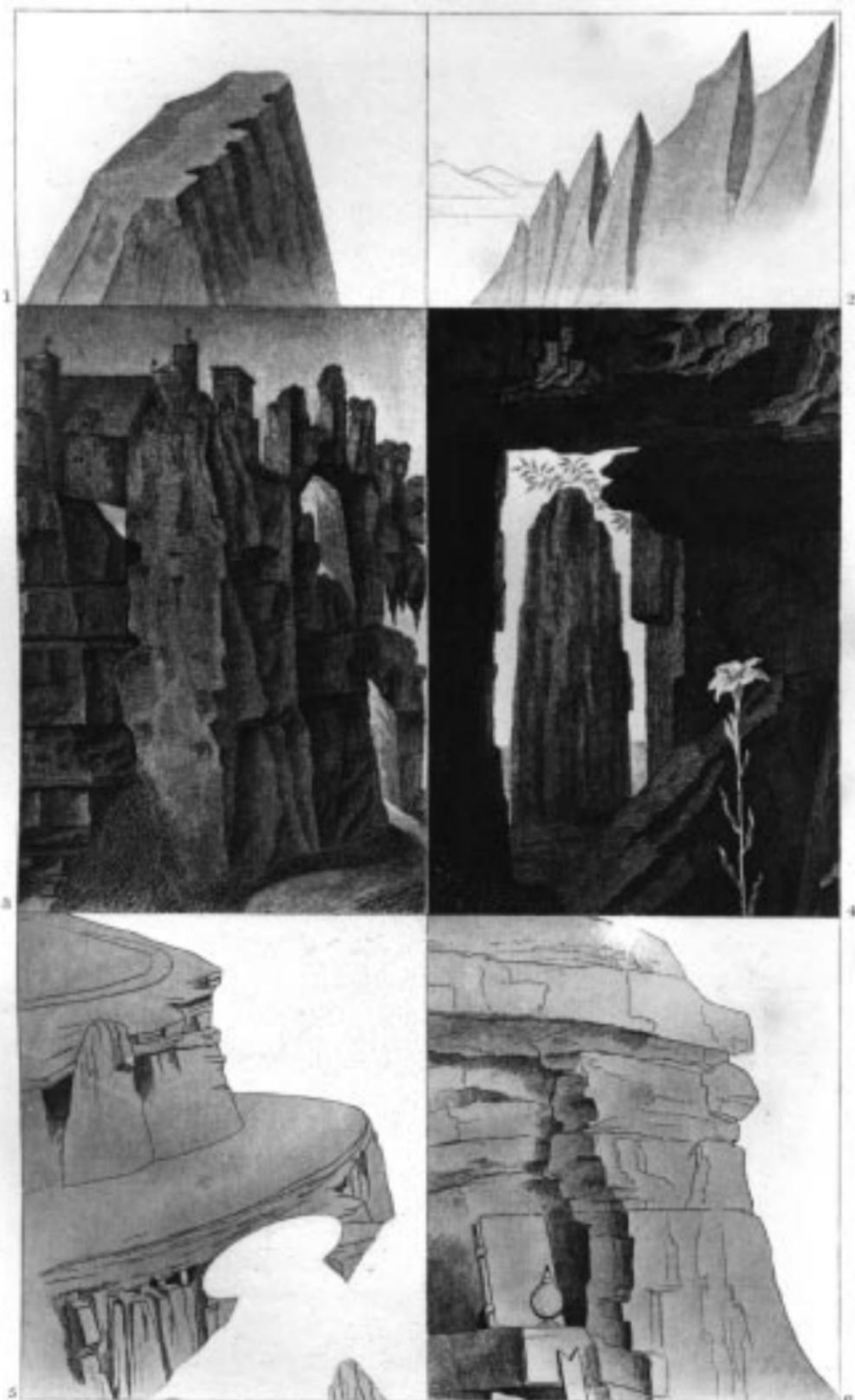
sides;¹ and the frescoes and illuminations of the Middle Ages enable us to ascertain exactly what this idea of “cut” rock was.

§ 16. In Plate 10 I have assembled some examples, which will give the reader a sufficient knowledge of mediæval rock-drawing, by men whose names are known. They are chiefly taken from engravings, with which the reader has it in his power to compare them,* and if, therefore, any injustice is done to the original paintings the fault is not mine; but the general impression conveyed is quite accurate, and it would not have been worth while, where work is so deficient in first conception, to lose time in insuring accuracy of facsimile. Some of the crags may be taller here, or broader there, than in the original paintings; but the character of the work is perfectly preserved, and that is all with which we are at present concerned.

Figs. 1 and 5 are by Ghirlandajo; 2 by Filippo Pesellino; 4 by Leonardo da Vinci; and 6 by Andrea del Castagno. All these are indeed workmen of a much later period than Dante, but the system of rock-drawing remains entirely unchanged from Giotto’s time to Ghirlandajo’s;—is then altered only by an introduction of stratification indicative of a little closer observance of nature, and so remains until Titian’s time. Fig. 1 is exactly representative of one of Giotto’s rocks, though actually by Ghirlandajo; and Fig. 2 is rather less skilful than Giotto’s ordinary work. Both these figures indicate precisely what Homer and Dante meant by “cut” rocks. They had observed the concave smoothness of certain rock fractures as eminently distinctive of rock from earth, and use the term “cut” or “sculptured” to distinguish the smooth surface from the knotty or sandy one, having observed nothing more respecting its real contours than is represented in Figs. 1 and 2, which

* See Appendix I. [p. 422.]

¹ [glafnoV: see above, p. 242; and for the application of the word to ships, see *Odyssey*, iii. 287, iv. 356. Compare also, in the next volume, ch. xvi. § 19.]



Leonardo, &c.

R. P. Coffey
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look as if they had been hewn out with an adze. Lorenzo Ghiberti preserves the same type, even in his finest work.

Fig. 3, from an interesting sixteenth century MS. in the British Museum (Cotton, Augustus, A. 5), is characteristic of the best later illuminators' work;¹ and Fig. 5, from Ghirlandajo, is pretty illustrative of Dante's idea of terraces on the purgatorial mountain.² It is the road by which the Magi descend in his picture of their Adoration, in the Academy of Florence. Of the other examples I shall have more to say in the chapter on Precipices;³ meanwhile we have to return to the landscape of the poem.

§ 17. Inaccurate as this conception of rock was, it seems to have been the only one which, in mediæval art, had place as representative of mountain scenery. To Dante, mountains are inconceivable except as great broken stones or crags; all their broad contours and undulations seem to have escaped his eye. It is, indeed, with his usual undertone of symbolic meaning that he describes the great broken stones, and the fall of the shattered mountain, as the entrance to the circle appointed for the punishment of the violent;⁴ meaning that the violent and cruel, notwithstanding all their iron hardness of heart, have no true strength, but, either by earthquake, or want of support, fall at last into desolate ruin, naked, loose, and shaking under the tread. But in no part of the poem do we find allusion to mountains in any other than a stern light; nor the slightest evidence that Dante cared to look at them. From that hill of San Miniato, whose steps he knew so well, the eye commands, at the farther extremity of the Val d'Arno, the whole purple range of the mountains of Carrara, peaked and mighty, seen always against the sunset light in silent outline, the chief forms that rule

¹ [For further references to this MS., which, however, is of the fifteenth century, see Vol. VI. pp. 99, 309.]

² [*Purgatorio*, xvii. 137; xxii. 92, etc., etc.]

³ [See ch. xvi. §§ 35, 36, in the next volume.]

⁴ [As above (p. 303), the opening lines of *Inferno*, xi.]

the scene as twilight fades away. By this vision Dante seems to have been wholly unmoved, and, but for Lucan's mention of Aruns at Luna would seemingly not have spoken of the Carrara hills in the whole course of his poem:¹ when he does allude to them, he speaks of their white marble, and their command of stars and sea, but has evidently no regard for the hills themselves. There is not a single phrase or syllable throughout the poem which indicates such a regard. Ugolino, in his dream, seemed to himself to be in the mountains, "by cause of which the Pisan cannot see Lucca;"² and it is impossible to look up from Pisa to that hoary slope without remembering the awe that there is in the passage; nevertheless, it was as a hunting-ground only that he remembered those hills. Adam of Brescia, tormented with eternal thirst, remembers the hills of Romena, but only for the sake of their sweet waters:

"The rills that glitter down the grassy slopes
Of Casentino, making fresh and soft
The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream,
Stand ever in my view."³

And, whenever hills are spoken of as having any influence on character, the repugnance to them is still manifest; they are always causes of rudeness or cruelty:

"But that ungrateful and malignant race,
Who in old times came down from Fesole,
Ay, and still smack of their rough mountain flint,
Will, for thy good deeds, show thee enmity.
Take heed thou cleanse thee of their ways."

So again—

"As one mountain-bred,
Rugged, and clownish, if some city's walls
He chance to enter, round him stares agape."

¹ [See *Inferno*, xx. 46. The reference in Lucan is *Pharsalia*, i. 575.]

² [*Inferno*, xxxiii. 30.]

³ [*Inferno*, xxx. 66; the translation here and in the following passages is Cary's. The other references in § 17 are *Inferno*, xv. 64 *seq.*, xv. 62 *seq.*; *Purgatorio*, xxvi. 67–69.]

§ 18. Finally, although the Carrara mountains are named as having command of the stars and sea, the *Alps* are never specially mentioned but in bad weather, or snow. On the sand of the circle of the blasphemers—

“Fell slowly wafting down
Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
On Alpine summit, when the wind is hushed.”¹

So the Paduans have to defend their town and castles against inundation,

“Ere the genial warmth be felt,
On Chiarentana’s top.”

The clouds of anger, in Purgatory, can only be figured to the reader who has

“On an Alpine height been ta’en by cloud,
Through which thou sawest no better than the mole
Doth through opacous membrane.”

And in approaching the second branch of Lethe, the seven ladies pause,—

“Arriving at the verge
Of a dim umbrage hoar, such as is seen
Beneath green leaves and gloomy branches oft
To overbrow a bleak and Alpine cliff.”

§ 19. Truly, it is unfair of Dante, that when he is going to use snow for a lovely image, and speak of it as melting away under heavenly sunshine, he must needs put it on the Apennines, not on the Alps:

“As snow that lies
Amidst the living rafters, on the back
Of Italy, congealed, when drifted high
And closely piled by rough Sclavonian blasts,
Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls.
And straightway, melting, it distils away,
Like a fire-wasted taper; thus was I,
Without a sigh, or tear, consumed in heart.”²

¹ [*Inferno*, xiv. 30 (Cary’s translation). The other references in § 18 are *Inferno*, xv. 9; *Purgatorio*, xvii. 1–3, xxxiii. 109 *seq.*]

² [*Purgatorio*, xxx. 88.]

The reader will thank me for reminding him, though out of its proper order, of the exquisite passage of Scott which we have to compare with this:

“As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the monarch’s feet she lay.”¹

Examine the context of this last passage, and its beauty is quite beyond praise; but note the northern love of rocks in the very first words I have to quote from Scott, “The rock that gave it rest.” Dante could not have thought of his “cut rocks” as giving rest even to snow. He must put it on the pine branches, if it is to be at peace.

§ 20. There is only one more point to be noticed in the Dantesque landscape; namely, the feeling entertained by the poet towards the sky. And the love of mountains is so closely connected with the love of clouds, the sublimity of both depending much on their association, that, having found Dante regardless of the Carrara mountains as seen from San Miniato, we may well expect to find him equally regardless of the clouds in which the sun sank behind them. Accordingly, we find that his only pleasure in the sky depends on its “white clearness,”—that turning into “bianco aspetto di cilestro” which is so peculiarly characteristic of fine days in Italy.² His pieces of pure pale light are always exquisite. In the dawn on the purgatorial mountain, first, in its pale white, he sees the “tremolar della marina”³—trembling of the sea; then it becomes vermilion; and at last, near sunrise, orange.⁴ These are precisely the changes of a calm and perfect dawn. The scenery of Paradise begins with “Day added to day,” the light of the sun so flooding the heavens, that “never rain nor river made lake so

¹ [*Lady of the Lake*, vi. 27.]

² [*Purgatorio*, xxvi. 6; on the white Italian skies compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 144 and *n.*.)]

³ [*Purgatorio*, i. 117.]

⁴ [*Purgatorio*, ii. 7–9.]

wide;”¹ and throughout the Paradise all the beauty depends on spheres of light, or stars, never on clouds. But the pit of the Inferno is at first sight obscure, deep, and so *cloudy* that at its bottom nothing could be seen.² When Dante and Virgil reach the marsh in which the souls of those who have been angry and sad in their lives are for ever plunged, they find it covered with thick fog; and the condemned souls say to them,—

“We once were sad,
In the *sweet air made gladsome by the sun.*
Now in these murky settlings are we sad.”

Even the angel crossing the marsh to help them is annoyed by this bitter marsh smoke “*fummo acerbo,*” and continually sweeps it with his hand from before his face.³

Anger, on the purgatorial mountain, is in like manner imaged, because of its blindness and wildness, by the Alpine clouds. As they emerge from its mist they see the white light radiated through the fading folds of it; and, except this appointed cloud, no other can touch the mountain of purification.

“Tempest none, shower, hail, or snow,
Hoar-frost, or dewy moistness, higher falls,
Than that brief scale of threefold steps. Thick clouds,
Nor scudding rack, are ever seen, swift glance
Ne'er lightens, nor Thaumantian iris gleams.”⁴

Dwell for a little while on this intense love of Dante for light,—taught, as he is at last by Beatrice, to gaze on the sun itself like an eagle,⁵—and endeavour to enter into his equally intense detestation of all mist, rack of cloud, or dimness of rain; and then consider with what kind of temper he would have regarded a landscape of Copley

¹ [*Paradiso*, i. 61, 62, 80, 81.]

² [*Inferno*, iv. 10–12; for the next quotation (*ibid.*, vii. 121 *seq.*) see also *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 381).]

³ [*Inferno*, ix. 82, 83.]

⁴ [*Purgatorio*, xxi. 46 *seq.*]

⁵ [*Paradiso*, i. 47, 48. Dante, however, does not say that he himself could gaze upon the sun, but only that Beatrice so gazed.]

Fielding's, or passed a day in the Highlands. He has, in fact, assigned to the souls of the gluttonous no other punishment in the Inferno than perpetuity of Highland weather:

"Showers
Ceaseless, accursed, heavy and cold, unchanged
For ever, both in kind and in degree,—
Large hail, discoloured water, sleety flaw,
Through the dim midnight air streamed down amain."¹

§ 21. However, in this immitigable dislike of clouds, Dante goes somewhat beyond the general temper of his age. For although the calm sky was alone loved, and storm and rain were dreaded by all men, yet the white horizontal clouds of serene summer were regarded with great affection by all early painters, and considered as one of the accompaniments of the manifestation of spiritual power; sometimes, for theological reasons which we shall soon have to examine, being received, even without any other sign, as the types of blessing or Divine acceptance; and in almost every representation of the heavenly paradise, these level clouds are set by the early painters for its floor, or for thrones of its angels; whereas Dante retains steadily, through circle after circle, his cloudless thought, and concludes his painting of heaven, as he began it, upon the purgatorial mountain, with the image of shadowless morning:

"I raised my eyes, and as at morn is seen
The horizon's eastern quarter to excel,
So likewise, that pacific Oriflamb
Glowed in the midmost, and toward every part,
With like gradation paled away its flame."²

But the best way of regarding this feeling of Dante's is as the ultimate and most intense expression of the love of light, colour, and clearness, which, as we saw above, distinguish the mediæval from the Greek on one side, and, as

¹ [*Inferno*, vi. 7 *seq.* (Cary).]

² [*Paradiso*, xxxi. 118, 119, 127–129 (seven lines being omitted in Ruskin's quotation after the first two). He here uses Cayley's translation, in which, however, "Auriflame" is read for "Oriflamb"—*i.e.* the Aurea flamma, a standard originally belonging to the monks of St. Denis, and assumed by the French kings in the field during the twelfth and following centuries.]

we shall presently see, distinguished him from the modern on the other. For it is evident that precisely in the degree in which the Greek was agriculturally inclined, in that degree the sight of clouds would become to him more acceptable than to the mediæval knight, who only looked for the fine afternoons in which he might gather the flowers in his garden, and in nowise shared or imagined the previous anxieties of his gardener. Thus, when we find Ulysses comforted about Ithaca, by being told it had “plenty of rain,” and the maids of Colonos boasting of their country for the same reason,¹ we may be sure that they had some regard for clouds; and accordingly, except Aristophanes, of whom more presently,² all the Greek poets speak fondly of the clouds, and consider them the fitting resting-places of the gods; including in their idea of clouds not merely the thin clear cirrus, but the rolling and changing volume of the thunder-cloud; nor even these only, but also the dusty whirlwind cloud of the earth, as in that noble chapter of Herodotus which tells us of the cloud, full of mystic voices, that rose out of the dust of Eleusis, and went down to Salamis.³ Clouds and rain were of course regarded with a like gratitude by the eastern and southern nations—Jews and Egyptians; and it is only among the northern mediævals, with whom fine weather was rarely so prolonged as to occasion painful drought, or dangerous famine, and over whom the clouds broke coldly and fiercely when they came, that the love of serene light assumes its intense character, and the fear of tempest its gloomiest; so that the powers of the clouds which to the Greek foretold his conquest at Salamis, and with whom he fought in alliance, side by side with their lightnings, under the crest of Parnassus,⁴ seemed, in the heart of the Middle Ages, to be

¹ [For Ithaca, see above, p. 243; and for the reference to the Chorus in the *ædipus Coloneus*, p. 273.]

² [See below, p. 318.]

³ [Herodotus, viii. 65. Compare Vol. IV. p. 330, where the passage is also referred to.]

⁴ [See again Vol. IV. p. 330 *n.*]

Observe, Buonconte, as he dies, crosses his arms over his breast, pressing them together, partly in his pain, partly in prayer. His body thus lies by the river shore, as on a sepulchral monument, the arms folded into a cross. The rage of the river, under the influence of the evil demon, *unlooses this cross*, dashing the body supinely away, and rolling it over and over by bank and bottom. Nothing can be truer to the action of a stream in fury than these lines. And how desolate is it all! The lonely flight,—the grisly wound, “pierced in the throat,”—the death, without help or pity,—only the name of Mary on the lips,—and the cross folded over the heart. Then the rage of the demon and the river,—the noteless grave,—and, at last, even she who had been most trusted forgetting him,—

“Giovanna, nor none else, have care for me.”

There is, I feel assured, nothing else like it in all the range of poetry; a faint and harsh echo of it, only, exists in one Scottish ballad, “The Twa Corbies.”¹

Here, then, I think, we may close our inquiry into the nature of the mediæval landscape; not but that many details yet require to be worked out; but these will be best observed by recurrence to them, for comparison with similar details in modern landscape,—our principal purpose, the getting at the governing tones and temper of conception, being, I believe, now sufficiently accomplished. And I think that our subject may be best pursued by immediately turning from the mediæval to the perfectly modern landscape; for although I have much to say respecting the transitional state of mind exhibited in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I believe the transitions may be more easily explained after we have got clear sight of the extremes; and that by getting perfect and separate hold of the three great phases of art,—Greek, mediæval, and

¹ [For another reference to the ballad, see *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. § 68.]

modern,—we shall be enabled to trace, with least chance of error, those curious vacillations which brought us to the modern temper while vainly endeavouring to resuscitate the Greek. I propose, therefore, in the next chapter to examine the spirit of modern landscape, as seen generally in modern painting, and especially in the poetry of Scott.

CHAPTER XVI

OF MODERN LANDSCAPE

§ 1. WE turn our eyes, therefore, as boldly and as quickly as may be, from these serene fields and skies of mediæval art, to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. And, I believe, the first thing that will strike us, or that ought to strike us, is their *cloudiness*.

Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the mediæval was in *stability, definiteness, and luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what it is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.

§ 2. We find, however, together with this general delight in breeze and darkness, much attention to the real form of clouds, and careful drawing of effects of mist; so that the appearance of objects, as seen through it, becomes a subject of science with us; and the faithful representation of that appearance is made of primal importance, under the name of aerial perspective. The aspects of sunset and sunrise, with all their attendant phenomena of cloud and mist, are watchfully delineated; and in ordinary daylight landscape, the sky is considered of so much importance, that a principal mass of foliage, or a whole foreground, is unhesitatingly thrown into shade merely to bring out the form of a white

cloud. So that, if a general and characteristic name were needed for modern landscape art, none better could be invented than “the service of clouds.”

§ 3. And this name would, unfortunately, be characteristic of our art in more ways than one. In the last chapter, I said that all the Greeks spoke kindly about the clouds, except Aristophanes; and he, I am sorry to say (since his report is so unfavourable), is the only Greek who had studied them attentively. He tells us, first, that they are “great goddesses to idle men”; then, that they are “mistresses of disputings, and logic, and monstrosities, and noisy chattering”; declares that whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter, and place supreme power in the hands of an unknown god “Whirlwind”; and, finally, he displays their influence over the mind of one of their disciples, in his sudden desire “to speak ingeniously concerning smoke.”¹

There is, I fear, an infinite truth in this Aristophanic judgment applied to our modern cloud-worship. Assuredly, much of the love of mystery in our romances, our poetry, our art, and, above all, in our metaphysics, must come under that definition so long ago given by the great Greek, “speaking ingeniously concerning smoke.” And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvellous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the “dethroning of Jupiter,” the “coronation of the whirlwind.”

§ 4. Nor of whirlwind merely, but also of darkness or ignorance respecting all stable facts. That darkening of the foreground to bring out the white cloud, is, in one aspect of it, a type of the subjection of all plain and positive fact,

¹ [*Clouds*, 316–318; 380; 320.]

to what is uncertain and unintelligible. And, as we examine farther into the matter, we shall be struck by another great difference between the old and modern landscape, namely, that in the old no one ever thought of drawing anything but as well *as he could*. That might not be *well*, as we have seen in the case of rocks; but it was as well as he *could*, and always distinctly. Leaf, or stone, or animal, or man, it was equally drawn with care and clearness, and its essential characters shown. If it was an oak tree, the acorns were drawn; if a flint pebble, its veins were drawn; if an arm of the sea, its fish were drawn; if a group of figures, their faces and dresses were drawn—to the very last subtlety of expression and end of thread that could be got into the space, far off or near. But now our ingenuity is all “concerning smoke.” Nothing is truly drawn but that; all else is vague, slight, imperfect; got with as little pains as possible. You examine your closest foreground, and find no leaves; your largest oak, and find no acorns; your human figure, and find a spot of red paint instead of a face; and in all this, again and again, the Aristophanic words come true, and the clouds seem to be “great goddesses to idle men.”

§ 5. The next thing that will strike us, after this love of clouds, is the love of liberty. Whereas the mediæval was always shutting himself into castles, and behind fosses, and drawing brickwork neatly, and beds of flowers primly, our painters delight in getting to the open fields and moors, abhor all hedges and moats; never paint anything but free-growing trees, and rivers gliding “at their own sweet will”;¹ eschew formality down to the smallest detail; break and displace the brickwork which the mediæval would have carefully cemented; leave unpruned the thickets he would have delicately trimmed; and, carrying the love of liberty even to license, and the love of wildness even to ruin, take pleasure at last in every aspect of age and desolation which

¹ [Wordsworth, *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, part ii. No. 36.]

emancipates the objects of nature from the government of men;—on the castle wall displacing its tapestry with ivy, and spreading, through the garden, the bramble for the rose.

§ 6. Connected with this love of liberty we find a singular manifestation of love of mountains, and see our painters traversing the wildest places of the globe in order to obtain subjects with craggy foregrounds and purple distances. Some few of them remain content with pollards and flat land; but these are always men of third-rate order; and the leading masters, while they do not reject the beauty of the low grounds, reserve their highest powers to paint Alpine peaks or Italian promontories. And it is eminently noticeable, also, that this pleasure in the mountains is never mingled with fear, or tempered by a spirit of meditation, as with the mediæval; but is always free and fearless, brightly exhilarating, and wholly unreflective; so that the painter feels that his mountain foreground may be more consistently animated by a sportsman than a hermit; and our modern society in general goes to the mountains, not to fast, but to feast, and leaves their glaciers covered with chicken-bones and egg-shells.

§ 7. Connected with this want of any sense of solemnity in mountain scenery, is a general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature; that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein. Whereas the mediæval never painted a cloud, but with the purpose of placing an angel in it; and a Greek never entered a wood without expecting to meet a god in it; *we* should think the appearance of an angel in the cloud wholly unnatural, and should be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere. Our chief ideas about the wood are connected with poaching. We have no belief that the clouds contain more than so many inches of rain or hail, and from our ponds and ditches expect nothing more divine than ducks and watercresses.

§ 8. Finally: connected with this profanity of temper is

a strong tendency to deny the sacred element of colour, and make our boast in blackness. For though occasionally glaring or violent, modern colour is on the whole eminently sombre, tending continually to grey or brown, and by many of our best painters consistently falsified, with a confessed pride in what they call chaste or subdued tints; so that, whereas a mediæval paints his sky bright blue and his foreground bright green, gilds the towers of his castles, and clothes his figures with purple and white, we paint our sky grey, our foreground black, and our foliage brown, and think that enough is sacrificed to the sun in admitting the dangerous brightness of a scarlet cloak or a blue jacket.

§ 9. These, I believe, are the principal points which would strike us instantly, if we were to be brought suddenly into an exhibition of modern landscapes out of a room filled with mediæval work. It is evident that there are both evil and good in this change; but how much evil, or how much good, we can only estimate by considering, as in the former divisions of our inquiry, what are the real roots of the habits of mind which have caused them.

At first, it is evident that the title "Dark Ages," given to the mediæval centuries, is, respecting art, wholly inapplicable. They were, on the contrary, the bright ages; ours are the dark ones. I do not mean metaphysically, but literally. They were the ages of gold; ours are the ages of umber.

*Distinctive
characters of
the modern
mind:*

This is partly mere mistake in us; we build brown brick walls, and wear brown coats, because we have been blunderingly taught to do so, and go on doing so mechanically. There is, however, also some cause for the change in our own tempers.

*1. Despond-
ency arising from
faithless-
ness.*

On the whole, these are much *sadder* ages than the early ones; not sadder in a noble and deep way, but in a dim wearied way,—the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of soul and body.¹ The Middle Ages had their wars and agonies, but also intense delights.

¹ [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xii. § 4.]

Their gold was dashed with blood; but ours is sprinkled with dust. Their life was inwoven with white and purple: ours is one seamless stuff of brown. Not that we are without apparent festivity, but festivity more or less forced, mistaken, embittered, incomplete—not of the heart. How wonderfully, since Shakspeare's time, have we lost the power of laughing at bad jests! The very finish of our wit belies our gaiety.

§ 10. The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart is, I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a generation of men (savage or civilized) who, taken as a body, so wofully fulfilled the words "having no hope, and without God in the world,"¹ as the present civilized European race. A Red Indian or Otaheitan savage has more sense of a divine existence round him, or government over him, than the plurality of refined Londoners and Parisians: and those among us who may in some sense be said to believe, are divided almost without exception into two broad classes, Romanist and Puritan; who, but for the interference of the unbelieving portions of society, would, either of them, reduce the other sect as speedily as possible to ashes; the Romanist having always done so whenever he could, from the beginning of their separation, and the Puritan at this time holding himself in complacent expectation of the destruction of Rome by volcanic fire. Such division as this between persons nominally of one religion, that is to say, believing in the same God, and the same Revelation, cannot but become a stumbling-block of the gravest kind to all thoughtful and far-sighted men,—a stumbling-block which they can only surmount under the most favourable circumstances of early education. Hence, nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands. Most

¹ [Ephesians ii. 12.]

of our scientific men are in this last class: our popular authors either set themselves definitely against all religious form, pleading for simple truth and benevolence, (Thackeray, Dickens,) or give themselves up to bitter and fruitless statement of facts, (De Balzac,) or surface-painting, (Scott,) or careless blasphemy, sad or smiling, (Byron, Beranger). Our earnest poets and deepest thinkers are doubtful and indignant, (Tennyson, Carlyle); one or two, anchored, indeed, but anxious or weeping, (Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning); and of these two, the first is not so sure of his anchor, but that now and then it drags with him, even to make him cry out,—

“Great God, I had rather be
A Pagan suckled in some creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.”¹

In politics, religion is now a name; in art, a hypocrisy or affectation. Over German religious pictures the inscription, “See how Pious I am,” can be read at a glance by any clear-sighted person. Over French and English religious pictures the inscription, “See how Impious I am,” is equally legible. All sincere and modest art is, among us, profane.*

§ 11. This faithlessness operates among us according to our tempers, producing either sadness or levity, and being the ultimate root alike of our discontents and of our wantonnesses. It is marvellous how full of contradiction it makes us: we are first dull, and seek for wild and lonely places because we have no heart for the garden; presently we recover our spirits, and build an assembly-room among the mountains, because we have no

* Pre-Raphaelitism, of course, excepted, which is a new phase of art, in no wise considered in this chapter. Blake was sincere, but full of wild creeds, and somewhat diseased in brain.²

¹ [*Miscellaneous Sonnets*, part i. No. 33.]

² [For Blake, see above, p. 138.]

reverence for the desert. I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one's shooting over it.¹

§ 12. There is, however, another, and a more innocent root of our delight in wild scenery.

All the Renaissance principles of art tended, as I have before often explained, to the setting Beauty above Truth, and seeking for it always at the expense of truth. And the proper punishment of such pursuit—the punishment which all the laws of the universe rendered inevitable—was, that those who thus pursued beauty should wholly lose sight of beauty. All the thinkers of the age, as we saw previously, declared that it did not exist. The age seconded their efforts, and banished beauty, so far as human effort could succeed in doing so, from the face of the earth, and the form of man. To powder the hair, to patch the cheek, to hoop the body, to buckle the foot, were all part and parcel of the same system which reduced streets to brick walls, and pictures to brown stains. One desert of Ugliness was extended before the eyes of mankind; and their pursuit of the beautiful, so recklessly continued, received unexpected consummation in high-heeled shoes and periwigs—Gower Street,² and Gaspar Poussin.

§ 13. Reaction from this state was inevitable, if any true life was left in the races of mankind; and, accordingly, though still forced, by rule and fashion, to the producing and wearing all that is ugly, men steal out, half-ashamed of themselves for doing so, to the fields and mountains; and, finding among these the colour, and liberty, and variety, and power, which are for ever grateful to them, delight in these to an extent never before known; rejoice in all the wildest shattering of the mountain side, as an opposition to Gower Street, gaze in a rapt manner at

¹ [An expectation presently fulfilled: see Ruskin's description of a drawing by J. F. Lewis, *Academy Notes*, 1856 (s. Old Water-Colour Society).]

² [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 4).]

sunsets and sunrises, to see there the blue, and gold, and purple, which glow for them no longer on knight's armour or temple porch; and gather with care out of the fields, into their blotted herbaria, the flowers which the five orders of architecture have banished from their doors and casements.¹

§ 14. The absence of care for personal beauty, which is another great characteristic of the age, adds to this 4. Disdain of beauty in man. feeling in a twofold way: first, by turning all reverent thoughts away from human nature; and making us think of men as ridiculous or ugly creatures, getting through the world as well as they can, and spoiling it in doing so; not ruling it in a kingly way and crowning all its loveliness. In the Middle Ages hardly anything but vice could be caricatured, because virtue was always visibly and personally noble: now virtue itself is apt to inhabit such poor human bodies, that no aspect of it is invulnerable to jest; and for all fairness we have to seek to the flowers, for all sublimity, to the hills.

The same want of care operates, in another way, by lowering the standard of health, increasing the susceptibility to nervous or sentimental impressions, and thus adding to the other powers of nature over us whatever charm may be felt in her fostering the melancholy fancies of brooding idleness.

§ 15. It is not, however, only to existing inanimate nature that our want of beauty in person and dress has driven us. The imagination of it, as it was seen in 5. Romantic imagination of the past. our ancestors, haunts us continually; and while we yield to the present fashions, or act in accordance with the dullest modern principles of economy and utility, we look fondly back to the manners of the ages of chivalry, and delight in painting, to the fancy, the fashions we pretend to despise, and the splendours

¹ [Here is the point of connexion between *The Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters* which Ruskin notes in a letter cited in Vol. X. pp. 207–208 n.]

we think it wise to abandon. The furniture and personages of our romance are sought, when the writer desires to please most easily, in the centuries which we profess to have surpassed in everything; the art which takes us into the present times is considered as both daring and degraded, and while the weakest words please us, and are regarded as poetry, which recall the manners of our forefathers, or of strangers, it is only as familiar and vulgar that we accept the description of our own.

In this we are wholly different from all the races that preceded us. All other nations have regarded their ancestors with reverence as saints or heroes; but have nevertheless thought their own deeds and ways of life the fitting subjects for their arts of painting or of verse. We, on the contrary, regard our ancestors as foolish and wicked, but yet find our chief artistic pleasure in descriptions of their ways of life.

The Greeks and mediævals honoured, but did not imitate their forefathers; we imitate, but do not honour.

§ 16. With this romantic love of beauty, forced to seek in history, and in external nature, the satisfaction it cannot find in ordinary life, we mingle a more rational passion, the due and just result of newly awakened powers of attention. Whatever may first lead us to the scrutiny of natural objects, that scrutiny never fails of its reward. Unquestionably they are intended to be regarded by us with both reverence and delight; and every hour we give to them renders their beauty more apparent, and their interest more engrossing. Natural science—which can hardly be considered to have existed before modern times—rendering our knowledge fruitful in accumulation, and exquisite in accuracy, has acted for good or evil, according to the temper of the mind which received it; and though it has hardened the faithlessness of the dull and proud, has shown new grounds for reverence to hearts which were thoughtful and humble. The neglect of the art of war, while it has somewhat weakened and

6. Interest in science.

7. Fear of war.

deformed the body,* has given us leisure and opportunity for studies to which, before, time and space were equally wanting; lives which once were early wasted on the battlefield are now passed usefully in the study; nations which exhausted themselves in annual warfare now dispute with each other the discovery of new planets;¹ and the serene philosopher dissects the plants, and analyses the dust, of lands which were of old only traversed by the knight in hasty march, or by the borderer in heedless rapine.

§ 17. The elements of progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind, we might beforehand anticipate that one of the notable characters of our art would be its inconsistency; that efforts would be made in every direction, and arrested by every conceivable cause and manner of failure; that in all we did, it would become next to impossible to distinguish accurately the grounds for praise or for regret; that all previous canons of practice and methods of thought would be gradually overthrown, and criticism continually defied by successes which no one had expected, and sentiments which no one could define.

§ 18. Accordingly, while, in our inquiries into Greek and mediæval art, I was able to describe, in general terms, what all men did or felt, I find now many characters in many men; some, it seems to me, founded on the inferior and evanescent principles of modernism, on its recklessness, impatience, or faithlessness; others founded on its science, its new affection for nature, its love of openness and liberty. And among all these characters, good or evil, I see that some, remaining to us from old or transitional periods, do not properly belong to us, and will soon fade away, and

* Of course this is meant only of the modern citizen or country gentleman, as compared with a citizen of Sparta or old Florence. I leave it to others to say whether the "neglect of the *art* of war" may or may not, in a yet more fatal sense, be predicated of the English nation. War *without* art, we seem, with God's help, able still to wage nobly.

¹ [The reference here and in the author's note above is of course to the Crimean War, to the alliance of France and England therein, and to the discoveries of various minor planets in the two countries severally during the years 1854–1856.]

others, though not yet distinctly developed, are yet properly our own, and likely to grow forward into greater strength.

For instance: our reprobation of bright colour is, I think, for the most part, mere affectation, and must soon be done away with. Vulgarity, dulness, or impiety, will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and grey, as in Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Salvator; but we are not wholly vulgar, dull, or impious; nor, as moderns, are we necessarily obliged to continue so in anywise. Our greatest men, whether sad or gay, still delight, like the great men of all ages, in brilliant hues. The colouring of Scott and Byron is full and pure; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess. Our practical failures in colouring are merely the necessary consequences of our prolonged want of practice during the periods of Renaissance affectation and ignorance; and the only durable difference between old and modern colouring, is the acceptance of certain hues, by the modern, which please him by expressing that melancholy peculiar to his more reflective or sentimental character, and the greater variety of them necessary to express his greater science.

§ 19. Again: if we ever become wise enough to dress consistently and gracefully, to make health a principal object in education, and to render our streets beautiful with art, the external charm of past history will in great measure disappear. There is no essential reason, because we live after the fatal seventeenth century, that we should never again be able to confess interest in sculpture, or see brightness in embroidery; nor, because now we choose to make the night deadly with our pleasures, and the day with our labours, prolonging the dance till dawn, and the toil to twilight, that we should never again learn how rightly to employ the sacred trusts of strength, beauty, and time. Whatever external charm attaches itself to the past, would then be seen in proper subordination to the brightness of present life; and the elements of romance would exist, in the earlier ages, only in the attraction which must generally

belong to whatever is unfamiliar; in the reverence which a noble nation always pays to its ancestors; and in the enchanted light which races, like individuals, must perceive in looking back to the days of their childhood.

§ 20. Again: the peculiar levity with which natural scenery is regarded by a large number of modern minds cannot be considered as entirely characteristic of the age, inasmuch as it never can belong to its greatest intellects. Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days; a certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception,—even the one who has made us laugh oftenest, taking us to the valley of Chamouni, and to the sea beach, there to give peace after suffering, and change revenge into pity.* It is only the dull, the uneducated, or the worldly, whom it is painful to meet on the hill sides; and levity, as a ruling character, cannot be ascribed to the whole nation, but only to its holiday-making apprentices, and its House of Commons.

§ 21. We need not, therefore, expect to find any single poet or painter representing the entire group of powers, weaknesses, and inconsistent instincts which govern or confuse our modern life. But we may expect that in the man who seems to be given by Providence as the type of the age (as Homer and Dante were given, as the types of classical and mediæval mind), we shall find whatever is fruitful and substantial to be completely present, together with those of our weaknesses, which are indeed nationally characteristic, and compatible with general greatness of mind, just as the weak love of fences, and dislike of mountains, were found compatible with Dante's greatness in other respects.

§ 22. Farther: as the admiration of mankind is found, in our times, to have in great part passed from men to mountains, and from human emotion to natural phenomena, we may anticipate that the great strength of art will also

* See *David Copperfield*, chap. lv. and lviii.

be warped in this direction; with this notable result for us, that whereas the greatest painters or painter of classical and mediæval periods, being wholly devoted to the representation of humanity, furnished us with but little to examine in landscape, the greatest painters or painter of modern times will in all probability be devoted to landscape principally; and farther, because in representing human emotion words surpass painting, but in representing natural scenery painting surpasses words, we may anticipate also that the painter and poet (for convenience' sake I here use the words in opposition) will somewhat change their relations of rank in illustrating the mind of the age; that the painter will become of more importance, the poet of less; and that the relations between the men who are the types and first-fruits of the age in word and work,—namely, Scott and Turner,—will be, in many curious respects, different from those between Homer and Phidias, or Dante and Giotto.¹

It is this relation which we have now to examine.

§ 23. And, first, I think it probable that many readers may be surprised at my calling Scott the great representative of the mind of the age in literature. Those who can perceive the intense penetrative depth of Wordsworth, and the exquisite finish and melodious power of Tennyson, may be offended at my placing in higher rank that poetry of careless glance, and reckless rhyme, in which Scott poured out the fancies of his youth; and those who are familiar with the subtle analysis of the French novelists, or who have in anywise submitted themselves to the influence of German philosophy, may be equally indignant at my ascribing a principality to Scott among the literary men of Europe, in an age which has produced De Balzac and Goethe.²

¹ [See below, p. 388.]

² [The first paragraph of § 23 here is the first paragraph of § 13 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where Ruskin added the following note:—

“I knew nothing of Goethe when I put him with Balzac; but the intolerable dulness which encumbers the depth of *Wilhelm Meister*, and the cruel reserve which conceals from all but the intensest readers the meaning of *Faust*, have made him, in a great degree, an evil influence in European literature; and evil is always second-rate.”

For other references to Goethe, see *Time and Tide*, § 96 (where *Wilhelm Meister* is

So also in painting, those who are acquainted with the sentimental efforts made at present by the German religious and historical schools, and with the disciplined power and learning of the French, will think it beyond all explanation absurd to call a painter of light water-colour landscapes, eighteen inches by twelve, the first representative of the arts of the age. I can only crave the reader's patience, and his due consideration of the following reasons for my doing so, together with those advanced in the farther course of the work.

§ 24. I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean, by humility, doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking his opinions;¹ but a right understanding of the relation between what *he* can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only, they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Dürer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done;"² Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else,—only they do not expect their fellow-men therefore to fall down and worship them; they have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them. And they see something Divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.

§ 25. Now, I find among the men of the present age, as far as I know them, this character in Scott and Turner

mentioned); *Munera Pulveris*, § 87; *Aratra Pentelici*, § 12 (*Faust*); and *Catalogue of the Educational Series* (where it is said that "Goethe has formed, directly or indirectly, the thoughts of all strong and wise men since his time".)]

¹ [Compare what is said on this subject in *Eagle's Nest*, § 30; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 171; *Queen of the Air*, §§ 134, 135.]

² [Compare Vol. XI. p. 14 n.]

pre-eminently; I am not sure if it is not in them alone. I do not find Scott talking about the dignity of literature, nor Turner about the dignity of painting. They do their work, feeling that they cannot well help it; the story must be told, and the effect put down; and if people like it, well and good; and if not, the world will not be much the worse.

I believe a very different impression of their estimate of themselves and their doings will be received by any one who reads the conversations of Wordsworth or Goethe. The *slightest* manifestation of jealousy or self-complacency is enough to mark a second-rate character of the intellect; and I fear that, especially in Goethe, such manifestations are neither few nor slight.

§ 26. Connected with this general humility, is the total absence of affectation in these men,—that is to say, of any assumption of manner or behaviour in their work, in order to attract attention. Not but that they are mannerists both. Scott's verse is strongly mannered, and Turner's oil painting; but the manner of it necessitated by the feelings of the men, entirely natural to both, never exaggerated for the sake of show. I hardly know any other literary or pictorial work of the day which is not in some degree affected. I am afraid Wordsworth was often affected in his simplicity, and De Balzac in his finish. Many fine French writers are affected in their reserve, and full of stage tricks in placing of sentences. It is lucky if in German writers we ever find so much as a sentence without affectation. I know no painters without it, except one or two Pre-Raphaelites (chiefly Holman Hunt), and some simple water-colour painters, as William Hunt, William Turner of Oxford, and the late George Robson;¹ but these last have no invention, and therefore by our fourth canon, Chap. III. § 21, are excluded from the first rank of artists; and of the

¹ [For Holman Hunt, see Vol. XII. pp. 324–335. For William Hunt, see General Index; for Turner of Oxford, *Academy Notes*, 1856, 1858, 1859; for Robson, Vol. I. p. 193 *n.*]

Pre-Raphaelites there is here no question, as they in no wise represent the modern school.

§ 27. Again: another very important, though not infallible, test of greatness is, as we have often said, the appearance of Ease with which the thing is done.¹ It may be that, as with Dante and Leonardo, the finish given to the work effaces the evidence of ease; but where the ease is manifest, as in Scott, Turner, and Tintoret, and the thing done is very noble, it is a strong reason for placing the men above those who confessedly work with great pains. Scott writing his chapter or two before breakfast—not retouching; Turner finishing a whole drawing in a forenoon before he goes out to shoot² (providing always the chapter and drawing be good), are instantly to be set above men who confessedly have spent a day over the work, and think the hours well spent if it has been a little mended between sunrise and sunset. Indeed, it is no use for men to think to appear great by working fast, dashing, and scrawling; the thing they do must be good and great, cost what time it may; but if it *be* so, and they have honestly and unaffectedly done it with *no effort*, it is probably a greater and better thing than the result of the hardest efforts of others.

§ 28. Then, as touching the kind of work done by these two men, the more I think of it I find this conclusion more impressed upon me,—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion,—all in one.

Therefore, finding the world of Literature more or less divided into Thinkers and Seers, I believe we shall find also that the Seers are wholly the greater race of the two. A true Thinker who has practical purpose in his thinking,

¹ [See, for instance, Vol. III. p. 122; Vol. IV. p. 283; Vol. XII. p. 344. And compare, with special reference to Scott, *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 23.]

² [See *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 55, Vol. XII. p. 386.]

and is sincere, as Plato, or Carlyle, or Helps,¹ becomes in some sort a seer, and must be always of infinite use in his generation; but an affected Thinker, who supposes his thinking of any other importance than as it tends to work, is about the vainest kind of person that can be found in the occupied classes. Nay, I believe that metaphysicians and philosophers are, on the whole, the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with; and that while a tyrant or bad man is of some use in teaching people submission or indignation, and a thoroughly idle man is only harmful in setting an idle example, and communicating to other lazy people his own lazy misunderstandings, busy metaphysicians are always entangling *good* and *active* people, and weaving cobwebs among the finest wheels of the world's business; and are as much as possible, by all prudent persons, to be brushed out of their way, like spiders, and the meshed weed that has got into the Cambridgeshire canals, and other such impediments to barges and business. And if we thus clear the metaphysical element out of modern literature, we shall find its bulk amazingly diminished, and the claims of the remaining writers, or of those whom we have thinned by this abstraction of their straw stuffing, much more easily adjusted.*

§ 29. Again: the mass of sentimental literature, concerned with the analysis and description of emotion, headed by the poetry of Byron, is altogether of lower rank than the literature which merely describes what it saw. The true Seer always feels as intensely as any one else; but he does not much describe his feelings. He tells you whom he met, and what they said; leaves you to make

* Observe, I do not speak thus of metaphysics because I have no pleasure in them. When I speak contemptuously of philology, it may be answered me, that I am a bad scholar; but I cannot be so answered touching metaphysics, for every one conversant with such subjects may see that I have strong inclination that way, which would, indeed, have led me far astray long ago, if I had not learned also some use of my hands, eyes, and feet.

¹ [For Ruskin's admiration of Helps, see Vol. XI. p. 153 n.]

out, from that, what they feel, and what he feels, but goes into little detail. And, generally speaking, pathetic writing and careful explanation of passion are quite easy, compared with this plain recording of what people said and did, or with the right invention of what they are likely to say and do; for this reason, that to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and know precisely how they would be affected by what happens; which to do requires a colossal intellect: but to describe a separate emotion delicately, it is only needed that one should feel it oneself; and thousands of people are capable of feeling this or that noble emotion, for one who is able to enter into all the feelings of somebody sitting on the other side of the table. Even, therefore, where this sentimental literature is first-rate, as in passages of Byron, Tennyson, and Keats, it ought not to be ranked so high as the Creative; and though perfection, even in narrow fields, is perhaps as rare as in the wider, and it may be as long before we have another *In Memoriam* as another *Guy Mannering*, I unhesitatingly receive as a greater manifestation of power the right invention of a few sentences spoken by Pleydell and Mannering across their supper-table,¹ than the most tender and passionate melodies of the self-examining verse.

§ 30. Having, therefore, cast metaphysical writers out of our way, and sentimental writers into the second rank, I do not think Scott's supremacy among those who remain will any more be doubtful; nor would it, perhaps, have been doubtful before, had it not been encumbered by innumerable faults and weaknesses. But it is pre-eminently in these faults and weaknesses that Scott is the representative of the mind of his age; and because he is the greatest man born amongst us, and intended for the enduring type of us, all our principal faults must be laid on

¹ [Chapters xxxiv., xlix.]

his shoulders, and he must bear down the dark marks to the latest ages; while the smaller men, who have some special work to do, perhaps not so much belonging to this age as leading out of it to the next, are often kept providentially quit of the encumbrances which they had not strength to sustain, and are much smoother and pleasanter to look at, in their way: only that is a smaller way.

§ 31. Thus, the most startling fault of the age being its faithlessness, it is necessary that its greatest man should be faithless. Nothing is more notable or sorrowful in Scott's mind than its incapacity of steady belief in anything. He cannot even resolve hardily to believe in a ghost, or a water-spirit; always explains them away in an apologetic manner, not believing, all the while, even in his own explanation. He never can clearly ascertain whether there is anything behind the arras but rats; never draws sword, and thrusts at it for life or death; but goes on looking at it timidly, and saying, "It must be the wind." He is educated a Presbyterian, and remains one, because it is the most sensible thing he can do if he is to live in Edinburgh; but he thinks Romanism more picturesque, and profaneness more gentlemanly; does not see that anything affects human life but love, courage, and destiny; which are, indeed, not matters of faith at all, but of sight. Any gods but those are very misty in outline to him; and when the love is laid ghastly in poor Charlotte's coffin; and the courage is no more of use,—the pen having fallen from between the fingers; and destiny is sealing the scroll,—the God-light is dim in the tears that fall on it.¹

He is in all this the epitome of his epoch.

§ 32. Again: as another notable weakness of the age is its habit of looking back, in a romantic and passionate idleness, to the past ages, not understanding them all the while, nor really desiring to understand them, so Scott gives up nearly the half of his intellectual power to a fond, yet

¹ [For Scott's feelings on the death of his wife, in 1826, see Lockhart's *Life*, ch. 70.]

purposeless, dreaming over the past, and spends half his literary labours in endeavours to revive it, not in reality, but on the stage of fiction; endeavours which were the best of the kind that modernism made, but still successful only so far as Scott put, under the old armour, the everlasting human nature which he knew; and totally unsuccessful, so far as concerned the painting of the armour itself, which he knew *not*. The excellence of Scott's work is precisely in proportion to the degree in which it is sketched from present nature. His familiar life is inimitable; his quiet scenes of introductory conversation, as the beginning of *Rob Roy* and *Redgauntlet*, and all his living Scotch characters, mean or noble, from Andrew Fair-service to Jeanie Deans, are simply right, and can never be bettered. But his romance and antiquarianism, his knighthood and monkery, are all false, and he knows them to be false; does not care to make them earnest; enjoys them for their strangeness, but laughs at his own antiquarianism, all through his own third novel,—with exquisite modesty indeed, but with total misunderstanding of the function of an Antiquary. He does not see how anything is to be got out of the past but confusion, old iron on drawing-room chairs, and serious inconvenience to Dr. Heavysterne.¹

§ 33. Again: more than any age that had preceded it, ours had been ignorant of the meaning of the word "Art." It had not a single fixed principle, and what unfixed principles it worked upon were all wrong. It was necessary that Scott should know nothing of art. He neither cared for painting nor sculpture, and was totally incapable of forming a judgment about them. He had some confused love of Gothic architecture, because it was dark, picturesque, old, and like nature; but could not tell the worst

¹ [See ch. iii. of *The Antiquary*. For other references to Andrew Fair-service in *Rob Roy*, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 65 and 92; *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, §§ 29 *seq.*, 114 *seq.*; and *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. § 71 *n.*, iii. ch. iv. § 71 *n.* And for Jeanie Deans, *Fors*, Letters 42, 91, 92; *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 113; *Pleasures of England*, § 98; and *Præterita*, ii. ch. xii. § 231.]

from the best, and built for himself perhaps the most incongruous and ugly pile that gentlemanly modernism ever designed;¹ marking, in the most curious and subtle way, that mingling of reverence with irreverence which is so striking in the age; he reverences Melrose, yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fireplace. Like all pure moderns, he supposes the Gothic barbarous, notwithstanding his love of it; admires, in an equally ignorant way, totally opposite styles; is delighted with the new town of Edinburgh; mistakes its dulness for purity of taste, and actually compares it, in its deathful formality of street, as contrasted with the rudeness of the old town, to Britomart taking off her armour.²

§ 34. Again: as in reverence and irreverence, so in levity and melancholy, we saw that the spirit of the age was strangely interwoven. Therefore, also, it is necessary that Scott should be light, careless, unearnest, and yet eminently sorrowful. Throughout all his work there is no evidence of any purpose but to while away the hour. His life had no other object than the pleasure of the instant, and the establishing of a family name. All his thoughts were, in their outcome and end, less than nothing, and vanity. And yet, of all poetry that I know, none is so sorrowful as Scott's. Other great masters are pathetic in a resolute and predetermined way, when they choose; but, in their own minds, are evidently stern or hopeful, or serene; never really melancholy. Even Byron is rather sulky and desperate than melancholy; Keats is sad because he is sickly; Shelley because he is impious; but Scott is inherently and consistently sad. Around all his power, and brightness, and enjoyment of eye and heart, the faraway Æolian knell is for ever sounding; there is not one of those loving or laughing glances of his but it is brighter for the film of tears; his mind is like one of his own hill

¹ [Compare on this subject Vol. I. p. 163 *n.*]

² [*Marmion*: Introduction to Canto v.]

rivers,—it is white, and flashes in the sun fairly, careless, as it seems, and hasty in its going, but

“Far beneath, where slow they creep
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.”¹

Life begins to pass from him very early; and while Homer sings cheerfully in his blindness, and Dante retains his courage, and rejoices in hope of Paradise, through all his exile, Scott, yet hardly past his youth, lies pensive in the sweet sunshine and among the harvests of his native hills.

“Blackford, on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed as I lay at rest,
While rose on breezes thin
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
St. Giles’s mingling din!
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And on the landscape as I look,
Naught do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook;
To me they make a heavy moan
Of early friendships past and gone.”²

§ 35. Such, then, being the weaknesses which it was necessary that Scott should share with his age, in order that he might sufficiently represent it, and such the grounds for supposing him, in spite of all these weaknesses, the greatest literary man whom that age produced, let us glance at the principal points in which his view of landscape differs from that of the mediævals.

I shall not endeavour now, as I did with Homer and Dante, to give a complete analysis of all the feelings which appear to be traceable in Scott’s allusions to landscape scenery,—for this would require a volume,—but only to

¹ [*Marmion*, iv. 10.]

² [*Ibid.*, iv. 24.]

indicate the main points of differing character between his temper and Dante's. Then we will examine in detail, not the landscape of literature, but that of painting, which must, of course, be equally, or even in a higher degree, characteristic of the age.

§ 36. And, first, observe Scott's habit of looking at nature neither as dead, or merely material, in the way that Homer regards it, nor as altered by his own feelings, in the way that Keats and Tennyson regard it, but as having an animation and pathos of *its own*, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion,—an animation which Scott loves and sympathises with, as he would with a fellow-creature, forgetting himself altogether, and subduing his own humanity before what seems to him the power of the landscape.

“Yon lonely Thorn,—would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough:
Would he could tell, how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made,
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red!”¹

Scott does not dwell on the grey stubbornness of the thorn, because he himself is at that moment disposed to be dull or stubborn; neither on the cheerful peeping forth of the rowan, because he himself is at that moment cheerful or curious: but he perceives them both with the kind of interest that he would take in an old man or a climbing boy; forgetting himself, in sympathy with either age or youth.

“And from the grassy slope he sees
The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
Where issuing from her darksome bed,
She caught the morning's eastern red,

¹ [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto ii.]

And through the softening vale below
 Roll'd her bright waves in rosy glow,
 All blushing to her bridal bed,
 Like some shy maid, in convent bred;
 While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay
 Sing forth her nuptial roundelay."¹

Is Scott, or are the persons of his story, gay at this moment? Far from it. Neither Scott nor Risingham is happy, but the Greta is; and all Scott's sympathy is ready for the Greta, on the instant.

§ 37. Observe, therefore, this is not *pathetic* fallacy; for there is no passion in *Scott* which alters nature. It is not the lover's passion, making him think the larkspurs are listening for his lady's foot; it is not the miser's passion, making him think that dead leaves are falling coins;² but it is an inherent and continual habit of thought, which Scott shares with the moderns in general, being, in fact, nothing else than the instinctive sense which men must have of the Divine presence, not formed into distinct belief. In the Greek it created, as we saw, the faithfully believed gods of the elements;³ in Dante and the mediævals, it formed the faithfully believed angelic presence: in the modern, it creates no perfect form, does not apprehend distinctly any Divine being or operation; but only a dim, slightly credited animation in the natural object, accompanied with great interest and affection for it. This feeling is quite universal with us, only varying in depth according to the greatness of the heart that holds it; and in Scott, being more than usually intense, and accompanied with infinite affection and quickness of sympathy, it enables him to conquer all tendencies to the pathetic fallacy, and, instead of making Nature anywise subordinate to himself, he makes himself subordinate to *her*—follows her lead simply—does not venture to bring his own cares and thoughts

¹ [*Rockeby*, ii. 16.]

² [See above, p. 219 *n.*]

³ [See above, p. 224.]

into her pure and quiet presence—paints her in her simple and universal truth, adding no result of momentary passion or fancy, and appears, therefore, at first shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier. “What am I?” he says continually, “that I should trouble this sincere nature with my thoughts. I happen to be feverish and depressed, and I could see a great many sad and strange things in those waves and flowers; but I have no business to see such things. Gay Greta! sweet harebells! *you* are not sad nor strange to most people; you are but bright water and blue blossoms; you shall not be anything else to me, except that I cannot help thinking you are a little alive,—no one can help thinking that.” And thus, as Nature is bright, serene, or gloomy, Scott takes her temper, and paints her as she is; nothing of himself being ever intruded, except that far-away Æolian tone, of which he is unconscious; and sometimes a stray syllable or two, like that about Blackford Hill,¹ distinctly stating personal feeling, but all the more modestly for that distinctness, and for the clear consciousness that it is not the chiming brook, nor the cornfields, that are sad, but only the boy that rests by them; so returning on the instant to reflect, in all honesty, the image of Nature, as she is meant by all men to be received; nor that in fine words, but in the first that come; nor with comment of far-fetched thoughts, but with easy thoughts, such as all sensible men ought to have in such places, only spoken sweetly; and evidently also with an undercurrent of more profound reflection, which here and there murmurs for a moment, and which, I think, if we choose, we may continually pierce down to, and drink deeply from, but which Scott leaves us to seek, or shun, at our pleasure.²

§ 38. And in consequence of this unselfishness and humility, Scott’s enjoyment of Nature is incomparably

¹ [See above, § 34.]

² [In looking back to this chapter in after years Ruskin rated more highly the influence of national scenery on Scott: see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 92 (1883) *ad fin.*]

greater than that of any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about their own affairs. Tennyson goes out on a furzy common, and sees it is calm autumn sunshine, but it gives him no pleasure. He only remembers that it is

“Dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.”¹

He sees a thundercloud in the evening, and *would* have “doted and pored” on it, but cannot, for fear it should bring the ship bad weather. Keats drinks the beauty of nature violently; but has no more real sympathy with her than he has with a bottle of claret. His palate is fine; but he “bursts joy’s grape against it,”² gets nothing but misery, and a bitter taste of dregs, out of his desperate draught.

Byron and Shelley are nearly the same, only with less truth of perception, and even more troublesome selfishness. Wordsworth is more like Scott, and understands how to be happy, but yet cannot altogether rid himself of the sense that he is a philosopher, and ought always to be saying something wise. He has also a vague notion that nature would not be able to get on well without Wordsworth; and finds a considerable part of his pleasure in looking at himself as well as at her. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. “I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great they are, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent, thoughtless sake!”

§ 39. This pure passion for nature in its abstract being, is still increased in its intensity by the two elements above taken notice of,—the love of antiquity, and the love of colour and beautiful form, mortified in our streets, and seeking for food in the wilderness and the ruin: both feelings,

¹ [*In Memoriam*, xi.; and for the next reference, see *ibid.* xv.]

² [*Ode to Melancholy*.]

observe, instinctive in Scott from his childhood, as everything that makes a man great is always.

“And well the lonely infant knew
 Recesses where the wallflower grew,
 And honeysuckle loved to crawl
 Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
 I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
 The sun in all its round survey'd.”¹

Not that these could have been instinctive in a child in the Middle Ages. The sentiments of a people increase or diminish in intensity from generation to generation,—every disposition of the parents affecting the frame of the mind in their offspring; the soldier's child is born to be yet more a soldier, and the politician's to be still more a politician; even the slightest colours of sentiment and affection are transmitted to the heirs of life; and the crowning expression of the mind of a people is given when some infant of highest capacity, and sealed with the impress of this national character, is born where providential circumstances permit the full development of the powers it has received straight from Heaven, and the passions which it has inherited from its fathers.

§ 40. This love of ancientness, and that of natural beauty, associate themselves also in Scott with the love of liberty, which was indeed at the root even of all his Jacobite tendencies in politics. For, putting aside certain predilections about landed property, and family name, and “gentlemanliness” in the club sense of the word,—respecting which I do not now inquire whether they were weak or wise,—the main element which makes Scott like Cavaliers better than Puritans is, that he thinks the former *free* and *masterful* as well as loyal: and the latter *formal* and *slavish*. He is loyal, not so much in respect for law, as in unselfish love for the king; and his sympathy is quite as ready for any active borderer who breaks the law, or fights the king, in

¹ [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

what Scott thinks a generous way, as for the king himself. Rebellion of a rough, free, and bold kind he is always delighted by; he only objects to rebellion on principle and in form: bareheaded and open-throated treason he will abet to any extent, but shrinks from it in a peaked hat and starched collar: nay, politically, he only delights in kingship itself, because he looks upon it as the head and centre of liberty; and thinks that, keeping hold of a king's hand, one may get rid of the cramps and fences of law; and that the people may be governed by the whistle, as a Highland clan on the open hill-side, instead of being shut up into hurdled folds or hedged fields, as sheep or cattle left masterless.

§ 41. And thus Nature becomes dear to Scott in a three-fold way; dear to him, first, as containing those remains or memories of the past, which he cannot find in cities, and giving hope of Prætorian mound or knight's grave, in every green slope and shade of its desolate places;—dear, secondly, in its moorland liberty, which has for him just as high a charm as the fenced garden had for the mediæval;

“For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp—a grandame's child:
But, half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caressed.
For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay. On the wild hill
Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine;
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine.”¹

—and dear to him, finally, in that perfect beauty, denied alike in cities and in men, for which every modern heart had begun at last to thirst, and Scott's, in its freshness and power, of all men's, most earnestly.

§ 42. And in this love of beauty, observe, that (as I said

¹ [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

we might expect¹) the love of *colour* is a leading element, his healthy mind being incapable of losing, under any modern false teaching, its joy in brilliancy of hue. Though not so subtle a colourist as Dante, which, under the circumstances of the age, he could not be, he depends quite as much upon colour for his power or pleasure. And, in general, if he does not mean to say much about things, the *one* character which he will give is colour, using it with the most perfect mastery and faithfulness, up to the point of possible modern perception. For instance, if he has a sea-storm to paint in a single line, he does not, as a feebler poet would probably have done, use any expression about the temper or form of the waves; does not call them angry or mountainous. He is content to strike them out with two dashes of Tintoret's favourite colours:²

*"The blackening wave is edged with white,
To inch and rock the seamews fly."*³

There is no form in this. Nay, the main virtue of it is, that it gets rid of all form. The dark raging of the sea—what form has that? But out of the cloud of its darkness those lightning flashes of the foam, coming at their terrible intervals—you need no more.

Again: where he has to described tents mingled among oaks, he says nothing about the form of either tent or tree, but only gives the two strokes of colour:

*"Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Chequered the borough moor below,
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green."*⁴

¹ [See above, p. 328.]

² [See Vol. X. p. xxxv.; Vol. XI. p. 364; Vol. XII. p. 290.]

³ [*Lay of the Last Minstrel*, vi. 23.]

⁴ [*Marmion*, iv. 25.]

Again: of tents at Flodden:

“Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
To view, afar, the Scottish power,
Encamped on Flodden edge.
The white pavilions made a snow,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge.”¹

Again: of trees mingled with dark rocks:

“Until where Teith’s young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the *sable* strath with *green*,
The chapel of St. Bride was seen.”²

Again: there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour. in his celebrated description of Edinburgh:

“The wandering eye could o’er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston Bay and Berwick Law:
And, broad between them, rolled
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.”³

¹ [*Marmion*, vi. 18.]

² [*Lady of the Lake*, iii. 19.]

³ [*Marmion*, iv. 30.]

I do not like to spoil a fine passage by italicizing it; but observe, the only hints at form, given throughout, are in the somewhat vague words, “ridgy,” “massy,” “close,” and “high”; the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the *colours* are all definite; note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green, and gold—a noble chord throughout; and then, moved doubtless less by the smoky than the amethystine part of the group,

“Fitz Eustace’ heart felt closely pent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And making demivolte in air,
Cried, ‘Where’s the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land?’ ”¹

I need not multiply examples: the reader can easily trace for himself, through verse familiar to us all, the force of these colour instincts. I will therefore add only two passages, not so completely known by heart as most of the poems in which they occur.

“’Twas silence all. He laid him down
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatwort with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
The course of Greta’s playful tide;
Beneath her banks, now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favourite gem
Of Albin’s mountain diadem.
Then tired to watch the currents play,
He turned his weary eyes away
To where the bank opposing show’d
Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
One, prominent above the rest,
Rear’d to the sun its pale grey breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude and sable yew;

¹ [*Marmion*, iv. 30.]

A thousand varied lichens dyed
 Its waste and weather-beaten side;
 And round its rugged basis lay,
 By time or thunder rent away,
 Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
 Were mantled now by verdant thorn.”¹

§ 43. Note, first, what an exquisite chord of colour is given in the succession of this passage. It begins with purple and blue: then passes to gold, or cairngorm colour (topaz colour); then to *pale grey*, through which the yellow passes into black; and the black, through broken dyes of lichen, into green. Note, secondly—what is indeed so manifest throughout Scott’s landscape as hardly to need pointing out,—the love of rocks, and true understanding of their colours and characters, opposed as it is in every conceivable way to Dante’s hatred and misunderstanding of them.

I have already traced, in various places, most of the causes of this great difference; namely, first, the ruggedness of northern temper (compare § 8 of the chapter on the Nature of Gothic in the *Stones of Venice*); then the really greater beauty of the northern rocks, as noted when we were speaking of the Apennine limestone;² then the need of finding beauty among them, if it were to be found anywhere,—no well-arranged colours being any more to be seen in dress, but only in rock lichens; and, finally, the love of irregularity, liberty, and power springing up in glorious opposition to laws of prosody, fashion, and the five orders.

§ 44. The other passage I have to quote is still more interesting; because it has *no form* in it *at all* except in one word (chalice), but wholly composes its imagery either of colour, or of that delicate half-believed life which we have seen to be so important an element in modern landscape.

“The summer dawn’s reflected hue
 To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
 Mildly and soft the western breeze
 Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees;

¹ [*Rokeby*, iii. 8.]

² [See above, p. 297; and for the following references, p. 324, and *Stones of Venice*, Vol. X. pp. 207–208.]

*And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
 Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
 The mountain-shadows on her breast
 Were neither broken nor at rest;
 In bright uncertainty they lie,
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
 The water-lily to the light
 Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
 The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
 Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn;
 The grey mist left the mountain side;
 The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
 Invisible in fleck'd sky,
 The lark sent down her revelry;
 The blackbird and the speckled thrush
 Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
 In answer coo'd the cushat dove
 Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.”¹*

Two more considerations are, however, suggested by the above passage. The first, that the love of natural history, excited by the continual attention now given to all wild landscape, heightens reciprocally the interest of that landscape, and becomes an important element in Scott's description, leading him to finish, down to the minutest speckling of breast, and slightest shade of attributed emotion, the portraiture of birds and animals; in strange opposition to Homer's slightly named “sea-crows, who have care of the works of the sea,”² and Dante's singing-birds of undefined species. Compare carefully a passage too long to be quoted,—the 2nd and 3rd stanzas of Canto vi. of *Rokeby*.

§ 45. The second and the last point I have to note, is Scott's habit of drawing a slight *moral* from every scene, just enough to excuse to his conscience his want of definite religious feeling; and that this slight moral is almost always melancholy. Here he has stopped short without entirely expressing it—

“The mountain shadows .
 lie
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.”

¹ [*Lady of the Lake*, iii. 2.]

² [See above, p. 235; and for “Dante's singing-birds,” *Purgatorio*, xxviii. 14–18.]

His completed thought would be, that those future joys, like the mountain shadows, were never to be attained. It occurs fully uttered in many other places. He seems to have been constantly rebuking his own worldly pride and vanity, but never purposefully:

“The foam-globes on her eddies ride,
Thick as the schemes of human pride
That down life’s current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain.”

“Foxglove, and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride.”

“Her dark eye flashed; she paused, and sighed;—
‘Ah what have I to do with pride!’ ”¹

And hear the thought he gathers from the sunset (noting first the Turnerian colour,—as usual, its principal element):

“The sultry summer day is done.
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard’s towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller Hill;
Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore’s ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array’d,
Streaks yet awhile the closing shade:
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus, aged men, full loath and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o’er
Till Memory lends her light no more.”²

That is, as far as I remember, one of the most finished pieces of sunset he has given; and it has a woful moral; yet one which, with Scott, is inseparable from the scene.

Hark again:

“‘Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope’s lonely top decay;

¹ [*Rokeby*, ii. 7; *Lady of the Lake*, i. 12; vi. 9.]

² [*Rokeby*, v. 1.]

And, as it faint and feeble died
 On the broad lake and mountain's side,
 To say, 'Thus pleasures fade away;
 Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
 And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey.' ”¹

And again, hear Bertram:

“Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
 With disk like battle-target red,
 He rushes to his burning bed,
 Dyes the wild wave with bloody light,
 Then sinks at once—and all is night.”²

In all places of this kind, where a passing thought is suggested by some external scene, that thought is at once a slight and sad one. Scott's deeper moral sense is marked in the *conduct* of his stories, and in casual reflections or exclamations arising out of their plot, and therefore sincerely uttered; as that of Marmion:

“Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive!”³

But the reflections which are founded, not on events, but on scenes, are, for the most part, shallow, partly insincere, and, as far as sincere, sorrowful. This habit of ineffective dreaming and moralizing over passing scenes, of which the earliest type I know is given in Jaques, is, as aforesaid,⁴ usually the satisfaction made to our modern consciences for the want of a sincere acknowledgment of God in nature: and Shakspeare has marked it as the characteristic of a mind “compact of jars” (Act II. Sc. VII., *As You Like It*). That description attaches but too accurately to all the moods which we have traced in the moderns generally, and in Scott as the first representative of them; and the question now is, what this love of landscape, so composed, is likely to lead us to, and what use can be made of it.

¹ [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto ii.]

² [*Rokeby*, vi. 21.]

³ [*Marmion*, vi. 27.]

⁴ [See above, p. 252.]

We began our investigation, it will be remembered, in order to determine whether landscape-painting was worth studying or not. We have now reviewed the three principal phases of temper in the civilized human race, and we find that landscape has been mostly disregarded by great men, or cast into a second place, until now; and that now it seems dear to us, partly in consequence of our faults, and partly owing to accidental circumstances, soon, in all likelihood, to pass away: and there seems great room for question still, whether our love of it is a permanent and healthy feeling, or only a healthy crisis in a generally diseased state of mind. If the former, society will for ever hereafter be affected by its results; and Turner, the first great landscape-painter, must take a place in the history of nations corresponding in art accurately to that of Bacon in philosophy;¹—Bacon having first opened the study of the laws of material nature, when, formerly, men had thought only of the laws of human mind; and Turner having first opened the study of the aspect of material nature, when, before, men had thought only of the aspect of the human form. Whether, therefore, the love of landscape be trivial and transient, or important and permanent, it now becomes necessary to consider. We have, I think, data enough before us for the solution of the question, and we will enter upon it, accordingly, in the following chapter.

¹ [See below, p. 387, and compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 101, Vol. XII. p. 128.]

CHAPTER XVII

THE MORAL OF LANDSCAPE

§ 1. SUPPOSING then the preceding conclusions correct, respecting the grounds and component *elements* of the pleasure which the moderns take in landscape, we have here to consider what are the probable or usual *effects* of this pleasure. Is it a safe or a seductive one? May we wisely boast of it, and unhesitatingly indulge it? or is it rather a sentiment to be despised when it is slight, and condemned when it is intense; a feeling which disinclines us to labour, and confuses us in thought; a joy only to the inactive and the visionary, incompatible with the duties of life, and the accuracies of reflection?

§ 2. It seems to me that, as matters stand at present, there is considerable ground for the latter opinion. We saw, in the preceding chapter, that our love of nature had been partly forced upon us by mistakes in our social economy, and led to no distinct issues of action or thought. And when we look to Scott—the man who feels it most deeply—for some explanation of its effect upon him, we find a curious tone of apology (as if for an involuntary folly) running through his confessions of such sentiment, and a still more curious inability to define, beyond a certain point, the character of this emotion. He has lost the company of his friends among the hills, and turns to these last for comfort. He says, “there is a pleasure in the pain” consisting in such thoughts

“As oft awake
By lone St. Mary’s silent lake;”

but when we look for some definition of these thoughts, all that we are told is, that they compose

“A mingled sentiment
'Twixt resignation and content;”*

a sentiment which, I suppose, many people can attain to on the loss of their friends, without the help of lakes or mountains; while Wordsworth definitely and positively affirms that *thought* has nothing whatever to do with the matter, and that though, in his youth, the cataract and wood “haunted him like a passion,” it was without the help of any “remoter charm, by thought supplied.”¹

§ 3. There is not, however, any question but that both Scott and Wordsworth are here mistaken in their analysis of their feelings. Their delight, so far from being without thought, is more than half made up of thought, but of thought in so curiously languid and neutralized a condition that they cannot trace it. The thoughts are beaten to a powder so small that they know not what they are; they know only that in such a state they are not good for much, and disdain to call them thoughts. But the way in which thought, even thus broken, acts in producing the delight will be understood by glancing back to §§ 9 and 10 of the tenth chapter, in which we observed the power of the imagination in exalting any visible object, by gathering round it, in farther vision, all the facts properly connected with it; this being, as it were, a spiritual or second sight, multiplying the power of enjoyment according to the fulness of the vision. For, indeed, although in all lovely nature there is, first, an excellent degree of simple beauty, addressed to the eye alone, yet often what impresses us most will form but a very small portion of that visible

* *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto II.

¹ [*Tintern Abbey*: see Vol. III. p. 671, and Vol. IV. p. 74, where the passage is also cited.]

beauty. That beauty may, for instance, be composed of lovely flowers and glittering streams, and blue sky and white clouds; and yet the thing that impresses us most, and which we should be sorriest to lose, may be a thin grey film on the extreme horizon, not so large, in the space of the scene it occupies, as a piece of gossamer on a near-at-hand bush, nor in any wise prettier to the eye than the gossamer; but, because the gossamer is known by us for a little bit of spider's work, and the other grey film is known to mean a mountain ten thousand feet high, inhabited by a race of noble mountaineers, we are solemnly impressed by the aspect of it; and yet, all the while, the thoughts and knowledge which cause us to receive this impression are so obscure that we are not conscious of them; we think we are only enjoying the visible scene; and the very men whose minds are fullest of such thoughts absolutely deny, as we have just heard, that they owe their pleasure to anything but the eye, or that the pleasure consists in anything else than "Tranquillity."

§ 4. And observe, farther, that this comparative Dimness and Untraceableness of the thoughts which are the sources of our admiration, is not a *fault* in the thoughts, at such a time. It is, on the contrary, a necessary condition of their subordination to the pleasure of Sight. If the thoughts were more distinct we should not *see* so well; and beginning definitely to think, we must comparatively cease to see. In the instance just supposed, as long as we look at the film of mountain or Alp, with only an obscure consciousness of its being the source of mighty rivers, that consciousness adds to our sense of its sublimity; and if we have ever seen the Rhine or the Rhone near their mouths, our knowledge, so long as it is only obscurely suggested, adds to our admiration of the Alp; but once let the idea define itself,—once let us begin to consider seriously *what* rivers flow from that mountain, to trace their source, and to recall determinately our memories of their distant aspect, —and we cease to behold the Alp; or, if we still behold it,

it is only as a point in a map which we are painfully designing, or as a subordinate object which we strive to thrust aside, in order to make room for our remembrances of Avignon or Rotterdam.

Again: so long as our idea of the multitudes who inhabit the ravines at the foot remains indistinct, that idea comes to the aid of all the other associations which increase our delight. But let it once arrest us, and entice us to follow out some clear course of thought respecting the causes of the prosperity or misfortune of the Alpine villagers, and the snowy peak again ceases to be visible, or holds its place only as a white spot upon the retina, while we pursue our meditations upon the religion or the political economy of the mountaineers.

§ 5. It is thus evident that a curiously balanced condition of the powers of mind is necessary to induce full admiration of any natural scene. Let those powers be themselves inert, and the mind vacant of knowledge, and destitute of sensibility; and the external object becomes little more to us than it is to birds or insects; we fall into the temper of the clown. On the other hand, let the reasoning powers be shrewd in excess, the knowledge vast, or sensibility intense, and it will go hard but that the visible object will suggest so much that it shall be soon itself forgotten, or become, at the utmost, merely a kind of keynote to the course of purposeful thought. Newton, probably, did not perceive whether the apple which suggested his meditations perceive whether the apple which suggested his meditations on gravity was withered or rosy; nor could Howard be affected by the picturesqueness of the architecture which held the sufferers it was his occupation to relieve.¹

§ 6. This wandering away in thought from the thing seen to the business of life, is not, however, peculiar to men of the highest reasoning powers, or most active benevolence. It takes place more or less in nearly all persons of average mental endowment. They see and love what

¹ [The reference is to John Howard, the prison reformer, who in the course of his travels inspected the Bastille and all the principal prisons both in Great Britain and in France, Italy, etc.: see his place in the list below, p. 360.]

is beautiful, but forget their admiration of it in following some train of thought which it suggested, and which is of more personal interest to them. Suppose that three or four persons come in sight of a group of pine-trees, not having seen pines for some time.¹ One, perhaps an engineer, is struck by the manner in which their roots hold the ground, and sets himself to examine their fibres, in a few minutes retaining little more consciousness of the beauty of the trees than if he were a rope-maker untwisting the strands of a cable: to another, the sight of the trees calls up some happy association, and presently he forgets them, and pursues the memories they summoned: a third is struck by certain groupings of their colours, useful to him as an artist, which he proceeds immediately to note mechanically for future use, with as little feeling as a cook setting down the constituents of a newly discovered dish; and a fourth, impressed by the wild coiling of boughs and roots, will begin to change them in his fancy into dragons and monsters, and lose his grasp of the scene in fantastic metamorphosis: while, in the mind of the man who has most the power of contemplating the thing itself, all these perceptions and trains of idea are partially present, not distinctly, but in a mingled and perfect harmony. He will not see the colours of the tree so well as the artist, nor its fibres so well as the engineer; he will not altogether share the emotion of the sentimentalist, nor the trance of the idealist; but fancy, and feeling, and perception, and imagination, will all obscurely meet and balance themselves in him, and he will see the pine-trees somewhat in this manner:

“Worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of interwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; a pillared shade,

¹ [For the early draft of this passage, see Appendix v., pp. 438–439.]

Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially,—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton,
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United workship.”¹

§ 7. The power, therefore, of thus fully *perceiving* any natural object depends on our being able to group and fasten all our fancies about it as a centre, making a garland of thoughts for it, in which each separate thought is subdued and shortened of its own strength, in order to fit it for harmony with others; the intensity of our enjoyment of the object depending, first, on its own beauty, and then on the richness of the garland. And men who have this habit of clustering and harmonizing their thoughts are a little too apt to look scornfully upon the harder workers who tear the bouquet to pieces to examine the stems. This was the chief narrowness of Wordsworth's mind; he could not understand that to break a rock with a hammer in search of crystal may sometimes be an act not disgraceful to human nature, and that to dissect a flower may sometimes be as proper as to dream over it; whereas all experience goes to teach us, that among men of average intellect the most useful members of society are the dissectors, not the dreamers. It is not that they love nature or beauty less, but that they love result, effect, and progress more; and when we glance broadly along the starry crowd of benefactors to the human race, and guides of human thought, we shall find that this dreaming love of natural beauty—or at least its expression—has been more or less checked by them all, and subordinated either to hard work or watching of *human* nature. Thus in all the classical and mediæval periods, it was, as we have seen,

¹ [Wordsworth: *Yew Trees*; a portion of the passage is quoted at Vol. IV. p. 298.]

subordinate to agriculture, war, and religion; and in the modern period, in which it has become far more powerful, observe in what persons it is chiefly manifested.¹

(1.) It is subordinate in

Bacon.
Milton.
Johnson.
Richardson.
Goldsmith.
Young.
Newton.
Howard.
Fénelon.
Pascal.

(2.) It is intense in

Mrs. Radcliffe.
St. Pierre.
Shenstone.
Byron.
Shelley.
Keats.
Burns.
Eugene Sue.
George Sand.
Dumas.

§ 8. I have purposely omitted the names of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Scott, in the second list, because, glancing at the two columns as they now stand, we may, I think, draw some useful conclusions from the high honourableness and dignity of the names on one side, and the comparative slightness of those on the other,—conclusions which may help us to a better understanding of Scott and Tennyson themselves. Glancing, I say, down those columns in their present form, we shall at once perceive that the intense love of nature is, in modern times, characteristic of persons not of the first order of intellect, but of brilliant imagination, quick sympathy, and undefined religious principle, suffering also usually under strong and ill-governed passions: while in the same individual it will be found to vary at different periods, being, for the most part, strongest in youth, and associated with force of emotion, and with indefinite and feeble powers of thought; also, throughout life, perhaps developing itself most at times when the mind is slightly unhinged by love, grief, or some other of the passions.

¹ [In his copy for revision Ruskin wrote against list No. (2)—“Add Rousseau, and say why I named Dumas (landscape of Monte Cristo), and quote a Frenchman’s comparison of Sand with Homer, and say why chosen, all.”]

§ 9. But, on the other hand, while these feelings of delight in natural objects cannot be construed into signs of the highest mental powers, or purest moral principles, we see that they are assuredly indicative of minds above the usual standard of power, and endowed with sensibilities of great preciousness to humanity; so that those who find themselves entirely destitute of them, must make this want a subject of humiliation, not of pride. The apathy which cannot perceive beauty is very different from the stern energy which disdains it; and the coldness of heart which receives no emotion from external nature, is not to be confounded with the wisdom of purpose which represses emotion in action. In the case of most men, it is neither acuteness of the reason, nor breadth of humanity, which shields them from the impressions of natural scenery, but rather low anxieties, vain discontents, and mean pleasures: and for one who is blinded to the works of God by profound abstraction or lofty purpose, tens of thousands have their eyes sealed by vulgar selfishness, and their intelligence crushed by impious care.

Observe, then: we have, among mankind in general, the three orders of being;—the lowest, sordid and selfish, which neither sees nor feels; the second, noble and sympathetic, but which sees and feels without concluding or acting; the third and highest, which loses sight in resolution, and feeling in work.*

* The investigation of this subject becomes, therefore, difficult beyond all other parts of our inquiry, since precisely the same sentiments may arise in different minds from totally opposite causes; and the extreme of frivolity may sometimes for a moment desire the same things as the extreme of moral power and dignity. In the following extract from *Marriage*,¹ the sentiment expressed by Lady Juliana (the ineffably foolish and frivolous heroine of the story,) is as nearly as possible what Dante would have felt under the same circumstances:—

“The air was soft and genial; not a cloud stained the bright azure of the heavens; and the sun shone out in all his splendour, shedding life and beauty even over the desolate health-clad hills of Glenfern. But, after they had

¹ [By Susan Edmondstone Ferrier (1782–1854), p. 88.]

Thus, even in Scott and Wordsworth themselves, the love of nature is more or less associated with their weaknesses. Scott shows it most in the cruder compositions of his youth, his perfect powers of mind being displayed only in dialogues with which description has nothing whatever to do. Wordsworth's distinctive work was a war with pomp and pretence, and a display of the majesty of simple feelings and humble hearts, together with high reflective truth in his analysis of the courses of politics and ways of men; without these, his love of nature would have been comparatively worthless.¹

§ 10. "If this be so, it is not well to encourage the observance of landscape, any more than other ways of dreamily and ineffectually spending time?"

Stay a moment. We have hitherto observed this love

journeyed a few miles, suddenly emerging from the valley, a scene of matchless beauty burst at once upon the eye. Before them lay the dark blue waters of Lochmarlie, reflecting, as in a mirror, every surrounding object, and bearing on its placid, transparent bosom a fleet of herring-boats, the drapery of whose black, suspended nets contrasted with picturesque effect with the white sails of the larger vessels, which were vainly spread to catch a breeze. All around, rocks, meadows, woods, and hills mingled in wild and lovely irregularity.

"Not a breath was stirring, not a sound was heard, save the rushing of the waterfall, the tinkling of some silver rivulet, or the calm rippling of a tranquil lake; now and then, at intervals, the fisherman's Gaelic ditty, chanted as he lay stretched on the sand in some sunny nook; or the shrill, distant sound of childish glee. How delicious to the feeling heart to behold so fair a scene of unsophisticated nature, and to listen to her voice alone, breathing the accents of innocence and joy! But none of the party who now gazed on it had minds capable of being touched with the emotions it was calculated to inspire.

"Henry, indeed, was rapturous in his expressions of admiration; but he concluded his panegyrics by wondering his brother did not keep a cutter, and resolving to pass a night on board one of the herring-boats, that he might eat the fish in perfection.

"Lady Juliana thought it might be very pretty, if, instead of those frightful rocks and shabby cottages, there could be villas, and gardens, and lawns, and conservatories, and summer-houses, and statues.

"Miss Bella observed, if it was hers, she would cut down the woods, and level the hills, and have races."

¹ [The MS. here adds:—

" . . . ; while Tennyson's keen enjoyment of visible beauty belongs to him entirely as a poet of the second or emotional, not the first or creative class, and if he could conceive more he would describe less."]

of natural beauty only as it distinguishes one man from another, not as it acts for good or evil on those minds to which it necessarily belongs. It may, on the whole, distinguish weaker men from stronger men, and yet in those weaker men may be of some notable use. It may distinguish Byron from St. Bernard, and Shelley from Sir Isaac Newton, and yet may, perhaps, be the best thing that Byron and Shelley possess—a saving element in them; just as a rush may be distinguished from an oak by its bending, and yet the bending may be the saving element in the rush, and an admirable gift in its place and way. So that, although St. Bernard journeys all day by the lake of Geneva, and asks at evening “where it is,”¹ and Byron learns by it “to love earth only for its earthly sake,”* it does not follow that Byron, hating men, was the worse for loving the earth, nor that St. Bernard, loving men, was the better or wiser for being blind to it. And this will become still more manifest if we examine somewhat farther into the nature of this instinct, as characteristic especially of youth.

§ 11. We saw above² that Wordsworth described the feeling as independent of thought, and, in the particular place then quoted, he *therefore* speaks of it depreciatingly. But in other places he does not speak of it depreciatingly, but seems to think the absence of thought involves a certain nobleness, as in the passage already quoted, Vol. II. p. 108:³

“In such high hour
Of visitation from the living God
Thought was not.”

And he refers to the intense delight which he himself felt, and which he supposes other men feel, in nature, during

* *Childe Harold*, Canto iii. st. 71.

¹ [For this reference, see Vol. XI. p. 51.]

² [Above, p. 355.]

³ [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 180.]

their thoughtless youth, as an intimation of their immortality, and a joy which indicates their having come fresh from the hand of God.¹

Now, if Wordsworth be right in supposing this feeling to be in some degree common to all men, and most vivid in youth, we may question if it can be *entirely* explained as I have now tried to explain it. For if it entirely depended on multitudes of ideas, clustering about a beautiful object, it might seem that the youth could not feel it so strongly as the man, because the man knows more, and must have more ideas to make the garland of. Still less can we suppose the pleasure to be of that melancholy and languid kind, which Scott defines as “Resignation” and “Content”;² boys being not distinguished for either of those characters, but for eager effort and delightful discontent. If Wordsworth is at all right in this matter, therefore, there must surely be some other element in the feeling not yet detected.

§ 12. Now, in a question of this subtle kind, relating to a period of life when self-examination is rare, and expression imperfect, it becomes exceedingly difficult to trace, with any certainty, the movements of the minds of others, nor always easy to remember those of our own. I cannot, from observation, form any decided opinion as to the extent in which this strange delight in nature influences the hearts of young persons in general; and, in stating what has passed in my own mind, I do not mean to draw any positive conclusion as to the nature of the feeling in other children;³ but the inquiry is clearly one in which personal experience is the only safe ground to go upon, though a narrow one; and I will make no excuse for talking about

¹ [See the Ode on *Intimations of Immortality*, quoted below, p. 369.]

² [See above, p. 355.]

³ [In the MS. Ruskin here added:—

“I should not have attempted to write this book at all unless I had been myself strongly influenced by the sensation to which Wordsworth and other modern poets refer.”

See the passage in *Fors Clavigera* noted above, p. 342, and compare *Præterita*, i. §§ 41, 192, 244 *seq.*]

myself with reference to this subject, because, though there is much egotism in the world, it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing,—and, though there is much work to be done in the world, it is often the best thing a man can do,—to tell the exact truth about the movements of his own mind; and there is this farther reason, that whatever other faculties I may or may not possess, this gift of taking pleasure in landscape I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men; it having been the ruling passion of my life, and the reason for the choice of its field of labour.

§ 13. The first thing which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwent Water; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since.¹ Two other things I remember as, in a sort, beginnings of life;—crossing Shapfells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hills), and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles;² these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything; comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself. Only thus much I can remember, respecting it, which is important to our present subject.

§ 14. First: it was never independent of associated thought. Almost as soon as I could see or hear, I had got

¹ [Compare *Præterita*, i. ch. v. § 107, and see Ruskin's early verses (1830) on Friar's Crag, Vol. II. p. 294, where the monument to him, now erected on the spot, is described in a note.]

² [For these reminiscences see Introduction to Vol. XII. (p. xxi.), where, in a letter of 1853, Ruskin recalls some of his "baby verses"; see also *Queen of the Air*, § 112, and the early verses (1827) in Vol. II. p. 262.]

reading enough to give me associations with all kinds of scenery; and mountains, in particular, were always partly confused with those of my favourite book, Scott's *Monastery*: so that Glenfarg and all other glens were more or less enchanted to me, filled with forms of hesitating creed about Christie of the Clint Hill, and the monk Eustace; and with a general presence of White Lady everywhere.¹ I also generally knew, or was told by my father and mother, such simple facts of history as were necessary to give more definite and justifiable association to other scenes which chiefly interested me, such as the ruins of Lochleven and Kenilworth; and thus my pleasure in mountains or ruins was never, even in earliest childhood, free from a certain awe and melancholy, and general sense of the meaning of death, though, in its principal influence, entirely exhilarating and gladdening.

§ 15. Secondly, it was partly dependent on contrast with a very simple and unamused mode of general life; I was born in London, and accustomed, for two or three years, to no other prospect than that of the brick walls over the way;² had no brothers nor sisters, nor companions; and though I could always make myself happy in a quiet way, the beauty of the mountains had an additional charm of change and adventure which a country-bred child would not have felt.

§ 16. Thirdly: there was no definite religious feeling mingled with it. I partly believed in ghosts and fairies; but supposed that angels belonged entirely to the Mosaic dispensation, and cannot remember any single thought or feeling connected with them. I believed that God was in heaven, and could hear me and see me; but this gave me neither pleasure nor pain, and I seldom thought of it at all. I never thought of nature as God's work, but as a separate fact or existence.

¹ [See Ruskin's early metrical version of *The Monastery*, Vol. II. pp. 260 n., 276 n.]

² [See *Præterita*, i. ch. i. § 14, where Ruskin recalls his early years in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square.]

§ 17. Fourthly: it was entirely unaccompanied by powers of reflection or invention. Every fancy that I had about nature was put into my head by some book; and I never reflected about anything till I grew older; and then, the more I reflected, the less nature was precious to me: I could then make myself happy, by thinking, in the dark, or in the dullest scenery; and the beautiful scenery became less essential to my pleasure.

§ 18. Fifthly: it was, according to its strength, inconsistent with every evil feeling, with spite, anger, covetousness, discontent, and every other hateful passion; but would associate itself deeply with every just and noble sorrow, joy, or affection. It had not, however, always the power to repress what was inconsistent with it; and, though only after stout contention, might at last be crushed by what it had partly repressed. And as it only acted by setting one impulse against another, though it had much power in moulding the character, it had hardly any in strengthening it; it formed temperament but never instilled principle; it kept me generally good-humoured and kindly, but could not teach me perseverance or self-denial: what firmness or principle I had was quite independent of it; and it came itself nearly as often in the form of a temptation as of a safeguard, leading me to ramble over hills when I should have been learning lessons, and lose days in reveries which I might have spent in doing kindnesses.

§ 19. Lastly: although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of Sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest;—an instinctive awe, mixed with delight; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone; and then it would often make me shiver from head to foot with the joy and fear of it, when after being some time away from hills, I first got to the shore of a mountain river, where

the brown water circled among the pebbles,¹ or when I first saw the swell of distant land against the sunset, or the first low broken wall, covered with mountain moss. I cannot in the least *describe* the feeling; but I do not think this is my fault, nor that of the English language, for I am afraid, no feeling *is* describable. If we had to explain even the sense of bodily hunger to a person who had never felt it, we should be hard put to it for words; and the joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit. These feelings remained in their full intensity till I was eighteen or twenty, and then, as the reflective and practical power increased, and the “cares of this world”² gained upon me, faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality*.³

§ 20. I cannot, of course, tell how far I am justified in supposing that these sensations may be reasoned upon as common to children in general. In the same degree they are not of course common, otherwise children would be, most of them, very different from what they are in their choice of pleasures. But, as far as such feelings exist, I apprehend they are more or less similar in their nature and influence; only producing different characters according to the elements with which they are mingled. Thus, a very religious child may give up many pleasures to which its instincts lead it, for the sake of irksome duties; and an inventive child would mingle its love of nature with watchfulness of human sayings and doings; but I believe the feelings I have endeavoured to describe are the pure landscape-instinct; and the likelihoods of good or evil resulting from them may be reasoned upon as generally indicating the usefulness or danger of the modern love and study of landscape.

¹ [See *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. (“The Banks of Tay”) § 74.]

² [Mark iv. 19.]

³ [See in illustration of this fading away of the child’s “heart-hunger,” the passages from Ruskin’s letters and diaries cited in Vol. IV. p. xxvi., Vol. IX. p. xxiii., and above, p. xix.]

§ 21. And, first, observe that the charm of romantic association (§ 14) can be felt only by the modern European child. It rises eminently out of the contrast of the beautiful past with the frightful and monotonous present; and it depends for its force on the existence of ruins and traditions, on the remains of architecture, the traces of battle-fields, and the precursorship of eventful history. The instinct to which it appeals can hardly be felt in America, and every day that either beautifies our present architecture and dress, or overthrows a stone of mediæval monument, contributes to weaken it in Europe. Of its influence on the mind of Turner and Prout, and the permanent results which, through them, it is likely to effect, I shall have to speak presently.¹

§ 22. Again: the influence of surprise in producing the delight, is to be noted, as a suspicious or evanescent element in it. Observe, my pleasure was chiefly (§ 19) when I *first* got into beautiful scenery out of London. The enormous influence of novelty—the way in which it quickens observation, sharpens sensation, and exalts sentiment—is not half enough taken note of by us, and is to me a very sorrowful matter. I think that what Wordsworth speaks of as a glory in the child,² because it has come fresh from God's hands, is in reality nothing more than the freshness of all things to its newly opened sight. I find that by keeping long away from hills, I can in great part still restore the old childish feeling about them; and the more I live and work among them, the more it vanishes.

§ 23. This evil is evidently common to all minds; Wordsworth himself mourning over it in the same poem:

“Custom hangs upon us, with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.”

¹ [See ch. i. in the next volume (“Of the Turnerian Picturesque”); the passage about Prout (omitted on revision) is in this edition given in a note (Vol. VI. p. 24): compare also Vol. XII. pp. 310–315.]

² [“But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

Intimations of Immortality, viii. Ruskin alters the first line somewhat.]

And if we grow impatient under it, and seek to recover the mental energy by more quickly repeated and brighter novelty, it is all over with our enjoyment. There is no cure for this evil, any more than for the weariness of the imagination already described,¹ but in patience and rest: if we try to obtain perpetual change, change itself will become monotonous; and then we are reduced to that old despair, “If water chokes, what will you drink after it?” And the two points of practical wisdom in this matter are, first, to be content with as little novelty as possible at a time; and, secondly, to preserve, as much as possible in the world, the sources of novelty.

§ 24. I say, first, to be content with as little change as possible. If the attention is awake, and the feelings in proper train, a turn of a country road, with a cottage beside it, which we have not seen before, is as much as we need for refreshment; if we hurry past it, and take two cottages at a time, it is already too much: hence, to any person who has all his senses about him, a quiet walk along not more than ten or twelve miles of road a day, is the most amusing of all travelling; and all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity. Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely “being sent” to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel;² the next step to it would of course be telegraphic transport, of which, however, I suppose it has been truly said by Octave Feuillet,

“*Il y aurait des gens assez bêtes pour trouver ça amusant.*”*

If we walk more than ten or twelve miles, it breaks up the day too much; leaving no time for stopping at the stream sides or shady banks, or for any work at the end

* *Scènes et Proverbes*. La Crise; (Scène en calèche, hors Paris).³

¹ [See above, p. 183.]

² [Compare Vol. VIII. p. 159.]

³ [This was one of the books which Ruskin recommended to Miss Mitford; see his letter to her of July 29, 1854, in a later volume.]

of the day; besides that the last few miles are apt to be done in a hurry, and may then be considered as lost ground. But if, advancing thus slowly, after some days we approach any more interesting scenery, every yard of the changeful ground becomes precious and piquant; and the continual increase of hope, and of surrounding beauty, affords one of the most exquisite enjoyments possible to the healthy mind; besides that real knowledge is acquired of whatever it is the object of travelling to learn, and a certain sublimity given to all places, so attained, by the true sense of the spaces of earth that separate them. A man who really loves travelling would as soon consent to pack a day of such happiness into an hour of railroad, as one who loved eating would agree, if it were possible, to concentrate his dinner into a pill.

§ 25. And, secondly, I say that it is wisdom to preserve as much as possible the innocent *sources* of novelty;—not definite inferiorities of one place to another, if such can be done away; but differences of manners and customs, of language and architecture. The greatest effort ought specially to be made by all wise and far-sighted persons, in the present crisis of civilization, to enforce the distinction between wholesome reform, and heartless abandonment of ancestral custom; between kindly fellowship of nation with nation, and ape-like adoption, by one, of the habits of another. It is ludicrously woeful to see the luxurious inhabitants of London and Paris rushing over the Continent (as they say, to *see* it), and transposing every place, as far as lies in their power, instantly into a likeness of Regent Street and the Rue de la Paix, which they need not certainly have come so far to see. Of this evil I shall have more to say hereafter;¹ meantime I return to our main subject.

§ 26. The next character we have to note in the land-scape-instinct (and on this much stress is to be laid), is its

¹ [See in the next volume, ch. xx. § 41; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 15.]

total inconsistency with all evil passions; its absolute contrariety (whether in the contest it were crushed or not), to all care, hatred, envy, anxiety, and moroseness. A feeling of this kind is assuredly not one to be lightly repressed, or treated with contempt.

But how, if it be so, the reader asks, can it be characteristic of passionate and unprincipled men, like Byron, Shelley, and such others, and not characteristic of the noblest and most highly principled men?

First, because it is itself a passion, and therefore likely to be characteristic of passionate men. Secondly, because it is (§ 18) wholly a separate thing from moral principle, and may or may not be joined to strength of will, or rectitude of purpose;* only, this much is always observable in the men whom it characterizes, that, whatever their faults or failings, they always understand and love noble qualities of character: they can conceive (if not certain phases of piety), at all events, self-devotion of the highest kind; they delight in all that is good, gracious, and noble; and, though warped often to take delight also in what is dark or degraded, that delight is mixed with bitter self-reproach; or else is wanton, careless, or affected, while their delight in noble things is constant and sincere.

§ 27. Look back to the two lists given above, § 7. I have not lately read anything by Mrs. Radcliffe or George Sand, and cannot, therefore, take instances from them.

* Compare the characters of Fleur de Marie and Rigolette, in the *Mystères de Paris*. I know no other instance in which the two tempers are so exquisitely delineated and opposed. Read carefully the beautiful pastoral, in the eighth chapter of the first Part, where Fleur de Marie is first taken into the fields under Montmartre, and compare it with the sixth of the second Part, its accurately traced companion sketch, noting carefully Rigolette's "Non, *je déteste la campagne*." She does not, however, dislike flowers or birds; "Cette caisse de bois, que Rigolette appellait le jardin de ses oiseaux, était rempli de terre recouverte de mousse, pendant l'hiver. Elle travaillait auprès de la fenêtre ouverte, à-demi-voilée par un verdoyant rideau de pois de senteur roses, de capucines oranges, de volubilis bleus et blancs."¹

¹ [Ruskin quotes the *Mystères de Paris* again in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 16.]

Keats hardly introduced human character into his work; but glance over the others, and note the general tone of their conceptions. Take St. Pierre's Virginia, Byron's Myrrha, Angiolina, and Marina, and Eugène Sue's Fleur de Marie; and out of the other list you will only be able to find Pamela, Clementina, and, I suppose, Clarissa,* to put beside them; and these will not more than match Myrrha and Marina; leaving Fleur de Marie and Virginia rivalless. Then meditate a little, with all justice and mercy, over the two groups of names; and I think you will, at last, feel that there is a pathos and tenderness of heart among the lovers of nature in the second list, of which it is nearly impossible to estimate either the value or the danger; that the sterner consistency of the men in the first may, in great part, have arisen only from the, to them, most merciful, appointment of having had religious teaching or disciplined education in their youth; while their want of love for nature, whether that love be originally absent, or artificially repressed, is to none of them an advantage. Johnson's indolence, Goldsmith's improvidence, Young's worldliness, Milton's severity, and Bacon's servility, might all have been less, if they could in anywise have sympathized with Byron's lonely joy in a Jura storm,† or with Shelley's interest in floating paper boats down the Serchio.¹

§ 28. And then observe, farther, as I kept the names of Wordsworth and Scott out of the second list, I withdrew, also, certain names from the first; and for this reason, that in all the men who are named in that list, there is evidently *some* degree of love for nature, which may have

* I have not read *Clarissa*.²

† It might be thought that Young *could* have sympathized with it. He would have made better use of it, but he would not have had the same delight in it. He turns his solitude to good account; but this is because, to him, solitude is sorrow, and his real enjoyment would have been of amiable society, and a place at court.

¹ ["The Boat on the Serchio" (poem of 1821). For Byron's "joy in a Jura storm," see *Childe Harold*, iii. 92.]

² [But Ruskin became a great admirer of Richardson: see *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 70; iii. ch. iv. § 66.]

been originally of more power than we suppose, and may have had an infinitely hallowing and protective influence upon them. But there also lived certain men of high intellect in that age who had *no* love of nature whatever. They do not appear ever to have received the smallest sensation of ocular delight from any natural scene, but would have lived happily all their lives in drawing-rooms or studies. And, therefore, in these men we shall be able to determine, with the greatest chance of accuracy, what the real influence of natural beauty is, and what the character of a mind destitute of its love. Take, as conspicuous instances, Le Sage and Smollett,¹ and you will find, in meditating over their works, that they are utterly incapable of conceiving a human soul as endowed with any nobleness whatever; their heroes are simply beasts endowed with some degree of human intellect;—cunning, false, passionate, reckless, ungrateful, and abominable, incapable of noble joy, of noble sorrow, of any spiritual perception or hope. I said, “beasts with human intellect;” but neither Gil Blas nor Roderick Random reaches, morally, anything near the level of dogs; while the delight which the writers themselves feel in mere filth and pain, with an unmitigated foulness and cruelty of heart, is just as manifest in every sentence as the distress and indignation with which pain and injustice are seen by Shelley and Byron.

§ 29. Distinguished from these men by *some* evidence of love for nature, yet an evidence much less clear than that for any of those named even in the first list, stand Cervantes, Pope, and Molière. It is not easy to say how much the character of these last depended on their epoch and education; but it is noticeable that the first two agree thus far in temper with Le Sage and Smollett,—that they delight in dwelling upon vice, misfortune, or folly, as subjects of amusement; while yet they are distinguished from

¹ [For an earlier reference to Smollett, in the same sense (though with recognition of his “magnificent wit and intellect”), see *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 418; see also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 90, Vol. XII. p. 119, and *Præterita*, i. ch. viii. § 166.]

Le Sage and Smollett by capacity of conceiving nobleness of character, only in a humiliating and hopeless way; the one representing all chivalry as insanity, the other placing the wisdom of man in a serene and sneering reconciliation of good with evil. Of Molière I think very differently. Living in the blindest period of the world's history, in the most luxurious city, and the most corrupted court, of the time, he yet manifests through all his writings an exquisite natural wisdom; a capacity for the most simple enjoyment; a high sense of all nobleness, honour, and purity, variously marked throughout his slighter work, but distinctly made the theme of his two perfect plays—the *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope*; and in all that he says of art or science he has an unerring instinct for what is useful and sincere, and uses his whole power to defend it, with as keen a hatred of everything affected and vain. And, singular as it may seem, the first definite lesson read to Europe in that school of simplicity of which Wordsworth was the supposed originator among the mountains of Westmorland, was, in fact, given in the midst of the court of Louis XIV., and by Molière. The little canzonet "J'aime mieux ma mie," is, I believe, the first Wordsworthian poem brought forward on philosophical principles, to oppose the schools of art and affectation.¹

§ 30. I do not know if, by a careful analysis, I could point out any evidences of a capacity for the love of natural scenery in Molière stealing forth through the slightness of his pastorals; but, if not, we must simply set him aside as exceptional, as a man uniting Wordsworth's philosophy with

¹ [So in *Academy Notes*, 1875 (s. No. 218), Ruskin mentions Goldsmith and Molière as "having given the first general statements" of the Pre-Raphaelite principle; and in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 21, he again cites Molière's song as the first expression in literature of the revolt against "the erudite and artificial schools." The song of Alceste—beginning "Si le Roi m'avait donné Paris, sa grande ville"—is in *Le Misanthrope*, Act i. sc. 2. Ruskin's references to Molière are numerous. See, for instance, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 90, where the other side of his attitude towards nature is noticed (Vol. XII. p. 119); *Ethics of the Dust*, § 109, where a "great sentence" of his is quoted; *Aratra Pentelici*, § 89, where *Le Misanthrope* is spoken of as his "most perfect work"; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 34, where his "reasoning and imaginative powers" are said to be "evenly balanced."]

Le Sage's wit, turned by circumstances from the observance of natural beauty to that of human frailty. And thus putting him aside for the moment I think we cannot doubt of our main conclusion, that, though the absence of the love of nature is not an assured condemnation, its presence is an invariable sign of goodness of heart and justness of moral *perception*, though by no means of moral *practice*; that in proportion to the degree in which it is felt, will *probably* be the degree in which all nobleness and beauty of character will also be felt; that when it is originally absent from any mind, that mind is in many other respects hard, worldly, and degraded; that where, having been originally present, it is repressed by art or education, that repression appears to have been detrimental to the person suffering it; and that wherever the feeling exists, it acts for good on the character to which it belongs, though, as it may often belong to characters weak in other respects, it may carelessly be mistaken for a source of evil in them.

§ 31. And having arrived at this conclusion by a review of facts, which, I hope it will be admitted, whether accurate or not, has at least been candid, these farther considerations may confirm our belief in its truth. Observe: the whole force of education, until very lately, has been directed in every possible way to the destruction of the love of nature.¹ The only knowledge which has been considered essential among us is that of words, and, next after it, of the abstract sciences; while every liking shown by children for simple natural history has been either violently checked, (if it took an inconvenient form for the housemaids,) or else scrupulously limited to hours of play: so that it has really been impossible for any child earnestly to study the works of God but against its conscience; and the love of nature has become inherently the characteristic of truants and idlers. While also the art of drawing, which is of more real importance to the human race than that of

¹ [Compare the Appendix on "Modern Education" in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 258).]

writing (because people can hardly draw anything without being of some use both to themselves and others, and can hardly write anything without wasting their own time and that of others),—this art of drawing, I say, which on plain and stern system should be taught to every child, just as writing is,—has been so neglected and abused, that there is not one man in a thousand, even of its professed teachers, who knows its first principles; and thus it needs much illfortune or obstinacy—much neglect on the part of its teachers, or rebellion on his own—before a boy can get leave to use his eyes or his fingers; so that those who *can* use them are for the most part neglected or rebellious lads—runaways and bad scholars—passionate, erratic, self-willed, and restive against all forms of education; while your well-behaved and amiable scholars are disciplined into blindness and palsy of half their faculties. Wherein here is at once a notable ground for what difference we have observed between the lovers of nature and its despisers; between the somewhat immoral and unrespectable watchfulness of the one, and the moral and respectable blindness of the other.

§ 32. One more argument remains, and that, I believe, an unanswerable one. As, by the accident of education, the love of nature has been, among us, associated with *wilfulness*, so, by the accident of time, it has been associated with *faithlessness*. I traced, above, the peculiar mode in which this faithlessness was indicated; but I never intended to imply, therefore, that it was an invariable concomitant of the love. Because it happens that, by various concurrent operations of evil, we have been led according to those words of the Greek poet already quoted, to “dethrone the gods, and crown the whirlwind,”¹ it is no reason that we should forget there was once a time when “the Lord answered Job *out* of the whirlwind.”² And if we now take final and full view of the matter, we shall find

¹ [See above, p. 318.]

² [Job xxxviii. 1.]

that the love of nature, wherever it has existed, has been a faithful and sacred element of human feeling; that is to say, supposing all circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will be *always* found to have more *faith in God* than the other. It is intensely difficult, owing to the confusion and counter influences which always mingle in the data of the problem, to make this abstraction fairly; but so far as we can do it, so far, I boldly assert, the result is constantly the same: the nature-worship will be found to bring with it such a sense of the presence and power of a Great Spirit as no mere reasoning can either induce or controvert; and where that nature-worship is innocently pursued, —*i.e.* with due respect to other claims on time, feeling, and exertion, and associated with the higher principles of religion,—it becomes the channel of certain sacred truths, which by no other means can be conveyed.

§ 33. This is not a statement which any investigation is needed to prove. It comes to us at once from the highest of all authority. The greater number of the words which are recorded in Scripture, as directly spoken to men by the lips of the Deity, are either simple revelations of His law, or special threatenings, commands, and promises relating to special events. But two passages of God's speaking, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, possess, it seems to me, a different character from any of the rest, having been uttered, the one to effect the last necessary change in the mind of a man whose piety was in other respects perfect; and the other, as the first statement to all men of the principles of Christianity by Christ Himself—I mean the 38th to 41st chapters of the book of Job, and the Sermon on the Mount. Now the first of these passages is, from beginning to end, nothing else than a direction of the mind which was to be perfected to humble observance of the works of God in nature. And the other consists only in the inculcation of *three* things: 1st, right conduct; 2nd, looking for eternal life; 3rd, trusting God,

through watchfulness of His dealings with His creation;¹ and the entire contents of the book of Job, and of the Sermon on the Mount, will be found resolvable simply into these three requirements from all men,—that they should act rightly, hope for heaven, and watch God’s wonders and work in the earth; the right conduct being always summed up under the three heads of *justice, mercy, and truth*, and no mention of any doctrinal point whatsoever occurring in either piece of divine teaching.

§ 34. As far as I can judge of the ways of men, it seems to me that the simplest and most necessary truths are always the last believed; and I suppose that well-meaning people in general would rather regulate their conduct and creed by almost any other portion of Scripture whatsoever, than by that Sermon on the Mount which contains the things that Christ thought it first necessary for all men to understand. Nevertheless, I believe the time will soon come for the full force of these two passages of Scripture to be accepted. Instead of supposing the love of nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty of the age;² that it is precisely the most healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness, and as a duty, results will spring of an importance at present inconceivable; and lights arise, which, for the first time in man’s history, will reveal to him the true

¹ [On the landscape of the Book of Job, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 79 (Vol. XII. pp. 105–106).]

² [The passage “Instead of supposing . . . his Maker” is § 63 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“I forget, now, what I meant by ‘liberty,’ in this passage; but I often used the word in my first writings, in a good sense, thinking of Scott’s moorland rambles, and the like. It is very wonderful to me, now, to see what hopes I had once; but Turner was alive, then; and the sun used to shine, and rivers to sparkle.”

See for a use of the word liberty “in a good sense,” *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. ii. § 15 and *n*. But there and always Ruskin associates freedom and authority, liberty and law: compare *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 138), *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 249).]

nature of his life, the true field for his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker.

§ 35. I will not endeavour here to trace the various modes in which these results are likely to be effected, for this would involve an essay on education, on the uses of natural history, and the probable future destiny of nations. Somewhat on these subjects I have spoken in other places;¹ and I hope to find time, and proper place, to say more. But one or two observations may be made merely to suggest the directions in which the reader may follow out the subject for himself.

The great mechanical impulses of the age, of which most of us are so proud, are a mere passing fever, half-speculative, half-childish. People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to; that if there were, it would that instant cease to be worth going to,—I mean, so far as the things to be obtained are in any way estimable in terms of *price*. For there are two classes of precious things in the world: those that God gives us for nothing—sun, air, and life (both mortal life and immortal); and the secondarily precious things which He gives us for a price: these secondarily precious things, worldly wine and milk, can only be bought for definite money; they never can be cheapened. No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of nature's "establishment" at half-price. Do we want to be strong?—we must work. To be hungry?—we must starve. To be happy?—we must be kind. To be wise?—we must look and think. No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world

¹ [See, for instance, *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. pp. 159, 259), and *Stone of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv.; and for places where Ruskin returned to the thoughts here suggested, *Modern Painters*, vol. v., concluding chapter, his Oxford *Lectures on Art*, and, indeed, the greater part of his later writings.]

than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any sort of conquering; they wanted *using*. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller: and as for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have, originally, nothing to say.* We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.

§ 36. “Well; but railroads and telegraphs are so useful for communicating knowledge to savage nations.” Yes, if you have any to give them. If you know nothing *but* railroads, and can communicate nothing but aqueous vapour and gunpowder,—what then? But if you have any other thing than those to give, then the railroad is of use only because it communicates that other thing; and the question is—what that other thing may be. Is it religion? I believe if we had really wanted to communicate that, we could have done it in less than 1800 years, without steam. Most of the good religious communication that I remember, has been done on foot; and it cannot be easily done faster than at foot pace. Is it science? But what science—of

* “The light-outspeeding telegraph
Bears nothing on its beam.”—EMERSON.¹

See Appendix III., Plagiarism [p. 427].

¹ [“The World Soul,” in Emerson’s *Poems* (1847).]

motion, meat, and medicine? Well; when you have moved your savage, and dressed your savage, fed him with white bread, and shown him how to set a limb,—what next? Follow out that question. Suppose every obstacle over-come; give your savage every advantage of civilization to the full; suppose that you have put the Red Indian in tight shoes; taught the Chinese how to make Wedgwood's ware, and to paint it with colours that will rub off; and persuaded all Hindoo women that it is more pious to torment their husbands into graves than to burn themselves at the burial,—what next? Gradually, thinking on from point to point, we shall come to perceive that all true happiness and nobleness are near us, and yet neglected by us; and that till we have learned how to be happy and noble we have not much to tell, even to Red Indians. The delights of horse-racing and hunting, of assemblies in the night instead of the day, of costly and wearisome music, of costly and burdensome dress,¹ of chagrined contention for place or power, or wealth, or the eyes of the multitude; and all the endless occupation without purpose, and idleness without rest, of our vulgar world, are not, it seems to me, enjoyments we need be ambitious to communicate. And all real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him, since first he was made of the earth, as they are now; and they are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray,—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing these, they never *will* have power to do more. The world's prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.

§ 37. And I am Utopian and enthusiastic enough to

¹ [For other references to these features of modern life, see *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 26, and *Love's Meinie*, § 133 (hunting); *Lectures on Art*, § 112 (late hours); *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 6 n. (opera); and the General Index (dress).]

believe, that the time will come when the world will discover this.¹ It has now made its experiments in every possible direction but the right one: and it seems that it must, at last, try the right one, in a mathematical necessity. It has tried fighting, and preaching, and fasting, buying and selling, pomp and parsimony, pride and humiliation,—every possible manner of existence in which it could conjecture there was any happiness or dignity: and all the while, as it bought, sold, and fought, and fasted, and wearied itself with policies, and ambitions, and self-denials, God had placed its real happiness in the keeping of the little mosses of the wayside, and of the clouds of the firmament. Now and then a wearied king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion.² But the world would not believe their report, and went on trampling down the mosses, and forgetting the clouds, and seeking happiness in its own way, until, at last, blundering and late, came natural science; and in natural science not only the observation of things, but the finding out of new uses for them. Of course the world, having a choice left to it, went wrong as usual, and thought that these mere material uses were to be the sources of its happiness. It got the clouds packed into iron cylinders, and made them carry its wise self at their own cloud pace. It got weavable fibres out of the mosses, and made clothes for itself, cheap and fine,—here was happiness at last. To go as fast as the clouds, and manufacture everything out of anything,—here was paradise, indeed!

¹ [On Ruskin's Utopianism, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 33 (Vol. XII. p. 56 and *n.*.)]

² [Ruskin was perhaps thinking of the abdication of the Emperor Charles V. and his cloister life, as described in Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's book; and of Epictetus—

“That halting slave, who in Nicopolis

Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son

Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him.”—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

For a reference to the cloister life of Charles V., see *Academy Notes*, 1856 (No. 175); to Epictetus, Vol. VI. p. 22.]

§ 38. And now, when, in a little while, it is unparadised again, if there were any other mistake that the world could make, it would of course make it. But I see not that there is any other; and, standing fairly at its wits' end, having found that going fast, when it is used to it, is no more paradisiacal than going slow; and that all the prints and cottons in Manchester cannot make it comfortable in its mind, I do verily believe it will come, finally, to understand that God paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work, and that in resting quietly beside Him, and watching His working, and—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants,—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.

§ 39. How far art is capable of helping us in such happiness we hardly yet know; but I hope to be able, in the subsequent parts of this work, to give some data for arriving at a conclusion in the matter.¹ Enough has been advanced to relieve the reader from any lurking suspicion of unworthiness in our subject, and to induce him to take interest in the mind and work of the great painter who has headed the landscape school among us. What farther considerations may, within any reasonable limits, be put before him, respecting the effect of natural scenery on the human heart, I will introduce in their proper places either as we examine, under Turner's guidance, the different classes of scenery, or at the close of the whole work; and therefore I have only one point more to notice here, namely, the exact relation between landscape-painting and natural science, properly so called.

§ 40. For it may be thought that I have rashly assumed that the Scriptural authorities above quoted apply to that partly superficial view of nature which is taken by the land-scape-painter, instead of to the accurate view taken by the

¹ [See, again, the last chapter of *Modern Painters*, vol. v.]

man of science. So far from there being rashness in such an assumption, the whole language, both of the book of Job and the Sermon on the Mount, gives precisely the view of nature which is taken by the uninvestigating affection of a humble, but powerful mind. There is no dissection of muscles or counting of elements, but the boldest and broadest glance at the apparent facts, and the most magnificent metaphor in expressing them. "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him." And in the often repeated, never obeyed, command, "Consider the lilies of the field," observe there is precisely the delicate attribution of life which we have seen to be the characteristic of the modern view of landscape,—“They toil not.” There is no science, or hint of science; no counting of petals, nor display of provisions for sustenance; nothing but the expression of sympathy, at once the most childish, and the most profound,—“They toil not.”¹

§ 41. And we see in this, therefore, that the instinct which leads us thus to attribute life to the lowest forms of organic nature, does not necessarily spring from faithlessness, nor the deducing a moral out of them from an irregular and languid conscientiousness. In this, as in almost all things connected with moral discipline, the same results may follow from contrary causes; and as there are a good and evil contentment, a good and evil discontent, a good and evil care, fear, ambition, and so on, there are also good and evil forms of this sympathy with nature, and disposition to moralize over it.* In general, active men, of strong sense and stern principle, do not care to see anything in

* Compare what is said before in various places of good and bad finish, good and bad mystery, etc.² If a man were disposed to system-making, he could easily throw together a counter-system to Aristotle's, showing that in all

¹ [The Bible references in § 40 are Job xli. 18, 22 (see also *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. x. § 17); Matthew vi. 28 (see also p. 292, above).]

² [See, for finish, ch. ix. p. 155, etc.; for mystery, ch. xvi. p. 318, with which passage contrast Vol. III. p. 123; and for the Aristotelian theory of virtue as a mean, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. App. iii.]

a leaf, but vegetable tissue, and are so well convinced of useful moral truth, that it does not strike them as a new or notable thing when they find it in any way symbolized by material nature; hence there is a strong presumption, when first we perceive a tendency in any one to regard trees as living, and enunciate moral aphorisms over every pebble they stumble against, that such tendency proceeds from a morbid temperament, like Shelley's, or an inconsistent one, like Jaques's. But when the active life is nobly fulfilled, and the mind is then raised beyond it into clear and calm beholding of the world around us, the same tendency again manifests itself in the most sacred way: the simplest forms of nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God; and we ourselves, their fellows, made out of the same dust, and greater than they only in having a greater portion of the Divine power exerted on our frame, and all the common uses and palpably visible forms of things, become subordinate in our minds to their inner glory,—to the mysterious voices in which they talk to us about God, and the changeful and typical aspects by which they witness to us of holy truth, and fill us with obedient, joyful, and thankful emotion.

§ 42. It is in raising us from the first state of inactive reverie to the second of useful thought, that scientific pursuits are to be chiefly praised. But in restraining us at this second stage, and checking the impulses towards higher contemplation, they are to be feared or blamed. They may in certain minds be consistent with such contemplation; but only by an effort: in their nature they are always adverse to it, having a tendency to chill and subdue the feelings, and to resolve all things into atoms and numbers. For most men, an ignorant enjoyment is better than an informed one; it is better to conceive the

things there were two extremes which exactly resembled each other, but of which one was bad, the other good; and a mean, resembling neither, but better than the one, and worse than the other.

sky as a blue dome than a dark cavity, and the cloud as a golden throne than a sleety mist. I much question whether any one who knows optics, however religious he may be, can feel in equal degree the pleasure or reverence which an unlettered peasant may feel at the sight of a rainbow. And it is mercifully thus ordained, since the law of life, for a finite being, with respect to the works of an infinite one, must be always an infinite ignorance. We cannot fathom the mystery of a single flower, nor is it intended that we should; but that the pursuit of science should constantly be stayed by the love of beauty, and accuracy of knowledge by tenderness of emotion.

§ 43. Nor is it even just to speak of the love of beauty as in all respects unscientific; for there is a science of the aspects of things, as well as of their nature; and it is as much a fact to be noted in their constitution, that they produce such and such an effect upon the eye or heart (as, for instance, that minor scales of sound cause melancholy), as that they are made up of certain atoms or vibrations of matter.

It is as the master of this science of *Aspects*, that I said, some time ago,¹ Turner must eventually be named always with Bacon, the master of the science of *Essence*. As the first poet who has, in all their range, understood the grounds of noble emotion which exist in landscape, his future influence will be of a still more subtle and important character. The rest of this work will therefore be dedicated to the explanation of the principles on which he composed, and of the aspects of nature which he was the first to discern.

¹ [Above, p. 353; see also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 101 (Vol. XII. p. 128), and compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 48 n.).]

CHAPTER XVIII
OF THE TEACHERS OF TURNER

§ 1. THE first step to the understanding either the mind or position of a great man ought, I think, to be an inquiry into the elements of his early instruction, and the mode in which he was affected by the circumstances of surrounding life. In making this inquiry, with respect to Turner, we shall be necessarily led to take note of the causes which had brought landscape-painting into the state in which he found it; and, therefore, of those transitions of style which, it will be remembered, we overleaped (hoping for a future opportunity of examining them) at the close of the fifteenth chapter.

§ 2. And first, I said, it will be remembered, some way back,¹ that the relations between Scott and Turner would probably be found to differ very curiously from those between Dante and Giotto. They differ primarily in this, —that Dante and Giotto, living in a consistent age, were subjected to one and the same influence, and may be reasoned about almost in similar terms. But Scott and Turner, living in an inconsistent age, became subjected to inconsistent influences; and are at once distinguished by notable contrarities, requiring separate examination in each.

§ 3. Of these, the chief was, that Scott, having had the blessing of a totally neglected education, was able early to follow most of his noble instincts; but Turner, having suffered under the instruction of the Royal Academy, had to pass nearly thirty years of his life in recovering from its

¹ [See above, p. 330.]

consequences;* this permanent result following for both,—that Scott never was led into any fault foreign to his nature, but spoke what was in him, in rugged or idle simplicity; erring only where it was natural to err, and failing only where it was impossible to succeed. But Turner, from the beginning, was led into constrained and unnatural error; diligently debarred from every ordinary help to success. The one thing which the Academy *ought* to have taught him (namely, the simple and safe use of oil colour),¹ it never taught him; but it carefully repressed his perceptions of truth, his capacities of invention, and his tendencies of choice. For him it was impossible to do right but in a spirit of defiance; and the first condition of his progress in learning, was the power to forget.

§ 4. One most important distinction in their feelings throughout life was necessitated by this difference in early training. Scott gathered what little knowledge of architecture he possessed, in wanderings among the rocky walls of Crichtoun, Lochleven, and Linlithgow, and among the delicate pillars of Holyrood, Roslin, and Melrose. Turner acquired his knowledge of architecture at the desk, from academical elevations of the Parthenon and St. Paul's; and spent a large portion of his early years in taking views of gentlemen's seats, temples of the Muses, and other productions of modern taste and imagination; being at the same time directed exclusively to classical sources for all information as to the proper subjects of art. Hence, while Scott was at once directed to the history of his native land, and to the Gothic fields of imagination, and his mind was fed in a consistent, natural, and felicitous way from his youth up; poor Turner for a long time knew no inspiration but that

* The education here spoken of is, of course, that bearing on the main work of life. In other respects, Turner's education was more neglected than Scott's, and that not beneficently. See the close of the third of my Edinburgh Lectures. [Vol. XII. p. 133.]

¹ [Compare the Review of Eastlake, § 3, Vol. XII. p. 253.]

of Twickenham;¹ no sublimity but that of Virginia Water. All the history and poetry presented to him at the age when the mind receives its dearest associations, were those of the gods and nations of long ago; and his models of sentiment and style were the worst and last wrecks of the Renaissance affectations.

§ 5. Therefore (though utterly free from affectation), his early works are full of an *enforced* artificialness, and of things ill-done and ill-conceived, because foreign to his own instincts; and, throughout life, whatever he did, because he thought he *ought* to do it, was wrong; all that he planned on any principle, or in supposed obedience to canons of taste, was false and abortive: he only did right when he ceased to reflect; was powerful only when he made no effort, and successful only when he had taken no aim.

§ 6. And it is one of the most interesting things connected with the study of his art, to watch the way in which his own strength of English instinct breaks gradually through fetter and formalism; how from Egerian wells he steals away to Yorkshire streamlets; how from Homeric rocks, with laurels at the top and caves in the bottom, he climbs, at last, to Alpine precipices fringed with pine, and fortified with the slopes of their own ruins; and how from Temples of Jupiter and Gardens of the Hesperides, a spirit in his feet guides him, at last, to the lonely arches of Whitby, and the bleak sands of Holy Isle.

§ 7. As, however, is the case with almost all inevitable evil, in its effect on great minds, a certain good rose even out of this warped education; namely, his power of more completely expressing all the tendencies of his epoch, and sympathizing with many feelings and many scenes which must otherwise have been entirely profitless to him. Scott's mind was just as large and full of sympathy as Turner's; but, having been permitted always to take his own choice

¹ [For "Twickenham" in art, see *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37 (Vol. XII. p. 373 and *n.*). Turner for some years (1814–1826) had a house at Twickenham—"Sandycombe Lodge": see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 101.]

among sources of enjoyment, Scott was entirely incapable of entering into the spirit of any classical scene. He was strictly a Goth and a Scot, and his sphere of sensation may be almost exactly limited by the growth of heather. But Turner had been forced to pay early attention to whatever of good and right there was even in things naturally distasteful to him. The charm of early association had been cast around much that to other men would have been tame; while making drawings of flower-gardens and Palladian mansions, he had been taught sympathy with whatever grace or refinement the garden or mansion could display, and to the close of life could enjoy the delicacy of trellis and parterre, as well as the wildness of the wood and the moorland; and watch the staying of the silver fountain at its appointed height in the sky, with an interest as earnest, if not as intense, as that with which he followed the crash of the Alpine cataract into its clouds of wayward rage.

§ 8. The distinct losses to be weighed against this gain are, first the waste of time during youth in painting subjects of no interest whatsoever,—parks, villas, and ugly architecture in general: secondly, the devotion of his utmost strength in later years to meaningless classical compositions, such as the *Fall and Rise of Carthage*, *Bay of Baiæ*, *Daphne and Leucippus*,¹ and such others, which, with infinite accumulation of material, are yet utterly heartless and emotionless, dead to the very root of thought, and incapable of producing wholesome or useful effect on any human mind, except only as exhibitions of technical skill and graceful arrangement: and, lastly, his incapacity, to the close of life, of entering heartily into the spirit of any elevated architecture; for those Palladian and classical buildings which he had been taught that it was right to admire, being wholly devoid of interest, and in their own formality and barrenness quite unmanageable, he was obliged to make them manageable in his pictures by disguising them, and

¹ [For Ruskin's criticism of Turner's classical compositions, see Vol. III. pp. 241–242, and compare *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (Third Period). The particular pictures here referred to are in the National Gallery, Nos. 498, 499, 505, 520.]

to use all kinds of playing shadows and glittering lights to obscure their ugly details; and as in their best state such buildings are white and colourless, he associated the idea of whiteness with perfect architecture generally, and was confused and puzzled when he found it grey. Hence he never got thoroughly into the feeling of Gothic;¹ its darkness and complexity embarrassed him; he was very apt to whiten by way of idealizing it, and to cast aside its details in order to get breadth of delicate light. In Venice, and the towns of Italy generally, he fastened on the wrong buildings, and used those which he chose merely as kind of white clouds, to set off his brilliant groups of boats, or burning spaces of lagoon. In various other minor ways, which we shall trace in their proper place,² his classical education hindered or hurt him; but I feel it very difficult to say how far the loss was balanced by the general grasp it gave his mind; nor am I able to conceive what would have been the result, if his aims had been made at once narrower and more natural, and he had been led in his youth to delight in Gothic legends instead of classical mythology; and, instead of the porticoes of the Parthenon, had studied in the aisles of Notre Dame.

§ 9. It is still more difficult to conjecture whether he gathered most good or evil from the pictorial art which surrounded him in his youth. What that art was, and how the European schools had arrived at it, it now becomes necessary briefly to inquire.

It will be remembered that, in the 14th chapter, we left our mediæval landscape (§ 18) in a state of severe formality, and perfect subordination to the interest of figure-subject. I will now rapidly trace the mode and progress of its emancipation.³

¹ [Compare, again, *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (s. No. 527, 535), and Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (s. 12 R.).]

² [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. x. § 21; but in a later chapter of that volume (pt. ix. ch. x. § 3 n.), Ruskin refers to the present passage, and somewhat modifies it.]

³ [For another sketch of this subject, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 84–94, Vol. XII. pp. 109–123.]

§ 10. The formalized conception of scenery remained little altered until the time of Raphael, being only better executed as the knowledge of art advanced; that is to say, though the trees were still stiff, and often set one on each side of the principal figures, their colour and relief on the sky were exquisitely imitated, and all groups of near leaves and flowers drawn with the most tender care, and studious botanical accuracy. The better the subjects were painted, however, the more logically absurd they became: a background wrought in Chinese confusion of towers and rivers, was in early times passed over carelessly and forgiven for the sake of its pleasant colour; but it appealed somewhat too far to imaginative indulgence when Ghirlandajo drew an exquisite perspective view of Venice and her lagoons behind an Adoration of the Magi;* and the impossibly small boats which might be pardoned in a mere illumination, representing the miraculous draught of fishes, became, whatever may be said to the contrary, inexcusably absurd in Raphael's fully realized landscape; so as at once to destroy the credibility of every circumstance of the event.

§ 11. A certain charm, however, attached itself to many forms of this landscape, owing to their very unnaturalness, as I have endeavoured to explain already in the last chapter of the second volume, §§ 9 to 12;¹ noting, however, there, that it was in no wise to be made a subject of imitation; a conclusion which I have since seen more and more ground for holding finally. The longer I think over the subject, the more I perceive that the pleasure we take in such unnatural landscapes is intimately connected with our

* The picture is in the Uffizii of Florence.²

¹ [In this edition, Vol. IV. pp. 320–323.]

² [For another reference to this background, see Vol. IV. p. 323 *n.* Ruskin describes the picture in his diary of 1845:—

“Mentioned by Rio [*Poetry of Christian Art*, p. 105], and all that he says about the distance is not too much. It is a wonderful bit of clear and clever Dutch painting, far in advance of all other distances up to Ghirlandajo's time, as far as mere power of imitation goes; the sky is sweet in colour and infinitely clear and far away, but the whole is a mere piece of Daguerreotype, totally feelingless and unpromising.”]

habit of regarding the New Testament as a beautiful poem, instead of a statement of plain facts. He who believes thoroughly that the events are true will expect, and ought to expect, real olive copse behind real Madonna, and no sentimental absurdities in either.

§ 12. Nor am I at all sure how far the delight which we take (when I say *we*, I mean, in general, lovers of old sacred art) in such quaint landscape, arises from its peculiar *falsehood*, and how far from its peculiar *truth*. For as it falls into certain errors more boldly, so, also, what truth it states, it states more firmly, than subsequent work. No engravings, that I know, render the backgrounds of sacred pictures with sufficient care to enable the reader to judge of this matter unless before the works themselves. I have, therefore, engraved on the opposite page, a bit of the background of Raphael's Holy Family, in the Tribune of the Uffizii, at Florence.¹ I copied the trees leaf for leaf, and the rest of the work with the best care I could; the engraver, Mr. Armytage,² has admirably rendered the delicate atmosphere which partly veils the distance. Now I do not know how far it is necessary to such pleasure as we receive from this landscape, that the trees should be both so straight and formal in stem, and should have branches no thicker than threads; or that the outlines of the distant hills should approximate so closely to those on any ordinary Wedgwood china pattern. I know that, on the contrary, a great part of the pleasure arises from the sweet expression of air and sunshine; from the traceable resemblance of the city and tower to Florence and Fésolle; from the fact that, though the boughs are too thin, the lines of ramification are true and beautiful; and from the expression of continually varied form in the clusters of leafage. And although all lovers of sacred art would shrink in horror from the idea of substituting for such a landscape a bit of Cuyp or Rubens, I do not think that the horror

¹ [The Madonna del Cardellino; see Vol. IV. p. 85.]

² [See Vol. IX. p. 1.]



J. Bunker, after Raphael.

*J. C. Attridge
Allen & Co. Sc.*

II . Latest Purism .

they feel is because Cuyp and Rubens's landscape is *truer*, but because it is *coarser* and more vulgar in associated idea than Raphael's; and I think it possible that the true forms of hills, and true thicknesses of boughs, might be tenderly stolen into this background of Raphael's without giving offence to any one.

§ 13. Take a somewhat more definite instance. The rock in Fig. 5, at the side, is one put by Ghirlandajo into the background of his Baptism of Christ.¹ I have no doubt Ghirlandajo's own rocks and trees are better, in several respects, than those here represented, since I have copied them from one of Lasinio's execrable engravings;² still, the harsh outline and generally stiff and uninventful blankness of the design are true enough and characteristic of all rock-painting of the period. In the plate opposite I have etched* the outline of a fragment of one of Turner's cliffs, out of his drawing of Bolton Abbey; and it does not seem



Fig. 5

* This etching is prepared for receiving mezzotint in the next volume;³ it is therefore much heavier in line, especially in the water, than I should have made it, if intended to be complete as it is.

¹ [One of the frescoes in S. Maria Novella at Florence, for which generally see *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 17 seq.]

² [Conte Carlo Lasinio (1757–1839), a prolific engraver of works by the earlier Tuscan painters, and curator of the gallery at Pisa. For other references to his engravings, see Vol. VI. p. 10 n., Vol. XII. p. 245. n.]

³ [Plate 12 A.]



J. M. W. Turner.

J. Hawkins
Allen & Co. Ed.

12. The Shores of Wharfe.

to me that, supposing them properly introduced in the composition, the substitution of the soft natural lines for the hard unnatural ones would make Ghirlandajo's background one whit less sacred.¹

§ 14. But, be this as it may, the fact is, as ill luck would have it, that profanity of feeling, and skill in art, increased together; so that we do not find the backgrounds rightly painted till the figures become irreligious and feelingless; and hence we associate necessarily the perfect landscape with want of feeling. The first great innovator was either Masaccio or Filippino Lippi; their works are so confused together in the Chapel of the Carmine, that I know not to whom I may attribute,—or whether, without being immediately quarrelled with, and contradicted, I may attribute to anybody,—the landscape background of the fresco of the Tribute Money.² But that background, with one or two other fragments in the same chapel, is far in advance of all other work I have seen of the period, in expression of the rounded contours and large slopes of hills, and the association of their summits with the clouds. The opposite engraving will give some better idea of its character than can be gained from the outlines commonly published; though the dark spaces, which in the original are deep blue, come necessarily somewhat too harshly on the eye when translated into light and shade. I shall have occasion to speak with greater speciality of this background in examining the forms of hills;³ meantime, it is only as an isolated work that it can be named in the history of pictorial progress, for Masaccio died too young to carry out his purposes;⁴ and the men

¹ [In the MS. Ruskin gives the Ghirlandajo rock one piece of credit:—

“One truth there is in the thing which seems to me the source of what pleasurable it possesses, the way the trees stand on the top of the rock, and the grass hangs over it. Nothing is more remarkable of mountain cliffs in general than the way the trees seem to like to look over the edge, and to stretch their branches as far down as they can, more or less following the line of the brow, like hair falling over a forehead. All the early painters seem to have been struck by this, and it is rare with them to draw a rock without some expression of the fact.”]

² [See the extracts from Ruskin's diary of 1845, given at Vol. III. p. 179 *n.*]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. §§ 50, 51 (Vol. VI. p. 363).]

⁴ [See Vol. XII. p. 113 and *n.*]



J. Ruskin, after Massacio.

J. H. Le Keux



J. Franklin

G. Allen
Allen & Co. Co.

14. The Lombard Apennine.



J. Ruskin.

Theo. Lupton.
Allen & Co. Sc.

15. St. George of the Seaweed.

around him were too ignorant of landscape to understand or take advantage of the little he had done. Raphael, though he borrowed from him in the human figure, never seems to have been influenced by his landscape, and retains either, as in Plate 11, the upright formalities of Perugino; or, by way of being natural, expands his distances into flattish flakes of hill, nearly formless, as in the backgrounds of the Charge to Peter and Draught of Fishes; and thenceforward the Tuscan and Roman schools grew more and more artificial, and lost themselves finally under round-headed niches and Corinthian porticoes.

§ 15. It needed, therefore, the air of the northern mountains and of the sea to brace the hearts of men to the development of the true landscape schools. I sketched by chance one evening the line of the Apennines from the ramparts of Parma, and I have put the rough note of it, and the sky that was over it, in Plate 14, and next to this (Plate 15) a moment of sunset, behind the Euganean hills at Venice. I shall have occasion to refer to both here-after:¹ but they have some interest here as types of the kind of scenes which were daily set before the eyes of Correggio and Titian, and of the sweet free spaces of sky through which rose and fell, to them, the coloured rays of the morning and evening.

§ 16. And they are connected, also, with the forms of landscape adopted by the Lombardic masters, in a very curious way. We noticed that the Flemings, educated entirely in flat land, seemed to be always contented with the scenery it supplied; and we should naturally have expected that Titian and Correggio, living in the midst of the levels of the lagoons, and of the plain of Lombardy, would also have expressed, in their background, some pleasure in such level scenery, associated, of course, with the sublimity of the far-away Apennine, Euganean, or Alp. But not a whit. The plains of mulberry and maize, of sea and

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. pref. § 3, ch. xx. § 21 (Parma); Plate 15 is not again referred to.]

shoal, by which they were surrounded, never occur in their backgrounds but in cases of necessity; and both of them, in all their important landscapes, bury themselves in wild wood; Correggio delighting to relieve with green darkness of oak and ivy the golden hair and snowy flesh of his figures; and Titian, whenever the choice of a scene was in his power, retiring to the narrow glens and forests of Cadore.

§ 17. Of the vegetation introduced by both, I shall have to speak at length in the course of the chapters on Foliage;¹ meantime, I give in Plate 16 one of Titian's slightest bits of background, from one of the frescoes in the little chapel behind St. Antonio, at Padua,² which may be compared more conveniently than any of his more elaborate landscapes with the purist work from Raphael. For in both these examples the trees are equally slender and delicate, only the formality of mediæval art is, by Titian, entirely abandoned, and the old conception of the aspen grove and meadow done away with for ever. We are now far from cities: the painter takes true delight in the desert; the trees grow wild and free; the sky also has lost its peace, and is writhed into folds of motion, closely impendent upon earth, and somewhat threatening, through its solemn light.

§ 18. Although, however, this example is characteristic of Titian in its wildness, it is not so in its *looseness*. It is only in the distant backgrounds of his slightest work, or when he is in a hurry, that Titian is vague: in all his near and studied work he completes every detail with scrupulous care. The next Plate, 17, a background of Tintoret's, from his picture of the Entombment at Parma, is more entirely characteristic of the Venetians. Some mistakes made in the reduction of my drawing during the

¹ [See, for instance, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. §§ 5, 8.]

² [The Scuola del Santo; for the neglect of these frescoes, see Vol. XII. p. 301. They are among the master's earlier works. The fresco from which Ruskin's drawing is taken represents "St. Anthony of Padua causing a new-born infant to speak"; see illustration of the whole subject at p. 43 of *The Earlier Work of Titian*, by Claude Phillips.]



J. Rusch, after Titan.

*J. C. Armstrong,
Allen & Co. Sc.*



J. M. W. Turner, after Titian.

J. C. Arncliffe &
Allan & Co. Sc.

course of engraving have cramped the curves of the boughs and leaves, of which I will give the true outline farther on;¹ meantime the subject, which is that described in § 16 of the chapter on Penetrative Imagination, Vol. II.,² will just as well answer the purpose of exemplifying the Venetian love of gloom and wildness, united with perfect definition of detail. Every leaf and separate blade of grass is drawn; but observe how the blades of grass are broken, how completely the aim at expression of faultlessness and felicity has been withdrawn, as contrary to the laws of the existent world.

§ 19. From this great Venetian school of landscape Turner received much important teaching,—almost the only healthy teaching which he owed to preceding art. The designs of the *Liber Studiorum* are founded first on nature, but in many cases modified by *forced* imitation of Claude, and *fond* imitation of Titian. All the worst and feeblest studies in the book—as the pastoral with the nymph playing the tambourine, that with the long bridge seen through trees, and with the flock of goats on the walled road—owe the principal part of their imbecilities to Claude; another group (Solway Moss, Peat Bog, Lauffenbourg, etc.) is taken, with hardly any modification by pictorial influence, straight from nature; and the finest works in the book—the Grande Chartreuse, Rizpah, Jason, Cephalus, and one or two more—are strongly under the influence of Titian.³

§ 20. The Venetian school of landscape expired with Tintoret, in the year 1594; and the sixteenth century closed,

¹ [This, however, was not done.]

² [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 262.]

³ [The drawing for the “Woman and Tambourine” is No. 468 in the National Gallery; those for the two bridges are Nos. 463 and 464; for the Peat Bog is No. 498, and Lauffenbourg, No. 473; for a notice of the careful symmetry in the last mentioned drawing, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. ii. § 12. For the Chartreuse (drawing, National Gallery, No. 866), see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvi. § 41; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 28; and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 98. For Rizpah (drawing, National Gallery, No. 864), see *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 35, Vol. XII. p. 370. For the Jason (drawing, National Gallery, No. 461), see Vol. IV. p. 259. For the Cephalus (drawing, National Gallery, No. 465), see Vol. IV. p. 245, where further references to it are given.]

like a grave, over the great art of the world. There is *no* entirely sincere or great art in the seventeenth century. Rubens and Rembrandt are its two greatest men, both deeply stained by the errors and affectations of their age. The influence of the Venetians hardly extended to them; the tower of the Titianesque art fell southwards, and on the dust of its ruins grew various art-weeds, such as Domenichino and the Carraccis. Their landscape, which may in few words be accurately defined as "Scum of Titian," possesses no single merit, nor any ground for the forgiveness of demerit; they are to be named only as a link through which the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude and Salvator.

§ 21. Salvator possessed real genius, but was crushed by misery in his youth, and by fashionable society in his age. He had vigorous animal life, and considerable invention, but no depth either of thought or perception. He took some hints directly from nature, and expressed some conditions of the grotesque of terror with original power; but his baseness of thought, and bluntness of sight, were unconquerable; and his works possess no value whatsoever for any person versed in the walks of noble art. They had little, if any, influence on Turner; if any, it was in blinding him for some time to the grace of tree trunks, and making him tear them too much into splinters.

§ 22. Not so Claude, who may be considered as Turner's principal master. Claude's capacities were of the most limited kind; but he had tenderness of perception, and sincerity of purpose, and he affected a revolution in art. This revolution consisted mainly in setting the sun in heaven.* Till Claude's time no one had seriously thought of painting the sun but conventionally; that is to say, as a red or yellow star, (often) with a face in it, under which

* Compare Vol. I. Part II. Sec. I. Chapter VII. I repeat here some things that were then said; but it is necessary now to review them in connection with Turner's education, as well as for the sake of enforcing them by illustration.

type it was constantly represented in illumination; else it was kept out of the picture, or introduced in fragmentary distances, breaking through clouds with almost definite rays. Perhaps the honour of having first tried to represent the real effect of the sun in landscape belongs to Bonifazio, in his pictures of the camps of Israel.* Rubens followed in a kind of bravado, sometimes making the rays issue from anything but the orb of the sun;—here, for instance, Fig. 6, is an outline of the position of the sun (at *s*) with respect

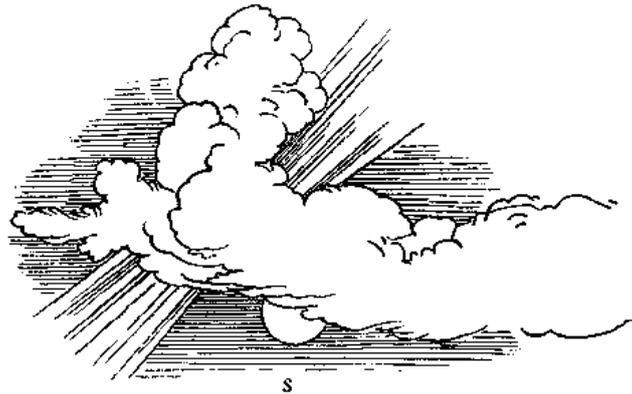


Fig. 6

to his own rays, in a sunset behind a tournament in the Louvre:¹ and various interesting effects of sunlight issuing from the conventional face-filled orb occur in contemporary missal-painting; for instance, very richly in the Harleian MS. Brit. Mus. 3469.² But all this was merely indicative of the tendency to transition which may always be traced in any age before the man comes who is to *accomplish* the transition. Claude took up the new idea seriously, made the sun his subject, and painted the effects of misty

* Now in the old library of Venice.³

¹ [See Vol. XII. p. 456.]

² ["A Book on the Philosopher's stone in the old German Language: finely written, and most beautifully painted, A.D. 1582. It contains 48 leaves and 22 finely executed paintings. . . . A book of uncommon style and beauty, executed on vellum" (*Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecæ Harleianæ*).]

³ [For these pictures see also Vol. XI. p. 390.]

shadows cast by his rays over the landscape, and other delicate aerial transitions, as no one had ever done before, and, in some respects, as no one has done in oil colour since.

§ 23. "But, how, if this were so, could his capacities be of the meanest order?" Because doing *one* thing well, or better than others have done it, does not necessarily imply large capacity. Capacity means breadth of glance, understanding of the relations of things, and invention, and these are rare and precious; but there are very few men who have not done *something*, in the course of their lives, better than other people. I could point out many engravers, draughtsmen, and artists, who have each a particular merit in their manner, or particular field of perception, that nobody else has, or ever had. But this does not make them great men, it only indicates a small special capacity of some kind: and all the smaller if the gift be very peculiar and single; for a great man never so limits himself to one thing, as that we shall be able to say, "That is all he can do." If Claude had been a great man he would not have been so steadfastly set on painting effects of sun: he would have looked at all nature, and at all art, and would have painted sun effects somewhat worse, and nature universally much better.

§ 24. Such as he was, however, his discovery of the way to make pictures look warm was very delightful to the shallow connoisseurs of the age. Not that they cared for sunshine; but they liked seeing jugglery. They could not feel Titian's noble colour, nor Veronese's noble composition; but they thought it highly amusing to see the sun brought into a picture: and Claude's works were bought and delighted in by vulgar people then, for their real-looking suns, as pictures are now by vulgar people for having real timepieces in their church towers.

§ 25. But when Turner arose, with an earnest desire to paint the whole of nature, he found that the existence of the sun was an important fact, and by no means an easily

manageable one. *He* loved sunshine for its own sake; but he could not at first paint it. Most things else, he would more or less manage without much technical difficulty; but the burning orb and the golden haze could not, somehow, be got out of the oil paint. Naturally he went to Claude, who really had got them out of oil paint; approached him with great reverence, as having done that which seemed to Turner most difficult of all technical matters, and he became his faithful disciple. How much he learned from him of manipulation, I cannot tell; but one thing is certain, that he never quite equalled him in that particular forte of his. I imagine that Claude's way of laying on oil colour was so methodical that it could not possibly be imitated by a man whose mechanism was interfered with by hundreds of thoughts and aims totally different from Claude's; and, besides, I suppose that certain useful principles in the management of paint, of which our schools are now wholly ignorant, had come down as far as Claude, from the Venetians. Turner at last gave up the attempt, and adopted a manipulation of his own, which indeed effected certain objects attainable in no other way, but which still was in many respects unsatisfactory, dangerous, and deeply to be regretted.

§ 26. But meantime his mind had been strongly warped by Claude's futilities of conception. It was impossible to dwell on such works for any length of time without being grievously harmed by them; and the style of Turner's compositions was for ever afterwards weakened or corrupted. For, truly, it is almost beyond belief into what depth of absurdity Claude plunges continually in his most admired designs. For instance; undertaking to paint Moses at the Burning Bush, he represents a graceful landscape with a city, a river, and a bridge, and plenty of tall trees, and the sea, and numbers of people going about their business and pleasure in every direction; and the bush burning quietly upon a bank in the corner; rather in the dark, and not to be seen without close inspection. It would take

some pages of close writing to point out, one by one, the inanities of heart, soul, and brain which such a conception involves; the ineffable ignorance of the nature of the event, and of the scene of it; the incapacity of conceiving anything, even *in* ignorance, which should be impressive; the dim, stupid, serene, leguminous enjoyment of his sunny afternoon—burn the bushes as much as they liked—these I leave the reader to think over at his leisure, either before the picture in Lord Ellesmere's gallery, or the sketch of it in the *Liber Veritatis*. But all these kinds of fallacy sprung more or less out of the vices of the time in which Claude lived; his own peculiar character reaches beyond these, to an incapacity of understanding the *main point* in anything he



Fig. 7

had to represent, down to the minutest detail, which is quite unequalled, as far as I know, in human nugatoriness. For instance; here, in Fig. 7, is the head, with half the body, of Æneas drawing his bow, from No. 180 of the

Liber Veritatis.¹ Observe the string is too long by half; for if the bow were unbent, it would be two feet longer than the whole bow. Then the arrow is too long by half, has too heavy a head by half, and finally, it actually is *under* the bow hand, instead of above it. Of the ideal and heroic refinement of the head and drapery I will say nothing; but look only at the wretched archery, and consider if it would be possible for any child to draw the thing with less understanding, or to make more mistakes in the given compass.*

* My old friend Blackwood² complains, bitterly, in his last number, of my having given this illustration at one of my late lectures, saying, that I "have a disagreeable knack of finding out the joints in my opponent's armour," and that "I never fight for love." I never do. I fight for truth, earnestly, and

¹ [Compare "Lectures on Colour," Vol. XII. p. 495 and Fig. 29, where another outline of this figure is given for comparison with an archer from an early illuminated manuscript.]

² [*Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1855, vol. 78; an article entitled "Modern Light Literature—Art," containing a notice of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* for 1855; the words cited by Ruskin are at pp. 707, 708 of the magazine.]

§ 27. And yet, exquisite as is Claude's instinct for blunder, he has not strength of mind enough to blunder in a wholly original manner, but must needs falter out of his way to pick up other people's puerilities, and be absurd at second-hand. I have been obliged to laugh a little—though I hope reverently—at Ghirlandajo's landscapes, which yet we saw had a certain charm of quaintness in them when contrasted with his grand figures; but could any one have believed that Claude, with all the noble landscapes of Titian set before him, and all nature round about him, should yet go back to Ghirlandajo for types of form? Yet such is the case. I said that the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude: but the old Florentine influence came clearly. The Claudesque landscape is not, as so commonly supposed, an idealized abstract of the nature about Rome. It is an ultimate condition of the Florentine conventional landscape, more or less softened by reference to nature. Fig. 8, from No. 145 of the *Liber Veritatis*, is sufficiently characteristic of Claude's rock-drawing; and compared with Fig. 5 (p. 395) above, will show exactly the kind of modification he made on old and received types. We shall see other instances of it hereafter.¹

Imagine this kind of reproduction of whatever other people had done worst, and this kind of misunderstanding of all that he saw himself in nature, carried out in Claude's trees, rocks, ships,—in everything that he touched,—and then consider what kind of school this work was for a young

in no wise for jest; and against all lies, earnestly, and in no wise for love. They complain that a "noble adversary is not in Mr. Ruskin's way." No; a noble adversary never was, never will be. With all that is noble I have been, and shall be, in perpetual peace; with all that is ignoble and false everlastingly at war. And as for these Scotch *bourgeois gentilshommes*, with their "Tu n'as pas la patience que je pare,"² let them look to their fence. But truly, if they will tell me where Claude's strong points are I will strike there, and be thankful.

¹ [See in the next volume, ch. i. § 1, and Plate 18; and ch. xvi. § 35.]

² [For Ruskin's references to Molière, see above, p. 375 *n.*; this particular quotation (from a speech of M. Jourdain in act iii. sc. 3 of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) is made again in *Ethics of the Dust*, § 106.]

and reverent disciple. As I said, Turner never recovered the effects of it; his compositions were always mannered, lifeless, and even foolish; and he only did noble things when the immediate presence of nature had overpowered the reminiscences of his master.



Fig. 8

§ 28. Of the influence of Gaspar and Nicolo Poussin on Turner, there is hardly anything to be said, nor much respecting that which they had on landscape generally. Nicolo Poussin had noble powers of design, and might have been a thoroughly great painter had he been trained in Venice; but his Roman education kept him tame; his trenchant severity was contrary to the tendencies of the age, and had few imitators compared to the dashing of Salvator, and the mist of Claude. Those few imitators adopted his manner without possessing either his science or invention; and the Italian school of landscape soon expired. Reminiscences of

him occur sometimes in Turner's compositions of sculptured stones for foreground; and the beautiful Triumph of Flora, in the Louvre,¹ probably first showed Turner the use of definite flower, or blossom-painting, in landscape. I doubt if he took anything from Gaspar; whatever he might have learned from him respecting masses of foliage and golden distances, could

¹ [See "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. p. 470.]



Engraved by J.H. Le Kreuz

have been learned better, and, I believe, *was* learned, from Titian.¹

§ 29. Meantime, a lower, but more living school had developed itself in the North; Cuyp had painted sunshine as truly as Claude, gilding with it a more homely, but far more honestly conceived landscape; and the effects of light of De Hooghe and Rembrandt presented examples of treatment to which southern art could show no parallel. Turner evidently studied these with the greatest care, and with great benefit in every way; especially this, that they neutralized the idealisms of Claude, and showed the young painter what power might be in plain truth, even of the most familiar kind. He painted several pictures in imitation of these masters; and those in which he tried to rival Cuyp are healthy and noble works, being, in fact, just what most of Cuyp's own pictures are—faithful studies of Dutch boats in calm weather, on smooth water. De Hooghe² was too precise, and Rembrandt too dark, to be successfully or affectionately followed by him; but he evidently learned much from both.

§ 30. Finally, he painted many pictures in the manner of Vandewelde (who was the accepted authority of his time in sea painting), and received much injury from him. To the close of his life, Turner always painted the sea too grey, and too opaque, in consequence of his early study of Vandewelde. He never seemed to perceive colour so truly in the sea as he saw it elsewhere. But he soon discovered the poorness of Vandewelde's forms of waves, and raised their meanly divided surfaces into massive surge, effecting rapidly other changes, of which more in another place.³

Such was the art to which Turner, in early years, devoted his most earnest thoughts. More or less respectful

¹ [See *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37, Vol. XII. p. 373.]

² [For other references to De Hooghe, always considered by Ruskin among the best of the Dutch masters, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. viii. § 11; *Academy Notes*, 1859, No. 329; *Ariadne Florentina*, § 256; *St. Mark's Rest*, § 200.]

³ [See *Harbours of England*, §§ 29 *seq.* (Vol. XIII.). For Turner's study of Vandewelde, see again *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37, Vol. XII. p. 372; and for his study of Morland, *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Nos. 468, 477 (Vol. XIII.).]

contemplation of Reynolds, Louthembourg, Wilson, Gainsborough, Morland, and Wilkie, was incidentally mingled with his graver study; and he maintained a questioning watchfulness of even the smallest successes of his brother artists of the modern landscape school. It remains for us only to note the position of that living school when Turner, helped or misled, as the case may be, by the study of the older artists, began to consider what remained for him to do, or design.

§ 31. The dead schools of landscape, composed of the works we have just been examining, were broadly divisible into northern and southern: the Dutch schools, more or less natural, but vulgar; the Italian, more or less elevated, but absurd. There was a certain foolish elegance in Claude, and a dull dignity in Gaspar; but then their work resembled nothing that ever existed in the world. On the contrary, a canal or cattle piece of Cuyp's had many veracities about it; but they were, at best, truths of the ditch and diary. The grace of Nature, or her gloom, her tender and sacred seclusions, or her reach of power and wrath, had never been painted; nor had *anything* been painted yet in true *love* of it; for both Dutch and Italians agreed in this, that they always painted for the *picture's* sake, to show how well they could imitate sunshine, arrange masses, or articulate straws,—never because they loved the scene, or wanted to carry away some memory of it.

And thus, all that landscape of the old masters is to be considered merely as a struggle of expiring skill to discover some new direction in which to display itself. There was no love of nature in the age; only a desire for something new. Therefore those schools expired at last, leaving a chasm of nearly utter emptiness between them and the true moderns, out of which chasm the new school rises, not engrafted on that old one, but from the very base of all things, beginning with mere washes of Indian ink, touched upon with yellow and brown; and gradually feeling its way to colour.

But this infant school differed inherently from that ancients one, in that its motive was love. However feeble its efforts might be, they were *for the sake of the nature*, not of the picture, and therefore, having this germ of true life, it grew and thrived. Robson¹ did not paint purple hills because he wanted to show how he could lay on purple; but because he truly loved their dark peaks. Fielding did not paint downs to show how dexterously he could sponge out mists; but because he loved downs.

This modern school, therefore, became the only true school of landscape which has yet existed; the artificial Claude and Gaspar work may be cast aside out of our way, as I have said in my Edinburgh lectures,² under the general title of “pastoralism,”—and from the last landscape of Tintoret, if we look for *life*, we must pass at once to the first of Turner.

§ 32. What help Turner received from this or that companion of his youth is of no importance to any one now. Of course every great man is always being helped by everybody,* for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons; and also there were two men associated with him in early study, who showed high promise in the same field, Cozens and Girtin (especially the former), and there is no saying what these men might have done had they lived; there might, perhaps, have been a struggle between one or other of them and Turner, as between Giorgione and Titian.³ But they lived not; and Turner is the only great man whom the school has yet produced,—quite great enough, as we shall see, for all that needed to be done.

* His first drawing-master was, I believe, that Mr. Lowe, whose daughters, now aged and poor, have, it seems to me, some claim on public regard, being connected distantly with the memory of Johnson, and closely with that of Turner.⁴

¹ [For Robson, see Vol. III. p. 193.]

² [See Vol. XII. pp. 117–120.]

³ [For Cozens and Girtin, see Vol. XII. p. 309. “Had Tom Girtin lived,” said Turner, “I should have starved” (Thornbury’s *Life*, 1877, p. 71).]

⁴ [Mauritius Lowe (1746–1793), one of the first students of the Royal Academy, enjoyed the friendship and protection of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who left him a small legacy.]

To him, therefore, we now finally turn, as the sole object of our inquiry. I shall first reinforce, with such additions as they need, those statements of his general principles which I made in the first volume, but could not then demonstrate fully, for want of time to prepare pictorial illustration; and then proceed to examine, piece by piece, his representations of the facts of nature, comparing them, as it may seem expedient, with what had been accomplished by others.

§ 33. I cannot close this volume without alluding briefly to a subject of different interest from any that have occupied us in its pages. For it may, perhaps, seem to a general reader heartless and vain to enter zealously into questions about our arts and pleasures, in a time of so great public anxiety as this.

But he will find, if he looks back to the sixth paragraph of the opening chapter of the last volume, some statement of feelings, which, as they made me despondent in a time of apparent national prosperity, now cheer me in one which, though of stern trial, I will not be so much a coward as to call one of adversity. And I derive this encouragement first from the belief that the war itself, with all its bitterness, is, in the present state of the European nations, productive of more good than evil; and, secondly, because I have more confidence than others generally entertain, in the justice of its cause.¹

I say, first, because I believe the war is at present productive of good more than of evil.² I will not argue this hardly and coldly, as I might, by tracing in past history

¹ [Ruskin often expressed this view, to which his admiration at this time for Napoleon III. in part inclined him (see Vol. XII. p. 55 and *n.*). For other references to the Crimean War, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. Appendix i., § 5; *Academy Notes*, 1856, No. 398; *Love's Meinie*, § 133; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 83; and *Præterita*, iii. ch. iv. § 79.]

² [Compare above, ch. xi. § 8; ch. xvi. § 16 *n.*; pp. 197, 198, 327 *n.* The ethics of war is the one subject on which Ruskin admitted that he had spoken with an uncertain and inconsistent sound; his writings abound alike in praise and in blame of war (see General Index). He explains his dilemma in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, § 161, and *Præterita*, ii. ch. viii. § 151.]

some of the abundant evidence that nations have always reached their highest virtue, and wrought their most accomplished works, in time of straitening and battle; as, on the other hand, no nation ever yet enjoyed a protracted and triumphant peace without receiving in its own bosom ineradicable seeds of future decline. I will not so argue this matter; but I will appeal at once to the testimony of those whom the war has cost the dearest. I know what would be told me, by those who have suffered nothing; whose domestic happiness has been unbroken; whose daily comfort undisturbed; whose experience of calamity consists, at its utmost, in the incertitude of a speculation, the dearness of a luxury, or the increase of demands upon their fortune which they could meet fourfold without inconvenience. From these, I can well believe, be they prudent economists, or careless pleasure-seekers, the cry for peace will rise alike vociferously, whether in street or senate. But I ask *their* witness, to whom the war has changed the aspect of the earth, and imagery of heaven, whose hopes it has cut off like a spider's web, whose treasure it has placed, in a moment, under the seals of clay. Those who can never more see sunrise, nor watch the climbing light gild the Eastern clouds, without thinking what graves it has gilded, first, far down behind the dark earth-line,—who never more shall see the crocus bloom in spring, without thinking what dust it is that feeds the wild flowers of Balaclava. Ask *their* witness, and see if they will not reply that it is well with them and with theirs; that they would have it no otherwise; would not, if they might, receive back their gifts of love and life, nor take again the purple of their blood out of the cross on the breastplate of England. Ask them: and though they should answer only with a sob, listen if it does not gather upon their lips into the sound of the old Seyton war-cry—“Set on.”

§ 34. And this not for pride—not because the names of their lost ones will be recorded to all time, as of those who held the breach and kept the gate of Europe against the

North, as the Spartans did against the East; and lay down in the place they had to guard, with the like home message, "Oh, stranger, go and tell the English that we are lying here, having obeyed their words;"¹—not for this, but because, also, they have felt that the spirit which has discerned them for eminence in sorrow—the helmed and sworded skeleton that rakes with its white fingers the sands of the Black Sea beach into grave-heap after grave-heap, washed by everlasting surf of tears—has been to them an angel of other things than agony; that they have learned, with those hollow, undeceivable eyes of his, to see all the earth by the sunlight of death-beds;—no inch-high stage for foolish griefs and feigned pleasures; no dream, neither, as its dull moralists told them;—*Anything* but that: a place of true, marvellous, inextricable sorrow and power; a question-chamber of trial by rack and fire, irrevocable decision recording continually; and no sleep, nor folding of hands, among the demon-questioners; none among the angel-watchers, none among the men who stand or fall beside those hosts of God. They know now the strength of sacrifice, and that its flames can illumine as well as consume; they are bound by new fidelities to all that they have saved,—by new love to all for whom they have suffered; every affection which seemed to sink with those dim life-stains into the dust, has been delegated, by those who need it no more, to the cause for which they have expired; and every mouldering arm, which will never more embrace the beloved ones, has bequeathed to them its strength and its faithfulness.

§ 35. For the cause of this quarrel is no dim, half-avoidable involution of mean interests and errors, as some would have us believe. There never was a great war caused by such things. There never can be. The historian may trace it, with ingenious trifling, to a courtier's jest or a woman's glance; but he does not ask—(and it is the sum

¹ [Quoted in the Greek at *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. i. § 18; and compare *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 48 (ed. 1 only).]

of questions)—how the warring nations had come to found their destinies on the course of the sneer, or the smile. If they have so based them, it is time for them to learn, through suffering, how to build on other foundations;—for great, accumulated, and most righteous cause, their foot slides in due time; and against the torpor, or the turpitude, of their myriads, there is loosed the haste of the devouring sword and the thirsty arrow. But if they have set their fortunes on other than such ground, then the war must be owing to some deep conviction or passion in their own hearts,—a conviction which, in resistless flow, or reckless ebb, or consistent stay, is the ultimate arbiter of battle, disgrace, or conquest.

§ 36. Wherever there is war, there *must* be injustice on one side or the other, or on both. There have been wars which were little more than trials of strength between friendly nations, and in which the injustice was not to each other, but to the God who gave them life. But in a malignant war of these present ages there is injustice of ignobler kind, at once to God and man, which *must* be stemmed for both their sakes. It may, indeed, be so involved with national prejudices, or ignorances, that neither of the contending nations can conceive it as attaching to their cause; nay, the constitution of their governments, and the clumsy crookedness of their political dealings with each other, may be such as to prevent either of them from knowing the actual cause for which they have gone to war. Assuredly this is, in a great degree, the state of things with *us*; for I noticed that there never came news by telegraph of the explosion of a powder-barrel, or of the loss of thirty men by a sortie, but the Parliament lost confidence immediately in the justice of the war; reopened the question whether we ever should have engaged in it, and remained in a doubtful and repentant state of mind until one of the enemy's powder-barrels blew up also; upon which they were immediately satisfied again that the war was a wise and necessary one. How far, therefore, the calamity may

have been brought upon us by men whose political principles shoot annually like the leaves, and change colour at every autumn frost:—how loudly the blood that has been poured out round the walls of that city, up to the horse-bridles, may now be crying from the ground against men who did not know, when they first bade shed it, exactly what war was, or what blood was, or what life was, or truth, or what anything else was upon the earth; and whose tone of opinions touching the destinies of mankind depended entirely upon whether they were sitting on the right or left side of the House of Commons:—this, I repeat, I know not, nor (in all solemnity I say it) do I care to know. For if it be so, and the English nation could at the present period of its history be betrayed into a war such as this by the slipping of a wrong word into a protocol, or bewitched into unexpected battle under the budding hallucinations of its sapling senators, truly it is time for us to bear the penalty of our baseness, and learn, as the sleepless steel glares close upon us, how to choose our governors more wisely, and our ways more warily. For that which brings swift punishment in war, must have brought slow ruin in peace; and those who have now laid down their lives for England, have doubly saved her; they have humbled at once her enemies and herself; and have done less for her, in the conquest they achieve, than in the sorrow that they claim.

§ 37. But it is not altogether thus: we have not been cast into this war by mere political misapprehensions, or popular ignorances. It is quite possible that neither we nor our rulers may clearly understand the nature of the conflict; and that we may be dealing blows in the dark, confusedly, and as a soldier suddenly awakened from slumber by an unknown adversary. But I believe the struggle was inevitable, and that the sooner it came, the more easily it was to be met, and the more nobly concluded. France and England are both of them, from shore to shore, in a state of intense progression, change, and experimental life. They

are each of them beginning to examine, more distinctly than ever nations did yet in the history of the world, the dangerous question respecting the rights of governed, and the responsibilities of governing, bodies; not, as heretofore, foaming over them in red frenzy, with intervals of fetter and straw crown, but in health, quietness, and daylight, with the help of a good Queen and a great Emperor;¹ and to determine them in a way which, by just so much as it is more effective and rational, is likely to produce more permanent results than ever before on the policy of neighbouring States, and to force, gradually, the discussion of similar questions into their places of silence. To force it,—for true liberty, like true religion, is always aggressive or persecuted; but the attack is *generally* made upon it by the nation which is to be crushed,—by Persian on Athenian, Tuscan on Roman, Austrian on Swiss;² or, as now, by Russia upon us and our allies: her attack appointed, it seems to me, for confirmation of all our greatness, trial of our strength, purging and punishment of our futilities, and establishment for ever, in our hands, of the leadership in the political progress of the world.

§ 38. Whether this its providential purpose be accomplished, must depend on its enabling France and England to love one another, and teaching these, the two noblest foes that ever stood breast to breast among the nations, first to decipher the law of international charities; first to discern that races, like individuals, can only reach their true strength, dignity, or joy, in seeking each the welfare, and exulting each in the glory, of the other. It is strange how far we still seem from fully perceiving this. We know that two men, cast on a desert island, could not thrive in dispeace; we can understand that four, or twelve, might still find their account in unity; but that a multitude should

¹ [For Ruskin's opinion of Napoleon III., see above, p. 410 *n.*]

² [Ruskin frequently refers to the attacks of the House of Hapsburg on the Forest Cantons, and to the victories of the latter at Morgarten (1315) and Sempach (1386); see, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. v., pt. ix. ch. xi. § 31 *n.*; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 95; *Eagle's Nest*, § 199; and *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 131.]

thrive otherwise than by the contentions of its classes, or *two* multitudes hold themselves in anywise bound by brotherly law to serve, support, rebuke, rejoice in one another, this seems still as far beyond our conception, as that clearest of commandments, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth,"¹ is beyond our habitual practice. Yet, if once we comprehend that precept in its breadth, and feel that what we now call jealousy for our country's honour, is, so far as it tends to other countries' dishonour, merely one of the worst, because most complacent and self-gratulatory, forms of irreligion,—a newly breathed strength will, with the newly interpreted patriotism, animate and sanctify the efforts of men. Learning, unchecked by envy, will be accepted more frankly, throned more firmly, guided more swiftly; charity, unchilled by fear, will dispose the laws of each State, without reluctance to advantage its neighbour by justice to itself; and admiration, unwrapped by prejudice, possess itself continually of new treasure in the arts and the thoughts of the stranger.

§ 39. If France and England fail of this, if again petty jealousies or selfish interests prevail to unknit their hands from the armoured grasp, then, indeed, their faithful children will have fallen in vain; there will be a sound as of renewed lamentation along those Euxine waves, and a shaking among the bones that bleach by the mounds of Sebastopol. But if they fail not of this,—if we, in our love of our queens and kings, remember how France gave to the cause of early civilization, first the greatest, then the holiest, of monarchs;* and France, in her love of liberty, remembers how *we* first raised the standard of Commonwealth, trusted to the grasp of one good and strong hand,² witnessed for by victory; and so join in perpetual compact of our different strengths, to contend for justice, mercy, and truth throughout the world,

* Charlemagne and St. Louis.

¹ [1 Corinthians x. 24.]

² [For Ruskin's estimate of Cromwell, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 15, 16.]

—who dares say that one soldier has died in vain? The scarlet of the blood that has sealed this covenant will be poured along the clouds of a new aurora, glorious in that Eastern heaven; for every sob of wreck-fed breaker round those Pontic precipices, the floods shall clap their hands¹ between the guarded mounts of the Prince-Angel; and the spirits of those lost multitudes, crowned with the olive and rose among the laurel, shall haunt, satisfied, the willowy brooks and peaceful vales of England, and glide, triumphant, by the poplar groves and sunned coteaux of Seine.

¹ [Psalms xcvi. 8.]
v.

APPENDIX

- I. CLAUDE'S TREE-DRAWING
- II. GERMAN PHILOSOPHY
- III. PLAGIARISM

(ADDED IN THIS EDITION)

- IV. A LETTER ON "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. III.
- V. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MSS.:—
 - MAGNITUDE
 - MODERATION

I

CLAUDE'S TREE-DRAWING

THE reader may not improbably hear it said, by persons who are incapable of maintaining an honest argument, and, therefore, incapable of understanding or believing the honesty of an adversary, that I have caricatured, or unfairly chosen, the examples I give of the masters I depreciate. It is evident, in the first place, that I could not, if I were even cunningly disposed, adopt a worse policy than in so doing; for the discovery of caricature or falsity in my representations, would not only invalidate the immediate statement, but the whole book; and invalidate it in the most fatal way, by showing that all I had ever said about "truth" was hypocrisy, and that in my own affairs I expected to prevail by help of lies. Nevertheless it necessarily happens, that in endeavours to facsimile any work whatsoever, bad or good, some changes are induced from the exact aspect of the original. These changes are, of course, sometimes harmful, sometimes advantageous; the bad thing generally gains; the good thing *always* loses: so that I am continually tormented by finding, in my plates of contrasts, the virtue and vice I exactly wanted to talk about, eliminated from *both* examples. In some cases, however, the bad thing will lose also, and then I must either cancel the plate, or increase the cost of the work by preparing another (at a similar risk), or run the chance of incurring the charge of dishonest representation. I desire, therefore, very earnestly, and once for all, to have it understood that whatever I say in the text, bearing on questions of comparison, refers *always* to the *original* works; and that, if the reader has it in his power, I would far rather he should look at those works than at my plates of them; I only give the plates for his immediate help and convenience: and I mention this, with respect to my plate of Claude's ramification, because, if I have such a thing as a prejudice at all (and, although I do not myself think I have, people certainly say so), it is against Claude; and I might, therefore, be sooner suspected of some malice in this plate than in others. But I simply gave the original engravings from the *Liber Veritatis* to Mr. Le Keux, earnestly requesting that the portions selected might be faithfully copied; and I think he is

much to be thanked for so carefully and successfully accomplishing the task. The figures are from the following plates:—

No.	1. Part of the Central tree in	No. 134 of the Liber Veritatis.
	2. From the largest tree	" 158
	3. Bushes at root of tree	" 134
	4. Tree on the left	" 183
	5. Tree on the left	" 95
	6. Tree on the left	" 172
	7. Principal tree	" 92
	8. Tree on the right	" 32

If, in fact, any change be effected in the examples in this plate, it is for the better; for, thus detached, they all look like small boughs, in which the faults are of little consequence; in the original works they are seen to be intended for large trunks of trees, and the errors are therefore pronounced on a much larger scale.

The plate of mediæval rocks (10) has been executed with much less attention in transcript, because the points there to be illustrated were quite indisputable, and the instances were needed merely to show the *kind of thing* spoken of, not the skill of particular masters. The example from Leonardo was, however, somewhat carefully treated. Mr. Cuff copied it accurately from the only engraving of the picture which, I believe, exists, and with which, therefore, I suppose the world is generally content. That engraving, however, in no respect seems to me to give the look of the light behind Leonardo's rocks; so I afterwards darkened the rocks, and put some light into the sky and lily; and the effect is certainly more like that of the picture than it is in the same portion of the old engraving.

Of the other masters represented in the plates of this volume, the noblest, Tintoret, has assuredly suffered the most (Plate 17); first, in my too hasty drawing from the original picture; and, secondly, through some accidental errors of outline which occurred in the reduction to the size of the page; lastly, and chiefly, in the withdrawal of the heads of the four figures underneath, in the shadow, on which the composition entirely depends. This last evil is unavoidable. It is quite impossible to make *extracts* from the great masters without partly spoiling every separated feature; the very essence of a noble composition being, that none should bear separation from the rest.

The plate from Raphael (11) is, I think, on the whole, satisfactory. It cost me much pains, as I had to facsimile the irregular form of every leaf; each being, in the original picture, executed with a somewhat wayward pencil-stroke of vivid brown on the clear sky.

Of the other plates it would be tedious to speak in detail. Generally, it will be found that I have taken most pains to do justice to the masters of whom I have to speak depreciatingly; and that, if there be calumny at all, it is always of Turner, rather than of Claude.

The reader might, however, perhaps suspect me of ill-will towards Constable, owing to my continually introducing him for depreciatory comparison. So far from this being the case, I had, as will be seen in various passages of the first volume, considerable respect for the feeling with which he worked;¹ but I was compelled to do harsh justice upon him now, because Mr. Leslie, in his unadvised and unfortunate *réchauffé* of the fallacious art-maxims of the last century,² had suffered his personal regard for Constable so far to prevail over his judgment as to bring him forward as a great artist, comparable in some kind with Turner. As Constable's reputation was, even before this, most mischievous, in giving countenance to the blotting and blundering of Modernism, I saw myself obliged, though unwillingly, to carry the suggested comparison thoroughly out.

¹ [See particularly Vol. III. p. 45.]

² [The reference is to *A Handbook for Young Painters*, by C. R. Leslie, R.A., 1855. Leslie's account of Constable in that book (pp. 273–279) was expressly directed to counteract Ruskin's criticisms in the first volume of *Modern Painters*. The book contained also other criticisms of Ruskin, who replied to them with some asperity in the "Supplement" to his *Academy Notes* of 1855.]

II

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

THE reader must have noticed that I never speak of German art, or German philosophy, but in depreciation.¹ This, however, is not because I cannot feel, or would not acknowledge, the value and power, within certain limits, of both; but because I also feel that the immediate tendency of the English mind is to rate them too highly; and, therefore, it becomes a necessary task, at present, to mark what evil and weakness there are in them, rather than what good. I also am brought continually into collision with certain extravagances of the German mind, by my own steady pursuit of Naturalism as opposed to Idealism; and, therefore, I become unfortunately cognizant of the evil, rather than of the good; which evil, so far as I feel it, I am bound to declare. And it is not to the point to protest, as the Chevalier Bunsen and other German writers have done, against the expression of opinions respecting their philosophy by persons who have not profoundly or carefully studied it; for the very resolution to study any system of metaphysics profoundly, must be based, in any prudent man's mind, on some preconceived opinion of its worthiness to be studied; which opinion of German metaphysics the naturalistic English cannot be let to form. This is not to be murmured against,—it is in the simple necessity of things. Men who have other business on their hands must be content to choose what philosophy they have occasion for, by the sample; and when, glancing into the second volume of *Hippolytus*,² we find the Chevalier Bunsen himself talking of a “finite realization of the infinite” (a phrase considerably less rational than “a black realization of white”), and of a triad composed of God, Man, and

¹ [See, for instance, in this volume, pp. 54, 57, 90, 100, 109, 184, 201, 204 *n.*, 323, 330, 332; and *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 230, 351); vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 57 *n.*, 325); *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 180 *n.*.)]

² [See *Hippolytus and his Age*, vol. ii., “The Philosophic Research,” 1852, p. 38. For another reference to the phrase, see above, Introduction, p. 1.; and vol. iv. ch. iii. § 2 *n.* In one draft Ruskin gives another illustration:—

“It is impossible to write purer or directer Nonsense. The infinite may be either real or unreal; but to realize it cannot make it finite; if it is realized it must be more infinite than it was before. It would be far more rational to talk of a ‘Short Realization of the long,’ which, with respect to German sentences, is indeed impossible, but in some sense, when there is anything at all in a long thing to be realized, is more or less possible.”]

Humanity* (which is a parallel thing to talking of a triad composed of man, dog, and canineness), knowing those expressions to be pure, definite, and highly finished nonsense, we do not in general trouble ourselves to look any farther. Some one will perhaps answer that if one always judged thus by the sample,—as, for instance, if one judged of Turner's pictures by the head of a figure cut out of one of them,—very precious things might often be despised. Not, I think, often. If any one went to Turner, expecting to learn figure-drawing from him, the sample of his figure-drawing would accurately and justly inform him that he had come to the wrong master.¹ But if he came to be taught landscape, the smallest fragment of Turner's work would justly exemplify his power. It may sometimes unluckily happen that, in such short trial, we strike upon an accidentally failing part of the thing to be tried, and then we may be unjust; but there is, nevertheless, in multitudes of cases, no other way of judging or acting; and the necessity of occasionally being unjust is a law of life,—like that of sometimes stumbling, or being sick. It will not do to walk at snail's pace all our lives for fear of stumbling, nor to spend years in the investigation of everything, which, by specimen, we must condemn. He who seizes all that he plainly discerns to be valuable, and never is unjust but when he honestly cannot help it, will soon be enviable in his possessions, and venerable in his equity.

Nor can I think that the risk of loss is great in the matter under discussion. I have often been told that any one who will read Kant, Strauss, and the rest of the German metaphysicians and divines, resolutely through, and give his whole strength to the study of them, will, after ten or twelve years' labour, discover that there is very little harm in them; and this I can well believe; but I believe also that the ten or twelve years may be better spent; and that any man who honestly wants philosophy not for show, but for *use*, and, knowing the Proverbs of Solomon, can, by way of commentary, afford to buy, in convenient editions, Plato, Bacon, Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps, will find that he has got as much as will be sufficient for him and his household during life, and of as good quality as need be.

It is also often declared necessary to study the German controversialists, because the grounds of religion "must be inquired into." I am sorry to hear they have not been inquired into yet; but if it be so, there are two ways of pursuing that inquiry: one for scholarly men, who have leisure on their hands, by reading all that they have time to read, for and

* I am truly sorry to have to introduce such words in an apparently irreverent way. But it would be a guilty reverence which prevented us from exposing fallacy, precisely where fallacy was most dangerous, and shrank from unveiling an error, just because that error existed in parlance respecting the most solemn subjects to which it could possibly be attached.

¹ [For a full discussion of Turner's figure-drawing, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, No. 522 (Vol. XIII.); and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 325).]

against, and arming themselves at all points for controversy with all persons; the other,—a shorter and simpler way,—for busy and practical men, who want merely to find out how to live and die. Now for the learned and leisurely men I am not writing; they know what and how to read better than I can tell them. For simple and busy men, concerned much with art, which is eminently a practical matter, and fatigues the eyes, so as to render much reading inexpedient, I *am* writing; and such men I do, to the utmost of my power, dissuade from meddling with German books; not because I fear inquiry into the grounds of religion, but because the only inquiry which is *possible* to them must be conducted in a totally different way. They have been brought up as Christians, and doubt if they should remain Christians. They cannot ascertain, by investigation, if the Bible be true; but *if it be*, and Christ ever existed, and was God, then certainly, the Sermon which He has permitted for 1800 years to stand recorded as first of all His own teaching in the New Testament, must be true. Let them take that Sermon and give it fair practical trial: act out every verse of it, with no quibbling, nor explaining away, except the reduction of such *evidently* metaphorical expressions as “cut off thy foot,” “pluck the beam out of thine eye,” to their effectively practical sense.¹ Let them act out, or obey, every verse literally for a whole year, so far as they can,—a year being little enough time to give to an inquiry into religion; and if, at the end of the year, they are not satisfied, and still need to prosecute the inquiry, let them try the German system if they choose.

¹ [Matthew v. 29, 30, vii. 5.]

III

PLAGIARISM

SOME time after I had written the concluding chapter of this work, the interesting and powerful poems of Emerson¹ were brought under my notice by one of the members of my class at the Working Men's College. There is much in some of these poems so like parts of the chapter in question, even in turn of expression, that though I do not usually care to justify myself from the charge of plagiarism, I felt that a few words were necessary in this instance.

I do not, as aforesaid, justify myself, in general, because I know there is internal evidence in my work of its originality, if people care to examine it; and if they do not, or have not skill enough to know genuine from borrowed work, my simple assertion would not convince them, especially as the charge of plagiarism is hardly ever made but by plagiarists, and persons of the unhappy class who do not believe in honesty but on evidence. Nevertheless, as my work is so much out of doors, and among pictures, that I have time to read few modern books, and am therefore in more danger than most people of repeating, as if it were new, what others have said, it may be well to note, once for all, that any such apparent plagiarism results in fact from my writings being more original than I wish them to be, from my having worked out my whole subject in unavoidable, but to myself hurtful, ignorance of the labours of others. On the other hand, I should be very sorry if I had *not* been continually taught and influenced by the writers whom I love; and am quite unable to say to what extent my thoughts have been guided by Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps; to whom (with Dante and George Herbert, in olden time) I owe more than to any other writers;—most of all, perhaps to Carlyle, whom I read so constantly, that, without wilfully setting myself to imitate him, I find myself perpetually falling into his modes of expression, and saying many things in a “quite other,” and, I hope, stronger, way, than I should have adopted some years ago; as also there are things which I hope are said more clearly and simply than before, owing to the influence upon me of the beautiful *quiet* English of Helps.² It would be both foolish and wrong to struggle to cast off

¹ [Quoted above, p. 381. For a similar reference to Emerson's Essays, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 23 n. So in *Time and Tide*, § 67, Emerson is classed with Carlyle among “our great teachers”; for a criticism of his *English Traits*, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 26.]

² [For other references to Helps, see note at Vol. XI. p. 153; and for Carlyle, Vol. XII. p. 507.]

influences of this kind; for they consist mainly in a real and healthy help;—the master, in writing as in painting, showing certain methods of language which it would be ridiculous, and even affected, not to employ, when once shown; just as it would have been ridiculous in Bonifazio to refuse to employ Titian's way of laying on colour, if he felt it the best, because he had not himself discovered it. There is all the difference in the world between this receiving of guidance, or allowing of influence, and wilful imitation, much more, plagiarism; nay, the guidance may even innocently reach into local tones of thought, and must do so to some extent; so that I find Carlyle's stronger thinking colouring mine continually; and should be very sorry if I did not; otherwise I should have read him to little purpose. But what I have of my own is still all there, and I believe, better brought out, by far, than it would have been otherwise. Thus, if we glance over the wit and satire of the popular writers of the day, we shall find that the *manner* of it, so far as it is distinctive, is always owing to Dickens; and that out of his first exquisite ironies branched innumerable other forms of wit, varying with the disposition of the writers; original in the matter and substance of them, yet never to have been expressed as they now are, but for Dickens.

Many people will suppose that for several ideas in the chapters on landscape I was indebted to Humboldt's *Kosmos*, and Howitt's *Rural Scenery*.¹ I am indebted to Mr. Howitt's book for much pleasure, but for no suggestion, as it was not put into my hands till the chapters in question were in type. I wish it had been; as I should have been glad to have taken farther note of the landscape of Theocritus, on which Mr. Howitt dwells with just delight. Other parts of the book will be found very suggestive and helpful to the reader who cares to pursue the subject. Of Humboldt's *Kosmos*² I heard much talk when it first came out, and looked through it cursorily; but thinking it contained no material (connected with my subject)* which I had not already possessed myself of, I have never since referred to the work. I may be mistaken in my estimate of it, but certainly owe it absolutely nothing.

It is also often said that I borrow from Pugin.³ I glanced at Pugin's

* See the Fourth Volume.

¹ [William Howitt: *The Rural Life of England*, 2 vols., 1838. The special reference is to ch. i. of part i. of vol. ii., where the author discusses the love of nature in modern and in classical literature; the landscape of Theocritus is noticed at pp. 7–11.]

² [Alexander von Humboldt: *Kosmos, Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*, 5 vols., Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1845–1862. Twice translated into English (1846 and 1849) as *Cosmos, a Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*. Part i. of vol. ii. contains some cursory pages on descriptions of nature in Greek, Roman, and other literatures.]

³ [As, for instance, in a review of the first volume of *The Stones of Venice*, in *The Ecclesiologist*, August 1851, vol. xi. p. 276: "Mr. Pugin himself might learn from Mr. Ruskin, had not (as is not improbable) Mr. Ruskin learnt it from him, to loathe all that is false and mean and meretricious in art." For Ruskin's views on Pugin, see Vol. IX. pp. 436–439.]

Contrasts once, in the Oxford architectural reading-room, during an idle forenoon. His "Remarks on Articles in the *Rambler*" were brought under my notice by some of the reviews. I never read a word of any other of his works, not feeling, from the style of his architecture, the smallest interest in his opinions.¹

I have so often spoken, in the preceding pages, of Holman Hunt's picture of the Light of the World,² that I may as well, in this place, glance at the envious charge against it of being plagiarized from a German print.

It is indeed true that there was a painting of the subject before; and

¹ [The "Remarks on Articles in the *Rambler*" are noticed in Appendix 12 to *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 437). The following letter bearing on the subject of the present Appendix is reprinted from the privately-printed *Letters from John Ruskin to Frederick J. Furnivall*, 1897, pp. 47-49:—

"LONDON, April 3rd, 1855.

"DEAR FURNIVALL,—Thursday will do excellently for me. I shall be most happy to see both Mrs. Wedgwood and Mrs. Gaskell. It may be that Kingsley may choose that day too, as I sent him another note yesterday with a *carte-blanche*. I think he must have missed one of my notes. Come to lunch at half-past one, if you have time so to arrange it with your friends.

"Faithfully yours,

"J. RUSKIN.

"I have found a book of yours on Mormonism: please put me in mind if I don't return your books. I wish you would explain something to the Wedgwoods for me; I have never been quite at ease with them since it happened, and yet it was so absurdly trifling that I never liked to write about it. One day at their dinner-table Mr. Wedgwood said to me across it, 'So you have taken up Pugin's idea of comparisons!' I could not at the instant determine with myself whether Mr. Wedgwood really supposed that I never could have had the idea of putting an ugly and a pretty thing side by side, and saying, 'Which is best?' unless I had borrowed it from Pugin, or whether he merely meant that I had been carrying out the same idea; and as I never like to appear sensitive on the point of originality, and did not like to enter into a long assertion of my own independence across a dinner-table, I simply bowed, in a very confused manner, which I have often thought since must have appeared to all the company like the confusion of a person detected in a plagiarism—whereas it was, in fact, the confusion of a person not knowing whether it was worth while, or a proper occasion, to assert his non-plagiarism. I do not know what Mr. Wedgwood's impression was, but I wish you would now explain this to him, and assure him that whatever I owe—and it is at least two-thirds of what I am—to other people, I certainly owe nothing to Pugin,—except two *facts*, one about Buttresses, and one about ironwork. I owe, I know not how much, to Carlyle, and after him to Wordsworth, Hooker, Herbert, Dante, Tennyson, and about another dozen of people. But assuredly *Nothing* to Pugin.

"Always yours,

"J. RUSKIN."]

² [See above, pp. 52, 65, 86, 109, and Vol. XII. pp. 328-332. Holman Hunt thus refers to the subject here noted: "When the subject of Christ knocking at the door first was undertaken by me, I thought it had never been treated before. I knew Longfellow's volume fairly well, but I had no memory of having read the

there were, of course, no paintings of the Nativity before Raphael's time, nor of the Last Supper before Leonardo's, else those masters could have laid no claim to originality. But what was still more singular (the verse to be illustrated being, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"), the principal figure in the antecedent picture was knocking at a door, knocking with its right hand, and had its face turned to the spectator! Nay, it was even robed in a long robe, down to its feet. All these circumstances were the same in Mr. Hunt's picture; and as the chances evidently were a hundred to one that if he had not been helped to the ideas by the German artist, he would have represented the figure as *not* knocking at any door, as turning its back to the spectator, and as dressed in a short robe, the plagiarism was considered as demonstrated. Of course no defence is possible in such a case. All I can say is, that I shall be sincerely grateful to any unconscientious persons who will adapt a few more German prints in the same manner.

Finally, touching plagiarism in general, it is to be remembered that all men who have sense and feeling are being continually helped: they are taught by every person whom they meet, and enriched by everything that falls in their way. The greatest is he who has been oftenest aided; and, if the attainments of all human minds could be traced to their real sources, it would be found that the world had been laid most under contribution by the men of most original power, and that every day of their existence deepened their debt to their race, while it enlarged their gifts to it. The labour devoted to trace the origin of any thought, or any invention, will usually issue in the blank conclusion that there is nothing new under the sun: yet nothing that is truly great can ever be altogether borrowed; and he is commonly the wisest, and is always the happiest, who receives simply, and without envious question, whatever good is offered him, with thanks to its immediate giver.

beautiful sonnet from 'Lope de Vega.' On coming to town I went to see the German prints of the subject, spoken of to me by a friend as forestalling my picture, but they were such meaningless vapidities that I became more content with my theme" (*Contemporary Review*, June 1886, p. 827). The sonnet, of which Longfellow's translation appeared first in the volume entitled *Coplas de Manrique* (1833), begins—

"Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
Thou should'st seek after me—that Thou should'st wait,
Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?"

Two German prints of the subject were in the shop-windows at the time when Hunt's picture was in progress.]

[Added in this Edition.]

IV
A LETTER ON “MODERN PAINTERS,”
VOL. III

[A reader of the third volume of *Modern Painters*, Miss M. S. Lockwood, was puzzled by what seemed a contradiction between paragraphs 7 and 40 of chapter xiv. (see above, p. 280 *n.*). She wrote to the author explaining her difficulty, and asking him further to explain the use of the word “anatomical” as applied to trees in chapter ix., § 12 (p. 161). Ruskin (mistaking his correspondent for a man) wrote the following letter in reply, the postmark being dated Dec. 13, 1856:—]

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for reading so carefully, and pointing out to me the discrepancy in question, very carelessly left unexplained. The first paragraph is speaking of the *habitual* mood of casual everyday contemplation, which was light with the mediæval and deep with the Greek. The other paragraph (40), of the sealing difference in the hard work and thought of the two. The flower was honoured by the Greek as God’s gift to *him*; by the mediæval as God’s work for God’s self, beautiful in itself and venerable, irrespective of its being a gift to *him* at all, so that —though the mediæval when he was at play in the fields was far less serious than the Greek (not expecting to meet Pan or Diana)—when he set himself to *work* he was far *more* serious than the Greek, carving the flower for its own sake and God’s sake, not merely for a conventional ornament of vase—or hair—undelighted in, except as connected with himself.

“But the two passages require expanding and explaining; and, in part, they *are* contradictory, describing two contradictory aspects of both minds; just as, if you divide two balls into red and blue—look at them from one side—and one is blue and the other red; and look at them from the other, and the first is red and the second blue. There are many subjects which involve this species of reversed light before you can work them out thoroughly.

“Anatomical laws in trees are, of course, the laws of their cellular growth —angles of branches, etc., which are just as *stern* as *laws* as those of the growth of animals. A law may be that you go into two, or three, or into an indefinite number of fields, but so long as it says positively, you must go into houses, or must do *something*, the law is as stern law, whether it says two, or three, or indefinite number. So the laws about vegetable growth are vague, admitting of *more alternatives* than in animal growth. But they

are just as stern. The law that a branch branches into its own quantity of wood, and no more, is as stern as that our hands shall branch only into five fingers.

“Truly yours,

“J. RUSKIN.

“‘Anatomical’ means, I believe, only ‘cutting up’ law. You may cut up a tree as well as a beast. Laws of *structure* would be a better word, or of organisms.”¹

¹ [This letter is reprinted from *St. George* (the Journal of the Ruskin Union), April 1902, vol. v. p. 166.]

V

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MSS.

[THE manuscript of the third volume of *Modern Painters* is among the Pierpont Morgan (formerly Allen) MSS. referred to in Vol. III. p. 682, and Vol. IV. p. 361. It represents two stages of the author's work:—

(1) An early draft, in three different volumes. The first of these (numbered by Ruskin "19") contains portions of the early chapters, and also *The Harbours of England*. The second (numbered "15 A") contains portions of some of the later chapters, and also *The Opening of the Crystal Palace*. The third contains portions of chapters in different parts of the volume, and also several chapters of the fourth volume.

(2) On 390 foolscap leaves, the MS., at a later stage of composition, of the Preface and Chapters i. to xviii. (down to the end of § 32). There is no MS. of the conclusion of that chapter or of the appendices. This MS. was that sent to the compositors; but the text was very heavily corrected in proof.

The early draft includes a good deal of additional matter, not incorporated in the text. The chapters were, it seems, to have been differently arranged, and allowed of discussions which had afterwards to be omitted or only briefly glanced at. Two such passages, dealing respectively with Magnitude and Moderation in art, are here given. Each was to have formed the subject of a separate chapter. The first, dealing with Magnitude, is briefly referred to in ch. iii. §§ 18, 19 (pp. 61–62) of the text:¹—

MAGNITUDE

"In order to receive an accurate idea of what is meant by greatness of style, we must consider what greatness itself consists in; and this in its two great orders—material and moral. For a truly great

¹ [The subject is also treated by Ruskin in *The Poetry of Architecture*, §§ 221 *seq.* (Vol. I. pp. 164–165); *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 309–311); vol. v. pt. viii. ch. iii.; *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Vol. VIII. pp. 103–107; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 79); *Mornings in Florence*, § 72; and *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 41.]

style is that which unites the representation of material greatness with a moral greatness in the mode of regarding it.

“We have first to examine in what material greatness consists; that is to say, what are the qualities of objects which impress us with the idea of their being Large.

“In ordinary parlance, we call objects large or small after comparing them with the average size which such objects attain. We call a moth large, if it be larger than moths usually are; and a mountain small, if it be smaller than the others in its neighbourhood. But a more essential idea of largeness is derived from our comparison of things with ourselves. We naturally call things small which are smaller than a man, and large which are larger than a man; we look upon wrens and sparrows, for instance, as small creatures, and upon elephants and rhinoceroses as large creatures; and we derive ideas of sublimity from the bulk of these latter which we could not receive from a wren or a sparrow, however large of its species.

“In order to produce these peculiar impressions of sublimity on the human mind, certain degrees of this material largeness are absolutely necessary. No beauty of design in architecture, or of form in mountains, will entirely take the place of what may be called ‘brute largeness.’ That is to say, of the actual superiority in feet and inches, over the size of Humanity, our constant standard, the general truth being that—*ceteris paribus*—the greatest effect of sublimity will be produced by the largest truth which can be clearly manifested to us. When bulk reaches certain limits, it becomes incomprehensible and immeasurable; and this uncomprehended bulk is, of course, useless—as far as regards any effect to be produced on the human mind. A space of sea, reaching to the horizon (say, perhaps, twenty miles square of water), and covered with large waves, will produce as great an effect of sublimity on most minds as anything can: the surface of the moon, though three thousand miles across, produces no such impression, because its size is not comprehended.

“The power of comprehending size is one of those which is most capable of cultivation; and—*ceteris paribus*—the mind which can measure the largest bulks, can receive the highest impressions of sublimity. Up to a certain point, the apprehension of size is indeed instructive, but this is only within very narrow limits; and as soon as those limits are past—that is to say, as soon as any object is more than about a hundred feet wide or high—the understanding of its magnitude depends on careful observation and accurate comparison of part with part, more and more difficult in proportion as the size increases; and however the power of such estimate may be increased by cultivation, the human mind never can quite comprehend the full size of distant things; so that universally all very large objects look smaller than they really are, and are more and more under-estimated in proportion to their magnitude—so that a mountain is always less justly estimated than a cathedral, and a great mountain always less justly than a small one. I do not mean that it is thought less than the small one—but it is not thought so much

greater as it really is. The wall of a cathedral, 150 feet high, produces an impression of magnitude nearly true,* but a cliff 500 feet high will not produce much more than twice the impression of the cathedral wall; and a mountain 3000 feet high will not produce much more than twice the impression of the cliff of 500. I have observed that, for the most part, the human mind seems most distinctly addressed by magnitudes under a thousand feet, brought well into the sphere of sight; so that with advantages of form, colour, and position, I think nearly as great an impression would be made by a bold precipice of 800 or 900 feet in height as is generally received from the Mont Blanc itself. For partly from the want of attention, and partly from the want of experience (objects of so great size having been seldom seen), with respect to heights above a thousand feet the ordinary observer is quite incapable of comparison. He is impressed by merely accidental circumstances of form and atmospheric effect, and is rarely more affected by a slope of 9000 or 10,000 feet, than by one of 1200.

“And the frequent comparisons made between the mountain scenery of our own island and that of Switzerland, as if they were in any wise capable of comparison, are a very sufficient proof of this. When once the eye has been taught to estimate magnitude justly, mountains in Scotland or Wales cease to exist, after a month spent among the Alps. Our own best scenery then becomes nothing more than pretty rocky country, rising here and there into a cairn of dark slate—or a heap of morass. But most travellers pass through the Alps without the slightest understanding of the scale of the objects around them, and derive their principal impressions not from the actual magnitude, but from the bolder forms of the Alpine rocks, and their various phenomena of snow and glacier; so that, putting these phenomena (which to many persons are more curious than sublime) out of the question, they are able to return to lower mountains without any very painful sense of their inferiority.

“Now there are two principal reasons for this insensibility: one based on a great power, the other on a great fault, of human nature. The feeling of magnificence or sublimity in the bulk of any object depends always in a great degree on the exertion of imagination. Upon torpid or prosaic temper, bulk produces hardly any effect, and in proportion as men decline towards the rank of animals, they are capable of less and less wonder at it. A dull peasant, entirely uneducated, seems to be little more impressible by the size of the mountain on which he dwells than an ant is by the size of the tree at whose root it has its nest. While, on the other hand, the emotions which educated men feel at magnitude appear to be very complicated, involving many subtle processes of the imagination, and many strange half-unconscious apprehensions of divine power or natural force. I cannot analyze the feeling, but one thing is certain, that before it

* But not quite true, for I suppose no one, however accurate his eye, ever ascended to the roof of a cathedral without finding the upper pinnacles larger than he thought them.

can take place the imagination must be excited, and the mind must take a kind of spiritual possession of the object, which, when once it is in the temper to do it, matters little whether that object be really of great magnitude or not. If it has had influence enough to put the imagination into train, or if the spectator have the will to raise himself into the mood of reverence, hundreds or thousands of feet are comparatively of small importance, and in a healthy tone of thought he will find more sublimity in a pretty crag of Derbyshire limestone than in a coldness and languor he could see in fifty leagues of Alps.

“Nor is this feeling false—though it is imagination. Imagination in this sense is nothing more than the complete perception of the inner truth of the thing; there are, in verity, in the humblest scenery, powers in operation vast enough, and masses of material existence large enough, to excite the full sensation of sublimity; and it is necessary to be very careful how we deaden this faculty of finding sublimity in things comparatively small by over-indulgence in the excitement of greater magnificence. For though it is the nature of the imagination to rouse itself with little help, yet it will never start but from the highest point it can reach; its ambition is insatiable; it always fixes on the largest thing it has in sight; and if, presently, anything still greater be offered to it, it flies to that, and instantly spurns what it before thought majestic. And this avarice of the imagination increases with the stimulus; and the more it obtains, the more it conceives it possible to obtain; and it may be pushed at last into a morbid hunger, in which it has nearly lost its own inherent power, but continually craves an increase of external excitement—and at last dies of pure repletion.”

MODERATION

[The second and more fragmentary passage is related to the text in ch. x. § 14 (p. 182), and (in the last paragraphs) with ch. xvii. § 6 (p. 358); but it connects also, as will be seen, with what is said under the head of “Magnitude”]:¹—

“The more experience men have of life (provided it be wisely used), the more they will come to look upon it in the light of a continual combat and Government. A combat against distinct principles of evil; a Government, in its dealings with things in themselves good, but which become evil when they are mismanaged. So that there is hardly a moment of existence but we have in it something to resist, or something to guide, which unresisted, or ill-guided, will assuredly turn to evil. And as this Guidance again divides itself into two great branches—one consisting in Restraint, when things good in themselves become evil in excess; and the other in Direction, when things good

¹ [On the subject of moderation and restraint in art, see also *Modern Painters*, vols. ii. and iv. (Vol. IV. pp. 135 *seq.*; Vol. VI. p. 327; and *Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. pp. 134, 259.]

in themselves becomes evil if misapplied—personal virtue has in all ages been resolved into three great branches of Fortitude, or resistance to pure evil; Temperance, or restraint in things capable of excess; and Prudence, or right judgment in things capable of error.

“Among these three virtues, it seems to me, that men in general least feel the full scope and bearing of Temperance; that Courage and judgment are commoner than mere self-restraint; and that men can oftener go where they ought, or stand where they ought, than stop where they ought. At least, in the particular branches of study into which I have been led, I find that Providence seems through various symbols and in various ways to insist upon the need of temperance far more than of the other virtues. I find in art, power and success depending continually upon a ‘Not too much,’—and I find in nature, the enjoyments of the finest and highest kind, liable to perpetual loss from over-covetousness of them. So that the explanation of what is right in art, or lovely in scenery, resolve themselves almost tiresomely into sections of an essay on Temperance; and whether we have to treat of beautiful form, or beautiful colour, or sublimity of effect, or grace of gesture, we shall find ourselves always driven back into the same insistence upon the habit of self-control. It will perhaps be less tiresome to point out at once the various modes in which this virtue is either demanded or illustrated in the matters before us; and afterwards to trace by themselves the elements of right which it modifies.

“And first, it is of singular importance in regulating the quantity of work which we give to the imagination. I mean here by the imagination that faculty which takes possession with the heart of what is seen by the eyes. For without a certain mental exertion, made as it were in sympathy with sight, it does not matter how beautiful the things may be which pass before us; we shall receive no pleasure from them. There are indeed certain forms and colours which please the eye as certain sounds do the ear; but when the heart is pre-occupied, or exhausted, these forms and colours have no longer any power, they pass before us as ineffectively as it may be supposed they do before animals. In an ordinary healthy state of mind the imagination exerts itself instinctively; and that which appears beautiful to the eye is fed upon by the heart, suggesting all kinds of pleasant and fruitful thoughts, and becoming in us a source of perpetual newness of life. But the form of this visible food, to nourish us, depends absolutely on the force of the Imagination by which it is received—and that force is limited. The quantity of Imagination which the mind can give forth is just as fixed as the muscular power which can be developed by the body; the Imagination may be as easily overtaxed as the limbs, and the moment it is exhausted, all the occupation which we give to the bodily sight is a weariness, and I think has even a tendency to destroy the spring of the Imagination for the future. Temperance, therefore, in the use of the imagination, is one of the most important means of enjoying nature truly, and one of the greatest powers of art is that of supplying the imagination with exactly the food it requires—and no more. It is therefore very necessary that we

should thoroughly understand the modes in which the mind operates, and can be addressed in these respects.

“And first, let me make my meaning as clear as possible in the use of the word “Imagination.”* I do not use it here in the limited, though accurate sense, in which it is defined in the second volume of this work. I mean by it here the entire operation of the Humanity within us, the sum of the mental powers which, at the sight of any object, are set to work to take possession of it; which contemplate its nature, perceive and admire its peculiar virtues, or which refresh it with wonder, sanctify it with association, and gild or darken it with the subtle dyes of hope and memory, and I understand this power to be operating altogether, like notes of music, but all forming a perfect harmony.

“For instance, suppose that several persons are looking at a pine tree, not having seen one for some time. To one, it will perhaps bring back some happy or painful association, and then he will forget the pine tree, and follow the train of thought it has called up. In him the note of memory has been struck too hard for harmony. Another will be impressed by the uprightness of the tree, and by the way in which it holds the rocks with its roots, and presently he will set himself to examine their fibres, and discover the process of its growth. In him the note of wonder has been struck too hard for harmony. Another will be impressed by the splendour of its dark green, and beauty of the lines of its branches, and will set himself to enjoy these without any further thought about the matter. In him the note of pleasure has been struck too hard for harmony.

* I have always felt this so important a matter, that I devoted the whole second volume of this work to an investigation of the faculties of mind which were chiefly concerned in our admiration of nature; and though, on looking back to this second volume after the lapse of nine years, I find it disfigured by affectations and encumbered by obscurities, and heartily wish I had it to write over again, still the main statements of it are all true, and I think its meaning may be got at with as little pains as that of metaphysical works in general. It contains what I intended it to contain for future reference; and though I am sorry to have to refer to anything so difficult to read, I do not think it would be wise to give up the time necessary to rewrite it; for there are perhaps some qualities in the writing of a young man which, though we may despise in more advanced life, are yet useful to persons in the same temper of mind in which the writer was at the time. Therefore, begging the sensible reader to pardon the involutions of language, the imitations of Hooker, and the tiresome length of sentences, I shall permit myself to refer to the book as if it had been better written, especially as I may be able now with a few words so to explain its contents as to spare the reader a good deal of trouble in analyzing them.

It divides the faculties of mind concerned in the contemplation of Nature into two great branches—one passive, the other active; one receiving delight from external things, the other so modifying and regarding external things as to increase this delight. The passive power I called *Theoria*, and the active, *Imagination*. The adoption of the term *Theoria* was pure pedantry.¹

¹ [But see Vol. IV. pp. xlvi. - xlvii.]

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And a fourth will be impressed by the coiling and fantastic labyrinth of its roots, and will begin to fancy them Dragons, or arms of demons, and the hair of a transformed Dryad fastened to the earth. And in him the note of fancy has been struck too hard for harmony. And most people in looking at nature, according to their profession and turn of mind, have of course some tendency to overbalance themselves in one direction or another, taking out of the thing that only which they are in the habit of seeking in their ordinary life. And this is so far a healthy and happy tendency, for we can thus go on without fatigue continually."

END OF VOLUME V



Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
Edinburgh & London.

THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

Two thousand and sixty-two copies of this edition—of which two thousand are for sale in England and America—have been printed at the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh, and the type has been distributed.



The Gates of the Hills.

LIBRARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF

JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO

1904

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VOLUME VI

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME IV

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME IV

CONTAINING

PART V

OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

“Accuse me not

Of arrogance,
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence.”

WORDSWORTH

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1904

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¹ [In this edition reproduced in most cases by photogravure; see note on p. xiii.]

² [This Plate contains seven figures, as follow: (1), (2), (3) the Towers of Fribourg; (1) as Dürer would have drawn them, (2) from a daguerreotype, (3) as a modern sketcher of the "bold" school would draw them: see pp. 46, 82, 102; (4) contour of the top of the Breven: see pp. 54, 282; (5), (6), and (7) pillars, illustrating the conditions of light and shade, characteristic of Rembrandt, Turner, and Veronese respectively: see p. 59.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION TO VOL. VI

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

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

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

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

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

These textual revisions and explanatory notes occur in chapters of *Modern Painters* to which the author attached particular importance. He considered the mountain-chapters in this volume to be, as we have seen,¹ among the most valuable of all his writings. He here suggests that some of the passages in question “should be read to young people by their tutors as an introduction to geological study.”² Fortunate are the young people who are allowed so attractive a guide; for apart from all questions of geological theory, Ruskin’s chapters have the unquestionable interest and value which attach to the direct observations of a singularly acute eye. “Precisely the same faculties of eye and mind are concerned,” he says elsewhere,³ “in the analysis of natural and of pictorial forms.” Ruskin, as Mr. Collingwood observes, knew “more about scenery than most geologists, and more about geology than most artists.”⁴ Ruskin’s classification of rocks into “crystallines” and “coherents” was adopted, it may be remarked, by Professor Bonney in his *Alpine Regions of Switzerland* (1868); in quoting many passages from the present volume, he truly describes it as “a book that no lover of the Alps should be without.” In an obituary notice of Ruskin in 1900, the President of the Geological Society referred in like manner to “his services to our science in directing the attention of artists and others to the effect of geological structure and of the characters of rocks on scenery,” and instanced the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* as a work that “might be read with advantage by many geologists.”⁵ Ruskin, it should be remembered, was here also, as in much else of his work, somewhat of a pioneer. Professor Alphonse Favre’s study of the Savoy mountains⁶ did not appear till 1867, and Professor Heim’s *Mechanismus der Gebirgsbildung* (on which Lord Avebury’s *Scenery of Switzerland*, 1896, is founded) not till 1878.

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

¹ Vol. V. p. lviii., and see below, p. 486.

² See p. 128, author’s note of 1885.

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

⁴ *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 205.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ See, for instance, Vol. V. p. xxviii.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ See Vol. XII. p. xxxi.

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

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

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

¹ Vol. V. p. xxxi.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ See Vol. XII. p. 500.

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

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

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

¹ Compare Ruskin's Preface to *Coeli Enarrant*, below, p. 486.

² See, in this connexion, ch. xvii. § 43, pp. 354–355.

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

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

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

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

² *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, 17-19 R. (Vol. XIII.).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Plate B is from a drawing in the collection of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.; called by Ruskin “Mountain Gloom: near St. Jean de Maurienne, on the Cenis route.” The drawing is in wash and body-colour on buff paper (18x13).

E. T. C.

[*Bibliographical Note*.—Enumeration is here made of the separate editions of *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. For the bibliography of the complete work, and of selections from it, see Vol. III. pp. lviii.–lxiii.

First Edition (1856).—The title-page was as follows:—

Modern Painters. | Volume IV. | Containing Part V. | of Mountain Beauty.
| By John Ruskin, M.A. | Author of “The Stones of Venice,” “The Seven
Lamps of Architecture,” etc., etc. | [*Quotation* from Wordsworth, as in vols.
i., ii., and iii.] | London: | Smith, Elder, & Co., 65, Cornhill. | 1856.
| [*The Author reserves the right of translation.*]

Imperial 8vo, pp. xii. +411. The Preface occupied pp. v.–viii.; Contents, pp. ix., x.; List of Plates, pp. xi., xii.; Text, pp. 1–393; Appendix, 395–411. The imprint at the foot of the last page, and of the reverse of the half-title, is “London: Printed by Spottiswoode & Co., New Street Square.” Issued on April 14, 1856, in green ornamental cloth boards, uniform with vol. iii. Price, 50s.

Second Edition (1868).—This was an exact reprint of the First, except for the alteration of the date, and the addition of the words “Second Edition” on the title-page. It was issued on April 2, 1868.

No other editions of the volume were issued separately. “Edition 3” below means the first edition of the volume in the complete book (1873).

Varia Lectiones.—This volume was not, as a whole, revised for the press by the author after its first appearance; but portions of it were revised for and reprinted in *In Montibus Sanctis* and *Coeli Enarrant* (see above, p. xix.). The following is a list of all the variations. Alterations consequent on different pagination are not included, except where something more than the mere number of a page is affected.

List of Plates. Called “List of Plates to Vol. IV.” in previous editions. The list here (pp. xi.–xiii.) is modelled on the list as published in the first edition. In some of the earlier copies of ed. 1, Plate 47 was wrongly numbered “49.” In ed. 3, Plate 31, “Blaitière” was misprinted “Blatière,” and No. 36 was misprinted “63.” In the 1888 edition, Plate 12A was re-engraved by Mr. George Allen, and 49 by Mr. C. A. Tomkins; the list was altered accordingly. In the small complete edition the list was reprinted from that in the 1888 edition, the words “Reproduced from engravings by” being substituted for “engraved by.” The list of woodcuts is added in this edition.

Preface, § 4, line 6, page 226, “at the first line” is an alteration in this edition to suit the rearrangement of the text; in the original editions

“page 184 at the fourth line from the bottom”; which words were retained in the small complete edition, though the reference was then erroneous.

Ch. i. § 11, line 11, eds. 1 and 2 read “illumine” for “illumine”; § 13, line 18, ed. 3 omits “not” before “utterly injurious”; § 17, line 22, “juvenile tricks” here put in inverted commas as marked by Ruskin in his copy.

Ch. iv. § 1, line 11, “referring” here substituted, as marked by Ruskin in his copy, for “but with reference”; § 3, line 8, “their” before “blue” here omitted, for the same reason; § 4, line 24, “a quarter” here substituted for “half,” for the same reason; § 7, line 1, ed. 3 omits “not” before “this only.”

Ch. v. §§ 19, 20, ed. 3 reads “Fig. 4” for “Fig. 6,” and *vice versa*.

Ch. vi. § 2, line 5, see p. 106 *n.*; § 8, line 9, see p. 111 *n.*

Ch. vii. § 6, line 7, the new paragraph here, and the “(I.)” (as below “(II.)” and “(III.)”) § 8, 9, are introduced from the revised reprint in *In Montibus Sanctis*; so in § 7, line 2, the italicising of “surface”; and in the Bible quotation at the end of the chapter, the substitution of “justice” for “righteousness” (this latter correction was made also in 1888 and in the small complete edition).

Ch. viii. § 1, line 18, ed. 3 reads “is” for “it”; § 2, line 7, eds. 1–3 read “if he has any opportunity,” altered to “when there is opportunity” in *In Montibus Sanctis*; § 3, last line but one, the word “distributive” here added in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision; § 4, lines 20 and 21, eds. 1–3 read “a different shade of colour, and a different character of form”; the alteration in the text here was made also in 1888, and in the small complete edition, following *In Montibus Sanctis*; § 4, end (see author’s note of 1885, p. 131); § 6, line 10, the words “though all of one kind” are here transposed from after “each other,” as marked by Ruskin in his copy for revision; line 14 (see p. 132 *n.*); § 8, line 1, “all these orders of substance” here substituted for “all these substances,” in accordance with *In Montibus Sanctis*; so also in line 4, the italicising of “flint;” § 13, last sentences (see p. 139 *n.*); § 14, line 48, the italicising of “pure dark blue” here introduced in accordance with Ruskin’s revision in the proof for *In Montibus Sanctis*; § 15, author’s note (see p. 141 *n.*) § 18, line 19, the words “among them” are here added from Ruskin’s revision in the proof for *In Montibus Sanctis*.

Ch. xi. § 3, line 19, eds. 1–3 read “coteau,” and later editions “côteau,” for “coteaux.”

Ch. xii. § 5, line 30, “human” before “dust” here added from Ruskin’s copy for revision.

Ch. xiii. § 1, last line but two, “Lime” for “Lyme” in all previous editions; § 17, line 14, the word “opposite” is in this edition omitted after “Fig. 24.”

Ch. xiv. § 4, second line from bottom of page, see p. 218 *n.*; § 13, line 5, “Fig. 35 (on the next page)” is an alteration in this edition (owing to rearrangement) for “the above figure.”

Ch. xv. § 3, line 2, all previous editions read “in mountain”; a misprint (as the MS. shows) for “in the mountain”; § 28, line 11, “on p. 270” is an alteration in this edition for “over leaf.”

Ch. xvi. § 7, line 3, “next” is an alteration in this edition for “opposite”; § 14, line 10, the reference to “e” in Fig. 33 was wrongly given as “i” in the 1888 and small complete edition; § 19, line 16, the words “is seen” (in all

previous editions) are here omitted from before “than,” as marked by Ruskin in his copy for revision; § 37, line 17, the word “(kathrefhV)” was misplaced in previous editions between “and” and “laurel”; § 37, last word, small complete edition misprinted “Veritas” for “Veritatis”; § 39, line 13, see p. 314 *n*.

Ch. xvii. § 3, line 2, all previous editions have “chapters” for “chapter”; § 11, author’s note, eds. 1 and 2 read “Fig. 95” for “Fig. 96”; § 49, line 9, “observed” here substituted for “known,” in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision; and similarly, two lines lower, the words “but one” added.

Ch. xix. § 1, line 19, “seek” substituted for “acknowledge” in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision; § 3, line 5, “Valorsine” in previous editions; § 4, line 27, “dying also, patiently,” in previous editions is here corrected to “dying, also patiently” as in *Fronde Agrestes*; § 6, line 8, “lay down” is here altered to “give” in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision; so also the dashes before and after “poetically minded” are removed, and a dash inserted before “that nightly”; § 6, note, “but well chosen” altered to “and consistent,” again in accordance with Ruskin’s copy for revision; § 31, towards the end of the penultimate paragraph, he altered “its . . . it . . . its” to “their . . . them . . . their”; § 32, six lines from end, he altered “biding” to “abiding.”

Ch. xx. § 13, line 3, this is altered in accordance with Ruskin’s revision; hitherto “. . . exciting the poetical and inventive faculties, in peculiarly solemn tones of mind”; § 17, line 3, 1873, ed. 3 reads “Bergham”; § 29, line 13, “Lances” in all previous editions for “Launces.”

Appendix ii. § 5, line 17, see p. 481 *n*.

The *headlines* in this edition have been altered in order to fit the page and preserve uniformity in the edition. In previous editions the headlines on left-hand pages were the subjects of the chapters, and these were repeated on the right-hand pages in chs. i.–iii., vi., vii., xix. and xx. In the other chapters, the full title ran across the two pages; thus, ch. iv. had on the left-hand pages “Of Turnerian Mystery,” and on the right-hand pages “I. As Essential”; ch. xiv. had similarly “Resulting Forms,” “I. Aiguilles,” and so on throughout.]

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME IV

VI.

A

P R E F A C E

1. I was in hopes that this volume might have gone its way without preface; but as I look over the sheets, I find in them various fallings short of old purposes which require a word of explanation.

Of which shortcomings, the chief is the want of reference to the landscape of the Poussins and Salvator; my original intention having been to give various examples of their mountain-drawing, that it might be compared with Turner's. But the ten years intervening between the commencement of this work and its continuation have taught me, among other things, that Life is shorter and less availably divisible than I had supposed: and I think now that its hours may be better employed than in making facsimiles of bad work. It would have required the greatest care, and prolonged labour, to give uncaricatured representations of Salvator's painting, or of any other work depending on the free dashes of the brush, so as neither to mend nor mar it. Perhaps in the next volume I may give one or two examples associated with vegetation;¹ but in general, I shall be content with directing the reader's attention to the facts in nature, and in Turner; leaving him to carry out for himself whatever comparisons he may judge expedient.

2. I am afraid, also, that disappointment may be felt at not finding plates of more complete subject illustrating these chapters on mountain beauty. But the analysis into

¹ [See in that volume Figs. 41, 57, 62; pt. vi. ch. vi. §§ 10, 12; ch. viii. § § 7, 9, 11.]

which I had to enter required the dissection of drawings, rather than their complete presentation; while, also, on the scale of any readable page, no effective presentation of large drawings could be given. Even my vignette, the frontispiece to the third volume, is partly spoiled by having too little white paper about it; and the fiftieth plate, from Turner's Goldau, necessarily omits, owing to its reduction, half the refinements of the foreground. It is quite waste of time and cost to reduce Turner's drawings at all; and I therefore consider these volumes only as *guides* to them, hoping hereafter to illustrate some of the best on their own scale.¹

3. Several of the plates appear, in their present position, nearly unnecessary; 14 and 15, for instance, in Vol. III. These are illustrations of the chapters on the Firmament in the fifth volume; but I should have had the plates disproportionately crowded at last, if I had put all that it needed in that volume; and as these two bear somewhat on various matters spoken of in the third, I placed them where they are first alluded to. The frontispiece² has chief reference to the same chapters; but seemed, in its three divisions, properly introductory to our whole subject. It is a simple sketch from nature, taken at sunset from the hills near Como, some two miles up the eastern side of the lake, and about a thousand feet above it, looking towards Lugano. The sky is a little too heavy for the advantage of the landscape below; but I am not answerable for the sky. It was *there*.*

* Persons unacquainted with hill scenery are apt to forget that the sky of the mountains is often close to the spectator. A black thundercloud may literally be dashing itself in his face, while the blue hills seen through its rents may be thirty miles away. Generally speaking, we do not enough understand the nearness of many clouds, even in level countries, as compared with the land horizon. See also the close of § 12 in Chap. III. of this volume.

¹ [For a note on this scheme of Ruskin's, see Vol. V. p. 9.]

² [*i.e.*, to vol. iii.; for the frontispiece to the present volume, see below, p. 355.]

4. In the multitudinous letterings and references of this volume there may possibly be one or two awkward errata;¹ but not so many as to make it necessary to delay the volume while I look it over again in search of them. The reader will perhaps be kind enough to note at once that in page 226, at the first line of the text, the words “general truth” refer to the angle-measurements, not to the diagrams; which latter are given merely for reference, and might cause some embarrassment if the statement of measured accuracy were supposed to refer to them.

One or two graver misapprehensions I had it in my mind to warn the reader against; but on the whole as I have honestly tried to make the book intelligible, I believe it will be found intelligible by any one who thinks it worth a careful reading; and every day convinces me more and more that no warnings can preserve from misunderstanding, those who have no desire to understand.

DENMARK HILL, *March* 1856.

¹ [The editors have discovered only three mistakes of the kind: see below, pp. 218 *n.*, 314 *n.*, 481 *n.*]

PART V
OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

CHAPTER I

OF THE TURNERIAN PICTURESQUE

§ 1. THE work which we proposed to ourselves, towards the close of the last volume,¹ as first to be undertaken in this, was the examination of those peculiarities of system in which Turner either stood alone, even in the modern school, or was a distinguished representative of modern, as opposed to ancient, practice.

And the most interesting of these subjects of inquiry, with which, therefore, it may be best to begin, is the precise form under which he has admitted into his work the modern feeling of the picturesque, which, so far as it consists in a delight in ruin, is perhaps the most suspicious and questionable of all the characters distinctively belonging to our temper, and art.

It is especially so, because it never appears, even in the slightest measure, until the days of the decline of art in the seventeenth century. The love of neatness and precision, as opposed to all disorder, maintains itself down to Raphael's childhood without the slightest interference of any other feeling; and it is not until Claude's time, and owing in great part to his influence, that the new feeling distinctly establishes itself.

Plate 18 shows the kind of modification which Claude used to make on the towers and backgrounds of Ghirlandajo; the old Florentine giving his idea of Pisa, with its leaning tower, with the utmost neatness and precision, and handsome youths riding over neat bridges on beautiful

¹ [See pp. 409–410 of that volume.]

horses;¹ Claude reducing the delicate towers and walls to unintelligible ruin, the well-built bridge to a rugged stone one, the handsome rider to a weary traveller, and the perfectly drawn leafage to confusion of copsewood or forest.*

How far he was right in doing this; or how far the moderns are right in carrying the principle to greater excess, and seeking always for poverty-stricken rusticity or pensive ruin, we must now endeavour to ascertain.

The essence of picturesque character has been already defined[†] to be a sublimity not inherent in the nature of the thing, but caused by something external to it; as the ruggedness of a cottage roof possesses something of a mountain aspect, not belonging to the cottage as such. And this sublimity may be either in mere external ruggedness, and other visible character, or it may lie deeper, in an expression of sorrow and old age, attributes which are both sublime; not a dominant expression, but one mingled with

* Ghirlandajo is seen to the greatest possible disadvantage in this plate, as I have been forced again to copy from Lasinio, who leaves out all the light and shade, and vulgarizes every form; but the points requiring notice here are sufficiently shown, and I will do Ghirlandajo more justice hereafter.²

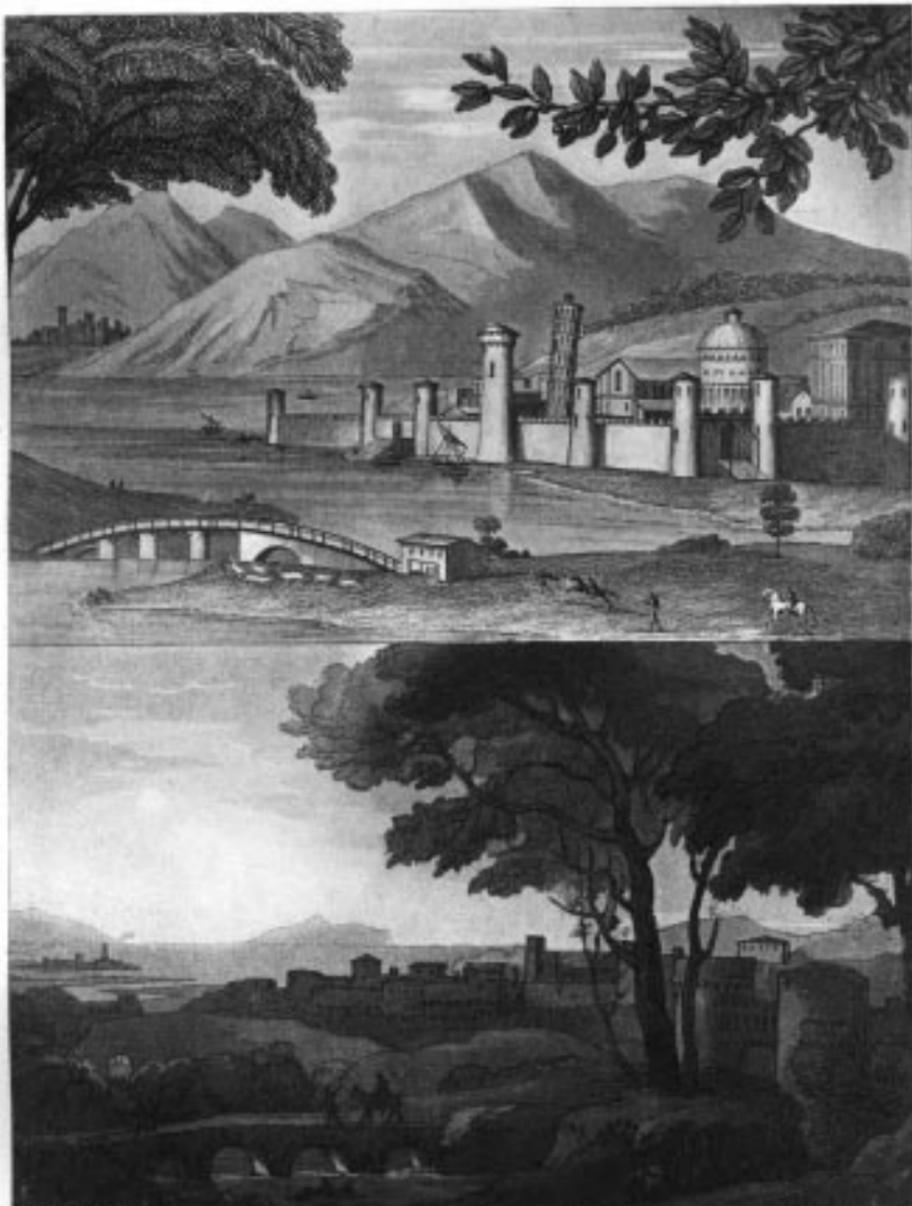
† *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, chap. vi. § 12. [Vol. VIII. p. 236.]

¹ [In the first draft, this plate and passage were intended for vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 27. After mentioning at that place Claude's reversion to Ghirlandajo's types, the MS. continues:—

“ . . . types of form; and taking whatever he [Ghirlandajo] had done childishly enough to fit Claude's capacity away from all the associations which gave it value, dress it up in his newly invented sunshine, and palm it upon the public for his own. Yet so it verily is. Compare the two bits of landscape in the opposite plate. The upper one is Ghirlandajo's, out of the background of his [blank not filled in]; the other, part of this landscape of Moses and the Burning Bush of which we have been speaking, out of Claude's *Liber Veritatis*. Now observe: Ghirlandajo had really gone to nature for most of his materials; his city is Pisa, with its leaning tower; the mountains beyond are bold and not ill-formed, and the leafage above quite well drawn and perfect. But Claude, borrowing this passage, denaturalises Pisa, and turns it into one of his impossible cities, made of nothing but round towers, lowers the mountains, turns the grand and simple leafage above into ignoble and indistinct trees, but has not wit enough to invent another figure, only shifts the horseman and his guide off the bridge to the river shore, and puts ill-built and ridiculous arches of stone for Ghirlandajo's timber.”

The Ghirlandajo is from his fresco (in the Church of Santa Trinità, Florence) of “St. Francis receiving the Stigmata”; the engraving was published in 1824.]

² [For Lasinio, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xviii. § 13 (Vol. V. p. 395); no further illustration from Ghirlandajo was given; Ruskin alludes to the want of good engravings from him and other Italian masters in the *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 46.]



Lozano and Barlow.

J. H. & Co. Rev.
Allen & Co. St.

such familiar and common characters as prevent the object from becoming perfectly pathetic in its sorrow, or perfectly venerable in its age.

§ 2. For instance, I cannot find words to express the intense pleasure I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais church.¹ The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty or desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work,—as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore,—the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise.

§ 3. I cannot tell the half of the strange pleasures and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower; for, in some sort, it is the epitome of all that makes the Continent of Europe interesting, as opposed to new countries; and, above all, it completely expresses that agedness in the midst of active life which binds the old and the new into harmony. We, in England, have our

¹ [With this passage compare *Notes on Prout and Hunt* (Prout, No. 2, and see above, Introduction, p. xxiii.)] The passage from “The essence of picturesque character” (p. 10) to the end of § 3 was printed as Appendix ii. to the *Notes on Prout and Hunt*.]

new street, our new inn, our green shaven lawn, and our piece of ruin emergent from it,—a mere *specimen* of the Middle Ages put on a bit of velvet carpet to be shown, which, but for its size, might as well be on a museum shelf at once, under cover. But, on the Continent, the links are unbroken between the past and present, and, in such use as they can serve for, the grey-headed wrecks are suffered to stay with men; while, in unbroken line, the generations of spared buildings are seen succeeding each in its place. And thus in its largeness, in its permitted evidence of slow decline, in its poverty, in its absence of all pretence, of all show and care for outside aspect, that Calais tower has an infinite of symbolism in it, all the more striking because usually seen in contrast with English scenes expressive of feelings the exact reverse of these.¹

§ 4. And I am sorry to say that the opposition is most distinct in that noble carelessness as to what people think of it.² Once, on coming from the Continent, almost the first inscription I saw in my native English was this:

“To Let, a Genteel House, up this road.”

And it struck me forcibly, for I had not come across the idea of gentility, among the upper limestones of the Alps, for seven months; nor do I think that the Continental nations in general *have* the idea. They would have advertised a “pretty” house, or a “large” one, or a “convenient” one; but they could not, by any use of the terms afforded by their several languages, have got at the English “genteel.” Consider, a little, all the meanness that there is in that epithet, and then see, when next you cross the Channel, how scornful of it that Calais spire will look.

§ 5. Of which spire the largeness and age are also

¹ [§§ 2 and 3 are § 20 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following note:—

“My friend won’t write out the reverse! Our book is to be all jelly, and no powder, it seems! Well, I’m very thankful she likes the jelly;—at any rate, it makes me sure that *it* is well made.”

“My friend” was the compiler of *Fronde Agrestes*, Miss Susan Beever.]

² [For the first notes of the following passage, see the extract from Ruskin’s diary given in the Introduction to Vol. V. p. xxxv.]

opposed exactly to the chief appearances of modern England, as one feels them on first returning to it; that marvellous smallness both of houses and scenery, so that a ploughman in the valley has his head on a level with the tops of all the hills in the neighbourhood; and a house is organized into complete establishment,—parlour, kitchen, and all, with a knocker to its door, and a garret window to its roof, and a bow to its second story,* on a scale of 12 feet wide by 15 high, so that three such at least would go into the granary of an ordinary Swiss cottage: and also our serenity of perfection, our peace of conceit, everything being done that vulgar minds can conceive as wanting to be done; the spirit of well-principled housemaids everywhere, exerting itself for perpetual propriety and renovation, so that nothing is old, but only “old-fashioned,” and contemporary, as it were, in date and impressiveness only with last year’s bonnets. Abroad, a building of the eighth or tenth century stands ruinous in the open street; the children play round it, the peasants heap their corn in it, the buildings of yesterday nestle about it, and fit their new stones into its rents, and tremble in sympathy as it trembles. No one wonders at it, or thinks of it as separate, and of another time; we feel the ancient world to be a real thing, and one with the new: antiquity is no dream; it is rather the children playing about the old stones that are the dream. But all is continuous; and the words, “from generation to generation,” understandable there. Whereas here we have a living present, consisting merely of what is “fashionable” and “oldfashioned”; and a past, of which there are no vestiges; a past which peasant or citizen can no more conceive; all equally far away; Queen Elizabeth as old as Queen Boadicea, and both incredible. At Verona we look out of Can Grande’s window to his tomb;¹ and if he does not stand beside us,

* The principal street of Canterbury has some curious examples of this *tininess*.

¹ [So in *Verona and its Rivers*, § 18, Ruskin speaks of “side by side, the presence chambers of the living and the dead”; and compare in *Seven Lamps*, the last words of the chapter on “The Lamp of Memory,” Vol. VIII. p. 247.]

we feel only that he is in the grave instead of the chamber,—not that he is *old*, but that he might have been beside us last night. But in England the dead are dead to purpose. One cannot believe they ever were alive, or anything else than what they are now—names in school-books.

§ 6. Then that spirit of trimness. The smooth paving stones; the scraped, hard, even, rutless roads; the neat gates and plates, and essence of border and order, and spikiness and spruceness.¹ Abroad, a country-house has some confession of human weakness and human fates about it. There are the old grand gates still, which the mob pressed sore against at the Revolution, and the strained hinges have never gone so well since; and the broken greyhound on the pillar—still broken—better so: but the long avenue is gracefully pale with fresh green, and the courtyard bright with orange-trees; the garden is a little run to waste—since Mademoiselle was married nobody cares much about it; and one range of apartments is shut up—nobody goes into them since Madame died. But with us, let who will be married or die, we neglect nothing. All is polished and precise again next morning; and whether people are happy or miserable, poor or prosperous, still we sweep the stairs of a Saturday.*

§ 7. Now, I have insisted long on this English character, because I want the reader to understand thoroughly the opposite element of the noble picturesque: its expression, namely, of *suffering*, of *poverty*, or *decay*, nobly endured by unpretending strength of heart. Nor only unpretending, but unconscious. If there be visible pensiveness in the building, as in a ruined abbey, it becomes, or claims

* This, however, is of course true only of insignificant duties, necessary, for appearance' sake. Serious duties, necessary for kindness' sake, must be permitted in any domestic affliction, under pain of shocking the English public.

¹ [With this passage may be compared the description of a typical Cathedral Close in *The Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 78). In one of his copies of the volume Ruskin here refers on the subject of neatness to the next volume, pt. ix. ch. vii. § 21.]

to become, beautiful; but the picturesqueness is in the unconscious suffering,—the look that an old labourer has, not knowing that there is anything pathetic in his grey hair, and withered arms, and sunburnt breast; and thus there are the two extremes, the consciousness of pathos in the confessed ruin, which may or may not be beautiful, according to the kind of it; and the entire denial of all human calamity and care, in the swept proprieties and neatnesses of English modernism: and, between these, there is the unconscious confession of the facts of distress and decay, in by-words; the world's hard work being gone through all the while, and no pity asked for, nor contempt feared. And this is the expression of that Calais spire, and of all picturesque things, in so far as they have mental or human expression at all.

§ 8. I say, in so far as they have mental expression, because their merely outward delightfulness—that which makes them pleasant in painting, or, in the literal sense, picturesque—is their actual variety of colour and form. A broken stone has necessarily more various forms in it than a whole one; a bent roof has more various curves in it than a straight one; every excrescence or cleft involves some additional complexity of light and shade, and every stain of moss on eaves or wall adds to the delightfulness of colour. Hence, in a completely picturesque object, as an old cottage or mill, there are introduced, by various circumstances not essential to it, but, on the whole, generally somewhat detrimental to it as cottage or mill, such elements of sublimity—complex light and shade, varied colour, undulatory form, and so on—as can generally be found only in noble natural objects, woods, rocks, or mountains. This sublimity, belonging in a parasitical manner to the building, renders it, in the usual sense of the word, “picturesque.”

§ 9. Now, if this outward sublimity be sought for by the painter, without any regard for the real nature of the thing, and without any comprehension of the pathos of character

hidden beneath, it forms the low school of the surface-picturesque; that which fills ordinary drawing-books and scrap-books, and employs, perhaps, the most popular living landscape painters of France, England, and Germany. But if these same outward characters be sought for in subordination to the inner character of the object, every source of pleasurable being refused which is incompatible with that, while perfect sympathy is felt at the same time with the object as to all that it tells of itself in those sorrowful by-words, we have the school of true or noble picturesque; still distinguished from the school of pure beauty and sublimity, because, in its subjects, the pathos and sublimity are all *by the way*, as in Calais old spire,—not inherent, as in a lovely tree or mountain; while it is distinguished still more from the schools of the lower picturesque by its tender sympathy, and its refusal of all sources of pleasure inconsistent with the perfect nature of the thing to be studied.

§ 10. The reader will only be convinced of the broad scope of this law by careful thought, and comparison of picture with picture; but a single example will make the principle of it clear to him.

On the whole, the first master of the lower picturesque, among our living artists, is Clarkson Stanfield; his range of art being, indeed, limited by his pursuit of this character. I take, therefore, a windmill, forming the principal subject in his drawing of Brittany near Dol (engraved in the *Coast Scenery*), Fig. 1, Plate 19, and beside it I place a windmill, which forms also the principal subject in Turner's study of the Lock, in the *Liber Studiorum*.¹ At first sight I dare say the reader may like Stanfield's best; and there is, indeed, a great deal more in it to attract liking. Its roof is nearly as interesting in its ruggedness as a piece of the stony peak of a mountain, with a *châlet* built on its side; and it

¹ [*Stanfield's Coast Scenery, a Series of Views in the British Channel*, 1836. The "Coast of Brittany" is at p. 25. Turner's "Windmill and Lock" was No. 27 in the *Liber*; the mill is said to have been taken from one which formerly existed at Hanwell, not far from the site of the present Lunatic Asylum.]



Stanfield and Turner.



J.H. Le Kock
Allen & Co. So.

19. The Picturesque of Windmills .

1. Pure Modern .

2. Turnerian .

is exquisitely varied in swell and curve. Turner's roof, on the contrary, is a plain, ugly gable,—a windmill roof, and nothing more. Stanfield's sails are twisted into most effective wrecks, as beautiful as pine bridges over Alpine streams; only they do not look as if they had ever been serviceable windmill sails; they are bent about in cross and awkward ways, as if they were warped or cramped; and their timbers look heavier than necessary. Turner's sails have no beauty about them like that of Alpine bridges; but they have the exact switchy sway of the sail that is always straining against the wind; and the timbers form clearly the lightest possible framework for the canvas,—thus showing the essence of windmill sail. Then the clay wall of Stanfield's mill is as beautiful as a piece of chalk cliff, all worn into furrows by the rain, coated with mosses, and rooted to the ground by a heap of crumbled stone, embroidered with grass and creeping plants. But this is not a serviceable state for a windmill to be in. The essence of a windmill, as distinguished from all other mills, is, that it should turn round, and be a spinning thing, ready always to face the wind; as light, therefore, as possible, and as vibratory; so that it is in no wise good for it to approximate itself to the nature of chalk cliffs.

Now observe how completely Turner has chosen his mill so as to mark this great fact of windmill nature; how high he has set it; how slenderly he has supported it; how he has built it all of wood; how he has bent the lower planks so as to give the idea of the building lapping over the pivot on which it rests inside; and how, finally, he has insisted on the great leverage of the beam behind it, while Stanfield's lever looks more like a prop than a thing to turn the roof with. And he has done all this fearlessly, though none of these elements of form are pleasant ones in themselves, but tend, on the whole, to give a somewhat mean and spider-like look to the principal feature in his picture; and then, finally, because he could not get the windmill dissected, and show us the real heart and centre of the whole, behold, he

has put a pair of old millstones,¹ *lying outside*, at the bottom of it. These—the first cause and motive of all the fabric—laid at its foundation; and beside them the cart which is to fulfil the end of the fabric's being, and take home the sacks of flour.

§ 11. So far of what each painter chooses to draw. But do not fail also to consider the spirit in which it is drawn. Observe, that though all this ruin has befallen Stanfield's mill, Stanfield is not in the least sorry for it. On the contrary, he is delighted, and evidently thinks it the most fortunate thing possible. The owner is ruined, doubtless, or dead; but his mill forms an admirable object in our view of Brittany. So far from being grieved about it, we will make it our principal light;—if it were a fruit-tree in spring-blossom, instead of a desolate mill, we could not make it whiter or brighter; we illumine our whole picture with it, and exult over its every rent as a special treasure and possession.

Not so Turner. *His* mill is still serviceable; but, for all that, he feels somewhat pensive about it. It is a poor property, and evidently the owner of it has enough to do to get his own bread out from between its stones. Moreover, there is a dim type of all melancholy human labour in it,—catching the free winds, and setting them to turn grindstones. It is poor work for the winds; better, indeed, than drowning sailors or tearing down forests, but not their proper work of marshalling the clouds, and bearing the wholesome rains to the place where they are ordered to fall, and fanning the flowers and leaves when they are faint with heat. Turning round a couple of stones, for the mere pulverization of human food, is not noble work for the winds. So, also, of all low labour to which one sets human souls. It is better than no labour; and, in a still higher degree, better than destructive wandering of imagination; but yet that grinding in the darkness, for

¹ [In one of his own copies, Ruskin here notes "Compare Deuteronomy xxiv. 6"—"No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge."]

mere food's sake, must be melancholy work enough for many a living creature. All men have felt it so; and this grinding at the mill, whether it be breeze or soul that is set to it, we cannot much rejoice in. Turner has no joy of his mill. It shall be dark against the sky, yet proud, and on the hill-top; not ashamed of its labour, and brightened from beyond, the golden clouds stooping over it, and the calm summer sun going down behind, far away, to his rest.

§ 12. Now in all this observe how the higher condition of art (for I suppose the reader will feel, with me, that Turner *is* the highest) depends upon largeness of sympathy. It is mainly because the one painter has communion of heart with his subject, and the other only casts his eyes upon it feelinglessly, that the work of the one is greater than that of the other. And, as we think farther over the matter, we shall see that this is indeed the eminent cause of the difference between the lower picturesque and the higher. For, in a certain sense, the lower picturesque ideal is eminently a *heartless* one; the lover of it seems to go forth into the world in a temper as merciless as its rocks. All other men feel some regret at the sight of disorder and ruin. He alone delights in both; it matters not of what. Fallen cottage—desolate villa—deserted village—blasted heath—mouldering castle—to him, so that they do but show jagged angles of stone and timber, all are sights equally joyful. Poverty, and darkness, and guilt, bring in their several contributions to his treasury of pleasant thoughts. The shattered window, opening into black and ghastly rents of wall, the foul rag or straw wisp stopping them, the dangerous roof, decrepit floor and stair, ragged misery, or wasting age of the inhabitants,—all these conduce, each in due measure, to the fulness of his satisfaction. What is it to him that the old man has passed his seventy years in helpless darkness and untaught waste of soul? The old man has at last accomplished his destiny, and filled the corner of a sketch, where something of an

unshapely nature was wanting. What is it to him that the people fester in that feverish misery in the low quarter of the town, by the river? Nay, it is much to him. What else were they made for? what could they have done better? The black timbers, and the green water, and the soaking wrecks of boats, and the torn remnants of clothes hung out to dry in the sun;—truly the fever-struck creatures, whose lives have been given for the production of these materials of effect, have not died in vain.*

§ 13. Yet, for all this, I do not say the lover of the lower picturesque is a monster in human form. He is by no means this, though truly we might at first think so, if we came across him unawares, and had not met with any such sort of person before. Generally speaking, he is

* I extract from my private diary a passage bearing somewhat on the matter in hand:¹—

“AMIENS, 11th May, 18—. I had a happy walk here this afternoon down among the branching currents of the Somme; it divides into five or six,—shallow, green, and not over-wholesome; some quite narrow and foul, running beneath clusters of fearful houses, reeling masses of rotten timber; and a few mere stumps of pollard willow sticking out of the banks of soft mud, only retained in shape of bank by being shored up with timbers; and boats like paper boats, nearly as thin at least, for the costermongers to paddle about in among the weeds, the water soaking through the lath bottoms, and floating the dead leaves from the vegetable-baskets with which they were loaded. Miserable little back yards, opening to the water, with steep stone steps down to it, and little platforms for the ducks; and separate duck staircases, composed of a sloping board with cross bits of wood leading to the ducks’ doors; and sometimes a flower-pot or two on them, or even a flower,—one group, of wallflowers and geraniums, curiously vivid, being seen against the darkness of a dyer’s back yard, who had been dyeing black all day, and all was black in his yard but the flowers, and they fiery and pure; the water by no means so, but still working its way steadily over the weeds, until it narrowed into a current strong enough to turn two or three mill-wheels, one working against the side of an old flamboyant Gothic church, whose richly traceried buttresses sloped into the filthy stream;—all exquisitely picturesque, and no less miserable. We delight in seeing the figures in these boats pushing them about the bits of blue water, in Prout’s drawings; but as I looked to-day at the unhealthy face and melancholy mien of the man in the boat pushing his load of peats along the ditch, and of the people, men as well as women, who sat spinning gloomily at the cottage doors, I could not help feeling how many suffering persons must pay for my picturesque subject and happy walk.”

¹ [The passage is in Ruskin’s diary of 1854, though it is somewhat altered for use here.]

kind-hearted, innocent of evil, but not broad in thought; somewhat selfish, and incapable of acute sympathy with others; gifted at the same time with strong artistic instincts and capacities for the enjoyment of varied form, and light, and shade, in pursuit of which enjoyment his life is passed, as the lives of other men are for the most part, in the pursuit of what *they* also like,—be it honour, or money, or indolent pleasure,—very irrespective of the poor people living by the stagnant canal.¹ And, in some sort, the hunter of the picturesque is better than many of these; inasmuch as he is simple-minded and capable of unostentatious and economical delights, which, if not very helpful to other people, are at all events not utterly injurious, even to the victims or subjects of his picturesque fancies; while to many others his work is entertaining and useful. And, more than all this, even that delight which he *seems* to take in misery is not altogether unvirtuous. Through all his enjoyment there runs a certain under-current of tragical passion,—a real vein of human sympathy;—it lies at the root of all those strange morbid hauntings of his; a sad excitement, such as other people feel at a tragedy, only less in degree, just enough, indeed, to give a deeper tone to his pleasure, and to make him choose for his subject the broken stones of a cottage wall rather than of a roadside bank, the picturesque beauty of form in each being supposed precisely the same: and, together with this slight tragical feeling, there is also a humble and romantic sympathy; a vague desire, in his own mind, to live in cottages rather than in palaces; a joy in humble things, a contentment and delight in make-shifts, a secret persuasion (in many respects a true one) that there is in these ruined cottages a happiness often quite as great as in kings' palaces, and a virtue and nearness to God infinitely greater and holier than can commonly be found in any other kind of place; so that the misery

¹ [The passage "And, in some sort, . . ." to the end of § 13 was printed as Appendix iii. to *Notes on Prout and Hunt.*]

in which he exults is not, as he sees it, misery, but nobleness,—“poor and sick in body, and beloved by the Gods.”* And thus, being nowise sure that these things can be mended at all, and very sure that he knows not how to mend them, and also that the strange pleasure he feels in them *must* have some good reason in the nature of things, he yields to his destiny, enjoys his dark canal without scruple, and mourns over every improvement in the town, and every movement made by its sanitary commissioners, as a miser would over a planned robbery of his chest; in all this being not only innocent, but even respectable and admirable, compared with the kind of person who has *no* pleasure in sights of this kind, but only in fair façades, trim gardens, and park palings, and who would thrust all poverty and misery out of his way, collecting it into back alleys, or sweeping it finally out of the world, so that the street might give wider play for his chariot-wheels, and the breeze less offence to his nobility.

§ 14. Therefore, even the love for the lower picturesque ought to be cultivated with care, wherever it exists: not with any special view to artistic, but to merely humane, education. It will never really or seriously interfere with practical benevolence; on the contrary, it will constantly lead, if associated with other benevolent principles, to a truer sympathy with the poor, and better understanding of the right ways of helping them; and, in the present stage of civilization, it is the most important element of character, not directly moral, which can be cultivated in youth; since it is mainly for the want of this feeling that we destroy so many ancient monuments, in order to erect “handsome” streets and shops instead, which might just as well have been erected elsewhere, and whose effect on

* Epitaph on Epictetus.¹

¹ [In the MS. Ruskin gives the epitaph in the Greek—swm anaphroV kai penihn IroV kai filoV aqanatoiV. The epitaph (of unknown authorship) is in the Greek Anthology, vii. 676. The first line is Doulos EpiphthoV genomhn kai sjm, etc. Iros is the beggar of the *Odyssey* (xviii. 25). Ruskin came across the epitaph in the *Idler*: see a letter reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, ii. 144, and in a later volume of this edition.]

our minds, so far as they have any, is to increase every disposition to frivolity, expense, and display.

These, and such other considerations not directly connected with our subject, I shall, perhaps, be able to press farther at the close of my work;¹ meantime, we return to the immediate question, of the distinction between the lower and higher picturesque, and the artists who pursue them.

§ 15. It is evident, from what has been advanced, that there is no definite bar of separation between the two; but that the dignity of the picturesque increases from lower to higher, in exact proportion to the sympathy of the artist with his subject. And in like manner, his own greatness depends (other things being equal) on the extent of this sympathy. If he rest content with narrow enjoyment of outward forms, and light sensation of luxurious tragedy, and so goes on multiplying his sketches of mere picturesque material, he necessarily settles down into the ordinary “clever” artist, very good and respectable, maintaining himself by his sketching and painting in an honourable way, as by any other daily business, and in due time passing away from the world without having, on the whole, done much for it. Such has been the necessary, not very lamentable, destiny of a large number of men in these days, whose gifts urged them to the practice of art, but who possessing no breadth of mind, nor having met with masters capable of concentrating what gifts they had towards nobler use, almost perforce remained in their small picturesque circle; getting more and more narrowed in range of sympathy as they fell more and more into the habit of contemplating the one particular class of subjects that pleased them, and recomposing them by rules of art.

I need not give instances of this class, we have very few painters who belong to any other; I only pause for a moment to *except* from it a man too often confounded with the draughtsmen of the lower picturesque;—a very

¹ [See in the next volume, pt. ix. ch. xi. §§ 15 to end, and ch. xii.]

great man, who, though partly by chance, and partly by choice, limited in range of subject, possessed for that subject the profoundest and noblest sympathy,—Samuel Prout. His renderings of the character of old buildings, such as that spire of Calais, are as perfect and as heartfelt as I can conceive possible;¹ nor do I suppose that any one else will ever hereafter equal them.* His early works show that he possessed a grasp of mind which could have entered into almost any kind of landscape subject; that it was only chance—I do not know if altogether evil chance—which fettered him to stones; and that in reality he is to be numbered among the true masters of the nobler picturesque.²

* I believe when a thing is once *well done* in this world, it never can be done *over again*.

¹ [See *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, No. 1.]

² [In Ruskin's diary of 1854 there is an earlier draft of portions of this chapter, and in the course of it a further illustration of Prout's picturesqueness:—

“In one of the numbers of Prout's Rhine, published long ago by Ackerman, there is a plate of ‘St. Ouen, Strassbourg.’ It represents two common German houses, with a few crossed timbers in the wall of one, beside some stagnant water, with a half-ruined church behind. I name it, in preference to any other of Prout's works, because it contains absolutely *no* point of graceful interest; there is no ornament about the houses, none but a few rude crosses and some arcades of the rudest pointed arches in the church. And yet there is some strange charm in it, which commended it to the artist, and recommends it still to thousands of minds besides. The place is ugly, poor, unhealthy. Doubtless those houses are not fit to be lived in; that water is not fit to wash in; the nets which are being hung beside the cottage door are too ragged to catch fish; the church is utterly unfit for church service, if not actually dangerous. And yet it has its charm in all that visible stagnancy and foulness of the pool, in the tottering timbers of the shed under which the women are washing; in their own rude figures and awkward arms and gestures, in every scar of bare brick on the plastered wall, in the various choking of windows with wooden bar, or shattered glass, or fluttering cloth, fading plant, or pure blackness of darkness; but chiefly of all in that mossy, wasted weariness of ungainly tower, pierced with gaunt scaffolding holes, and rent through and through by zigzag seams; naked to all the winds; bound together with old iron bars and cranks, gnawed away at its angles by frost and rain, stained with dark rust and moss, and silver grey of years; blocked up with moulding planks; in all ways unregarded, unrevered, unhelped in its old age,—in all this, and chiefly where it is saddest, there is some strange fascination which many a spectator would not exchange for all the order and freshness which the most zealous sanitary commissioners or pious churchwardens could give either to household or to church.

“How is this? Are we inhuman monsters? Is it the venom of that old delight in ugliness, decay, and death which has infected us? Was Samuel Prout (forgive me, kind and happy spirit, as I write)—was Samuel Prout

§ 16. Of these, also, the ranks rise in worthiness, according to their sympathy. In the noblest of them that sympathy seems quite unlimited; they enter with their whole heart into all nature; their love of grace and beauty keeps them from delighting too much in shattered stones and stunted trees, their kindness and compassion from dwelling by choice on any kind of misery, their perfect humility from avoiding simplicity of subject when it comes in their way, and their grasp of the highest thoughts from seeking a lower sublimity in cottage walls and penthouse roofs. And, whether it be home of English village thatched with straw and walled with clay, or of Italian city vaulted with gold and roofed with marble; whether it be stagnant stream under ragged willow, or glancing fountain between arcades of laurel, all to them will bring equal power of happiness, and equal field for thought.

§ 17. Turner is the only artist who hitherto has furnished the entire *type* of this perfection. The attainment of it in all respects is, of course, impossible to man; but the complete type of such a mind has once been seen in him, and, I think, existed also in Tintoret; though, as far as I know, Tintoret has not left any work which indicates sympathy with the *humour* of the world. Paul Veronese, on the other hand, had sympathy with its humour, but not with its deepest tragedy or horror. Rubens wants the feeling for grace and mystery. And so, as we pass through the list of great painters, we shall find in each of them some local narrowness. Now, I do not, of course, mean to say that Turner has accomplished all to which his sympathy prompted him; necessarily, the very breadth of effort involved, in some directions, manifest failure; but he has

a species of ghoul, feeding in waste places, and drawing all his delight from wretchedness, sacrilege and pain? Or was he right in loving these scenes; are they as they ought ever to be? Is it rather the churchwardens and sanitary commissioners who are the enemies of mankind, and ought all churches to be desecrated, and all cottages in disrepair?

“Neither the one supposition nor the other can be entertained. The fascination which we feel in this scene is all founded on true virtues, healthfulnesses, dignities in it; not upon its desolation.”]

shown, in casual incidents, and byways, a range of *feeling* which no other painter, as far as I know, can equal. He cannot, for instance, draw children at play as well as Mulready; but just glean out of his works the evidence of his sympathy with children;—look at the girl putting her bonnet on the dog in the foreground of the Richmond, Yorkshire; the “juvenile tricks” and “marine dabblers” of the *Liber Studiorum*; the boys scrambling after their kites in the woods of the Greta and Buckfastleigh; and the notable and most pathetic drawing of the Kirkby Lonsdale churchyard, with the schoolboys making a fortress of their larger books on the tombstone, to bombard with the more projectile volumes; and passing from these to the intense horror and pathos of the Rizpah, consider for yourself whether there was ever any other painter who could strike such an octave.¹ Whether there has been or not, in other walks of art, this power of sympathy is unquestionably in landscape unrivalled; and it will be one of our pleasantest future tasks to analyze in his various drawings the character it always gives; a character, indeed, more or less marked in all good work whatever, but to which, being pre-eminent in him, I shall always hereafter give the name of the “*Turnerian Picturesque*.”

¹ [The “Richmond” was in Ruskin’s collection; see *Notes on his drawings by Turner*, No. 27. The drawings for “Juvenile Tricks” and the “Marine Dabblers” are Nos. 511 and 509 in the National Gallery. The boy with the kite “in the woods of the Greta” is in the drawing of “Brignall Church” (see below, p. 381; “Buckfastleigh Abbey” is in vol. i. of *England and Wales*. “Kirkby Lonsdale Churchyard” is in Whitaker’s *Richmondshire*. Ruskin refers to the drawing again, below, p. 381; and more fully in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 41. “Rizpah” is No. 464 (oils) in the National Gallery collection (now at Liverpool). The drawing for the *Liber* plate is No. 864: see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. ix. § 21, ch. xi. § 29.]

CHAPTER II

OF TURNERIAN TOPOGRAPHY

§ 1. WE saw, in the course of the last chapter, with what kind of feeling an artist ought to regard the character of every object he undertakes to paint. The next question is, what objects he *ought* to undertake to paint; how far he should be influenced by his feelings in the choice of subjects; and how far he should permit himself to alter, or in the usual art language, improve, nature. For it has already been stated (Vol. III. Chap. III. § 21),¹ that all great art must be inventive; that is to say, its subject must be produced by the imagination. If so, then great landscape art cannot be a mere copy of any given scene; and we have now to inquire what else than this it may be.

§ 2. If the reader will glance over that twenty-first, and the following three paragraphs of the same chapter, he will see that we there divided art generally into “historical” and “poetical,” or the art of relating facts simply, and facts imaginatively. Now with respect to landscape, the historical art is simply topography, and the imaginative art is what I have in the heading of the present chapter called Turnerian topography, and must in the course of it endeavour to explain.

Observe, however, at the outset, that, touching the duty or fitness of altering nature at all, the quarrels which have so woefully divided the world of art are caused only by want of understanding this simplest of all canons,—“It is always wrong to draw what you don’t see.” This law is

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 63.]

inviolable. But then, some people see only things that exist, and others see things that do not exist, or do not exist apparently. And if they really *see* these non-apparent things, they are quite right to draw them; the only harm is when people try to draw non-apparent things, who *don't* see them, but think they can calculate or compose into existence what is to them for evermore invisible. If some people really see angels where others see only empty space, let them paint the angels; only let not anybody else think *he* can paint an angel too, on any calculated principles of the angelic.

§ 3. If, therefore, when we go to a place, we see nothing else than is there, we are to paint nothing else, and to remain pure topographical or historical landscape painters. If, going to the place, we see something quite different from what is there, then we are to paint that—nay, we *must* paint that, whether we will or not; it being, for us, the only reality we can get at. But let us beware of pretending to see this unreality if we do not.

The simple observance of this rule would put an end to nearly all disputes, and keep a large number of men in healthy work who now totally waste their lives; so that the most important question that an artist can possibly have to determine for himself, is whether he has invention or not. And this he can ascertain with ease. If visions of unreal things present themselves to him with or without his own will, praying to be painted, quite ungovernable in their coming or going,—neither to be summoned if they do not choose to come, nor banished if they do,—he has invention. If, on the contrary, he only sees the commonly visible facts; and, should he not like them, and want to alter them, finds that he must think of a *rule* whereby to do so, he has no invention. All the rules in the world will do him no good; and if he tries to draw anything else than those materially visible facts, he will pass his whole life in uselessness, and produce nothing but scientific absurdities.

§ 4. Let him take his part at once, boldly, and be content. Pure history and pure topography are most precious things; in many cases more useful to the human race than high imaginative work; and assuredly it is intended that a large majority of all who are employed in art should never aim at anything higher. It is *only* vanity, never love, nor any other noble feeling, which prompts men to desert their allegiance to the simple truth, in vain pursuit of the imaginative truth which has been appointed to be for evermore sealed to them.

Nor let it be supposed that artists who possess minor degrees of imaginative gift need be embarrassed by the doubtful sense of their own powers. In general, when the imagination is at all noble, it is irresistible, and therefore those who can at all resist it *ought* to resist it. Be a plain topographer if you possibly can; if Nature meant you to be anything else, she will force you to it; but never try to be a prophet; go on quietly with your hard campwork, and the spirit will come to you in the camp, as it did to Eldad and Medad,¹ if you are appointed to have it; but try above all things to be quickly perceptive of the noble spirit in others, and to discern in an instant between its true utterance and the diseased mimicries of it. In a general way, remember it is a far better thing to find out other great men, than to become one yourself: for you can but become *one* at best, but you may bring others to light in numbers.

§ 5. We have, therefore, to inquire what kind of changes these are, which must be wrought by the imaginative painter on landscape, and by whom they have been thus nobly wrought. First, for the better comfort of the non-imaginative painter, be it observed, that it is not possible to find a landscape, which if painted precisely as it is, will not make an impressive picture. No one knows, till he has tried, what strange beauty and subtle composition is

¹ [Numbers xi. 26, 27.]

prepared to his hand by Nature, wherever she is left to herself; and what deep feeling may be found in many of the most homely scenes, even where man has interfered with those wild ways of hers. But, beyond this, let him note that though historical topography forbids *alteration*, it neither forbids sentiment nor choice. So far from doing this, the proper choice of subject* is an absolute duty to the topographical painter: he should first take care that it is a subject intensely pleasing to himself, else he will never paint it well; and then, also, that it shall be one in some sort pleasurable to the general public, else it is not worth painting at all; and lastly, take care that it be instructive, as well as pleasurable to the public, else it is not worth painting with care. I should particularly insist at present on this careful choice of subject, because the Pre-Raphaelites, taken as a body, have been culpably negligent in this respect, not in humble respect to Nature, but in morbid indulgence of their own impressions.¹ They happen to find their fancies caught by a bit of an oak hedge, or the weeds at the side of a duck-pond, because, perhaps, they remind them of a stanza of Tennyson; and forthwith they sit down to sacrifice the most consummate skill, two or three months of the best summer time available for out-door work (equivalent to some seventieth or sixtieth of all their lives), and nearly all their credit with the public, to this duck-pond delineation. Now it is indeed quite right that they should see much to be loved in the hedge, nor less in the ditch; but it is utterly and inexcusably wrong that they should neglect the nobler scenery which is full of

* Observe what was said in the second volume² respecting the spirit of choice as evil, refers only to young students, and to that choice which assumes that any common subject is not good enough, not interesting enough, to be studied. But, though all is good for study, and all is beautiful, some is better than the rest for the help and pleasure of others; and this it is our duty always to choose, if we have opportunity, being quite happy with what is within our reach, if we have not.

¹ [On this subject, compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. iii. § 5.]

² [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 60, and compare Vol. III. p. 624.]

majestic interest, or enchanted by historical association; so that, as things go at present, we have all the commonalty, that may be seen whenever we choose, painted properly: but all of lovely and wonderful, which we cannot see but at rare intervals, painted vilely: the castles of the Rhine and Rhone made vignettes of for the annuals; and the nettles and mushrooms, which were prepared by nature eminently for nettle porridge and fish sauce, immortalized by art as reverently as if we were Egyptians and they deities.

§ 6. Generally speaking, therefore, the duty of every painter at present, who has not much invention, is to take subjects of which the portraiture will be precious in after times:¹ views of our abbeyes and cathedrals; distant views of cities, if possible chosen from some spot in itself notable by association; perfect studies of the battle-fields of Europe, of all houses of celebrated men, and places they loved, and, of course, of the most lovely natural scenery. And, in doing all this, it should be understood, primarily, whether the picture is topographical or not: if topographical, then not a line is to be altered, not a stick nor stone removed, not a colour deepened, not a form improved; the picture is to be, as far as possible, the reflection of the place in a mirror; and the artist to consider himself only as a sensitive and skilful reflector, taking care that no false impression is conveyed by any error on his part which he might have avoided; so that it may be for ever afterwards in the power of all men to lean on his work with absolute trust, and to say: "So it was:—on such a day of June or July of such a year, such a place looked like this: those weeds were growing there, so tall and no taller; those stones were lying there, so many and no more; that tower so rose against the sky, and that shadow so slept upon the street."

§ 7. Nor let it be supposed that the doing of this would ever become mechanical, or be found too easy, or exclude

¹ [Compare *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 13, Vol. XII. p. 349.]

sentiment. As for its being easy, those only think so who never tried it; composition being, in fact, infinitely easier to a man who *can* compose, than imitation of this high kind to even the most able imitator; nor would it exclude sentiment, for, however sincerely we may try to paint all we see, this *cannot*, as often aforesaid,¹ be ever done; all that is possible is a certain selection, and more or less wilful assertion, of one fact in preference to another; which selection ought always to be made under the influence of sentiment. Nor will such topography involve an entire submission to ugly accidents interfering with the impressiveness of the scene. I hope, as art is better understood, that our painters will get into the habit of accompanying all their works with a written statement of their own reasons for painting them, and the circumstances under which they were done; and if in this written document they state the omissions they have made, they may make as many as they think proper. For instance, it is not possible now to obtain a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva without including the “Hôtel Biron”—an establishment looking like a large cotton factory—just above the Castle of Chillon. This building ought always to be omitted, and the reason for the omission stated. So the beauty of the whole town of Lucerne, as seen from the lake, is destroyed by the large new hotel for the English,² which ought, in like manner, to be ignored, and the houses behind it drawn as if it were transparent.

§ 8. But if a painter has inventive power he is to treat his subject in a totally different way; giving not the actual facts of it, but the impression it made on his mind.

And now, once for all, let it be clearly understood, that an “impression on the mind” does not mean a piece of manufacture. The way in which most artists proceed to “invent,” as they call it, a picture, is this: they choose their subject, for the most part well, with a sufficient quantity of towers, mountains, ruined cottages, and other

¹ [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. x. § 3 (Vol. V. p. 172).]

² [See also below, ch. xx. § 41, p. 456 *n.*]

materials, to be generally interesting; then they fix on some object for a principal light; behind the they put a dark cloud, or, in front of it, a dark piece of foreground; then they repeat this light somewhere else in a less degree, and connect the two lights together by some intermediate ones. If they find any part of the foreground uninteresting, they put a group of figures into it; if any part of the distance, they put something there from some other sketch; and proceed to inferior detail in the same manner, taking care always to put white stones near black ones, and purple colours near yellow ones, and angular forms near round ones;—all this being, as simply a matter of recipe and practice as cookery; like that, not by any means a thing easily done well, but still having no reference whatever to “impressions on the mind.”

§ 9. But the artist who has real invention sets to work in a totally different way. First, he receives a true impression from the place itself, and takes care to keep hold of that as his chief good; indeed, he needs no care in the matter, for the distinction of his mind from that of others consists in his instantly receiving such sensations strongly, and being unable to lose them; and then he sets himself as far as possible to reproduce that impression on the mind of the spectator of his picture.

Now, observe, this impression on the mind never results from the mere piece of scenery which can be included within the limits of the picture. It depends on the temper into which the mind has been brought, both by all the landscape round, and by what has been seen previously in the course of the day; so that no particular spot upon which the painter’s glance may at any moment fall, is then to him what, if seen by itself, it will be to the spectator far away; nor is it what it would be, even to that spectator, if he had come to the reality through the steps which Nature has appointed to be the preparation for it, instead of seeing it isolated on an exhibition wall. For instance, on the descent of the St. Gothard, towards, Italy, just

after passing through the narrow gorge above Faido, the road emerges into a little breadth of valley, which is entirely filled by fallen stones and débris, partly disgorged by the Ticino as it leaps out of the narrower chasm, and partly brought down by winter avalanches from a loose and decomposing mass of mountain on the left. Beyond this first promontory is seen a considerably higher range, but not an imposing one, which rises above the village of Faido. The etching,¹ Plate 20, is a topographical outline of the scene, with the actual blocks of rock which happened to be lying in the bed of the Ticino at the spot from which I chose to draw it. The masses of loose débris (which, for any permanent purpose, I had no need to draw, as their arrangement changes at every flood) I have not drawn, but only those features of the landscape which happen to be of some continual importance. Of which note, first, that the little three-windowed building on the left is the remnant of a gallery built to protect the road which once went on that side, from the avalanches and stones that come down the “couloir”* in the rock above. It is only a ruin, the greater part having been by said avalanches swept away, and the old road, of which a remnant is also seen on the extreme left, abandoned and carried now along the hill side on the right, partly sustained on rough stone arches, and winding down, as seen in the sketch, to a weak wooden bridge, which enables it to recover its old track past the gallery. It seems formerly (but since the destruction of the gallery) to have gone about a mile farther down the river on the right bank, and then to have been carried across by a longer wooden bridge, of which only the two butments are seen in the sketch, the rest having

* “Couloir” is a good untranslatable Savoyard word, for a place down which stones and water fall in storms; it is perhaps deserving of naturalization.

¹ [For another reference to the etching see below, p. 354.]



20. Pass of Faido. (1st Simple Topography.)



21. Pass of Faido. (2nd Turnerian Topography)

been swept away by the Ticino, and the new bridge erected near the spectator.¹

§ 10. There is nothing in this scene, taken by itself, particularly interesting or impressive. The mountains are not elevated, nor particularly fine in form, and the heaps of stones which encumber the Ticino present nothing notable to the ordinary eye. But, in reality, the place is approached through one of the narrowest and most sublime ravines in the Alps, and after the traveller during the early part of the day has been familiarized with the aspect of the highest peaks of the Mont St. Gothard. Hence it speaks quite another language to him from that in which it would address itself to an unprepared spectator: the confused stones, which by themselves would be almost without any claim upon his thoughts, become exponents of the fury of the river by which he has journeyed all day long; the defile beyond, not in itself narrow or terrible, is regarded nevertheless with awe, because it is imagined to resemble the gorge that had just been traversed above; and, although no very elevated mountains immediately overhang it, the scene is felt to belong to, and arise in its essential characters out of, the strength of those mightier mountains in the unseen north.

§ 11. Any topographical delineation of the facts, therefore, must be wholly incapable of arousing in the mind of the beholder those sensations which would be caused by the facts themselves, seen in their natural relations to others. And the aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts, and to reach a representation which, though it may be totally useless to engineers or geographers, and, when tried by rule and measure, totally unlike the place, shall yet be capable of producing on the far-away beholder's mind precisely the impression which the reality would have produced, and

¹ [Ruskin made his studies here in 1845: see the Introduction to Vol. V. p. xvi.]

putting his heart into the same state in which it would have been, had he verily descended into the valley from the gorges of Airolo.

§ 12. Now observe; if in his attempt to do this the artist does not understand the sacredness of the truth of *Impression*, and supposes that, once quitting hold of his first thought, he may by Philosophy compose something prettier than he saw and mightier than he felt, it is all over with him. Every such attempt at composition will be utterly abortive, and end in something that is neither true nor fanciful; something geographically useless, and intellectually absurd.

But if, holding fast his first thought, he finds other ideas insensibly gathering to it, and, whether he will or not, modifying it into something which is not so much the image of the place itself, as the spirit of the place, let him yield to such fancies, and follow them wherever they lead. For, though error on this side is very rare among us in these days, it *is* possible to check these finer thoughts by mathematical accuracies, so as materially to impair the imaginative faculty. I shall be able to explain this better after we have traced the actual operation of Turner's mind on the scene under discussion.

§ 13. Turner was always from his youth fond of stones (we shall see presently why).¹ Whether large or small, loose or embedded, hewn into cubes or worn into boulders, he loved them as much as William Hunt loves pineapples and plums. So that this great litter of fallen stones, which to any one else would have been simply disagreeable, was to Turner much the same as if the whole valley had been filled with plums and pineapples, and delighted him exceedingly, much more than even the gorge of Dazio Grande just above. But that gorge had its effect upon him also, and was still not well out of his head when the diligence stopped at the bottom of the hill, just at that turn of the

¹ [See below, ch. xviii. § 12, p. 374.]

road on the right of the bridge; which favourable opportunity Turner seized to make what he called a “memorandum” of the place, composed of a few pencil scratches on a bit of thin paper, that would roll up with others of the sort and go into his pocket afterwards. These pencil scratches he put a few blots of colour upon (I suppose at Bellinzona the same evening, certainly *not* upon the spot), and showed me this blotted sketch when he came home. I asked him to make me a drawing of it, which he did, and casually told me afterwards (a rare thing for him to do) that he liked the drawing he had made. Of this drawing I have etched a reduced outline in Plate 21.¹

§ 14. In which, primarily, observe that the whole place is altered in scale, and brought up to the general majesty of the higher forms of the Alps. It will be seen that, in my topographical sketch, there are a few trees rooted in the rock on this side of the gallery, showing, by comparison, that it is not above four or five hundred feet high. These trees Turner cuts away, and gives the rock a height of about a thousand feet, so as to imply more power and danger in the avalanche coming down the couloir.

Next, he raises, in a still greater degree, all the mountains beyond, putting three or four ranges instead of one, but uniting them into a single massy bank at their base, which he makes overhang the valley, and thus reduces it nearly to such a chasm as that which he had just passed through above, so as to unite the expression of this ravine with that of the stony valley. The few trees, in the hollow of the glen, he feels to be contrary in spirit to the stones, and fells them, as he did the others; so also he feels the

¹ [Turner's original sketch is now in the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford (on loan from the National Gallery); it is described in Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Turner Sketches in the National Gallery*, 1857 (No. 40). The drawing made from the sketch was among those which were most treasured in Ruskin's collection (see the Epilogue to his *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*). “That litter of stones which I endeavoured to represent,” was the artist's description of it to Ruskin (see vol. iii. ch. vii. § 13, Vol. V., p. 122, and compare Vol. XII. p. 500). In his *Elements of Drawing*, § 147, Ruskin recommends the copying of Plate 21 as an exercise in “the linear expression of ground surface.” For further particulars, see above, Introduction, pp. xxv.–xxvi.]

bridge in the foreground, by its slenderness, to contradict the aspect of violence in the torrent; he thinks the torrent and avalanches should have it all their own way hereabouts; so he strikes down the nearer bridge, and restores the one farther off, where the force of the stream may be supposed less. Next, the bit of road on the right, above the bank, is not built on a wall, nor on arches high enough to give the idea of an Alpine road in general; so he makes the arches taller, and the bank steeper, introducing, as we shall see presently,¹ a reminiscence from the upper part of the pass.

§ 15. I say, he “*thinks*” this, and “*introduces*” that. But, strictly speaking, he does not think at all. If he thought, he would instantly go wrong; it is only the clumsy and uninventive artist who thinks. All these changes come into his head involuntarily; an entirely imperative dream, crying, “Thus it must be,” has taken possession of him; he can see, and do, no otherwise than as the dream directs.

This is especially to be remembered with respect to the next incident—the introduction of figures. Most persons to whom I have shown the drawing, and who feel its general character, regret that there is any living thing in it; they say it destroys the majesty of its desolation. But the dream said not so to Turner. The dream insisted particularly upon the great fact of its having come by the road. The torrent was wild, the storms were wonderful; but the most wonderful thing of all was how we ourselves, the dream and I, ever got here. By our feet we could not—by the clouds we could not—by any ivory gates² we could not—in no other wise could we have come than by the coach road. One of the great elements of sensation, all the day long, has been that extraordinary road, and its goings on, and gettings about; here, under avalanches of stones, and among insanities of torrents, and overhangings of precipices, much tormented and driven to all manner of makeshifts and coils to this side and the other, still the marvellous road persists in going on,

¹ [See below, p. 40.]

² [Through which come false visions: see Homer, *Od.* xix. 562.]

and that so smoothly and safely, that it is not merely great diligences, going in a caravannish manner, with whole teams of horses, that can traverse it, but little postchaises with small postboys, and a pair of ponies. And the dream declared that the full essence and soul of the scene, and consummation of all the wonderfulness of the torrents and Alps, lay in a postchaise with small ponies and post-boy, which accordingly it insisted upon Turner's inserting, whether he liked it or not, at the turn of the road.

§ 16. Now, it will be observed by any one familiar with ordinary principles of arrangement of form (on which principles I shall insist at length in another place), that while the dream introduces these changes bearing on the expression of the scene, it is also introducing other changes, which appear to be made more or less in compliance with received rules of composition,* rendering the masses broader, the

* I have just said, § 12, that if, *quitting hold* of this original impression, the artist tries to compose something prettier than he saw, it is all over with him; but, retaining the first impression, he will, nevertheless, if he has invention, instinctively modify many lines and parts of it—possibly all parts of it—for the better; sometimes making them individually more pictorial, sometimes preventing them from interfering with each other's beauty. For almost all natural landscapes are redundant treasures of more or less confused beauty, out of which the human instinct of invention can by just choice arrange, not a better treasure, but one more fitted to human sight and emotion,—infinitely narrower, infinitely less lovely in detail, but having this great virtue, that there shall be absolutely nothing which does not contribute to the effect of the whole; whereas in the natural landscape there is a redundancy which impresses only *as* redundance, and often an occurrence of marring features; not of ugliness only, but of ugliness in *the wrong place*. Ugliness has its proper virtue and use; but ugliness occurring at the wrong time (as if the negro servant, instead of standing behind the king, in Tintoret's picture,¹ were to thrust his head in front of the noble features of his master) is justly to be disliked and withdrawn.

"Why this," exclaims the idealist, "is what *I* have always been saying, and *you* have always been denying." No; I never denied this. But I denied that painters in general, when they spoke of improving Nature, knew what Nature was. Observe: before they dare so much as to *dream* of arranging her, they must be able to paint her as she is: nor will the

¹ ["The Adoration of the Magi" in the Scuola di San Rocco: see Ruskin's study of the figures, opposite p. 288 in Vol. IV. The negro servant has already been mentioned in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vii. § 2 (Vol. V. p. 112).]

lines more continuous, and the curves more graceful. But the curious part of the business is, that these changes seem not so much to be wrought by imagining an entirely new condition of any feature, as by *remembering* something which will fit better in that place. For instance, Turner felt the bank on the right ought to be made more solid and rocky, in order to suggest firmer resistance to the stream, and he turns it, as will be seen by comparing the etchings, into a kind of rock buttress to the wall,

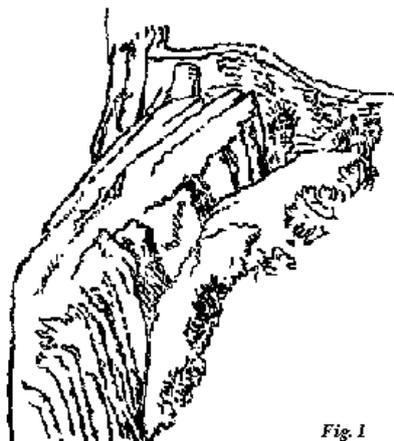


Fig. 1

instead of a mere bank. Now the buttress into which he turns it is very nearly a facsimile of one which he had drawn on that very St. Gothard road, far above, at the Devil's Bridge, at least thirty years before, and which he had himself etched and engraved for the *Liber Studiorum*, although the plate was never published.¹ Fig. 1 is a copy of the bit of the etching in question. Note how the wall

winds over it, and observe especially the peculiar depression in the middle of its surface, and compare it in those parts generally with the features introduced in the later composition. Of course, this might be set down as a mere chance coincidence, but for the frequency of the cases in which Turner can be shown to have done the same thing,

most skilful arrangement ever atone for the slightest wilful failure in truth of representation: and I am continually declaiming against arrangement, not because arrangement is wrong, but because our present painters have for the most part nothing to arrange. They cannot so much as paint a weed or a post accurately; and yet they pretend to improve the forests and mountains.

¹ [This plate is the "Swiss Bridge, Mont St. Gothard" (called sometimes "Via Mala," as in *Elements of Drawing*, § 109 *n.*). An engraver's proof was in Ruskin's collection: see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 73.]

and to have introduced, after a lapse of many years, memories of something which, however apparently small or unimportant, had struck him in his earlier studies. These instances, when I can detect them, I shall point out as I go on engraving his works;¹ and I think they are numerous enough to induce a doubt whether Turner's composition was not universally an arrangement of remembrances, summoned just as they were wanted, and set each in its fittest place. It is this very character which appears to me to mark it as so distinctly an act of dream-vision; for in a dream there is just this kind of confused remembrance of the forms of things which we have seen long ago, associated by new and strange laws. That common dreams are grotesque and disorderly, and Turner's dream natural and orderly, does not, to my thinking, involve any necessary difference in the real species of act of mind. I think I shall be able to show in the course of the following pages, or elsewhere, that whenever Turner really tried to *compose*, and made modifications of his subjects on principle, he did wrong, and spoiled them;² and that he only did right in a kind of passive obedience to his first vision, that vision being composed primarily of the strong memory of the place itself which he had to draw; and secondarily, of memories of other places (whether recognized as such by himself or not I cannot tell), associated, in a harmonious and helpful way, with the new central thought.

§ 17. The kind of mental chemistry by which the dream summons and associates its materials, I have already endeavoured, not to explain, for it is utterly inexplicable, but to illustrate, by a well-ascertained though equally inexplicable fact in common chemistry. That illustration (§ 8 of chapter on Imagination Associative, Vol. II.³) I see more and more ground to think correct. How far I could show

¹ [Compare the instances already given in *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), Vol. XII. pp. 379–384; others are pointed out in *The Harbours of England*, §§ 34, 35, and letterpress to the plates of Ramsgate and Scarborough.]

² [See, for instance, *Harbours of England*, letterpress to the plates on Dover and Falmouth.]

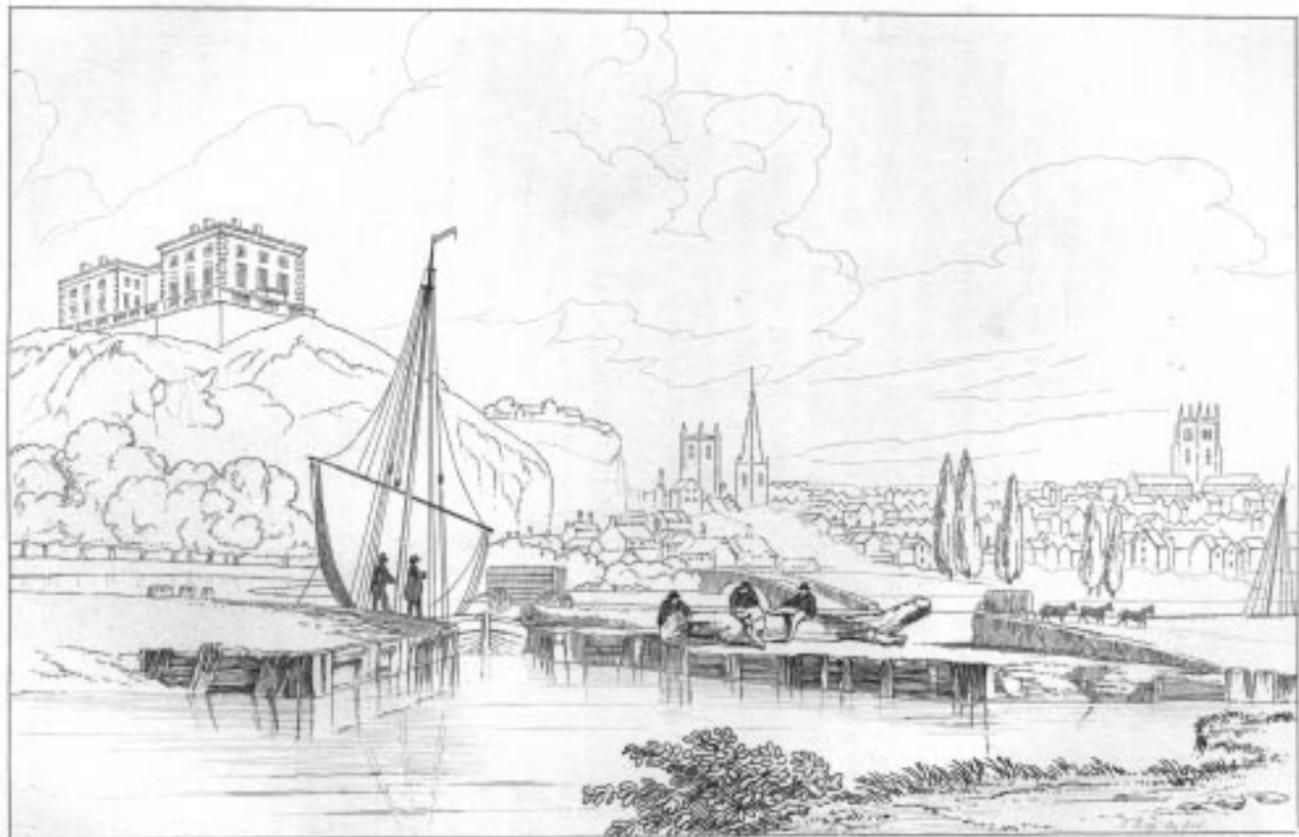
³ [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 234.]

that it held with all great inventors, I know not, but with all those whom I have carefully studied (Dante, Scott,¹ Turner, and Tintoret) it seems to me to hold absolutely; their imagination consisting, not in a voluntary production of new images, but an involuntary remembrance, exactly at the right moment, of something they had actually seen.

Imagine all that any of these men had seen or heard in the whole course of their lives, laid up accurately in their memories as in vast storehouses, extending, with the poets, even to the slightest intonations of syllables heard in the beginning of their lives, and with the painters, down to minute folds of drapery, and shapes of leaves or stones; and over all this unindexed and immeasurable mass of treasure, the imagination brooding and wandering, but dream-gifted, so as to summon at any moment exactly such groups of ideas as shall justly fit each other: this I conceive to be the real nature of the imaginative mind, and this, I believe, it would be oftener explained to us as being, by the men themselves who possess it, but that they have no idea what the state of other persons' minds is in comparison; they suppose every one remembers all that he has seen in the same way, and do not understand how it happens that they alone can produce good drawings or great thoughts.

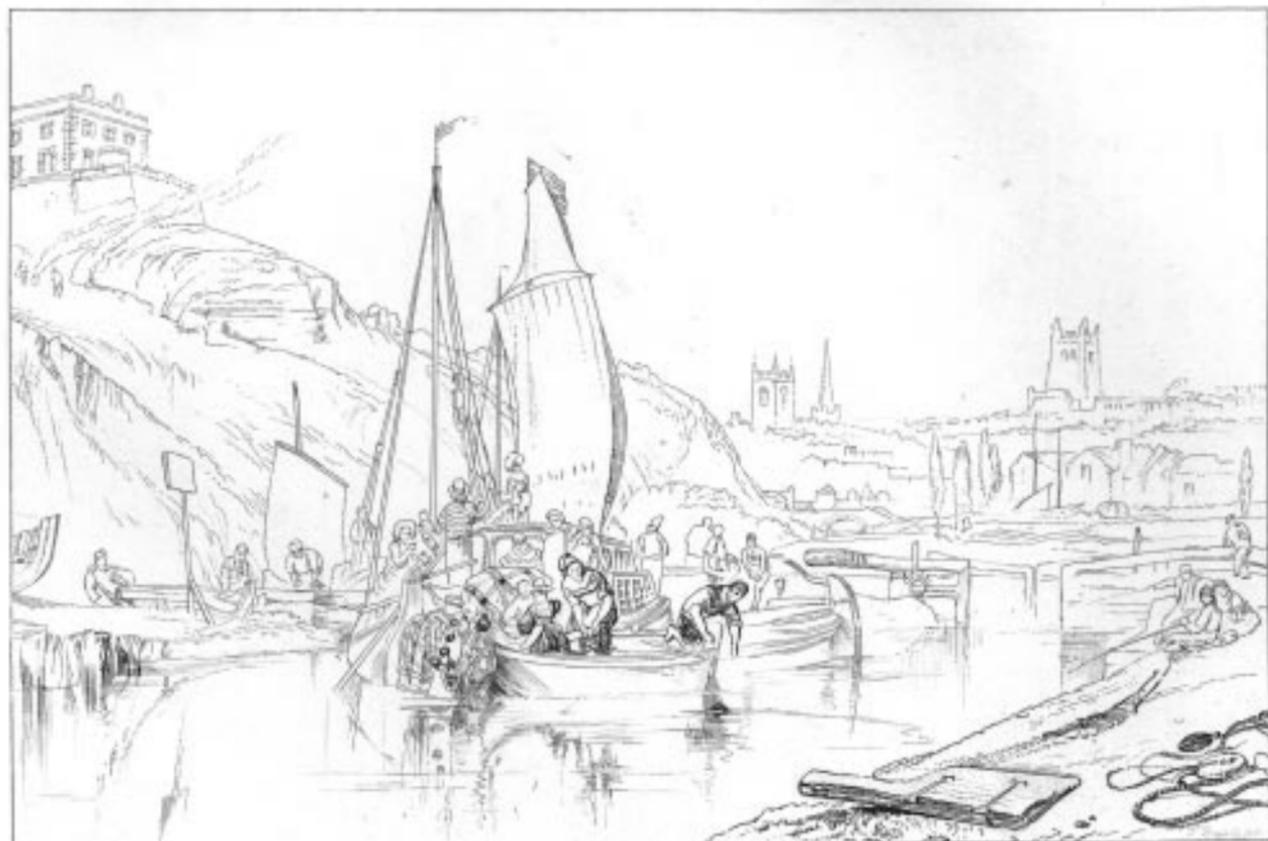
§ 18. Whether this be the case with all inventors or not, it was assuredly the case with Turner, to such an extent that he seems never either to have lost, or cared to disturb, the impression made upon him by any scene,—even in his earliest youth. He never seems to have gone back to a place to look at it again, but, as he gained power, to have painted and repainted it as first seen, associating with it certain new thoughts or new knowledge, but never shaking the central pillar of the old image. Several instances of

¹ [For Scott's unconsciousness in composing, see the Introductory Letter to *The Fortunes of Nigel*: "I think there is a dæmon who sits himself on the feather of my pen," etc. Compare with the text here ch. vii. § 7 in the preceding volume, pp. 115–116.]



Turner

T. Boys



23. Turner's Latest "Nottingham"

this have been already given in my pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism;¹ others will be noted in the course of our investigation of his works; one, merely for the sake of illustration, I will give here.

§ 19. Plate 22 is an outline of a drawing of the town and castle of Nottingham, made by Turner for Walker's *Itinerant*,² and engraved in that work. The engraving (from which this outline was made, as I could not discover the drawing itself) was published on the 28th of February, 1795, a period at which Turner was still working in a very childish way; and the whole design of this plate is curiously stiff and commonplace. Note, especially, the two formal little figures under the sail.

In the year 1833 an engraving of Nottingham, from a drawing by Turner, was published by Moon, Boys, and Graves, in the England and Wales series.³ Turner certainly made none of the drawings for that series long before they were wanted; and if, therefore, we suppose the drawing to have been made so much as three years before the publication of the plate, it will be setting the date of it as far back as is in the slightest degree probable. We may assume, therefore (and the conclusion is sufficiently established, also, by the style of the execution), that there was an interval of at least thirty-five years between the making of those two drawings,—thirty-five years, in the course of which Turner had become, from an unpractised and feeble draughtsman, the most accomplished artist of his age, and had entirely changed his methods of work and his habits of feeling.

§ 20. On the page opposite to the etching of the first, I have given an etching of the last Nottingham. The one

¹ [See Vol. XII. pp. 379–384.]

² [Fourteen drawings by Turner are engraved in this work,—*The Itinerant; a Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain*, printed for John Walker, engraver, 1799. The same plates appeared in *The Copper-Plate Magazine; or Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Prints, consisting of Sublime and Interesting Views in Great Britain and Ireland*, issued by the same engraver; "Nottingham" being Plate 75 in vol. ii. (No. 38).]

³ [This drawing was at one time in Ruskin's collection: see Index in Vol. XIII. It is now in the collection of Sir E. H. Scott, Bart.]

will be found to be merely the amplification and adornment of the other. *Every incident* is preserved; even the men employed about the log of wood are there, only now removed far away (beyond the lock on the right, between it and the town), and so lost in mist that, though made out by colour in the drawing, they cannot be made clear in the outline etching. The canal bridge and even the stiff mast are both retained; only another boat is added, and the sail dropped upon the higher mast is hoisted on the lower one; and the castle, to get rid of its formality, is moved a little to the left, so as to hide one side. But, evidently, no new sketch has been made. The painter has returned affectionately to his boyish impression, and worked it out with his manly power.

§ 21. How far this manly power itself acted merely in the accumulation of memories, remains, as I said, a question undetermined; but at all events, Turner's mind is not more, in my estimation, distinguished above others by its demonstrably arranging and ruling faculties, than by its demonstrably retentive and submissive faculties; and the longer I investigate it, the more this tenderness of perception and grasp of memory seem to me the root of its greatness. So that I am more and more convinced of what I had to state¹ respecting the imagination, now many years ago, viz., that its true force lies in its marvellous insight and foresight,—that it is, instead of a false and deceptive faculty, exactly the most accurate and truth-telling faculty which the human mind possesses; and all the more truth-telling, because in *its* work, the vanity and individualism of the man himself are crushed, and he becomes a mere instrument or mirror, used by a higher power for the reflection to others of a truth which no effort of his could ever have ascertained; so that all mathematical, and arithmetical, and generally scientific truth, is, in comparison, truth of the husk and surface, hard and shallow; and only

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. sec. ii. ch. iii., and especially §§ 29, 30 (Vol. IV. pp. 284–286).]

the imaginative truth is precious. Hence, whenever we want to know what are the chief facts of any case, it is better not to go to political economists, nor to mathematicians, but to the great poets; for I find they always see more of the matter than any one else; and in like manner those who want to know the real facts of the world's outside aspect, will find that they cannot trust maps, nor charts, nor any manner of mensuration; the most important facts being always quite immeasurable, and that, (with only some occasional and trifling inconvenience, if they form too definite anticipations as to the position of a bridge here, or a road there) the Turnerian topography is the only one to be trusted.

§ 22. One or two important corollaries may be drawn from these principles, respecting the kind of fidelity which is to be exacted from men who have no imaginative power. It has been stated, over and over again, that it is not *possible* to draw the whole of nature, as in a mirror. Certain omissions must be made, and certain conventionalities admitted, in all art. Now it ought to be the instinctive affection of each painter which guides him to the omissions he is to make, or signs he is to use; and his choice of this or the other fact for representation, his insistence upon this or the other character in his subject, as that which to him is impressive, constitutes, when it is earnest and simple, part of the value of his work. This is the only inspiration he is capable of, but it is a kind of inspiration still; and although he may not have the memory or the associative power which would enable him to compose a subject in the Turnerian manner, he may have certain *affections*, perfectly expressible in his work, and of which he ought to allow the influence to be seen.*

* For instance, even in my topographical etching, Plate 20, I have given only a few lines out of the thousands which existed in the scene. Those lines are what I considered the leading ones. Another person might have thought other lines the leading ones, and his representation might be equally true as far as it went; but which of our representations went farthest would depend on our relative degrees of knowledge and feeling about hills.

§ 23. And this may especially be permitted in rapid sketch of effects or scenes which either in their speedy passing away, or for want of time, it is impossible to draw faithfully. Generally, if leisure permit, the detailed drawing of the object will be grander than any "impression on the mind" of an unimaginative person; but if leisure do not permit, a rapid sketch, marking forcibly the points that strike him, may often have considerable interest in its way. The other day I sketched the towers of the Swiss Fribourg hastily from the Hôtel de Zähringen.¹ It was a misty morning with broken sunshine, and the towers were seen by flickering light through broken clouds,—dark blue mist filling the hollow of the valley behind them. I have engraved the sketch on the opposite page, adding a few details, and exaggerating the exaggerations; for in drawing from nature, even at speed, I am not in the habit of exaggerating enough to illustrate what I mean. The next day, on a clear and calm forenoon, I daguerreotyped the towers, with the result given on the next Plate² (25, Fig. 2); and this unexaggerated statement, with its details properly painted, would not only be the more right, but infinitely the grander of the two. But the first sketch nevertheless conveys, in some respects, a truer idea of Fribourg than the other, and has, therefore, a certain use. For instance, the wall going up behind the main tower is seen in my drawing to bend very distinctly, following the different slopes of the hill. In the daguerreotype this bend is hardly perceptible. And yet the notablest thing in the town of Fribourg is, that all its walls have got flexible spines, and creep up and down the precipices more in the manner of cats than walls; and there is a general sense of height, strength, and grace, about its belts of tower and rampart, which clings even to every separate and less graceful piece of them when seen on the spot; so that the hasty sketch,

¹ [This hotel, near the railway station, has been closed since September 1890.]

² [For the plate see below, p. 54; for explanations of figs. 1 and 3 in it, giving other representations of the towers, see p. 82.]



expressing this, has a certain veracity wanting altogether in the daguerreotype.

Nay, sometimes, even in the most accurate and finished topography, a slight exaggeration may be permitted; for many of the most important facts in nature are so subtle, that they *must* be slightly exaggerated, in order to be made noticeable when they are translated into the comparatively clumsy lines of even the best drawing,* and removed from the associating circumstances which enhanced their influence, or directed attention to them, in nature.

§ 24. Still, in all these cases, the more unconscious the draughtsman is of the changes he is making, the better. Love will then do its own proper work; and the only true test of good or bad is, ultimately, strength of affection. For it does not matter with what wise purposes, or on what wise principles, the thing is drawn; if it be not drawn for love of it, it will never be right; and if it *be* drawn for love of it, it will never be wrong—love's misrepresentation being truer than the most mathematical presentation. And although all the reasonings about right and wrong, through which we have been led in this chapter, could never be brought to bear on the work at the moment of doing it, yet this test of right holds always;—if the artist is in anywise modifying or methodizing to exhibit himself and his dexterity, his work will, in that precise degree, be abortive; and if he is working with hearty love of the place, earnest desire to be faithful to it, and yet an open heart for every fancy that Heaven sends him, in that precise degree his work will be great and good.

* Or the best photograph. The question of the exact relation of value between photography and good topographical drawing, I hope to examine in another place.¹

¹ [This intention was partially fulfilled many years later in Ruskin's *Lectures on Art*, § 172.]

CHAPTER III OF TURNERIAN LIGHT¹

§ 1. HAVING in the preceding chapter seen the grounds on which to explain and justify Turner's *choice* of facts, we proceed to examine finally those modes of *representing* them introduced by him; modes so utterly at variance with the received doctrines on the subject of art, as to cause his works to be regarded with contempt, or severe blame, by all reputed judges, at the period of their first appearance. And, chiefly, I must confirm and farther illustrate the general statements made respecting light and shade in the chapters on Truth of Tone,* and on Infinity,[†] deduced from the great fact (§ 5, chapter on Truth of Tone) that "nature surpasses us in power of obtaining light as much as the sun surpasses white paper." I found that this part of the book was not well understood, because people in general have no idea how much the sun *does* surpass white paper. In order to know this practically, let the reader take a piece of pure white drawing-paper, and place it in the position in which a drawing is usually seen. This is, properly, upright (all drawings being supposed to be made on vertical planes), as a picture is seen on a room wall. Also, the usual place in which paintings or drawings are seen is at some distance from a window, with a gentle side light falling upon them, front lights being unfavourable to nearly all drawing.

* Vol. i. p. 149. [In this edition Vol. III. p. 261.]

[†] Vol. ii. p. 41. [In this edition Vol. IV. pp. 81–82.]

¹ [A more summary treatment of the subject-matter of this chapter will be found in *The Elements of Drawing*, §§ 234–239.]

Therefore the highest light an artist can ordinarily command for his work is that of white paint, or paper, under a gentle side light.* But if we wished to get as much light as possible, and to place the artist under the most favourable circumstances, we should take the drawing near the window. Put therefore your white paper upright, and take it to the window. Let $a c$, $c d$, be two sides of your room, with a window at $b b$. Under ordinary circumstances your picture would be hung at e , or in some such position on the wall $c d$. First,

therefore, put your paper upright at e , and then bring it gradually to the window, in the successive positions f , g , and (opening the window) finally at p . You will notice that as you come nearer the window the light gradually *increases* on the paper; so that in the position at p it is far better lighted than it was at e . If,

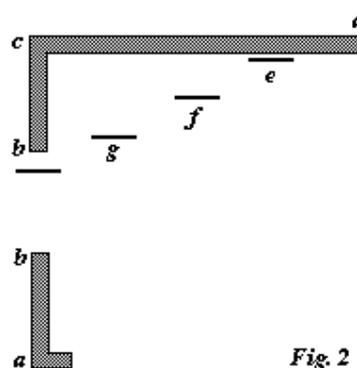


Fig. 2

however, the sun actually falls upon it at p , the experiment is unfair, for the picture is not meant to be seen in sunshine, and your object is to compare pure white paper, as ordinarily used, *with* sunshine. So either take a time when the sun does not shine at all, or does not shine in at the window where the experiment is to be tried; or else keep the paper so far within the window that the sun may not touch it. Then the experiment is perfectly fair, and you will find that you have the paper at p in full, serene, pictorial light, of the best kind, and highest attainable power.

§ 2. Now, leaning a little over the window sill, bring the edge of the paper at p against the sky, rather low down on the horizon (I suppose you choose a fine day for the experiment, that the sun is high, and the sky clear

* Light from above is the same thing with reference to our present inquiry. D

blue, down to the horizon). The moment you bring your white paper against the sky you will be startled to find this bright white paper suddenly appear in shade. You will draw it back, thinking you have changed its position. But no; the paper is not in shade. It is as bright as ever it was; brighter than under ordinary circumstances it ever can be. But, behold, the blue sky of the horizon is far brighter. The one is indeed blue, and the other white, but the *white* is *darkest*, and by a great deal. And you will, though perhaps not for the first time in your life, perceive that though black is not easily proved to be white, white may, under certain circumstances, be very nearly proved black, or at all events brown.*

§ 3. When this fact is first shown to them, the general feeling with most people is, that, by being brought against the sky, the white paper is somehow or other brought into "shade." But this is not so; the paper remains exactly as it was; it is only compared with an actually brighter hue, and looks darker by comparison. The circumstances are precisely like those which affect our sensations of heat and cold. If, when by chance we have one hand warm, and another cold, we feel, with each hand, water warmed to an intermediate degree, we shall first declare the water to be cold, and then to be warm; but the water has a definite heat wholly independent of our sensations, and accurately ascertainable by a thermometer. So it is with light and shade. Looking from the bright sky to the white paper, we affirm the white paper to be "in shade,"—that is, it produces on us a sensation of darkness, by comparison. But the hue of the paper, and that of the sky, are just as fixed as temperatures are; and the sky is actually a brighter thing than white paper, by a certain number of degrees of light, scientifically determinable. In the same way, every other colour, or force of colour, is a fixed thing,

* For which reason, I said in the Appendix to the third volume, that the expression, "finite realization of infinity," was a considerably less rational one than "black realization of white." [Vol. V. p. 424.]

not dependent on sensation, but numerically representable with as much exactitude as a degree of heat by a thermometer. And of these hues, that of open sky is one not producible by human art. The sky is not blue *colour* merely,—it is blue *fire*, and cannot be painted.¹

§ 4. Next, observe, this blue fire has in it *white* fire; that is, it has white clouds, as much brighter than itself as *it* is brighter than the white paper. So, then, above this azure light, we have another equally exalted step of white light. Supposing the value of the light of the pure white paper represented by the number 10, then that of the blue sky will be (approximately) about 20, and of the white clouds 30.

But look at the white clouds carefully, and it will be seen they are not all of the same white; parts of them are quite grey compared with other parts, and they are as full of passages of light and shade as if they were of solid earth. Nevertheless, their most deeply shaded part is that already so much lighter than the blue sky, which has brought us up to our number 30, and all these high lights of white are some ten degrees above that, or, to white paper, as 40 to 10. And now if you look from the blue sky and white clouds towards the sun, you will find that this cloud white, which is four times as white as white paper, is quite dark and lightless compared with those silver clouds that burn nearer the sun itself, which you cannot gaze upon,—an infinite of brightness. How will you estimate that?

And yet to express all this, we have but our poor white paper after all. We must not talk too proudly of our “truths” of art: I am afraid we shall have to let a good deal of black fallacy into it, at the best.

§ 5. Well, of the sun, and of the silver clouds, we will not talk for the present. But this principal fact we have learned by our experiment with the white paper, that,

¹ [For a reference to this passage, see *Queen of the Air*, § 93.]

taken all in all, the calm sky, with such light and shade as are in it, is brighter than the earth; brighter than the whitest thing on earth which has not, at the moment of comparison, heaven's own direct light on it. Which fact it is generally one of the first objects of noble painters to render. I have already marked one part of their aim in doing so, namely, the expression of infinity: but the opposing of heavenly light to earth-darkness is another most important one; and of all ways of rendering a picture generally impressive (see especially § 12 of the chapter just referred to), this is the simplest and surest. Make the sky calm and luminous, and raise against it dark trees, mountains, or towers, or any other substantial and terrestrial thing, in bold outline, and the mind accepts the assertion of this great and solemn truth with thankfulness.

§ 6. But this may be done either nobly or basely, as any other solemn truth may be asserted. It may be spoken with true feeling of all that it means; or it may be declared, as a Turk declares that "God is great," when he means only that he himself is lazy. The "heaven is bright," of many vulgar painters, has precisely the same amount of signification; it means that they know nothing,—will do nothing, are without thought—without care—without passion. They will not walk the earth, nor watch the ways of it, nor gather the flowers of it. They will sit in the shade, and only assert that very perceptible, long-ascertained fact, "heaven is bright." And as it may be *asserted* basely, so it may be *accepted* basely. Many of our capacities for receiving noblest emotion are abused, in mere idleness, for pleasure's sake, and people take the excitement of a solemn sensation as they do that of a strong drink. Thus the abandoned court of Louis XIV. had on fast days its sacred concerts, doubtless entering in some degree into the religious expression of the music, and thus idle and frivolous women at the present day will weep at an oratorio. So the sublimest effects of landscape may be sought through mere indolence; and even those who are

not ignorant, or dull, judge often erroneously of such effects of art because their very openness to all pleasant and sacred association instantly colours whatever they see, so that, give them but the feeblest shadow of a thing they love, they are instantly touched by it to the heart, and mistake their own pleasurable feelings for the result of the painter's power. Thus when, by spotting and splashing, such a painter as Constable reminds them somewhat of wet grass and green leaves, forthwith they fancy themselves in all the happiness of a meadow walk; and when Gaspar Poussin throws out his yellow horizon with black hills, forthwith they are touched as by the solemnity of a real Italian twilight, altogether forgetting that wet grass and twilight do not constitute the universe; and prevented by their joy at being pleasantly cool, or gravely warm, from seeking any of those more precious truths which cannot be caught by momentary sensation, but must be thoughtfully pursued.

§ 7. I say "more precious," for the simple fact that the sky is brighter than the earth is *not* a precious truth unless the earth itself be first understood. Despise the earth, or slander it; fix your eyes on its gloom, and forget its loveliness; and we do not thank you for your languid or despairing perception of brightness in heaven. But rise up actively on the earth,—learn what there is in it, know its colour and form, and the full measure and make of it, and if *after that* you can say "heaven is bright," it will be a precious truth, but not till then. Giovanni Bellini knows the earth well, paints it to the full, and to the smallest fig-leaf and falling flower,—blue hill and white-walled city,—glittering robe and golden hair; to each he will give its lustre and loveliness; and then, so far as with his poor human lips he may declare it, far beyond all these, he proclaims that "heaven is bright." But Gaspar, and such other landscapists, painting all Nature's flowery ground as one barrenness, and all her fair foliage as one blackness, and all her exquisite forms as one bluntness; when, in this

sluggard gloom and sullen treachery of heart, they mutter their miserable attestation to what others had long ago discerned for them,—the sky's brightness,—we do not thank them; or thank them only in so far as, even in uttering this last remnant of truth, they are more commendable than those who have sunk from apathy to atheism, and declare, in their dark and hopeless backgrounds, that heaven is NOT bright.

§ 8. Let us next ascertain what are the colours of the earth itself.

A mountain five or six miles off, in a sunny summer morning in Switzerland, will commonly present itself in some such pitch of dark force, as related to the sky, as that shown in Fig. 4, Plate 25, while the sky itself will still, if there are white clouds in it, tell as a clear dark, throwing out those white clouds in vigorous relief of light; yet, conduct the experiment of the white paper as already described, and you will, in all probability, find that the darkest part of the mountain—its most vigorous nook of almost black-looking shadow—is *whiter than the paper*.

The figure given represents the *apparent colour** of the top of the Aiguille Bouchard (the mountain which is seen from the village of Chamouni, on the other side of the Glacier des Bois), distant, by Forbes's map,¹ a furlong or two less than four miles in a direct line from the point of observation. The observation was made on a warm sunny morning, about eleven o'clock, the sky clear blue; the mountain seen against it, its shadows grey purple, and its sunlit parts greenish. Then the darkest part of the mountain was *lighter than pure white paper*, held upright in full

* The *colour*, but not the form. I wanted the contour of the top of the Breven for reference in another place,² and have therefore given it instead of that of the Bouchard, but in the proper depth of tint.

¹ ["Map of the Mer de Glace of Chamouni and of the adjoining mountains laid down from a detailed survey in 1842 by Professor Forbes," given in his *Travels through the Alps*.]

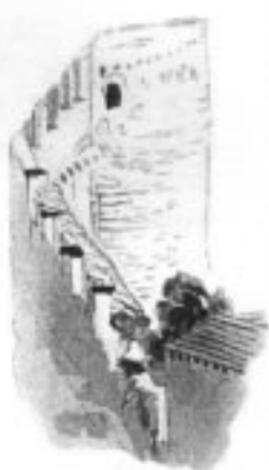
² [For the Aiguille Bouchard see below, ch. xv. § 11, p. 250, and Plates 33 and 34. The contour of the top of the Breven, here given, is referred to in ch. xvi. § 5 n., p. 282.]



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

J. Trachten.

J.H. Le Roy,
Allen & Co. S.

light at the window, parallel to the direction in which the light entered. And it will thus generally be found impossible to represent, in any of its *true* colours, scenery distant more than two or three miles, in full daylight. The deepest shadows are whiter than white paper.

§ 9. As, however, we pass to nearer objects, true representation gradually becomes possible;—to what degree is always of course ascertainable accurately by the same mode of experiment. Bring the edge of the paper against the thing to be drawn, and on that edge—as precisely as a lady would match the colours of two pieces of a dress—match the colour of the landscape (with a little opaque white mixed in the tints you use, so as to render it easy to lighten or darken them). Take care not to imitate the tint as you believe it to be, but accurately as it is; so that the coloured edge of the paper shall not be discernible from the colour of the landscape. You will then find (if before inexperienced) that shadows of trees, which you thought were dark green or black, are pale violets and purples; that lights, which you thought were green, are intensely yellow, brown, or golden, and most of them far too bright to be matched at all. When you have got all the imitable hues truly matched, sketch the masses of the landscape out completely in those true and ascertained colours; and you will find, to your amazement, that you have painted it in the colours of Turner,—in those very colours which perhaps you have been laughing at all your life,—the fact being that he, and he alone, of all men, *ever painted Nature in her own colours*.

§ 10. “Well, but,” you will answer, impatiently, “how is it, if they are the true colours, that they look so unnatural?”¹

Because they are not shown in true contrast to the sky, and to other high lights. Nature paints her shadows in pale purple, and then raises her lights of heaven and sunshine

¹ [Compare *Academy Notes*, 1856, where this passage is referred to in connexion with Holman Hunt’s colouring.]

to such heights that the pale purple becomes, by comparison, a vigorous dark. But poor Turner has no sun at his command to oppose his pale colours. He follows Nature submissively as far as he can; puts pale purple where she does, bright gold where she does; and then when, on the summit of the slope of light, she opens her wings and quits the earth altogether, burning into ineffable sunshine, what can he do but sit helpless, stretching his hands towards her in calm consent, as she leaves him and mocks at him!

§ 11. “Well,” but you will farther ask, “is this right or wise? ought not the contrast between the masses to be given, rather than the actual hues of a few parts of them, when the others are inimitable?”

Yes, if this *were* possible, it ought to be done; but the true contrasts can NEVER be given. The whole question is simply whether you will be false at one side of the scale or at the other,—that is, whether you will lose yourself in light or in darkness. This necessity is easily expressible in numbers. Suppose the utmost light you wish to imitate is that of serene, feebly lighted clouds in ordinary sky (not sun or stars, which it is, of course, impossible deceptively to imitate in painting by any artifice). Then, suppose the degrees of shadow between those clouds and Nature’s utmost darkness accurately measured, and divided into a hundred degrees (darkness being zero). Next we measure our own scale, calling our utmost possible black, zero;* and we shall be able to keep parallel with Nature, perhaps up to as far as her 40 degrees; all above that being whiter than our white paper. Well, with our power of contrast between zero and 40, we have to imitate her contrasts between zero and 100. Now, if we want true contrasts, we can first set our 40 to represent her 100, our

* Even here we shall be defeated by Nature, her utmost darkness being deeper than ours. See “On Truth of Tone,” § 4–7, etc., Vol. I. p. 150.¹

¹ [In this edition, Vol. III. pp. 260–263.]

20 for her 80, and our zero for her 60; everything below her 60 being lost in blackness. This is, with certain modifications, Rembrandt's system. Or, secondly, we can put zero for her zero, 20 for her 20, and 40 for her 40; everything above 40 being lost in *whiteness*. This is, with certain modifications, Paul Veronese's system. Or, finally, we can put our zero for her zero, and our 40 for her 100; our 20 for her 50, our 30 for her 75, and our 10 for her 25, proportioning the intermediate contrasts accordingly. This is, with certain modifications, Turner's system;* the modifications, in each case, being the adoption, to a certain extent, of either of the other systems. Thus, Turner inclines to Paul Veronese; liking, as far as possible, to get his hues perfectly true up to a certain point,—that is to say, to let his zero stand for Nature's zero, and his 10 for her 10, and his 20 for her 20, and then to expand towards the light by quick but cunning steps, putting 27 for 50, 30 for 70, and reserving some force still for the last 90 to 100. So Rembrandt modifies his system on the other side, putting his 40 for 100, his 30 for 90, his 20 for 80; then going subtly downwards, 10 for 50, 5 for 30; nearly everything between 30 and zero being lost in gloom, yet so as still to reserve his zero for zero. The systems expressed in tabular form will stand thus:—

NATURE.		REMBRANDT		TURNER.		VERONESE.
0	...	0	...	0	...	0
10	...	1	...	10	...	10
20	...	3	...	20	...	20
30	...	5	...	24	...	30
40	...	7	...	26	...	32
50	...	10	...	27	...	34
60	...	13	...	28	...	36
70	...	17	...	30	...	37
80	...	20	...	32	...	38
90	...	30	...	36	...	39
100	...	40	...	40	...	40

* When the clouds are brilliantly lighted, it may rather be, as stated in § 4 above, in the proportion of 160 to 40. I take the number 100 as more calculable.

§ 12. Now it is evident that in Rembrandt's system, while the *contrasts* are not more right than with Veronese, the *colours* are all wrong, from beginning to end. With Turner and Veronese, Nature's 10 is their 10, and Nature's 20 their 20; enabling them to give pure truth up to a certain point. But with Rembrandt, *not one colour* is absolutely true, from one side of the scale to the other; only the contrasts are true at the top of the scale. Of course, this supposes Rembrandt's system applied to a subject which shall try it to the utmost, such as landscape. Rembrandt generally chose subjects in which the real colours were very nearly imitable,—as single heads with dark back-grounds, in which Nature's highest light was little above his own; her 40 being then truly representable by his 40, his picture became nearly an absolute truth. But his system is only right when applied to such subjects: clearly, when we have the full scale of natural light to deal with, Turner's and Veronese's convey the greatest sum of truth. But not the most complete deception, for people are so much more easily and instinctively impressed by force of light than truth of colour, that they instantly miss the relative power of the sky, and the upper tones; and all the true local colouring looks strange to them, separated from its adjuncts of high light; whereas, give them the true contrast of light, and they will not observe the false local colour. Thus all Gaspar Poussin's and Salvator's pictures, and all effects obtained by leaving high lights in the midst of exaggerated darkness, catch the eye and are received for true, while the pure truth of Veronese and Turner is rejected as unnatural; only not so much in Veronese's case as in Turner's, because Veronese confines himself to more imitable things, as draperies, figures, and architecture, in which his exquisite truth at the bottom of the scale tells on the eye at once; but Turner works a good deal also (see the table) at the *top* of the natural scale, dealing with effects of sunlight and other phases of the upper colours, more or less inimitable, and betraying, therefore, more or less, the

artifices used to express them. It will be observed, also, that in order to reserve some force for the top of his scale, Turner is obliged to miss his gradations chiefly in middle tints (see the table), where the feebleness is sure to be felt. His principal point for missing the midmost gradations is almost always between the earth and sky; he draws the earth truly as far as he can, to the horizon; then the sky as far as he can, with his 30 to 40 part of the scale. They run together at the horizon; and the spectator complains that there is no distinction between earth and sky, or that the earth does not *look solid enough*.

§ 13. In the upper portions of the three pillars 5, 6, 7, Plate 25, are typically represented these three conditions of light and shade, characteristic, 5, of Rembrandt, 6, of Turner, and 7, of Veronese. The pillar to be drawn is supposed, in all the three cases, white; Rembrandt represents it as white on its highest light; and, getting the true gradations between this highest light and extreme dark, is reduced to his zero, or black, for the dark side of the white object. This first pillar also represents the system of Leonardo da Vinci. In the room of the Louvre appropriated to Italian drawings is a study of a piece of drapery by Leonardo.¹ Its lights are touched with the finest white chalk, and its shadows wrought, through exquisite gradations, to utter blackness. The pillar 6 is drawn on the system of Turner; the high point of light is still distinct: but even the darkest part of the shaft is kept pale, and the gradations which give the roundness are wrought out with the utmost possible delicacy. The third shaft is drawn on Veronese's system. The light, though still focused, is more diffused than with Turner; and a slight flatness results from the determination that the fact of the shaft's being *white* shall be discerned more clearly even than that it is round; and that its darkest part shall still be capable of brilliant relief, as a white mass, from other objects round it.

¹ [See below, § 20, p. 64.]

§ 14. This resolution, on Veronese's part, is owing to the profound respect for the *colours* of objects which necessarily influenced him, as the colourist at once the most brilliant and the most tender of all painters of the elder schools; and it is necessary for us briefly to note the way in which this greater or less respect for local colour influences the system of the three painters in light and shade.

Take the whitest piece of note-paper you can find, put a blot of ink upon it, carry in into the sunshine, and hold it fully fronting the sunshine, so as to make the paper look as dazzling as possible, but not to let the wet blot of ink *shine*. You will then find the ink look *intensely* black,—black, in fact, than anywhere else, owing to its vigorous contrast with the dazzling paper.

Remove the paper from the sunshine. The ink will not look so black. Carry the paper gradually into the darkest part of the room, and the contrast will as gradually appear to diminish; and, of course, in darkness, the distinction between the black and the white vanishes. Wet ink is as perfect a representative as is by any means attainable of a perfectly dark colour; that is, of one which absorbs all the light that falls on it; and the nature of such a colour is best understood by considering it as a piece of portable night. Now, of course, the higher you raise the daylight about this bit of night, the more vigorous is the contrast between the two. And, therefore, as a general rule, the higher you raise the light on any object with a pattern or stain upon it, the more distinctly that pattern or stain is seen.

But observe: the distinction between the full black of ink, and full white of paper, is the utmost reach of light and dark possible to art. Therefore, if this contrast is to be represented truly, no deeper black can ever be given in any shadow than that offered at once, as local colour, in a full black pattern, on the highest light. And, where colour is the principal object of the picture, that colour must, at all events, be as right as possible *where it is*

best seen, i.e. in the lights. Hence the principle of Paul Veronese, and of all the great Venetian colourists, is to use full black for full black in high light, letting the shadow shift for itself as best it may; and sometimes even putting the local black a little darker in light than shadow in order to give the more vigorous contrast noted above. Let the pillars in Plate 25 be supposed to have a black mosaic pattern on the lower part of their shafts. Paul Veronese's general practice will be, as at 7, having marked the rounding of the shaft as well as he can in the white parts, to paint the pattern with one even black over all, reinforcing it, if at all, a little in the *light*.

§ 15. Repeat the experiment on the note-paper with a red spot of carmine instead of ink. You will now find that the contrast in the sunshine appears about the same as in the shade—the red and white rising and falling together, and dying away together into the darkness. The fact, however, is, that the contrast does actually for some time increase towards the light; for in utter darkness the distinction is not visible—the red cannot be distinguished from the white; admit a little light, and the contrast is feebly discernible; admit more, it is distinctly discernible. But you cannot increase the contrast beyond a certain point. From that point the red and white for some time rise very nearly equally in light, or fall together very nearly equally in shade; but the contrast will begin to *diminish* in very high lights, for strong sunlight has a tendency to exhibit particles of dust, or any sparkling texture in the local colour, and then to diminish its power; so that in order to see local colour well, a certain degree of shadow is necessary: for instance, a very delicate complexion is not well seen in the sun; and the veins of a marble pillar, or the colours of a picture, can only be properly seen in comparative shade.

§ 16. I will not entangle the reader in the very subtle and curious variations of the laws in this matter. The simple fact which is *necessary* for him to observe is, that

the paler and purer the colour, the more the great Venetian colourists will reinforce it in the shadow, and allow it to fall or rise in sympathy with the light;¹ and those especially whose object it is to represent sunshine nearly always reinforce their local colours somewhat in the shadows, and keep them both fainter and feebler in the light, so that they thus approach a condition of universal glow, the full colour being used for the shadow, and a delicate and somewhat subdued hue of it for the light. And this to the eye is the loveliest possible condition of colour. Perhaps few people have ever asked themselves why they admire a rose so much more than all other flowers. If they consider, they will find, first, that red is, in a delicately gradated state, the loveliest of all pure colours; and secondly, that in the rose there is *no shadow*, except what is composed of colour. All its shadows are fuller in colour than its lights, owing to the translucency and reflective power of its leaves.

The second shaft, 6, in which the local colour is paler towards the light, and reinforced in the shadow, will therefore represent the Venetian system with respect to paler colours; and the system, for the most part, even with respect to darker colours, of painters who attempt to render effects of strong sunlight. Generally, therefore, it represents the practice of Turner. The first shaft, 5, exhibits the disadvantage of the practice of Rembrandt and Leonardo, in that they cannot show the local colour on the dark side, since, however energetic, it must at last sink into their exaggerated darkness.

§ 17. Now, from all the preceding inquiry, the reader must perceive more and more distinctly the great truth, that all forms of right art consist in a certain *choice* made between various classes of truths, a few only being represented, and others necessarily excluded; and that the excellence of each style depends first on its consistency with itself,—the perfect fidelity, as far as possible, to the truths

¹ [See, for illustration of Veronese's principles of local colour, Ruskin's remarks in his *Catalogue of Sketches and Drawings by Turner*, 1857–1858, under Frame 75 (Vol. XIII.).]

it has chosen; and secondly, on the breadth of its harmony, or number of truths it has been able to reconcile, and the consciousness with which the truths refused are acknowledged, even though they may not be represented. A great artist is just like a wise and hospitable man with a small house: the large companies of truths, like guests, are waiting his invitation; he wisely chooses from among this crowd the guests who will be happiest with each other, making those whom he receives thoroughly comfortable, and kindly remembering even those whom he excludes; while the foolish host, trying to receive all, leaves a large part of his company on the staircase, without even knowing who is there, and destroys, by inconsistent fellowship, the pleasure of those who gain entrance.

§ 18. But even those hosts who choose well will be farther distinguished from each other by their choice of nobler or inferior companies; and we find the greatest artists mainly divided into two groups,—those who paint principally with respect to local colour, headed by Paul Veronese, Titian, and Turner; and those who paint principally with reference to light and shade irrespective of colour, headed by Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Raphael. The noblest members of each of these classes introduce the element proper to the other class, in a subordinate way. Paul Veronese introduces a subordinate light and shade, and Leonardo introduces a subordinate local colour. The main difference is, that with Leonardo, Rembrandt, and Raphael, vast masses of the picture are lost in comparatively colourless (dark grey or brown) shadow; these painters *beginning* with the *lights* and going *down* to blackness; but with Veronese, Titian, and Turner, the whole picture is like the rose,—glowing with the colour in the shadows, and rising into paler and more delicate hues, or masses of whiteness, in the lights; they having *begun* with the *shadows*, and gone up *to* whiteness.

§ 19. The colourists have in this respect one disadvantage, and three advantages. The disadvantage is, that

between their less violent hues, it is not possible to draw all the forms which can be represented by the exaggerated shadows of the chiaroscurists, and therefore a slight tendency to flatness is always characteristic of the greater colourists, as opposed to Leonardo or Rembrandt. When the form of some single object is to be given, and its subtleties are to be rendered to the utmost, the Leonardesque manner of drawing is often very noble. It is generally adopted by Albert Dürer, in his engravings, and is very useful, when employed by a thorough master, in many kinds of engravings;* but it is an utterly false method of *study*, as we shall see presently.

§ 20. Of the three advantages possessed by the colourists over the chiaroscurists, the first is, that they have in the greater portions of their pictures *absolute* truth, as shown above, § 12, while the chiaroscurists have no absolute truth anywhere. With the colourists the shadows are right; the lights untrue: but with the chiaroscurists lights and shadows are both untrue. The second advantage is, that also the *relations* of colour are broader and vaster with the colourists than the chiaroscurists. Take, for example, that piece of drapery studied by Leonardo, in the Louvre, with white lights and black shadows.¹ Ask yourself, first, whether the

* It is often extremely difficult to distinguish properly between the Leonardesque manner, in which local colour is denied altogether, and the Turner-esque, in which local colour at its highest point in the picture is merged in whiteness. Thus, Albert Dürer's noble "Melancholia"² is entirely Leonardesque: the leaves on her head, her flesh, her wings, her dress, the wolf, the wooden ball, and the rainbow, being all equally white on the high lights. But my drawing of leaves, facing page 164, Vol. III.,³ is Turner-esque; because, though I leave pure white to represent the pale green of leaves and grass in high light, I give definite increase of darkness to four of the bramble leaves, which, in reality, were purple, and leave a dark withered stalk nearly black, though it is in light, where it crosses the leaf in the centre. These distinctions could only be properly explained by a lengthy series of examples; which I hope to give some day or other, but have not space for here.

¹ [In the collection of Italian drawings: see above, § 13, p. 59.]

² [For other notes on this engraving, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv. §§ 17–19, *Catalogue of the Standard Series*, No. 4, and *Aratra Pentelici*, § 126.]

³ [*i.e.*, vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*; Plate 6, "Foreground Leafage."]

real drapery was black or white. If white, then its high lights are rightly white; but its folds being black, it could not *as a mass* be distinguished from the black or dark objects in its neighbourhood. But the fact is, that a white cloth or handkerchief always *is* distinguished in daylight, as a *whole white thing*, from all that is coloured about it: we see at once that there is a white piece of stuff, and a red, or green, or grey one near it, as the case may be: and this relation of the white object to other objects *not* white, Leonardo has wholly deprived himself of the power of expressing; while if the cloth were black or dark, much more has he erred by making its lights white. In either case, he has missed the large relation of mass to mass, for the sake of the small one of fold to fold. And this is more or less the case with all chiaroscurists; with all painters, that is to say, who endeavour in their studies of objects to get rid of the idea of colour, and give the abstract shade. They invariably exaggerate the shadows, not with respect to the thing itself, but with respect to all around it; and they exaggerate the lights also, by leaving pure white for the high light of what in reality is grey, rose-coloured, or, in some way, not white.

§ 21. This method of study, being peculiarly characteristic of the Roman and Florentine schools, and associated with very accurate knowledge of form and expression, has gradually got to be thought by a large body of artists the *grand* way of study; an idea which has been fostered all the more because it was an unnatural way, and therefore thought to be a philosophical one. Almost the first idea of a child, or of a simple person looking at any thing, is, that it is a red, or a black, or a green, or a white thing. Nay, say the artists; that is an unphilosophical and barbarous view of the matter. Red and white are mere vulgar appearances; look farther into the matter, and you will see such and such wonderful other appearances. Abstract those, *they* are the heroic, epic, historic, and generally eligible appearances. And acting on this grand principle,

they draw flesh white, leaves white, ground white, everything white in the light, and everything black in the shade—and think themselves wise. But, the longer I live, the more ground I see to hold in high honour a certain sort of childishness or innocent susceptibility. Generally speaking, I find that when we first look at a subject, we get a glimpse of some of the greatest truths about it: as we look longer, our vanity, and false reasoning, and half-knowledge, lead us into various wrong opinions; but as we look longer still, we gradually return to our first impressions, only with a full understanding of their mystical and innermost reasons; and of much beyond and beside them, not then known to us, now added (partly as a foundation, partly as a corollary) to what at first we felt or saw. It is thus eminently in this matter of colour. Lay your hand over the page of this book,—any child or simple person looking at the hand and book, would perceive, as the main fact of the matter, that a brownish pink thing was laid over a white one. The grand artist comes and tells you that your hand is not pink, and your paper is not white. He shades your fingers and shades your book, and makes you see all manner of starting veins, and projecting muscles, and black hollows, where before you saw nothing but paper and fingers. But go a little farther, and you will get more innocent again; you will find that, when “science has done its worst, two and two still make four;” and that the main and most important facts about your hand, so seen, are, after all, that it has four fingers and a thumb—showing as brownish pink things on white paper.

§ 22. I have also been more and more convinced, the more I think of it, that in general *pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes*.¹ All the other passions do occasional good, but whenever pride puts in *its* word, everything goes wrong, and what it might really be desirable to do, quietly and innocently, it is mortally dangerous to do, proudly.

¹ [See Vol. IV. p. 192, Vol. XI. p. 78, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 18.]

Thus, while it is very often good for the artist to make *studies* of things, for the sake of knowing their forms, with their high lights all white, the moment he does this in a haughty way, and thinks himself drawing in the great style, because he leaves high lights white, it is all over with him;¹ and half the degradation of art in modern times has been owing to endeavours, much fostered by the metaphysical Germans, to see things without colour, as if colour were a vulgar thing, the result being, in most students, that they end by not being able to see anything at all; whereas the true and perfect way of studying any object is simply to look what its colour is in high light, and put that safely down, if possible; or, if you are making a chiaroscuro study, to take the grey answering to that colour, and cover the *whole* object at once with that grey, firmly resolving that no part of it shall be brighter than that; then look for the darkest part of it, and if, as is probable, its darkest part be still a great deal lighter than black, or than other things about it, assume a given shade, as dark as, with due reference to other things, you can have it, but no darker. Mark that for your extreme dark on the object, and between those limits get as much drawing as you can, by subtlety of gradation. That will tax your powers of drawing indeed; and you will find this, which seems a childish and simple way of going to work, requires verily a thousandfold more power to carry out than all the pseudo-scientific abstractions that ever were invented.

§ 23. Nor can it long be doubted that it is also the most impressive way to others; for the third great advantage possessed by the colourists is, that the delightfulness of their picture, its sacredness, and general nobleness, are increased exactly in proportion to the quantity of light and of lovely colour they can introduce in *the shadows*, as opposed to the black and grey of the chiaroscuroists. I have already, in the *Stones of Venice*, Vol. II. Chap. v.

¹ [Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 129–131, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 55, Vol. XII. pp. 151 *seq.* and 385.]

§§ 30–36,¹ insisted upon the fact of the sacredness of colour, and its necessary connection with all pure and noble feeling. What we have seen of the use of colour by the poets will help to confirm this truth; but perhaps I have not yet enough insisted on the simplest and readiest to hand of all proofs,—the way, namely, in which God has employed colour in His creation as the unvarying accompaniment of all that is purest, most innocent, and most precious; while for things precious only in material uses, or dangerous, common colours are reserved. Consider for a little while what sort of a world it would be if all flowers were grey, all leaves black, and the sky *brown*. Imagine that, as completely as may be, and consider whether you would think the world any whit more sacred for being thus transfigured into the hues of the shadows in Raphael's Transfiguration.² Then observe how constantly innocent things are bright in colour; look at a dove's neck, and compare it with the grey back of a viper; I have often heard talk of brilliantly coloured serpents; and I suppose there are such,—as there are gay poisons, like the foxglove and kalmia—types of deceit: but all the venomous serpents I have really *seen* are grey, brick-red, or brown, variously mottled; and the most awful serpent I have seen, the Egyptian asp, is precisely of the colour of gravel, or only a little greyer. So, again, the crocodile and alligator are grey, but the innocent lizard green and beautiful.³ I do not mean that the rule is invariable, otherwise it would be more convincing than the lessons of the natural universe are intended ever to be; there are beautiful colours on the leopard and tiger, and in the berries of the nightshade; and there is nothing very notable in brilliancy of colour either in sheep or cattle (though, by the way, the velvet of a brown bull's hide in the sun, or the tawny white of the Italian oxen, is,

¹ [Vol. X. pp. 172–179, and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiv. § 42.]

² [Compare Vol. XI. p. 418.]

³ [For some further remarks on this subject, and a reference to this chapter as “one of the most important in *Modern Painters*,” see *Deucalion* (“Living Waves”).]

to my mind, lovelier than any leopard's or tiger's skin): but take a wider view of nature, and compare generally rainbows, sunrises, roses, violets, butterflies, birds, goldfish, rubies, opals, and corals, with alligators, hippopotami, lions, wolves, bears, swine, sharks, slugs, bones, fungi,* fogs, and corrupting, stinging, destroying things in general, and you will feel then how the question stands between the colourists and chiaroscurists,—which of them have nature and life on their side, and which have sin and death.

§ 24. Finally: the ascertainment of the sanctity of colour is not left to human sagacity. It is distinctly stated in Scripture. I have before alluded to the sacred chord of colour (blue, purple, and scarlet, with white and gold) as appointed in the tabernacle; this chord is the fixed base of all colouring with the workmen of every great age; the purple and scarlet will be found constantly employed by noble painters, in various unison, to the exclusion in general of pure crimson;—it is the harmony described by Herodotus as used in the battlements of Ecbatana,¹ and the invariable base of all beautiful missal-painting; the mistake continually made by modern restorers, in supposing the purple to be a faded crimson, and substituting full crimson for it, being instantly fatal to the whole work, as, indeed, the slightest modification of any hue in a perfect colour-harmony must always be.† In this chord the scarlet is the powerful colour, and is on the whole the most perfect representation of abstract colour which exists; blue being in a certain degree associated with shade, yellow with light, and scarlet, as absolute *colour*, standing alone. Accordingly, we find it used,

* It is notable, however, that nearly all the poisonous agarics are scarlet or speckled, and wholesome ones brown or grey, as if to show us that things rising out of darkness and decay are always most deadly when they are well drest.

† Hence the intense absurdity of endeavouring to "restore" the colour of ancient buildings by the hands of ignorant colourists, as at the Crystal Palace.

¹ [See the note on Vol. X. p. 175, where the passage in Herodotus is quoted.]

together with cedar wood, hyssop, and running water, as an emblem of purification, in Leviticus xiv. 4, and other places, and so used not merely as representative of the colour of blood, since it was also to be dipped in the actual blood of a living bird. So that the cedar wood for its perfume, the hyssop for its searchingness, the water for its cleansing, and the scarlet for its kindling or enlightening, are all used as tokens of sanctification;* and it cannot be with any force alleged, in opposition to this definite appointment, that scarlet is used incidentally to illustrate the stain of sin,—“though thy sins be as scarlet,”—any more than it could be received as a diminution of the authority for using snow-whiteness as a type of purity, that Gehazi’s leprosy is described as being “white as snow.” An incidental image has no authoritative meaning, but a stated ceremonial appointment has; besides, we have the reversed image given distinctly in Prov. xxxi.: “She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with *scarlet*.” And, again: “Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights.” So, also, the arraying of the mystic Babylon in purple and scarlet may be interpreted exactly as we choose; either by those who think colour sensual, as an image of earthly pomp and guilt, or, by those who think it sacred, as an image of assumed or pretended sanctity. It is possible the two meanings may be blended, and the idea may be that the purple and fine linen of Dives are worn in hypocritical semblance of the purple and fine linen of the high priest, being, nevertheless, themselves, in all cases typical of all beauty and purity. I hope, however, to be able some day to enter farther into these questions with respect to the art of illumination; meantime, the facts bearing on our immediate subject may

* The redeemed Rahab bound for a sign a *scarlet* thread in the window.¹ Compare Canticles iv. 3.

¹ [Joshua ii. 18. The other Bible references in § 24 are Isaiah i. 18; 2 Kings v. 27; 2 Samuel i. 24; Revelation xvii. 4; Luke xvi. 19.]

be briefly recapitulated. All men, completely organised and justly tempered, enjoy colour; it is meant for the perpetual comfort and delight of the human heart; it is richly bestowed on the highest works of creation, and the eminent sign and seal of perfection in them; being associated with *life* in the human body, with *light* in the sky, with *purity* and hardness in the earth,—death, night, and pollution of all kinds being colourless. And although if form and colour be brought into complete opposition,* so that it should be put to us as a matter of stern choice whether we should have a work of art all of form, without colour (as an Albert Dürer's engraving), or all of colour, without form (as an imitation of mother-of-pearl), form is beyond all comparison

* The inconsistency between perfections of colour and form, which I have had to insist upon in other places,¹ is exactly like that between articulation and harmony. We cannot have the richest harmony with the sharpest and most audible articulation of words: yet good singers will articulate clearly; and the perfect study of the science of music will conduct to a fine articulation; but the study of pronunciation will not conduct to, nor involve, that of harmony. So also, though, as said farther on,² *subtle* expression can be got without colour, perfect expression never can; for the colour of the face is a part of its expression. How often has that scene between Francesca di Rimini and her lover been vainly attempted by sculptors, simply because they did not observe that the main note of expression in it was in the far sheet-lightning—fading and flaming through the cloud of passion!

Per più fiata gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso.³

And, of course, in landscape, colour is the principal source of expression. Take one melancholy chord from the close of Crabbe's⁴ Patron:

“Cold grew the foggy morn; the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf,
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roared with strong blasts; with mighty showers, the floods:
All green was vanished, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly, with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.”

¹ [See, for instance, Vol. III. pp. 158–162, and Vol. VIII. pp. 176–178, and compare *Elements of Drawing*, § 183 *n.*]

² [See below, Appendix i., pp. 469–474.]

³ [*Inferno*, v. 130.]

⁴ [For other references to Crabbe, see Vol. X. p. 231 *n.*]

the more precious of the two; and in explaining the essence of objects, form is essential, and colour more or less accidental (compare Chap. v. of the first section of Vol. I.¹); yet if colour be introduced at all, it is necessary that, whatever else may be wrong, *that* should be right: just as, though the music of a song may not be so essential to its influence as the meaning of the words, yet if the music be given at all, *it* must be right, or its discord will spoil the words; and it would be better, of the two, that the words should be indistinct, than the notes false. Hence, as I have said elsewhere,² the business of a painter is to paint. If he can colour, he is a painter, though he can do nothing else; if he cannot colour, he is no painter, though he may do everything else. But it is, in fact, impossible, if he can colour, but that he should be able to do more; for a faithful study of colour will always give power over form, though the most intense study of form will give no power over colour. The man who can see all the greys, and reds, and purples in a peach, will paint the peach rightly round, and rightly altogether; but the man who has only studied its roundness, may not see its purples and greys, and if he does not, will never get it to look like a peach; so that great power over colour is always a sign of large general art-intellect. Expression of the most subtle kind can be often reached by the slight studies of caricaturists;* sometimes elaborated by the toil of the dull, and sometimes by the sentiment of the feeble; but to colour well requires real talent and earnest study, and to colour perfectly is the rarest and most precious power an artist can possess. Every other gift may be erroneously cultivated, but this will guide to all healthy, natural, and forcible truth; the student may be led into folly by philosophers, and into falsehood by purists; but he is always safe, if he holds the hand of a colourist.

* See Appendix I. Modern Grotesque [p. 469.]

¹ [In this edition, Vol. III. pp. 158–162; first section of Part ii.]

² [*Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 52–54.)]

CHAPTER IV¹

OF TURNERIAN MYSTERY:—FIRST, AS ESSENTIAL

§ 1. IN the preceding chapters we have shown the nature of Turner's art; first, as respected sympathy with his subject; next, as respected fidelity to local detail; and thirdly, as respected principles of colour. We have now finally to confirm what in various places has been said respecting his principles of *delineation*, or that mysterious and apparently uncertain execution by which he is distinguished from most other painters.

In Chap. III. § 17 of the preceding volume² we concluded generally that all great drawing was *distinct* drawing; referring, nevertheless, to a certain sort of indistinctness, necessary to the highest art, and afterwards to be explained. And the inquiry into this seeming contradiction has, I trust, been made somewhat more interesting by what we saw respecting modern art in the fourth paragraph of Chap. XVI., namely, that it was distinguished from old art eminently by *indistinctness*, and by its idle omission of details for the sake of general effect. Perhaps also, of all modern artists, Turner is the one to whom most people would first look as the great representative of this nineteenth-century cloudiness, and “ingenious speaking concerning smoke”;³ everyone of his compositions being evidently dictated by a delight in seeing only part of things rather than the whole, and in casting clouds and mist around them rather than unveiling them.

§ 2. And as the head of modern mystery, all the ranks

¹ [With this chapter compare *The Elements of Drawing*, §§ 138, 139.]

² [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 60.]

³ [Aristophanes: see Vol. V. p. 318.]

of the best ancient, and of even a very important and notable division of modern authority, seem to be arrayed against him. As we saw in preceding chapters, every great man was definite until the seventeenth century. John Bellini, Leonardo, Angelico, Dürer, Perugino, Raphael,—all of them hated fog, and repudiated indignantly all manner of concealment. Clear, calm, placid, perpetual vision, far and near; endless perspicuity of space; unfatigued veracity of eternal light; perfectly accurate delineation of every leaf on the trees, every flower in the fields, every golden thread in the dresses of the figures, up to the highest point of calm brilliancy which was penetrable to the eye, or possible to the pencil,—these were their glory. On the other—the entirely mysterious—side, we have only sullen and sombre Rembrandt; desperate Salvator; filmy, futile Claude; occasionally some countenance from Correggio and Titian, and a careless condescension or two from Tintoret,*—not by any means a balanced weight of authority. Then, even in modern times, putting Turner (who is at present the prisoner at the bar) out of the question, we have, in landscape, Stanfield and Harding as definers, against Copley Fielding and Robson on the side of the clouds;† Mulready and Wilkie against Etty,—even Etty being not so much misty in conception as vague in execution, and not, therefore, quite legitimately to be claimed on the foggy side; while, finally, the whole body of the Pre-Raphaelites—certainly the greatest men, taken as a class, whom modern Europe has produced in concernment with the arts—entirely agree

* In the clouds around Mount Sinai, in the picture of the Golden Calf; the smoke turning into angels, in the Cenacolo in San Giorgio Maggiore; and several other such instances.¹

† Stanfield I call a definer, as opposed to Copley Fielding, because, though like all other moderns, he paints cloud and storm, he will generally paint all the masts and yards of a ship, rather than merely her black bows glooming through the foam; and all the rocks on a hill side, rather than the blue outline of the hill through the mist.

¹ [See Vol. XI. pp. 395, 382, for these pictures.]

with the elder religious painters, and do, to their utmost, dwell in an element of light and declaration, in antagonism to all mist and deception. Truly, the clouds seem to be getting much the worst of it; and I feel, for the moment, as if nothing could be said for them. However, having been myself long a cloud-worshipper, and passed many hours of life in the pursuit of them from crag to crag, I must consider what can possibly be submitted in their defence, and in Turner's.

§ 3. The first and principal thing to be submitted is, that the clouds *are there*. Whether we like them or not, it is a fact that by far the largest spaces of the habitable world are full of them. That is Nature's will in the matter; and whatever we may theoretically determine to be expedient or beautiful, she has long ago determined what shall *be*. We may declare that clear horizons and blue skies form the most exalted scenery; but for all that, the bed of the river in the morning will still be traced by its line of white mist, and the mountain peaks will be seen at evening only in the rents between blue fragments of towering cloud. Thus it is, and that so constantly, that it is impossible to become a faithful landscape painter without continually getting involved in effects of this kind. We may, indeed, avoid them systematically, but shall become narrow mannerists if we do.

§ 4. But not only is there a *partial* and variable mystery thus caused by clouds and vapours throughout great spaces of landscape; there is a continual mystery caused throughout *all* spaces, caused by the absolute infinity of things. WE NEVER SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY.¹ I stated

¹ [The first version of this passage occurs in the MS. of ch. ix. in the preceding volume, and is as follows:—

“Observe, in the first place, this great fact. You never see anything Plainly. It is with sight as with knowledge. It is written: ‘If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.’ And in the same sense: if any man think that he seeth, he seeth nothing yet as he ought to see. Whatever we look at is full of mystery. Everything that we look at, be it large or small, near or distant, has an infinite quantity of details still too small to be seen; and the only question

this fact partly in the chapter on Truth of Space, in the first volume,¹ but not with sufficient illustration, so that the reader might by that chapter have been led to infer that the mystery spoken of belonged to some special distance of the landscape, whereas the fact is, that everything we look at, be it large or small, near or distant, has an equal quantity of mystery in it; and the only question is, not how much mystery there is, but at what part of the object mystification begins. We suppose we see the ground under our feet clearly, but if we try to number its grains of dust, we shall find that it is as full of confusion and doubtful form, as anything else; so that there is literally *no* point of clear sight, and there never can be. What we call seeing a thing clearly, is only seeing enough of it to *make out what it is*; this point of intelligibility varying in distance for different magnitudes and kinds of things, while the appointed quantity of mystery remains nearly the same for all. Thus: throwing an open book and an embroidered handkerchief on a lawn, at a distance of a quarter of a mile we cannot tell which is which; that is the point

is not how much mystery there is, but at what point the mystery begins. For instance, I suppose most people think they can see their own hand clearly. If they do, let them try to count the small furrows, or the lines of the light down which give its texture to the skin, and to trace the course of the fine veins through the shadows of the fingers. You suppose you see the ground under your feet clearly; but if you try to number its grains of dust, you will find that it is as full of confusion and difficulty as the distance; only the confusion on the horizon is of trees and houses, here, of pebbles and of dust. You cannot count the fibres of the cloth stuff, and if you try to draw all the fibers and threads that you see, you will find the work as infinite as if you were drawing a distant forest. Pope asked ironically why man has not a microscopic eye, but man's eyes are just as microscopic as any other creature's; he sees the things that bear a certain proportion to himself with a certain degree of intelligibility, and a fly can do no more. It sees less things than a man, but it does not see them more clearly; infinity is as much beyond a fly's sight, as beyond our own, only the fly stops at a different point in the infinity. So, then, when-ever in drawing any object—be it large or small—we have represented it perfectly distinct, there is something wrong. Our work is either unfinished, or false. Distinct drawing is certainly bad drawing in one way or another, and we must not think we have approached perfection until we have got our work into confusion."

The Biblical reference is to 1 Corinthians viii. 2; that to Pope, *Essay on Man*, line 193; the lines are quoted again in *Deucalion*, ch. ii.]

¹ [In this edition, Vol. III. p. 320.]

of mystery for the whole of those things. They are then merely white spots of indistinct shape. We approach them, and perceive that one is a book, the other a handkerchief, but cannot read the one, nor trace the embroidery of the other. The mystery has ceased to be in the whole things, and has gone into their details. We go nearer, and can now read the text and trace the embroidery, but cannot see the fibres of the paper, nor the threads of the stuff. The mystery has gone into a third place. We take both up and look closely at them; we see the watermark and the threads, but not the hills and dales in the paper's surface, nor the fine fibres which shoot off from every thread. The mystery has gone into a fourth place, where it must stay, till we take a microscope, which will send it into a fifth, sixth, hundredth, or thousandth place, according to the power we use. When, therefore, we say, we see the book *clearly*, we mean only that we know it is a book. When we say that we see the letters clearly, we mean that we know what letters they are; and artists feel that they are drawing objects at a convenient distance when they are so near them as to know, and to be able in painting to show that they know, what the objects are, in a tolerably complete manner: but this power does not depend on any definite distance of the object, but on its size, kind, and distance, together; so that a small thing in the foreground may be precisely in the same *phase* or place or mystery as a large thing far away.

§ 5. The other day,¹ as I was lying down to rest on the side of the hill round which the Rhone sweeps in its main angle, opposite Martigny, and looking carefully across the valley to the ridge of the hill which rises above Martigny itself, then distant about four miles, a plantain seed-vessel about an inch long, and a withered head of a scabious half an inch broad, happened to be seen rising up, out of the grass near me, across the outline of the distant hill, so as seemingly to set themselves closely beside the

¹ [Ruskin noted these observations in his diary, September 12, 1854.]

large pines and chestnuts which fringed that distant ridge. The plantain was eight yards from me, and the scabious seven; and to my sight, at these distances, the plantain and the far-away pines were equally clear (it being a clear day, and the sun stooping to the west). The pines, four miles off, showed their branches, but I could not count them: and two or three young and old Spanish chestnuts beside them showed their broken masses distinctly; but I could not count those masses, only I knew the trees to be chestnuts by their general look. The plantain and scabious in like manner I knew to be a plantain and scabious by, their general look. I saw the plantain seed-vessel to be, somehow, rough, and that there were two little projections at the bottom of the scabious head which I knew to mean the leaves of the calyx; but I could no more count distinctly the seeds of the plantain, or the group of leaves forming the calyx of the scabious, than I could count the branches of the far-away pines.

§ 6. Under these circumstances, it is quite evident that neither the pine nor plantain could have been rightly represented by a single dot or stroke of colour. Still less could they be represented by a definite drawing, on a small scale, of a pine with all its branches clear, or of a plantain with all its seeds clear. The round dot or long stroke would represent nothing, and the clear delineation too much. They were not mere dots of colour which I saw on the hill, but something full of essence of pine; out of which I could gather which were young and which were old, and discern the distorted and crabbed pines from the symmetrical and healthy pines; and feel how the evening sun was sending its searching threads among their dark leaves;—assuredly they were more than dots of colour. And yet not one of their boughs or outlines could be distinctly made out, or distinctly drawn. Therefore, if I had drawn either a definite pine, or a dot, I should have been equally wrong, the right lying in an inexplicable, almost inimitable, confusion between the two.

§ 7. “But is not this only the case with pines four miles away, and with plantains eight yards?”

Not so. Everything in the field of sight is equally puzzling, and can only be drawn rightly on the same difficult conditions. Try it fairly. Take the commonest, closest, most familiar thing, and strive to draw it verily as you see it. Be sure of this last fact, for otherwise you will find yourself continually drawing, not what you *see*, but what you *know*. The best practice to begin with is, sitting about three yards from a bookcase (not your own, so that you may *know* none of the titles of the books), to try to draw the books accurately, with the titles on the backs, and patterns on the bindings, as you see them. You are not to stir from your place to look what they are, but to draw them simply as they appear, giving the perfect look of neat lettering; which, nevertheless, must be (as you will find it on most of the books) absolutely illegible. Next try to draw a piece of patterned muslin or lace (of which you do not know the pattern), a little way off, and rather in the shade; and be sure you get all the grace and *look* of the pattern without going a step nearer to see what it is. Then try to draw a bank of grass, with all its blades; or a bush, with all its leaves; and you will soon begin to understand under what a universal law of obscurity we live, and perceive that all *distinct* drawing must be *bad* drawing, and that nothing can be right, till it is unintelligible.

§ 8. “How! and Pre-Raphaelitism and Dürerism, and all that you have been talking to us about for these five hundred pages!”

Well, it is all right; Pre-Raphaelitism is quite as unintelligible as need be (I will answer for Dürerism farther on¹). Examine your Pre-Raphaelite painting well, and you will find it is the precise fulfilment of these laws. You can make out your plantain head and your pine, and see entirely what they are; but yet they are full of mystery,

¹ [See ch. iv. § 12, ch. v. § 20, pp. 82, 102.]

and suggest more than you can see. So also with Turner, the true head of Pre-Raphaelitism.¹ You shall see the spots of the trout lying dead on the rock in his foreground, but not count them. It is only the Germans and the so-called masters of drawing and defining that are wrong, not the Pre-Raphaelites.*

Not, that is to say, so far as it is *possible* to be right. No human skill can get the absolute truth in this matter; but a drawing by Turner of a large scene, and by Holman Hunt of a small one, are as close to truth as human eyes and hands can reach.

§ 9. “Well, but how of Veronese and all the firm, fearless draughtsmen of days gone by?”

They are indeed firm and fearless, but they are all mysterious. Not one great man of them, but he will puzzle you, if you look close, to know what he means. Distinct enough, as to his general intent, indeed, just as Nature is distinct in her general intent, but examine his

* Compare, if at hand, my letter in the *Times*, of the 5th of May, 1854, on Hunt's *Light of the World*. I extract the passage bearing chiefly on the point in question.²

“As far as regards the technical qualities of Mr. Hunt's painting, I would only ask the spectator to observe this difference between true Pre-Raphaelite work and its imitations. The true work represents all objects exactly as they would appear in nature, in the position and at the distances which the arrangement of the picture supposes. The false work represents them with all their details, as if seen through a microscope. Examine closely the ivy on the door in Mr. Hunt's picture, and there will not be found in it a single clear outline. All is the most exquisite mystery of colour; becoming reality at its due distance. In like manner, examine the small gems on the robe of the figure. Not one will be made out in form, and yet there is not one of all those minute points of green colour, but it has two or three distinctly varied shades of green in it, giving its mysterious value and lustre. The spurious imitations of Pre-Raphaelite work represent the most minute leaves and other objects with sharp outlines, but with no variety of colour, and with none of the concealment, none of the infinity of nature.”

¹ [So in the second edition of *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Vol. XII. p. 159.]

² [See now Vol. XII. pp. 328–332.]

touches, and you will find in Veronese, in Titian, in Tintoret, in Correggio, and in all the great *painters*, properly so called, a peculiar melting and mystery about the pencilling, sometimes called softness, sometimes freedom, sometimes breadth; but in reality a most subtle confusion of colours and forms, obtained either by the apparently careless stroke of the brush, or by careful retouching with tenderest labour; but always obtained in one way or another; so that though, when compared with work that has no meaning, all great work is *distinct*,—compared with work that has narrow and stubborn meaning, all great work is *indistinct*; and if we find, on examining any picture closely, that it is all clearly to be made out, it cannot be, as painting, first-rate. There is no exception to this rule. EXCELLENCE OF THE HIGHEST KIND, WITHOUT OBSCURITY, CANNOT EXIST.

§ 10. “But you said that all authority was against Turner,—Titian’s and Veronese’s, as well as that of the older painters.”

Yes, as regards his choice of misty or foggy subject, it is so; but in this matter of mere *execution*, all the great painters are with him, though at first he seems to differ from them, on account of that choice of foggy subject; and because, instead of painting things under circumstances when their general character is to be discerned at once (as Veronese paints human figures close to us and the size of life), he is always painting things twenty and thirty miles away, reduced to unintelligible and eccentric shades.

§ 11. “But how, then, of this foggy choice; can *that* be right in itself?”

That we will discuss in the next chapter: let us keep at present to the question of execution.

“Keeping to that question, why is it that a photograph always looks clear and sharp,—not at all like a Turner?”

Photographs never look entirely clear and sharp; but because clearness is supposed a merit in them, they are usually taken from very clearly marked and un-Turnerian

subjects; and such results as are misty and faint, though often precisely those which contain the most subtle renderings of nature, are thrown away, and the clear ones only are preserved. Those clear ones depend for much of their force on the faults of the process. Photography either exaggerates shadows, or loses detail in the lights, and, in many ways which I do not here pause to explain, misses certain of the utmost subtleties of natural *effect* (which are often the things that Turner has chiefly aimed at), while it renders subtleties of *form* which no human hand could achieve. But a delicately taken photograph of a truly Turnerian subject, is far more like Turner in the drawing than it is to the work of any other artist; though, in the system of chiaroscuro, being entirely and necessarily Rembrandtesque, the subtle mystery of the touch (Turnerism carried to an infinitely wrought refinement) is not usually perceived.

§ 12. “But how of Van Eyck, and Albert Dürer, and all the clear early men?”

So far as they are *quite* clear, they are imperfect, and knowingly imperfect, if considered as painters of real appearances; but by means of this very imperfection or conventionalism, they often give certain facts which are more necessary to their purpose than these outward appearances. For instance, in Fig. 2 of Plate 25, facing page 54, I requested Mr. Le Keux to facsimile, as far as might be, the look of the daguerreotype;¹ and he has admirably done so. But if Albert Dürer had drawn the wall between those towers, he would have represented it with all its facts distinctly revealed, as in Fig. 1; and in many respects this clear statement is precious, though, so far as regards ocular truth, it is not natural. A modern sketcher of the “bold” school would represent the tower as in Fig. 3; that is to say, in a manner just as trenchant and firm, and therefore ocularly false, as Dürer’s; but, in all probability, with involved entireness of fallacy or ignorance as to the wall

¹ [See above, p. 46.]

facts; rendering the work nearly valueless; or valuable only in colour or composition; not as draughtsmanship.

Of this we shall have more to say presently, here we may rest satisfied with the conclusion that to a perfectly great manner of painting, or to entirely finished work, a certain degree of indistinctness is indispensable. As all subjects have a mystery in *them*, so all drawing must have a mystery in *it*; and from the nearest object to the most distant, if we can quite make out what the artist would be at, there is something wrong. The strokes of paint, examined closely, must be confused, odd, incomprehensible; having neither beginning nor end,—melting into each other, or straggling over each other, or going wrong and coming right again, or fading away altogether; and if we can make anything of them quite out, that part of the drawing is wrong, or incomplete.

§ 13. Only, observe, the method by which the confusion is obtained may vary considerably according to the distance and scale of the picture itself; for very curious effects are produced upon all paintings by the distance of the eye from them. One of these is the giving a certain softness to all colours, so that hues which would look coarse or bald if seen near, may sometimes safely be left, and are left, by the great workmen in their large works, to be corrected by the kind of *bloom* which the distance of thirty or forty feet sheds over them. I say, “sometimes,” because this optical effect is a very subtle one, and seems to take place chiefly on certain colours, dead fresco colours especially; also the practice of the great workmen is very different, and seems much to be regulated by the time at their disposal. Tintoret’s picture of Paradise, with 500 figures in it, adapted to a supposed distance of from fifty to a hundred feet, is yet coloured so tenderly that the nearer it is approached the better it looks;¹ nor is it at all certain that the colour which is wrong near, will look right a little way off, or even

¹ [For this picture, see Vol. XI. p. 372.]

a great way off: I have never seen any of our Academy portraits made to look like Titians by being hung above the line: still, distance *does* produce a definite effect on pictorial colour, and in general an improving one. It also deepens the relative power of all strokes and shadows. A touch of shade which, seen near, is all but invisible, and, as far as effect on the picture is concerned, quite powerless, will be found a little way off, to tell as a definite shadow, and to have a notable result on all that is near it; and so markedly is this the case, that in all fine and first-rate drawing there are many passages in which if we *see* the touches we are putting on, we are doing too much; they must be put on by the feeling of the hand only, and have their effect on the eye when seen in unison, a little way off. This seems strange; but I believe the reason of it is, that, seen at some distance, the parts of the touch or touches are gathered together, and their relations truly shown; while, seen near, they are scattered and confused. On a large scale, and in common things, the phenomenon is of constant occurrence; the “dirt bands” on a glacier, for instance, are not to be counted on the glacier itself, and yet their appearance is truly stated by Professor Forbes to be “*one of great importance, though from the two circumstances of being best seen at a distance, or considerable height, and in a feeble or slanting light, it had very naturally been overlooked both by myself and others, like what are called blind paths over moors, visible at a distance, but lost when we stand upon them.*”*

§ 14. Not only, however, does this take place in a picture very notably, so that a group of touches will tell as a compact and intelligible mass, a little way off, though confused when seen near; but also a dark touch gains at a little distance in apparent *darkness*, a light touch in apparent *light*, and a coloured touch in apparent colour, to

* *Travels through the Alps*, chap. viii.¹

¹ [At p. 155, somewhat revised, in the reprint of 1900.]

a degree inconceivable by an unpractised person; so that literally, a good painter is obliged, working near his picture, to do in everything only about half of what he wants, the rest being done by the distance. And if the effect, at such distance, is to be of confusion, then sometimes, seen near, the work must be a confusion worse confounded, almost utterly unintelligible: hence the amazement and blank wonder of the public at some of the finest passages of Turner, which look like a mere meaningless and disorderly work of chance: but, rightly understood, are preparations for a given result, like the most subtle moves of a game of chess,¹ of which no bystander can for a long time see the intention, but which are, in dim, underhand, wonderful way, bringing out their foreseen and inevitable result.

§ 15. And, be it observed, no other means would have brought out that result. Every distance and size of picture has its own proper method of work; the artist will necessarily vary that method somewhat according to circumstances and expectations: he may sometimes finish in a way fitted for close observation, to please his patron, or catch the public eye; and sometimes be tempted into such finish by his zeal, or betrayed into it by forgetfulness, as I think Tintoret has been, slightly, in his Paradise, above mentioned. But there never yet was a picture thoroughly effective at a distance, which did not look more or less unintelligible near. Things which in distant effect are folds of dress, seen near are only two or three grains of golden colour set there apparently by chance; what far off is a solid limb, near, is a grey shade with a misty outline, so broken that it is not easy to find its boundary; and what far off may perhaps be a man's face, near, is only a piece of thin brown colour, enclosed by a single flowing wave of a brush loaded with white, while three brown touches

¹ [Ruskin was always very fond of chess, and was an excellent player; and among his other unwritten books was a manual of the game: see the letter given in a later volume.]

across one edge of it, ten feet away, become a mouth and eyes. The more subtle the power of the artist, the more curious the difference will be between the apparent means and the effect produced: and one of the most sublime feelings connected with art consists in the perception of this very strangeness, and in a sympathy with the foreseeing and foreordaining power of the artist. In Turner, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese, the intenseness of perception, first, as to what is to be done, and then, of the means of doing it, is so colossal, that I always feel in the presence of their pictures just as other people would in that of a supernatural being. Common talkers use the word “magic” of a great painter’s power without knowing what they mean by it. They mean a great truth. That power *is* magical; so magical, that, well understood, no enchanter’s work could be more miraculous or more *appalling*; and though I am not often kept from saying things by timidity, I should be afraid of offending the reader, if I were to define to him accurately the kind and the degree of awe, with which I have stood before Tintoret’s Adoration of the Magi, at Venice, and Veronese’s Marriage in Cana, in the Louvre.¹

§ 16. It will now, I hope, be understood how easy it is for dull artists to mistake the mystery of great masters for carelessness, and their subtle concealment of intention for want of intention. For one person who can perceive the delicacy, invention, and veracity of Tintoret, or Reynolds,* there are thousands who can perceive the dash of the brush and the confusion of the colour. They suppose that the merit consists in dash and confusion, and that they may easily rival Reynolds by being unintelligible, and Tintoret by being impetuous. But I assure them, very

* Reynolds is usually admired for his dash and speed. His true merit is in an ineffable subtlety combined with this speed. The tenderness of some of Reynolds’ touches is quite beyond telling.

¹ [For these pictures, see Vol. IV., plates 6, 7, 11, Vol. V. p. 112, Vol. XI. p. 406, Vol. XII. pp. 456–457.]

seriously, that obscurity is *not* always admirable, nor impetuosity always right; that disorder does not necessarily imply discretion, nor haste, security. It is sometimes difficult to understand the words of a deep thinker; but it is equally difficult to understand an idiot: and young students will find it, on the whole, the best thing they can do, to strive to be *clear*;* not affectedly clear, but manfully and firmly. Mean something, and say something, whenever you touch canvas; yield neither to the affectation of precision nor of speed, and trust to time, and your honest labour, to invest your work gradually, in such measure and kind as your genius can reach, with the tenderness that comes of love, and the mystery that comes of power.

* Especially in distinction of species of things. It may be doubtful whether in a great picture we are to represent the bloom upon a grape, but never doubtful that we are to paint a grape so as to be known from a cherry.

CHAPTER V

OF TURNERIAN MYSTERY:—SECONDLY, WILFUL

§ 1. IN the preceding chapter we were concerned only with the mystery necessary in all great art. We have yet to inquire into the nature of that more special love of concealment in which Turner is the leading representative of modern cloud-worship; causing Dr. Waagen sapiently to remark that “he” had here succeeded in combining “a crude painted medley with a general foggy appearance.”*

As, for defence of his universal indistinctness, my appeal was in the last chapter to universal fact, so, for defence of this special indistinctness, my first appeal is in this chapter to special fact. An English painter justifiably loves fog, because he is born in a foggy country; as an Italian painter justifiably loves clearness, because he is born in a comparatively clear country. I have heard a traveller familiar with the East complain of the effect in a picture of Copley Fielding’s, that “it was such very bad weather.”¹ But it ought not to be bad weather to the English. Our green country depends for its life on those kindly rains and floating swirls of cloud; we ought, therefore, to love them, and to paint them.

§ 2. But there is no need to rest my defence on this narrow English ground. The fact is, that though the climates of the South and East may be *comparatively* clear, they are no more absolutely clear than our own northern

* *Art and Artists in England*, vol. ii. p. 151. The other characteristics which Dr. Waagen discovers in Turner are, “such a looseness of treatment, such a total want of truth, as I never before met with.”

¹ [Compare *The Art of England*, § 169, where Ruskin gives some further particulars about this remark by one of his Christ Church friends.]

air; and that wherever a landscape-painter is placed, if he paints faithfully, he will have continually to paint effects of mist. Intense clearness, whether in the North after or before rain, or in some moments of twilight in the South, is always, as far as I am acquainted with natural phenomena, a *notable* thing. Mist of some sort, or mirage, or confusion of light, or of cloud, are the general facts; the distance may vary in different climates at which the effects of mist begin, but they are always present; and therefore, in all probability it is meant that we should enjoy them.

§ 3. Nor does it seem to me in any wise difficult to understand why they should be thus appointed for enjoyment. In former parts of this work we were able to trace a certain delightfulness in every visible feature of natural things which was typical of any great spiritual truth;¹ surely, therefore, we need not wonder now, that mist and all its phenomena have been made delightful to us, since our happiness as thinking beings must depend on our being content to accept only partial knowledge, even in those matters which chiefly concern us. If we insist upon perfect intelligibility and complete declaration in every moral subject, we shall instantly fall into misery of unbelief. Our whole happiness and power of energetic action depend upon our being able to breathe and live in the cloud; content to see it opening here and closing there; rejoicing to catch, through the thinnest films of it, glimpses of stable and substantial things; but yet perceiving a nobleness even in the concealment, and rejoicing that the kindly veil is spread where the untempered light might have scorched us, or the infinite clearness wearied.

§ 4. And I believe that the resentment of this interference of the mist is one of the forms of proud error which are too easily mistaken for virtues. To be content in utter darkness and ignorance is indeed unmanly, and therefore we think that to love light and seek knowledge must

¹ [See volume ii., chapters v.–xi. (“Of Typical Beauty.”).]

always be right. Yet (as in all matters before observed¹), wherever *pride* has any share in the work, even knowledge and light may be ill pursued. Knowledge is good, and light is good, yet man perished in seeking knowledge, and moths perish in seeking light; and if we, who are crushed before the moth, will not accept such mystery as is needful for us, we shall perish in like manner. But accepted in humbleness, it instantly becomes an element of pleasure; and I think that every rightly constituted mind ought to rejoice, not so much in knowing anything clearly, as in feeling that there is infinitely more which it cannot know.² None but proud or weak men would mourn over this, for we may always know more if we choose, by working on; but the pleasure is, I think, to humble people, in knowing that the journey is endless, the treasure inexhaustible,—watching the cloud still march before them with its summitless pillar, and being sure that, to the end of time and to the length of eternity, the mysteries of its infinity will still open farther and farther, their dimness being the sign and necessary adjunct of their inexhaustibleness. I know there are an evil mystery and a deathful dimness,—the mystery of the great Babylon—the dimness of the sealed eye and soul; but do not let us confuse these with the glorious mystery of the things which the angels “desire to look into,”³ or with the dimness which, even before the clear eye and open soul, still rests on sealed pages of the eternal volume.

§ 5. And going down from this great truth to the lower

¹ [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. iv. § 24, and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii.]

² [In one of his copies of the volume, Ruskin here notes on the margin, “Compare Newman on the Soul; the first passage of the Introduction.” The reference is to F. W. Newman’s *The Soul, Her Sorrows and Her Aspirations: an Essay towards the Natural History of the Soul as the true Basis of Theology*, 1849: “All human knowledge, like human power, is bounded; and it is then most accurate when we can sharply draw the line which shows where ignorance begins. . . . It is thus a condition of human existence to be surrounded with but moderately diffused light, that instructs the understanding, and illimitable haziness, that excites the imagination,” etc. On the subject thus touched upon, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. §§ 24, 28, 50–52.]

³ [Revelation xvii. 17; 1 Peter i. 12; and, above, Exodus xiii. 21, 22.]

truths which are types of it in smaller matters, we shall find, that as soon as people try honestly to see all they can of anything, they come to a point where a noble dimness begins. They see more than others; but the consequence of their seeing more is, that they feel they cannot see all; and the more intense their perception, the more the crowd of things which they *partly* see will multiply upon them; and their delight may at last principally consist in dwelling on this cloudy part of their prospect, somewhat casting away or aside what to them has become comparatively common, but is perhaps the sum and substance of all that other people see in the thing, for the utmost subtleties and shadows and glancings of it cannot be caught but by the most practised vision. And as a delicate ear rejoices in the slighter and more modulated passages of sound which to a blunt ear are utterly monotonous in their quietness, or unintelligible in their complication, so, when the eye is exquisitely keen and clear, it is fain to rest on grey films of shade, and wandering rays of light, and intricacies of tender form, passing over hastily, as unworthy or commonplace, what to a less educated sense appears the whole of the subject.* In painting, this progress of the eye is marked always by one consistent sign—its sensibility, namely, to effects of *gradation* in light and colour, and habit of looking for them, rather even than for the signs of the essence of the subject. It will, indeed, see more of that essence than is seen by other eyes; and its choice of the points to be seized upon will be always regulated by that special sympathy which we have above examined as the motive of the Turnerian picturesque: but yet, the more it is cultivated, the more of light and colour it will perceive, the less of substance.

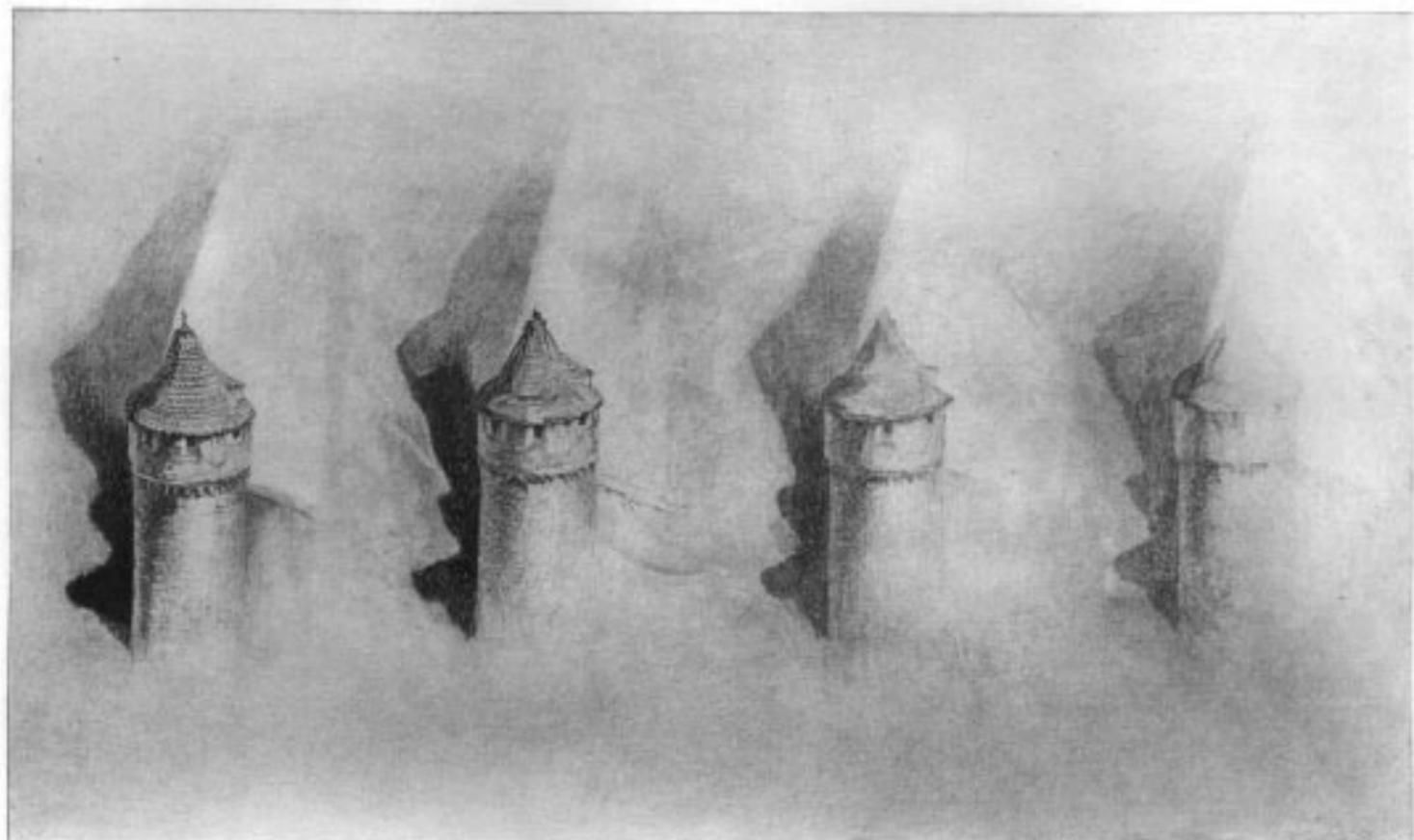
§ 6. Thus, when the eye is quite uncultivated, it sees that a man is a man, and a face is a face, but has no idea

* And yet, all these intricacies will produce for it another whole; as simple and natural as the child's first conception of the thing; only more comprehensive. See above, Chap. iii. § 21.

what shadows or lights fall upon the form or features. Cultivate it to some degree of artistic power, and it will then see shadows distinctly, but only the more vigorous of them. Cultivate it still farther, and it will see light within light, and shadow within shadow, and will continually refuse to rest in what it had already discovered, that it may pursue what is more removed and more subtle, until at last it comes to give its chief attention and display its chief power on gradations which to an untrained faculty are partly matters of indifference, and partly imperceptible. That these subtle gradations have indeed become matters of primal importance to it, may be ascertained by observing that they are the things it will last part with, as the object retires into distance; and that, though this distance may become so great as to render the real nature of the object quite undiscernible, the gradations of light upon it will not be lost.

§ 7. For instance, Fig. 1, on the opposite page, Plate 26, is a tolerably faithful rendering of the look of a wall tower of a Swiss town as it would be seen within some hundred yards of it. Fig. 2 is (as nearly as I can render it) a facsimile of Turner's actual drawing of this tower, at a presumed distance of about half a mile.¹ It has far less of intelligible delineation, either of windows, cornices, or tiles; but intense care has still been given to get the pearly roundness of the side, and the exact relations of all the tones of shade. And now, if Turner wants to remove the tower still farther back, he will gradually let the windows and stones all disappear together, before he will quit his shadows and delicately centralized rays. At Fig. 3 the tower is nearly gone, but the pearly roundness of it and principal lights of it are there still. At Fig. 4 (Turner's ultimate condition in distance) the essence of the thing is quite unintelligible; we cannot answer for its being a tower

¹ [The drawing is of the walls and towers of Lucerne; it was at this time in Ruskin's collection: see the Epilogue to his *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, Vol. XIII.]



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at all. But the gradations of light are still there, and as much pains have been taken to get them as in any of the other instances. A vulgar artist would have kept something of the form of the tower, expressing it by a few touches; and people would call it clever drawing. Turner lets the tower melt into air, but still he works half an hour or so over those delicate last gradations, which perhaps not many people in England besides himself can fully see, as not many people can understand the final work of a great mathematician. I assume, of course, in this example, that the tower, as it grows less and less distinct, becomes part of the subject of a *larger* picture. Fig. 1 represents nearly what Turner's treatment of it would be if it were the principal subject of a vignette; and Fig. 4 his treatment of it as an object in the extreme distance of a large oil picture. If at the same supposed distance it entered into a smaller drawing, so as to be much smaller in size, he might get the gradations with less trouble, sometimes even by a single sweep of the brush; but *some* gradation would assuredly be retained, though the tower were diminished to the height of one of the long letters of this type.

§ 8. "But is Turner right in doing this?"

Yes. The truth is indeed so. If you watch any object as it fades in distance, it will lose gradually its force, its intelligibility, its anatomy, its whole comprehensible being; but it will *never* lose its gradation of light. Up to the last moment, what light is seen on it, feebly glimmering and narrowed almost to a point or a line, is still full of change. One part is brighter than another, and brighter with as lovely and tender increase as it was when nearest to us; and at last, though a white house ten miles away will be seen only as a small square spot of light, its windows, doors, or roof being as utterly invisible as if they were not in existence, the gradation of its light will not be lost; one part of the spot will be seen to be brighter than another.

§ 9. Is there not a deep meaning in this? We, in our

daily looking at the thing, think that its own make is the most important part of it. Windows and porticoes, eaves and cornices, how interesting or how useful are they! Surely, the chief importance of the thing is in these. No; not in these, but in the play of the light of heaven upon it. There is a place and time when all those windows and porticoes will be lost sight of; when the only question becomes, "What light had it?" How much of heaven was looking upon it? What were the broad relations of it, in light and darkness, to the sky and earth, and all things around it? It might have strange humours and ways of its own—many a rent in its wall, and many a roughness on its roof; or it might have many attractivenesses and noblenesses of its own—fair mouldings and gay ornaments; but the time comes when all these are vain, and when the slight, wandering warmth of heaven's sunshine which the building itself felt not, and not one eye in a thousand saw, becomes all in all. I leave the reader to follow out the analogies of this.

§ 10. "Well, but," it is still objected, "if this be so, why is it necessary to insist, as you do always,¹ upon the most minute and careful renderings of form?"

Because, though these gradations of light are indeed, as an object dies in distance, the only things it can retain, yet as it lives its active life near us, those very gradations can only be seen properly by the effect they have on its character. You can only show how the light affects the object, by knowing thoroughly what the object is; and noble mystery differs from ignoble, in being a veil thrown between us and something definite, known, and substantial; but the ignoble mystery is a veil cast before chaos, the studious concealment of Nothing.

§ 11. There is even a way in which the very definiteness of Turner's knowledge adds to the mystery of his pictures. In the course of the first volume I had several times occasion to insist on the singular importance of

¹ [See, for instance, above, p. 72.]

cast shadows, and the chances of their sometimes gaining supremacy in visibility over even the things that cast them.¹ Now a cast shadow is a much more curious thing than we usually suppose. The strange shapes it gets into,—the manner in which it stumbles over everything that comes in its way, and frets itself into all manner of fantastic schism, taking neither the shape of the thing that casts it, nor of that it is cast upon, but an extraordinary, stretched, flattened, fractured, ill-jointed anatomy of its own,—cannot be imagined until one is actually engaged in shadow-hunting. If any of these wayward umbræ are faithfully remembered and set down by the painter, they nearly always have an unaccountable look, quite different from anything one would have invented or philosophically conjectured for a shadow; and it constantly happens, in Turner's distances, that such strange pieces of broken shade accurately remembered, or accurately invented, as the case may be, cause a condition of unintelligibility, quaint and embarrassing almost in exact proportion to the amount of truth it contains.

§ 12. I believe the reader must now sufficiently perceive that the right of being obscure is not one to be lightly claimed; it can only be founded on long effort to be intelligible, and on the present power of *being* intelligible to the exact degree which the nature of the thing admits. Nor shall we, I hope, any more have difficulty in understanding how the noble mystery and the ignoble, though direct opposites, are yet continually mistaken for each other—the last aping the first; and the most wretched artists taking pride in work which is simply slurred, slovenly, ignorant, empty, and insolent, as if it were nobly mysterious (just as a drunkard who cannot articulate supposes himself oracular); whereas the noble art-mystery, as all noble language-mystery, is reached only by intense labour. Striving to speak with uttermost truth of expression, weighing word

¹ [See, for instance, Vol. III. pp. 161–162, and for a reference to the same subject in reply to criticisms, *Academy Notes*, 1855 (Supplement).]

against word, and wasting none, the great speaker, or writer, toils first into perfect intelligibleness, then, as he reaches to higher subject, and still more concentrated and wonderful utterance, he becomes ambiguous—as Dante is ambiguous,—half a dozen different meanings lightening out in separate rays from every word, and, here and there, giving rise to much contention of critics as to what the intended meaning actually was. But it is no drunkard's babble for all that, and the men who think it so, at the third hour of the day,¹ do not highly honour *themselves* in the thought.

§ 13. And now observe how perfectly the conclusions arrived at here consist with those of the third chapter, and how easily we may understand the meaning of that vast weight of authority which we found at first ranged against the clouds, and strong in arms on the side of intelligibility. Nearly all great men must, for the reasons above given, be intelligible. Even, if they are to be the greatest, still they must struggle through intelligibility to obscurity; if of the second class, then the best thing they can do, all their lives through, is to be intelligible. Therefore, the enormous majority of all good and true men will be *clear* men; and the drunkards, sophists, and sensualists will, for the most part, sink back into the fog-bank, and remain wrapt in darkness, unintelligibility, and futility. Yet, here and there, once in a couple of centuries, one man will rise past clearness, and become dark with excess of light.

§ 14. “Well, then, you mean to say that the tendency of this age to general cloudiness, as opposed to the old religious clearness of painting, is one of degradation; but that Turner is this one man who has risen *past* clearness?”

Yes. With some modifications of the saying, I mean that; but those modifications will take us a little time to express accurately.

For, first, it will not do to condemn every minor painter

¹ [Acts ii. 15.]

utterly, the moment we see he is foggy. Copley Fielding, for instance, was a minor painter; but his love of obscurity in rain clouds, and dew-mist on downs, was genuine love, full of sweetness and happy aspiration; and, in this way, a little of the light of the higher mystery is often caught by the simplest men when they keep their hearts open.

§ 15. Neither will it be right to set down every painter for a great man, the moment we find he is clear; for there is a hard and vulgar intelligibility of nothingness, just as there is an ambiguity of nothingness. And as often, in conversation, a man who speaks but badly and indistinctly has, nevertheless, got much to say; and a man who speaks boldly and plainly may yet say what is little worth hearing; so, in painting, there are men who can express themselves but blunderingly, and yet have much in them to express; and there are others who talk with great precision, whose works are yet very impertinent and untrustworthy assertions. Sir Joshua Reynolds is full of fogginess and shortcomings as compared with either of the Carraccis; but yet one Sir Joshua is worth all the Carraccis in Europe; and so, in our modern water-colour societies, there are many men who define clearly enough, all whose works, put together, are not worth a careless blot by Cox or Barret.¹

§ 16. Let me give one illustration more, which will be also of some historical usefulness in marking the relations of the clear and obscure schools.

We have seen, in our investigation of Greek landscape, Homer's intense love of the aspen poplar.² For once, in honour of Homer and the Greeks, I will take an aspen for the subject of comparison, and glance at the different modes in which it would have been, or was, represented from the earliest to the present stage of landscape art.

¹ [For David Cox, see Vol. III. p. 46; for Barret, Vol. III. p. 275.]

² [Vol. V. p. 237.]

The earliest manner which comes within our field of examination is that of the thirteenth century. Fig. 1, Plate 27, is an aspen out of the wood in which Absalom is slain, from a Psalter in my own possession, executed, certainly, after the year 1250, and before 1272;¹ the other trees in the wood being, first, of course, the oak in which Absalom is caught, and a sycamore. All these trees are somewhat more conventional than is even usual at the period; though, for this reason, the more characteristic as examples of earliest work. There is no great botanical accuracy until some forty years later (at least in painting); so that I cannot be quite sure, the leaf not being flat enough at the base, that this tree is meant for an aspen: but it is so in all probability: and whether it be or be not, serves well enough to mark the definiteness and symmetry of the old art,—a symmetry which, be it always observed, is NEVER formal or unbroken. This tree, though it looks formal enough, branches unequally at the top of the stem. But the lowest figure in Plate 7, Vol. III.,² is a better example from the MS., Sloane 1975, Brit. Mus.³ Every plant in that herbarium is drawn with some approach to accuracy, in leaf, root, and flower; while yet all are subjected to the sternest conventional arrangement; coloured in almost any way that pleases the draughtsman, and set on quaint grounds of barred colour, like bearings on shields;* one side of the plant always balancing the other, but never without some transgression or escape from the law of likeness, as in the heads of the cyclamen flower, and several other parts of this design. It might seem at

* Compare Vol. III. Chap. xiv. § 13. Touching the exact degree in which ignorance or incapacity is mingled with wilful conventionalism in this drawing, we shall inquire in the chapters on Vegetation.⁴

¹ [The Psalter of St. Louis: see Vol. XII. pp. lxix., 479.]

² [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 262.]

³ [An "inestimable early Herbarium" Ruskin calls it in his notes (1853–1854) on the MSS. in the British Museum.]

⁴ [The intended reference was, however, not made.]



1. Ancient, or Giottoesque.



4. Modern, or Eltonesque.



2. Pariet.



5. Constablesque.



3. Turneresque.



6. Hardingesque.

first, that the root was more carelessly drawn than the rest, and uglier in colour; but this is in pure conscientiousness. The workman knew that a root was ugly and earthy; he would not make it ornamental and delicate. He would sacrifice his pleasant colours and graceful lines at once for the radical fact; and rather spoil his page than flatter a fibre.

§ 17. Here, then, we have the first mediæval condition of art, consisting in a fenced, but varied, symmetry; a perfect definiteness; and a love of nature, more or less interfered with by conventionalism and imperfect knowledge. Fig. 2, in Plate 27, represents the next condition of mediæval art, in which the effort at imitation is contending with the conventional type. This aspen is from the MS. Cotton, Augustus, A. 5, from which I have already taken an example of rocks to compare with Leonardo's.¹ There can be no doubt here about the species of the tree intended, as throughout the MS. its illuminator has carefully distinguished the oak, the willow, and the aspen; and this example, though so small (it is engraved of the actual size), is very characteristic of the aspen ramification; and in one point, of ramification in general, namely, the division of the tree into two masses, each branching outwards, not across each other. Whenever a tree divides at first into two or three nearly equal main branches, the secondary branches always spring from the outside of the divided ones, just as, when a tree grows under a rock or wall, it shoots away from it, never towards it. The beautiful results of this arrangement we shall trace in the next volume;² meantime in the next Plate (28) I have drawn the main* ramifications of a real

* Only the *main* lines; the outer sprays have had no pains taken with them, as I am going to put some leaves on them in next volume.

¹ [See Fig. 3 in Plate 10, Vol. V. p. 307, and below, p. 309.]

² [See pt. vi. ch. vii., where the general arrangement is described; but the intended illustration of the aspen, with its leaves put on, does not appear.]

aspen, growing freely, but in a sheltered place, as far as may be necessary to illustrate the point in question.

§ 18. This example, Fig. 2 in Plate 27, is sufficiently characteristic of the purest mediæval landscape, though there is somewhat more leaning to naturalism than is usual at the period. The next example, Fig. 3, is from Turner's vignette of St. Anne's Hill (Rogers's Poems, p. 214). Turner almost always groups his trees, so that I have had difficulty in finding one on a small scale and isolated, which would be characteristic of him; nor is this one completely so, for I had no access to the original vignette, it being, I believe, among the drawings that have been kept from the public, now these four years, because the Chancery lawyers do not choose to determine the meaning of Turner's perfectly intelligible, though informal, will;¹ and Mr. Goodall's engraving,² which I have copied, though right in many respects, is not representative of the dotted touch by which Turner expressed the aspen foliage. I have not, however, ventured to alter it, except only by adding the extremities where they were hidden in the vignette by the trellis-work above.

The principal difference between the Turnerian aspen and the purist aspen is, it will be seen, in the expression of lightness and confusion of foliage, and roundness of the tree as a mass; while the purist tree, like the thirteenth-century one, is still flat. All attempt at the expression of individual leaves is now gone, the tree being too far off to justify their delineation; but the direction of the light, and its gradations, are carefully studied.

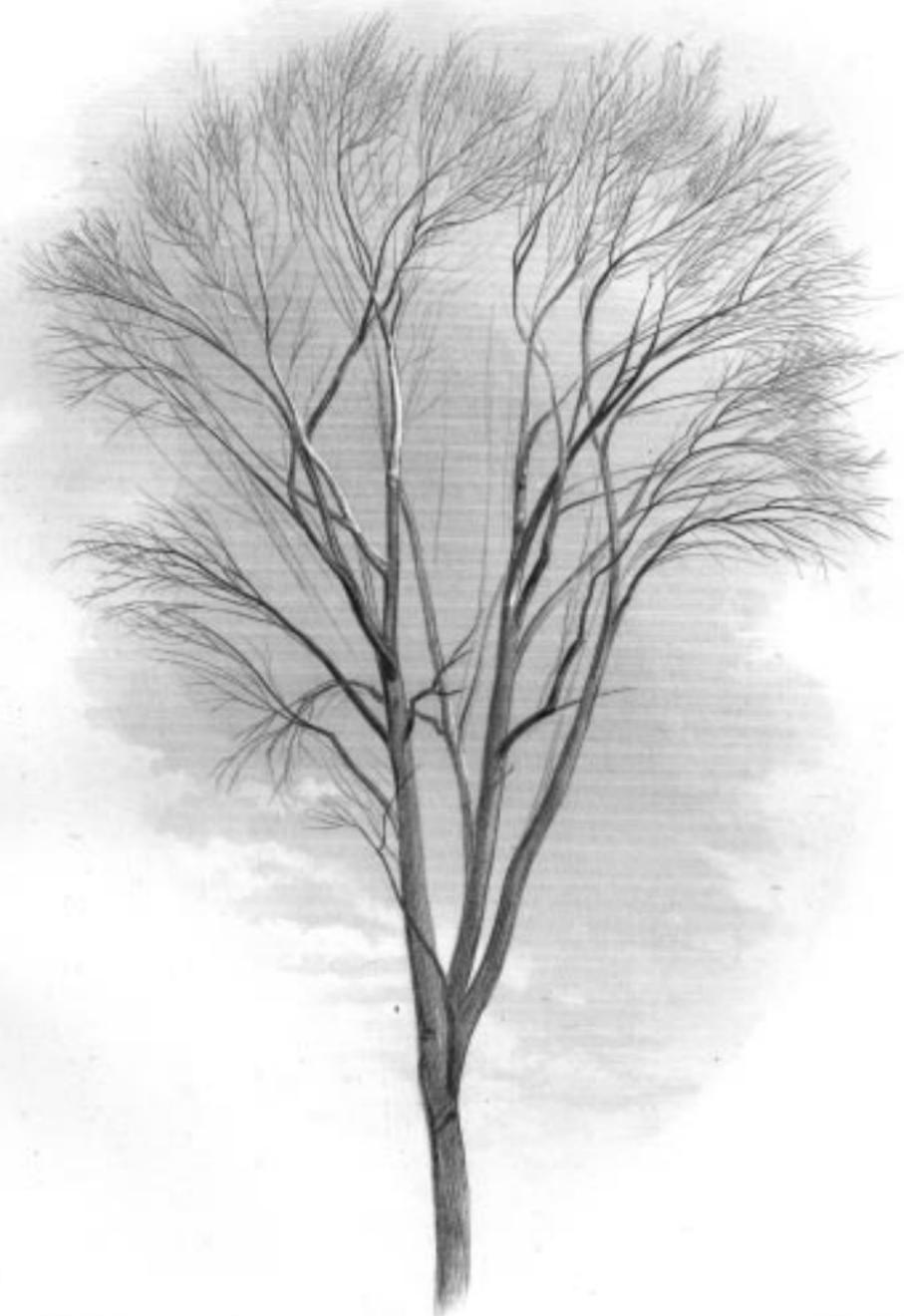
§ 19. Fig. 6 is a tolerable facsimile* of a little chalk sketch of Harding's;³ quite inimitable in the quantity of

* It is quite impossible to facsimile good free work. Both Turner and Harding suffer grievously in this plate.

¹ ["St. Anne's Hill (in the garden)": the drawing is No. 229 in the National Gallery. For particulars about the Turner Bequest, see Introduction to Vol. XIII.]

² [For E. Goodall, the engraver, see Vol. II. pp. xlii.-xliii. n., Vol. III. p. 300.]

³ [See Vol. I. p. 425, Vol. III. p. 200.]



J. Busby.

J. C. Armytage.

life and truth obtained by about a quarter of a minute's work; but beginning to show the faulty vagueness and carelessness of modernism. The stems, though beautifully free, are not thoroughly drawn nor rounded; and in the mass of the tree, though well formed, the tremulousness and transparency of leafage are lost. Nor is it possible, by Harding's manner of drawing, to express such ultimate truths; his execution, which, *in its way*, no one can at all equal (the best chalk drawing of Calame¹ and other foreign masters being quite childish and feeble in comparison), is yet sternly limited in its reach, being originally based on the assumption that nothing is to be delicately drawn, and that the method is only good which insures specious incompleteness.

It will be observed, also, that there is a leaning first to one side, then to the other, in Harding's aspen, which marks the wild picturesqueness of modernism as opposed to the quiet but stiff dignity of the purist (Fig. 2); Turner occupying exactly the intermediate place.

The next example (Fig. 5) is an aspen of Constable's, on the left in the frontispiece to Mr. Leslie's life of him.² Here we have arrived at the point of total worthlessness, the tree being as flat as the old purist one, but, besides, wholly false in ramification, idle, and undefined in every respect; it being, however, just possible still to discern what the tree is meant for, and therefore the type of the worst modernism not being completely established.

§ 20. Fig. 4 establishes this type, being the ordinary condition of tree treatment in our blotted water-colour drawings; the nature of the tree being entirely lost sight of, and no accurate knowledge, of any kind, possessed or communicated.

Thus, from the extreme of definiteness and light, in the

¹ [For Alexandre Calame (1810–1864), see Vol. III. p. 449 *n.*; and *Elements of Drawing*, § 128. There is a characteristic Swiss view by him in the Tate Gallery, No. 1786.]

² [The first, illustrated, edition of 1843.]

thirteenth century (the middle of the Dark Ages!), we pass to the extreme of uncertainty and darkness, in the middle of the nineteenth century.

As, however, the definite mediæval work has some faults, so the indefinite modern work has some virtues, its very uncertainty enabling it to appeal pleasantly to the imagination (though in an inky manner, as described above, Vol. III. Chap. x. § 10),¹ and sometimes securing qualities of colour which could no otherwise be obtained. It ought, however, if we would determine its true standing, to be compared, not with the somewhat forced and narrow decision of the thirteenth century, but with the perfect and well-formed decision of Albert Dürer and his fellow-workmen. For the proper representation of these there was no room in this plate; so in Plate 25, above, on each side of the daguerreotyped towers of Fribourg, I have given, Fig. 1, a Düreresque, and Fig. 3 a Blottesque, version of the intermediate wall.² The latter version may, perhaps, be felt to have some pleasantness in its apparent ease; and it has a practical advantage, in its capability of being executed in a quarter of a minute, while the Düreresque statement *cannot* be made in less than a quarter of an hour. But the latter embraces not only as much as is worth the extra time, but even an infinite of contents, beyond and above the other, for the other is in no single place clear in its assertion of *anything*; whereas the Düreresque work, asserting clearly many most interesting facts about the grass on the ledges, the bricks of the windows, and the growth of the foliage, is for ever a useful and trustworthy record; the other for ever an empty dream. If it is a beautiful dream, full of lovely colour and good composition, we will not quarrel with it, but it can never be so, unless it is founded first on the Düreresque knowledge, and suggestive of it through all its own mystery

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 179.]

² [See also above, pp. 46, 82.]

or incompleteness. So that by all students the Düreresque is the manner to be first adopted, and calmly continued as long as possible; and if their inventive instincts do not, in after life, *force* them to swifter or more cloudy execution,—if at any time it becomes a matter of doubt with them how far to surrender their gift of accuracy,—let them be assured that it is best always to err on the side of clearness; to live in the illumination of the thirteenth century rather than the mysticism of the nineteenth, and vow themselves to the cloister rather than lose themselves in the desert.

§ 21. I am afraid the reader must be tired of this matter; and yet there is one question more which I must for a moment touch upon, in conclusion, namely, the mystery of *clearness itself*. In an Italian twilight, when, sixty or eighty miles away, the ridge of the Western Alps rises in its dark and serrated blue against the crystalline vermilion, there is still unsearchableness, but an unsearchableness without cloud or concealment,—an infinite unknown, but no sense of any veil or interference between us and it: we are separated from it, not by any anger of storm, not by any vain and fading vapour, but only by the deep infinity of the thing itself. I find that the great religious painters rejoiced in that kind of unknowableness, and in that only; and I feel that even if they had had all the power to do so, still they would not have put rosy mists and blue shadows behind their sacred figures, but only the far-away sky and cloudless mountains. Probably the right conclusion is that the clear and cloudy mysteries are alike noble; but that the beauty of the wreaths of frost mist, folded over banks of greensward deep in dew, and of the purple clouds of evening, and the wreaths of fitful vapour gliding through groves of pine, and irised around the pillars of waterfalls, is more or less typical of the kind of joy which we should take in the imperfect knowledge granted to the earthly life, while the serene and cloudless mysteries set forth that belonging to the

redeemed life. But of one thing I am well assured, that so far as the clouds are regarded, not as concealing the truth of other things, but as themselves true and separate creations, they are not usually beheld by us with enough honour; we have too great veneration for cloudlessness. My reasons for thinking this I will give in the next chapter; here we have, I believe, examined as far as necessary the general principles on which Turner worked, and justified his adoption of them so far as they contradicted preceding practice.

It remains for us to trace, with more observant patience, the ground which was marked out in the first volume; and, whereas in that volume we hastily compared the truth of Turner with that of preceding landscapists, we shall now, as closely as possible, examine the range of what he himself has done and felt, and the way in which it is likely to influence the future acts and thoughts of men.

§ 22. And I shall attempt to do this, first, by examining what the real effect of the things painted—clouds, or mountains, or whatever else they may be—is, or ought to be, in general, on men's mind, showing the grounds of their beauty or impressiveness as best I can; and then examining how far Turner seems to have understood these reasons of beauty, and how far his work interprets, or can take the place of nature. But in doing this, I shall, for the sake of convenience, alter the arrangement which I followed in the first volume; and instead of examining the sky first, treat of it last; because, in many illustrations which I must give of other things, I shall have to introduce pieces of sky background which will all be useful for reference when I can turn back to them from the end of the book, but which I could not refer to in advance without anticipating all my other illustrations. Nevertheless, some points which I have to note respecting the meaning of the sky are so intimately connected with the subjects we have just been examining, that I cannot properly defer their consideration to another place; and I shall state them, therefore, in the next chapter,

afterwards proceeding, in the order I adopted in the first volume, to examine the beauty of mountains, water, and vegetation.¹

¹ [Thus "Truth of Skies," discussed in Section iii. (chs. i.-v.) of vol. i. is resumed in vol. v. (pt. vii. chs. i.-iv.); "Truth of Earth" (sec. iv. chs. i.-iv. of vol. i.), in vol. iv. chs. viii.-xx.; "Truth of Water" (sec. v. chs. i.-iii.) was not resumed in *Modern Painters*, but formed the subject of a separate essay (*The Harbours of England*); "Truth of Vegetation" (sec. vi. ch. i. in vol. i.) is resumed in vol. v. (pt. vi. chs. i.-x.).]

CHAPTER VI¹

THE FIRMAMENT

§ 1. THE task which we now enter upon, as explained in the close of the preceding chapter, is the ascertaining as far as possible what the proper effect of the natural beauty of different objects *ought* to be on the human mind, and the degree in which this nature of theirs, and true influence, have been understood and transmitted by Turner.

I mean to begin with the mountains, for the sake of convenience in illustration; but, in the proper order of thought, the clouds ought to be considered first; and I think it will be well, in this intermediate chapter, to bring to a close that line of reasoning by which we have gradually, as I hope, strengthened the defences around the love of mystery which distinguishes our modern art; and to show, on final and conclusive authority, what noble things these clouds are, and with what feeling it seems to be intended by their Creator that we should contemplate them.

§ 2. The account given² of the stages of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis, is in every respect clear and intelligible to the simplest reader, except in the statement of the work of the second day. I suppose that this statement is passed over by careless readers³ without an endeavour to

¹ [This chapter, with some minor omissions (here noted as they occur), was reprinted as ch. i. of *Coeli Enarrant* (1885), the preface to which work is given below as Appendix iv., p. 486. For further particulars about it, see Vol. III. pp. xlix., lxii.]

² [From here to the end of the chapter is § 26 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“This passage, to the end of the chapter, is one of the last, and best, which I wrote in the temper of my youth; and I can still ratify it thus far, that the texts referred to in it must either be received as it explains them, or neglected altogether.”]

³ [In *Coeli Enarrant* the words “without an endeavour . . . faithful readers” are omitted.]

understand it; and contemplated by simple and faithful readers as a sublime mystery, which was not intended to be understood. But there is no mystery in any other part of the chapter, and it seems to me unjust to conclude that any was intended here.

And the passage ought to be peculiarly interesting to us, as being the first in the Bible in which the *heavens* are named, and the only one in which the word "Heaven," all important as that word is to our understanding of the most precious promises of Scripture, receives a definite explanation.

Let us, therefore, see whether, by a little careful comparison of the verse with other passages in which the word occurs, we may not be able to arrive at as clear an understanding of this portion of the chapter as of the rest.

§ 3. In the first place, the English word "Firmament" itself is obscure and useless; because we never employ it but as a synonym of heaven; it conveys no other distinct idea to us; and the verse, though from our familiarity with it we imagine that it possesses meaning, has in reality no more point or value than if it were written, "God said, Let there be a something in the midst of the waters, and God called the something Heaven."

But the marginal reading, "Expansion," has definite value; and the statement that "God said, Let there be an expansion in the midst of the waters, and God called the expansion Heaven," has an apprehensible meaning.

§ 4. Accepting this expression as the one intended, we have next to ask what expansion there is, between two waters, describable by the term Heaven. Milton adopts the term "expanse;"* but he understands it of the whole volume of the air which surrounds the earth. Whereas, so

* "God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round."

—*Paradise Lost*, book vii.

far as we can tell, there is no water beyond the air, in the fields of space; and the whole expression of division of waters from waters is thus rendered valueless.

§ 5. Now, with respect to this whole chapter, we must remember always that it is intended for the instruction of all mankind, not for the learned reader only; and that, therefore, the most simple and natural interpretation is the likeliest in general to be the true one. An unscientific reader knows little about the manner in which the volume of the atmosphere surrounds the earth; but I imagine that he could hardly glance at the sky when rain was falling in the distance, and see the level line of the bases of the cloud from which the shower descended, without being able to attach an instant and easy meaning to the words "Expansion in the midst of the waters." And if, having once seized this idea, he proceeded to examine it more accurately, he would perceive at once, if he had ever noticed *anything* of the nature of clouds, that the level line of their bases did indeed most severely and stringently divide "waters from waters," that is to say, divide water in its collective and tangible state, from water in its divided and aerial state; or the waters which *fall* and *flow*, from those which *rise* and *float*. Next, if we try this interpretation in the theological sense of the word *Heaven*, and examine whether the clouds are spoken of as God's dwelling-place, we find God going before the Israelites in a pillar of cloud; revealing Himself in a cloud on Sinai; appearing in a cloud on the mercy seat; filling the Temple of Solomon with the cloud when its dedication is accepted; appearing in a great cloud to Ezekiel; ascending into a cloud before the eyes of the disciples on Mount Olivet; and in like manner returning to judgment. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."* While farther, the "clouds"

* The reader may refer to the following texts, which it is needless to quote: Exod. xiii. 24, xvi. 10, xix. 9, xxiv. 16, xxxiv. 5; Levit. xvi. 2;

and “heavens” are used as interchangeable words in those Psalms which most distinctly set forth the power of God: “He bowed the heavens also, and came down; He made darkness pavilions round about Him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.” And, again: “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.” And, again: “His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds.” Again: “The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, the voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven.” Again, “Clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne;¹ the heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory.”

§ 6. In all these passages the meaning is unmistakable, if they possess definite meaning at all. We are too apt to take them merely for sublime and vague imagery, and therefore gradually to lose the apprehension of their life and power. The expression, “He bowed the heavens,” for instance, is, I suppose, received by most readers as a magnificent hyperbole, having reference to some peculiar and fearful manifestation of God’s power to the writer of the Psalm in which the words occur. But the expression either has plain meaning, or it has *no* meaning. Understand by the term “Heavens” the compass of infinite space around the earth, and the expression, “bowed the Heavens,” however sublime, is wholly without meaning; infinite space cannot be bent or bowed. But understand by the “Heavens” the veil of clouds above the earth, and the expression is neither hyperbolical nor obscure; it is pure, plain, and accurate truth, and it describes God, not as revealing Himself in any peculiar way to David, but doing what He is still

Numb. x. 34; Judges v. 4; 1 Kings viii. 10; Ezek. i. 4; Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. i. 7.²

¹ [Compare *Eagle’s Nest*, § 7, where this verse is again cited.]

² [The other Bible references in §§ 1–6 are Genesis i. 6, 8; Exodus xiii. 21; 2 Chronicles v. 13; Acts i. 9; Psalms xviii. 9, 11, xxxvi. 5, lviii. 34, lxxvii. 17, 18, xcvi. 2–6.]

doing before our own eyes day by day. By accepting the words in their simple sense, we are thus led to apprehend the immediate presence of the Deity, and His purpose of manifesting Himself as near us whenever the storm-cloud stoops upon its course; while by our vague and inaccurate acceptance of the words we remove the idea of His presence far from us, into a region which we can neither see nor know: and gradually, from the close realization of a living God Who “maketh the clouds His chariot,”¹ we refine and explain ourselves into dim and distant suspicion of an inactive God, inhabiting inconceivable places, and fading into the multitudinous formalisms of the laws of nature.

§ 7. All errors of this kind—and in the present day we are in constant and grievous danger of falling into them—arise from the originally mistaken idea that man can, “by searching, find out God—find out the Almighty to perfection;”² that is to say, by help of courses of reasoning and accumulations of science, apprehend the nature of the Deity in a more exalted and more accurate manner than in a state of comparative ignorance; whereas it is clearly necessary, from the beginning to the end of time, that God’s way of revealing Himself to His creatures should be a *simple* way, which *all* those creatures may understand. Whether taught or untaught, whether of mean capacity or enlarged, it is necessary that communion with their Creator should be possible to all; and the admission to such communion must be rested, not on their having a knowledge of astronomy, but on their having a human soul. In order to render this communion possible, the Deity has stooped from His throne, and has not only, in the person of the Son, taken upon Him the veil of our human *flesh*, but, in the person of the Father, taken upon Him the veil of our human *thoughts*, and permitted *us*, by His own spoken authority, to conceive Him simply and clearly as a loving Father and Friend;—a being to be walked with and

¹ [Psalms civ. 3; and the reference above is Psalms xviii. 9, 11.]

² [Job xi. 7. With what Ruskin here says, compare Vol. V. p. 229.]

reasoned with; to be moved by our entreaties, angered by our rebellion, alienated by our coldness, pleased by our love, and glorified by our labour; and, finally, to be beheld in immediate and active presence in all the powers and changes of creation. This conception of God, which is the child's, is evidently the only one which can be universal, and therefore the only one which *for us* can be true. The moment that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire Him, instead of stooping to hold our hands, to rise up before us into His glory,—we hoping that by standing on a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as He rises,—God takes us at our word; He rises, into His own invisible and inconceivable majesty; He goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone. And presently we say in our vain hearts, “There is no God.”¹

§ 8. I would desire, therefore, to receive God's account of His own creation as under the ordinary limits of human knowledge and imagination it would be received by a simple-minded man; and finding that the “heavens and the earth” are spoken of always as having something like equal relation to each other (“thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them”²), I reject at once all idea of the term “Heavens” being intended to signify the infinity of space inhabited by countless worlds;³ for between those infinite heavens and the particle of sand, which not the earth only, but the sun itself, with all the solar system, is in relation to them, no relation of equality or comparison could be inferred. But I suppose the heavens

¹ [Isaiah lv. 8 (quoted again in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. i. § 14); Psalms liii. 1.]

² [Genesis ii. 1.]

³ [In *Coeli Enarrant* Ruskin altered this passage as follows:—

“. . . inhabited by countless sand, with which space, though we measured not the earth only, but the sun itself, with all the solar system, no relation of equality . . .”]

to mean that part of creation which holds equal companionship with our globe; I understand the “rolling of those heavens together as a scroll”¹ to be an equal and relative destruction with the “melting of the elements in fervent heat:”^{*} and I understand the making of the firmament to signify that, so far as man is concerned, most magnificent ordinance of the clouds;—the ordinance, that as the great plain of waters was formed on the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean; and that this upper and heavenly plain should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them or rocks divide,² but answering each other with their own voices from pole to pole; no longer restrained by established shores, and

^{*} Compare also Job xxxvi. 29, “The spreading of the clouds, and the noise of His *tabernacle*;” and xxxviii. 33, “Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds?”

Observe that in the passage of Addison’s well-known hymn—

“The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue, ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim”—

the writer has clearly the true distinctions in his mind; he does not use his words, as we too often accept them, in vain tautology. By the *spacious* firmament he means the clouds, using the word spacious to mark the true meaning of the Hebrew term: the blue *ethereal* sky is the real air or ether, blue above the clouds; the heavens are the starry space, for which he uses this word, less accurately, indeed, than the others, but as the only one available for his meaning.

¹ [Isaiah xxxiv. 4; 2 Peter iii. 10.]

² [On this passage, and the following one “no longer restrained,” etc., see Ruskin’s note in the Preface to *Coeli Enarrant*, below, p. 486. The MS. shows that the passage was much revised. It originally read:—

“. . . no longer murmuring only when the wind has moved them or rock has divided, but answering each other from pole to pole; no longer bound by banks of sand, and guided by unchanging channels, but going forth at their pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their abodes upon the heights of the hills; no longer hurried downwards with perpetual fall, nor darkened in the accumulations of the soundless abyss . . .”]

guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at their pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their encampments upon the heights of the hills; no longer hurried downwards for ever, moving but to fall, nor lost in the lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the east and west with the waving of their wings, and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of divers colours,¹ of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame.

§ 9. This, I believe, is the ordinance of the firmament;² and it seems to me that in the midst of the material nearness of these heavens God means us to acknowledge His own immediate presence as visiting, judging, and blessing us. “The earth shook, the heavens also dropped, at the presence of God.”³ “He doth set His bow in the cloud,” and thus renews, in the sound of every drooping swathe of rain, His promises of everlasting love. “In them hath He set a *tabernacle* for the sun;” whose burning ball, which without the firmament would be seen but as an intolerable and scorching circle in the blackness of vacuity, is by that firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, and tempered by mediatorial ministries; by the firmament of clouds the golden pavement is spread for his chariot wheels at morning; by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for his presence to fill with light at noon; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of his rest; by the mists of the firmament his implacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of distance with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains burn as they drink the overflowing of the dayspring. And in this tabernacling of the unendurable sun with men, through the shadows of the firmament, God would seem to set forth

¹ [2 Samuel xiii. 18.]

² [On the ordinance of the firmament, compare *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 46.]

³ [Psalms lxviii. 8. The other Bible references in § 9 are Genesis ix. 13; Psalms xix. 4; Matthew v. 34, 35, vi. 9; Luke xi. 2.]

the stooping of His own majesty to men, upon the *throne* of the firmament. As the Creator of all the worlds, and the Inhabiter of eternity, we cannot behold Him; but, as the Judge of the earth and the Preserver of men, those heavens are indeed His dwelling-place. "Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool." And all those passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of coloured robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance, and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

CHAPTER VII¹

THE DRY LAND

§ 1. HAVING thus arrived at some apprehension of the true meaning and noble offices of the clouds, we leave farther inquiry into their aspects to another time, and follow the fixed arrangement of our subject; first, to the crests of the mountains. Of these also, having seen in our review of ancient and modern landscape various strange differences in the way men looked upon them, it will be well in the outset to ascertain, as far as may be, the true meaning and office.

The words which marked for us the purpose of the clouds are followed immediately by those notable ones:—

“And God said, Let the waters which are under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.”²

We do not, perhaps, often enough consider the deep significance of this sentence. We are too apt to receive it as the description of an event vaster only in its extent, not in its nature, than the compelling the Red Sea to draw back, that Israel might pass by. We imagine the Deity in like manner rolling the waves of the greater ocean together on an heap, and setting bars and doors to them eternally.

¹ [This chapter—beginning at “We do not, perhaps, often enough consider”—was reprinted as ch. ii. of *In Montibus Sanctis* (Part ii., 1885), being “Studies of Mountain Form and of its Visible Causes,” for which work see again Vol. III. pp. xlix., lxxii. The preface to the work has been given in Appendix iv. in Vol. III. p. 678. The notes in the reprint of 1885 are given here in their places beneath the text, being distinguished by the addition of that date. A postscript, also then added to the chapter, is given on p. 127.]

² [Genesis i. 9. The other Bible references in § 1 are Exodus xiv. 22, and Psalms xcvi. 5.]

But there is a far deeper meaning than this in the solemn words of Genesis, and in the correspondent verse of the Psalm, "His hands prepared the dry land." Up to that moment the earth had been *void*, for it had been *without form*. The command that the waters should be *gathered* was the command that the earth should be *sculptured*. The sea was not driven to his place in suddenly restrained rebellion, but withdrawn to his place in perfect and patient obedience. The dry land appeared, not in level sands, forsaken by the surges, which those surges might again claim for their own; but in range beyond range of swelling hill and iron rock, for ever to claim kindred with the firmament, and be companioned by the clouds of heaven.

§ 2. What space of time was in reality occupied by the "day" of Genesis, is not, at present, of any importance for us to consider. By what furnaces of fire the adamant was melted, and by what wheels of earthquake it was torn, and by what teeth of glacier* and weight of sea-waves it was engraven and finished into its perfect form, we may perhaps hereafter endeavour to conjecture; but here, as in few words the work is summed by the historian, so in few broad thoughts it should be comprehended by us; and as we read the mighty sentence, "Let the dry land appear," we should try to follow the finger of God, as it engraved upon the stone tables of the earth the letters and the law of its everlasting form; as, gulf by gulf, the channels of the deep were ploughed; and, cape by cape, the lines were traced, with Divine foreknowledge, of the shores that were to limit the nations; and, chain by chain, the mountain walls were lengthened forth, and their foundations fastened

* Though I had already learned from James Forbes the laws of glacier motion, I still fancied that ice could drive embedded blocks and wear down rock surfaces. See, for correction of this error, *Arrows of the Chace*, vol. i. pp. 255–273, and *Deucalion*, passim.¹ [1885.]

¹ [The letters in *Arrows of the Chace* (1880) were addressed to *The Reader* in 1864. In this edition they are included, with others on geological questions, in the volume containing *Deucalion*.]

for ever; and the compass was set upon the face of the depth, and the fields, and the highest part of the dust of the world were made; and the right hand of Christ first strewed the snow on Lebanon, and smoothed the slopes of Calvary.

§ 3. It is not, I repeat, always needful, in many respects it is not possible, to conjecture the manner, or the time, in which this work was done; but it is deeply necessary for all men to consider the magnificence of the accomplished purpose, and the depth of the wisdom and love which are manifested in the ordinances of the hills. For observe, in order to bring the world into the form which it now bears, it was not mere *sculpture* that was needed; the mountains could not stand for a day unless they were formed of materials altogether different from those which constitute the lower hills, and the surfaces of the valleys. A harder substance had to be prepared for every mountain chain; yet not so hard but that it might be capable of crumbling down into earth fit to nourish the Alpine forest and the Alpine flower; not so hard but that, in the midst of the utmost majesty of its enthroned strength, there should be seen on it the seal of death, and the writing of the same sentence that had gone forth against the human frame, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."* And with this perishable substance the most majestic forms were to be framed that were consistent with the safety of man; and the peak was to be lifted, and the cliff rent, as high and as steeply as was possible, in order yet to permit the shepherd to feed his flocks upon the slope, and the cottage to nestle beneath their shadow.

§ 4. And observe, two distinct ends were to be accomplished in the doing this. It was, indeed, absolutely necessary that such eminences should be created, in order to fit

* "Surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones; thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man."—Job xiv. 18, 19.

the earth in anywise for human habitation; for without mountains the air could not be purified, nor the flowing of the rivers sustained, and the earth must have become for the most part desert plain or stagnant marsh. But the feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working,—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment,—are their higher missions. They are as a great and noble architecture; first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend. It is impossible to examine in their connected system the features of even the most ordinary mountain scenery, without concluding that it has been prepared in order to unite as far as possible, and in the closest compass, every means of delighting and sanctifying the heart of man. "As far as *possible*;" that is, as far as is consistent with the fulfilment of the sentence of condemnation on the whole earth. Death must be upon the hills; and the cruelty of the tempests smite them, and the briar and thorn spring up upon them: but they so smite, as to bring their rocks into the fairest forms; and so spring, as to make the very desert blossom as the rose.¹ Even among our own hills of Scotland and Cumberland, though often too barren to be perfectly beautiful, and always too low to be perfectly sublime, it is strange how many deep sources of delight are gathered into the compass of their glens and vales; and how, down to the most secret cluster of their far-away flowers, and the idlest leap of their straying stream-lets, the whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglect of her nobleness, and apathy to her love. But among the true mountains of the greater orders the Divine purpose of appeal at once to all the faculties of the human spirit becomes

¹ [Isaiah xxxv. 1.]

still more manifest. Inferior hills ordinarily interrupt, in some degree, the richness of the valleys at their feet; the grey downs of southern England, and treeless coteaux of central France, and grey¹ swells of Scottish moor, whatever peculiar charm they may possess in themselves, are at least destitute of those which belong to the woods and fields of the lowlands. But the great mountains *lift* the lowlands *on their sides*. Let the reader imagine, first, the appearance of the most varied plain of some richly cultivated country; let him imagine it dark with graceful woods, and soft with deepest pastures; let him fill the space of it, to the utmost horizon, with innumerable and changeful incidents of scenery and life; leading pleasant streamlets through its meadows, strewing clusters of cottages beside their banks, tracing sweet footpaths through its avenues, and animating its fields with happy flocks, and slow wandering spots of cattle; and when he has wearied himself with endless imagining, and left no space without some loveliness of its own, let him conceive all this great plain, with its infinite treasures of natural beauty and happy human life, gathered up in God's hands from one edge of the horizon to the other, like a woven garment; and shaken into deep falling folds, as the robes droop from a king's shoulders; all its bright rivers leaping into cataracts along the hollows of its fall, and all its forests rearing themselves aslant against its slopes, as a rider rears himself back when his horse plunges; and all its villages nestling themselves into the new windings of its glens; and all its pastures thrown into steep waves of greensward, dashed with dew along the edges of their folds, and sweeping down into endless slopes, with a cloud here and there lying quietly, half on the grass, half in the air; and he will have as yet, in all this lifted world, only the foundation of one of the great Alps. And whatever is lovely in the lowland scenery becomes lovelier in this change: the trees which grew heavily and stiffly from the level line of plain assume strange

¹ [The repetition of the word "grey" was probably a printer's error, which escaped the author's notice. The MS. reads "many."]]

curves of strength and grace as they bend themselves against the mountain side; they breathe more freely, and toss their branches more carelessly as each climbs higher, looking to the clear light above the topmost leaves of its brother tree: the flowers which on the arable plain fell before the plough, now find out for themselves unapproachable places, where year by year they gather into happier fellowship, and fear no evil;¹ and the streams which in the level land crept in dark eddies by unwholesome banks, now move in showers of silver, and are clothed with rainbows, and bring health and life wherever the glance of their waves can reach.

§ 5. And although this beauty seems at first, in its wildness, inconsistent with the service of man, it is, in fact, more necessary to his happy existence than all the level and easily subdued land which he rejoices to possess. It seems almost an insult to the reader's intelligence to ask him to dwell (as if they could be doubted) on the *uses* of the hills; and yet so little, until lately, have those uses been understood, that, in the seventeenth century, one of the most enlightened of the religious men of his day (Fleming²), himself a native of a mountain country, casting about for some reason to explain to himself the existence of mountains, and prove their harmony with the general perfectness of the providential government of creation, can light upon this reason only, "They are inhabited by the beasts."

§ 6. It may not, therefore, even at this day, be altogether profitless or unnecessary to review briefly the nature of the three great offices which mountain ranges are appointed to fulfil, in order to preserve the health and increase the happiness of mankind.

(I.) Their first use is of course *to give motion to*

First use of mountains. To give motion to water.

¹ [Psalms xxiii. 4.]

² [Robert Fleming (the elder, 1630–1694), author of *The Fulfilling of the Scripture*. At p. 133 of the ed. of 1726, in the course of an argument on "the marvellous order of nature and disposal of the works of God under the sun," it is said "the mountains and high places do not mar its beauty, nor want their use, where the beasts have a shelter provided." The remark is quoted again below, p. 425.]

(fresh) *water*. Every fountain and river, from the inchdeep streamlet that crosses the village lane in trembling clearness, to the massy and silent march of the everlasting multitude of waters in Amazon or Ganges, owe their play, and purity, and power, to the ordained elevations of the earth. Gentle or steep, extended or abrupt, some determined slope of the earth's surface is of course necessary, before any wave can so much as overtake one sedge in its pilgrimage; and how seldom do we enough consider, as we walk beside the margins of our pleasant brooks, how beautiful and wonderful is that ordinance, of which every blade of grass that waves in their clear water is a perpetual sign; that the dew and rain fallen on the face of the earth shall find *no* resting-place; shall find, on the contrary, fixed channels traced for them, from the ravines of the central crests down which they roar in sudden ranks of foam, to the dark hollows beneath the banks of lowland pasture, round which they must circle slowly among the stems and beneath the leaves of the lilies;—paths prepared for them, by which, at some appointed rate of journey, they must evermore descend, sometimes slow and sometimes swift, but never pausing; the daily portion of the earth they have to glide over marked for them at each successive sunrise, the place which has known them knowing them no more,¹ and the gateways of guarding mountains opened for them in cleft and chasm, none letting them in their pilgrimage; and, from afar off, the great heart of the sea calling them to itself! Deep calleth unto deep. I know not which of the two is the more wonderful,—that calm, gradated, invisible slope of the champaign land, which gives motion to the stream;* or that passage cloven for

* Only true on a large scale. I have perhaps not allowed enough for the mere secession of flowing water, supplying the evaporation of the sea, whether the plains be level or not;—it must find its way to the place where there *is* a fall, as through a mill-pond to the weir. [1885.]

¹ [Psalms ciii. 16; and, below, xlii. 7.]

it through the ranks of hill, which, necessary for the health of the land immediately around them, would, yet, unless so supernaturally divided, have fatally intercepted the flow of the waters from far-off countries. When did the great spirit of the river first knock at those adamantine gates? When did the porter open to it, and cast his keys away for ever, lapped in whirling sand? I am not satisfied—no one should be satisfied—with that vague answer,—the river *cut* its way. Not so. The river *found* its way.* I do not see that rivers, in their own strength, can do much in cutting their way;¹ they are nearly as apt to choke their channels up, as to carve them out. Only give a river some little sudden power in a valley, and see how it will use it. Cut itself a bed? Not so, by any means, but fill up its bed, and look for another, in a wild, dissatisfied, inconsistent manner. Any way, rather than the old one, will better please it; and even if it is banked up and forced to keep to the old one, it will not deepen, but do all it can to raise it, and leap out of it. And although, wherever water has a steep fall, it will swiftly cut itself a bed deep into the rock or ground, it will not, when the rock is hard, cut a wider channel than it actually needs; so that if the existing river beds, through ranges of mountain, had in reality been cut by the streams, they would be found, wherever the rocks are hard, only in the form of narrow and profound ravines,—like the well-known channel of the Niagara below the fall; not in that of extended valleys. And the actual work of true mountain rivers,

* It is very delightful to me,—at least to the proud spirit in me,—to find myself thus early perceiving and clearly announcing a fact of which modern geology is still incognizant; see the postscript to this chapter. [1885.]

¹ [The greater portion of this chapter is § 32 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“I attach great importance to the remaining contents of this passage, and have had occasion to insist on them at great length in recent lectures at Oxford.” The reference is to the lectures on glaciers delivered at Oxford in Michaelmas Term, 1874, and partly utilised in *Deucalion* (see ch. ii.).]

though often much greater in proportion to their body of water than that of the Niagara, is quite insignificant when compared with the area and depth of the valleys through which they flow; so that, although in many cases it appears that those larger valleys have been excavated at earlier periods by more powerful streams, or by the existing stream in a more powerful condition, still the great fact remains always equally plain, and equally admirable, that, whatever the nature and duration of the agencies employed, the earth was so shaped at first as to direct the currents of its rivers in the manner most healthy and convenient for man. The valley of the Rhone may, though it is not likely, have been in great part excavated in early time by torrents a thousand times larger than the Rhone; but it could not have been excavated at all, unless the mountains had been thrown at first into two chains, between which the torrents were set to work in a given direction. And it is easy to conceive how, under any less beneficent dispositions of their masses of hill, the continents of the earth might either have been covered with enormous lakes, as parts of North America actually are covered: or have become wildernesses of pestiferous marsh; or lifeless plains, upon which the water would have dried as it fell, leaving them for great part of the year desert. Such districts do exist, and exist in vastness: the *whole* earth is not prepared for the habitation of man; only certain small portions are prepared for him,—the houses, as it were, of the human race, from which they are to look abroad upon the rest of the world, not to wonder or complain that it is not all house, but to be grateful for the kindness of the admirable building, in the house itself, as compared with the rest. It would be as absurd to think it an evil that all the world is not fit for us to inhabit, as to think it an evil that the globe is no larger than it is. As much as we shall ever need is evidently assigned to us for our dwelling-place; the rest, covered with rolling waves or drifting sands, fretted with ice or crested with fire, is set

before us for contemplation in an uninhabitable magnificence; and that part which we are enabled to inhabit owes its fitness for human life chiefly to its mountain ranges, which, throwing the superfluous rain off as it falls, collect it in streams or lakes, and guide it into given places, and in given directions; so that men can build their cities in the midst of fields which they know will be always fertile, and establish the lines of their commerce upon streams which will not fail.

§ 7. Nor is this giving of motion to water to be considered as confined only to the *surface* of the earth. A no less important function of the hills is in directing the flow of the fountains and springs, from subterranean reservoirs. There is no miraculous springing up of water out of the ground at our feet; but every fountain and well is supplied from a reservoir among the hills, so placed as to involve some slight fall or pressure, enough to secure the constant flowing of the stream. And the incalculable blessing of the power given to us in most valleys, of reaching by excavation some point whence the water will rise to the surface of the ground in perennial flow, is entirely owing to the concave disposition of the beds of clay or rock raised from beneath the bosom of the valley into ranks of enclosing hills.

§ 8. (II.) The second great use of mountains is to maintain a constant change in the currents and nature of the *air*. Such change would, of course, have been partly caused by differences in soils and vegetation, even if the earth had been level; but to a far less extent than it is now by the chains of hills, which, exposing on one side their masses of rock to the full heat of the sun (increased by the angle at which the rays strike on the slope), and on the other casting a soft shadow for leagues over the plains at their feet, divide the earth not only into districts, but into climates,* and cause perpetual

* This second division of my subject, compressed into one paragraph, is treated with curious insufficiency. See again postscript to this chapter. [1885.]

currents of air to traverse their passes, and ascend or descend their ravines, altering both the temperature and nature of the air as it passes, in a thousand different ways; moistening it with the spray of their waterfalls, sucking it down and beating it hither and thither in the pools of their torrents, closing it within clefts and caves, where the sunbeams never reach, till it is as cold as November mists, then sending it forth again to breathe softly across the slopes of velvet fields, or to be scorched among sunburnt shales and grassless crags: then drawing it back in moaning swirls through clefts of ice, and up into dewy wreaths above the snow-fields; then piercing it with strange electric darts and flashes of mountain fire, and tossing it high in fantastic storm-cloud, as the dried grass is tossed by the mower, only suffering it to depart at last, when chastened and pure, to refresh the faded air of the far-off plains.

§ 9. (III.) The third great use of mountains is to cause perpetual change in the *soils* of the earth. Without such provision the ground under cultivation would in a series of years become exhausted, and require to be upturned laboriously by the hand of man. But the elevations of the earth's surface provide for it a perpetual renovation. The higher mountains suffer their summits to be broken into fragments and to be cast down in sheets of massy rock, full, as we shall see presently, of every substance necessary for the nourishment of plants: these fallen fragments are again broken by frost, and ground by torrents, into various conditions of sand and clay—materials which are distributed perpetually by the streams farther and farther from the mountain's base. Every shower which swells the rivulets enables their waters to carry certain portions of earth into new positions, and exposes new banks of ground to be mined in their turn. That turbid foaming of the angry water,—that tearing down of bank and rock along the flanks of its fury,—are no disturbances of the kind course of nature; they are beneficent operations of laws necessary to the existence of

Third use. To give change to the ground.

man and to the beauty of the earth. The process is continued more gently, but not less effectively, over all the surface of the lower undulating country; and each filtering thread of summer rain which trickles through the short turf of the uplands is bearing its own appointed burden of earth to be thrown down on some new natural garden in the dingles below.

And it is not, in reality, a degrading, but a true, large, and ennobling view of the mountain ranges of the world, if we compare them to heaps of fertile and fresh earth, laid up by a prudent gardener beside his garden beds, whence, at intervals, he casts on them some scattering of new and virgin ground. That which we so often lament as convulsion or destruction is nothing else than the momentary shaking of the dust from the spade.* The winter floods, which inflict a temporary devastation, bear with them the elements of succeeding fertility; the fruitful field is covered with sand and shingle in momentary judgment, but in enduring mercy; and the great river, which chokes its mouth with marsh, and tosses terror along its shore, is but scattering the seeds of the harvests of futurity, and preparing the seats of unborn generations.

§ 10. I have not spoken of the local and peculiar utilities of mountains; I do not count the benefit of the supply of summer streams from the moors of the higher ranges,—of the various medicinal plants which are nested among their rocks,—of the delicate pasturage which they furnish for cattle,[†]—of the forests in which they bear timber for shipping,—the stones they supply for building, or the ores of metal which they collect into spots open to discovery, and easy for working. All these benefits are of a secondary or a limited nature. But the three great functions which

* I should call it a good deal else, now! but must leave the text untouched; being, in its statements of pure fact,—putting its theology aside for the moment,—quite one of the best pieces I have ever done. [1885.]

[†] The *highest* pasturages (at least so say the Savoyards) being always the best and richest.

I have just described,—those of giving motion and change to water, air, and earth,—are indispensable to human existence; they are operations to be regarded with as full a depth of gratitude as the laws which bid the tree bear fruit, or the seed multiply itself in the earth. And thus those desolate and threatening ranges of dark mountain, which, in nearly all ages of the world, men have looked upon with aversion or with terror, and shrunk back from as if they were haunted by perpetual images of death, are, in reality, sources of life and happiness far fuller and more beneficent than all the bright fruitfulnesses of the plain. The valleys only feed; the mountains feed, and guard, and strengthen us. We take our ideas of fearfulness and sublimity alternately from the mountains and the sea; but we associate them unjustly. The sea wave, with all its beneficence, is yet devouring and terrible; but the silent wave of the blue mountain is lifted towards heaven in a stillness of perpetual mercy; and the one surge, unfathomable in its darkness, the other, unshaken in its faithfulness, for ever bear the seal of their appointed symbolism:

“Thy *justice* is like the great mountains:
Thy *judgments* are a great deep.”¹

POSTSCRIPT [1885]

The subject of erosion by water, referred to in the note at p. 122, is treated of at length in the 12th chapter of *Deucalion*, of which the conclusions may be summed in the warning to young geologists not to suppose that because Shanklin Chine was “chined” by its central gutter, therefore Salisbury Craigs were cut out by the Water of Leith,—Ingleborough by the Ribble, or Monte Rosa by the Rhone.

The subject has since been farther illustrated by the admirable drawings and sections given by Mr. Collingwood in his *Limestone Alps of Savoy*, 1884.

The paragraph at p. 124 is chiefly, and enormously, defective in speaking only of the changes effected by mountains in the nature of air, and not following out their good offices in lifting the mountaineer nations to live in the air they purify, or rise into, already pure.

¹ [Psalms xxxvi. 6.]

CHAPTER VIII¹

OF THE MATERIALS OF MOUNTAINS:—FIRST, COMPACT CRYSTALLINES

§ 1. IN the early days of geological science, the substances which composed the crust of the earth, as far as it could be examined, were supposed to be referable to three distinct classes: the first consisting of rocks which not only supported all the rest, but from which all the rest were derived, therefore called “Primary”; the second class consisting of rock formed of the broken fragments or altered substance of the primary ones, therefore called “Secondary”; and, thirdly, rocks or earthy deposits formed by the ruins and detritus of both primary and secondary rocks, called therefore “Tertiary.” This classification was always, in some degree, uncertain; and has been lately superseded by more complicated systems, founded on the character of the fossils contained in the various deposits, and on the circumstances of position, by which their relative ages are more accurately ascertainable. But the original rude classification, though of little, if any, use for scientific purposes, was based on certain broad and conspicuous phenomena, which it brought clearly before the popular mind. In this way it may still be serviceable, and ought, I think, to be permitted to retain its place, as an introduction to systems more defined and authoritative.*

* I am still entirely of this opinion. See postscript to chapter. These opening paragraphs are to my mind extremely well put, and should be read to young people by their tutors as an introduction to geological study. I have here and there retouched a loose sentence, and leave them as good as I could do now. [1885.]

¹ [§§ 1–9 of this chapter formed, with some minor alterations, ch. iii. of *In Montibus Sanctis* (Part ii.). The notes there added are given below the text; a postscript, there added, is given at p. 144.]

§ 2. For the fact is, that in approaching any large mountain range, the ground over which the spectator passes, if he examine it with any intelligence, will almost always arrange itself in his mind under three great heads. There will be, first, the ground of the plains or valleys he is about to quit, composed of sand, clay, gravel, rolled stones, and variously mingled soils; which, when there is opportunity,—at the banks of a stream, or the sides of a railway cutting,—to examine to any depth, he will find arranged in beds exactly resembling those of modern sand-banks or sea-beaches, and appearing to have been formed under natural laws such as are in operation daily around us. At the outskirts of the hill district, he may, perhaps, find considerable eminences, formed of these beds of loose gravel and sand; but, as he enters into it farther, he will soon discover the hills to be composed of some harder substance, properly deserving the name of rock, sustaining itself in picturesque forms, and appearing, at first, to owe both its hardness and its outlines to the action of laws such as do not hold at the present day. He can easily explain the nature, and account for the distribution, of the banks which overhang the lowland road, or of the dark earthy deposits which enrich the lowland pasture; but he cannot so distinctly imagine how the limestone hills of Derbyshire and Yorkshire were hardened into their stubborn whiteness, or raised into their cavernous cliffs. Still, if he carefully examines the substance of these more noble rocks, he will, in nine cases out of ten, discover them to be composed of fine calcareous dust, or closely united particles of sand; and will be ready to accept as possible, or even probable, the suggestion of their having been formed, by slow deposit, at the bottom of deep lakes and ancient seas, and then gradually consolidated under such laws of Nature as are still in operation.

§ 3. But, as he advances yet farther into the hill district, he finds the rocks around him assuming a gloomier and more majestic condition. Their tint darkens; their outlines

become wild and irregular; and whereas before they had only appeared at the roadside in narrow ledges among the turf, or glanced out from among the thickets above the brooks in white walls and fantastic towers, they now rear themselves up in solemn and shattered masses far and near; softened, indeed, with strange harmony of clouded* colours, but possessing the whole scene with their iron spirit; and rising, in all probability, into eminences as much prouder in actual elevation than those of the intermediate rocks, as more powerful in their distributive influence over every minor feature of the landscape.

§ 4. And when the traveller proceeds to observe closely the materials of which these nobler ranges are composed, he finds also a complete change in their internal structure. They are no longer formed of delicate sand or dust—each particle of that dust the same as every other, and the whole mass depending for its hardness merely on their closely-cemented unity; but they are now formed of several distinct substances, visibly unlike each other; and not *pressed*, but *crystallized* into one mass,—crystallized into a unity far more perfect than that of the dusty limestone, but yet without the least mingling of their several natures with each other. Such a rock, freshly broken, has a spotty, granulated, and, in almost all instances, sparkling, appearance; it requires a much harder blow to break it than the limestone or sandstone; but, when once thoroughly shattered, it is easy to separate from each other the various substances of which it is composed, and to examine them in their individual grains or crystals; of which each variety will be found to have a different degree of hardness, a different shade of colour, a different character of form, and a different chemical composition.

* “Clouded” referring to the peculiar softness and richness of the dark lichens on many primitive rocks, as opposed to the whiteness or grey yellow of many among the secondaries. “Iron spirit,” just after, meaning a strength having the toughness of iron in it, unassailable; but I find with pleasant surprise in extremely “old English” geology, a large family of these rocks called “siderous,” from the quantity of latent iron they contain. [1885.]

But this examination will not enable the observer to comprehend the method either of their formation or aggregation, at least by any process such as he now sees taking place around him; he will at once be driven to admit that some strange and powerful operation has taken place upon these rocks, different from any of which he is at present cognizant.*

§ 5. Now, although these three great groups of rocks do indeed often pass into each other by imperceptible gradations, and although their peculiar aspect is never a severe indication of their relative ages, yet their characters are for the most part so defined as to make a strong impression on the mind of an ordinary observer; and their age is also for the most part approximately indicated by their degrees of hardness, and crystalline aspect. It does, indeed, sometimes[†] happen that a soft and slimy clay will pass into a rock like Aberdeen granite by transitions so subtle that no point of separation can be determined; and it very often happens that rocks like Aberdeen granite are of more recent formation than certain beds of sandstone and limestone. But in spite of all these uncertainties and exceptions, I believe that unless actual pains be taken to efface from the mind its natural impressions, the idea of three great classes of rocks and earth will maintain its ground in the thoughts of the generally intelligent observer; that whether he desire it or not, he will find himself throwing the soft and loose clays and sands together under one head; placing the hard rocks, of a dull, compact, homogeneous substance, under another head; and the hardest rocks, of a crystalline, glittering, and various substance, under a third head; and having

* The original text proceeded thus—"And farther inquiry will probably induce him to admit, as more than probable, the supposition that their structure is in great part owing to the action of enormous heat prolonged for indefinite periods,"—which sentence I remove into this note to prevent the lucidity and straightforward descriptiveness of these paragraphs being soiled with conjecture. [1885.]

† Very rarely! I forget what instance I was thinking of;—anyhow, the sentence is too strongly put. [1885.]

done this, he will also find that, with certain easily admissible exceptions, these three classes of rocks are, in every district which he examines, of three different ages; that the softest are the youngest, the hard and homogeneous ones are older, and the crystalline are the oldest; and he will, perhaps, in the end, find it a somewhat inconvenient piece of respect to the complexity and accuracy of modern geological science, if he refuse to the three classes, thus defined in his imagination, their ancient titles of Tertiary, Secondary, and Primary.

§ 6. But however this may be, there is one lesson evidently intended to be taught by the different characters of these rocks, which we must not allow to escape us. We have to observe, first, the state of perfect powerlessness, and loss of all beauty, exhibited in those beds of earth in which the separated pieces or particles are entirely independent of each other, more especially in the gravel whose pebbles have all been *rolled into one shape*: secondly, the greater degree of permanence, power, and beauty possessed by the rocks whose component atoms, though all of one kind, have some affection and attraction for each other; and, lastly, the utmost form and highest beauty of the rocks in which the several atoms have all *different shapes, characters, and offices*; but are inseparably united by some fiery, or baptismal,¹ process which has purified them all.

It can hardly be necessary to point out how these natural ordinances seem intended* to teach us the great truths which are the basis of all political science; how the polishing friction which separates, the affection that binds, and

* Most people being unable to imagine intention under the guise of fixed law, I should have said now, rather than "seem intended to teach us," "*do*, if we will consider them, teach us." See, however, below, the old note to § 9 (p. 134).² This 6th paragraph is the germ, or rather bulb, of *Ethics of the Dust*. [1885.]

¹ [The words "or baptismal" were inserted by Ruskin in 1885, in revising the chapter for *In Montibus Sanctis*.]

² [See also *The Elements of Drawing*, § 189, where Ruskin says that composition is the type, in art, "of the Providential government of the world."]

the affliction that fuses and confirms, are accurately symbolized by the processes to which the several ranks of hills appear to owe their present aspect; and how, even if the knowledge of those processes be denied to us, that present aspect may in itself seem no imperfect image of the various states of mankind: first, that which is powerless through total disorganization; secondly, that which, though united, and in some degree powerful, is yet incapable of great effort or result, owing to the too great similarity and confusion of offices, both in ranks and individuals; and finally, the perfect state of brotherhood and strength in which each character is clearly distinguished, separately perfected, and employed in its proper place and office.

§ 7. I shall not, however, so oppose myself to the views of our leading geologists as to retain here the names of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary rocks. But as I wish the reader to keep the ideas of the three classes clearly in his mind, I will ask his leave to give them names which involve no theory, and can be liable, therefore, to no grave objections. We will call the hard, and (generally) central, masses Crystalline Rocks, because they almost always present an appearance of crystallization.* The less hard substances, which appear compact and homogeneous, we will call Coherent Rocks, and for the scattered débris we will use the general term Diluvium.

§ 8. All these orders of substance agree in one character, that of being more or less frangible or soluble. One material, indeed, which enters largely into the composition of most of them, *flint*, is harder than iron; but even this, their chief source of strength, is easily broken by a sudden blow; and it is so combined in the large rocks with softer substances, that time and the violence or chemical agency of the weather invariably produce certain destructive effects on their masses. Some of them become soft, and moulder

* Not strongly enough put, this time. They always are crystalline, whether they present the appearance of it or not. [1885.]

away; others break, little by little, into angular fragments or slaty sheets; but all yield in some way or other; and the problem to be solved in every mountain range appears to be, that under these conditions of decay, the cliffs and peaks may be raised as high, and thrown into as noble forms, as is possible, consistently with an effective, though not perfect permanence, and a general, though not absolute security.

§ 9. Perfect permanence and absolute security were evidently in nowise intended.* It would have been as easy for the Creator to have made mountains of steel as of granite, of adamant as of lime; but this was clearly no part of the Divine councils; mountains were to be destructible and frail; to melt under the soft lambency of the streamlet; to shiver before the subtle wedge of the frost; to wither with untraceable decay in their own substance; and yet, under all these conditions of destruction, to be maintained in magnificent eminence before the eyes of men.

Nor is it in anywise difficult for us to perceive the beneficent reasons for this appointed frailness of the mountains. They appear to be threefold: the first, and the most important, that successive soils might be supplied to the plains, in the manner explained in the last chapter, and that men might be furnished with a material for their works of architecture and sculpture, at once soft enough to be subdued, and hard enough to be preserved; the

* I am well aware that to the minds of many persons nothing bears a greater appearance of presumption than any attempt at reasoning respecting the purposes of the Divine Being; and that in many cases it would be thought more consistent with the modesty of humanity to limit its endeavour to the ascertaining of physical causes than to form conjectures respecting Divine intentions. But I believe this feeling to be false and dangerous. Wisdom can only be demonstrated in its ends, and goodness only perceived in its motives. He who in a morbid modesty supposes that he is incapable of apprehending any of the purposes of God, renders himself also incapable of witnessing His wisdom; and he who supposes that favours may be bestowed without intention, will soon learn to receive them without gratitude.

second, that some sense of danger might always be connected with the most precipitous forms, and thus increase their sublimity; and the third, that a subject of perpetual interest might be opened to the human mind in observing the changes of form brought about by time on these monuments of creation.

In order, therefore, to understand the method in which these various substances break, so as to produce the forms which are of chief importance in landscape, as well as the exquisite adaptation of all their qualities to the service of men, it will be well that I should take some note of them in their order; not with any far-followed mineralogical detail, but with care enough to enable me hereafter to explain, without obscurity, any phenomena dependent upon such peculiarities of substance.¹

§ 10. 1st. CRYSTALLINE ROCKS.—In saying, above, that the hardest rocks generally presented an appearance of “crystallization,” I meant a glittering or granulated look, somewhat like that of a coarse piece of freshly broken loaf sugar.

But this appearance may also exist in rocks of uniform and softer substance, such as statuary marble, of which freshly broken pieces, put into a sugarbasin, cannot be distinguished by the eye from the real sugar.* Such rocks are truly crystalline in structure; but

* Much of this seems directly borrowed from Saussure. It is all the sounder that it does so; yet is perfectly my own, for I always, as a boy, used to skip his analytic lithology, though I have been reading some of it this morning, 25th February, 1885, with the greatest interest. [1885 Proof.]

¹ [Here ch. iii. of *In Montibus Sanctis* came to an end, Ruskin appending the following sentence:—

“(I have cut the eighth chapter of the old book in half here for better arrangement of subject. The reader will perhaps forego, once in a way, without painful sense of loss, my customary burst of terminal eloquence)”

For the “Postscript of Chapter iii.” which followed here, see end of the present chapter, p. 144, below. No further Part of *In Montibus Sanctis* was issued, but a further chapter (comprising the rest of this one) was put into type and revised by Ruskin with added notes. His revisions and notes are here given, being distinguished by the addition of “[1885 Proof]”: see also “Variæ Lectiones” above, p. xxx.]

the group to which I wish to limit the term “crystalline” is not only thus granulated and glittering, but is always composed of at least two, usually three or four, substances, intimately mingled with each other in the form of small grains or crystals, and giving the rock a more or less speckled or mottled look, according to the size of the crystals and their variety of colour.* It is a law of nature, that whenever rocks are to be employed on hard service, and for great purposes, they shall be thus composed. And there appear to be two distinct providential reasons for this.

§ 11. The first, that these crystalline rocks being, as we saw above, generally the oldest and highest, it is from them that other soils of various kinds must be derived: and they were therefore made a kind of storehouse, from which, wherever they were found, all kinds of treasures could be developed necessary for the service of man and other living creatures. Thus the granite of Mont Blanc is a crystalline rock composed of four substances;† and in these four substances are contained the elements of nearly all kinds of sandstone and clay, together with potash, magnesia, and the metals of iron and manganese. Wherever the smallest portion of this rock occurs, a certain quantity of each of these substances may be derived from it, and the plants and animals which require them sustained in health.

The second reason appears to be that rocks composed in this manner are capable of more interesting variety in form than any others; and as they were continually to be exposed to sight in the high ranges, they were so prepared as to be always as interesting and beautiful as possible.

* Therefore called “granite,” short for “granitum marmor” (marble composed of grains), and originally used of the granite of Elba. (See Pinkerton, Vol. ii. p. 204, note.) [1885 Proof.]

† Quartz, felspar, chlorite, and hornblende (Saussure, *passim*). An Egyptian grey granite of quartz, felspar, and hornblende was called by the ancients “Psaronion,” “starling-stone.” (See again Pinkerton, Vol. ii., p. 191.) [1885 Proof.]

§ 12. These crystalline or spotted rocks we must again separate into two great classes, according to the arrangement, in them, of the particles of a substance called mica. It is not present in all of them; but when it occurs, it is usually in large quantities, and a notable source of character.¹ It varies in colour, occurring white, brown, green, red, and black; and in aspect, from shining plates to small dark grains, even these grains being seen, under a magnifier, to be composed of little plates, like pieces of exceedingly thin glass; but with this great difference from glass, that, whether large or small, the plates will not easily break *across*, but are elastic, and capable of being bent into a considerable curve; only if pressed with a knife upon the edge, they will separate into any number of thinner plates, more and more elastic and flexible according to their thinness, and these again into others still finer; there seeming to be no limit to the possible subdivision but the coarseness of the instrument employed.

And divisible into two classes, Compact Crystallines and Slaty Crystallines.

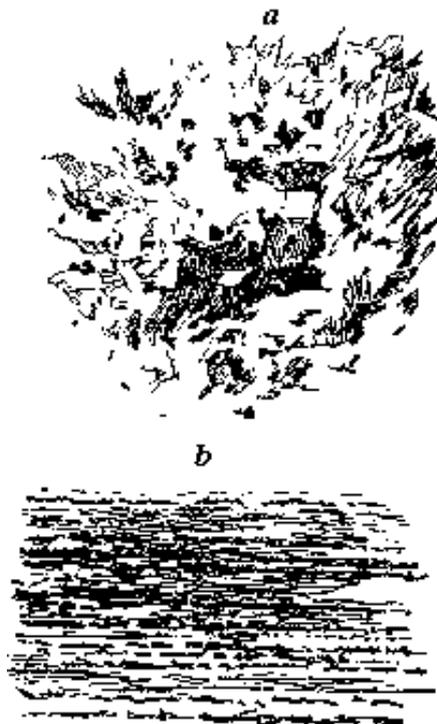


Fig. 3

§ 13. Now when these crystals, or grains, represented by the black spots and lines in Fig. 3, lie as they do at *a* in that figure, in all directions, cast hither and thither among the other materials of the stone,—sometimes on their faces, sometimes on their sides, sometimes on their edges,—they give the rock an irregularly granulated appearance and structure, so that it will break with equal ease in any direction; but if these crystals lie all one way, with their

¹ [In the proof of *In Montibus Sanctis*, Ruskin transferred the remainder of § 12 to a footnote.]

sides parallel, as at *b*, they give the rock a striped or slaty look, and it will most readily break in the direction in which they lie, separating itself into folia or plates, more or less distinctly according to the quantity of mica in its mass. In the example Fig. 4,* a piece of rock from the top of Mont Breven, there are very few of them, and the material with which they are surrounded is so hard and

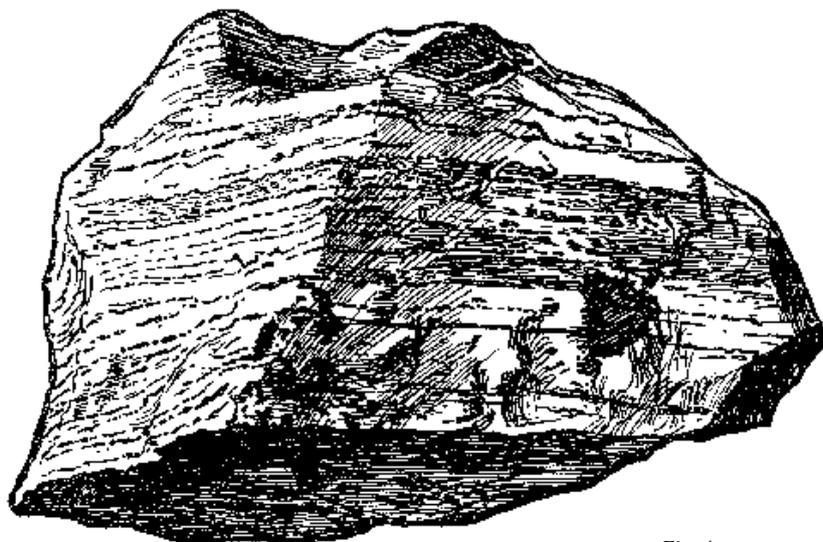


Fig. 4

compact that the whole mass breaks irregularly, like a solid flint, beneath the hammer; but the plates of mica nevertheless influence the fracture on a large scale, and occasion, as we shall see hereafter, the peculiar form of the precipice at the summit of the mountain.†

* Real size. The carelessness of recent writers in not giving the scale of sections and drawings is productive of all kinds of error. [1885 Proof.]

† See Appendix 2. Slaty Cleavage.1

¹ [*i.e.*, on the general subject of Rock Cleavage. A note added by Ruskin at this point in the proof of *In Montibus Sanctis*, shows that he meant to print the Appendix (p. 475) as ch. vi. of that work. For the special reference to the precipice at the summit of the Breven, see p. 280.]

The rocks, in which the mica lies irregularly, or in which it is altogether absent,¹ I shall call Compact Crystallines. The rocks in which the mica lies regularly I shall call Slaty Crystallines.

§ 14. 1st. Compact Crystallines.—Under this head are embraced the large group of the granites, syenites, and porphyries,—rocks which all agree in the following particulars:—

A. Variety of colour.—The method of their composition out of different substances necessitates their being all more or less spotted or dashed with various colours; there being generally a prevalent ground colour, with other subordinate hues broken over it, forming, for the most part, tones of silver grey, of warm but subdued red, or purple. Now, there is in this a very marvellous provision for the beauty of the central ranges. Other rocks, placed lower among the hills, receive colour upon their surfaces from all kinds of minute vegetation; but these higher and more exposed rocks are liable to be in many parts barren; and the wild forms into which they are thrown necessitate their being often freshly broken, so as to bring their pure colour, untempered in anywise, frankly into sight. Hence it is appointed that this colour shall not be raw or monotonous, but composed—as all beautiful colour must be composed—by mingling of many hues in one. Not that there is any aim at *attractive* beauty in these rocks; they are intended to constitute solemn and desolate scenes; and there is nothing delicately or variously disposed in their colours. Such beauty would have been inconsistent with their expression of power and terror, and it is reserved for the marbles and other rocks of inferior office. But their colour is grave and perfect; closely resembling, in many cases, the sort of hue reached by cross-chequering in the ground of fourteenth-century manuscripts, and peculiarly calculated for distant effects

COMPACT
CRYSTALLINES.

Their first characteristic.
Speckledness.

¹ [In previous eds., “The rocks which are destitute of mica, or in which the mica lies irregularly . . .”; the alteration was made by Ruskin in the proof for *In Montibus Sanctis*.]

of light; being, for the most part, slightly warm in tone, so as to receive with full advantage the red and orange rays of sunlight. This warmth is almost always farther aided by a glowing orange colour, derived from the decomposition of the iron which, though in small quantity, usually is an essential element in them: the orange hue forms itself in unequal veins and spots upon the surfaces which have been long exposed, more or less darkening them; and a very minute black lichen,—so minute as to look almost like spots of dark paint,—a little opposed and warmed by the golden Lichen geographicus,¹ still farther subdues the paler hues of the highest granite rocks. Now, when a surface of this kind is removed to a distance of four or five miles, and seen under warm light through soft air, the orange becomes russet, more or less inclining to pure red, according to the power of the rays: but the black of the lichen becomes *pure dark blue*; and the result of their combination is that peculiar reddish purple which is so strikingly the characteristic of the rocks of the higher Alps. Most of the travellers who have seen the Valley of Chamouni carry away a strong impression that its upper precipices are of red rock. But they are, without exception, of a whitish grey, toned and raised by this united operation of the iron, the lichen, and the light.

§ 15. I have never had an opportunity of studying the effects of these tones upon rocks of porphyry; but the beautiful colour of that rock in its interior substance has rendered it one of the favourite materials of the architects of all ages, in their most costly work. Not that all porphyry is purple; there are green and white porphyries, as there are yellow and white roses; but the first idea of a porphyry rock is that it shall be purple; just as the first idea of a rose is that it shall be red. The purple inclines always toward russet* rather than blue, and is subdued by small

* As we had to complain of Dante for not enough noticing the colours

¹ [Ruskin had noted this colour effect in his early essay on *The Poetry of Architecture* (§ 53): see Vol. I. p. 47.]

spots of grey or white. This speckled character, common to all the crystalline rocks, fits them, in art, for large and majestic work; it unfits them for delicate sculpture; and their second universal characteristic is altogether in harmony with this consequence of their first.

§ 16. This second characteristic is a tough hardness, not a brittle hardness, like that of glass or flint, which will splinter violently at a blow in the most unexpected directions; but a grave hardness, which will bear many blows before it yields, and when it is forced to yield at last, will do so, as it were, in a serious and thoughtful way; not spitefully, nor uselessly, nor irregularly, but in the direction in which it is wanted, and where the force of the blow is directed—there, and there only. A flint which receives a shock stronger than it can bear, gives up everything at once, and flies into a quantity of pieces, each piece full of flaws. But a piece of granite seems to say to itself, very solemnly: “If these

*Their second
characteristic.
Toughness.*

of rocks in wild nature, let us do him the justice to refer to his noble symbolic use of their colours when seen in the hewn block

“The lowest stair was marble white, so smooth
And polished that therein my mirrored form,
Distinct I saw. The next of hue more dark
Than sablest grain, a rough and singed block,
Cracked lengthwise and across. The third, that lay
Massy above, seemed porphyry, that flamed
Red as the life-blood spouting from a vein.”

This stair is at the gate of Purgatory. The white step is said to mean sincerity of conscience; the black, contrition; the purple, pardon by the Atonement. (I do not answer for the interpretation. The idea is assuredly taken from the white, black, and red of Greek mosaic, as is the font of Pisa. Black slate is still used for the ground of Florentine mosaic.)¹

¹ [*Purgatorio*, ix. 94–102 (the translation is Cary’s). The earlier reference to the colours of rocks in Dante is at Vol. V. p. 297. The commentators variously interpret the coloured stairs (compare Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, iii. 516: “Each stair mysteriously was meant”); some preferring to say that the first is candid confession; the second, mournful contrition; and the third, ardent love (see Maria Rossetti’s *Shadow of Dante*, p. 112, and Paget Toynbee’s *Dante Dictionary*, s.v. “Porta del Purgatorio”). The concluding portion of Ruskin’s note—“I do not answer,” etc.—was added by him in brackets in the proof of *In Montibus Sanctis*, where also he substituted “is said to mean” for “means” (in eds. 1–3), and struck out the words “(I believe)” after “purple” (in all eds. hitherto).]

people are resolved to split me into two pieces, that is no reason why I should split *myself* into three. I will keep together as well as I can, and as long as I can; and if I must fall to dust at last, it shall be slowly and honourably; not in a fit of fury." The importance of this character, in fitting the rock for human uses, cannot be exaggerated: it is essential to such uses that it should be hard, for otherwise it could not bear enormous weight without being crushed; and if, in addition to this hardness, it had been brittle, like glass, it could not have been employed except in the rudest way, as flints are in Kentish walls. But now it is possible to cut a block of granite out of its quarry to exactly the size we want; and that with perfect ease, without gunpowder, or any help but that of a few small iron wedges, a chisel, and a heavy hammer. A single workman can detach a mass fifteen or twenty feet long, by merely drilling a row of holes, a couple of inches deep, and three or four inches apart, along the surface, in the direction in which he wishes to split the rock, and then inserting wedges into each of these holes, and striking them, consecutively, with small, light, repeated blows along the whole row. The granite rends, at last, along the line, quite evenly, requiring very little chiselling afterwards to give the block a smooth face.

§ 17. This after-chiselling, however, is necessarily tedious work, and therefore that condition of speckled colour, which is beautiful if exhibited in broad masses, but offensive in delicate forms, exactly falls in with the conditions of *possible* sculpture. Not only is it more laborious to carve granite delicately, than a softer rock; but it is physically impossible to bring it into certain refinements of form. It cannot be scraped and touched into contours, as marble can; it must be struck hard, or it will not yield at all; and to strike a delicate and detached form hard, is to break it. The detached fingers of a delicate hand, for instance, cannot, as far as I know, be cut in granite. The smallest portion could not be removed from them without a strength

of blow which would break off the finger. Hence the sculptor of granite is forced to confine himself to, and to seek for, certain types of form capable of expression in his material; he is naturally driven to make his figures simple in surface, and colossal in size, that they may bear his blows; and this simplicity and magnitude are exactly the characters necessary to show the granitic or porphyritic colour to the best advantage. And thus we are guided, almost forced, by the laws of nature, to do right in art. Had granite been white and marble speckled (and why should this not have been, but by the definite Divine appointment for the good of man?), the huge figures of the Egyptian would have been as oppressive to the sight as cliffs of snow, and the Venus de' Medici would have looked like some exquisitely graceful species of frog.¹

§ 18. The third universal characteristic of these rocks is their decomposition into the purest sand and clay. Some of them decompose spontaneously, though slowly, on exposure to weather; the greater number only after being mechanically pulverized; but the sand and clay to which by one or the other process they are reducible, are both remarkable for their purity. The clay is the finest and best that can be found for porcelain; the sand often of the purest white, always lustrous and bright in its particles. The result of this law is a peculiar aspect of purity in the landscape composed of such rocks. It cannot become muddy, or foul, or unwholesome. The streams which descend through it may indeed be opaque, and as white as cream with the churned substance of the granite; but their water, after this substance has been thrown down, is good and pure, and their shores are not slimy or treacherous, but of pebbles, or of firm and sparkling sand. The quiet streams, springs, and lakes among them are always of exquisite clearness, and the sea which washes a granite coast

*Their third
characteristic.
Purity in de-
composition.*

¹ [On this subject of the correspondence of materials in nature to service in art, compare Vol. XI. p. 38, Vol. XII. p. 200; see also below, p. 162.]

is as unsullied as a flawless emerald. It is remarkable to what an extent this intense purity in the country seems to influence the character of its inhabitants. It is almost impossible to make a cottage built in a granite country look absolutely miserable. Rough it may be,—neglected, cold, full of aspect of hardship,—but it never can look *foul*; no matter how carelessly, how indolently, its inhabitants may live, the water at their doors will not stagnate, the soil beneath their feet will not allow itself to be trodden into slime, the timbers of their fences will not rot, they cannot so much as dirty their faces or hands if they try; do the worst they can, there will still be a feeling of firm ground under them, and pure air about them, and an inherent wholesomeness in their abodes which it will need the misery of years to conquer. And, as far as I remember, the inhabitants of granite countries have always a force and healthiness of character, more or less abated or modified, of course, according to the other circumstances of their life, but still definitely belonging to them, as distinguished from the inhabitants of the less pure districts of the hills.

These, then, are the principal characters of the compact crystallines, regarded in their minor or detached masses. Of the peculiar forms which they assume we shall have to speak presently; meantime, retaining these general ideas touching their nature and substance, let us proceed to examine, at the same point of view, the neighbouring group of slaty crystallines.

POSTSCRIPT [1885]

For many reasons, which will appear one by one in the course of this work,¹ I think it well to give, for postscript to this chapter, a translation of Saussure's introductory account of granite, published in 1803, at Neuchatel, Chez Louis Fauche-Borel, Imprimeur *du Roi* (King of Prussia), *Voyages dans les Alpes*, vol. i. chap. v. Les Roches Composées. Granit.

¹ [*i.e.*, the intended sequel of *In Montibus Sanctis*.]

“Granites belong to that class of stones which naturalists name composed stones, or rocks, or living rock, *roc vif*,* the *saxa mixta* of Wallerius. This class includes stones which are composed of two, three, or four different species of stones, intermixed under the form of angular grains, or *folia* (*feuilletés*) *united by the intimacy of their contact, without the help of any stronger gluten.*

“Those which divide themselves by *folia* are called schistous rocks, or foliated rocks (*Roches schisteuses* ou *Roches feuilletées*). *Saxa fissilia*, Wall. Those which appear composed of grains, and which present neither *folia* nor sensible veins, are named *Rocks in mass. Saxa solida*, Wall. Such are the granites.

“It is these two species of rocks which form the matter of the most elevated mountains, such as the central chains of the Alps, the Cordillera, the Ural, Caucasus, and Altaic mountains. One never finds them seated upon (*assises sur*) mountains of slate (*ardoise*) or of calcareous stone; they serve, on the contrary, for base to these, and have consequently existed before them. They bear then, by just claim, the name of primitive mountains, while those of slate and calcareous stone are qualified as secondary.”

The young reader will do well to fix these simple statements in his head, and by no means let them be shaken in it. Modern geologists will tell him that Mont Blanc is young; but the date of a mountain's elevation is not that of its substance. Granite no more becomes a secondary rock in lifting a bed of chalk than an old man becomes a boy in throwing off his bedclothes. Also modern geologists will tell you that granite and basalt are pretty much the same thing, that each may become the other, and any come to the top. Recollect simply, to begin with, that granite forms delightful and healthy countries, basalt gloomy and oppressive ones, and that, if you have the misfortune to live under Etna or Hecla, you and your house may both be buried in basalt to-morrow morning; but that nobody was ever buried in granite, unless somebody paid for his tomb. Recollect farther that granite is for the most part visibly composed of three substances, always easily recognisable—quartz, felspar, and mica; but basalt may be made of anything on the face or in the stomach of the Earth. And recollect finally, that there was assuredly a time when the Earth had no animals upon it—another time when it had only nasty and beastly animals upon it, and that at this time it has a great many beautiful and angelic animals upon it, tormented out of their lives by one extremely foolish two-legged one. To these three periods, the first of chaotic solitude, the second of rampant monstrosity, and the third of ruthless beauty, the names of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary may justly hold for ever—be the Fourth Age what it may.

* The modern reader passes as merely poetical the words “living rock” of former good writers. But living rock is as distinct from dead, as heart of oak from dry rot. In accuracy, “living” is the word used by the natural human sense to express the difference between a crystalline rock, and one of mere coagulated sand or slime.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE MATERIALS OF MOUNTAINS:—SECONDLY, SLATY CRYSTALLINES

§ 1. It will be remembered that we said in the last chapter (§ 4) that one of the notable characters of the whole group of the crystallines was the incomprehensibility of the processes which have brought them to their actual state. This however is more peculiarly true of the slaty crystallines. It is perfectly possible, by many processes of chemistry, to produce masses of irregular crystals, which, though not of the substance of granite, are very like it in their mode of arrangement. But, as far as I am aware, it is impossible to produce artificially anything resembling the structure of the slaty crystallines. And the more I have examined the rocks themselves, the more I have felt at once the difficulty of explaining the method of their formation, and the growing interest of inquiries respecting that method. The facts (and I can venture to give nothing more than facts) are briefly these:—

§ 2. The mineral called mica, described in the course of the last chapter, is closely connected with another, differing from it in containing a considerable quantity of magnesia. This associated mineral, called chlorite, is of a dull greenish colour, and opaque, while the mica is, in thin plates, more or less translucent; and the chlorite is apt to occur more in the form of a green earth, or green dust, than of finely divided plates. The original quantity of magnesia in the rock determines how far the mica shall give place to chlorite; and in the intermediate conditions of rock we find a black and nearly opaque mica, containing

a good deal of magnesia, together with a chlorite, which at first seems mixed with small plates of true mica, or is itself formed of minute plates or spangles, and then, as the quantity of magnesia increases, assumes its proper form of a dark green earth.

§ 3. By this appointment there is obtained a series of materials by which the appearance of the rock may be varied to almost any extent. From plates of brilliant white mica half a foot broad, flashing in the sun like panes of glass, to a minute film of dark green dust, hardly traceable by the eye, an infinite range of conditions is found in the different groups of rocks; but always under this general law, that, for the most part, the compact crystallines present the purest and boldest plates of mica; and the tendency to pass into slaty crystallines is commonly accompanied by the change of the whiteness of the mica to a dark or black colour, indicating (I believe) the presence of magnesia, and by the gradual intermingling with it of chloritic earth; or else of a cognate mineral (differing from chlorite in containing a quantity of lime) called hornblende.

Such, at least, is eminently the case in the Alps; and in the account I have to give of their slaty crystallines, it must be understood that in using the word "mica" generally, I mean the more obscure conditions of the mineral, associated with chlorite and hornblende.

§ 4. Now it is quite easy to understand how, in the compact crystallines, the various elements of the rock, separating from each other as they congealed from their fluid state, whether of watery solution or fiery fusion, might arrange themselves in irregular grains, as at *a* in Fig. 3, p. 137. Such an arrangement constantly takes place before our eyes in volcanic rocks as they cool. But it is not at all easy to understand how the white, hard, and comparatively heavy substances should throw themselves into knots and bands in one definite direction, and the delicate films of mica should undulate about and between them, as in Fig. 5, on next page, like rivers among islands, pursuing,

however, on the whole, a straight course across the mass of rock. If it could be shown that such pieces of stone had been formed in the horizontal position in which I have drawn the one in the figure, the structure would be somewhat intelligible as the result of settlement. But, on the contrary, the lines of such foliated rocks hardly ever are horizontal; neither can distinct evidence be found of their at any time having been so. The evidence, on the contrary,

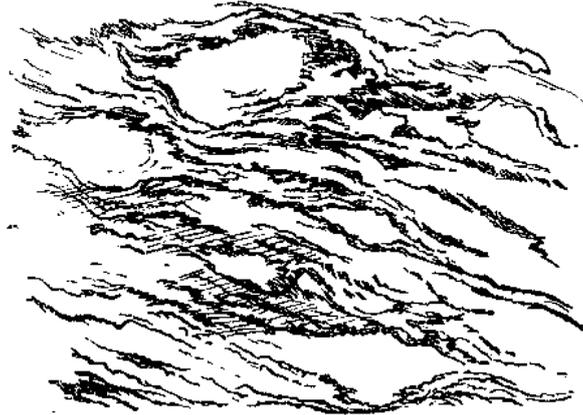


Fig. 5

is often strongly in favour of their having been formed in the highly inclined directions in which they now occur, such as that of the piece in Fig. 7, p. 151.*

§ 5. Such, however, is the simple fact, that when the compact crystallines are about to pass into slaty crystallines, their mica throws itself into these bands and zones, undulating around knots of the other substances which compose the rock. Gradually the knots diminish in size, the mica becomes more abundant and more definite in direction, and at last the mass, when broken across the beds, assumes the appearance of Fig. 6, on next page.†

* See again Appendix 2. Slaty Cleavage [p. 476.]

† This is a piece of the gneiss of the Montanvert, near the Châlets of Blaitière dessous.

Now it will be noticed that, in the lines of that figure, no less than in Fig. 5, though more delicately, there is a subdued, but continual, expression of *undulation*. This character belongs, more or less, to nearly the whole mass of the slaty crystalline rocks; it is one of exquisite beauty, and of the highest importance to their picturesque forms. It is also one of as great mysteriousness as beauty. For these two figures are selected from crystallines whose beds

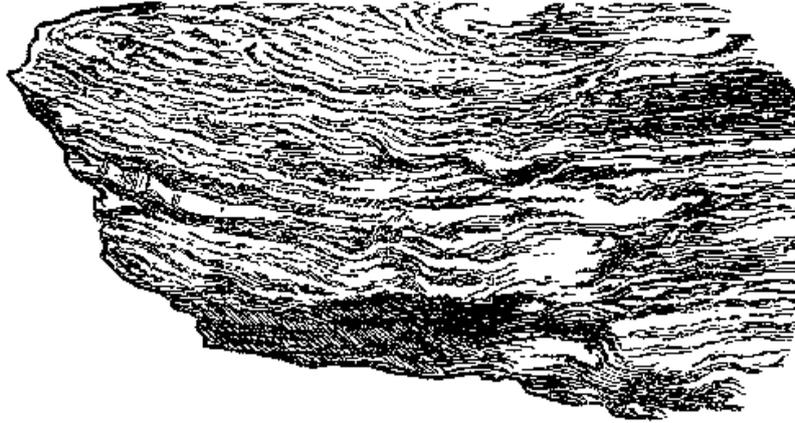


Fig. 6

are! remarkably straight; in the greater number the undulation becomes far more violent, and, in many, passes into absolute contortion. Fig. 7 is a piece of a slaty crystalline, rich in mica, from the valley of St. Nicolas, below Zermatt. The rock from which it was broken was thrown into coils three or four feet across: the fragment, which is drawn of the real size, was at one of the turns, and came away like a thick portion of a crumpled quire of paper from the other sheets.*

* Some idea may be formed of the nature of these incurvations by supposing the gneiss beds to have been in a plastic state, either from the action of heat or of some other unknown cause, and, while in this state, to have been subjected to pressure at the two extremities, or in some other parts, according to the nature of the curvatures. But even this

§ 6. I might devote half a volume to a description of the fantastic and incomprehensible arrangements of these rocks and their veins; but all that is necessary for the general reader to know or remember, is this broad fact of the *undulation* of their whole substance. For there is something, it seems to me, inexpressibly marvellous in this phenomenon, largely looked at. It is to be remembered that these are the rocks which, on the average, will be oftenest observed, and with the greatest interest, by the human race. The central granites are too far removed, the lower rocks too common, to be carefully studied; these slaty crystallines form the noblest hills that are easily accessible, and seem to be thus calculated especially to attract observation, and reward it. Well, we begin to examine them; and, first, we find a notable hardness in them, and a thorough boldness of general character, which make us regard them as very types of perfect rocks. They have nothing of the look of dried earth about them, nothing petty or limited in the display of their bulk. Where they are,¹ they seem to form

hypothesis (though the best that has been thought of) will scarcely enable us to explain all the contortions which not merely the beds of gneiss, but likewise of mica slate and clay slate, and even greywacke slate, exhibit. There is a bed of clay slate near the ferry to Kerrera, a few miles south of Oban, in Argyleshire. This bed has been partly wasted away by the sea, and its structure exposed to view. It contains a central cylindrical nucleus of unknown length (but certainly considerable), round which six beds of clay slate are wrapped, the one within the other, so as to form six concentric cylinders. Now, however plastic the clay slate may have been, there is no kind of pressure which will account for this structure; the central cylinder would have required to have been rolled six times in succession (allowing an interval for solidification between each) in the plastic clay slate.—*Outlines of Mineralogy, Geology, etc.*, by Thomas Thomson, M. D.²

¹ [The passage, “Where they are . . .” down to the end of § 6, is § 34 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Passage written after I had got by some years cooler and wiser than when I wrote No. 33; describing however the undulation of the gneiss rocks, which, ‘where they are, seem to form the world,’ in terms more fanciful than I now like.”

“No. 33” is a passage from *Modern Painters*, vol. i., about the mountain peaks “lifting up their Titan heads to Heaven” (Vol. III. p. 427).]

² [The above note is Ruskin’s; the reference at the end is to vol. ii. pp. 184–185 of the work cited (1836), where the Oban conglomerate is described.]

the world; no mere bank of a river here, or of a lane there, peeping out among the hedges or forests: but from the lowest valley to the highest clouds, all is theirs—one



Fig. 7

adamantine dominion and rigid authority of rock. We yield ourselves to the impression of their eternal, unconquerable stubbornness of strength; their mass seems the least yielding, least to be softened, or in anywise dealt with by external force, of all earthly substance. And, behold, as

we look farther into it, it is all touched and troubled, like waves by a summer breeze; rippled, far more delicately than seas or lakes are rippled: *they* only undulate along their surfaces—this rock trembles through its every fibre, like the chords of an Eolian harp—like the stillest air of spring with the echoes of a child's voice. Into the heart of all those great mountains, through every tossing of their boundless crests, and deep beneath all their unfathomable defiles, flows that strange quivering of their substance. Other and weaker things seem to express their subjection to an Infinite power only by momentary terrors: as the weeds bow down before the feverish wind, and the sound of the going in the tops of the taller trees passes on before the clouds, and the fitful opening of pale spaces on the dark water, as if some invisible hand were casting dust abroad upon it, gives warning of the anger that is to come, we may well imagine that there is indeed a fear passing upon the grass, and leaves, and waters, at the presence of some great spirit commissioned to let the tempest loose; but the terror passes, and their sweet rest is perpetually restored to the pastures and the waves. Not so to the mountains. They, which at first seemed strengthened beyond the dread of any violence or change, are yet, also ordained to bear upon them the symbol of a perpetual Fear: the tremor which fades from the soft lake and gliding river is sealed, to all eternity, upon the rock; and while things that pass visibly from birth to death may sometimes forget their feebleness, the mountains are made to possess a perpetual memorial of their infancy,—that infancy which the prophet saw in his vision:¹ “I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void, and the

¹ [Here again in *Fronde Agrestes* Ruskin added a note:—

“Utter misinterpretation of the passage. It is the old age, not the childhood, of earth, which Jeremiah describes in this passage. See its true interpretation in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 46.”

The reference is to Jeremiah iv. 22–24, a passage which, as Ruskin explains in *Fors*, describes “the great reverse of creation, and wrath of God, accomplished on the earth by the fiends, and by men their ministers.”]

heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they *trembled*; and all the hills *moved lightly*.”

§ 7. Thus far may we trace the apparent typical signification of the structure of those noble rocks. The material uses of this structure are not less important. These substances of the higher mountains, it is always to be remembered, were to be so hard as to enable them to be raised into, and remain in, the most magnificent forms; and this hardness renders it a matter of great difficulty for the peasant to break them into such masses as are required for his daily purposes. He is compelled in general to gather the fragments which are to form the walls of his house or his garden from the ruins into which the mountain suffers its ridges to be naturally broken: and if these pieces were absolutely irregular in shape, it would be a matter of much labour and skill to build securely with them. But the flattened arrangement of the layers of mica always causes the rock to break into flattish fragments, requiring hardly any pains in the placing them so as to lie securely in a wall, and furnishing light, broad, and unflawed pieces to serve for slates upon the roof; for fences, when set edgeways into the ground; or for pavements, when laid flat.

*Serviceable
character of
the Slaty
Crystalliness.*

*1. Fitness for
building with.*

§ 8. Farther: whenever rocks break into utterly irregular fragments, the masses of *débris* which they form are not only excessively difficult to walk over, but the pieces touch each other in so few points, and suffer the water to run so easily and so far through their cavities, that it takes a long series of years to enable them either to settle themselves firmly, or receive the smallest covering of vegetation. Where the substance of the stone is soft, it may soon be worn down, so that the irregular form is of less consequence. But in the hard crystallines, unless they had a tendency to break into flattish fragments, their ruins would remain for centuries in impassable desolation. The flat shape of the separate pieces prevents this; it permits—almost necessitates—their fitting

*2. Stability in
débris.*

into and over each other in a tolerably close mass, and thus they become comparatively easy to the foot, less permeable to water, and therefore retentive both of surface moisture and of the seeds of vegetation.

§ 9. There is another result of nearly equal importance as far
3. Security on declivities. as regards the habitableness of the hills. When stones are thrown together in rounded or massy blocks, like a heap of hazel nuts, small force will sometimes disturb their balance; and when once set in motion, a square-built and heavy fragment will thunder down even a slightly sloping declivity, with an impetus as unlikely to be arrested as fatal in its increase. But when stones lie flatly, as dead leaves lie, it is not easy to tilt any one of them upon its edge, so as to set it in motion; and when once moved, it will nearly always slide, not roll, and be stopped by the first obstacle it encounters, catching against it by the edge, or striking into the turf where first it falls, like a hatchet. Were it not for the merciful ordinance that the slaty crystallines should break into thin and flattish fragments, the frequent falls of stones from the hill sides would render many spots among the greater mountain chains utterly uninhabitable, which are now comparatively secure.

§ 10. Of the picturesque aspects which this mode of cleavage
4. Tendency to form the loveliest scenery. produces in the mountains, and in the stones of the foreground, we shall have to speak presently;¹ with regard to the uses of the material it is only necessary to note farther that these slaty rocks are of course, by their wilful way of breaking, rendered unfit for sculpture, and for nearly all purposes of art: the properties which render them convenient for the peasant in building his cottage, making them unavailable for the architecture of more elaborate edifices. One very great advantage is thus secured for the scenery they compose, namely, that it is rarely broken by quarries. A single quarry will often spoil a whole Alpine

¹ [See below, pp. 368–369, with Plate 48, and Appendix ii., pp. 478–479.]

landscape; the effect of the lovely bay of the Lago Maggiore, for instance, in which lie the Borromean Islands, is, in great part, destroyed by the scar caused by a quarry of pink granite on its western shore; and the valley of Chamouni itself has lost some of its loveliest rock scenery in consequence of the unfortunate discovery that the boulders which had fallen from its higher pinnacles, and were lying in massy heaps among its pines, were available for stone lintels and door-posts in the building of its new inns. But the slaty crystallines, though sometimes containing valuable mines, are hardly ever quarried for stone; and the scenes they compose retain in general, little disturbed by man, their aspect of melancholy power, or simple and noble peace. The colour of their own mass, when freshly broken, is nearly the same as that of the compact crystallines: but it is far more varied by veins and zones of included minerals, and contains usually more iron, which gives a rich brown or golden colour to their exposed sides, so that the colouring of these rocks is the most glowing to be found in the mountain world. They form also soil for vegetation more quickly, and of a more fruitful kind than the granites, and appear, on the whole, intended to unite every character of grandeur and of beauty, and to constitute the loveliest as well as the noblest scenes which the earth ever unfolds to the eyes of men.

CHAPTER X

OF THE MATERIALS OF MOUNTAINS:—THIRDLY, SLATY COHERENTS

§ 1. It will be remembered that we resolved¹ to give generally the term “coherent” to those rocks which appeared to be composed of one compact substance, not of several materials. But, as in all the arrangements of Nature we find that her several classes pass into each other by imperceptible gradations, and that there is no ruling of red lines between one and the other, we need not suppose that we shall find any plainly distinguishable limit between the crystalline and coherent rocks. Sometimes, indeed, a very distinctly marked crystalline will be joined by a coherent rock so sharply and neatly that it is possible to break off specimens, no larger than a walnut, containing portions of each; but far more frequently the transition from one to the other is effected gradually; or, if not, there exist, at any rate, in other places intervening, a series of rocks which possess an imperfectly crystalline character, passing down into that of simple coherence. This transition is usually effected through the different kinds of slate; the slaty crystallines becoming more and more fine in texture, until at last they appear composed of nothing but very fine mica or chlorite; and this mass of micaceous substance becomes more and more compact and silky in texture, losing its magnesia, and containing more of the earth which forms the substance of clay, until at last it assumes the familiar appearance of roofing slate, the noblest example of the coherent rocks. I call it the noblest, as being the nearest to the crystallines, and possessing much in common with them.
Connected

¹ [Above, p. 133.]

with this well-known substance are enormous masses of other rocks, more or less resembling it in character, of which the following are universal characteristics.

§ 2. First. They nearly always, as just said, contain more of the earth, which is the basis of clay, than the crystalline rocks; and they can be scratched or crushed with much greater facility. The point of a knife will trace a continuous powdery streak upon most of the coherent rocks; while it will be quite powerless against a large portion of the granular knots in the crystallines. Besides this actual softness of substance, the slaty coherents are capable of very fine division into flakes, not irregularly and contortedly, like the crystallines, but straightly, so as to leave a silky lustre on the sides of the fragments, as in roofing slate;¹ and separating with great ease, yielding to a slight pressure against the edge. Consequently, although the slaty coherents are capable of forming large and bold mountains, they are liable to all kinds of destruction and decay in a far greater degree than the crystallines; giving way in large masses under frost, and crumbling into heaps of flaky rubbish, which in its turn dissolves or is ground down into impalpable dust or mud, and carried to great distances by the mountain streams. These characters render the slaty coherents peculiarly adapted for the support of vegetation; and as, though apparently homogeneous, they usually contain as many chemical elements as the crystallines, they constitute (as far as regards the immediate nourishment of soils) the most important part of mountain ranges.

§ 3. I have already often had occasion to allude to the apparent connection of brilliancy of colour with vigour of life, or purity of substance. This is pre-eminently the case in the mineral kingdom.

Characteristics of Slaty Coherents.

1. *Softness of texture.*

2. *Lamination of Structure. Compare Chap. xi., § 4.*

3. *Darkness and blueness in colour.*

¹ [In one of his copies for revision, Ruskin here refers the reader (as already in the marginal summary) to the passage in ch. xi. § 4 (p. 164), "However thin the bed may be," etc.]

The perfection with which the particles of any substance unite in crystallization, corresponds, in that kingdom, to the vital power in organic nature; and it is a universal law, that according to the purity of any substance, and according to the energy of its crystallization, is its beauty or brightness. Pure earths are without exception white when in powder; and the same earths which are the constituents of clay and sand, form, when crystallized, the emerald, ruby, sapphire, amethyst, and opal. Darkness and dulness of colour are the universal signs of dissolution, or disorderly mingling of elements.*

§ 4. Accordingly, these slaty coherents, being usually composed of many elements imperfectly united, are also for the most part grey, black, or dull purple; those which are purest and hardest verging most upon purple, and some of them in certain lights displaying on their smooth sides, very beautiful zones and changeful spaces of grey, russet, and obscure blue. But even this beauty is strictly connected with their preservation of such firmness of form as properly belongs to them; it is seen chiefly on their even and silky surfaces: less, in comparison, upon their broken edges, and is lost altogether when they are reduced to powder. They then form a dull grey dust, or, with moisture, a black slime, of great value as a vegetative earth, but of intense ugliness when it occurs in extended spaces in mountain scenery. And thus the slaty coherents are often employed to form those landscapes of which the purpose appears to be to impress us with a sense of horror and pain, as a foil to neighbouring scenes of extreme beauty. There are many spots among the inferior ridges of the Alps, such as the Col de Ferret, the Col d'Anterne, and the associated ranges of the Buet, which, though commanding prospects of great nobleness, are themselves very nearly types of all that is most painful to the human mind.

* Compare the close of § 11, Chap. iii., Vol. III., and here, Chap. III., § 23. [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 55, and above, p. 68.]

Vast wastes of mountain ground,¹ covered here and there with dull grey grass or moss, but breaking continually into black banks of shattered slate, all glistening and sodden with slow tricklings of clogged, incapable streams; the snow water oozing through them in a cold sweat, and spreading itself in creeping stains among their dust; ever and anon a shaking here and there, and a handful or two of their particles or flakes trembling down, one sees not why, into more total dissolution; leaving a few jagged teeth, like the edges of knives eaten away by vinegar, projecting through the half-dislodged mass from the inner rock, keen enough to cut the hand or foot that rests on them, yet crumbling as they wound, and soon sinking again into the smooth, slippery, glutinous heap, looking like a beach of black scales of dead fish, cast ashore from a poisonous sea; and sloping away into the foul ravines, branched down immeasurable slopes of barrenness, where the winds howl and wander continually, and the snow lies in wasted and sorrowful fields, covered with sooty dust, that collects in streaks and stains at the bottom of all its thawing ripples. I know no other scenes so appalling as these in storm, or so woful in sunshine.

§ 5. Where, however, these same rocks exist in more favourable positions, that is to say, in gentler banks and at lower elevations, they form a ground for the most luxuriant vegetation; and the valleys of Savoy owe to them some of their loveliest solitudes,—exquisitely rich pastures, interspersed with arable and orchard land, and shaded by groves of walnut and cherry. Scenes of this kind, and of that just described, so singularly opposed, and apparently brought together as foils to each other, are, however, peculiar to certain beds of the slaty

*4. Great power
of supporting
vegetation.*

¹ [The passage, “There are many spots . . .” down to the end of § 5, is § 36 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“This is a fourth volume passage,—and I will venture to say of it, as Albert Dürer, when he was pleased with his work—that, for what it had to do, it cannot be much better done. It is a study on the Col de Bonhomme.”

For Dürer’s saying, see also Vol. XI. p. 14 *n.* For Ruskin’s impressions of the Col du Bonhomme in 1849, see Introduction to Vol. V. p. xxiv.]

coherents, which are both vast in elevation, and easy of destruction. In Wales and Scotland, the same groups of rocks possess far greater hardness, while they attain less elevation; and the result is a totally different aspect of scenery. The severity of the climate, and the comparative durableness of the rock, forbid the rich vegetation; but the exposed summits, though barren, are not subject to laws of destruction so rapid and fearful as in Switzerland; and the natural colour of the rock is oftener developed in the purples and greys which, mingled with the heather, form the principal elements of the deep and beautiful distant blue of the British hills. Their gentler mountain streams also permit the beds of rock to remain in firm, though fantastic, forms along their banks, and the gradual action of the cascades and eddies upon the slaty cleavage produces many pieces of foreground scenery to which higher hills can present no parallel. Of these peculiar conditions we shall have to speak at length in another place.

§ 6. As far as regards ministry to the purposes of man, the slaty coherents are of somewhat more value than the slaty crystallines. Most of them can be used in the same way for rough buildings, while they furnish finer plates or sheets for roofing. It would be difficult, perhaps, to estimate the exact importance of their educational influence in the form of drawing-slate. For sculpture they are, of course, altogether unfit, but I believe certain finer conditions of them are employed for a dark ground in Florentine mosaic.

§ 7. It remains only to be noticed, that the direction of the lamination (or separation into small folia) is, in these rocks, not always, nor even often, indicative of the true direction of their larger beds. It is not, however, necessary for the reader to enter into questions of such complicated nature as those which belong to the study of slaty cleavage; and only a few points, which I could not pass over, are noted in the Appendix;¹ but it is necessary to observe here,

¹ [Appendix ii., p. 476.]

§5. *Adaptation to architecture and the fine arts.*

that all rocks, however constituted, or however disposed, have certain ways of breaking in one direction rather than another, and separating themselves into blocks by means of smooth cracks or fissures, technically called joints, which often influence their forms more than either the position of their beds, or their slaty lamination; and always are conspicuous in their weathered masses. Of these, however, as it would be wearisome to enter into more detail at present, I rather choose to speak incidentally, as we meet with examples of their results in the scenery we have to study more particularly.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE MATERIALS OF MOUNTAINS:—FOURTHLY, COMPACT COHERENTS

§ 1. THIS group of rocks, the last we have to examine, is, as far as respects geographical extent and usefulness to the human race, more important than any of the preceding ones. It forms the greater part of all low hills and uplands throughout the world, and supplies the most valuable materials for building and sculpture, being distinguished from the group of the slaty coherents by its incapability of being separated into thin sheets. All the rocks belonging to the group break irregularly, like loaf sugar or dried clay. Some of them are composed of hardened calcareous matter, and are known as limestone; others are merely hardened sand, and are called freestone or sandstone; and others, appearing to consist of dried mud or clay, are of less general importance, and receive different names in different localities.

§ 2. Among these rocks, the foremost position is, of course, occupied by the great group of the marbles, of which the substance appears to have been prepared expressly in order to afford to human art a perfect means of carrying out its purposes.¹ They are of exactly the necessary hardness,—neither so soft as to be incapable of maintaining themselves in delicate forms, nor so hard as always to require a blow to give effect to the sculptor's touch; the mere pressure of his chisel produces a certain effect upon them. The colour of the white varieties is of exquisite delicacy, owing to the partial translucency of the pure rock;

¹ [On this subject compare p. 143, above.]

and it has always appeared to me a most wonderful ordinance,—one of the most *marked* pieces of purpose in the creation,—that all the variegated kinds should be comparatively opaque, so as to set off the colour on the surface, while the white, which if it had been opaque would have looked somewhat coarse (as, for instance, common chalk does), is rendered just translucent enough to give an impression of extreme purity, but not so translucent as to interfere in the least with the distinctness of any forms into which it is wrought. The colours of variegated marbles are also for the most part very beautiful, especially those composed of purple, amber, and green, with white; and there seems to be something notably attractive to the human mind in the vague and veined labyrinths of their arrangements. They are farther marked as the prepared material for human work by the dependence of their beauty on smoothness of surface; for their veins are usually seen but dimly in the native rock; and the colours they assume under the action of weather are inferior to those of the crystallines: it is not until wrought and polished by man that they show their character. Finally, they do not decompose. The exterior surface is sometimes destroyed by a sort of mechanical disruption of its outer flakes, but rarely to the extent in which such action takes place in other rocks; and the most delicate sculptures, if executed in good marble, will remain for ages undeteriorated.

§ 3. Quarries of marble are, however, rare, and we owe the greatest part of the good architecture of this world to the more ordinary limestones and sandstones, easily obtainable in blocks of considerable size, and capable of being broken, sawn, or sculptured with ease; the colour, generally grey, or warm red (the yellow and white varieties becoming grey with age), being exactly that which will distinguish buildings by an agreeable contrast from the vegetation by which they may be surrounded.

To these inferior conditions of the compact coherents we owe also the greater part of the *pretty* scenery of

the inhabited globe. The sweet winding valleys, with peeping cliffs on either side; the light, irregular wanderings of broken streamlets; the knolls and slopes covered with rounded woods; the narrow ravines, carpeted with greensward, and haunted by traditions of fairy or gnome; the jutting crags, crowned by the castle or watch-tower; the white sea-cliff and sheep-fed down; the long succession of coteaux, sunburnt and bristling with vines,—all these owe whatever they have of simple beauty to the peculiar nature of the group of rocks of which we are speaking; a group which, though occasionally found in mountain masses of magnificent form and size, is on the whole characterized by a comparative smallness of scale, and a tendency to display itself less in true mountains than in elevated downs or plains, through which winding valleys, more or less deep, are cut by the action of the streams.

§ 4. It has been said that this group of rocks is distinguished by its incapability of being separated into sheets. This is only true of it in small portions, for it is usually deposited in beds or layers of irregular thickness, which are easily separable from each other; and when, as not unfrequently happens, some of these beds are only half an inch or a quarter of an inch thick, the rock appears to break into flat plates like a slaty coherent. But this appearance is deceptive. However thin the bed may be, it will be found that it is in its own substance compact, and not separable into two other beds; but the true slaty coherents possess a delicate slatiness of structure, carried into their most minute portions, so that however thin a piece of them may be, it is usually possible, if we have instruments fine enough, to separate it into two still thinner flakes. As, however, the slaty and compact crystallines, so also the slaty and compact coherents pass into each other by subtle gradations, and present many intermediate conditions, very obscure and indefinable.

§ 5. I said just now that the colours of the compact coherents were usually such as would pleasantly distinguish

buildings from vegetation. They are so; but, considered as abstract hues, are yet far less agreeable than those of the nobler and older rocks. And it is to be noticed, that as these inferior rocks are the materials with which we usually build, they form the ground of the idea suggested to most men's minds by the word "stone," and therefore the general term "stone-colour" is used in common parlance as expressive of the hue to which the compact coherents for the most part approximate. By stone-colour I suppose we all understand a sort of tawny grey, with too much yellow in it to be called cold, and too little to be called warm. And it is quite true that over enormous districts of Europe, composed of what are technically known as "Jura" and "mountain" limestones, and various pale sandstones, such is generally the colour of any freshly broken rock which peeps out along the sides of their gentler hills. It becomes a little greyer as it is coloured by time, but never reaches anything like the noble hues of the gneiss and slate; the very lichens which grow upon it are poorer and paler; and although the deep wood mosses will sometimes bury it altogether in golden cushions, the minor mosses, whose office is to decorate and chequer the rocks without concealing them, are always more meagrely set on these limestones than on the crystallines.

§ 6. I never have had time to examine and throw into classes the varieties of the mosses which grow on the two kinds of rock, nor have I been able to ascertain whether there are really numerous differences between the species, or whether they only grow more luxuriantly on the crystallines than on the coherents. But this is certain, that on the broken rocks of the foreground in the crystalline groups the mosses seem to set themselves consentfully and deliberately to the task of producing the most exquisite harmonies of colour in their power. They will not conceal the form of the rock, but will gather over it in little brown bosses, like small cushions of velvet made of mixed threads of dark ruby silk and gold, rounded over more subdued

films of white and grey, with lightly crisped and curled edges like hoar frost on fallen leaves, and minute clusters of upright orange stalks with pointed caps, and fibres of deep green, and gold,¹ and faint purple passing into black, all woven together, and following with unimaginable fineness of gentle growth the undulation of the stone they cherish, until it is charged with colour so that it can receive no more; and instead of looking rugged, or cold, or stern, as² anything that a rock is held to be at heart, it seems to be clothed with a soft, dark leopard skin, embroidered with arabesque of purple and silver. But in the lower ranges this is not so. The mosses grow in more independent spots, not in such a clinging and tender way over the whole surface; the lichens are far poorer and fewer; and the colour of the stone itself is seen more frequently; altered, if at all, only into a little chiller grey than when it is freshly broken. So that a limestone landscape is apt to be dull and cold in general tone, with some aspect even of barrenness. The sandstones are much richer in vegetation: there are, perhaps, no scenes in our own island more interesting than the wooded dingles which traverse them, the red rocks glowing out on either side, and shelving down into the pools of their deep brown rivers, as at Jedburgh and Langholme; the steep oak copses climbing the banks, the paler plumes of birch shaking themselves free into the light of the sky above, and the few arches of the monastery where the fields in the glen are greenest, or the stones of the border tower where its cliffs are steepest, rendering both field and cliff a thousandfold more dear to the heart and sight. But deprived of such associations, and compared in their mere natural beauty with the ravines of the central ranges, there can be no question but that even the loveliest passages of such scenery are imperfect and poor in foreground colour. And at first there would seem to

¹ [Ruskin here notes in the margin of one of his copies "Dew on a lichen."]

² [So in all eds. and apparently in the MS., but the sense seems to require "or."]

be an unfairness in this, unlike the usual system of compensation which so often manifests itself throughout nature. The higher mountains have their scenes of power and vastness, their blue precipices and cloud-like snows: why should they also have the best and fairest colours given to their foreground rocks, and overburden the human mind with wonder; while the less majestic scenery, tempting us to the observance of details for which amidst the higher mountains we had no admiration left, is yet, in the beauty of those very details, as inferior as it is in scale of magnitude?

§ 7. I believe the answer must be, simply, that it is not good for man to live among what is most beautiful;—that he is a creature incapable of satisfaction by anything upon earth; and that to allow him habitually to possess, in any kind whatsoever, the utmost that earth can give, is the surest way to cast him into lassitude or discontent.

If the most exquisite orchestral music could be continued without a pause for a series of years, and children were brought up and educated in the room in which it was perpetually resounding, I believe their enjoyment of music, or understanding of it, would be very small. And an accurately parallel effect seems to be produced upon the powers of contemplation, by the redundant and ceaseless loveliness of the high mountain districts. The faculties are paralyzed by the abundance, and cease, as we before noticed of the imagination,¹ to be capable of excitement, except by other subjects of interest than those which present themselves to the eye. So that it is, in reality, better for mankind that the forms of their common landscape should offer no violent stimulus to the emotions,—that the gentle upland, browned by the bending furrows of the plough, and the fresh sweep of the chalk down, and the narrow winding of the copseclad dingle, should be more frequent scenes of human life than the Arcadias of cloud-capped mountain or luxuriant vale; and that, while humbler (though always infinite) sources

¹ [See in the preceding volume, ch. x. § 14, p. 182.]

of interest are given to each of us around the homes to which we are restrained for the greater part of our lives, these mightier and stranger glories should become the objects of adventure,—at once the cynosures of the fancies of childhood, and themes of the happy memory, and the winter's tale of age.

§ 8. Nor is it always that the inferiority is felt. For, so natural is it to the human heart to fix itself in hope rather than in present possession, and so subtle is the charm which the imagination casts over what is distant or denied, that there is often a more touching power in the scenes which contain far-away promise of something greater than themselves, than in those which exhaust the treasures and powers of Nature in an unconquerable and excellent glory, leaving nothing more to be by the fancy pictured, or pursued.

I do not know that there is a district in the world more calculated to illustrate this power of the expectant imagination, than that which surrounds the city of Fribourg in Switzerland, extending from it towards Berne.¹ It is of grey sandstone, considerably elevated, but presenting no object of striking interest to the passing traveller: so that, as it is generally seen in the course of a hasty journey from the Bernese Alps to those of Savoy, it is rarely regarded with any other sensation than that of weariness, all the more painful because accompanied with reaction from the high excitement caused by the splendour of the Bernese Oberland. The traveller, footsore, feverish, and satiated with glacier and precipice, lies back in the corner of the diligence, perceiving little more than that the road is winding and hilly, and the country through which it passes, cultivated and tame. Let him, however, only do this tame country the justice of staying in it a few days, until his mind has recovered its tone, and take one or two long walks through its fields, and he will have other thoughts of it. It is, as

¹ [For Ruskin's sojourn in this region, see Introduction to preceding volume, p. xxxii.]

I said, an undulating district of grey sandstone, never attaining any considerable height, but having enough of the mountain spirit to throw itself into continual succession of bold slope and dale; elevated, also, just far enough above the sea to render the pine a frequent forest tree along its irregular ridges. Through this elevated tract the river cuts its way in a ravine some five or six hundred feet in depth, which winds for leagues between the gentle hills, unthought of, until its edge is approached; and then suddenly, through the boughs of the firs, the eye perceives, beneath, the green and gliding stream, and the broad walls of sandstone cliff that form its banks; hollowed out where the river leans against them, as it turns, into perilous overhanging; and, on the other shore, at the same spots, leaving little breadths of meadow between them and the water, halfovergrown with thicket, deserted in their sweetness, inaccessible from above, and rarely visited by any curious wanderers along the hardly traceable footpath which struggles for existence beneath the rocks. And there the river ripples, and eddies, and murmurs in an utter solitude. It is passing through the midst of a thickly peopled country; but never was a stream so lonely. The feeblest and most faraway torrent among the high hills has its companions: the goats browse beside it; and the traveller drinks from it, and passes over it with his staff; and the peasant traces a new channel for it down to his mill-wheel. But this stream has no companions: it flows on in an infinite seclusion, not secret nor threatening, but a quietness of sweet daylight and open air—a broad space of tender and deep desolateness, drooped into repose out of the midst of human labour and life; the waves plashing lowly, with none to hear them; and the wild birds building in the boughs, with none to fray them away; and the soft, fragrant herbs rising, and breathing, and fading, with no hand to gather them;—and yet all bright and bare to the clouds above, and to the fresh fall of the passing sunshine and pure rain.

§ 9. But above the brows of those scarped cliffs, all is

in an instant changed. A few steps only beyond the firs that stretch their branches, angular, and wild, and white, like forks of lightning, into the air of the ravine, and we are in an arable country of the most perfect richness; the swathes of its corn glowing and burning from field to field; its pretty hamlets all vivid with fruitful orchards and flowery gardens, and goodly with steep-roofed storehouse and barn; its well-kept, hard, park-like roads rising and falling from hillside to hillside, or disappearing among brown banks of moss, and thickets of the wild raspberry and rose; or gleaming through lines of tall trees, half glade, half avenue, where the gate opens, or the gateless path turns trustedly aside, unhindered, into the garden of some statelier house, surrounded in rural pride with its golden hives and carved granaries, and irregular domain of latticed and espaliered cottages, gladdening to look upon in their delicate homeliness—delicate, yet, in some sort, rude; not like our English homes—trim, laborious, formal, irreproachable in comfort; but with a peculiar carelessness and largeness in all their detail, harmonizing with the outlawed loveliness of their country. For there is an untamed strength even in all that soft and habitable land. It is, indeed, gilded with corn and fragrant with deep grass, but it is not subdued to the plough or to the scythe. It gives at its own free will,—it seems to have nothing wrested from it nor conquered in it. It is not redeemed from desertness, but unrestrained in fruitfulness,—a generous land, bright with capricious plenty, and laughing from vale to vale in fitfulness, kind and wild. Nor this without some sterner element mingled in the heart of it. For along all its ridges stand the dark masses of innumerable pines,¹ taking no part in its gladness, asserting themselves for ever as

¹ [§§ 8 and 9 here are § 18 of *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Almost the only pleasure I have, myself, in re-reading my old books, is my sense of having at least done justice to the pine. Compare the passage in this book, No. 47.”

No. 47 in *Fronde* in from *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. ix. §§ 7–9.]

fixed shadows, not to be pierced or banished, even in the intensest sunlight; fallen flakes and fragments of the night, stayed in their solemn squares in the midst of all the rosy bendings of the orchard boughs, and yellow effulgence of the harvest, and tracing themselves in black network and motionless fringes against the blanched blue of the horizon in its saintly clearness. And yet they do not sadden the landscape, but seem to have been set there chiefly to show how bright everything else is around them; and all the clouds look of purer silver, and all the air seems filled with a whiter and more living sunshine, where they are pierced by the sable points of the pines; and all the pastures look of more glowing green, where they run up between the purple trunks; and the sweet field footpaths skirt the edges of the forest for the sake of its shade, sloping up and down about the slippery roots, and losing themselves every now and then hopelessly among the violets, and ground ivy, and brown sheddings of the fibrous leaves; and, at last, plunging into some open aisle where the light, through the distant stems, shows that there is a chance of coming out again on the other side; and coming out, indeed, in a little while, from the scented darkness, into the dazzling air and marvellous landscape, that stretches still farther and farther in new wilfulnesses of grove and garden, until at last the craggy mountains of the Simmenthal rise out of it, sharp into the rolling of the southern clouds.

§ 10. I believe, for general development of human intelligence and sensibility, country of this kind is about the most perfect that exists. A richer landscape, as that of Italy, enervates, or causes wantonness; a poorer contracts the conceptions, and hardens the temperament of both mind and body; and one more curiously or prominently beautiful deadens the sense of beauty. Even what is here of attractiveness,—far exceeding, as it does, that of most of the thickly-peopled districts of the temperate zone,—seems to act harmfully on the poetical character of the

Swiss; but take its inhabitants all in all, as with deep love and stern penetration they are painted in the works of their principal writer, Gotthelf,¹ and I believe we shall not easily find a peasantry which would completely sustain comparison with them.²

§ 11. But be this as it may, it is certain that the compact coherent rocks are appointed to form the greatest part of the earth's surface, and by their utility, and easily changed and governed qualities, to tempt man to dwell among them; being, however, in countries not definitely mountainous, usually covered to a certain depth by those beds of loose gravel and sand to which we agree to give the name of diluvium. There is nothing which will require to be noted respecting these last, except the forms into which they are brought by the action of water; and the account of these belongs properly to the branch of inquiry which follows next in the order we proposed to ourselves, namely, that touching the sculpture of mountains, to which it will be best to devote some separate chapters; this only being noted in conclusion respecting the various rocks whose nature we have been describing, that out of the entire series of them we may obtain almost every colour pleasant to human sight, not the less so for being generally a little softened or saddened. Thus we have beautiful subdued reds, reaching tones of deep purple, in the porphyries, and of pale rose colour, in the granites; every kind of silvery and leaden grey, passing into purple, in the slates; deep green, and every hue of greenish grey, in the volcanic rocks, and serpentines; rich orange, and golden brown, in the gneiss; black in the lias limestones; and all these, together with

¹ [Albert Bitzius (1797–1854), who wrote under the pseudonym of Jeremias Gotthelf. Ruskin was presently to bring his principal book before the English reader; see the Preface (reprinted in a later volume) to Mrs. Firth's translation of *Ulric the Farm Servant*. He refers to this and other books by Gotthelf in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 24. For later references to Gotthelf, see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (under 5 R.), and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 30, 34, 55, 61, 62, 91, 94.]

² [In one of his copies for revision Ruskin marks this passage as requiring a "note modifying."]

pure white, in the marbles. One colour only we hardly ever get in an exposed rock—that dull *brown* which we noticed above, in speaking of colour generally, as the most repulsive of all hues; every approximation to it is softened by nature, when exposed to the atmosphere, into a purple grey. All this can hardly be otherwise interpreted, than as prepared for the delight and recreation of man; and I trust that the time may soon come when these beneficent and beautiful gifts of colour may be rightly felt and wisely employed, and when the variegated fronts of our houses may render the term “stone colour” as little definite in the mind of the architect as that of “flower colour” would be to the horticulturist.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE SCULPTURE OF MOUNTAINS:—FIRST, THE LATERAL RANGES

§ 1. CLOSE beside the path by which travellers ascend the Montanvert from the valley of Chamouni, on the right hand, where it first begins to rise among the pines, there descends a small stream from the foot of the granite peak known to the guides as the Aiguille Charmoz. It is concealed from the traveller by a thicket of alder, and its murmur is hardly heard, for it is one of the weakest streams of the valley. But it is a constant stream; fed by a permanent though small glacier, and continuing to flow even to the close of the summer, when more copious torrents, depending only on the melting of the lower snows, have left their beds “stony channels in the sun.”

I suppose that my readers must be generally aware that glaciers are masses of ice in slow motion, at the rate of from ten to twenty inches a day, and that the stones which are caught between them and the rocks over which they pass, or which are embedded in the ice and dragged along by it over those rocks, are of course subjected to a crushing and grinding power altogether unparalleled by any other force in constant action. The dust to which these stones are reduced by the friction is carried down by the streams which flow from the melting glacier, so that the water which in the morning may be pure, owing what little strength it has chiefly to the rock springs, is in the afternoon not only increased in volume, but whitened with dissolved dust of granite, in proportion to the heat of the

preceding hours of the day, and to the power and size of the glacier which feeds it.

§ 2. The long drought which took place in the autumn of the year 1854, sealing every source of waters except these perpetual ones, left the torrent of which I am speaking, and such others, in a state peculiarly favourable to observance of their *least* action on the mountains from which they descend. They were entirely limited to their own ice fountains, and the quantity of powdered rock which they brought down was, of course, at its minimum, being nearly unmingled with any earth derived from the dissolution of softer soil, or vegetable mould, by rains.

At three in the afternoon, on a warm day in September, when the torrent had reached its average maximum strength for the day, I filled an ordinary Bordeaux wine-flask with the water where it was least turbid.¹ From this quart of water I obtained twenty-four grains of sand and sediment, more or less fine. I cannot estimate the quantity of water in the stream; but the runlet of it at which I filled the flask was giving about two hundred bottles a minute, or rather more, carrying down therefore about three-quarters of a pound of powdered granite every minute. This would be forty-five pounds an hour; but allowing for the inferior power of the stream in the cooler periods of the day, and taking into consideration, on the other side, its increased power in rain, we may, I think, estimate its average hour's work at twenty-eight or thirty pounds, or a hundredweight every four hours. By this insignificant runlet, therefore, some four inches wide and four inches deep, rather more than two tons of the substance of the Mont Blanc are displaced, and carried down a certain distance every week; and as it is only for three or four months that the flow of the stream is checked by frost, we may certainly allow eighty tons for the mass which it annually moves.

¹ [For a reference to these experiments—"weighing the minute-burden of sand in the streams of Chamouni"—see the Epilogue to *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. XI. p. 237.]

§ 3. It is not worth while to enter into any calculation of the relation borne by this runlet to the great torrents which descend from the chain of Mont Blanc into the valley of Chamouni.¹ To call it the thousandth part of the glacier waters, would give a ludicrous under-estimate of their total power; but even so calling it, we should find for result that eighty thousand tons of mountain must be yearly transformed into drifted sand, and carried down a certain distance.* How much greater than this is the actual quantity so transformed I cannot tell; but take this quantity as certain, and consider that this represents merely the results of the labour of the constant summer streams, utterly irrespective of all sudden falls of stones and of masses of mountain (a single thunderbolt will sometimes leave a scar on the flank of a soft rock, looking like a trench for a railroad); and we shall then begin to apprehend something of the operation of the great laws of change, which are the conditions of all material existence, however apparently enduring. The hills, which, as compared with living beings, seem “everlasting,”² are, in truth, as perishing as they: its veins of flowing fountain weary the mountain heart, as the crimson pulse does ours; the natural force of the iron crag is abated in its appointed time, like the strength of the sinews in a human old age; and it is but

* How far, is another question. The sand which the stream brings from the bottom of one eddy in its course, it throws down in the next; all that is proved by the above trial is, that so many tons of material are annually carried down by it a certain number of feet.

¹ [§§ 1–3 here form with some abbreviations § 30 of *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“I have slightly modified and abridged what follows, being impatient of its prolixity, as well as ashamed of what is truly called the ludicrous under-estimate of the mass of the larger streams.”

The second paragraph of § 1—“I suppose that my readers . . . the glacier that feeds it”—is omitted; and at the present point after the words “the valley of Chamouni” the modified and abridged text reads thus:—

“I but take this quantity, eighty tons, as the result of the labour of a scarcely noticeable runlet at the side of one of them, utterly irrespective . . .”]

² [Genesis xlix. 26.]

the lapse of the longer years of decay which, in the sight of its Creator, distinguishes the mountain range from the moth and the worm.

§ 4. And hence two questions arise of the deepest interest. From what first created forms were the mountains brought into their present condition? into what forms will they change in the course of ages? Was the world anciently in a more or less perfect state than it is now? was it less or more fitted for the habitation of the human race? and are the changes which it is now undergoing favourable to that race or not? The present confirmation of the earth appears dictated, as has been shown in the preceding chapters, by supreme wisdom and kindness. And yet its former state must have been different from what it is now; as its present one from that which it must assume hereafter. Is this, therefore, the earth's prime into which we are born: or is it, with all its beauty, only the wreck of Paradise?

I cannot entangle the reader in the intricacy of the inquiries necessary for anything like a satisfactory solution of these questions. But, were he to engage in such inquiries, their result would be his strong conviction of the earth's having been brought from a state in which it was utterly uninhabitable into one fitted for man;—of its having been, when first inhabitable, more beautiful than it is now; and of its gradually tending to still greater inferiority of aspect, and unfitness for abode.¹

It has, indeed, been the endeavour of some geologists to prove that destruction and renovation are continually proceeding simultaneously in mountains as well as in organic creatures; that while existing eminences are being slowly lowered, others, in order to supply their place, are being

¹ [See, however, *Ethics of the Dust* (1866), § 119, where Ruskin refers to this passage as containing "an old error." He explains the particular phenomena of which he was thinking, and confirms his impression of them; but, he adds, "I feel more strongly, every day, that no evidence to be collected within historical periods can be accepted as any clue to the great tendencies of geological change; but that the great laws which never fail, and to which all change is subordinate, appear such as to accomplish a gradual advance to lovelier order, and more calmly, yet more deeply, animated Rest."]

slowly elevated; and that what is lost in beauty or healthiness in one spot is gained in another. But I cannot assent to such a conclusion. Evidence altogether incontrovertible points to a state of the earth in which it could be tenanted only by lower animals, fitted for the circumstances under which they lived by peculiar organizations. From this state it is admitted gradually to have been brought into that in which we now see it; and the circumstances of the existing dispensation, whatever may be the date of its endurance, seem to me to point not less clearly to an end than to an origin; to a creation, when "the earth was without form and void,"¹ and to a close, when it must either be renovated or destroyed.

§ 5. In one sense, and in one only, the idea of a continuous order of things is admissible, in so far as the phenomena which introduced, and those which are to terminate, the existing dispensation, may have been, and may in future be, nothing more than a gigantic development of agencies which are in continual operation around us. The experience we possess of volcanic agency is not yet large enough to enable us to set limits to its force; and as we see the rarity of subterranean action generally proportioned to its violence, there may be appointed, in the natural order of things, convulsions to take place after certain epochs, on a scale which the human race has not yet lived long enough to witness. The soft silver cloud which writhes innocently on the crest of Vesuvius, rests there without intermission; but the fury which lays cities in sepulchres of lava bursts forth only after intervals of centuries; and the still fiercer indignation of the greater volcanoes, which makes half the globe vibrate with earthquake, and shrivels up whole kingdoms with flame, is recorded only in dim distances of history; so that it is not irrational to admit that there may yet be powers dormant, not destroyed, beneath the apparently calm surface of the earth, whose date of rest is the endurance of the human race, and whose date of action must be that

¹ [Genesis i.2.]

of its doom. But whether such colossal agencies are indeed in the existing order of things or not, still the effective truth, for us, is one and the same. The earth, as a tormented and trembling ball, may have rolled in space for myriads of ages before humanity was formed from its dust; and as a devastated ruin it may continue to roll, when all that human dust shall again have been mingled with ashes that never were warmed by life, or polluted by sin. But for us the intelligible and substantial fact is that the earth has been brought, by forces we know not of, into a form fitted for our habitation: on that form a gradual, but destructive, change is continually taking place, and the course of that change points clearly to a period when it will no more be fitted for the dwelling-place of men.

§ 6. It is therefore, not so much what these forms of the earth actually are, as what they are continually becoming, that we have to observe: nor is it possible thus to observe them without an instinctive reference to the first state out of which they have been brought. The existing torrent has dug its bed a thousand feet deep. But in what form was the mountain originally raised which gave that torrent its track and power? The existing precipice is wrought into towers and bastions by the perpetual fall of its fragments. In what form did it stand before a single fragment fell?

Yet to such questions, continually suggesting themselves, it is never possible to give a complete answer. For a certain distance, the past work of existing forces can be traced; but there gradually the mist gathers, and the footsteps of more gigantic agencies are traceable in the darkness; and still, as we endeavour to penetrate farther and farther into departed time, the thunder of the Almighty power sounds louder and louder; and the clouds gather broader and more fearfully, until at last the Sinai of the world is seen altogether upon a smoke, and the fence of its foot is reached, which none can break through.¹

¹ [Exodus xix. 18, 23, 24.]

§ 7. If, therefore, we venture to advance towards the spot where the cloud first comes down, it is rather with the purpose of fully pointing out that there *is* a cloud, than of entering into it. It is well to have been fully convinced of the existence of the mystery in an age far too apt to suppose that everything which is visible is explicable, and everything that is present, eternal. But besides ascertaining the existence of this mystery, we shall perhaps be able to form some few conjectures respecting the facts of mountain aspects in the past ages: not respecting the processes or powers to which the hills owe their origin, but respecting the aspect they first assumed.

§ 8. For it is evident that, through all their ruin, some traces must still exist of the original contours. The directions in which the mass gives way must have been dictated by the disposition of its ancient sides; and the currents of the streams that wear its flanks must still, in great part, follow the course of the primal valleys. So that, in the actual form of any mountain peak, there must usually be traceable the shadow or skeleton of its former self; like the obscure indications of the first frame of a war-worn tower, preserved, in some places, under the heap of its ruins, in others to be restored in imagination from the thin remnants of its tottering shell; while here and there, in some sheltered spot, a few unfallen stones retain their Gothic sculpture, and a few touches of the chisel, or stains of colour, inform us of the whole mind and perfect skill of the old designer. With this great difference, nevertheless, that in the human architecture the builder did not calculate upon ruin, nor appoint the course of independent desolation; but that in the hand of the great Architect of the mountains, time and decay are as much the instruments of His purpose as the forces by which He first led forth the troops of hills in leaping flocks:—the lightning and the torrent, and the wasting and weariness of innumerable ages, all bear their part in the working out of one consistent plan; and the Builder of the temple for ever stands beside His work,

appointing the stone that is to fall, and the pillar that is to be abased, and guiding all the seeming wildness of chance and change, into ordained splendours and foreseen harmonies.

§ 9. Mountain masses, then, considered with respect to their first raising and first sculpture, may be conveniently divided into two great groups; namely, those made up of beds or layers, commonly called stratified; and those made of more or less united substance, called unstratified. The former are nearly always composed of coherent rocks, the latter of crystallines; and the former almost always occupy the outside, the latter the centre, of mountain chains. It signifies, therefore, very little whether we distinguish the groups by calling one stratified and the other unstratified, or one “coherent” and the other “crystalline,” or one “lateral” and the other “central.” But as this last distinction in position seems to have more influence on their forms than either of the others, it is, perhaps, best, when we are examining them in connection with art, that this should be thoroughly kept in mind; and therefore we will consider the first group under the title of “lateral ranges,” and the second under that of “central peaks.”

§ 10. The LATERAL RANGES, which we are first to examine, are, for the most part, broad tabular masses of sandstone, limestone, or whatever their material may be,—tilted slightly up over large spaces (several or many miles square), and forming precipices with their exposed edges, as a book resting obliquely on another book forms miniature precipices with its back and sides. The book is a tolerably accurate representation of the mountain in substance, as well as in external aspect; nearly all these tabular masses of rock being composed of a multitude of thinner beds or layers, as the thickness of the book is made up of its leaves; while every one of the mountain leaves is usually written over, though in dim characters, like those of a faded manuscript, with history of departed ages.

“How were these mountain volumes raised, and how

are they supported?" are the natural questions following such a statement.

And the only answer is: "Behold the cloud."

No eye has ever seen one of these raised on a large scale; no investigation has brought completely to light the conditions under which the materials which support them were prepared. This only is the simple fact, that they *are* raised into such sloping positions; generally several resting one upon another, like a row of books fallen down (Fig. 8); the last book being usually propped by a piece of formless compact crystalline rock,

represented by the piece of crumpled paper at *a*.



Fig. 8

§ 11. It is another simple fact that this arrangement is not effected in an orderly and serene manner; but that the books, if they were

ever neatly bound, have been fearfully torn to pieces and dog's-eared in the course of their elevation; sometimes torn leaf from leaf, but more commonly rent across, as if the paper had been wet and soft: or, to leave the book similitude, which is becoming inconvenient, the beds seem to have been in the consistence of a paste, more or less dry; in some places brittle, and breaking, like a cake, fairly across; in others moist and tough, and tearing like dough, or bending like hot iron; and, in others, crushed and shivering into dust like unannealed glass. And in these various states they are either bent or broken, or shivered, as the case may be, into fragments of various shapes, which are usually tossed one on the top of another, as above described; but, of course, under such circumstances, presenting, not the uniform edges of the books, but jagged edges, as in Fig. 9.

§ 12. Do not let it be said that I am passing my prescribed limits, and that I have tried to enter the clouds, and am describing operations which have never been witnessed. I describe facts or semblances, not operations.

I say “*seem* to have been,” not “have been.” I say “*are* bent;” I do not say “*have been* bent.”

Most travellers must remember the entrance to the valley of Cluse, from the plain of Bonneville, on the road from Geneva to Chamouni.¹ They remember that immediately after entering it they find a great precipice on their left, not less than two thousand feet in perpendicular height. That precipice is formed by beds of limestone bent like a rainbow, as in Fig. 10. Their edges constitute



Fig. 9

the cliff; the flat arch which they form with their backs is covered with pine forests and meadows, extending for three or four leagues in the direction of Sixt. Whether the whole mountain was called out of nothing into the form it possesses, or created first in the form of a level mass, and then actually bent and broken by external force, is quite irrelevant to our present purpose; but it is impossible to describe its form without



Fig. 10

appearing to imply the latter alternative; and all the distinct evidence which can be obtained upon the subject points to such a conclusion, although there are certain features in such mountains which, up to the present time,² have rendered all positive conclusion impossible, not because they contradict the theories in question, but because they are utterly inexplicable on any theory whatever.

§ 13. We return then to our Fig. 9, representing beds which *appear* to have been broken short off at the edges. “If they ever were actually broken,” the reader asks, “what

¹ [Compare *Deucalion*, ch. v., “The Valley of Cluse,” and see Ruskin’s drawing, opposite p. 236 in Vol. II.]

² [The year 1856. For Ruskin’s subsequent speculations on this subject, see the *Deucalion* volume.]

could have become of the bits?" Sometimes they seem to have been lost, carried away no one knows where. Sometimes they are really found in scattered fragments or dust in the neighbourhood. Sometimes the mountain is simply broken in two, and the pieces correspond to each other, only leaving a valley between; but more frequently one half slips down, or the other is pushed up. In such cases, the coincidence of part with part is sometimes so exact, that half of a broken pebble has been found on one side, and the other half five or six hundred feet below, on the other.

§ 14. The beds, however, which are to form mountains of any eminence are seldom divided in this gentle way. If brittle, one would think they had been broken as a captain's biscuit breaks,¹ leaving sharp and ragged edges; and if tough, they appear to have been torn asunder very much like a piece of new cheese.

The beds which present the most definite appearances of abrupt fracture, are those of that grey or black limestone above described (Chap. x. § 4), formed into a number of thin layers or leaves, commonly separated by filmy spreadings of calcareous sand, hard when dry, but easily softened by moisture; the whole, considered as a mass, easily friable, though particular beds may be very thick and hard. Imagine a layer of such substance, three or four thousand feet thick, broken with a sharp crash through the middle, and one piece of it thrown up as in Fig. 11.

It is evident that the first result of such a shock would be a complete shattering of the consistence of the broken edges, and that these would fall, some on the instant, and others tottering and crumbling away from time to time, until the cliff had got in some degree settled into a tenable form. The fallen fragments would lie in a confused heap at the bottom, hiding perhaps one half of its height, as in Fig. 12; the top of it, wrought into somewhat less ragged shape, would thenceforward submit itself only to the gradual influences of time and storm.

¹ [See also § 22 below, p. 195.]

I do not say that this operation has actually taken place. I merely say that such cliffs do in multitudes *exist* in the form shown at Fig. 12, or, more properly speaking, in that form modified by agencies in visible operation, whose work can be traced upon them, touch by touch. But the condition at Fig. 12 is the first rough blocking out of their form, the primal state in which they demonstrably were, some thousands of years ago, but beyond which no human

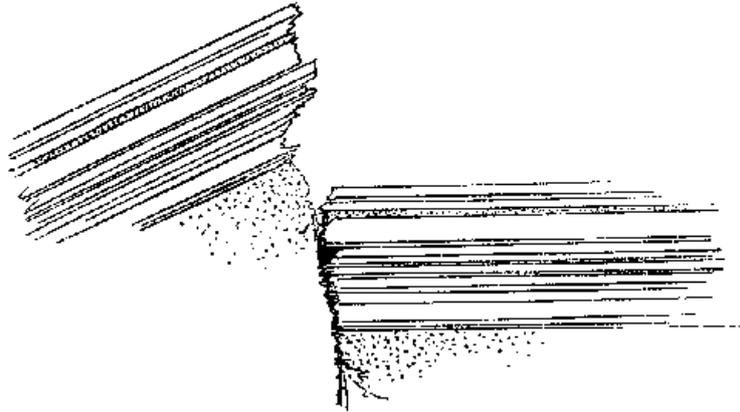


Fig. 12

reason can trace them without danger of error. The cloud fastens upon them there.

§ 15. It is rare, however, that such a cliff as that represented in Fig. 12 can maintain itself long in such a contour. Usually it moulders gradually away into a steep mound or bank; and the larger number of bold cliffs are composed of far more solid rock, which in its general make is quite unshattered and flawless; apparently unaffected, as far as its coherence is concerned, by any shock it may have suffered in being raised to its position, or hewn into its form. Beds occur in the Alps composed of solid coherent limestone (such as that familiar to the English traveller in the cliffs of Matlock and Bristol), 3,000 or 4,000 feet thick, and broken short off throughout a great part of this thickness,

forming nearly* sheer precipices not less than 1,500 or 2,000 feet in height, after all deduction has been made for slopes of débris at the bottom, and for rounded diminution at the top.

§ 16. The geologist plunges into vague suppositions and fantastic theories in order to account for these cliffs: but, after all that can be dreamed or discovered, they remain in great part inexplicable. If they were interiorly shattered, it would be easy to understand that, in their hardened condition, they had been broken violently asunder; but

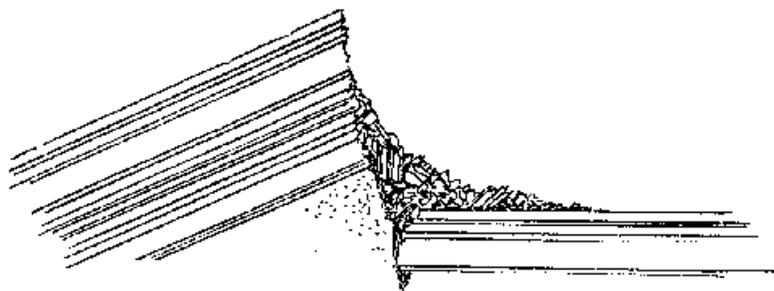


Fig. 12

it is not easy to conceive a firm cliff of limestone broken through a thickness of 2,000 feet without showing a crack in any other part of it. If they were divided in a soft state, like that of paste, it is still less easy to understand how any such soft material could maintain itself, till it dried, in the form of a cliff so enormous and so ponderous: it must have flowed down from the top, or squeezed itself out in bulging protuberance at the base. But it has done neither; and we are left to choose between the suppositions that the mountain was created in a form approximating to that which it now wears, or that the shock which produced it was so violent and irresistible, as to do its work neatly

* Nearly; that is to say, not quite vertical. Of the degree of steepness we shall have more to say hereafter.¹

¹ [See ch. xvi., on Precipices.]

in an instant, and cause no flaws to the rock, except in the actual line of fracture. The force must have been analogous either to the light and sharp blow of the hammer with which one breaks a stone into two pieces as it lies in the hand, or the parting caused by a settlement under great weight, like the cracks through the brickwork of a modern ill-built house. And yet the very beds which seem at the time they were broken to have possessed this firmness of consistence, are also bent throughout their whole body into waves, apparently following the action of the force that fractured them, like waves of sea under the wind. Truly the cloud lies darkly upon us here!

§ 17. And it renders these precipices more remarkable that there is in them no principle of compensation against destructive influences. They are not cloven back continually into new cliffs, as our chalk shores are by the sea; otherwise, one might attribute their first existence to the force of streams. But, on the contrary, the action of years upon them is now always one of deterioration. The increasing heap of fallen fragments conceals more and more of their base, and the wearing of the rain lowers the height and softens the sternness of their brows, so that a great part of their terror has evidently been subdued by time; and the farther we endeavour to penetrate their history, the more mysterious are the forms we are required to explain.

§ 18. Hitherto, however, for the sake of clearness, we have spoken of hills as if they were composed of a single mass or volume of rock. It is very seldom that they are so. Two or three layers are usually raised at once, with certain general results on mountain form, which it is next necessary to examine.

The three great representative forms of stratified mountains.

1st. Suppose a series of beds raised in the condition *a*, Fig. 13, the lowest soft, the uppermost compact; it is evident that the lower beds would rapidly crumble away, and the compact mass above break

1. Wall above slope.

for want of support, until the rocks beneath had reached a slope at which they could securely sustain themselves, as well as the weight of wall above, thus bringing the hill into the outline *b*.

2nd. If, on the other hand, the hill were originally raised as at 2. *Slope above wall.* *c*, the softest beds being at the top, these would crumble into their smooth slope without affecting the outline of the mass below, and the hill would assume the form *d*, large masses of débris being in either of these

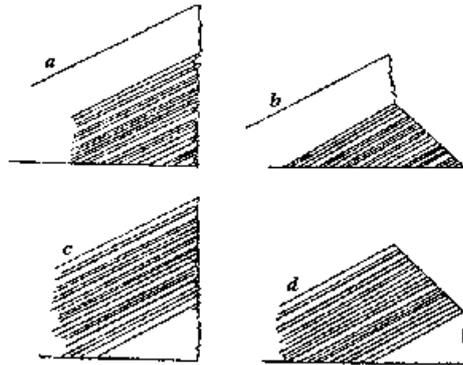


Fig. 13

two cases accumulated at the foot of the slope, or of the cliff. These first ruins might, by subsequent changes, be variously engulfed, carried away, or covered over, so as to leave nothing visible, or at least nothing notable, but the great cliff with its slope above or below

it. Without insisting on the evidences or probabilities of such construction, it is sufficient to state that mountains of the two types *b* and *d* are exceedingly common in all parts of the world; and though of course confused with others, and themselves always more or less imperfectly developed, yet they are, on the whole, singularly definite, as classes of hills, examples of which can hardly but remain clearly impressed on the mind of every traveller. Of the first, *b*, Salisbury Crags, near Edinburgh,¹ is a nearly perfect instance, though on a diminutive scale. The cliffs of Lauterbrunnen, in the Oberland, are almost without exception formed on the type *d*.

3rd. When the elevated mass, instead of consisting

¹ [Compare p. 127, above, postscript to *In Montibus Sanctis*.]

merely of two great divisions, includes alternately hard and soft beds, as at *a*, Fig. 14, the vertical cliffs and inclined banks alternate with each other, and the mountain rises in a series of steps, with receding slopes of turf or débris on the ledge of each, as at *b*. At the head of the valley of Sixt, in Savoy, huge masses of mountain connected with the Buet are thus constructed: their slopes are quite smooth, and composed of good pasture land, and the cliffs in many places literally vertical. In the summer the peasants make hay on the inclined pastures; and the hay is “carried” by merely

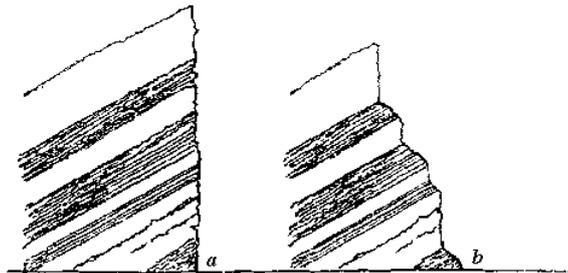


Fig. 14

binding the haycocks tight and rolling them down the slope and over the cliff, when I have heard them fall to the bank below, a height of from five to eight hundred feet, with a sound like the distant report of a heavy piece of artillery.

§ 19. The next point of importance in these beds is the curvature, to which, as well as to fracture, they seem to have been subjected. This curvature is not to be confounded with that rippling or undulating character of every portion of the slaty crystalline rocks above described.¹ I am now speaking of all kinds of rocks indifferently;—not of their appearance in small pieces, but of their great contours in masses, thousands of feet thick. And it is almost universally true of these masses that they do not merely lie in flat superposition, one over another, as the books in

¹ [See above, p. 150.]

Fig. 8; but they lie in *waves*, more or less vast and sweeping according to the scale of the country, as in Fig. 15, where the distance from one side of the figure to the other is supposed to be four or five leagues.

§ 20. Now, observe, if the precipices which we have just been describing had been broken when their substance was in a hard state, there appears no reason why any connection should be apparent between the energy of *undulation*, and these *broken* rocks. If the continuous waves were caused by convulsive movements of the earth's surface while its substance was pliable, and were left in repose for so long a period as to become perfectly hard before

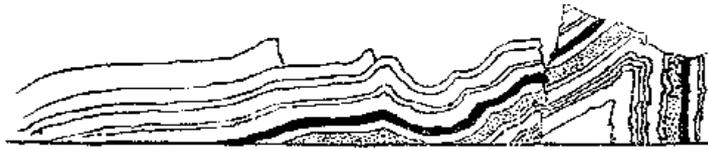


Fig. 15

they were broken into cliffs, there seems no reason why the second series of shocks should so closely have confined itself to the locality which had suffered the first, that the most abrupt precipices should always be associated with the wildest waves. We might have expected that sometimes we should have had noble cliffs raised where the waves had been slight; and sometimes low and slight fractures where the waves had been violent. But this is not so. The contortions and fractures bear always such relation to each other as appears positively to imply contemporaneous formation. Through all the lowland districts of the world the average contour of the waves of rock is somewhat as represented in Fig. 16 *a*, and the little cliffs or hills formed at the edges of the beds (whether by fracture, or, as oftener happens in such countries, by gradual washing away under the surge of ancient seas) are no higher, in proportion to the extent of surface, than the

little steps seen in the centre of the figure. Such is the nature, and such the scale, of the ranges of hill which form our own downs and wolds, and the French coteaux beside their winding rivers. But as we approach the hill countries, the undulation becomes more marked, and the crags more bold; so that almost any portion of such mountain ranges as the Jura or the Vosges will present itself under conditions

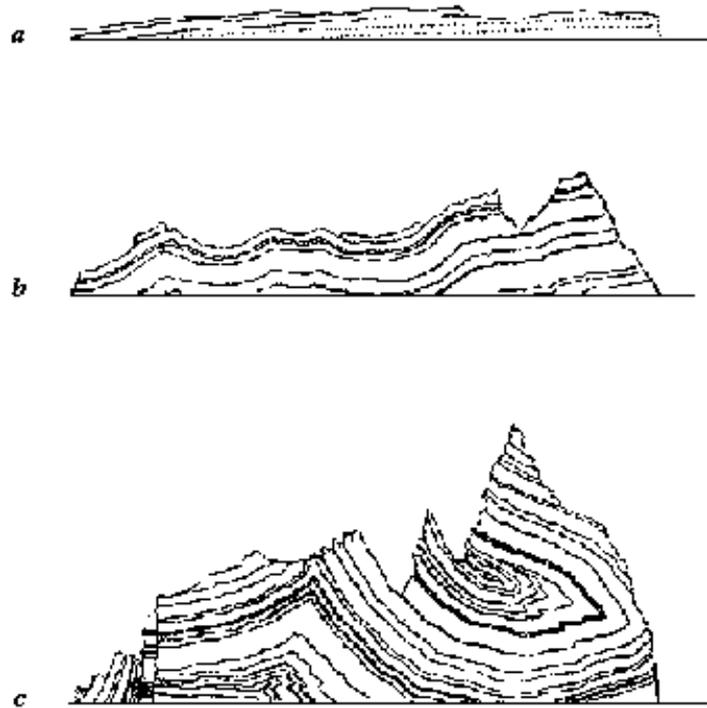


Fig. 16

such as those at *b*, the precipices at the edges being bolder in exact proportion to the violence of wave. And, finally, in the central and noblest chains the undulation becomes literally contortion; the beds occur in such positions as those at *c*, and the precipices are bold and terrific in exact proportion to this exaggerated and tremendous contortion.

§ 21. These facts appear to be just as contrary to the supposition of the mountains having been formed while the rocks were hard, as the considerations adduced in § 15 are

to that of their being formed while they were soft. And I believe the more the reader revolves the subject in his thoughts, and the more opportunities he has of examining the existing facts, the less explicable those facts will become to him, and the more reverent will be his acknowledgment of the presence of the cloud.

For, as he examines more clearly the structure of the great mountain ranges, he will find that though invariably the boldest forms are associated with the most violent contortions, they sometimes *follow* the contortions, and sometimes appear entirely independent of them. For instance, in crossing the pass of the Tête Noire, if the traveller defers his journey till near the afternoon, so that from the top of the pass he may see the great limestone mountain in the Valais, called the Dent de Morcles, under the full evening light, he will observe that its peaks are hewn out of a group of contorted beds, as shown in Fig. 4, Plate 29.* The wild and irregular zigzag of the beds, which traverse the face of the cliff with the irregularity of a flash of lightning, has apparently not the slightest influence on the outline of the peak. It has been carved out of the mass, with no reference whatever to the interior structure. In like manner, as we shall see hereafter, the most wonderful peak in the whole range of the Alps seems to have been cut out of a series of nearly horizontal beds, as a square pillar of hay is cut out of a half-consumed haystack. And yet, on the other hand, we meet perpetually with instances in which the curves of the beds have in great part directed the shape of the whole mass of mountain. The gorge which leads from the village of Ardon, in the Valais, up to the root of the Diablerets,¹ runs between two ranges of limestone hills, of which the rude contour is given in Fig. 17. The great slope seen on the left, rising about seven thousand feet above the ravine, is nothing but the back of one sheet of limestone, whose broken edge forms the first cliff at the

* Facing p. 200.

¹ [See also below, p. 315; and in the next volume, pt. vii. ch. ii. § 9.]

top, a height of about six hundred feet, the second cliff being the edge of another bed emergent beneath it, and the slope beyond, the surface of a third. These beds of limestone all descend at a uniform inclination into the gorge, where they are snapped short off, the torrent cutting its way along the cliff, while the beds rise on the other side in a huge contorted wave, forming the ridge of mountains on the right,—a chain about seven miles in length, and from five thousand to six thousand feet in height. The actual order of the beds is seen in Fig. 18, and it is one of the boldest and

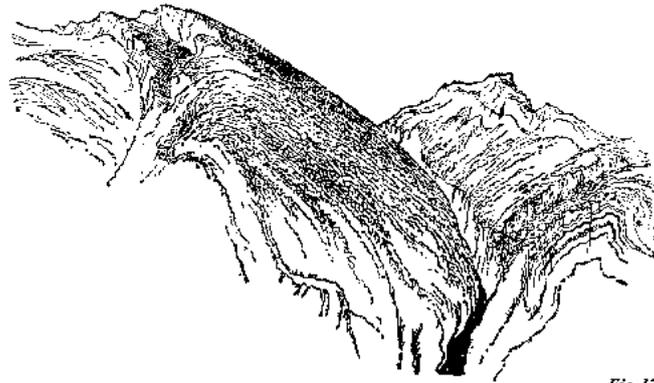


Fig. 17

clearest examples of the form of mountains being correspondent to the curves of beds which I have ever seen; it also exhibits a condition of the summits which is of constant occurrence in stratified hills, and peculiarly important as giving rise to the serrated structure, rendered classical by the Spaniards in their universal term for mountain ridges, Sierra, and obtaining for one of the most important members of the Comasque chain of Alps its well-known Italian name,—Il Resegone.¹ Such mountains are not merely successions of irregular peaks, more or less resembling the edge of a much-hacked sword; they are orderly successions of teeth set in one direction, closely resembling those of a somewhat

¹ [The mountain above Lecco, whose eleven points, seen from a distance and especially from Milan, have the appearance of a saw (*sega*); in the Milanese dialect, *résega*.]

overworn saw, and nearly always produced by successive beds emerging one from beneath the other.

§ 22. In all such cases there is an infinitely greater difficulty in accounting for the forms than in explaining the fracture of a single bed. How, and when, and where, were the other portions carried away? Was each bed once continuous over a much larger space from the point where its edge is now broken off, or have such beds slipped back into some gulf behind them? It is very easy for geologists to speak generally of elevation and convulsion, but very difficult to explain what sort of convulsion it could be which

passed forward from the edge of one bed to the edge of another,

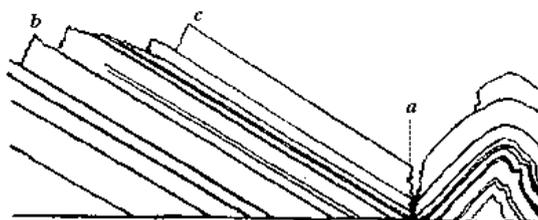


Fig. 18

and broke the required portion off each without disturbing the rest. Try the experiment in the simplest way: put half a dozen of hard captain's biscuits in a sloping position on a table, and then try as they lie, to break the edge of each, one by one, without disturbing the rest.¹ At least, you will have to raise the edge before you can break it; to put your hand underneath, between it and the next biscuit, before you can get any purchase on it. What force was it that put its fingers between one bed of limestone 600 feet thick and the next beneath? If you try to break the biscuits by a blow from above, observe the necessary force of your blow, and then conceive, if you can, the sort of hammer that was required to break the 600 feet of rock through in the same way. But, also,

¹ [See above, p. 184, and *Deucalion*, i. ch. i. § 15, where this illustration is referred to, and the subject further discussed.]

you will, ten to one, break two biscuits at the same time. Now, in these serrated formations, two biscuits are *never* broken at the same time. There is no appearance of the slightest jar having taken place affecting the bed beneath. If there be, a huge cliff or gorge is formed at that spot, not a sierra. Thus, in Fig. 18, the beds are affected throughout their united body by the shock which formed the ravine at *a*; but they are broken, one by one, into the cliffs at *b* and *c*. Sometimes one is tempted to think that they must have been slipped back, one from off the other; but there is never any appearance of friction having taken place on their exposed surfaces; in the plurality of instances, their continuance or rise from their roots in waves (see Fig. 16 above) renders the thing utterly impossible; and in the few instances which have been known of such action actually taking place (which have always been on a small scale), the sliding bed has been torn into a thousand fragments almost as soon as it began to move.*

§ 23. And, finally, supposing a force found capable of breaking these beds in the manner required, what force was it that carried the fragments away? How were the gigantic fields of shattered marble conveyed from the ledges which were to remain exposed? No signs of violence are found on those ledges; what marks there are, the rain and natural decay have softly traced through a long series of years. Those very time-marks may have indeed effaced mere superficial appearances of convulsion; but could they have effaced all evidence of the action of such floods as would have been necessary to carry bodily away the whole ruin of a block of marble leagues in length and breadth, and a quarter of a mile thick? Ponder over the intense marvellousness of this. The bed at *c* (Fig. 18) must first

* The Rossberg fall, compared to the convulsions which seem to have taken place in the higher Alps, is like the slip of a paving stone compared to the fall of a tower.¹

¹ [For the fall of the Rossberg, compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30 *n.*]

be broken through the midst of it into a sharp precipice, without at all disturbing it elsewhere; and then all of it beyond *c* is to be broken up, and carried perfectly away, without disturbing or wearing down the face of the cliff at *c*.

And yet no trace of the means by which all this was effected is left. The rock stands forth in its white and rugged mystery, as if its peak had been born out of the blue sky. The strength that raised it, and the sea that wrought upon it, have passed away and left no sign, and we have no words wherein to describe their departure, no thoughts to form about their action, than those of the perpetual and unsatisfied interrogation,—

“What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?
And ye mountains, that ye skipped like lambs?”¹

¹ [Psalms cxiv. 5, 6. For the same passage, see Vol. XII. p. 105.]

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE SCULPTURE OF MOUNTAINS:—SECONDLY, THE CENTRAL PEAKS

§ 1. IN the 20th paragraph of the last chapter, it was noticed that ordinarily the most irregular contortions or fractures of beds of rock were found in the districts of most elevated hills, the contortion or fracture thus appearing to be produced at the moment of elevation. It has also previously been stated that the hardness and crystalline structure of the material increased with the mountainous character of the ground, so that we find as almost invariably correlative, the *hardness* of the rock, its *distortion*, and its *height*; and in like manner, its *softness*, *regularity of position*, and *lowness*. Thus, the line of beds in an English range of down, composed of soft chalk which crumbles beneath the fingers, will be as low and continuous as in *a* of Fig. 16 (p. 191); the beds in the Jura mountains, composed of firm limestone, which needs a heavy hammer stroke to break it, will be as high and wavy as at *b*; and the ranges of Alps, composed of slaty crystallines, yielding only to steel wedges or to gunpowder, will be as lofty and as wild in structure as at *c*. Without this beneficent connection of hardness of material with height, mountain ranges either could not have existed, or would not have been habitable. In their present magnificent form they could not have existed; and whatever their forms, the frequent falls and crumbings away, which are of little consequence in the low crags of Hastings, Dover, or Lyme, would have been fatal to the population of the valleys beneath, when they took place from heights of eight or ten thousand feet.

§ 2. But this hardening of the material would not have

been sufficient, by itself, to secure the safety of the inhabitants. Unless the reader has been already familiarized with geological facts, he must surely have been struck by the prominence of the *bedded* structure in all the instances of mountain form given in the preceding chapter; and must have asked himself, Why are mountains always built in this masonry-like way, rather than in compact masses? Now, it is true that according to present geological theories the bedded structure was a necessary consequence of the mode in which the materials were accumulated; but it is not less

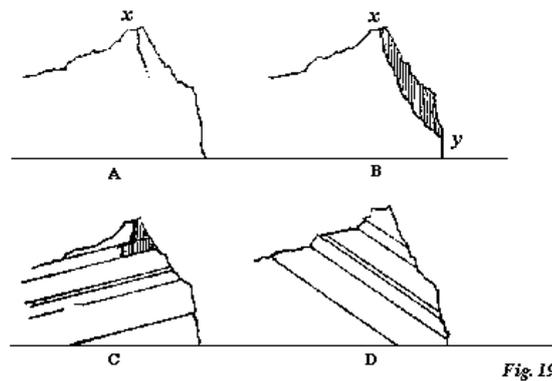


Fig. 19

true that this bedded structure is now the principal means of securing the stability of the mass, and is to be regarded as a beneficent appointment, with such special view. That structure compels each mountain to assume the safest contour of which under the given circumstances of upheaval it is capable. If it were all composed of an amorphous mass of stone as at A, Fig. 19, a crack beginning from the top, as at x in A, might gradually extend downwards in the direction $x y$ in B, until the whole mass, indicated by the shade, separated itself and fell. But when the whole mountain is arranged in beds, as at C, the crack beginning at the top stops in the uppermost bed, or if it extends to the next, it will be in a different place, and the detached blocks, marked by the shaded portions, are of course still as secure in their

positions as before the crack took place. If, indeed, the beds sloped towards the precipice, as at D, the danger would be greater; but if the reader looks to any of the examples of mountain form hitherto given, he will find that the universal tendency of the modes of elevation is to cause the beds to slope *away* from the precipice, and to build the whole mountain in the form C, which affords the utmost possible degree of security. Nearly all the mountains which rise immediately above thickly peopled districts, though they may appear to be thrown into isolated peaks, are in reality nothing more than flattish ranks of rock, terminated by walls of cliff, of this perfectly safe kind; and it will be part of our task in the succeeding chapter to examine at some length the modes in which sublime and threatening forms are almost deceptively assumed by arrangements of mountains which are in themselves thus simple and secure.

§ 3. It, however, fell within the purpose of the Great Builder to give, in the highest peaks of mountains, examples of form more strange and majestic than any which could be attained by structures so beneficently adapted to the welfare of the human race. And the admission of other modes of elevation, more terrific and less secure, takes place exactly in proportion to the increasing presence of such conditions in the locality as shall render it on other grounds unlikely to be inhabited, or incapable of being so. Where the soil is rich and the climate soft, the hills are low and safe;* as the ground becomes poorer and the air keener, they rise into forms of more peril and pride; and their utmost terror is shown only where their fragments fall on trackless ice, and the thunder of their ruin can be heard but by the ibex and the eagle.

§ 4. The safety of the lower mountains depends, as has just been observed, on their tendency to divide themselves

* It may be thought I should have reversed these sentences, and written, where the hills are low and safe, the climate is soft, etc. But it is not so. No antecedent reason can be shown why the Mont Cervin or Finsteraarhorn should not have risen sharp out of the plains of Lombardy, instead of out of glaciers.

into beds. But it will easily be understood that, together with security, such a structure involves some monotony of aspect; and that the possibility of a rent like that indicated in the last figure, extending itself without a check, so as to detach some vast portion of the mountain at once, would be a means of obtaining accidental forms of far greater awfulness. We find, accordingly, that the bedded structure is departed from in the central peaks; that they are in reality gifted with this power, or, if we choose so to regard it, affected with this weakness, of rending downwards throughout into vertical sheets; and that, to this end they are usually composed of that structureless and massive rock which we have characterized by the term "compact crystalline."

§ 5. This, indeed, is not universal. It happens sometimes that toward the centre of great hill-ranges ordinary stratified rocks of the coherent groups are hardened into more compact strength than is usual with them; and out of the hardened mass a peak, or range of peaks, is cut as if out of a single block. Thus the well-known Dent du Midi of Bex, a mountain of peculiar interest to the English travellers who crowd the various inns and pensions which now glitter along the shores of the Lake of Geneva at Vevay, Clarens, and Montreux, is cut out of horizontal beds of rock which are traceable in the evening light by their dark and light lines along its sides, like courses of masonry; the real form of the mountain being that of the ridge of a steep house-roof, jagged and broken at the top, so that, seen from near St. Maurice, the extremity of the ridge appears a sharp pyramid. The Dent de Morcles, opposite the Dent du Midi, has been already noticed,¹ and is figured in Plate 29, Fig. 4. In like manner, the Matterhorn is cut out of a block of nearly horizontal beds of gneiss. But in all these cases the materials are so hardened and knit together that to all intents and purposes they form

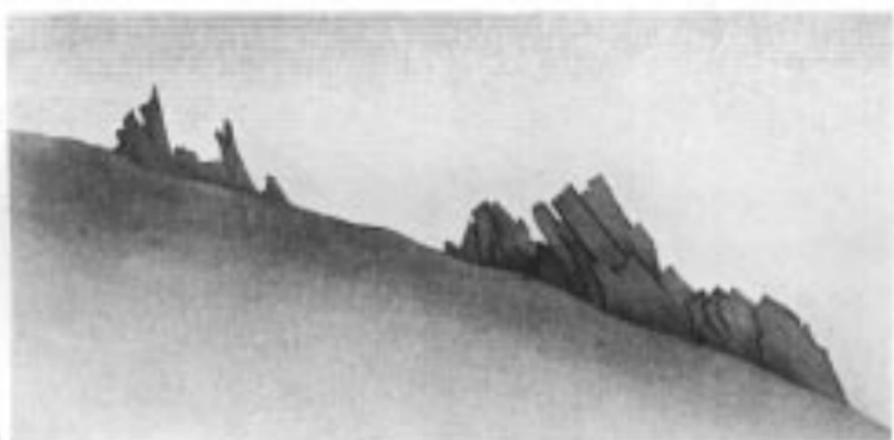
¹ [See above, p. 192. Fig. 2 in Plate 29 is the top of the ridge of the Charmoz: see p. 234; for Fig. 3 see below, Appendix ii., p. 481.]



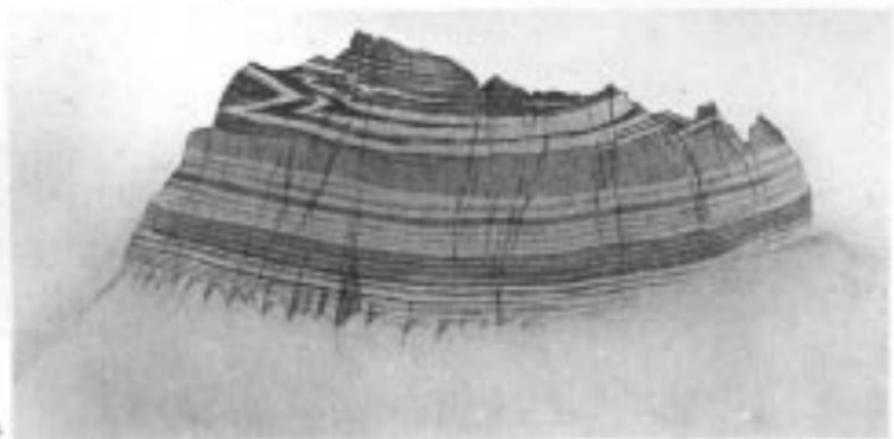
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J. Thomson.

J. C. Argyrakis
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one solid mass; and when the forms are to be of the boldest character possible, this solid mass is unstratified, and of compact crystalline rock.

§ 6. In looking from Geneva in the morning light, when Mont Blanc and its companion hills are seen dark against the dawn, almost every traveller must have been struck by the notable range of jagged peaks which bound the horizon immediately to the north-east of Mont Blanc. In ordinary weather they appear a single chain, but if any clouds or mists happen to float into the heart of the group, it divides itself into two ranges, lower and higher, as in Fig. 1, Plate 29, of which the uppermost and more distant chain is the real crest of the Alps, and the lower and darker line is composed of subordinate peaks which form the south side of the valley of Chamouni, and are therefore ordinarily known as the "Aiguilles of Chamouni."

Though separated by some eight or nine miles of actual distance, the two ranges are part of one and the same system of rock. They are both of them most notable examples of the structure of the compact crystalline peaks, and their jagged and spiry outlines are rendered still more remarkable in any view obtained of them in the immediate neighbourhood of Geneva, by their rising, as in the figure, over two long slopes of comparatively flattish mountain. The highest of these is the back of a stratified limestone range, distant about twenty-five miles, whose precipitous extremity, nodding over the little village of St. Martin's, is well known under the name of the Aiguille de Varens. The nearer line is the edge of another limestone mountain, called the Petit Salève, within five miles of Geneva, and thus we have two ranges of the crystalline rocks opposed to two ranges of the coherents, both having their distinctive characters, the one of vertical fracture, the other of level continuousness, developed on an enormous scale. I am aware of no other view in Europe where the essential characteristics of the two formations are so closely and graphically displayed.

§ 7. Nor can I imagine any person thoughtfully regarding the more distant range, without feeling his curiosity strongly excited as to the method of its first sculpture. That long banks and fields of rock should be raised aslope, and break at their edges into cliffs, however mysterious the details of the operation may be, is yet conceivable in the main circumstances without any great effort of imagination. But the carving of those great obelisks and spires out of an infinitely harder rock; the sculpture of all the fretted pinnacles on the inaccessible and calm elevation of that great cathedral,—how and when was this wrought? It is necessary, before the extent and difficulty of such a question can be felt, to explain more fully the scale and character of the peaks under consideration.

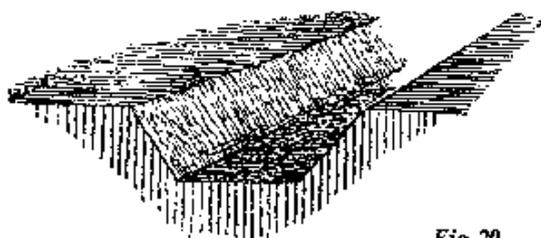


Fig. 20

§ 8. The valley of Chamouni, largely viewed, and irrespectively of minor ravines and irregularities, is nothing more than a

deep trench, dug between two ranges of nearly continuous mountains,—dug with the straightness and evenness which render its scenery, in some respects, more monotonous than that of any other Alpine valley. On each side it is bordered by banks of turf, darkened with pine forest, rising at an even slope to a height of about 3,000 feet, so that it may best be imagined as a kind of dry moat, which, if cut across, would be of the form typically shown in Fig. 20; the sloping bank on each side being about 3,000 feet high, or the moat about three-fifths of a mile in vertical depth. Then, on the top of the bank, on each side, and a little way back from the edge of the moat, rise the ranges of the great mountains, in the form of shattered crests and pyramids of barren rock sprinkled with snow. Those on the south side of the valley rise another 3,000 feet above the bank on which they stand, so that each of the masses superadded, in Fig. 21, may best be described as a sort of

Egyptian pyramid,* of the height of Snowdon or Ben Lomond, hewn out of solid rock, and set on the shoulder of the great bank which borders the valley. Then the Mont Blanc, a higher and heavier cluster of such summits, loaded with deep snow, terminates the range. Glaciers of greater or less extent descend between the pyramids of rocks; and one, supplied from their largest recesses, even runs down the bank into the valley. Fig. 22[†] rudely represents the

real contours of the mountains, including Mont Blanc itself, on its south side. The range of peaks, *b, p, m*, is that already spoken of, known as the "Aiguilles of Chamouni."¹ They form but a very small portion of the great

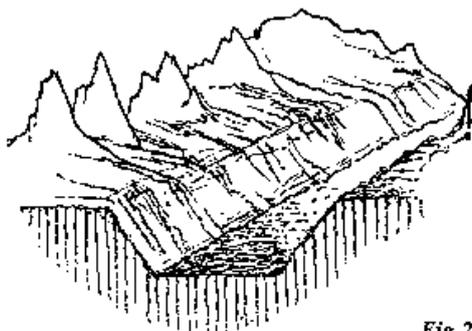


Fig. 21

crowd of similar, and, for the most part, larger peaks which constitute the chain of Mont Blanc, and which receive from the Savoyards the name of Aiguilles, or needles, in consequence of their peculiarly sharp summits. The forms of these Aiguilles, wonderful enough in themselves, are, nevertheless, perpetually exaggerated both by the imagination of the traveller, and by the artists whose delineations of them find most frank acceptance. Fig. 1, in Plate 30 (facing p. 221), is faithfully copied from the representation given of one of these mountains in a plate lately published in Geneva. Fig. 2 in the same plate is a true outline of the mountain itself. Of the exaggerations in the other I shall have more to say presently; meantime I refer to it merely as a proof that I am not myself exaggerating, in giving Fig. 22 as showing the general characters of these peaks.

§ 9. This, then, is the problem to be considered,—How

* I use the terms "pyramid" and "peak" at present, in order to give a rough general idea of the aspects of these hills. Both terms, as we shall see in the next chapter, are to be accepted under limitation.

† This coarse sketch is merely given for reference, as I shall often have

¹ [For a drawing by Ruskin of the Aiguilles shown roughly in Fig. 22, see the frontispiece to Vol. IV.]

mountains of such rugged and precipitous outline, and at the least 3,000 feet in height, were originally carved out of the hardest rocks, and set in their present position on the top of the green and sloping bank which sustains them.



Fig. 22

to speak of the particular masses of mountain, indicated by the letters in the outline below it; namely—

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>b.</i> Aiguille Blaitière. | <i>M.</i> Mont Blanc (summit). | <i>T.</i> Tapia. |
| <i>p.</i> Aiguille du Plan. | <i>d.</i> Dôme du Gouté. | <i>c.</i> Montagne de la Côte. |
| <i>m.</i> Aiguille du Midi. | <i>g.</i> Aiguille du Gouté. | <i>t.</i> Montagne de Taconay. |
| | <i>q</i> and <i>r</i> indicate stations only. | |

“By mere accident,” the reader replies. “The uniform bank might as easily have been the highest, and the broken granite peaks have risen from its sides, or at the bottom of it. It is merely the chance formation of the valley of Chamouni.”

Nay: not so. Although, as if to bring the problem more clearly before the thoughts of men, by marking the structure most where the scenery is most attractive, the formation is more distinct at Chamouni than anywhere else in the Alpine chain; yet the general condition of a rounded bank sustaining jagged or pyramidal peaks is more or less traceable throughout the whole district of the great mountains.¹ The most celebrated spot, next to the valley of Chamouni, is the centre of the Bernese Oberland; and it will be remembered by all travellers that in its principal valley, that of Grindelwald, not only does the summit of the Wetterhorn consist of a sharp pyramid raised on the advanced shoulder of a great promontory, but the two most notable summits of the Bernese Alps, the Schreckhorn and Finsteraarhorn, cannot be seen from the valley at all, being thrown far back upon an elevated plateau, of which only the advanced head or shoulder, under the name of the Mettenberg, can be seen from the village. The real summits, consisting in each case of a ridge starting steeply from this elevated plateau, as if by a new impulse of angry or ambitious mountain temper, can only be seen by ascending a considerable height upon the flank of the opposite mass of the Faulhorn.

§ 10. And this is, if possible, still more notably and provokingly the case with the great peaks of the chain of Alps between Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. It will be seen, by a glance at any map of Switzerland, that the district which forms the canton Valais is, in reality, nothing but a ravine sixty miles long, between that central chain

¹ [The passage “Although . . . great mountains,” with another from p. 207 here, “The longer I stayed” down to the end of § 12, are printed as ch. ix. in *Studies in Both Arts*, and illustrated by one of the drawings of Chamouni given in the last volume (Plate B).]

and the Alps of the cantons Fribourg and Berne. This ravine is also, in its general structure, merely a deeper and wider *moat* than that already described as forming the valley of Chamouni. It lies, in the same manner, between two *banks* of mountain; and the principal peaks are precisely in the same manner set back upon the tops of these banks; and so provokingly far back, that throughout the whole length of the valley not one of the summits of the chief chain can be seen from it. That usually pointed out to travellers as Monte Rosa is a subordinate, though still very colossal mass, called the Montagne de Saas; and this

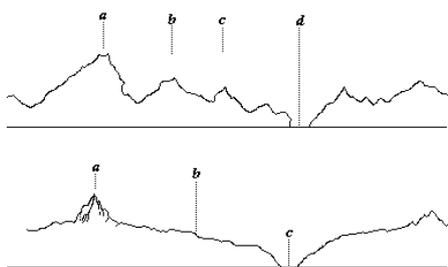


Fig. 23

is the only peak of great size discoverable from the valley throughout its extent; one or two glimpses of the snows, not at any eminent point, being caught through the entrances of the lateral valleys of Evolena, etc.

§ 11. Nor is this merely the consequence of the great *distance* of the central ridge. It would be intelligible enough that the mountains should rise gradually higher and higher towards the middle of the chain, so that the summit at *a* in the upper diagram of Fig. 23 should be concealed by the intermediate eminences, *b*, *c*, from the valley at *d*. But this is not, by any means, the manner in which the concealment is effected. The great peaks stand, as at *a* in the lower diagram, jagged, sharp, and suddenly starting out of a comparatively tame mass of elevated land, through

which the trench of the valley of the Rhone is cut, as at *c*. The subdivision of the bank at *b* by thousands of ravines, and its rise, here and there, into more or less notable summits, conceal the real fact of the structure from a casual observer. But the longer I stayed among the Alps, and the more closely I examined them, the more I was struck by the one broad fact of there being a vast Alpine plateau, or mass of elevated land, upon which nearly all the highest peaks stood like children set upon a table, removed, in most cases, far back from the edge of the plateau, as if for fear of their falling. And the most majestic scenes in the Alps are produced, not so much by any violation of this law, as by one of the great peaks having apparently walked to the edge of the table to look over, and thus showing itself suddenly above the valley in its full height. This is the case with the Wetterhorn and Eiger at Grindelwald, and with the Grande Jorasse, above the Col de Ferret. But the raised bank or table is always intelligibly in existence, even in these apparently exceptional cases; and, for the most part, the great peaks are not allowed to come to the edge of it, but remain like the keeps of castles far withdrawn, surrounded, league beyond league, by comparatively level fields of mountain, over which the lapping sheets of glacier writhe and flow, foaming about the feet of the dark central crests like the surf of an enormous sea-breaker hurled over a rounded rock, and islanding some fragment of it in the midst. And the result of this arrangement is a kind of division of the whole of Switzerland into an upper and lower mountain-world; the lower world consisting of rich valleys bordered by steep, but easily accessible, wooded banks of mountain, more or less divided by ravines, through which glimpses are caught of the higher Alps; the upper world, reached after the first steep banks, of 3,000, or 4,000 feet in height, have been surmounted, consisting of comparatively level but most desolate tracts of moor and rock, half-covered by glacier, and stretching to the feet of the true pinnacles of the chain.

§ 12. It can hardly be necessary to point out the perfect wisdom and kindness of this arrangement, as a provision for the safety of the inhabitants of the high mountain regions. If the great peaks rose at once from the deepest valleys, every stone which was struck from their pinnacles, and every snow-wreath which slipped from their ledges, would descend at once upon the inhabitable ground, over which no year would pass without recording some calamity of earth-slip or avalanche; while, in the course of their fall, both the stones and the snow would strip the woods from the hill sides, leaving only naked channels of destruction where there are now the sloping meadow and the chestnut glade. Besides this, the masses of snow, cast down at once into the warmer air, would all melt rapidly in the spring, causing furious inundation of every great river for a month or six weeks. The snow being then all thawed, except what lay upon the highest peaks in regions of nearly perpetual frost, the rivers would be supplied during the summer, only by fountains, and the feeble tricklings on sunny days from the high snows. The Rhone under such circumstances would hardly be larger at Lyons than the Severn at Shrewsbury,¹ and many Swiss valleys would be left almost without moisture. All these calamities are prevented by the peculiar Alpine structure which has been described. The broken rocks and the sliding snow of the high peaks, instead of being dashed at once to the vales, are caught upon the desolate shelves or shoulders which everywhere surround the central crests. The soft banks which terminate these shelves, traversed by no falling fragments, clothe themselves with richest wood; while the masses of snow, heaped upon the ledge above them, in a climate neither so warm as to thaw them quickly in the spring, nor so cold as to protect them from all the power of the summer sun, either form themselves into glaciers, or remain in slowly wasting fields even to the close of the

¹ [In *Fronde Agrestes* (1875) this passage reads: "The Rhone . . . would hardly be larger in summer, than the Severn, and many . . ."]

year,—in either case supplying constant, abundant, and regular streams to the villages and pastures beneath, and to the rest of Europe, noble and navigable rivers.¹

§ 13. Now, that such a structure is the best and wisest possible,² is, indeed, sufficient reason for its existence; and to many people it may seem useless to question farther respecting its origin. But I can hardly conceive any one standing face to face with one of these towers of central rock, and yet not also asking himself, Is this indeed the actual first work of the Divine Master on which I gaze? Was the great precipice shaped by His finger, as Adam was shaped out of the dust? Were its clefts and ledges carved upon it by its Creator, as the letters were on the Tables of the Law, and was it thus left to bear its eternal testimony to His beneficence among these clouds of heaven? Or is it the descendant of a long race of mountains, existing under appointed laws of birth and endurance, death and decrepitude?

§ 14. There can be no doubt as to the answer. The rock itself answers audibly by the murmur of some falling stone or rending pinnacle. It is *not* as it was once. Those waste leagues around its feet are loaded with the wrecks of what it was. On these, perhaps, of all mountains, the characters of decay are written most clearly; around these

¹ [In the margin of one of his own copies (now in possession of Mr. Edmundson) Ruskin quotes the following passage:—

“ ‘I never saw so much snow even on the mountains before. This is the guarantee of a fertile year. Thank God. There is nothing more exquisitely beautiful, I think, than Nature’s design for preserving water for the plains in summer. None of your cast-iron reservoirs with ugly pipes, on a mole-hill two miles out of town, as the Londoners have, but a range of glorious mountains with broad bosoms and wise hearts, that gather in the winter snow from Heaven, and hoard it till the children of men want it, and look up—then let it flow, and ask no water-rates. ’—Colonel Herbert Edwardes.”

The passage is no doubt from a MS. diary of Sir Herbert Edwardes (1819–1868), a friend of Ruskin, who later edited some of his papers in the volume entitled *A Knight’s Faith*. See also *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 163; and *Pleasures of England*, § 80.]

² [The passage beginning in § 11, “The longer I stayed among the Alps . . .” down to “Behold the cloud” in § 14, is § 35 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Of course I had seen every other tried before giving this favourable judgment.”]

are spread most gloomily the memorials of their pride, and the signs of their humiliation.

“What then were they once?”

The only answer is yet again,—“Behold the cloud.”¹

Their form, as far as human vision can trace it, is one of eternal decay. No retrospection can raise them out of their ruins, or withdraw them beyond the law of their perpetual fate. Existing science may be challenged to form, with the faintest colour of probability, any conception of the original aspect of a crystalline mountain: it cannot be followed in its elevation, nor traced in its connection with its fellows. No eyes ever “saw its substance, yet being imperfect”; its history is a monotone of endurance and destruction: all that we can certainly know of it, is that it was once greater than it is now, and it only gathers vastness, and still gathers, as it fades into the abyss of the unknown.

§ 15. Yet this one piece of certain evidence ought not to be altogether unpursued; and while, with all humility, we shrink from endeavouring to theorize respecting processes which are concealed, we ought not to refuse to follow, as far as it will lead us, the course of thought which seems marked out by conspicuous and consistent phenomena. Exactly as the form of the lower mountains seems to have been produced by certain raisings and bendings of their formerly level beds, so the form of these higher mountains seems to have been produced by certain breakings away from their former elevated mass. If the process appears in either case doubtful, it is less so with respect to the higher hills. We may not easily believe that the steep limestone cliffs on one side of a valley, now apparently secure and steadfast, ever were united with the cliffs on the other side; but we cannot hesitate to admit that the peak which we see shedding its flakes of granite on all sides of it, as a fading rose lets fall its leaves, was once

¹ [Numbers xvi. 42; the next reference is Psalms cxxxix. 16.]

larger than it is, and owes the present characters of its form chiefly to the modes of its diminution.

§ 16. Holding fast this clue, we have next to take into consideration another fact of not less importance,—that over the whole of the rounded banks of lower mountain, wherever they have been in anywise protected from the injuries of time, there are yet visible the tracks of ancient glaciers. I will not here enter into detail respecting the mode in which traces of glaciers are distinguishable. It is enough to state that the footmark, so to speak, of a glacier is just as easily recognizable as the trail of any well-known animal; and that with as much confidence as we should feel in asserting that a horse had passed along a soft road which yet retained the prints of its shoes, it may be concluded that the glaciers of the Alps had once triple or quadruple the extent that they have now; so that not only the banks of inferior mountains were once covered with sheets of ice, but even the great valley of the Rhone itself was the bed of an enormous “Mer de Glace,” which extended beyond the Lake of Geneva to the slopes of Jura.*

§ 17. From what has already been noted of glacier action, the reader cannot but be aware that its universal effect is to round and soften the contours of the mountain subjected to it; so that a glacier may be considered as a vast instrument of friction, a white sandpaper, applied slowly but irresistibly to all the roughnesses of the hill which it covers. And this effect is of course greatest when the ice flows fastest, and contains more embedded stones; that is to say, greater towards the lower part of a mountain than near its summit.

Suppose now a chain of mountains raised in any accidental form, of course highest where the force was

* The glacier tracks on the gneiss of the great angle opposite Martigny are the most magnificent I ever saw in the Alps; those above the channel of the Trient, between Valorsine and the valley of the Rhone, the most interesting.

greatest,—that is to say, at the centre of the chain,—and presenting any profile such as *a*, Fig. 24;¹ terminated, perhaps, by a broken secondary cliff, and the whole covered with a thick bed of glaciers, indicated by the spotted space, and moving in the direction of the arrows. As

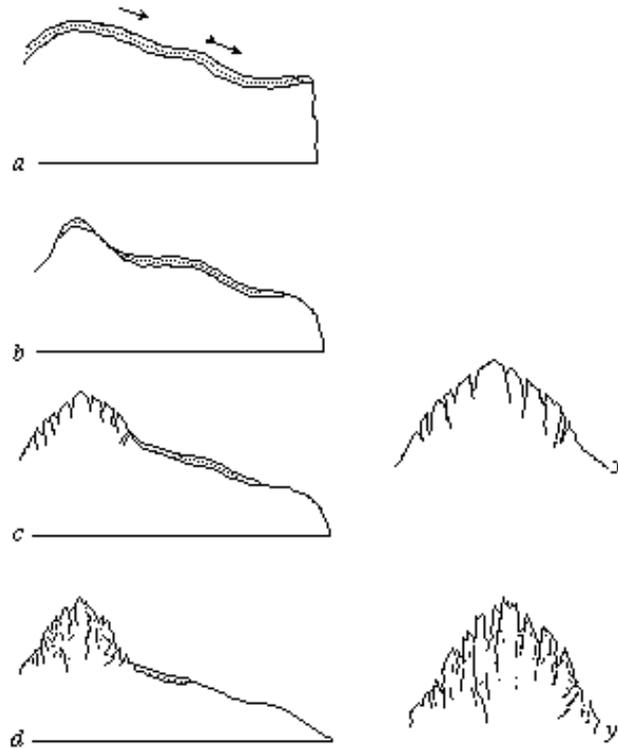


Fig. 24

it wears away the mountain, not at all at the top, but always more and more as it descends, it would in process of time reduce the contour of the flank of the hill to the form at *b*. But at this point the snow would begin

¹ [See *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. p. 276, where Ruskin, referring to this passage, says that he was “the first to reduce to a diagram the probable stages” of the operation of glacier friction “on the bases of the higher Alpine Aiguilles.”]

to slide from the central peak, and to leave its rocks exposed to the action of the atmosphere. Supposing those rocks disposed to break into vertical sheets, the summit would soon cleave itself into such a form as that at *x*; and the flakes again subdividing and falling, we should have conditions such as at *y*. Meanwhile the glacier is still doing its work uninterruptedly on the lower bank, bringing the mountain successively into the outlines *c* and *d*, in which the forms *x* and *y* are substituted consecutively for the original summit. But the level of the whole flank of the mountain being now so much reduced, the glacier has brought itself by its own work into warmer climate, and has wrought out its own destruction. It would gradually be thinned away, and in many places at last vanish, leaving only the barren rounded mountains, and the tongues of ice still supplied from the peaks above.

§ 18. Such is the actual condition of the Alps at this moment. I do not say that they have in reality undergone any such process. But I think it right to put the supposition before the reader, more with a view of explaining what the appearance of things actually is, than with any wish that he should adopt either this or any other theory on the subject. It facilitates a description of the Brèche de Roland¹ to say, that it looks as if the peer had indeed cut it open with a swordstroke; but it would be unfair to conclude that the describer gravely wished the supposition to be adopted as explanatory of the origin of the ravine. In like manner, the reader who has followed the steps of the theory I have just offered, will have a clearer conception of the real look and anatomy of the Alps than I could give him by any other means. But he is welcome to accept in seriousness just as much or as little of the theory as he likes.* Only I am well persuaded

* For farther information respecting the glaciers and their probable action, the reader should consult the works of Professor Forbes. I believe this theory of the formation of the upper peaks has been proposed by

¹ [See Vol. IX. p. 103 *n.*]

that the more familiar any one becomes with the chain of the Alps, the more, whether voluntarily or not, the idea will force itself upon him of their being mere remnants of large masses,—splinters and fragments, as of a stranded wreck, the greater part of which has been removed by the waves; and the more he will be convinced of the existence of two distinct regions, one, as it were, below the ice, another above it,—one of subjected, the other of emergent rock; the lower worn away by the action of the glaciers and rains, the higher splintering and falling to pieces by natural disintegration.

§ 19. I press, however, neither conjecture nor inquiry farther; having already stated all that is necessary to give the reader a complete idea of the different divisions of mountain form, I proceed now to examine the points of pictorial interest in greater detail; and in order to do so more conveniently, I shall adopt the order, in description, which Nature seems to have adopted in formation; beginning with the mysterious hardness of the central crystallines, and descending to the softer and lower rocks which we

him, and recently opposed by Mr. Sharpe,¹ who believes that the great bank spoken of in the text was originally a sea-bottom. But I have simply stated in this chapter the results of my own watchings of the Alps; for being without hope of getting time for available examination of the voluminous works on these subjects, I thought it best to read nothing (except Forbes's most important essay on the glaciers, several times quoted in the text), and therefore to give, at all events, the force of independent witness to such impressions as I received from the actual facts; De Saussure, always a faithful recorder of those facts, and my first master in geology, being referred to, occasionally, for information respecting localities I had not been able to examine.

¹ [J. D. Forbes' papers on Glaciers were collected in 1859, under the title of *Occasional Papers on the Theory of Glaciers*, some of the chapters being reprinted from his *Travels through the Alps*, which is the work "several times quoted in the text" (see pp. 54, 84, 224, 230, 284, 287). Ruskin afterwards defended Forbes' views with much energy (see *Deucalion* volume). Daniel Sharpe (1806–1856), F.R.S., was successively Treasurer and President of the Geological Society. The reference here is to his paper in the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*, 1856, vol. xii. pp. 102–123, "On the Last Elevation of the Alps; with notices of the heights at which the sea has left traces of its action on their sides." He refers to Forbes' *Norway and its Glaciers*, 1851, as well as to his *Travels through the Alps*.]

see in some degree modified by the slight forces still in operation. We will therefore examine: 1, the pictorial phenomena of the central peaks; 2, those of the summits of the lower mountains round them, to which we shall find it convenient to give the distinguishing name of Crests; 3, the formation of Precipices, properly so called; then, the general aspect of the Banks and Slopes, produced by the action of water or of falling débris, on the sides or at the bases of mountains; and finally, remove, if it may be, a few of the undeserved scorns thrown upon our most familiar servants, Stones. To each of these subjects we shall find it necessary to devote a distinct chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

RESULTING FORMS:—FIRST, AIGUILLES

§ 1. I HAVE endeavoured in the preceding chapters always to keep the glance of the reader on the broad aspect of things, and to separate for him the mountain masses into the most distinctly comprehensible forms. We must now consent to take more pains and observe more closely.

§ 2. I begin with the Aiguilles. In Fig. 24, p. 212, at *a*, it was assumed that the mass was raised highest merely where the elevating force was greatest, being of one substance with the bank or cliff below. But it hardly ever *is* of the same substance. Almost always it is of compact crystallines, and the bank of slaty crystallines; or if it be of slaty crystallines the bank is of slaty coherents. The bank is almost always the softer of the two.*

Is not this very marvellous? Is it not exactly as if the substance had been prepared soft or hard with a sculpturesque view to what had to be done with it; soft, for the glacier to mould and the torrent to divide; hard, to stand for ever, central in mountain majesty?

§ 3. Next, then, comes the question, How do these compact crystallines and slaty crystallines join each other? It has long been a well recognized fact in the science of geology, that the most important mountain ranges lift up and sustain upon their sides the beds of rock which form the inferior groups of hills around them, in the manner roughly shown in the section, Fig. 25, where the dark mass stands for the hard rock of the great mountains (crystallines), and the lighter lines at the side of it indicate

* See, for explanatory statements, Appendix 2 [p. 478].

the prevalent direction of the beds in the neighbouring hills (coherents), while the spotted portions represent the gravel and sand of which the great plains are usually composed. But it has not been so universally recognized, though long ago pointed out by De Saussure, that the great central groups are often themselves composed of beds lying in a precisely opposite direction; so that if we



Fig. 25

analyze carefully the structure of the dark mass in the centre of Fig. 25, we shall find it arranged in lines which slope downwards to the centre; the flanks of it being of slaty crystalline rock, and the summit of compact crystallines, as at *a*, Fig. 26.

In speaking of the sculpture of the central peaks in the last chapter, I made no reference to the *nature* of the rocks in the banks on which they stood. The diagram at *a*, Fig.

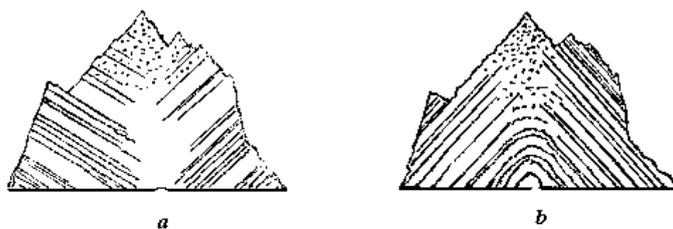


Fig. 26

27, as representative of the original condition, and *b*, of the resultant condition, will, compared with Fig. 24, p. 212, more completely illustrate the change.*

§ 4. By what secondary laws this structure may ultimately be discovered to have been produced is of no

* I have been able to examine these conditions with much care in the chain of Mont Blanc only, which I chose for the subject of investigation both as being the most interesting to the general traveller, and as being the only range of the central mountains which had been much painted by Turner. But I believe the singular arrangements of beds which take place in this chain have been found by the German geologists to prevail also in the highest peaks of the western Alps; and there are a peculiar beauty

consequence to us at present; all that it is needful for us to note is the beneficence which appointed it for the mountains destined to assume the boldest forms. For into whatever outline they may be sculptured by violence or time, it is evident at a glance that their

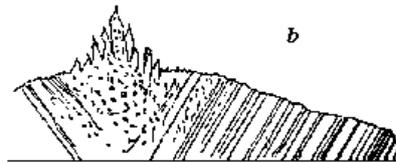
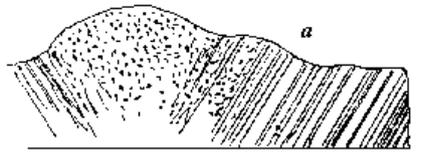


Fig. 27

stability and security must always be the greatest possible under the given circumstances. Suppose, for instance, that the peak is in such a form as *a*, in Fig. 26; then, however steep the slope may be on either side, there is still no chance of one piece of rock sliding off another; but if the same outline were given to beds disposed as at *b*, the unsupported masses might slide off those beneath them at any moment, unless prevented by the inequalities of the surfaces. Farther, in the minor divisions of the outline, the tendency of the peak at *a* will be always to assume contours like those at *a* in Fig. 28, which are, of course,

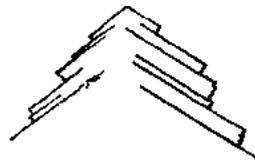


Fig. 28

perfectly safe; but the tendency of the beds at *b* in Fig. 26,¹ will be to break into contours such as at *b* here, which are

and providence in them which induce me to expect that farther inquiries may justify our attributing them to some very extensive law of the earth's structure. See the notes from De Saussure in Appendix 2 [p. 477].

¹ [In the early editions, "Fig. 27"; the mistake was first corrected in the small complete edition.]

all perilous, not only in the chance of each several portion giving way, but in the manner in which they would *deliver*, from one to the other, the fragments which fell. A stone detached from any portion of the peak at *a* would be caught and stopped on the ledge beneath it; but a fragment loosened from *b* would not stay till it reached the valley by a series of accelerating bounds.

§ 5. While, however, the secure and noble form represented at *a* in Figs. 26 and 28 is for the most part ordained to be that of the highest mountains, the contours at *b*, in each figure, are of perpetual occurrence among the secondary ranges, in which, on a smaller scale, they produce some of the most terrific and fantastic forms of precipice; not altogether without danger, as has been fearfully demonstrated by many a “bergfall” among the limestone groups of the Alps; but with far less danger than would have resulted from the permission of such forms among the higher hills; and with collateral advantages which we shall have presently to consider.¹ In the meantime, we return to the examination of the superior groups.

§ 6. The reader is, no doubt, already aware that the chain of the Mont Blanc is bordered by two great valleys running parallel to each other, and seemingly excavated on purpose that travellers might be able to pass, foot by foot, along each side of the Mont Blanc and its aiguilles, and thus examine every peak in succession. One of these valleys is that of Chamouni, the other that of which one half is called the Allée Blanche, and the other the Val Ferret, the town of Courmayeur being near its centre, where it opens to the Val d’Aosta. Now, cutting the chain of Mont Blanc right across from valley to valley, through the double range of aiguilles, the section would be* as Fig. 29, p. 220,

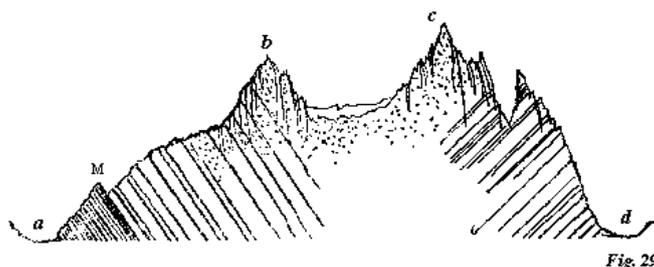
* That is to say, as it appears to me. There are some points of the following statements which are disputed among geologists; the reader will find them hereafter discussed at greater length.²

¹ [Below, pp. 314 *seq.*]

² [Below, pp. 254 *seq.*]

in which *a* is the valley of Chamouni, *b* the range of aiguilles of Chamouni, *c* the range of the Géant, *d* the valley of Courmayeur.

The little projection under *M* is intended to mark approximately the position of the so well known "Montanvert." It is a great weakness, not to say worse than weakness, on the part of travellers, to extol always chiefly what they think fewest people have seen or can see. I have climbed much, and wandered much, in the heart of the high Alps, but I have never yet seen anything which equalled the view from the cabin of the Montanvert;¹ and



as the spot is visited every year by increasing numbers of tourists, I have thought it best to take the mountains which surround it for the principal subjects of our inquiry.

§ 7. The little eminence left under *M* truly marks the height of the Montanvert on the flanks of the aiguilles, but not accurately its position, which is somewhat behind the mass of mountain supposed to be cut through by the section. But the top of the Montanvert is actually formed, as shown at *M*, by the crest of the oblique beds of slaty crystallines. Every traveller must remember the steep and smooth beds of rock, like sloping walls, down which, and over the ledges of which, the path descends from the cabin to the edge of

¹ [Professor James Forbes quoted these remarks by Ruskin "with much sympathy," in his article on *Pedestrianism in Switzerland* in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1857—an article which preceded by some months the foundation of the English Alpine Club; see W. A. B. Coolidge's edition (1900) of Forbes' *Travels through the Alps*, p. 472. For Ruskin's diaries and letters describing the view from the Montanvert, see Introduction to preceding volume, p. xxix.]

the glacier. These sloping walls are formed by the inner sides of the crystalline beds,* as exposed in the notch behind the letter M.

§ 8. To these beds we shall return presently,¹ our object just now being to examine the aiguille, which, on the Montanvert, forms the most conspicuous mass of mountain on the right of the spectator. It is known in Chamouni as the Aiguille de Charmoz, and is distinguished by a very sharp horn or projection on its side, which usually attracts the traveller's attention as one of the most singular minor features in the view from the Montanvert. The larger masses of the whole aiguille, and true contour of this horn, are carefully given in Plate 30, Fig. 2, as they are seen in morning sunshine. The *impression* which travellers usually carry away with them is, I presume, to be gathered from Fig. 1, a facsimile of one of the lithographs purchased with avidity by English travellers, in the shops of Chamouni and Geneva, as giving a faithful representation of this aiguille seen from the Montanvert.² It is worth while to perpetuate this example of the ideal landscape of the nineteenth century, popular at the time when the works of Turner were declared by the public to be extravagant and unnatural.

§ 9. This example of the common ideal of aiguilles is, however, useful in another respect. It shows the strong impression which these Chamouni mountains leave, of their being above all others sharp-peaked and splintery, dividing more or less into arrowy spires; and it marks the sense of another and very curious character in them, that these spires are apt to be somewhat bent or curved.

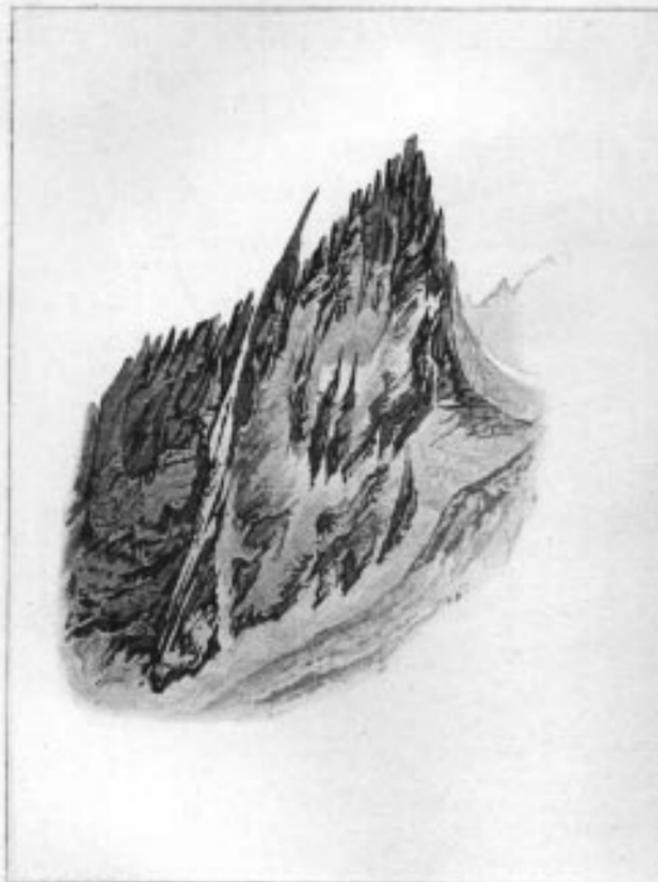
Both these impressions are partially true, and need to be insisted upon, and cleared of their indistinctness, or exaggeration.

First, then, this strong impression of their peakedness

* Running, at that point, very nearly, N. E. and s. w., and dipping under the ice at an angle of about seventy degrees.

¹ [See below, pp. 254 *seq.*]

² [See above, ch. xiii. § 8, p. 203.]



Diquet et DuBois.



J. Buskin.

R.F. Curt.
Allen & Co. S.

Ideal.

30 . The Aiguille Chamois .

Actual.

and spiry separateness is always produced with the least possible *danger* to the travelling and admiring public; for if in reality these granite mountains were ever separated into true spires or points, in the least resembling this popular ideal in Plate 30, the Montanvert and Mer de Glace would be as inaccessible, except at the risk of life, as the trenches of a besieged city; and the continual fall of the splintering fragments would turn even the valley of Chamouni itself into a stony desolation.

§ 10. Perhaps in describing mountains with any effort to give some idea of their sublime forms, no expression comes oftener to the lips than the word “peak.”¹ And yet it is curious how rarely, even among the grandest ranges, an instance can be found of a mountain ascertainably peaked in the true sense of the word,—pointed at the top, and sloping steeply on all sides; perhaps not more than five summits in the chain of the Alps, the Finsteraarhorn, Wetterhorn, Bietsch-horn, Weisshorn, and Monte Viso presenting approximations to such a structure. Even in the case of not very steep pyramids, presenting themselves in the distance under some such outline as that at the top of Fig. 30, it almost invariably happens, when we approach and examine them, that they do not slope equally on all their sides, but are nothing more than steep ends of ridges, supported by far extended masses of comparatively level rock, which, seen in perspective, give the impression of a steep slope, though in reality disposed in a horizontal, or nearly horizontal, line.

§ 11. Supposing the central diagram in Fig. 30 to be

¹ [The following passage affords an instance of what is said in the Introduction (above, p. xxii.) about Ruskin’s frequent revisions on his proof sheets. In the proof which has been preserved the passage reads:—

“... the word ‘peak.’ And yet, after some fourteen summers of watchful wandering among mountains, I can say, confidently, that I never yet saw a peaked one. Pyramids, not steep, and cones, at such slope as that of Vesuvius, I have indeed seen, though not frequently; but peaks—that is, rocky summits terminating in a sharp point—I have never seen. I mean, of course, on a large scale, so as to deserve the name of a mountain. The Wetterhorn and Aiguille Verte may perhaps be exceptions; but they are both blunt enough to be loaded with snow, and, therefore, not accurately observable. Even in the case . . .”]

the apparent contour of a distant mountain, then its slopes may indeed, by singular chance, be as steep as they appear; but in all probability, several of them are perspective descents of its retiring lines; and supposing it were formed as the gable roof of the old French house below, and seen under the same angle, it is evident that the part of the

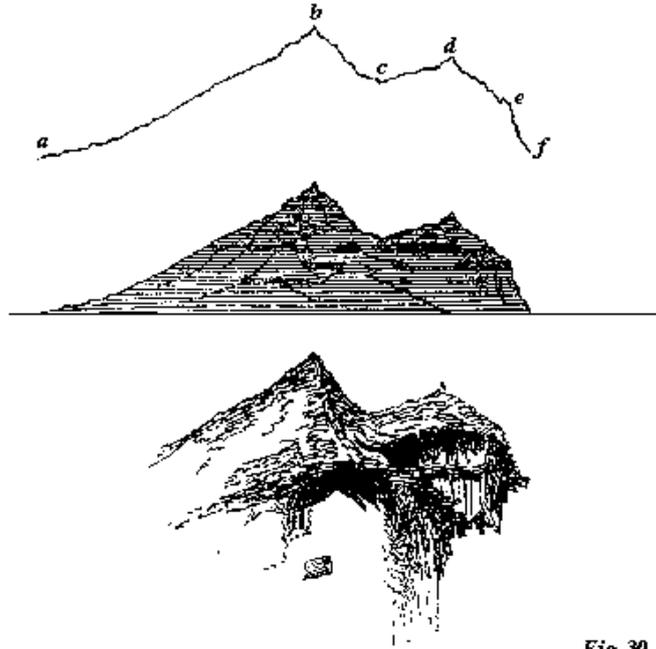


Fig. 30

outline *a b* (in lettered reference line above) would be perfectly horizontal; *b c*, an angle slope, in retiring perspective, much less steep than it appears; *c d*, perfectly horizontal; *d e*, an advancing or foreshortened angle slope, less steep than it appears; and *e f*, perfectly horizontal.

But if the pyramid presents itself under a more formidable aspect, and with steeper sides than those of the central diagram, then it may be assumed (as far as I know

mountains) for next to a certainty, that it is not a pointed obelisk, but the end of a ridge more or less prolonged, of which we see the narrow edge or section turned towards us.

For instance, no mountain in the Alps produces a more vigorous impression of peakedness than the Matterhorn. In Professor Forbes's work on the Alps, it is spoken of as an "obelisk" of rock,¹ and represented with little exaggeration in his seventh plate under the outline Fig. 31. Naturally, in glancing, whether at the plate or the mountain, we assume the mass to be a peak, and suppose the line *a b* to be the steep slope of its side. But that line is a perspective line. It is in reality *perfectly horizontal*, corresponding to *ef* in the penthouse roof, Fig. 30.

§ 12. I say "perfectly horizontal," meaning, of course, in general tendency. It is more or less irregular and broken, but so nearly horizontal that, after some prolonged examination of the data I have collected about the Matterhorn, I am at this moment in doubt *which is its top*. For as, in order to examine the beds on its flanks, I walked up the Zmutt glacier, I saw that the line *a b* in Fig. 31 gradually lost its steepness; and about half-way up the glacier, the conjectural summit *a* then bearing nearly S.E. (forty degrees east of south), I found the contour was as in Fig. 32. In Fig. 33, p. 226, I have given the contour as seen from Zermatt; and in all three the same letters indicate the same points. In the Figures 32 and 33 I measured the angles with the greatest care,* from the base

* It was often of great importance to me to ascertain these *apparent* slopes with some degree of correctness. In order to do so without the trouble of carrying any instrument (except my compass and spirit-level), I had my Alpine pole made as even as a round rule for about a foot in the middle of its length. Taking the bearing of the mountain, placing the pole at right angles to the bearing, and adjusting it by the spirit-level, I brought the edge of a piece of finely cut pasteboard parallel, in a vertical plane (plumbed), with the apparent slope of the hill side. A pencil line drawn by the pole then gave me a horizon, with which the angle could be easily measured at home. The measurements thus obtained are given under the figures.

¹ [*Travels among the Alps*, p. 313 of the original edition, and Plate vii. (the *plates* are not reproduced in the reprint of 1900); see below, p. 287.]

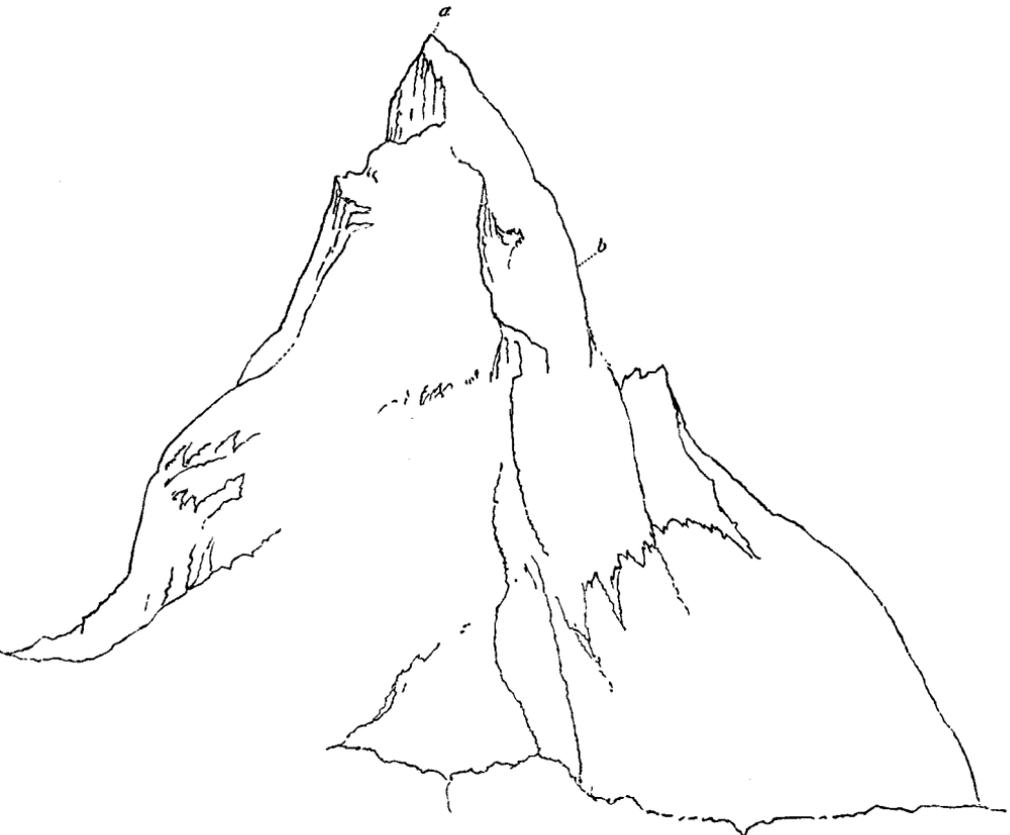


Fig. 31

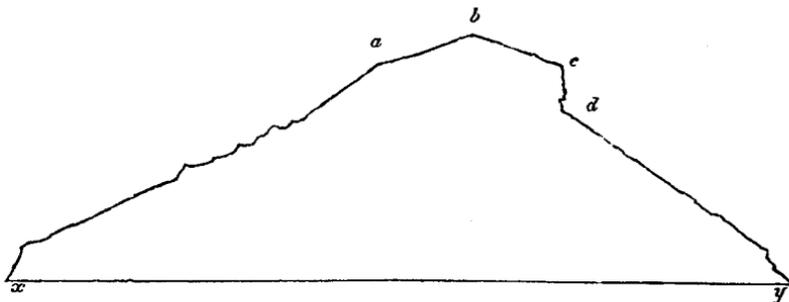


Fig. 32

Of the line $a b$ - -	17°		Of the line $d y$ (general slope, exclusive of inequalities)	$35\frac{3}{4}^\circ$
$b c$ - -	$20\frac{1}{2}$		$a x$ (ditto, ditto, to point of cliff above x)	$23\frac{1}{2}$

lines $x y$, which are accurately horizontal; and their general truth,¹ irrespective of mere ruggedness, may be depended upon. Now in this flank view, Fig. 32, what *was* the summit at Zermatt, a , becomes quite subordinate, and the point b , far down the flank in Forbes's view taken from the Riffelhorn, is here the apparent summit. I was for

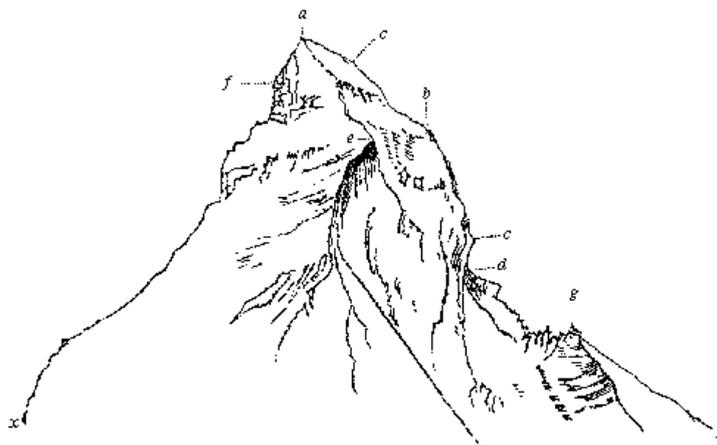


Fig. 23

Angles with the horizon $x y$.

$a f$ -----	56°	$c d$ (overhanging)-----	79°
$a e$ -----	$12\frac{3}{4}$	$a x$ (irrespective of irregularities)	56
$e b$ (from point to point) --	$44\frac{1}{2}$	$a y$ -----	$38\frac{3}{4}$
$b c$ (ditto, ditto)-----	$67\frac{1}{4}$		

some time in considerable doubt which of the appearances was most trustworthy;² and believe now that they are *both* deceptive; for I found, on ascending the flank of the hills on the other side of the Valais, to a height of about five thousand feet above Brieg, between the Aletsch glacier and Bietsch-horn; being thus high enough to get a view of the Matterhorn on something like distant terms of

¹ [See Preface, § 3, p. 5.]

² [For Ruskin's expeditions, on which observations such as those here recorded were made, see *Deucalion*, i. ch. x. ("Thirty Years Since"), and the Introduction to Vol. V. p. 27.]

equality, up the St. Nicholas valley, it presented itself under the outline Fig. 34, which seems to be conclusive for the supremacy of the point *e*, between *a* and *b* in Fig. 33. But the impossibility of determining, at the foot of it, without a trigonometrical observation, *which is the top* of such an apparent peak as the Matterhorn, may serve to show the reader how little the eye is to be trusted for the verification of peaked outline.



Fig. 34

§ 13. In like manner, the aiguilles of Chamouni, which present themselves to the traveller, as he looks up to them from the village, under an outline approximating to that rudely indicated at C in Fig. 35 (on the next page) are in reality buttresses projecting from an intermediate ridge. Let A be supposed a castle wall, with slightly elevated masses of square-built buttresses at intervals. Then, by process of dilapidation, these buttresses might easily be brought to assume in their perspective of ruin the forms indicated at B, which, with certain modifications, is the actual shape of the Chamouni aiguilles. The top of the Aiguille Charmoz is not the point under *d*, but that under *e*. The deception is much increased by the elevation of the whole castle wall on the green bank before spoken of, which raises its foundation several thousand feet above the eye, and thus, giving amazing steepness to all the perspective lines, produces an impression of the utmost possible isolation of peaks, where, in reality, there is a well-supported, and more or less continuous, though sharply jagged, pile of solid walls.

§ 14. There is, however, this great difference between the castle wall and aiguilles, that the dilapidation in the one would take place by the fall of *horizontal* bricks or stones; in the aiguilles it takes place in quite an opposite manner by the flaking away of nearly *vertical* ones.

This is the next point of great interest respecting them. Observe, the object of their construction appears to be the attainment of the utmost possible peakedness in aspect,

with the least possible danger to the inhabitants of the valleys. As, therefore, they are first thrown into transverse ridges, which take, in perspective, a more or less peaked outline, so, in their dilapidation, they split into

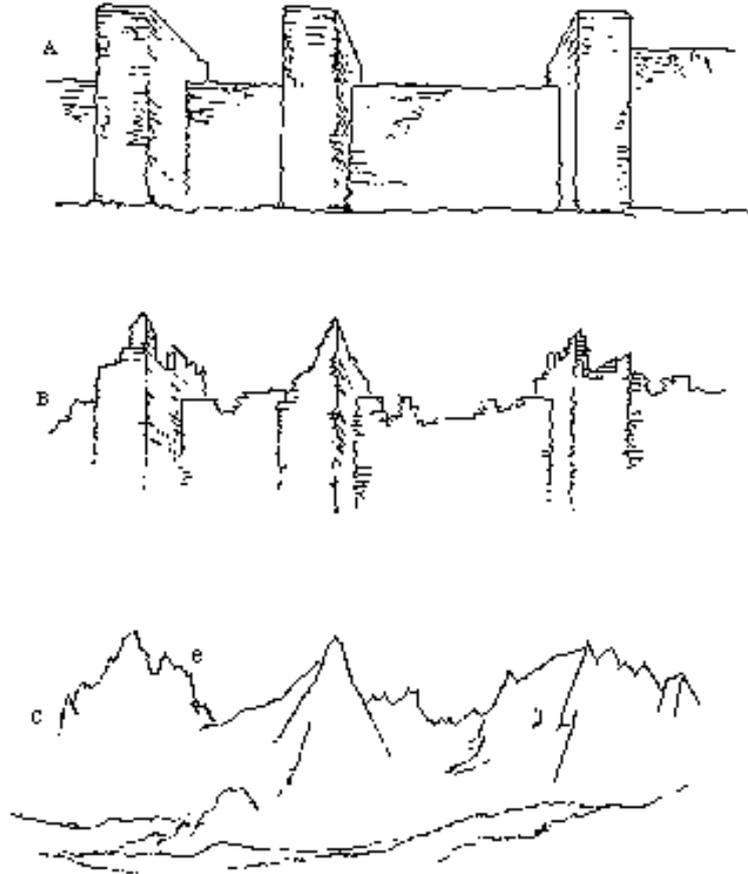


Fig. 35

narrow flakes, which, if seen edgewise, look as sharp as a lance-point, but are nevertheless still strong; being each of them, in reality, not a lance-point or needle, but a hatchet edge.

§ 15. And since if these sharp flakes broke *straight* across the masses of mountain, when once the fissure took

place, all hold would be lost between flake and flake, it is ordered (and herein is the most notable thing in the whole matter) that they shall not break straight, but *in curves, round the body* of the aiguilles, somewhat in the manner of the coats of an onion; so that, even after the fissure has taken place, the detached film or flake clings to and leans upon the central mass, and will not fall from it till centuries of piercing frost have wedged it utterly from its hold; and, even then, will not fall all at once, but drop to pieces slowly, and flake by flake. Consider a little the beneficence of this ordinance;* supposing the cliffs had been built like the castle wall, the mouldering away of a few bricks, more or less, at the bottom would have brought down huge masses above; as it constantly does in ruined buildings, and in the mouldering cliffs of the slaty coherents; while yet the top of the mountain would have been always blunt and rounded, as at *a*,



Fig. 36

Fig. 36, when seen against the sky. But the aiguille being built in these nearly vertical curved flakes, the worst that the frost can do to it is to push its undermost rocks asunder into forms such as at *b*, of which, when many of the edges have fallen, the lower ones are more or less supported by the very débris accumulated at their feet; and yet all the while the tops sustain themselves in

* That is to say, in a cliff intended to owe its outline to dilapidation. Where no dilapidation is to be permitted, the bedded structure, well knit, is always used. Of this we shall see various examples in the 16th chapter.

the most fantastic and incredible fineness of peak against the sky.

§ 16. I have drawn the flakes in Fig. 36, for illustration's sake, under a caricatured form. Their real aspect will be understood in a moment by a glance at the opposite plate, 31, which represents the central aiguille in the woodcut outline Fig. 35 (Aiguille Blaitière, called by Forbes Greppond), as seen from within about half a mile of its actual base.¹ The white shell-like mass beneath it is a small glacier, which in its beautifully curved outline* appears to sympathize with the sweep of the rocks beneath, rising and breaking like a wave at the feet of the remarkable horn or spur which supports it on the right. The base of the aiguille itself, is, as it were, washed by this glacier, or by the snow which covers it, till late in the season, as a cliff is by the sea; except that a narrow chasm, of some twenty or thirty feet in depth and two or three feet wide, usually separates the rock from the ice, which is melted away by the heat reflected from the southern face of the aiguille. The rock all along this base line is of the most magnificent compactness and hardness, and rings under the hammer like a bell; yet, when regarded from a little distance, it is seen to be distinctly inclined to separate into grand curved flakes or sheets, of which the dark edges are well marked in the plate. The pyramidal form of the aiguille, as seen from this point, is, however, entirely deceptive; the square rock which forms its apparent summit is not the real top, but much in advance of it, and the slope on the right against the sky is a perspective line; while, on the other hand, the precipice in light, above the three small horns at the narrowest part of the glacier, is considerably steeper than it appears to be,

* Given already as an example of curvature in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. plate 7. [Vol. IX. p. 267.]

¹ [See Vol. V. p. xxix. for Ruskin's description of this spot; and for the drawing, part of which is engraved in Plate 31, see his *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, etc., No. 48 R (Vol. XIII).]



the cleavage of the flakes crossing it somewhat obliquely. But I show the aiguille from this spot that the reader may more distinctly note the fellowship between its curved precipice and the little dark horn or spur which bounds the glacier; a spur the more remarkable because there is just such another, jutting in like manner from the corresponding angle of the next aiguille (Charmoz), both of them looking like remnants or foundations of the vaster ancient pyramids, of which the greater part has been by ages carried away.

§ 17. The more I examined the range of the aiguilles the more I was struck by this curved cleavage as their principal character. It is quite true that they have other straighter cleavages (noticed in the Appendix,¹ as the investigation of them would be tiresome to the general reader); but it is this to which they owe the whole picturesqueness of their contours; curved as it is, not simply, but often into the most strange shell-like undulations, as will be understood by a glance at Fig. 37, which shows the mere *governing* lines at the base of this Aiguille Blaitière, seen, with its spur, from a station² some quarter of a mile nearer it, and more to the east than that chosen in Plate 31. These leading lines are rarely well shown in fine weather, the important contour from *a* downwards being hardly relieved clearly from the precipice beyond (*b*), unless a cloud intervenes, as it did when I made this memorandum; while, again, the leading lines of the Aiguille du Plan, as seen from the foot of it, close to the rocks, are as at Fig. 38, the generally pyramidal outline being nearly similar to that of Blaitière, and a spur being thrown out to the right, under *a*, composed in exactly the same manner of curved folia of rock laid one against the other. The hollow in the heart of the aiguille is as smooth and sweeping in curve as the cavity of a vast bivalve shell.

§ 18. I call these the governing or leading lines, not because they are the first which strike the eye, but because,

¹ [Appendix ii., § 4, pp. 478–479.]

² [See p. 481 for the locality of this station.]

like those of the grain of the wood in a tree-trunk, they rule the swell and fall and change of all the mass. In Nature, or in a photograph, a careless observer will by no means be struck by them, any more than he would be by the curves of the tree; and an ordinary artist would draw rather the cragginess and granulation of the surfaces, just as he would rather draw the bark and moss of the trunk.

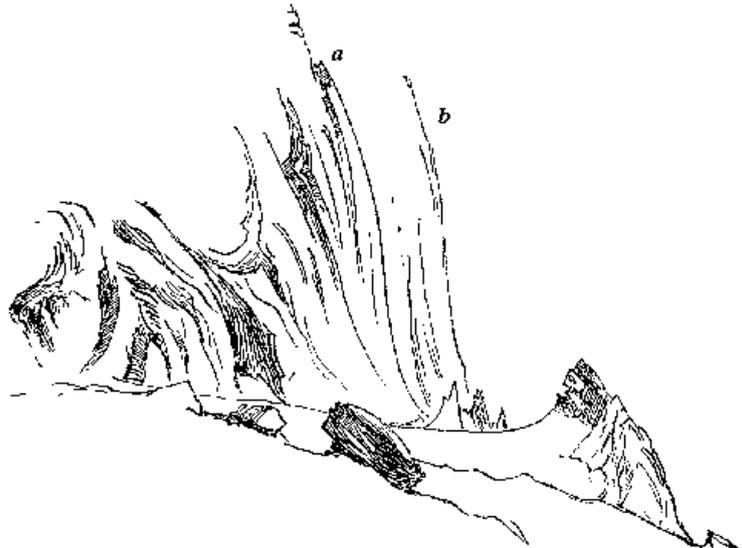


Fig. 37

Nor can any one be more steadfastly averse than I to every substitution of anatomical knowledge for outward and apparent fact;¹ but so it is, that, as an artist increases in acuteness of perception, the facts which *become* outward and apparent to him are those which bear upon the growth or make of the thing. And, just as in looking at any woodcut of trees after Titian or Albert Dürer, as compared with a modern water-colour sketch, we shall always be struck by the writhing and rounding of the tree-trunks in

¹ [See Vol. IV. p. 155 *n.*]

the one, and the stiffness, and merely blotted or granulated surfaces of the other; so, in looking at these rocks, the keenness of the artist's eye may almost precisely be tested by the degree in which he perceives the curves that give them their strength and grace, and in harmony with which the flakes of granite are bound together, like the bones of the jaw of a saurian. Thus the ten years of study which I have given to these mountains since I described them in the first volume as "traversed sometimes by graceful curvilinear fissures, sometimes by straight fissures,"¹ have enabled

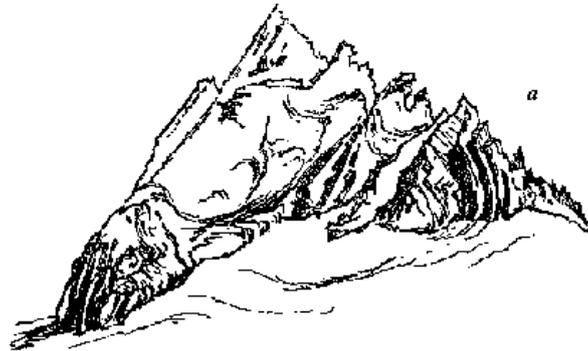


Fig. 38

me to ascertain, and now generally at a glance to see, that the curvilinear ones are *dominant*, and that even the fissures or edges which appear perfectly straight have *almost* always some delicate sympathy with the curves. Occasionally, however, as in the separate beds which form the spur or horn of the Aiguille Blaitière, seen in true profile in Plate 29, Fig. 3, the straightness is so accurate that, not having brought a rule with me up the glacier, I was obliged to write under my sketch, "Not possible to draw it straight enough." Compare also the lines sloping to the left in Fig. 38.

§ 19. "But why not give everything just as it is; without caring what is dominant and what subordinate?"

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 432.]

You cannot. Of all the various impossibilities which torment and humiliate the painter, none are more vexatious than that of drawing a mountain form. It is indeed impossible enough to draw, by resolute care, the foam on a wave, or the outline of the foliage of a large tree; but in these cases when care is at fault, carelessness will help, and the dash of the brush will in some measure give wildness to the churning of the foam, and infinitude to the shaking of the leaves. But chance will not help us with the mountain. Its fine and faintly organized edge seems to be definitely traced against the sky; yet let us set ourselves honestly to follow it, and we find, on the instant, it has disappeared: and that for two reasons. The first, that if the mountain be lofty, and in light, it is so faint in colour that the eye literally cannot trace its separation from the hues next to it. The other day I wanted the contour of a limestone mountain in the Valais, distant about seven miles, and as many thousand feet above me; it was barren limestone; the morning sun fell upon it, so as to make it almost vermilion colour, and the sky behind it a bluish green. Two tints could hardly have been more opposed, but both were so subtle, that I found it impossible to see accurately the line that separated the vermilion from the green. The second, that if the contour be observed from a nearer point, or looked at when it is dark against the sky, it will be found composed of millions of minor angles, crags, points, and fissures, which no human sight or hand can draw finely enough, and yet all of which have effect upon the mind.

§ 20. The outline shown as dark against the sky in Plate 29, Fig. 2, p. 200, is about a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, yards of the top of the ridge of Charmoz, running from the base of the aiguille down to the Montanvert, and seen from the moraine of the Charmoz glacier, a quarter of a mile distant to the south-west.* It is formed

* The top of the aiguille of the Little Charmoz bearing, from the point whence this sketch was made, about six degrees east of north.

of decomposing granite, thrown down in blocks entirely detached, but wedged together, so as to stand continually in these seemingly perilous contours (being a portion of such a base of aiguille as that in *b*, Fig. 36, p. 229).* The block forming the summit on the left is fifteen or eighteen feet long; and the upper edge of it, which is the dominant point of the Charmoz ridge, is the best spot in the Chamouni district for giving a thorough command of the relations of the aiguilles on each side of the Mer de Glace. Now put the book, with that page open, upright, at three yards' distance from you, and try to draw this contour, which I have made as dark and distinct as it ever could be in reality, and you will immediately understand why it is impossible to draw mountain outlines rightly.

§ 21. And if not outlines, *à fortiori* not details of mass, which have all the complexity of the outline multiplied a thousand fold, and drawn in fainter colours. Nothing is more curious than the state of embarrassment into which the unfortunate artist must soon be cast, when he endeavours honestly to draw the face of the simplest mountain cliff—say a thousand feet high, and two or three miles distant. It is full of exquisite details, all seemingly decisive and clear; but when he tries to arrest one of them, he cannot see it,—cannot find where it begins or ends,—and

* The *summits* of the aiguilles are often more fantastically rent still. Fig. 39 is the profile of a portion of the upper edge of the Aiguille du Moine, seen from the crest of Charmoz; Fig. 40 shows the three lateral



Fig. 39



Fig. 40

fragments, drawn to a larger scale. The height of each of the upright masses must be from twenty to twenty-five feet. I do not know if their rude resemblance to two figures, on opposite sides of a table or altar, has had anything to do with the name of the aiguille.

presently it runs into another; and then he tries to draw that, but that will not be drawn, neither, until it has conducted him to a third, which, somehow or other, made part of the first; presently he finds that, instead of three, there are in reality four, and then he loses his place altogether. He tries to draw clear lines, to make his work look craggy, but finds that then it is too hard; he tries to draw soft lines, and it is immediately too soft; he draws a curved line, and instantly sees it should have been straight; a straight one, and finds when he looks up again, that it has got curved while he was drawing it. There is nothing for him but despair, or some sort of abstraction and shorthand for cliff. Then the only question is, what is the wisest abstraction; and out of the multitude of lines that cannot altogether be interpreted, which are the really dominant ones; so that if we cannot give the whole, we may at least give what will convey the most important facts about the cliff.

§ 22. Recurring then to our “public opinion” of the Aiguille Charmoz,¹ we find the greatest exaggeration of, and therefore I suppose the greatest interest in, the narrow and spiry point on its left side. That is in reality not a point at all, but a hatchet edge; a flake of rock, which is enabled to maintain itself in this sharp-edged state by its writhing folds of sinewy granite. Its structure, on a larger scale, and seen “edge on,” is shown in Fig. 41. The whole aiguille is composed of a series of such flakes, liable, indeed, to all kinds of fissure in other directions, but holding, by their modes of vertical association, the strongest authority over the form of the whole mountain. It is not in all lights that they are seen plainly: for instance, in the morning effect in Plate 30 they are hardly traceable: but the longer we watch, the more they are perceived; and their power of sustaining themselves vertically is so great, that at the foot of the aiguille on the right a few of them form a detached mass, known as the *Petit Charmoz*, between E and

¹ [See above, § 8, p. 221.]

c, in Fig. 60, p. 257, of which the height of the outermost flake, between *c* and *d*, is about five hundred feet.

Important, however, as this curved cleavage is, it is so confused among others, that it has taken me, as I said,¹ ten years of almost successive labour to develop, in any degree of completeness, its relations among the aiguilles of Chamouni; and even of professed geologists, the only person who has described it properly is De Saussure, whose *continual* sojourn among the Alps enabled him justly to discern the constant from the inconstant phenomena. And yet, in his very first journey to Savoy, Turner saw it at a glance, and fastened on it as the main thing to be expressed in those mountains.

In the opposite Plate (32), the darkest division, on the right, is a tolerably accurate copy of Turner's rendering of the Aiguille Charmoz (etched and engraved by himself), in the plate called the "Mer de Glace," in the *Liber Studiorum*. Its outline is in local respects inaccurate enough, being modified by Turnerian

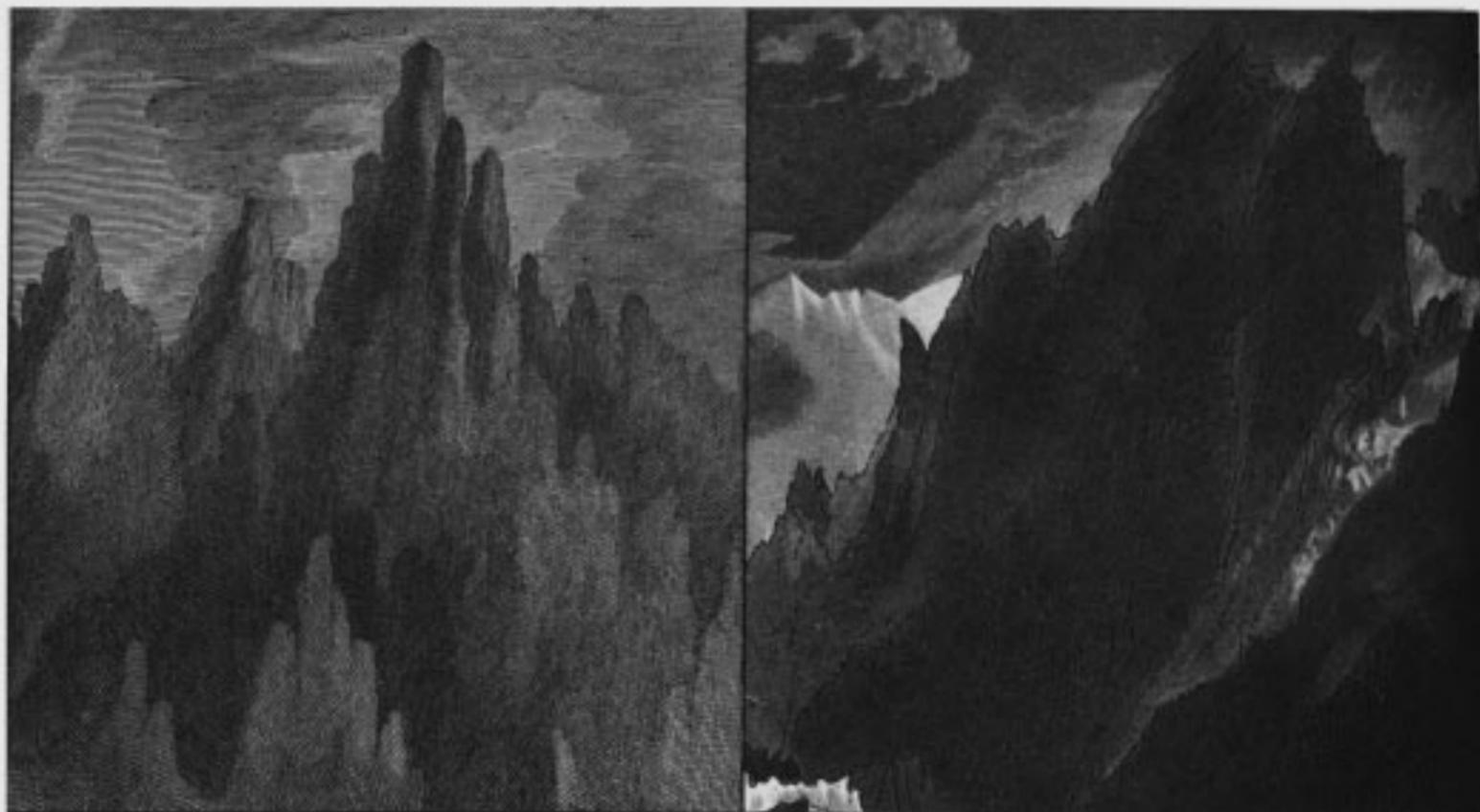


Fig. 41

topography; but the flaky character is so definite, that it looks as if it had been prepared for an illustrative diagram of the points at present under discussion.

§ 23. And do not let it be supposed that this was by chance, or that the modes of mountain drawing at the period would in any wise have helped Turner to discover these lines. The aiguilles had been drawn before his time, and the figure on the left in Plate 32 will show how. It

¹ [See above, § 18, p. 231; and on the subject generally, Appendix ii. below, p. 479.]



W. Pars and Turner

1. Old Ideal

32. Aiguille Drawing.

2. Turnerian

J.H. Le Keux
Allen & Co. Sc

is a facsimile of a piece of an engraving of the Mer de Glace, by Woollett,¹ after William Pars, published in 1783, and founded on the general Wilsonian and Claudesque principles of landscape common at the time. There are, in the rest of the plate, some good arrangements of shadow and true aerial perspective; and the piece I have copied, which is an attempt to represent the Aiguille Dru, opposite the Charmoz, will serve, not unfairly, to show how totally inadequate the draughtsmen of the time were to perceive the character of mountains; and, also, how unable the human mind is by itself to conceive anything like the variety of natural form. The workman had not looked at the thing,—trusted to his “Ideal,” supposed that broken and rugged rocks might be shaped better out of his own head than by Nature’s laws,—and we see what comes of it.

§ 24. And now, lastly, observe, in the laws by which this strange curvilinear structure is given to the aiguilles, how the provision for beauty of form is made in the first landscape materials we have to study. We have permitted ourselves, according to that unsystematic mode of proceeding pleaded for in the opening of our present task,² to wander hither and thither as this or that question rose before us, and demanded, or tempted, our pursuit. But the reader must yet remember that our special business in this section of the work is the observance of the nature of *beauty*, and of the degrees in which the aspect of any object fulfils the laws of beauty stated in the second volume.³ Now in the fifteenth paragraph of the chapter on infinity, it was stated that curvature was essential to all beauty, and that, what we should “need more especially to prove, was the constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever.”⁴ And these aiguilles, which are the first objects we have had definitely to consider, appeared as little likely to fulfil the

¹ [William Woollett (1735–1785), a landscape engraver of considerable repute.]

² [See Vol. V. p. 18; *i.e.*, at the beginning of vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*, the Third and Fourth Volumes being treated as a single work.]

³ [Compare also *Seven Lamps*, ch. iv. § 3 (Vol. VIII. p. 141).]

⁴ [Vol. IV. p. 88.]

condition as anything we could have come upon. I am well assured that the majority of spectators see no curves in them at all, but an intensely upright, stern, spiry rugged ness and angularity. And we might even beforehand have been led to expect, and to be contented in expecting, nothing else from them than this; for since, as we have said often, they are part of the earth's skeleton, being created to sustain and strengthen everything else, and yet differ from a skeleton in this, that the earth is not only supported by their strength, but fed by their ruin; so that they are first composed of the hardest and least tractable substance, and then exposed to such storm and violence as shall beat large parts of them to powder;—under these desperate conditions of being, I say, we might have anticipated some correspondent ruggedness and terribleness of aspect, some such refusal to comply with ordinary laws of beauty, as we often see in other things and creatures put to hard work, and sustaining distress or violence.

§ 25. And truly, at first sight, there is such refusal in their look, and their shattered walls and crests seem to rise in a gloomy contrast with the soft waves of bank and wood beneath;¹ nor do I mean to press the mere fact, that, as we look longer at them, other lines become perceptible, because it might be thought no proof of their beauty that they needed long attention in order to be discerned. But I think this much at least is deserving of our notice, as confirmatory of foregone conclusions, that the forms which in other things are produced by slow increase or gradual abrasion of surface, *are here produced by rough fracture*, when rough fracture is to be the law of existence. A rose is rounded by its own soft ways of growth, a reed is

¹ [The rest of the chapter was added by the author in revising. In the MS. it reads thus:—

“ . . . soft waves of bank and wood beneath. But watch them long: and each day, as their true character is more and more understood, the tender laws of beauty will be seen more and more to influence their inmost being, and their true strength and nobleness to rest at last in the same harmonies of curve which regulate the stooping of the reed and the budding of the rose.”]

bowed into tender curvature by the pressure of the breeze; but we could not, from these, have proved any resolved preference, by Nature, of curved lines to others, inasmuch as it might always have been answered that the curves were produced, not for beauty's sake, but infallibly by the laws of vegetable existence; and, looking at broken flints or rugged banks afterwards, we might have thought that we only liked the curved lines because associated with life and organism, and disliked the angular ones, because associated with inaction and disorder. But nature gives us in these mountains a more clear demonstration of her will. She is here driven to make fracture the law of being. She cannot tuft the rock-edges with moss, or round them by water, or hide them with leaves and roots. She is bound to produce a form, admirable to human beings, by continual breaking away of substance. And behold—so soon as she is compelled to do this—she changes the law of fracture itself. "Growth," she seems to say, "is not essential to my work, nor concealment, nor softness; but curvature is: and if I must produce my forms by breaking them, the fracture itself shall be in curves. If, instead of dew and sunshine, the only instruments I am to use are the lightning and the frost, then their forked tongues and crystal wedges shall still work out my laws of tender line. Devastation instead of nurture may be the task of all my elements, and age after age may only prolong the unrenovated ruin; but the appointments of typical beauty which have been made over all creatures shall not therefore be abandoned; and the rocks shall be ruled, in their perpetual perishing, by the same ordinances that direct the bending of the reed and the blush of the rose."

CHAPTER XV

RESULTING FORMS:—SECONDLY, CRESTS

§ 1. BETWEEN the aiguilles, or other conditions of central peak, and the hills which are clearly formed, as explained in Chap. XII. § 11, by the mere breaking of the edges of solid beds of coherent rock, there occurs almost always a condition of mountain summit, intermediate in aspect, as in position. The aiguille may generally be represented by the type *a*, Fig. 42; the solid and simple beds of rock by



Fig. 42

the type *c*. The condition *b*, clearly intermediate between the two, is, on the whole, the most graceful and perfect in which mountain masses occur. It seems to have attracted more of the attention of the poets than either of the others; and the ordinary word, crest, which we carelessly use in speaking of mountain summits, as if it meant little more than “edge” or “ridge,” has a peculiar force and propriety when applied to ranges of cliff whose contours correspond thus closely to the principal lines of the crest of a Greek helmet.

§ 2. There is another resemblance which they can hardly fail to suggest when at all irregular in form,—that of a wave about to break. Byron uses the image definitely of Soracte;¹ and, in a less clear way, it seems to present itself

¹ [For the passage referred to, see Vol. IX. p. 86 *n.*; and compare Vol. V. p. xxiii.]

occasionally to all minds, there being a general tendency to give or accept accounts of mountain form under the image of waves; and to speak of a hilly country, seen from above, as looking like a "sea of mountains."

Such expressions, vaguely used, do not, I think, generally imply much more than that the ground is waved or undulated into bold masses. But if we give prolonged attention to the mountains of the group *b* we shall gradually begin to feel that more profound truth is couched



Fig. 43

under this mode of speaking, and that there is indeed an appearance of action and united movement in these crested masses, nearly resembling that of sea waves; that they seem not to be heaped up, but to leap or toss themselves up; and in doing so, to wreath and twist their summits into the most fantastic, yet harmonious, curves, governed by some grand under-sweep like that of a tide running through the whole body of the mountain chain.

For instance, in Fig. 43, which gives, rudely, the leading lines of the junction of the "Aiguille Pourri"*

* So called from the mouldering nature of its rocks. They are slaty crystallines, but unusually fragile.

(Chamouni) with the Aiguilles Rouges, the reader cannot, I think, but feel that there is something which binds the mountains together—some common influence at their heart which they cannot resist: and that, however they may be broken or disordered,¹ there is true unity among them as in the sweep of a wild wave, governed, through all its foaming ridges, by constant laws of weight and motion.

§ 3. How far this apparent unity is the result of elevatory force *in* the mountain, and how far of the sculptural force of water *upon* the mountain, is the question we have mainly to deal with in the present chapter.

But first look back to Fig. 7 of Plate 8, Vol. III.,² there given as the typical representation of the ruling forces of growth in a leaf. Take away the extreme portion of the curve on the left, and any segment of the leaf remaining, terminated by one of its ribs, as *a* or *b*, Fig. 44, will be equally a typical contour of a common

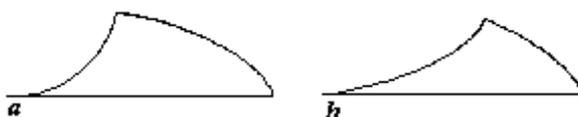


Fig. 44

crested mountain. If the reader will merely turn Plate 8 so as to look at the figure upright, with its stalk downwards, he will see that it is also the base of the honeysuckle ornament of the Greeks. I may anticipate what we shall have to note with respect to vegetation so far as to tell him that it is also the base of form in all timber trees.

§ 4. There seems something, therefore, in this contour which makes its production one of the principal aims of Nature in all her compositions. The cause of this appears

¹ [This passage, again, affords a good instance of the author's revision. He first wrote:—

“. . . however they may toss themselves up hither and thither, there is as much unity among them as in the bending of the swing of a wild wave, governed, through all its foaming ridges, by everlasting laws of swell and motion.”

On a first revision “sweep” was substituted for “bending of the swing,” “constant” for “everlasting,” and “mass” for “swell”; “mass” being next altered to “weight.” And then, on a final revision, the passage was altered to its form in the text.]

² [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 264.]

to be, that as the cinq-foil is the simplest expression of proportion, this is the simplest expression of opposition, in unequal curved lines. If we take any lines, $a x$ and $e g$, Fig. 45,

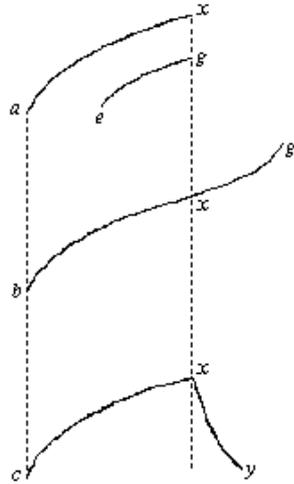


Fig. 45

both of varied curvature (not segments of circles), and one shorter than the other, and join them together so as to form one line, as $b x$, $x g$, we shall have one of the common lines of beauty; if we join them at an angle, as $c x$, $x y$, we shall have a common crest, which is in fact merely a jointed line of beauty. If we join them as at a , Fig. 46, they form a line at once monotonous and cramped, and the jointed condition of this same line, b , is hardly less so. It is easily proved, therefore, that the junction of lines $c x$, $x y$ is the simplest and most graceful mode of opposition; and easily observed that in branches of trees,

wings of birds, and other more or less regular organizations, such groups of line are continually made to govern the contours. But it is not so easily seen why or how this form should be impressed upon irregular heaps of mountain.

§ 5. If a bed of coherent rock be raised, in the manner described in Chap. XIII., so as to form a broken precipice with its edge, and a long slope with its surface, as at a , Fig. 47 (and in this way nearly all hills are raised), the top of the precipice has usually a tendency to crumble down, and in process of time to form a heap of advanced ruins at its foot. On the other side, the back or slope of the hill does not crumble down, but is gradually worn away by the streams; and as these are always more considerable both in velocity and weight, at the bottom of the slope, than the top, the ground is faster worn away at

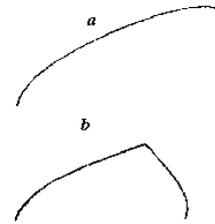


Fig. 46

the bottom, and the straight slope is cut to a curve of continually increasing steepness. Fig. 47 *b* represents the contour to which the hill *a* would thus be brought in process of time; the dotted line indicating its original form. The result, it will be seen, is a crest.*

§ 6. But crests of this uniform substance and continuous outline occur only among hills composed of the softest coherent rocks, and seldom attain any elevation such as to make them important or impressive. The notable crests are composed of the hard coherents or slaty crystallines, and then the contour of the crest depends mainly on the question whether, in the original mass of it, the beds lie as at *a* or as at *b*, Fig. 48. If they lie as at *a*, then the resultant crest will

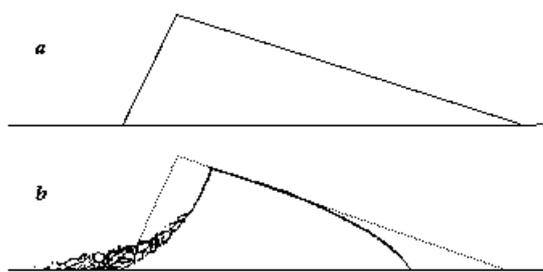


Fig. 47

have the general appearance seen at *c*; the edges of the beds getting separated and serrated by the weather. If the beds lie as at *b*, the resultant crest will be of such a contour as that at *d*.

The crests of the contour *d* are formed usually by the harder coherent rocks, and are notable chiefly for their bold precipices in front, and regular slopes, or sweeping curves, at the back. We shall examine them under the special head of *precipices*. But the crests of the form at *c* belong usually to the slaty crystallines, and are those properly called crests, their edges looking, especially when covered with pines, like separated plumes. These it is our chief business to examine in the present chapter.

§ 7. In order to obtain this kind of crest, we first

* The materials removed from the slope are spread over the plain or valley below. A nearly equal quantity is supposed to be removed from the other side; but besides this removed mass, the materials crumble heavily from above, and form the concave curve.

require to have our mountain beds thrown up in the form *a*, Fig. 48. This is not easily done on a large scale, except among the slaty crystallines forming the flanks of the great chains, as in Fig. 29, p. 220. In that figure it will be seen that the beds forming each side of the chain of Mont Blanc are thrown into the required steepness, and therefore, whenever they are broken towards the central mountain, they naturally form the front of a crest, while

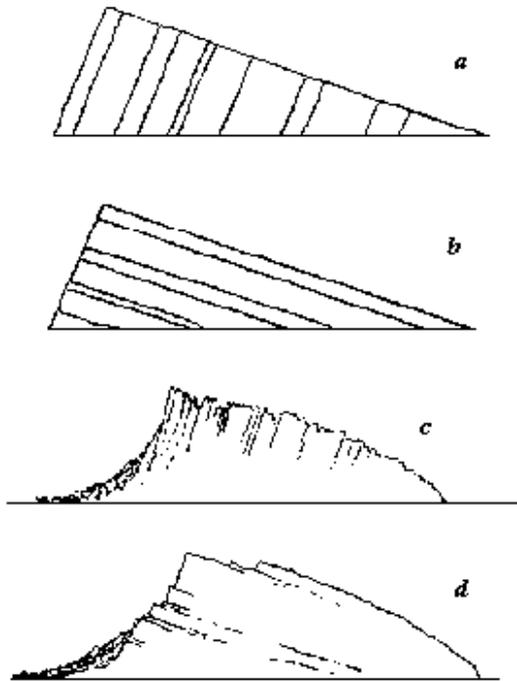


Fig. 48

the torrents and glaciers falling over their longer slopes, carve them into rounded banks towards the valley.

§ 8. But the beauty of a crest or bird's wing consists, in nature, not merely in its curved terminal outline, but in the radiation of the plumes, so that while each assumes a different curve, every curve shall show a certain harmony of direction with all the others.

We shall have to enter into the examination of this subject at greater length in the 17th chapter; meanwhile, it is sufficient to observe the law in a single example, such as Fig. 49, which is a wing of one of the angels in Dürer's woodcut of the Fall of Lucifer.* At first sight

* The lines are a little too straight in their continuations, the engraver having cut some of the curvature out of their thickness, thinking I had drawn them too coarsely. But I have chosen this coarsely lined example, and others like it, following, because I wish to accustom the reader to distinguish between the mere fineness of instrument in the

the plumes seem disposed with much irregularity, but there is a sense of power and motion in the whole which the reader would find was at once lost by a careless copyist; for it depends on the fact that if we take the principal curves at any points of the wing, and continue them in the lines which they are pursuing at the moment they terminate,

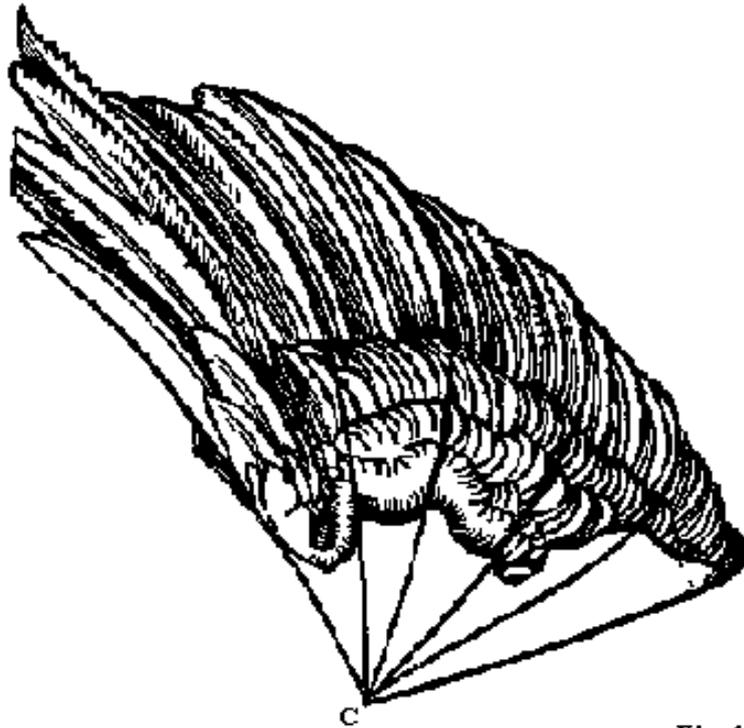


Fig. 49

these continued lines will all meet in a single point, C. It is this law which gives unity to the wing.

All groups of curves set beside each other depend for

artist's hand, and the precision of the line he draws. Give Titian a blunt pen, and still Titian's line will be a noble one: a tyro, with a pen well mended, may draw more neatly; but his lines ought to be discerned from Titian's if we understand drawing. Every line in this woodcut of Dürer's is *refined*; and that in the noblest sense. Whether broad or fine does not matter, the lines are *right*; and the most delicate false line is evermore to be despised, in presence of the coarsest faithful one.

their beauty upon the observance of this law;* and if, therefore, the mountain crests are to be perfectly beautiful, Nature must contrive to get this element of radiant curvature into them in one way or another.¹ Nor does it, at first sight, appear easy for her to get, I do not say radiant curves, but curves *at all*: for, in the aiguilles, she actually bent their beds; but in these slaty crystallines it seems not always convenient to her to bend the beds; and when they are to remain straight, she must obtain the curvature in some other way.

§ 9. One way in which she gets it is curiously simple in itself, but somewhat difficult to explain, unless the reader will be at the pains of making a little model for himself out of paste or clay. Hitherto, observe, we have spoken of the crests as seen at their sides, as a Greek helmet is seen from the side of the wearer. By means presently to be examined, these mountain crests are so shaped that seen *in front*, or from behind (as a helmet crest is seen in front of or behind the wearer), they present the contour of a sharp ridge, or house gable. Now if the breadth of this ridge at its base remains the same, while its height gradually diminishes from the front of it to the back (as from the top of the crest to the back of the helmet), it necessarily assumes the form of such a quaint gable roof as that shown in profile in Fig. 50, and in perspective[†] in Fig. 51, in which the gable is steep at the end farthest off, but

* Not absolutely on the meeting of the curves in one point, but on their radiating with some harmonious succession of difference in direction. The difference between lines which are in true harmony of radiation, and lines which are not, can, in complicated masses, only be detected by a trained eye; yet it is often the chief difference between good and bad drawing. A cluster of six or seven black plumes forming the wing of one of the cherubs in Titian's *Assumption*, at Venice, has a freedom and force about it in the painting which no copyist or engraver has ever yet rendered, though it depends merely on the subtlety of the curves, not on the colour.

† "*Out of perspective*," I should have said; but it will show what I mean.

¹ [On the Law of Radiation, see *Elements of Drawing*, §§ 210–220.]

depressed at the end nearest us; and the rows of tiles in consequence, though in reality quite straight, appear to radiate as they retire, owing to their different slopes. When a mountain crest is thus formed, and the concave curve of its front is carried into its flanks, each edge of bed assuming this concave curve, and radiating, like the rows of tiles, in perspective at the same time, the whole crest is thrown into the form Fig. 52, which is that of the radiating plume required.

§ 10. It often happens, however, that Nature does not choose to keep the ridge broad at the lower extremity, so as to diminish its steepness. But when this is not so, and the base is narrowed so that the slope of side shall be



Fig. 50



Fig. 51



Fig. 52

nearly equal everywhere, she almost always obtains her varied curvature of the plume in another way, by merely turning the crest a little round as it descends. I will not confuse the reader by examining the complicated results of such turning on the inclined lines of the strata; but he can understand, in a moment, its effect on another series of lines, those caused by rivulets of water down the sides of the crest. These lines are, of course, always, in general tendency, perpendicular. Let *a*, Fig. 53, be a circular funnel, painted inside with a pattern of vertical lines meeting at the bottom. Suppose these lines to represent the ravines traced by the water. Cut off a portion of the lip of the funnel, as at *b*, to represent the crest side. Cut the edge so as to slope down towards you, and add a slope on the other side. Then give each inner line the concave sweep, and you have your ridge *c*, of the required form, with radiant curvature.

§ 11. A greater space of such a crest is always seen on its concave than on its convex side (the outside of the funnel); of this other perspective I shall have to speak hereafter; meantime, we had better continue the examination of the proper crest, the *c* of Fig. 48, in some special instance.

The form is obtained usually in the greatest perfection among the high ridges near the central chain, where the beds of

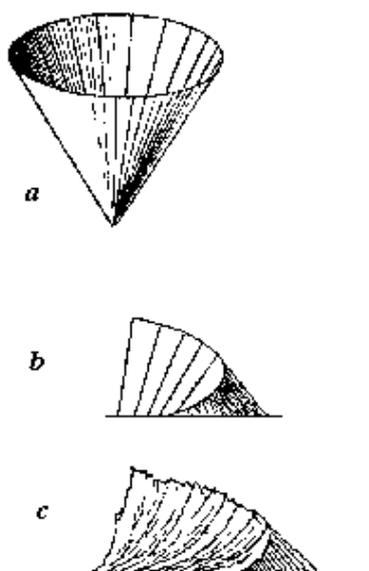
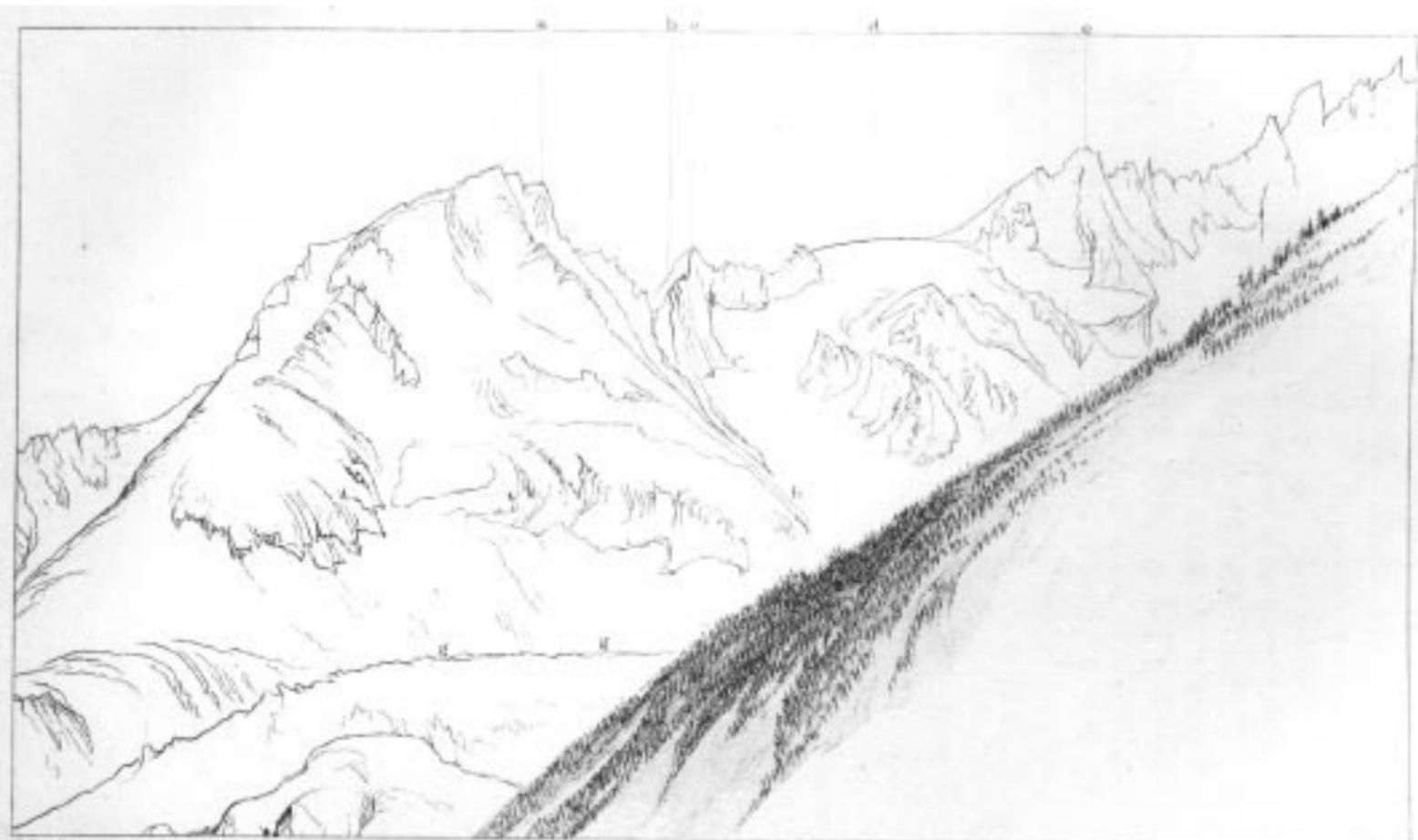


Fig. 53

the slaty crystallines are steep and hard. Perhaps the most interesting example I can choose for close examination will be that of a mountain in Chamouni, called the Aiguille Bouchard,¹ now familiar to the eye of every traveller, being the ridge which rises, exactly opposite the Montanvert, beyond the Mer de Glace. The structure of this crest is best seen from near the foot of the Montanvert, on the road to the source of the Arveron, whence the top of it, *a*, presents itself under the outline given rudely

in the opposite plate (33), in which it will be seen that, while the main energy of the mountain mass tosses itself against the central chain of Mont Blanc (which is on the right hand), it is met by a group of counter-crests, like the recoil of a broken wave cast against it from the other side; and yet, as the recoiling water has a sympathy with the under swell of the very wave against which it clashes, the whole mass writhes together in strange unity of mountain passion, so that it is almost impossible to persuade oneself, after long looking at it, that the crests have

¹ [Ruskin made two drawings of it, Nos. 31 and 32 in his list given in Vol. V. p. xxii.; see in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iii. § 17 n., and Plate 69 (the second piece from the top).]



J. Ruskin.

R.F. Coffey
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33. Leading Contours of Aiguille Bouchard.

not indeed been once fused and tossed into the air by a tempest which had mastery over them, as the winds have over ocean.

§ 12. And yet, if we examine the crest structure closely we shall find that nearly all these curvatures are obtained by Nature's skilful handling of perfectly straight beds,—only the meeting of those two waves of crest is indeed indicative of the meeting of two masses of different rocks; it marks that junction of the slaty with the compact crystallines, which has before been noticed as the principal mystery of rock structure.¹ To this junction my attention was chiefly directed during my stay at Chamouni, as I found it was always at that point that Nature produced the loveliest mountain forms. Perhaps the time I gave to the study of it may have exaggerated its interest in my eyes; and the reader who does not care for these geological questions except in their direct bearing upon art, may, without much harm, miss the next seven paragraphs, and go on at the twenty-first. Yet there is one point, in a Turner drawing presently to be examined,² which I cannot explain without inflicting the tediousness even of these seven upon him.

§ 13. First, then, the right of the Aiguille Bouchard to be called a crest at all depends, not on the slope from *a* to *b*, Plate 33, but on that from *a* to *h*. The slope from *a* to *b* is a perspective deception; *b* is much the highest point of the two. Seen from the village of Chamouni, the range presents itself under the outline Fig. 54, the same points in each figure being indicated by the same letters. From the end of the valley the supremacy of the mass *b c* is still more notable. It is altogether with mountains as with human spirits, you never know which is greatest till they are far away.

§ 14. It will be observed also, that the beauty of the

¹ [See ch. xiv. § 3, p. 216.]

² [See below, pp. 270, 271.]

crest, in both Plate 33 and Fig. 54, depends on the gradually increasing steepness of the lines of slope between *a* and *b*. This is in great part deceptive, being obtained by the receding of the crest into a great mountain crater, or basin, as explained in § 11.

But this very recession is a matter of interest, for it takes place exactly on the line above spoken of, where the slaty crystallines of the crest join the compact crystallines of the aiguilles; at which junction a correspondent

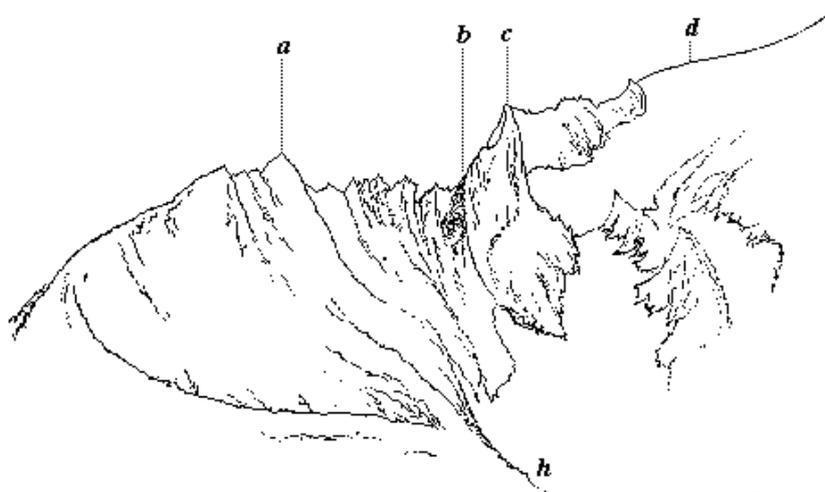


Fig. 54

chasm or recession, of some kind or another, takes place along the whole front of Mont Blanc.

§ 15. In the third paragraph of the last chapter we had occasion to refer to the junction of the slaty and compact crystallines at the roots of the aiguilles. It will be seen in the figure there given, that this change is not sudden, but gradated. The rocks to be joined are of the two types represented in Fig. 3, p. 137 (for convenience' sake I shall

in the rest of this chapter call the slaty rock gneiss, and the compact rock protogine, its usual French name). Fig. 55 shows the general manner of junction, beds of gneiss occurring in the middle of the protogine, and of protogine in the gneiss; sometimes one touching the other so closely, that a hammer-stroke breaks off a piece of both; sometimes one passing into the other by a gradual change, like the zones of a rainbow; the only general phenomenon being this, that the higher up the hill the gneiss is, the harder it is (so that while it often yields to the pressure of the finger down in the valley, on the Montanvert it is nearly as hard as protogine); and, on the other hand, the lower down the hill, or the nearer the gneiss, the protogine

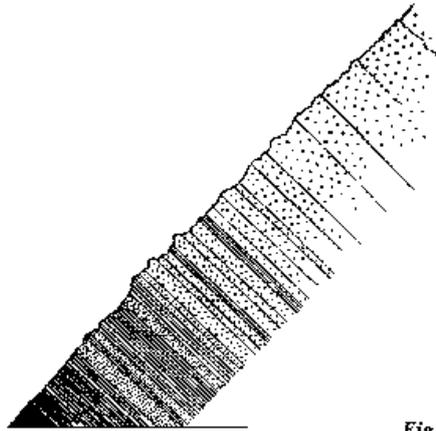


Fig. 55

is, the finer it is in grain. But still the actual transition from one to the other is usually within a few fathoms; and it is that transition, and the preparation for it, which causes the great step, or jag, on the flank of the chain, and forms the tops of the Aiguille Bouchard, Charmoz ridges, Tapia, Montagne de la Côte, Montagne de Taconay, and Aiguille du Gouté.

§ 16. But what most puzzled me was the intense *straightness* of the lines of the gneiss beds, dipping, as it seemed, under the Mont Blanc. For it has been a chief theory with geologists that these central protogine rocks have once been in fusion, and have risen up in molten fury, overturning and altering all the rocks around. But every day, as I looked at the crested flanks of the Mont

Blanc, I saw more plainly the exquisite *regularity* of the slopes of the beds, ruled, it seemed, with an architect's rule, along the edge of their every flake from the summits to the valley. And this surprised me the more because I had always heard it stated that



Fig. 56

the beds of the lateral crests, *a* and *b*, Fig. 56, varied in slope, getting less and less inclined as they descended, so as to arrange themselves somewhat in the form of a fan. It may be so; but I can only say that all

my observations and drawings give an opposite report, and that the beds seemed invariably to present themselves to the eye and the pencil in parallelism,

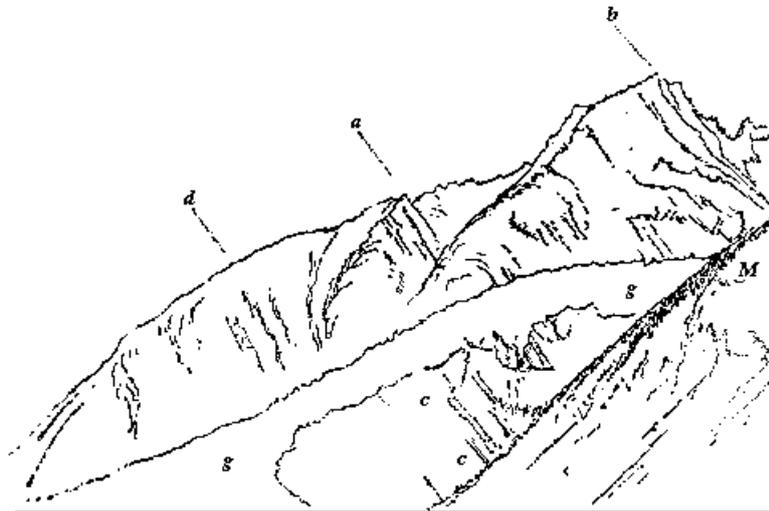


Fig. 57

modified only by the phenomena just explained (§§ 9, 10). Thus the entire mass of the Aiguille Bouchard, of which only the top is represented in Plate 33, appeared to me in profile, as in Fig. 57, dependent for all its effect and character on the descent of the beds in the directions of the dotted lines, *a*, *b*, *d*. The interrupting space, *g g*, is

the Glacier des Bois; M is the Montanvert; *c, c*, the rocks under the glacier, much worn by the fall of avalanches, but for all that, showing the steep lines still with the greatest distinctness. Again, looking down the valley instead of up, so as to put the Mont Blanc on the left hand, the principal crests which support it, Taconay and La Côte, always appeared to me constructed as in Plate 35 (p. 259), they also depending for all their effect on the descent of the beds in diagonal lines towards the left. Nay, half-way up the Breven, whence the structure of the Mont Blanc is commanded, as far as these lower buttresses are concerned, better than from the top of the Breven, I drew carefully the cleavages of the beds, as high as the edge of the Aiguille du Gouté, and found them exquisitely parallel throughout; and again on the Courmayeur side, though less steep, the beds *a, b*, Fig. 58,

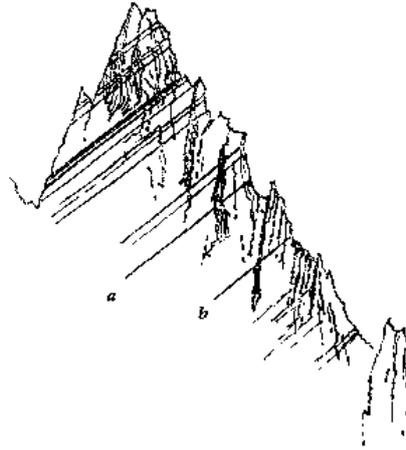


Fig. 58

traversing the vertical irregular fissures of the great aiguille of the Allée Blanche, as seen over the Lac de Combal, still appeared to me perfectly regular and parallel.* I have not had time

* Nor did any nearer observations ever induce me to form any contrary opinion. It is not easy to get any consistent series of *measurements* of the slope of these gneiss beds; for, although parallel on the great scale, they admit many varieties of dip in minor projections. But all my notes unite, whether at the bottom or top of the great slope of the Montanvert and La Côte, in giving an angle of from 60° to 80° with the horizon; the consistent angle being about 75° . I cannot be mistaken in the measurements themselves, however inconclusive observations on minor portions of rock may be; for I never mark an angle unless enough of the upper or lower surface of the beds be smoothly exposed to admit of my pole being adjusted to it by the spirit-level. The pole then indicates the strike of the beds, and a quadrant with a plumb-line their dip; to all intents and purposes accurately. There is a curious distortion of the beds

to trace them round, through the Aiguille de Bionnassay, and above the Col de Bonhomme, though I know the relations of the beds of limestone to the gneiss on the latter col are most notable and interesting. But, as far as was



Fig. 59

in the ravine between the Glacier des Bois and foot of the Montanvert, near the ice, about a thousand feet above the valley; the beds there seem to bend suddenly back under the glacier, and in some places to be quite vertical. On the opposite side of the glacier, below the Chapeau, the dip of the limestone under the gneiss, with the intermediate bed, seven or eight feet thick, of the grey porous rock which the French call *cargneule*, is highly interesting; but it is so concealed by débris and the soil of the pine forests, as to be difficult to examine to any extent. On the whole, the best position for getting the angle of the beds accurately, is the top of the Tapia, a little below the junction there of the granite and gneiss (see notice of this junction in Appendix 2); a point from which the summit of the Aiguille du Gouté bears 11° south of west, and that of the

Aiguille Bouchard 17° north of east, the Aiguille Dru $5\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ or 6° north of east, the peak of it appearing behind the Petit Charmoz. The beds of gneiss emerging from the turf under the spectator's feet may be brought parallel by the eye with the slopes of the Aiguille du Gouté on one side, and the Bouchard (and base of Aiguille d'Argentière) on the other; striking as nearly as possible from summit to summit through that on which the spectator stands, or from about 10° north of east to 10° south of west, and dipping with exquisite uniformity at an angle of 74 degrees with the horizon. But what struck me as still more strange was, that from this point I could distinctly see traces of the same straight structure running through the Petit Charmoz, and the roots of the aiguilles themselves, as in Fig. 59; nor could I ever, in the course of countless observations, fairly

required for any artistical purposes, I perfectly ascertained the fact that, whatever their real structure might be, these beds did appear, through the softer contours of the hill, as straight and parallel; that they continued to appear so until near the tops of the crests; and that those tops seemed, in some mysterious way, dependent on the junction of the gneissitic beds with, or their transition into, the harder protogine of the aiguilles.

Look back to Plate 33. The peak of the Bouchard, *a*, is of gneiss, and its beds run down in lines originally straight, but more or less hollowed by weathering, to the

determine any point where this slaty structure altogether had ceased. It seemed only to get less and less traceable towards the centre of the mass of Mont Blanc; and, from the ridge of the Aiguille Bouchard itself, at the point *a* in Plate 33, whence, looking south-west, the aiguilles can be seen in the most accurate profile obtainable throughout the valley of Chamouni, I noticed a very singular parallelism even on the south-east side of the

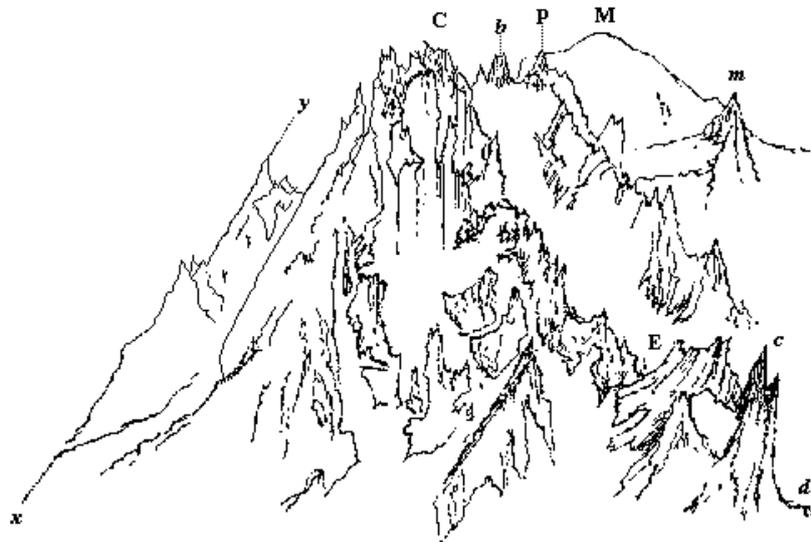


Fig. 60

Charmoz, *x y* (Fig. 60), as if the continued influence of this cleavage were carried on from the Little Charmoz, *c d* (in which, seen on the opposite side, I had traced it as in Fig. 59), through the central mass of rock *r*. In this profile, *M* is the Mont Blanc itself; *m*, the Aiguille du Midi; *P*, Aiguille du Plan; *b*, Aiguille Blaitière; *C*, Great Charmoz; *c*, Petit Charmoz; *E*, passage called de l'Étala.

VI.

R

point *h*, where they plunge under *débris*. But the point *b* is, I believe, of *protogine*; and all the opposed writhing of the waves of rock to the right appears to be in consequence of the junction.

§ 17. The way in which these curves are produced cannot, however, be guessed at until we examine the junction more closely. Ascending about five hundred feet above the cabin of the Montanvert, the opposite crest of the Bouchard, from *a* to *c*, Plate 33, is seen more in front, expanded into the jagged line, *a* to *c*, Plate 34, and the beds, with their fractures, are now seen clearly throughout the mass, namely:

1st. (See reference on plate.) The true gneiss beds dipping down in the direction *GH*, the point *H* being the same as *h* in Plate 33. These are the beds so notable for their accurate straightness and parallelism.

2nd. The smooth fractures which in the middle of the etching seem to divide the column of rock into a kind of brickwork. They are very neat and sharp, running nearly at right angles with the true beds.*

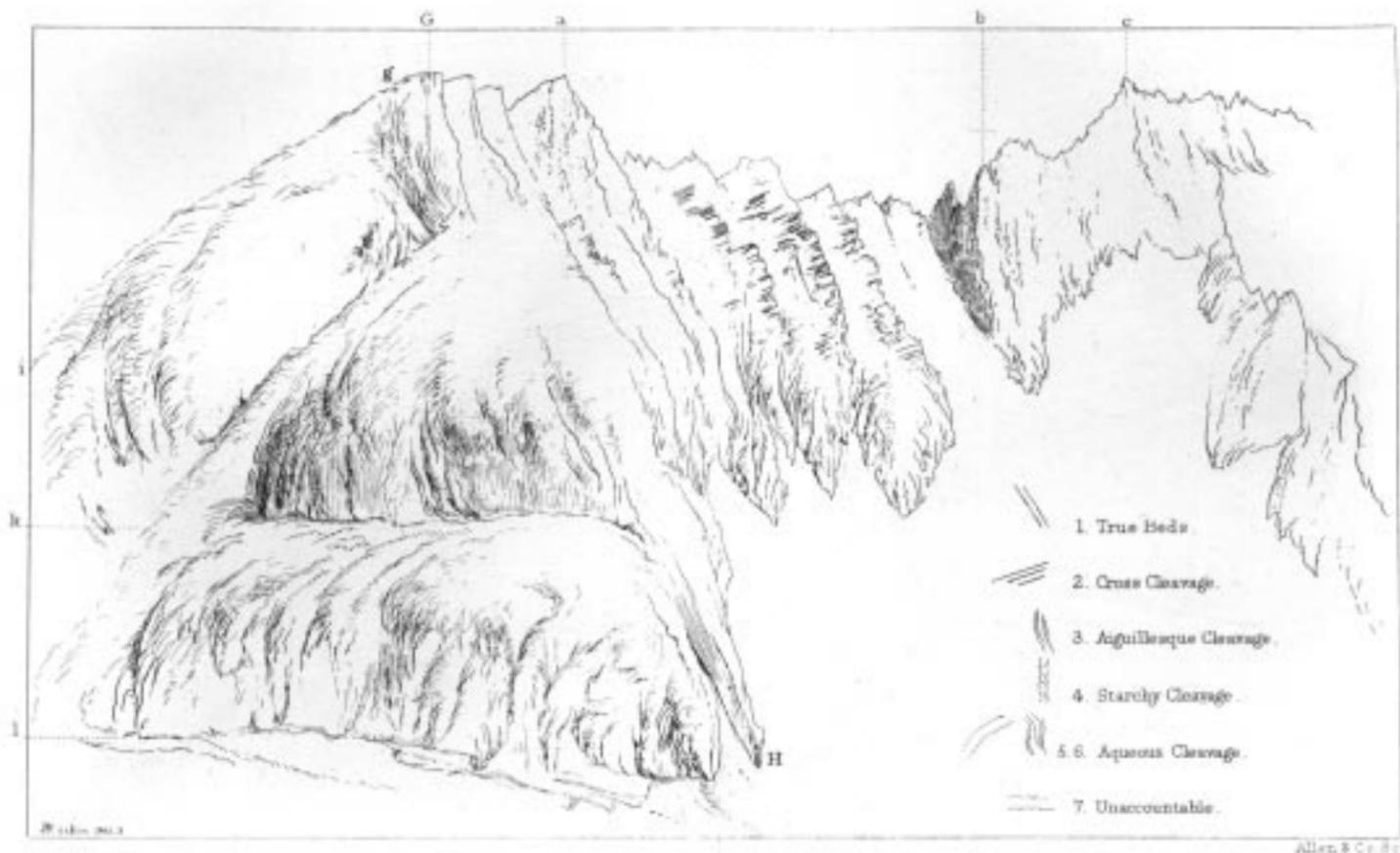
3rd. The curved fractures of the *aiguilles* (seen first under the letter *b*, and seeming to push outwards against the gneiss beds[†]) continuing through *c* and the spur below.

4th. An irregular cleavage, something like that of starch, showing itself in broken vertical lines.

5th. Writhing lines, cut by water. These have the greatest possible influence on the aspect of the precipice: they are not merely caused by torrents, but by falls of winter snow, and stones from the glacier moraines, so that the cliff being continually worn away at the foot of it, is wrought into a great amphitheatre, of which the receding

* Many geologists think they *are* the true beds. They run across the gneissitic folia, and I hold with De Saussure, and consider them a cleavage.

† I tried in vain to get along the ridge of the Bouchard to this junction, the edge of the precipice between *a* and *b* (Plate 33) being too broken; but the point corresponds so closely to that of the junction of the gneiss and *protogine* on the Charmoz ridge, that, adding the evidence of the distant contour, I have no doubt as to the general relations of the rocks.



34 . Cleavages of Aiguille Bouchard .



Allart & Co. Sc.

35. Crests of La Côte and Taconay.

sweep continually varies the apparent steepness of the crest, as already explained. I believe in ancient times the great Glacier des Bois itself used to fill this amphitheatre, and break right up against the base of the Bouchard.

6th. Curvatures worn by water over the back of the crest towards the valley, in the direction *g i*.

7th. A tendency (which I do not understand) to form horizontal masses at the levels *k* and *l*.*

§ 18. The reader may imagine what strange harmonies and changes of line must result throughout the mass of the mountain, from the varied prevalence of one or other of these secret inclinations of its rocks (modified, also, as they are by perpetual deceptions of perspective), and how completely the rigidity or parallelism of any one of them is conquered by the fitful urgencies of the rest,—a sevenfold action seeming to run through every atom of crag. For the sake of clearness, I have shown in this plate merely leading lines; the next (Plate 35 opposite) will give some idea of the complete aspect of two of the principal crests on the Mont Blanc flanks, known as the Montagne de la Côte, and Montagne de Taconay, *C* and *t* in Fig. 22, at page 204. In which note, first, that the eminences marked *a a*, *b b*, *c c*, in the reference figure (61), are in each of the mountains correspondent, and indicate certain changes in the conditions of their beds at those points. I have no doubt the two mountains were once one mass, and that they have been sawn asunder by the great glacier of Taconay, which descends between them; and similarly the Montagne de la Côte sawn from the Tapia by the Glacier des Bossons, *B B* in reference figure.

§ 19. Note, secondly, the general tendency in each mountain to throw itself into concave curves towards the Mont Blanc, and descend in rounded slopes to the valley; more

* De Saussure often refers to these as “*assaissements*.”¹ They occur, here and there, in the *aguilles* themselves.

¹ [The actual word is “*affaissements*” (subsidences): see Vol. I. p. 200. For Saussure’s use of it, see, for example, §§ 642 and 960 in his *Voyages*.]

or less interrupted by the direct manifestation of the straight beds, which are indeed, in this view of Taconay, the principal features of it. They necessarily become, however, more prominent in the outline etching than in the scene itself, because in reality the delicate cleavages are lost in distance or in mist, and the effects of light bring out the rounded forms of the larger masses; and wherever the clouds fill the hollows between, as they are apt to do, (the glaciers causing a chillness in the ravines, while the wind, blowing *up* the larger valleys, clears the edges of the crests), the summits show themselves as in Plate 36,¹ dividing, with their dark frontlets, the perpetual sweep of the glaciers and the clouds.*

* The aqueous curves and roundings on the nearer crest (La Côte) are peculiarly tender, because the gneiss of which it is composed is softer in grain than that of the Bouchard, and remains so even to the very top

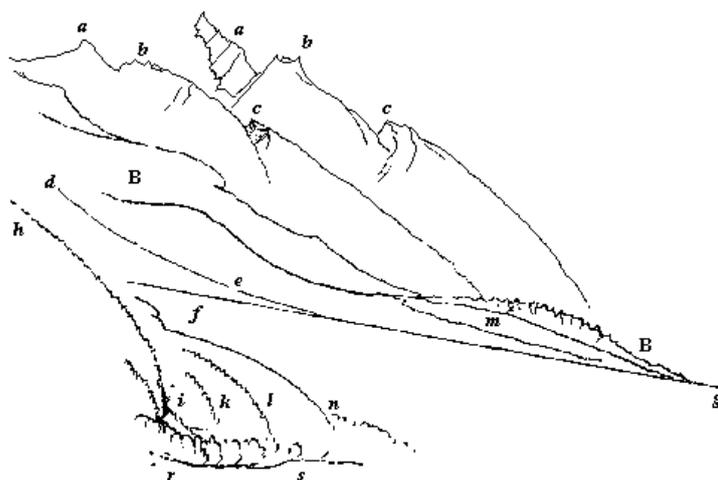


Fig. 61

of the peak, *a*, in Fig. 61, where I found it mixed with a yellowish and somewhat sandy quartz rock, and generally much less protogenic than is usual at such elevations on other parts of the chain.

¹ [It was by "the Crest of La Côte" (the Montagne de la Côte) that most of the early attempts to scale Mont Blanc were made, and that the summit was ultimately attained; see *The Annals of Mont Blanc*, by C. E. Mathews, p. 27, where this drawing is referred to. For some remarks on the clouds in this plate, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. iii. § 17.]



J. Ruskin.

Thos. Agnew
Allen & Co. So.

§ 20. Of the aqueous curvatures of this crest, we shall have more to say presently; meantime let us especially observe how the providential laws of beauty, acting with reversed data, arrive at similar results in the aiguilles and crests. In the aiguilles, which are of such hard rock that the fall of snow and trickling of streams do not affect them, the inner structure is so disposed as to bring out the curvatures by the mere fracture. In the crests and lower hills, which are of softer rock, and largely influenced by external violence, the inner structure is straight, and the necessary curvatures are produced by perspective, by external modulation, and by the balancing of adverse influences of cleavage. But, as the accuracy of an artist's eye is usually shown by his perceiving the inner anatomy which regulates growth and form, and as in the aiguilles, while we watch them, we are continually discovering new curves, so in the crests, while we watch them, we are continually discovering new straightnesses; and nothing more distinguishes good mountain-drawing, or mountain-seeing, from careless and inefficient mountain-drawing, than the observance of the marvellous parallelisms which exist among the beds of the crests.

§ 21. It indeed happens, not unfrequently, that in hills composed of somewhat soft rock, the aqueous contours will so prevail over the straight cleavage as to leave nothing manifest at the first glance but sweeping lines like those of waves. Fig. 43, p. 242, is the crest of a mountain on the north of the valley of Chamouni, known, from the rapid decay and fall of its crags, as the *Aiguille Pourri*;¹ and at first there indeed seems little distinction between its contours and those of the summit of a sea wave. Yet I think also if it *were* a wave, we should immediately suppose the tide was running towards the right hand; and if we examined the reason for this supposition, we should perceive that along the ridge the steepest falls of crag

¹ [As aforesaid, § 2 n.]

were always on the right-hand side; indicating a tendency in them to break rather in the direction of the line *a b* than any other. If we go half-way down the Montanvert, and examine the left side of the crest somewhat more closely, we shall find this tendency still more definitely visible, as in Fig. 62.

§ 22. But what, then, has given rise to all those coiled



Fig. 62

plungings of the crest hither and thither, yet with such strange unity of motion?

Yes. There is the cloud. How the top of the hill was first shaped so as to let the currents of water act upon it in so varied a way we know not, but I think that the appearance of *interior* force of elevation is for the most part deceptive. The series of beds would be found, if examined in section, very uniform in their arrangement, only a little harder in one place, and more delicate in another. A stream receives a slight impulse this way or that, at the top of the hill, but increases in energy and sweep as it descends, gathering into itself others from its

sides, and uniting their power with its own. A single knot of quartz occurring in a flake of slate at the crest of the ridge may alter the entire destinies of the mountain form. It may turn the little rivulet of water to the right or left, and that little turn will be to the future direction of the gathering stream what the touch of a finger on the barrel of a rifle would be to the direction of the bullet. Each succeeding year increases the importance of every determined form, and arranges in masses yet more and more harmonious, the promontories shaped by the sweeping of the eternal waterfalls.

§ 23. The importance of the results thus obtained by the slightest change of direction in the infant streamlets, furnishes an interesting type of the formation of human characters by habit. Every one of those notable ravines and crags is the expression, not of any sudden violence done to the mountain, but of its little *habits*, persisted in continually. It was created with one ruling instinct; but its destiny depended, nevertheless, for effective result, on the direction of the small and all but invisible tricklings of water, in which the first shower of rain found its way down its sides. The feeblest, most insensible oozings of the drops of dew among its dust were in reality arbiters of its eternal form; commissioned, with a touch more tender than that of a child's finger,—as silent and slight as the fall of a half-checked tear on a maiden's cheek,—to fix for ever the forms of peak and precipice, and hew those leagues of lifted granite into the shapes that were to divide the earth and its kingdoms. Once the little stone evaded,—once the dim furrow traced,—and the peak was for ever invested with its majesty, the ravine for ever doomed to its degradation. Thenceforward, day by day, the subtle habit gained in power; the evaded stone was left with wider basement; the chosen furrow deepened with swifter-sliding wave; repentance and arrest were alike impossible, and hour after hour saw written in larger and rockier characters upon the sky, the history of the choice

that had been directed by a drop of rain, and of the balance that had been turned by a grain of sand.

§ 24. Such are the principal laws, relating to the crested mountains, for the expression of which we are to look to art; and we shall accordingly find good and intelligent mountain-drawing distinguished from bad mountain-drawing, by an indication, first, of the artist's recognition of some



Fig. 63

great harmony among the summits, and of their tendency to throw themselves into tidal waves, closely resembling those of the sea itself; sometimes in free tossing towards the sky, but more frequently still in the form of *breakers*, concave and steep on one side, convex and less steep on the other; secondly, by his indication of straight beds or fractures, continually stiffening themselves through the curves in some given direction.

§ 25. Fig. 63 is a facsimile of a piece of the background in Albert Dürer's woodcut of the binding of the great

Dragon in the Apocalypse.¹ It is one of his most careless and rudest pieces of drawing; yet, observe in it how notably the impulse of the breaking wave is indicated; and note farther, how different a thing good drawing may be from a delicate² *drawing* on the one hand, and how different it must be from ignorant drawing on the other. Woodcutting, in Dürer's days, had reached no delicacy capable of expressing subtle detail or aerial perspective. But all the subtlety and aerial perspective of modern days are useless, and even barbarous, if they fail in the expression of the essential mountain facts.

§ 26. It will be noticed, however, that in this example of Dürer's, the recognition of straightness of line does not exist, and that for this reason the hills look soft and earthy, not rocky.

So, also, in the next example, Fig. 64, the crest in the middle distance is exceedingly fine in its expression of mountain force; the two ridges of it being thrown up like the two edges of a return wave that has just been beaten back from a rock. It is still, however, somewhat wanting in the expression of straightness, and therefore slightly unnatural. It was not people's way in the Middle Ages to look at mountains carefully enough to discover the most subtle elements of their structure. Yet, in the next example, Fig. 65, the parallelism and rigidity are definitely indicated, the crest outline being, however, less definite.

Note, also (in passing), the entire equality of the lines in all these examples, whether turned to dark or light. All

¹ [*Revelation* xii. 7; one of a series of fifteen plates illustrating "The Apocalypse." Fig. 64 is a portion of Dürer's "The Visitation," one of twenty woodcuts illustrating "The Life of the Virgin": the scale is here reduced by about one-half. Fig. 65 is again from the fight with the dragon in the Apocalypse.]

² [In one of his copies for revision Ruskin notes here "Correct"; and again, at the end of the volume, "correct page 222" (*i.e.* in the original edition, p. 265 here). He meant, no doubt, to modify the distinction here made between "good" and "delicate" drawing; for to one rule in art there is "absolutely no exception": "all great art is delicate art" (Vol. V. p. 63). The inconsistency is only apparent, owing to a certain ambiguity in the word delicate; as the reader will perceive if he considers the qualifications made in the passage just referred to and the explanations in the author's note to § 8 above. Drawing may be delicate, though done with a coarse instrument; and delicacy is relative to the intended effect.]

good outline drawing, as noticed in the chapter on finish, agrees in this character.

§ 27. The next figure (66) is interesting because it furnishes one of the few instances in which Titian definitely



Fig. 64

took a suggestion from the Alps, as he saw them from his house at Venice.¹ It is from an old print of a shepherd with a flock of sheep by the sea-side, in which he has introduced a sea distance, with the Venetian church of

¹ [Compare Vol. III. p. 170.]

St. Helena, some subordinate buildings resembling those of Murano, and this piece of cloud and mountain. The peak represented is one of the greater Tyrolese Alps, which shows itself from Venice behind an opening in the chain, and is their culminating point. In reality the mass is of the shape given in Fig. 67. Titian has modified it into an energetic crest, showing his feeling for the form, but I have no doubt that the woodcut reverses Titian's original work (whatever it was), and that he gave the crest the true inclination to the right, or east, which it has in nature.

§ 28. Now, it not unfrequently happens that in Claude's distances he introduces actual outlines of Capri, Ischia,



Fig. 65

Monte St. Angelo, the Alban Mount, and other chains about Rome and Naples, more or less faithfully copied from nature. When he does so, confining himself to mere outline, the grey contours seen against the distance are often satisfactory enough; but as soon as he brings one of them nearer, so as to require any drawing within its mass, it is quite curious to see the state of paralysis into which he is thrown for want of any perception of the mountain anatomy. Fig. 68, on p. 270, is one of the largest hills I can find in the *Liber Veritatis* (No. 86), and it will be seen that there are only a few lines inserted towards the edges, drawn in the direction of the sides of the heap, or cone, wholly without consciousness of any interior structure.

§ 29. I put below it, outlined also in the rudest way (for as I take the shade away from the *Liber Veritatis*, I

am bound also to take it away from Turner), Fig. 69, a bit of the crags in the drawing of Loch Coriskin, partly described already in § 5 of the chapter of the Inferior Mountains in Vol. I.¹ The crest form is, indeed, here accidentally



Fig. 66

prominent, and developed to a degree rare even with Turner; but note, besides this, the way in which Turner leans on the *centre* and body of the hill, not on its edge; marking its strata stone by stone, just as a good figure painter, drawing a limb, marks the fall and rise of the joint, letting the

¹ [See, in this edition, Vol. III. p. 453.]

outline sink back softened; and compare the exactly opposite method of Claude, holding for life to his outline, as a Greek navigator¹ holds to the shore.*

§ 30. Lest, however, it should be thought that I have unfairly chosen my examples, let me take an instance, at once less singular and more elaborate.

We saw in our account of Turnerian topography, Chap. II. § 14, that it had been necessary for the painter, in his modification of the view in the ravine of Faido, to introduce a passage from among the higher peaks; which, being thus intended expressly to convey the general impression of their character, must sufficiently illustrate what Turner felt that character to be. Observe: it could not be taken from the great central aiguilles, for none such exist at all near Faido; it could only be an expression of what Turner considered the noblest attributes of the hills next to these in elevation,—that is to say, those which we are now examining.

I have etched the portion of the picture which includes this passage, opposite, on its own scale, including the whole couloir above the gallery, and the gallery itself, with the rocks beside it.† And now, if the reader will look back

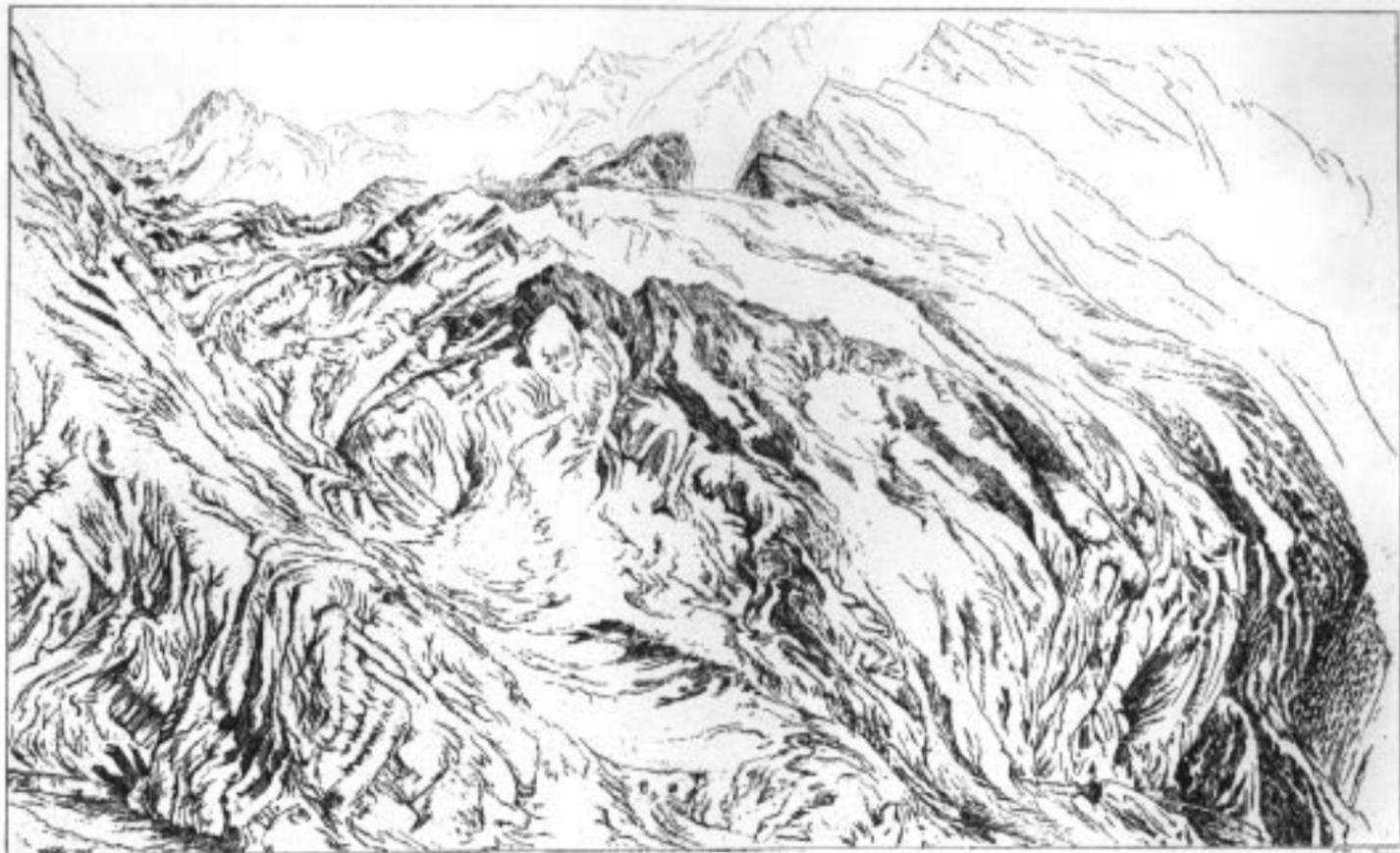
* It is worth while noting here, in comparing Fig. 66 and Fig. 68, how entirely our judgment of some kinds of art depends upon knowledge, not on feeling. Any person unacquainted with hills would think Claude's right, and Titian's ridiculous; but, after inquiring a little farther into the matter, we find Titian's a careless and intense expression of true knowledge, and Claude's slow and plausible expression of total ignorance.

It will be observed that Fig. 69 is one of the second order of crests, *d*, in Fig. 48, p. 246 above. The next instance given is of the first order of crests, *c*, in the same figure.

† This etching, like that of the Bolton rocks, is prepared for future mezzotint,² and looks harsh in its present state: but will mark all the more clearly several points of structure in question. The diamond-shaped rock,

¹ [On the margin of the proof here, a friend (probably W. H. Harrison) who was revising the sheets for Ruskin, suggested "as an ancient Greek," adding "or do they still hug the shore?" In returning the sheet, Ruskin rejected the proposed alteration, and thus answered the question: "Yes. One of the wittiest bits in *Eothen* describes his practical discovery that Ulysses, having been ten years in making Ithaca, had, on the whole, a fair 'average passage.'" See ch. v. of Kinglake's book, p. 91 in the ed. of 1845.]

² [In this case, however, the mezzotint was not made.]



J. M. W. Turner.

J. Rowlin.

Allen & Co. 3-

37. Crests of the Slaty Crystallines.

to Plate 20, which is the outline of the *real* scene, he will have a perfect example, in comparing the two, of the operation of invention of the highest order on a given subject. I should recommend him to put a piece of tracing paper



Fig. 67

over the etching, Plate 37, and with his pen to follow some of the lines of it as carefully as he can, until he feels their complexity, and the redundancy of the imaginative power which amplified the simple theme, furnished by the natural

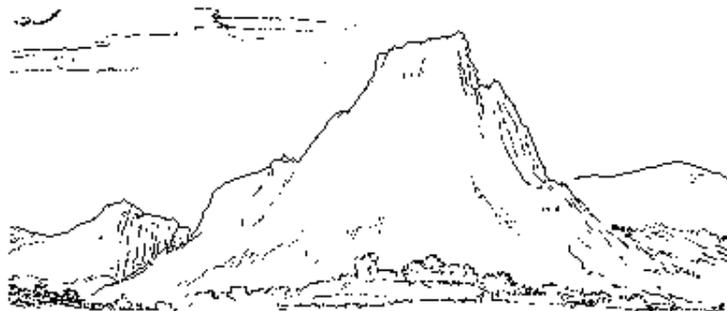


Fig. 68

scene, with such detail; and then let him observe what great mountain laws Turner has been striving to express in all these additions.

however, (M, in the reference figure,) is not so conspicuous here as it will be when the plate is finished, being relieved in light from the mass behind, as also the faint distant crests in dark from the sky.

§ 31. The cleavages which govern the whole are precisely the same as those of the Aiguille Bouchard, only wrought into grander combinations. That the reader may the better distinguish them, I give the leading lines coarsely for reference



Fig. 69

in Fig. 70, over leaf. The cleavages and lines of force are the following.

1. A B and associated lines *a b*, *a b*, etc., over the whole plate. True beds or cleavage beds (*g h* in Aiguille Bouchard, Plate 34); here, observe, closing in retiring perspective with exquisite subtlety, and giving the great unity of radiation to the whole mass.



A

2. *D E* and associated lines *d e*, *d e*, over all the plate. Cross cleavage, the second in Aiguille Bouchard; straight and sharp. Forming here the series of crests at B and D.
3. *r s*, *r s*. Counter-crests, closely corresponding to counter-fracture, the third in Aiguille Bouchard.
4. *m n*, *m n*, etc., over the whole. Writhing aqueous lines falling gradually into the cleavages. Fifth group in Aiguille Bouchard. The starchy cleavage is not seen here, it being not generally characteristic of the crests, and present in the Bouchard only accidentally.
5. *x x x*. Sinuous lines worn by the water, indicative of some softness or flaws in the rock; these probably the occasion or consequence of the formation of the great precipice or brow on the right. We shall have more to say of them in Chap. XVII.
6. *g f*, *g f*, etc. Broad aqueous or glacial curvatures. The sixth group in Aiguille Bouchard.
7. *k l*, *k l*. Concave curves wrought by the descending avalanche; peculiar, of course, to this spot.
8. *i h*, *i h*. Secondary convex curves, glacial or aqueous, corresponding to *g f*, but wrought into the minor secondary ravine. This secondary ravine is associated with the opponent aiguillesque masses *r s*; and the cause of the break or gap between these and the crests B

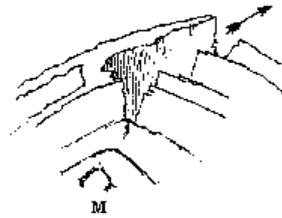


Fig. 71

D is indicated by the elbow or joint of nearer rock, M, where the distortion of the beds or change in their nature first takes place. Turner's idea of the structure of the whole mass has evidently been that in section it was as in Fig. 71, snapped asunder by elevation, with a nucleus at M, which, allowing for perspective, is precisely on the line of the chasm running

in the direction of the arrow; but he gives more of the curved aiguillesque fracture to these upper crests, which are greater in elevation (and we saw, some time ago, that the higher the rock the harder). And that nucleus of change at M, the hinge, as it were, on which all these promontories of upper crest revolve, is the first or nearest of the evaded stones, which have determined the course of streams and nod of cliffs throughout the chain.

§ 32. I can well believe that the reader will doubt the possibility of all this being intended by Turner: and *intended*, in the ordinary sense, it was not. It was simply seen and instinctively painted, according to the command of the imaginative dream, as the true Griffin was,¹ and as all noble things are. But if the reader fancies that the apparent truth came by mere chance, or that I am imagining purpose and arrangement where they do not exist, let him be once for all assured that no man goes through the kind of work which, by this time, he must be beginning to perceive I *have* gone through, either for the sake of deceiving others, or with any great likelihood of deceiving himself. He who desires to deceive the picture-purchasing public may do so cheaply; and it is easy to bring almost any kind of art into notice, without climbing Alps or measuring cleavages. But any one, on the other hand, who desires to ascertain facts, and will refer all art directly to nature, for many laborious years, will not at last find himself an easy prey to groundless enthusiasms, or erroneous fancies. Foolish people are fond of repeating a story which has gone the full round of the artistical world, that Turner, some day, somewhere said to somebody (time, place, or person never being ascertainable), that I discovered in his pictures things which he did himself not know were there.²

¹ [See Vol. V. p. 143, and Plate 1.]

² [Ruskin first heard of this reported remark by Turner in a letter from his father, who sent him a newspaper containing it. "I wonder if it be true," Ruskin replied (Venice, January 12, 1852), "that he ever said I knew more about his

Turner was not a person apt to say things of this kind; being generally, respecting all the movements of his own mind, as silent as a granite crest;¹ and if he ever did say it, was probably laughing at the person to whom he was speaking. But he *might* have said it in the most perfect sincerity; nay, I am quite sure that, to a certain extent, the case really was as he is reported to have declared, and that he neither was aware of the value of the truths he had seized, nor understood the nature of the instinct that combined them. And yet the truth was assuredly apprehended, and the instinct assuredly present and imperative; and any artists who try to imitate the smallest portion of his work will find that no happy chances will, for them,

pictures than he did. I hardly think so." Sir William Richmond professes to be able to give chapter and verse for the anecdote, attributing it to his father, George Richmond: "My father used to tell an excellent story anent Ruskin and Turner. There was a dinner party at Denmark Hill; the company was composed of old Mr. Ruskin, Mrs. Ruskin, Turner, my father, and the Master. Over the mantel-piece in the dining-room there hung one of Turner's masterpieces of Venice. The talk was brilliant; Ruskin was in one of his most flexible moods. His mother was a lady of sound sense, very puritanical, extremely clever, but hard and critical. The Master's words ran not according to the estimation of his mother, whereat she rebuked him thus, 'John, you are talking too much, and you are talking nonsense.' The dutiful son made a sign of assent, and answering simply, 'Yes, mother,' he turned the conversation. But this is not all. After dinner the company stood round the fire, listening to Ruskin's elaborate dissertation upon every corner of Turner's picture, explaining this, making a symbol out of that, in fact, constructing a running commentary. Turner whispered to my father, 'The fellow sees much more in my work than I ever intended.' The remark was not heard by Ruskin, who presently turned to Turner and said respectfully, 'Is it not all true, Mr. Turner?' The simple painter's only answer was, 'I liked painting that heap of stones.' " The "simple painter," however, enjoyed a joke and was fond of a little mystification—facts which should be remembered in interpreting stories of this kind. The dates, however, are against Sir William Richmond. If the alleged remark was made at Ruskin's own dinner-table some years before 1851 (for Turner could not have dined there during the seclusion before his illness and death), how comes it that J. J. Ruskin sent the anecdote to his son as a novelty in 1852? Part of Sir William Richmond's recital is authentic, but he has mixed up two pictures; it is Ruskin himself who records Turner's remark about the "heap of stones," which, however, was made not of the Venice picture, but of the drawing of the Pass of Faïdo (see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. vii. § 13; Vol. V. p. 122). Sir William Richmond's reminiscences are quoted from his paper "Ruskin as I knew him," in *St. George*, vol. v. p. 290. The story appeared in the *Literary Gazette* of January 3, 1852; an article by Lovell Reeve in that journal first set it afloat; it was thence transferred to the memoir of Turner, by Alaric A. Watts, prefixed to *Liber Fluviorum* (1853), p. xlvi. It was contradicted in Thornbury's *Life* (1862, i. p. 215), and at a later date Turner's friend, the Rev. W. Kingsley, characterised it as "great nonsense": see the appendix to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (Vol. XIII.).]

¹ [Compare on this point *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, No. 476 (Vol. XIII.).]

gather together the resemblances of fact, nor, for them, mimic the majesty of invention.*

§ 33. No happy chance—nay, no happy thought—no perfect knowledge—will ever take the place of that mighty unconsciousness. I have often had to repeat that Turner, in the ordinary sense of the words, neither knew nor thought so much as other men.¹ Whenever his *perception* failed—that is to say, with respect to scientific truths which produce no result palpable to the eye—he fell into the frankest errors. For instance, in such a thing as the relation of position between a rainbow and the sun, there is not any definitely visible connection between them; it needs attention and calculation to discover that the centre of the rainbow is the shadow of the spectator's head.[†] And attention or calculation of this abstract kind Turner appears to have been utterly incapable of; but if he drew a piece of drapery, in which every line of the folds has a *visible* relation to the points of suspension, not a merely calculable one, this relation he will see to the last thread; and thus he traces the order of the mountain crests to their last stone, not because he knows anything of geology, but

* An anecdote is related, more to our present purpose, and better authenticated, inasmuch as the name of the artist to whom Turner was speaking at the time is commonly stated, though I do not give it here, not having asked his permission. The story runs that this artist (one of our leading landscape painters) was complaining to Turner that, after going to Domo d'Ossola, to find the sight of a particular view which had struck him several years before, he had entirely failed in doing so; "it looked different when he went back again." "What," replied Turner, "do you not know yet, at your age, that you ought to *paint your impressions?*"

† So, in the exact length or shape of shadows in general, he will often be found quite inaccurate; because the irregularity caused in shadows, by the shape of what they fall *on*, as well as what they fall from, renders the law of connection untraceable by the eye or the instinct. The chief *visible* thing about the shadow is, that it is always of some form which nobody would have thought of; and this visible principle Turner always seizes, sometimes wrongly in calculated fact, but always so rightly as to give more the look of a real shadow than any one else.

¹ [See, for instance, ch. xviii. in the preceding volume (Vol. V. p. 389).]

because he instinctively seizes the last and finest traces of any visible law.

§ 34. He was, however, especially obedient to these laws of the crests, because he heartily loved them. We saw in the early part of this chapter how the crest outlines harmonized with nearly every other beautiful form of natural objects, especially in the continuity of their external curves. This continuity was so grateful to Turner's heart that he would often go great lengths to serve it. For instance, in one of his drawings of the town of Lucerne¹ he has first



Fig. 72

outlined the Mont Pilate in pencil, with a central peak, as indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 72. This is nearly true to the local fact; but being inconsistent with the general look of crests, and contrary to Turner's instincts, he strikes off the refractory summit, and, leaving his pencil outline still in the sky, touches with colour only the contour shown by the continuous line in the figure, thus treating it just as we saw Titian did the great Alp of the Tyrol.² He probably, however, would not have done this with so important a feature of the scene as the Mont Pilate, had not the continuous line been absolutely necessary to his composition, in order to oppose the peaked

¹ [The drawing of Lucerne from the lake, once in Ruskin's collection: see the Index in Vol. XIII. Turner's treatment of Mount Pilatus here is further discussed and illustrated below, pp. 361–362, and Figs. 106 and 107.]

² [See above, p. 267.]

towers of the town, which were his principal subject; the form of the Pilate being seen only as a rosy shadow in the far-off sky. We cannot, however, yet estimate the importance, in his mind, of this continuity of descending curve, until we come to the examination of the lower hill *flanks*, hitherto having been concerned only with their rocky summits; and before we leave those summits, or rather the harder rocks which compose them, there is yet another condition of those rocks to be examined; and that the condition which is commonly the most interesting, namely, the Precipice. To this inquiry, however, we had better devote a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

RESULTING FORMS:—THIRDLY, PRECIPICES

§ 1. THE reader was, perhaps, surprised by the smallness of the number to which our foregoing analysis reduced Alpine summits bearing an ascertainably peaked or pyramidal form. He might not be less so if I were to number the very few occasions on which I have seen a true precipice of any considerable height.¹ I mean by a true precipice one by which a plumb-line will swing clear, or without touching the face of it, if suspended from a point a foot or two beyond the brow. Not only are perfect precipices of this kind very rare, but even imperfect precipices, which often produce upon the eye as majestic an impression as if they were vertical, are nearly always curiously low in proportion to the general mass of the hills to which they belong. They are for the most part small steps or rents in large surfaces of mountain, and mingled by nature among her softer forms, as cautiously and sparingly as the utmost exertion of his voice is, by a great speaker, with his tones of gentleness.

§ 2. Precipices, in the large plurality of cases, consist of the edge of a bed of rock, sharply fractured, in the manner already explained in Chap XII., and are represented, in their connection with aiguilles and crests, by *c* in Fig. 42, p. 241. When the bed of rock slopes backwards from the edge, as *a*, Fig. 73, a condition of precipice is obtained more or less peaked, very safe and very grand.* When

* Distinguished from a *crest* by being the *face* of a large continuous bed of rock, not the end of a ridge.

¹ [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. pt. ii. sec. iv. ch. iii. § 18 (Vol. III. p. 463).]

the beds are horizontal, *b*, the precipice is steeper, more dangerous, but much less impressive. When the beds slope towards the precipice, the front of it overhangs, and the noblest effect is obtained, which is possible in mountain forms of this kind.

§ 3. Singularly enough, the type *b* is in actual nature nearly always the most dangerous of the three, and *c* the safest, for horizontal beds are usually of the softest rocks, and their cliffs



Fig. 73

are caused by some violent agency in constant operation, as chalk cliffs by the wearing power of

the sea, so that such rocks are continually falling in one place or another. The form *a* may also be assumed by very soft rocks. But *c* cannot exist at all on a large scale, unless it is built of good materials, and it will then frequently stay in its fixed form for ages.

§ 4. It occasionally happens that a precipice is formed among the higher crests by the *sides* of vertical beds of slaty crystallines. Such rocks are rare, and never very high, but always beautiful in their smoothness of surface and general trenchant and firm expression. One of the most interesting I know is that of the summit of the Breven, on the north of the valley of Chamouni. The mountain is formed by vertical sheets of slaty crystallines, rather soft at the bottom, and getting harder and harder towards the top, until at the very summit it is as hard and compact as the granite of Waterloo Bridge, though much finer in the grain, and breaking into perpendicular faces of rock so perfectly cut as to feel smooth to the hand. Fig. 4, p. 138, represents, of the real size, a bit which I broke from the edge of the cliff, the shaded part underneath being the surface which forms the precipice. The plumb-line from the brow of this cliff hangs clear 124 English feet; it is then caught by a ledge about three feet wide, from which another precipice falls to about twice

the height of the first; but I had not line enough to measure it with from the top, and could not get down to the ledge. When I say the line hangs *clear*, I mean, when once it is off the actual brow of the cliff, which is a little rounded for about fourteen or fifteen feet from *a* to *b*, in the section, Fig. 75. Then the rock recedes in an almost unbroken concave sweep, detaching itself from the plumb-line about two feet at the point *c* (the lateral dimensions are exaggerated to show the curve), and approaching it again at the ledge *d*, which is 124 feet below *a*. The plumb-line, fortunately, can be seen throughout its whole extent from a sharp bastion of the precipice farther on, for the face of the cliff runs, in horizontal plan, very nearly to the magnetic north and south, as shown in Fig. 74, the plumb-line swinging at *a*, and seen from the advanced point *P*. It would give a similar result at any other part of the cliff face, but may be most conveniently cast from the point *a*, a little below, and to the north of, the summit.

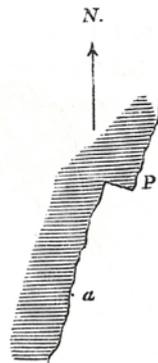


Fig. 74

§ 5. But although the other divisions of this precipice below the ledge which stops the plummet, gave it altogether a height of about five hundred feet,* the whole looks a mere step on the huge slope of the Breven; and it only deserves mention among Alpine cliffs as one of singular beauty and decision, yet perfectly approachable and examinable even by the worst climbers; which is very rarely the case with cliffs of the same boldness. I suppose that this is the reason for its having been often stated in



Fig. 75

* The contour of the whole cliff, seen from near its foot as it rises above the shoulder of the Breven, is as at Fig. 76 opposite. The part measured is *a d*; but the precipice recedes to the summit, *b*, on which

scientific works that no cliff could be found in the Alps from which a plumb-line would swing two hundred feet. This can *possibly* be true (and even with this limitation I doubt it) of cliffs conveniently approachable by experimental philosophers. For indeed, one way or another, it is curious how Nature fences out, as it were, the brows

a human figure is discernible to the naked eye merely as a point. The bank from which the cliff rises, *c*, *recedes* as it falls to the left; so that five hundred feet may perhaps be an under-estimate of the height below

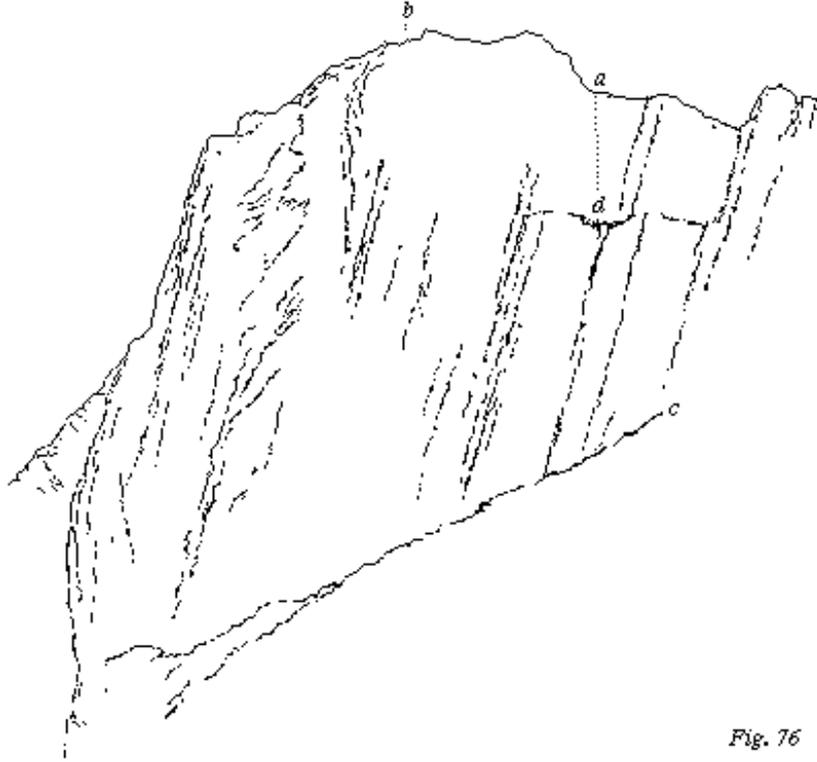


Fig. 76

the summit. The straight sloping lines are cleavages, across the beds. Finally, Fig. 4, Plate 25, gives the look of the whole summit as seen from the village of Chamouni beneath it, at a distance of about two miles, and some four or five thousand feet above the spectator. It appears, then, like a not very formidable projection of crag overhanging the great slopes of the mountain's foundation.

of her boldest precipices. Wherever a plumb-line will swing, the precipice is, almost without exception, of the type *c* in Fig. 73, the brow of it rounding towards the edge for, perhaps, fifty or a hundred yards above, rendering it unsafe in the highest degree for any inexperienced person to attempt approach. But it is often possible to ascertain from a distance, if the cliff can be got relieved against the sky, the approximate degree of its precipitousness.

§ 6. It may, I think, be assumed, almost with certainty, that whenever a precipice is very bold and very high, it is formed by beds more or less approaching horizontality, out of which it has been cut, like the side of a haystack from which part has been removed. The wonderfulness of this operation I have before insisted upon;¹ here we have to examine the best examples of it.

As, in forms of central rock, the Aiguilles of Chamouni, so in notableness of lateral precipice, the Matterhorn, or Mont Cervin, stands, on the whole, unrivalled among the Alps, being terminated, on two of its sides, by precipices which produce on the imagination nearly the effect of verticality. There is, however, only one point at which they reach anything approaching such a condition; and that point is wholly inaccessible either from below or above, but sufficiently measurable by a series of observations.

§ 7. From the slope of the hill above, and to the west of, the village of Zermatt, the Matterhorn presents itself under the figure shown on the right hand in the next plate (38). The whole height of the mass, from the glacier out of which it rises, is about 4,000 feet, and although, as before noticed, the first slope from the top towards the right is merely a perspective line, the part of the contour *c d*, Fig. 33, p. 226, which literally overhangs,* cannot be.

* At an angle of 79° with the horizon. See the Table of angles, p. 226. The line *a e* in Fig. 33 is too steep, as well as in the plate here; but the other slopes are approximately accurate. I would have made them quite so, but did not like to alter the sketch made on the spot.

¹ [See above, p. 185.]

An apparent slope, however steep, so that it does not overpass the vertical, *may* be a horizontal line; but the moment it can be shown literally to overhang, it *must* be one of two things,—either an actually pendent *face* of rock, as at *a*, Fig. 77, or the under-edge of an overhanging *cornice* of rock, *b*. Of course the

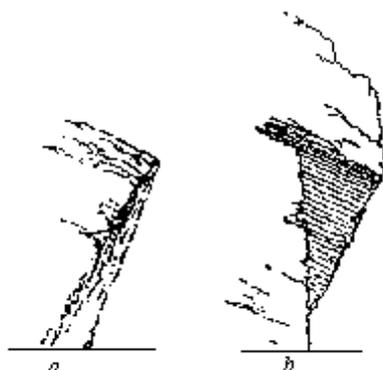


Fig. 77

latter condition, on such a scale as this of the Matterhorn, would be the more wonderful of the two; but I was anxious to determine which of these it really was.

§ 8. My first object was to reach some spot commanding, as nearly as might be, the lateral profile of the Mont Cervin. The most available point for this purpose was the top of the Riffelhorn; which,

however, first attempting to climb by its deceitful western side, and being stopped, for the moment, by the singular moat and wall which defend its Malakhoff-like summit,¹ fearing that I might not be able ultimately to reach the top, I made the drawing of the Cervin, on the left hand in Plate 38, from the edge of the moat; and found afterwards the difference in aspect, as it was seen from the true summit, so slight as not to necessitate the trouble of making another drawing.*

* Professor Forbes gives the bearing of the Cervin² from the top of the Riffelhorn as 351°, or N. 9° w., supposing local attraction to have caused an error of 65° to the northward, which would make the true bearing N. 74° w. From the point just under the Riffelhorn summit, *e*, in Fig. 78, at which my drawing was made, I found the Cervin bear N. 79° w. without any allowance for attraction; the disturbing influence would seem therefore confined, or nearly so, to the summit *a*. I did not know at the time that there was any such influence traceable, and took no bearing from the summit. For the rest, I cannot vouch for bearings as I can for angles, as their accuracy was of no importance to my work, and I merely noted them

¹ [The allusion to the Malakoff tower at Sebastopol, ultimately taken by the French, will remind the reader that this volume was written during the Crimean War.]

² [See *Travels through the Alps of Savoy*, ch. xvii., p. 315 of the reprint of 1900.]



J. Ruskin.



J. C. Armytage
Allen & Co. So.

38 . The Cervin, from the East, and North-East .

§ 9. It may be noted in passing, that this wall which with its regular fosse defends the Riffelhorn on its western side, and a similar one on its eastern side, though neither of them of any considerable height, are curious instances of trenchant precipice, formed, I suppose, by slight slips or faults of the serpentine rock. The summit of the horn, *a*, Fig. 78, seems to have been pushed up in a mass beyond the rest of the ridge, or else the rest of the ridge to have dropped from it on each side, at *b c*, leaving the two troublesome faces of cliff right across the craig; hard, green as a sea wave, and polished like the inside of a sea shell, where the weather has not effaced the surface produced by the slip. It is only by getting past the eastern cliff that the summit can be reached at all, for on its two lateral escarpments the mountain seems quite inaccessible, being in its whole mass nothing else than the top of a narrow wall with a raised battlement, as rudely shown in perspective at *e d*; the flanks of the wall falling towards the glacier on one side, and to the lower Riffel on the other, four or five hundred feet, not, indeed, in unbroken precipice, but in a form quite incapable of being scaled.*

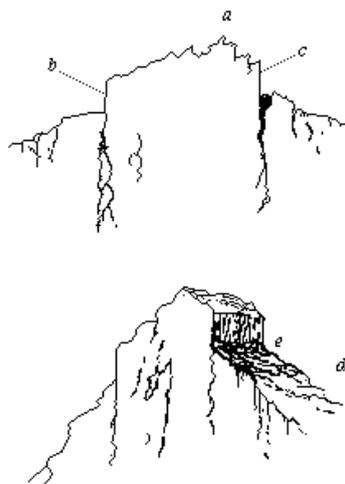


Fig. 78

with a common pocket compass and in the sailor's way (S. by W. and $\frac{1}{2}$ W., etc.), which involves the probability of error of from two to three degrees on either side of the true bearing. The other drawing in Plate 38 was made from a point only a degree or two to the westward of the village of Zermatt. I have no note of the bearing; but it must be about S. 60° or 55° W.

* Independent travellers may perhaps be glad to know the way to the top of the Riffelhorn. I believe there is only one path; which ascends (from the ridge of the Riffel) on its eastern slope, until, near the summit, the low, but perfectly smooth cliff, extending from side to side of

§ 10. To return to the Cervin. The view of it given on the left hand in Plate 38 shows the ridge in about its narrowest profile; and shows also that this ridge is composed of beds of rock shelving across it, apparently horizontal, or nearly so, at the top, and sloping considerably southwards (to the spectator's left), at the bottom. How far this slope is a consequence of the advance of the nearest angle, giving a steep perspective to the beds, I cannot say; my own belief would have been that a great deal of it is thus deceptive, the beds lying as the tiles do in the somewhat anomalous, but perfectly conceivable house roof, Fig. 79.



Fig. 79

Saussure, however, attributes to the beds themselves a very considerable slope. But be this as it may, the main facts of the thinness of the beds, their comparative horizontality, and the daring sword-sweep by which the whole mountain has been hewn out of them, are from this spot comprehensible at a

glance. Visible, I *should* have said; but eternally, and to the uttermost, *incomprehensible*. Every geologist who speaks of this mountain seems to be struck by the wonderfulness of its calm sculpture—the absence of all aspect of convulsion, and yet the stern chiselling of so vast a mass into its precipitous isolation, leaving no ruin nor débris near it. “Quelle force n’a-t-il pas fallu,” exclaims M. Saussure, “pour rompre, et pour *balayer* tout ce qui manque à cette pyramide!”¹ “What an overturn of all

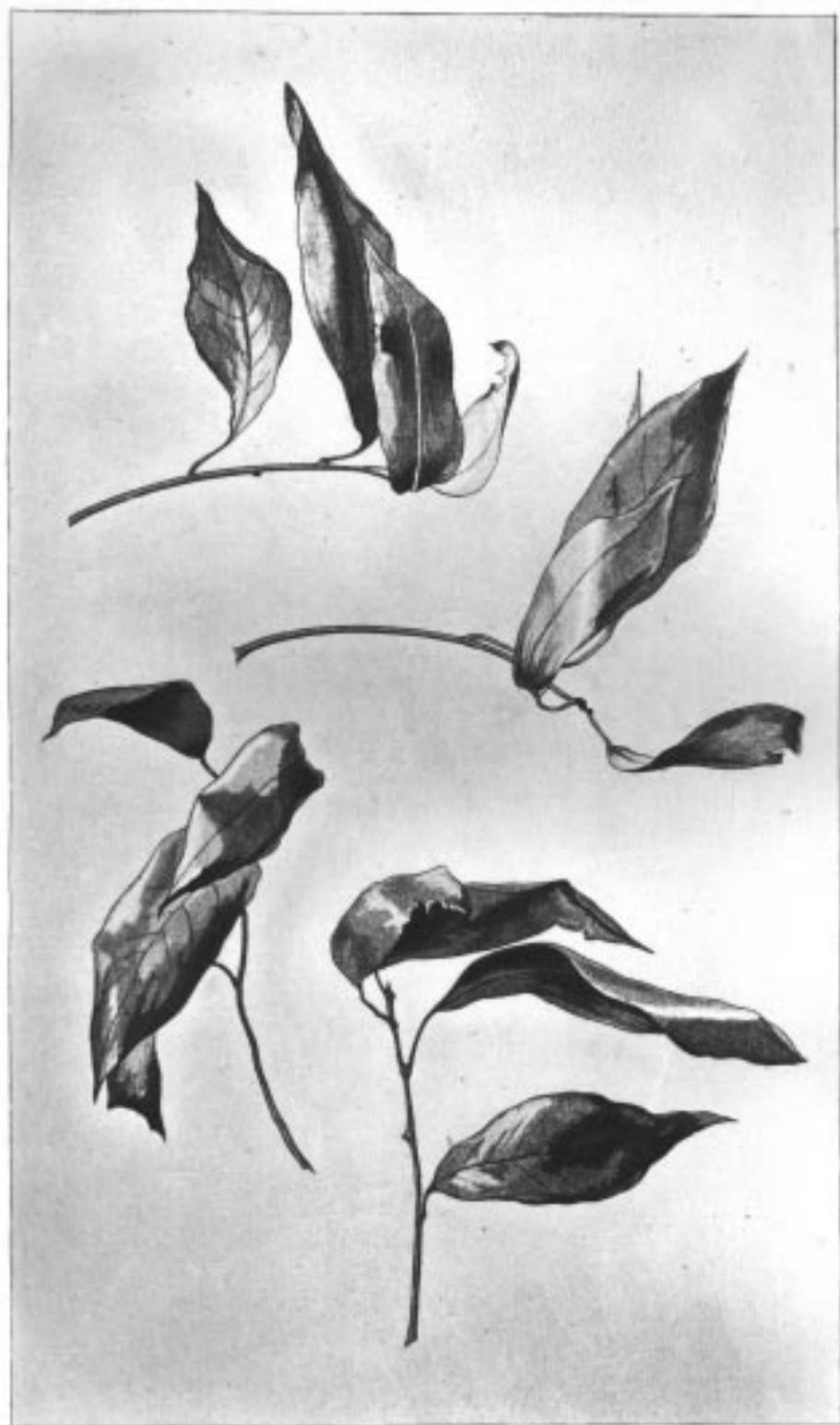
the ridge, seems, as on the western slope, to bar all farther advance. This cliff may, however, by a good climber, be mastered even at the southern extremity; but it is dangerous there: at the opposite, or northern, side of it, just at its base, is a little cornice, about a foot broad, which does not look promising at first, but widens presently; and when once it is past, there is no more difficulty in reaching the summit.

¹ [*Voyages dans les Alpes*, § 2244.]



J. Ruskin.

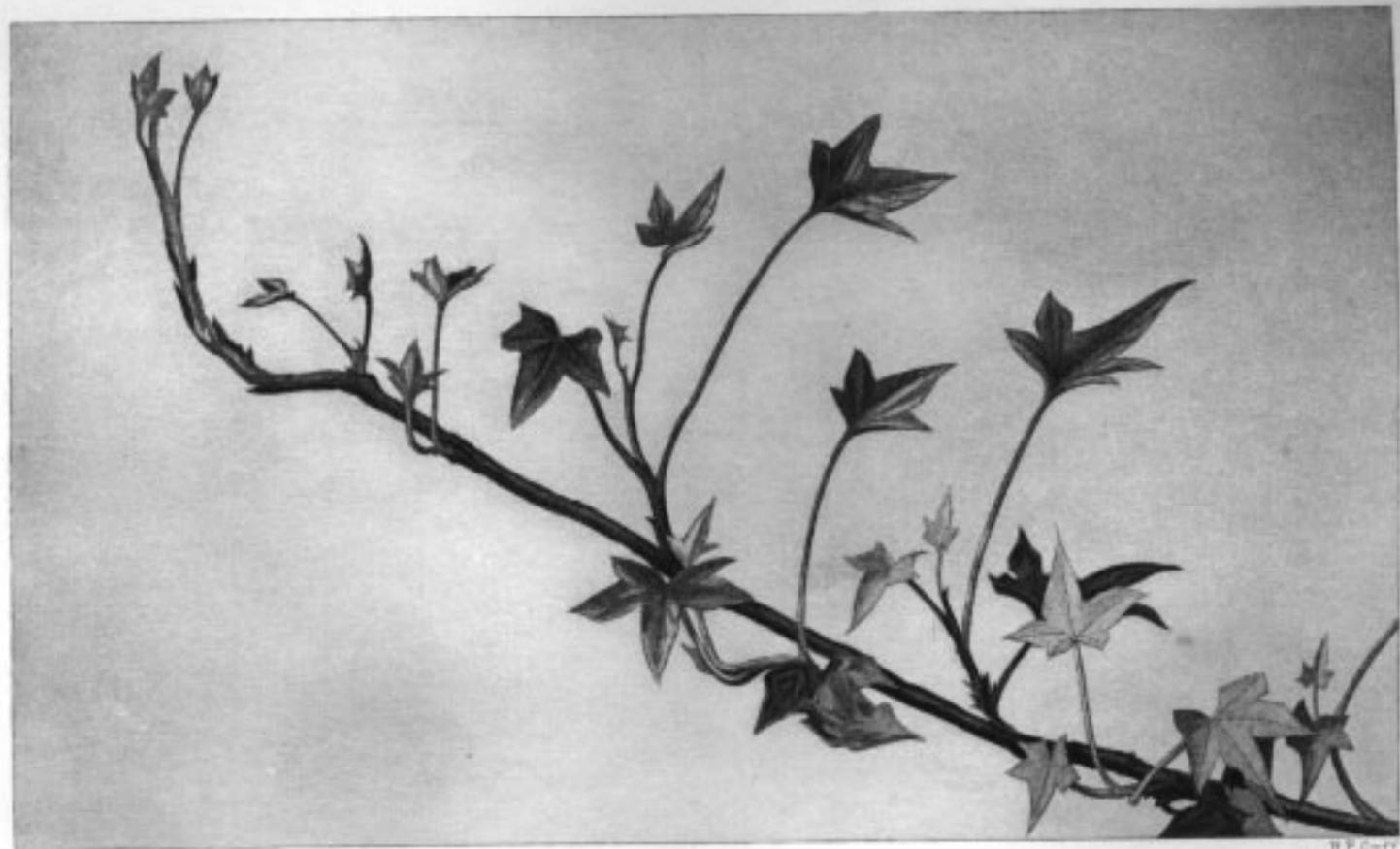
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J. Buckle.

W. P. Child,
Eden & Co. Ill.

43. Leaf Curvature. Dead Laurel.



H. F. Coffey
Allen & Co. S.

44. Leaf Curvature. Young Ivy.

ancient ideas in Geology," says Professor Forbes, "to find a pinnacle of 15,000 feet high [above the sea] sharp as a pyramid, and with perpendicular precipices of thousands of feet on every hand, to be a representative of the older chalk formation; and what a difficulty to conceive the nature of a convulsion (even with unlimited power), which could produce a configuration like the Mont Cervin rising from the glacier of Zmutt!"¹

§ 11. The term "perpendicular" is of course applied by the Professor in the "poetical" temper of Reynolds,—that is to say, in one "inattentive to minute exactness in details";² but the effect of this strange Matterhorn upon the imagination is indeed so great, that even the gravest philosophers cannot resist it; and Professor Forbes's drawing of the peak, outlined at page 225,³ has evidently been made under the influence of considerable excitement. For fear of being deceived by enthusiasm also, I daguerreotyped the Cervin from the edge of the little lake under the crag of the Riffelhorn, with the somewhat amazing result shown in Fig. 80. So cautious is Nature, even in her boldest work, so broadly does she extend the foundations, and strengthen the buttresses, of masses which produce so striking an *impression* as to be described, even by the most careful writers, as perpendicular.



Fig. 80

§ 12. The only portion of the Matterhorn which approaches such a condition is the shoulder, before alluded to, forming a step of about one-twelfth the height of the

¹ [*Travels through the Alps of Savoy*, p. 307 of the reprint of 1900.]

² [See Vol. V. pp. 21, 24.]

³ [See above, p. 224 *n.* In a later paper on *Pedestrianism in Switzerland*, Forbes referred to § 12 here, and made some criticisms on Ruskin's objections to the terms "perpendicular" and "precipice" as applied to the Matterhorn. Mr. Coolidge in a note on Forbes' objections (p. 494 of the reprint of 1900) says: "Those who have been on the north-east face of the Matterhorn, over which the route from Zermatt more or less passes, will agree with Mr. Ruskin rather than with Forbes."]

whole peak, shown by light on its snowy side, or upper surface, in the right-hand figure of Plate 38. Allowing 4,000 feet for the height of the peak, this step or shoulder will be between 300 and 400 feet in absolute height; and as it is not only perpendicular, but assuredly overhangs, both at this snow-lighted angle and at the other corner of the mountain (seen against the sky in the same figure), I have not the slightest doubt that a plumb-line would swing from the brow of either of these bastions, between 600 and 800 feet, without touching rock. The intermediate portion of the cliff which joins them is, however, not more than vertical. I was therefore anxious chiefly to observe the structure of the two angles, and, to that end, to see the mountain close on that side, from the Zmutt glacier.

§ 13. I am afraid my dislike to the nomenclatures invented by the German philosophers¹ has been unreasonably, though involuntarily, complicated with that which, crossing out of Italy, one necessarily feels for those invented by the German peasantry. As travellers now every day more frequently visit the neighbourhood of the Monte Rosa, it would surely be a permissible, because convenient, poetical license, to invent some other name for this noble glacier, whose present title, certainly not euphonious, has the additional disadvantage of being easily confounded with that of the *Zermatt* glacier, properly so called. I mean myself, henceforward, to call it the Red glacier, because, for two or three miles above its lower extremity, the whole surface of it is covered with blocks of reddish gneiss, or other slaty crystalline rocks, some fallen from the Cervin, some from the Weisshorn, some brought from the Stockje and Dent d'Erin, but little rolled or ground down in the transit, and covering the ice, often four or five feet deep, with a species of macadamization on a large scale (each stone being usually some foot or foot and a half in diameter), anything but convenient to a traveller in haste.

² [See Appendix ii. in the preceding volume, Vol. V. p. 424.]

Higher up, the ice opens into broad white fields and furrows, hard and dry, scarcely fissured at all, except just under the Cervin, and forming a silent and solemn causeway, paved, as it seems, with white marble from side to side; broad enough for the march of an army in line of battle, but quiet as a street of tombs in a buried city, and bordered on each hand by ghostly cliffs of that faint granite purple which seems, in its far-away height, as unsubstantial as the dark blue that bounds it;—the whole scene so changeless and soundless; so removed, not merely from the presence of men, but even from their thoughts; so destitute of all life of tree or herb, and so immeasurable in its lonely brightness of majestic death, that it looks like a world from which not only the human, but the spiritual, presences had perished, and the last of its archangels, building the great mountains for their monuments, had laid themselves down in the sunlight to an eternal rest, each in his white shroud.

§ 14. The first point from which the Matterhorn precipices, which I came to examine, show their structure distinctly, is about halfway up the valley, before reaching the glacier. The most convenient path, and access to the ice, are on the south; but it is best, in order to watch the changes of the Matterhorn, to keep on the north side of the valley; and, at the point just named, the shoulder marked *e*, in Fig. 33, p. 226, is seen, in the morning sunlight, to be composed of zigzag beds, apparently of eddied sand.¹ (Fig. 81.)



Fig. 81

I have no doubt they once *were* eddied sand; that is to say, sea or torrent drift, hardened by fire into crystalline rock; but whether they ever were or not, the certain fact

¹ [In one of his copies for revision, Ruskin wrote here:—
 “Not by any means ‘apparently so’ to my present judgment.—J. R. 1884.”]
 vi. T

is, that here we have a precipice, trenchant, overhanging, and 500 feet in height, cut across the thin beds which compose it as smoothly as a piece of fine-grained wood is cut with a chisel.

§ 15. From this point, also, the nature of the corresponding bastion, *c d*, Fig. 33, is also discernible. It is the edge of a great concave precipice, cut out of the mountain, as the smooth hollows are out of the rocks at the foot of a waterfall, and across which the variously coloured beds, thrown by perspective into corresponding curvatures, run exactly like the seams of canvas in a Venetian felucca's sail.

Seen from this spot, it seems impossible that the mountain should long support itself in such a form, but the impression is only caused by the concealment of the vast proportions of the mass behind, whose poise is quite unaffected by this hollowing at one point. Thenceforward, as we ascend the glacier, the Matterhorn every moment expands in apparent width; and, having reached the foot of the Stockje (about a four hours' walk from Zermatt), and getting the Cervin summit to bear S. $11\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ E., I made the drawing of it engraved opposite, which gives a true idea of the relations between it and the masses of its foundation.¹ The bearing stated is that of the apparent summit only, as from this point the true summit is not visible; the rocks which seem to form the greatest part of the mountain being in reality nothing but its foundations, while the little white jagged peak, relieved against the dark hollow just below the seeming summit, is the rock marked *g* in Fig. 33. But the structure of the mass, and the long ranges of horizontal, or nearly horizontal, beds

¹ [For Ruskin's drawing at Zermatt, see the Introduction to Vol. V. p. xxviii., and compare Plate D in that volume. In the engraving of the Matterhorn here, many of the points on the mountain, familiar to climbers or to readers of the story of its ascent, are shown. "The little depression on the ridge, close to the margin of the engraving, on the right hand side, is the Col du Lion. . . . The battlemented portion of the ridge, a little higher up, is called the *crête du coq*; and the nearly horizontal portion of the ridge above it is 'the shoulder' " (Whymper's *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, p. 143 *n.* of the ed. of 1893).]



J. Buskin.

J. C. Arroyo & Co.
Alton & Co. So.

39. The Cervin, from the North West.

which form its crest, showing in black points like arrowheads through the snow, where their ridges are left projecting by the avalanche channels, are better seen than at any other point I reached, together with the sweeping and thin zones of sandy gneiss below, bending apparently like a coach-spring; and the notable point about the whole is, that this under-bed, of seemingly the most delicate substance, is that prepared by Nature to build her boldest precipice with, it being this bed which emerges at the two bastions or shoulders before noticed, and which by that projection causes the strange oblique distortion of the whole mountain mass, as it is seen from Zermatt.

§ 16. And our surprise will still be increased as we farther examine the materials of which the whole mountain is composed. In many places its crystalline slates, where their horizontal surfaces are exposed along the projecting beds of their foundations, break into ruin so total that the foot dashes through their loose red flakes as through heaps of autumn leaves; and yet, just where their structure seems most delicate, just where they seem to have been swept before the eddies of the streams that first accumulated them, in the most passive whirls, there the after ages have knit them into the most massive strength, and there have hewn out of them those firm grey bastions of the Cervin,—overhanging, smooth, flawless, unconquerable! For, unlike the Chamouni aiguilles, there is no aspect of destruction about the Matterhorn cliffs. They are not torn remnants of separating spires, yielding flake by flake, and band by band, to the continual process of decay. They are, on the contrary, an unaltered monument, seemingly sculptured long ago, the huge walls retaining yet the forms into which they were first engraven, and standing like an Egyptian temple,—delicate-fronted, softlycoloured, the suns of uncounted ages rising and falling upon it continually, but still casting the same line of shadows from east to west, still, century after century, touching the same purple stains on the lotus pillars; while

the desert sand ebbs and flows about their feet, as those autumn leaves of rock lie heaped and weak about the base of the Cervin.

§ 17. Is not this a strange type, in the very heart and height of these mysterious Alps—these wrinkled hills in their snowy, cold, grey-haired old age, at first so silent, then, as we keep quiet at their feet, muttering and whispering to us garrulously, in broken and dreaming fits, as it were, about their childhood—is it not a strange type of the things which “out of weakness are made strong”?¹ If one of those little flakes of mica-sand, hurried in tremulous spangling along the bottom of the ancient river, too light to sink, too faint to float, almost too small for sight, could have had a mind given to it as it was at last borne down with its kindred dust into the abysses of the stream, and laid, (would it not have thought?) for a hopeless eternity, in the dark ooze, the most despised, forgotten, and feeble of all earth’s atoms; incapable of any use or change; not fit, down there in the diluvial darkness, so much as to help an earth-wasp to build its nest, or feed the first fibre of a lichen;—what would it have thought, had it been told that one day, knitted into a strength as of imperishable iron, rustless by the air, infusible by the flame, out of the substance of it, with its fellows, the axe of God should hew that Alpine tower; that against *it*—poor, helpless mica flake!—the wild north winds should rage in vain; beneath *it*—low-fallen mica flake!—the snowy hills should lie bowed like flocks of sheep, and the kingdoms of the earth fade away in unregarded blue; and around *it*—weak, wave-drifted mica flake!—the great war of the firmament should burst in thunder, and yet stir it not; and the fiery arrows and angry meteors of the night fall blunted back from it into the air; and all the stars in the clear heaven should light, one by one as they rose, new cressets upon the points of snow that fringed its abiding place on the imperishable spire?

¹ [Hebrews xi. 34.]

§ 18. I have thought it worth while, for the sake of these lessons, and the other interests connected with them, to lead the reader thus far into the examination of the principal precipices among the Alps, although, so far as our immediate purposes are concerned, the inquiry cannot be very fruitful or helpful to us. For rocks of this kind, being found only in the midst of the higher snow fields, are not only out of the general track of the landscape painter, but are for the most part quite beyond his power—even beyond Turner's. The waves of snow, when it becomes a principal element in mountain form, are at once so subtle in tone, and so complicated in curve and fold, that no skill will express them, so as to keep the whole luminous mass in anything like a true relation to the rock darkness. For the distant rocks of the upper peaks are themselves, when in light, paler than white paper, and their true size and relation to near objects cannot be exhibited unless they are painted in the palest tones. Yet, as compared with their snow, they are so dark that a daguerreotype taken for the proper number of seconds to draw the snow shadows rightly, will always represent the rocks as *coal-black*. In order, therefore, to paint a snowy mountain properly, we should need a light as much brighter than white paper as white paper is brighter than charcoal. So that although it is possible, with deep blue sky, and purple rocks, and blue shadows, to obtain a very interesting resemblance of snow effect, and a true one up to a certain point, (as in the best examples of the body-colour drawings sold so extensively in Switzerland), it is not possible to obtain any of those refinements of form and gradation which a great artist's eye requires.¹ Turner felt that, among these highest hills, no serious or perfect work could be done; and although in one or two of his vignettes (already referred

¹ [On the unpaintableness of the Alps, and Turner's avoidance of the upper snows, see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 70 and 26 R. (Vol. XIII.) Some letters by Ruskin on the same subject to Mr. Douglas Freshfield are reprinted in a later volume of this edition. For Turner's Alpine vignettes, see Vol. III. pp. 433-434.]

to in the first volume) he showed his knowledge of them, his practice, in larger works, was always to treat the snowy mountains merely as a far-away white cloud, concentrating the interest of his picture on nearer and more tractable objects.

§ 19. One circumstance, however, bearing upon art, we may note before leaving these upper precipices, namely, the way in which they illustrate the favourite expression of Homer and Dante—*cut* rocks.¹ However little satisfied we had reason to be with the degree of affection shown towards mountain scenery by either poet, we may now perceive, with some respect and surprise, that they had got at one character which was in the essence of the noblest rocks, just as the early illuminators got at the principles which lie at the heart of vegetation. As distinguished from all other natural forms,—from fibres which are torn, crystals which are broken, stones which are rounded or worn, animal and vegetable forms which are grown or moulded,—the true hard rock or precipice is notably a thing *cut*, its inner *grain* or structure seeming to have less to do with its form than in any other object or substance whatsoever; and the aspect of subjection to some external sculpturing instrument being distinct in almost exact proportion to the size and stability of the mass.

§ 20. It is not so, however, with the next groups of mountain which we have to examine—those formed by the softer slaty coherents, when their perishable and frail substance has been raised into cliffs in the manner illustrated by the figure at p. 186,—cliffs whose front every frost disorganizes into filmy shale, and of which every thunder-shower dissolves tons in the swoln blackness of torrents. If this takes place from the top downwards, the cliff is gradually effaced, and a more or less rounded eminence is soon all that remains of it; but if the lower beds only decompose, or if the whole structure is strengthened here

¹ [See Vol. V. pp. 242, 305.]

and there by courses of harder rock, the precipice is undermined, and remains hanging in perilous ledges and projections until, the process having reached the limit of its strength, vast portions of it fall at once, leaving new fronts of equal ruggedness, to be ruined and cast down in their turn.

The whole district of the northern inferior Alps, from the mountains of the Réposoir to the Gemmi, is full of precipices of this kind; the well-known crests of the Mont Doron, and of the Aiguille de Varens, above Sallenches, being connected by the great cliffs of the valley of Sixt, the dark mass of the Buet, the Dent du Midi de Bex, and the Diablerets, with the great amphitheatre of rock in whose securest recess the path of the Gemmi hides its winding. But the most frightful and most characteristic cliff in the whole group is the range of the Rochers des Fys, above the Col d'Anterne. It happens to have a bed of harder limestone at the top than in any other part of its mass; and this bed, protecting its summit, enables it to form itself into the most ghastly ranges of pinnacle which I know among mountains. In one spot the upper ledge of limestone has formed a complete cornice, or rather bracket—for it is not extended enough to constitute a cornice, which projects far into the air over the wall of ashy rock, and is seen against the clouds, when they pass into the chasm beyond, like the nodding coping-stones of a castle—only the wall below is not less than 2,500 feet in height,—not vertical, but steep enough to seem so to the imagination.

§ 21. Such precipices are among the most impressive as well as the most really dangerous of mountain ranges; in many spots inaccessible with safety either from below or from above; dark in colour, robed with everlasting mourning, for ever tottering like a great fortress shaken by war, fearful as much in their weakness as in their strength, and yet gathered after every fall into darker frowns and unhumiliated threatening; for ever incapable of comfort or

of healing from herb or flower, nourishing no root in their crevices, touched by no hue of life on buttress or ledge, but, to the utmost, desolate; knowing no shaking of leaves in the wind, nor of grass beside the stream,—no motion but their own mortal shivering, the dreadful crumbling of atom from atom in their corrupting stones; knowing no sound of living voice or living tread, cheered neither by the kid's bleat nor the marmot's cry; haunted only by uninterrupted echoes from far off, wandering hither and thither, among their walls, unable to escape, and by the hiss of angry torrents, and sometimes the shriek of a bird that flits near the face of them, and sweeps frightened back from under their shadow into the gulph of air; and, sometimes, when the echo has fainted, and the wind has carried the sound of the torrent away, and the bird has vanished, and the mouldering stones are still for a little time,—a brown moth, opening and shutting its wings upon a grain of dust, may be the only thing that moves, or feels, in all the waste of weary precipice, darkening five thousand feet of the blue depth of heaven.

§ 22. It will not be thought that there is nothing in a scene such as this deserving our contemplation, or capable of conveying useful lessons, if it were fitly rendered by art. I cannot myself conceive any picture more impressive than a faithful rendering of such a cliff would be, supposing the aim of the artist to be the utmost tone of sad sublime. I am, nevertheless, aware of no instance in which the slightest attempt has been made to express their character; the reason being, partly, the extreme difficulty of the task, partly the want of temptation in specious colour or form. For the majesty of this kind of cliff depends entirely on its size: a low range of such rock is as uninteresting as it is ugly; and it is only by making the spectator understand the enormous scale of their desolation, and the space which the shadow of their danger oppresses, that any impression can be made upon his mind. And this scale cannot be expressed by any artifice; the mountain cannot be made to

look large by painting it blue or faint, otherwise it loses all its ghastliness. It must be painted in its own near and solemn colours, black and ashen grey; and its size must be expressed by thorough drawing of its innumerable details—pure *quantity*,—with certain points of comparison explanatory of the whole. This is no light task; and, attempted by any man of ordinary genius, would need steady and careful painting for three or four months; while, to such a man, there would appear to be nothing worth his toil in the gloom of the subject, unrelieved as it is even by variety of form; for the soft rock of which these cliffs are composed rarely breaks into bold masses; and the gloom of their effect partly depends on its not doing so.

§ 23. Yet, while painters thus reject the natural and large sublime, which is ready to their hand, how strangely do they seek after a false and small sublime. It is not that they reprobate gloom, but they will only have a gloom of their own making: just as half the world will not see the terrible and sad truths which the universe is full of, but surrounds itself with little clouds of sulky and unnecessary fog for its own special breathing. A portrait is not thought grand unless it has a thunder-cloud behind it (as if a hero could not be brave in sunshine); a ruin is not melancholy enough till it is seen by moonlight or twilight; and every condition of theatrical pensiveness or of the theatrical terrific is exhausted in setting forth scenes or persons which in themselves are, perhaps, very quiet scenes and homely persons; while that which, without any accessories at all, is everlastingly melancholy and terrific, we refuse to paint,—nay, we refuse even to observe it in its reality, while we seek for the excitement of the very feelings it was meant to address, in every conceivable form of our false ideal.

For instance; there have been few pictures more praised for their sublimity than the “Deluge” of Nicholas Poussin;¹

¹ [In the Louvre; see Vol. XII. p. 469, and compare Vol. III. p. 518; Vol. IV. p. 200; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 18.]

portion of the artist to be the ^{tone} most ^{read} of sad sublimity
I am nevertheless aware of no instance in which the slightest
attempt has been made to express their character: the reason
being partly the extreme difficulty, ^{of doing so; the task} partly the want of
temptation in attractive species colour or form. ^{I say}
~~first the extreme difficulty.~~ ^{For} The success of ^{this kind of} work
depends entirely on its size: a low range of such rocks
is as uninteresting as it is ugly; and it is only by making
the spectator understand the enormous scale of their desolation,
and the space through which their ^{shadow of their} dangers ^{offences} ~~darkness~~; that
any impression can be made upon his mind. ^{And} ~~Further~~
this scale cannot be expressed by any artifice: the mountain
^{can} ~~must~~ not be made to look large by painting it blue & faint;
otherwise it loses all its grandeur. It must be painted
in its own ^{accords} volcanic colours, black and ash grey; and its
size must be expressed by thorough drawing of its innumerable
details; pure quantities, with certain points of comparison
as keynotes to the whole. Now this is no light task; and
attempted by any ^{man of} ordinary genius, would need the steady &
careful painting for three or four months; while the picture
~~when completed, would at first be almost repulsive in its gloom~~
^{such} to a man of ordinary genius. ~~then would also appear to be within~~

of which, nevertheless, the sublimity, such as it is, consists wholly in the painting of everything grey and brown,—not the grey and brown of great painters, full of mysterious and unconfessed colours, dim blue, and shadowy purple, and veiled gold,—but the stony grey and dismal brown of the conventionalist. Madame de Genlis,¹ whose general criticisms on painting are full of good sense—singularly so, considering the age in which she lived*—has the following passage on this picture:—

“ ‘I remember to have seen the painting you mention; but I own I found nothing in it very beautiful. ’

“ ‘You have seen it rain often enough? ’

“ ‘Certainly. ’

“ ‘Have you ever at such times observed the colour of the clouds attentively?—how the dusky atmosphere obscures all objects, makes them, if distant, disappear, or be seen with difficulty? Had you paid a proper attention to these effects of rain, you would have been amazed by the exactitude with which they are painted by Poussin. ’ ”†

§ 24. Madame de Genlis is just in her appeal to nature, but had not herself looked carefully enough to make her appeal accurate. She had noticed one of the principal effects of rain, but not the other. It is true that the dusky atmosphere “obscures all objects,” but it is also true that Nature, never intending the eye of man to be without delight, has provided a rich compensation for this shading of the tints with *darkness*, in their brightening by *moisture*. Every colour, wet, is twice as brilliant as it is when dry; and when distances are obscured by mist, and bright colours vanish from the sky, and gleams of sunshine from the earth,

* I ought before to have mentioned Madame de Genlis as one of the few writers whose influence was always exerted to restore to truthful feelings, and persuade to simple enjoyments and pursuits, the persons accessible to reason in the frivolous world of her times.

† *Veillées du Château*, vol. ii.

¹ [For a reference to Madame de Genlis (1746–1830), “the French Miss Edgeworth,” see *Elements of Drawing*, § 259.]

the foreground assumes all its loveliest hues, the grass and foliage revive into their perfect green, and every sunburnt rock glows into an agate. The colours of mountain foregrounds can never be seen in perfection unless they *are* wet; nor *can moisture be entirely expressed except by fulness of colour*. So that Poussin, in search of a false sublimity, painting every object in his picture, vegetation and all, of one dull grey and brown, has actually rendered it impossible for an educated eye to conceive it as representing rain at all: it is a dry, volcanic darkness. It may be said, that had he painted the effect of rain truly, the picture, composed of the objects he has introduced, would have become too pretty for his purpose. But his error, and the error of landscapists in general, is in seeking to express terror by false treatment, instead of going to Nature herself to ask her what she has appointed to be everlastingly terrible. The greatest genius would be shown by taking the scene in its plainest and most probable facts; not seeking to change pity into fear, by denying the beauty of the world that was passing away. But if it were determined to excite fear, and fear only, it ought to have been done by imagining the true ghastliness of the tottering cliffs of Ararat or Caucasus, as the heavy waves first smote against the promontories that until then had only known the thin fanning of the upper air of heaven;—not by painting leaves and grass slate-grey. And a new world of sublimity might be opened to us, if any painter of power and feeling would devote himself, for a few months, to these solemn cliffs of the dark limestone Alps, and would only paint one of them as it truly stands, not in rain nor storm, but in its own eternal sadness: perhaps best on some fair summer evening, when its fearful veil of immeasurable rock is breathed upon by warm air, and touched with fading rays of purple; and all that it has of the melancholy of ruin, mingled with the might of endurance, and the foreboding of danger, rises in its grey gloom against the gentle sky; the soft wreaths of the evening clouds expiring along its ridges one by one,

and leaving it, at last, with no light but that of its own cascades, standing like white pillars here and there along its sides, motionless and soundless in their distance.

§ 25. Here, however, we must leave those more formidable examples of the Alpine precipice, to examine those which, by Turner, or by artists in general, have been regarded as properly within the sphere of their art.

Turner had in this respect some peculiar views induced by early association. It has already been noticed, in my pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism,¹ that his first conceptions of mountain scenery seem to have been taken from Yorkshire; and its rounded hills, far-winding rivers, and broken limestone scars, to have formed a type in his mind to which he sought, as far as might be, to obtain some correspondent imagery in all other landscape. Hence, he almost always preferred to have a precipice *low down* on the hillside, rather than near the top; liked an extent of rounded slope above, and the vertical cliff to the water or valley, better than the slope at the bottom and wall at the top (compare Fig. 13, p. 188); and had his attention early directed to those horizontal, or comparatively horizontal, beds of rock which usually form the faces of precipices in the Yorkshire dales; not, as in the Matterhorn, merely indicated by veined colouring on the surface of the smooth cliff, but projecting, or mouldering away, in definite successions of ledges, cornices, or steps.

§ 26. This decided love of the slope, or bank above the wall, rather than below it, is one of Turner's most marked idiosyncrasies, and gives a character to his composition, as distinguished from that of other men, perhaps more marked than any which are traceable in other features of it (except, perhaps, in his pear-shaped ideal of trees, of which more hereafter).² For when mountains are striking to the general eye, they almost always have the high crest or wall of cliff on the *top* of their slopes, rising from the plain first in

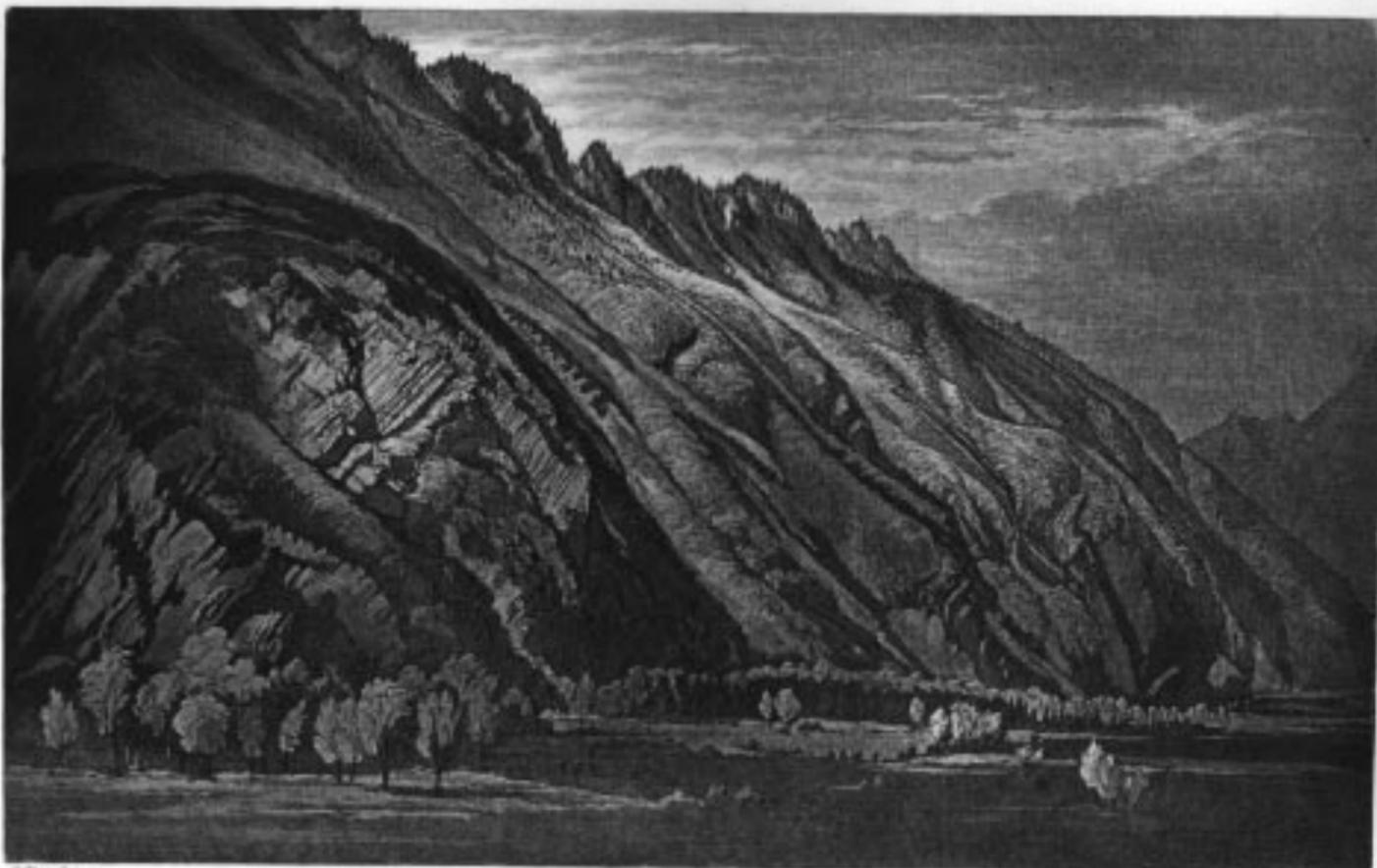
¹ [§ 36, see Vol. XII. p. 371.]

² [See ch. vii. § 20 in the next volume.]

mounds of meadow-land, and bosses of rock, and studded softness of forest; the brown cottages peeping through grove above grove, until just where the deep shade of the pines becomes blue or purple in the haze of height, a red wall of upper precipice rises from the pasture land, and frets the sky with glowing serration. Plate 40, opposite, represents a mass of mountain just above Villeneuve, at the head of the Lake of Geneva, in which the type of the structure is shown with singular clearness. Much of the scenery of western Switzerland, and characteristically the whole of that of Savoy, is composed of mountains of this kind; the isolated group between Chambéry and Grenoble, which holds the Grande Chartreuse in the heart of it, is constructed entirely of such masses; and the Montagne de Vergi, which in like manner encloses the narrow meadows and traceried cloistures of the Convent of the Réposoir,¹ forms the most striking feature among all the mountains that border the valley of the Arve between Cluse and Geneva; while ranges of cliffs presenting precisely the same typical characters frown above the bridge and fortress of Mont-Meillan, and enclose, in light blue calm, the waters of the Lake of Annecy

§ 27. Now, although in many of his drawings Turner acknowledges this structure, it seems always to be with some degree of reluctance: whereas he seizes with instant eagerness, and every appearance of contentment, on forms of mountain which are rounded into banks above, and cut into precipices below, as is the case in most elevated tablelands; in the chalk coteaux of the Seine, the basalt borders of the Rhine, and the lower gorges of the Alps; so that while the most striking pieces of natural mountain scenery usually rise from the plain under some such outline as that at *a*, Fig. 82, Turner always formed his composition, if possible, on such an arrangement as that at *b*.

¹ [The range of the Réposoir on Mont Vergi is described and analysed in Mr. W. G. Collingwood's *Limestone Alps of Savoy*, p. 90, and Plate xiii. For Mont-meillan, on the Isère, see *ibid.*, p. 25.]



J. H. Le Keux.

J. H. Le Keux.
Allen & Co. S.

40 . The Mountains of Villeneuve .

One reason for this is clearly the greater simplicity of the line. The simpler a line is, so that it be cunningly varied *within* its simplicities, the grander it is; and Turner likes to enclose all his broken crags by such a line as that at *b*, just as we saw the classical composer, in our first plate, enclose the griffin's beak with breadth of wing.¹ Nevertheless, I cannot but attribute his somewhat wilful and marked rejection of what sublimity there is in the other form, to the influence of early affections; and sincerely regret that the fascination exercised over him by memory should have led him to pass so much of his life

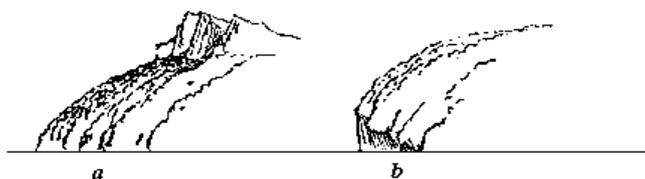


Fig. 82

in putting a sublimity not properly belonging to them into the coteaux of Clairmont and Mauves, and the vine terraces of Bingen and Oberwesel;² leaving almost unrecorded the natural sublimity, which he could never have exaggerated, of the pine-fringed mountains of the Isère, and the cloudy diadem of the Mont Vergi.

§ 28. In all cases of this kind, it is difficult to say how far harm and how far good have resulted from what unquestionably has in it something of both. It is to be regretted that Turner's studies should have been warped, by early affection, from the Alps to the Rhine; but the fact of his *feeling* this early affection, and being thus strongly influenced by it through his life, is indicative of that sensibility which was at the root of all his greatness.

¹ [In Vol. V.; see p. 142.]

² [Turner's drawings of "The Coteaux de Mauves" and "Between Clairmont and Mauves" are at Oxford (Ruskin's gift); for a reference to the latter, see Vol. III. p. 466. For the drawing of "Oberwesel" (formerly in the Windus Collection), see Vol. III. p. 468; for "Bingen" (Farnley), Vol. III. p. 422; for the Rhine Series generally, Vol. XII. p. 377.]

Other artists are led away by foreign sublimities and distant interests; delighting always in that which is most markedly strange, and quaintly contrary to the scenery of their homes. But Turner evidently felt that the claims upon his regard possessed by those places which first had opened to him the joy, and the labour, of his life, could never be superseded; no Alpine cloud could efface, no Italian sunbeam outshine, the memory of the pleasant dales and days of Rokeby and Bolton; and many a simple promontory, dim with southern olive,—many a low cliff that stooped unnoticed over some alien wave, was recorded by him with a love, and delicate care, that were the shadows of old thoughts and long-lost delights, whose charm yet hung like morning mist above the chanting waves of Wharfe and Greta.

§ 29. The first instance, therefore, of Turner's mountain drawing which I endeavoured to give accurately, in this book,¹ was from those shores of Wharfe which, I believe, he never could revisit without tears; nay, which for all the latter part of his life, he never could even speak of, but his voice faltered. We will now examine this instance with greater care.

It is first to be remembered that in every one of his English or French drawings, Turner's mind was, in two great instincts, at variance with itself. The *affections* of it clung, as we have just seen, to humble scenery, and gentle wildness of pastoral life. But the *admiration* of it was, more than any other artist's whatsoever, fastened on largeness of scale. With all his heart, he was attached to the narrow meadows and rounded knolls of England; by all his imagination he was urged to the reverence of endless vales and measureless hills: nor could any scene be too contracted for his love, or too vast for his ambition. Hence, when he returned to English scenery after his first studies in Savoy and Dauphiné, he was continually endeavouring

¹ [See Plate 12 in the preceding volume, Vol. V. p. 395.]

to reconcile old fondnesses with new sublimities; and, as in Switzerland he chose rounded Alps for the love of Yorkshire, so in Yorkshire he exaggerated scale, in memory of Switzerland, and gave to Ingleborough, seen from Hornby Castle, in great part the expression of cloudy majesty and height which he had seen in the Alps from Grenoble. We must continually remember these two opposite instincts as we examine the Turnerian topography of his subject of Bolton Abbey.

§ 30. The Abbey is placed, as most lovers of our English scenery know well, on a little promontory of level park land, enclosed by one of the sweeps of the Wharfe. On the other side of the river, the flank of the dale rises in a pretty wooded brow, which the river, leaning against, has cut into two or three somewhat bold masses of rock, steep to the water's edge, but feathered above with copse of ash and oak. Above these rocks, the hills are rounded softly upwards to the moorland; the entire height of the brow towards the river being perhaps two hundred feet, and the rocky parts of it not above forty or fifty, so that the general impression upon the eye is that the hill is little more than twice the height of the ruins, or of the groups of noble ash trees which encircle them. One of these groups is conspicuous above the rest, growing on the very shore of the tongue of land which projects into the river, whose clear brown water, stealing first in mere threads between the separate pebbles of shingle, and eddying in soft golden lines towards its central currents, flows out of amber into ebony, and glides calm and deep below the rock on the opposite shore.

§ 31. Except in this stony bed of the stream, the scene possesses very little more aspect of mountain character than belongs to some of the park and meadow land under the chalk hills near Henley and Maidenhead; and if it were faithfully drawn on all points, and on its true scale, would hardly more affect the imagination of the spectator, unless he traced, with such care as is never from any spectator to

be hoped, the evidence of nobler character in the pebbled shore and unobtrusive rock. But the scene in reality does affect the imagination strongly, and in a way wholly different from lowland hill scenery. A little farther up the valley the limestone summits rise, and that steeply, to a height of twelve hundred feet above the river, which foams between them in the narrow and dangerous channel of the Strid. Noble moorlands extend above, purple with heath, and broken into scars and glens; and around every soft tuft of wood, and gentle extent of meadow, throughout the dale, there floats a feeling of this mountain power, and an instinctive apprehension of the strength and greatness of the wild northern land.

§ 32. It is to the association of this power and border sternness with the sweet peace and tender decay of Bolton Priory, that the scene owes its distinctive charm. The feelings excited by both characters are definitely connected by the melancholy tradition of the circumstances to which the Abbey owes its origin; and yet farther darkened by the nearer memory of the death, in the same spot which betrayed the boy of Egremont, of another, as young, as thoughtless, and as beloved.

“The stately priory was reared,
And Wharfe, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at evensong.”¹

All this association of various awe, and noble mingling of mountain strength with religious fear, Turner had to suggest, or he would not have drawn Bolton Abbey. He goes down to the shingly shore; for the Abbey is but the

¹ [Wordsworth: *The Force of Prayer; or, the Founding of Bolton Priory: a Tradition*—the tradition being that the death of “the boy of Egremont,” the only son of William Fitz-Duncan, was the cause of the removal of the Priory from Emsay, near Skipton, to Bolton (1153). Leading a hound in leash, the boy attempted to jump across the “Strid”; but the dog hung back, and the boy was dragged into the stream and drowned. The tradition is the subject also of a poem by Rogers, “The Boy of Egremont,” for which Turner made two drawings, Nos. 236 and 237 in the National Gallery. The editors are unable to identify the later memory to which Ruskin refers; there have in modern times been several fatal accidents at the Strid (see E. Baines’ *History of Yorkshire*, vol. i. p. 230).]

child of the Wharfe;—it is the river, the great cause of the Abbey, which shall be his main subject; only the extremity of the ruin itself is seen, between the stems of the ash trees; but the waves of the Wharfe are studied with a care which renders this drawing unique among Turner's works, for its expression of the eddies of a slow mountain stream, and of their pausing in treacherous depth beneath the hollowed rocks.

On the opposite shore is a singular jutting angle of the shales, forming the principal feature of the low cliffs at the water's edge. Turner fastens on it as the only available mass; draws it with notable care, and then magnifies it by diminishing the trees on its top to one fifth of their real size, so that what would else have been little more than a stony bank becomes a true precipice, on a scale completely suggestive of the heights behind. The hill beyond is in like manner lifted into a more rounded, but still precipitous, eminence, reaching the utmost admissible elevation of ten or twelve hundred feet (measurable by the trees upon it). I have engraved this entire portion of the drawing of the real size,¹ on the opposite page; the engraving of the whole drawing, published in the England Series, is also easily accessible.

§ 33. Not knowing accurately to what group of the Yorkshire limestones the rocks opposite the Abbey belonged, or their relation to the sandstones at the Strid, I wrote to ask my kind friend Professor Phillips,² who instantly sent me a little geological sketch of the position of these "Yoredale Shales," adding this interesting note: "The black shales opposite the Abbey are curiously tinted at the surface, and are contorted. Most artists give them the appearance of solid massive rocks; nor is this altogether wrong, especially when the natural joints of the shale appear prominent after particular accidents; they should, however,

¹ [In this edition necessarily reduced (by about two-sevenths), and reproduced in photogravure.]

² [John Phillips (1800–1874), F.R.S.; Professor of Geology at Trinity College, Dublin, 1844–1853; President of the Geological Society, 1859 and 1860; Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1854–1870.]



J.M.W. Turner.

J. Ruskin.

H. Allen.
Allen & Co. Sc.

12.A. The Shores of Wharfe .

never be made to resemble [*i.e.* in solidity]¹ limestone or gritstone.”

Now, the Yoredale shales are members of the group of rocks which I have called slaty coherents, and correspond very closely to those portions of the Alpine slates described in Chapter x. § 4; their main character is continual separation into fine flakes, more or less of Dante’s “iron-coloured grain”;² which, however, on a large scale, form those somewhat solid-looking masses to which Mr. Phillips alludes in his letter, and which he describes, in his recently published *Geology*, in the following general terms: “The shales of this tract are usually dark, close, and fissile, and traversed by extremely long straight joints dividing the rock into rhomboidal prisms;”³ (*i.e.* prisms of the shape *c*, Fig. 83, in the section).

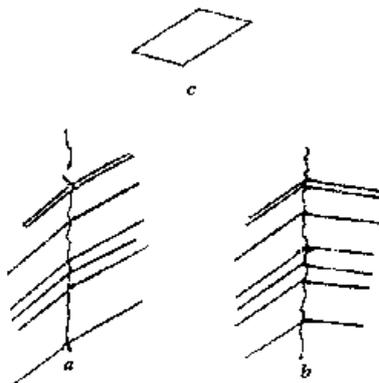


Fig. 83

§ 34. Turner had, therefore, these four things to show:—1. Flaky division horizontally; 2. Division by rhomboidal joints; 3. Massy appearance occasionally, somewhat concealing the structure; 4. Local contortion of the beds. (See passage quoted of Mr. Phillips’s letter.)

Examine, then, the plate just given (12 A.). The cleavage of the shales runs diagonally up from left to right; note especially how delicately it runs up through the foreground rock, and is insisted upon, just at the brow of it, in the angular step-like fragments; compare also the etching in the first volume. Then note the upright pillars in the distance marked especially as rhomboidal by being

¹ [The square brackets here enclose an addition by the author to the passage he is quoting.]

² [See Vol. V. p. 303.]

³ [*Manual of Geology*, 1855, p. 177, a volume in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* series.]

drawn with the cleavage still sloping up on the returning side, as at *a*, Fig. 83, not as at *b*, which would be their aspect if they were square; and then the indication of interruption in the structure at the brow of the main cliff, where, as well as on the nearer mass, exposure to the weather has rounded away the cleavages.

This projection, as before mentioned, does exist at the spot; and I believe is partly an indication of the contortion in the beds alluded to by Mr. Phillips; but no one but Turner would have fastened on it, as in anywise deserving special attention.

For the rest, no words are of any use to explain the subtle fidelity with which the minor roundings and cleavages have been expressed by him. Fidelity of this kind can only be estimated by workers: if the reader can himself draw a bit of natural precipice in Yoredale shale, and then copy a bit of the etching, he will find some measure of the difference between Turner's work and other people's, and no otherwise; although, without any such labour, he may at once perceive that there *is* a difference, and a wide one,—so wide, that I have literally nothing to compare the Turnerian work with in previous art. Here, however, Fig. 84, is a rock of Claude's (*Liber Veritatis*, No. 91, on the left-hand), which is something of the shape of Turner's, and professes to be crested in like manner with copse-wood. The reader may "compare" as much as he likes, or can, of it.

§ 35. In fact, as I said some time ago, the whole landscape of Claude was nothing but a more or less softened continuance of the old traditions of missal-painting, of which I gave examples in the previous volume.¹ The general notion of rock which may be traced in the earliest work, as Figs. 1 and 2 in Plate 10, Vol. III., is of an upright mass cut out with an adze; as art advances, the painters begin to perceive horizontal stratification, and, as

¹ [See ch. xv. § 16, and Plate 10 ("Geology of the Middle Ages"), Fig. 3, for the rocks of the illuminators; and ch. xviii. § 27 for Claude's "modification on old and received types" (Vol. V. pp. 307, 405.)]

in all the four other examples of that plate, show something like true rendering of the fracture of rocks in vertical joints with superimposed projecting masses. They insist on this type, thinking it frowning or picturesque, and usually exhibit it to more advantage by putting a convent, hermitage, or castle on the projection of the crag. In the blue backgrounds of the missals the projection is often wildly extravagant; for instance, the MS. Additional, 11,696 Brit. Mus.,¹ has all its backgrounds composed of blue rocks with towers upon them, of which Fig. 85 is a characteristic example (magnified in scale about one third; but, I think, rather diminished in extravagance of projection). It is infinitely better drawn than Claude's rocks ever are, in the expression of cleavage; but certainly somewhat too bold in standing. Then, in more elaborate work we get conditions of precipice like Fig. 3 in Plate 10, which, indeed, is not ill-drawn in many respects; and the book from which it is taken shows other evidences of a love of nature sufficiently rare at the period, though joined quaintly with love of the grotesque: for instance, the writer, giving an account of the natural productions of Saxony, illustrates his chapter with a view of the salt-mines; he represents the brine-spring, conducted by a wooden trough from the rock into an evaporating-house, where it is received in a pan, under which he has painted scarlet flames of fire with singular



Fig. 84

¹ [In his notes on the British Museum (see Vol. XII. p. lxxviii.) Ruskin mentions this MS. among those of the fifteenth century— "Boccaccio: an exquisite landscape with towers on the second illuminated leaf. The letters turned up on the edges are curious." The title of the MS. (fifteenth century) is "Boccace, le livre des cas des nobles et illustres hommes." For the other MS. compare Vol. V. p. 307, and above, p. 99. Its title is "Le Tresor des Histoires," being an universal history from the creation to A.D. 1342. The chapter "De la province de Saxone," and the illustration here referred to, are on folio 363.]

skill; and the rock out of which the brine flows is in its general cleavages the best I ever saw drawn by mediæval art. But it is carefully wrought to the resemblance of a grotesque human head.

§ 36. This bolder quaintness of the missals is very slightly modified in religious paintings of the period. Fig. 86, by Cima da Conegliano, a Venetian, No. 173 in the Louvre,¹ compared with Fig. 3 of Plate 10 (Flemish),² will show the kind of received

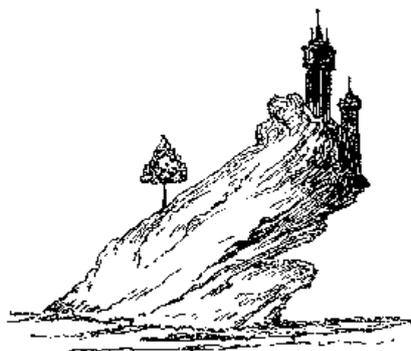


Fig. 85

tradition about rocks current throughout Europe. Claude takes up this tradition, and, merely making the rocks a little clumsier, and more weedy, produces such conditions as Fig. 87 (*Liber Veritatis*, No. 91, with Fig. 84 above); while the orthodox door or archway at the bottom is developed into

the Homeric cave, shaded with laurels,³ and some ships are put underneath it, or seen through it, at impossible anchorages.

§ 37. Fig. 87 is generally characteristic, not only of Claude, but of the other painters of the Renaissance period, because they were all equally fond of representing this overhanging of rocks with buildings on the top, and weeds drooping into the air over the edge, always thinking to get sublimity by exaggerating the projection, and never able to feel or understand the simplicity of real rock lines: not that they were in want of examples around them; on the contrary, though the main idea was traditional, the modifications of it are always traceable to the lower masses of limestone and tufa which skirt the Alps and Apennines,

¹ [Now No. 1259: "Virgin and Child" in a landscape: compare Vol. XII. p. 472.]

² [See Vol. V. p. 306.]

³ [See Vol. V. p. 242.]

and which have, in reality, long contracted habits of nodding over their bases; being, both by Virgil and Homer, spoken of always as “hanging” or “over-roofed” rocks.¹ But then they have a way of doing it rather different from the Renaissance ideas of them. Here, for instance (Plate 41), is a real hanging rock (kathrefhV), with a castle on the top of it, and laurel, all plain fact, from Arona, on the Lago Maggiore; and, I believe, the reader, though we have not as yet said anything about lines, will at once, on comparing it with Fig. 87, recognise the difference between the true parabolic flow of the rocklines and the humpbacked deformity of Claude: and, still more, the difference between the delicate overhanging of the natural cliff, cautiously diminished as it gets higher,* and the ideal danger of the Liber Veritatis.

§ 38. And the fact is, generally, that natural cliffs are very cautious how they overhang, and that the artist who represents them as doing so in any extravagant degree entirely destroys the sublimity which he hoped to increase, for the simple reason that he takes away the whole rock-nature, or at least that part of it which depends upon weight. The instinct of the observer refuses to believe that the rock is ponderous when



Fig. 86

* The actual extent of the projection remaining the same throughout, the angle of suspended slope, for that very reason, diminishes as the cliff increases in height.

¹ [For kathrefhV in this application, see *Od.* xiii. 349; the commoner epithet is ephrefhV, see *Il.* xii. 54; *Od.* x. 131, xii. 59. Virgil has *Scopulis pendentibus* (*Æn.* i. 166), and applies *cavus* commonly to rocks (*Georg.* iii. 253, *Æn.* iii. 566) and mountains (*Æn.* v. 448, viii. 599).]



J. Ruskin.

J. H. Le Kouz.

41. The Rock of Arona.

it overhangs so far, and it has no more real effect upon him than the imagined rocks of a fairy tale.

Though, therefore, the subject sketched (Plate 41) is sufficiently trifling in itself, it is important as a perfect general type of the overhanging of that kind of precipices, and of the mode in which they are connected with the



Fig. 87

banks above. Fig. 88 shows its abstract leading lines, consisting of one great parabolic line $x y$ falling to the brow, curved aqueous lines down the precipice face, and the springing lines of its vegetation opposed by contrary curves on the farther cliff. Such an arrangement, with or without vegetation, may take place on a small or large scale; but a bolder projection than this, except by rare accident, and on a small scale, cannot. If the reader will glance back to Plate 37, and observe the arrangement of the precipices on the right hand, he will now better understand what

Turner means by them. But the whole question of the beauty of this form, or mode of its development, rests on the nature of the bank above the cliffs, and of the aqueous forces that carved it; and this discussion of the nature

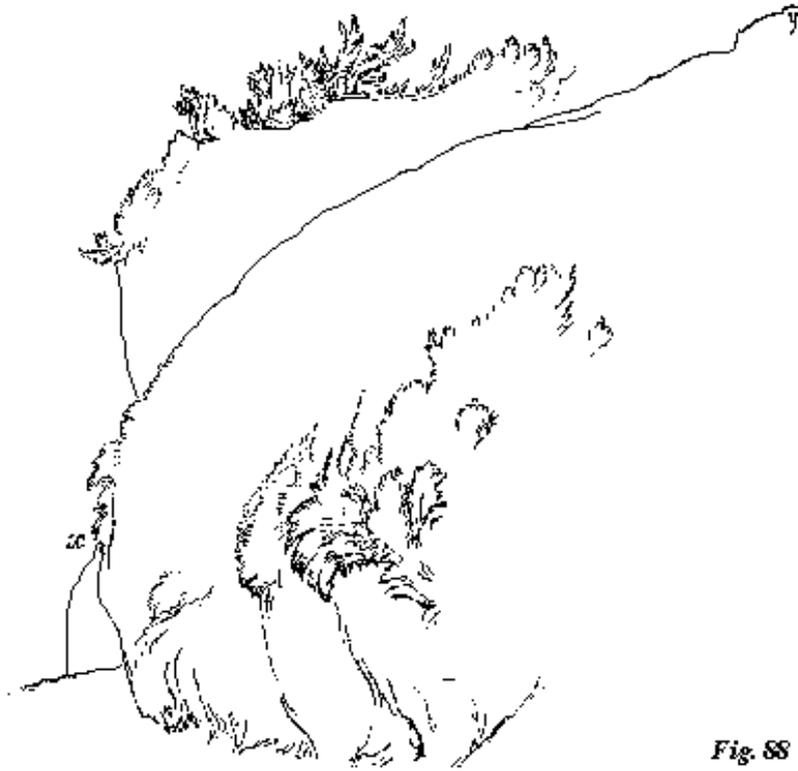


Fig. 88

of banks, as it will take some time, had better be referred to next chapter. One or two more points are, however, to be stated here.

§ 39. For the reader has probably been already considering how it is that these overhanging cliffs are formed at all, and why they appear thus to be consumed away at the bottom. Sometimes, if of soft material, they actually *are* so consumed by the quicker trickling of streamlets at

the base than at the summit, or by the general action of damp in decomposing the rock. But, in the noblest instances, such cliffs are constructed as at *c* in Fig. 73 above, and the inward retirement of the precipice is the result of their tendency to break at right angles to the beds, modified according to the power of the rock to support itself, and the queous action from above or below.

I have before alluded (in p. 219)¹ to this somewhat perilous arrangement permitted in the secondary strata. The danger, be it observed, is not of the fall of the *brow* of the precipice, which never takes place on a large scale in rocks of this kind (compare § 3 of this chapter), but of the sliding of one bed completely away from another, and the whole mass coming down together. But even this, though it has several times occurred in Switzerland, is not a whit more likely to happen when the precipice is terrific than when it is insignificant. The danger results from the imperfect adhesion of the mountain beds; not at all from the external form of them. A cliff, which is in aspect absolutely awful, may hardly, in the part of it that overhangs, add one thousandth part to the gravitating power of the entire mass of the rocks above; and, for the comfort of nervous travellers, they may be assured that they are often in more danger under the gentle slopes of a pleasantly wooded hill, than under the most terrific cliffs of the Eiger or Jungfrau.

§ 40. The most interesting examples of these cliffs are usually to be seen impending above strong torrents, which, if forced originally to run in a valley, such as *a* in Fig. 89, bearing the relation there shown to the inclination of beds on each side, will not, if the cleavage is across the beds, cut their channels straight down, but in an inclined direction, correspondent to the cleavage, as at *b*. If the operation be carried far, so as to undermine one side of the ravine too seriously, the undermined masses fall, partially

¹ [In all previous editions, the reference has erroneously been given to the page containing ch. xiii. § 2.]

choke the torrent, and give it a new direction of force, or diminish its sawing power by breaking it among the fallen masses, so that the cliff never becomes very high in such an impendent form; but the trench is hewn downwards in a direction irregularly vertical. Among the limestones on the north side of the Valais, they being just soft enough to yield easily to the water, and yet so hard as to maintain themselves in massy precipices, when once hewn to the shape, there are defiles of whose depth and proportions I am almost afraid to state what I believe to be the measurements, so much do they differ from any which I have seen assigned by scientific men as the limits of



Fig. 89

precipitous formation. I can only say that my deliberate impression of the great ravine cut by the torrent which descends from the Aletsch glacier, about half-way between the glacier and Brieg, was, that its depth is between a *thousand and fifteen hundred* feet, by a breadth of between *forty and a hundred*.

But I could not get to the edge of its cliffs, for the tops rounded away into the chasm, and, of course, all actual measurement was impossible. There are other similar clefts between the Bietschhorn and the Gemmi; and the one before spoken of¹ at Ardon, about five miles below Sion, though quite unimportant in comparison, presents some boldly overhanging precipices, easily observed by the passing traveller, as they are close to the road.

¹ [See ch. xii. § 21, and Fig. 17, p. 192.]

The glen through which the torrent of the Trient descends into the valley of the Rhone, near Martigny, though not above three or four hundred feet deep, is also notable for its narrowness, and for the magnificent hardness of the rock through which it is cut,—a gneiss twisted with quartz into undulations like those of a Damascus sabre, and as compact as its steel.¹

§ 41. It is not possible to get the complete expression of these ravines, any more than of the apse of a Gothic cathedral, into a picture, as their elevation cannot be drawn on a vertical plane in front of the eye, the head needing to be thrown back, in order to measure their height, or stooped, to penetrate their depth. But the structure and expression of the entrance to one of them have been made by Turner the theme of his sublime mountain-study (Mill near the Grande Chartreuse) in the *Liber Studiorum*;² nor does he seem ever to have been weary of recurring, for various precipice-subject, to the ravines of the Via Mala and St. Gothard. I will not injure any of these—his noblest works—by giving imperfect copies of them; the reader has now data enough whereby to judge, when he meets with them, whether they are well done or ill; and, indeed, all that I am endeavouring to do here, as often aforesaid,³ is only to get some laws of the simplest kind understood and accepted, so as to enable people who care at all for justice to make a stand at once beside the modern mountain-drawing, as distinguished from Salvator's or Claude's, or any other spurious work. Take, for instance, such a law as this of the general oblique inclination of a torrent's sides, Fig. 89, and compare the Turnerian gorge in the distance of Plate 21 here, or of the Grande Chartreuse subject in the *Liber*

¹ [On Damascus steel, compare *Lectures on Art*, § 121; and *Hortus Inclusus*, letter of January 24, 1875.]

² [No. 54 in the *Liber*; the drawing is No. 866 in the National Gallery. For other references to the plate see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 28, and Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 76.]

³ [See, for instance, Vol. III. pp. 425–426.]

Studiorum, and consider whether anywhere else in art you can find similar expressions of the law.

§ 42. “Well; but you have come to no conclusions in this chapter respecting the Beauty of Precipices; and that was your professed business with them.”

I am not sure that the idea of beauty was meant in general to be very strictly connected with such mountain forms: one does not instinctively speak or think of a “Beautiful Precipice.” They have, however, their beauty, and it is infinite; yet so dependent on help or change from other things, on the way the pines crest them, or the waterfalls colour them, or the clouds isolate them, that I do not choose to dwell here on any of their perfect aspects, as they cannot be reasoned of but by anticipating inquiries into other materials of landscape.

Thus, I have much to say of the cliffs of Grindelwald and the Chartreuse, but all so dependent upon certain facts belonging to pine vegetation, that I am compelled to defer it to the next volume:¹ nor do I much regret this; because it seems to me that without any setting forth, or rather beyond all setting forth, the Alpine precipices have a fascination about them which is sufficiently felt by the spectator in general, and even by the artist; only they have not been properly drawn, because people do not usually attribute the magnificence of their effect to the trifling details which really are its elements; and, therefore, in common drawings of Swiss scenery we see all kinds of efforts at sublimity by exaggeration of the projection, or of the mass, or by obscurity, or blueness of aerial tint,—by everything, in fact, except the one needful thing,—plain drawing of the rock. Therefore in this chapter I have endeavoured to direct the reader to a severe mathematical estimate of precipice outline, and to make him dwell, not on the immediately pathetic or impressive

¹ [For the pine, and its connexion with rocks and glaciers, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. ix., where, however, there is no special reference to the cliffs of Grindelwald and the Chartreuse.]

aspect of cliffs, which all men feel readily enough, but on their internal structure. For he may rest assured that, as the Matterhorn is built out of mica flakes, so every great pictorial impression in scenery of this kind is to be reached by little and little; the cliff must be built in the picture as it was probably in reality—inch by inch; and the work will, in the end, have most power which was begun with most patience. No man is fit to paint Swiss scenery until he can place himself front to front with one of those mighty crags, in broad daylight, with no “effect” to aid him, and work it out, boss by boss, with only such conventionality as its infinitude renders unavoidable. We have seen that a literal facsimile is impossible, just as a literal facsimile of the carving of an entire cathedral front is impossible. But it is as vain to endeavour to give any conception of an Alpine cliff without minuteness of detail, and by mere breadth of effect, as it would be to give a conception of the façades of Rouen or Rheims, without indicating any statues or foliation. When the statues and foliation are once got, as much blue mist and thunder-cloud as you choose, but not before.

§ 43. I commend, therefore, in conclusion, the precipice to the artist's *patience*; to which there is this farther and final encouragement, that, though one of the most difficult of subjects, it is one of the kindest of sitters. A group of trees changes the colour of its leafage from week to week, and its position from day to day; it is sometimes languid with heat, and sometimes heavy with rain; the torrent swells or falls in shower or sun; the best leaves of the foreground may be dined upon by cattle, or trampled by unwelcome investigators of the chosen scene. But the cliff can neither be eaten, nor trampled down; neither bowed by the shower, nor withered by the heat: it is always ready for us when we are inclined to labour; will always wait for us when we would rest; and, what is best of all, will always talk to us when we are inclined to converse. With its own patient and victorious presence, cleaving daily

through cloud after cloud, and reappearing still through the tempest drift, lofty and serene amidst the passing rents of blue, it seems partly to rebuke, and partly to guard, and partly to calm and chasten, the agitations of the feeble human soul that watches it; and that must be indeed a dark perplexity, or a grievous pain, which will not be in some degree enlightened or relieved by the vision of it, when the evening shadows are blue on its foundation, and the last rays of the sunset resting on the fair height of its golden fortitude.

CHAPTER XVII

RESULTING FORMS:—FOURTHLY, BANKS

§ 1. DURING all our past investigations of hill form, we have been obliged to refer continually to certain results produced by the action of descending streams or falling stones. The actual contours assumed by any mountain range towards its foot depend usually more upon this torrent sculpture than on the original conformation of the masses; the existing hill side is commonly an accumulation of *débris*; the existing glen commonly an excavated water-course; and it is only here and there that portions of rock, retaining impress of their original form, jut from the bank, or shelve across the stream.

§ 2. Now this sculpture by streams, or by gradual weathering, is the finishing work by which Nature brings her mountain forms into the state in which she intends us generally to observe and love them. The violent convulsion or disruption by which she first raises and separates the masses may frequently be intended to produce impressions of terror rather than of beauty; but the laws which are in constant operation on all noble and enduring scenery, must assuredly be intended to produce results grateful to men. Therefore, as in this final pencilling of Nature's we shall probably find her ideas of mountain beauty most definitely expressed, it may be well that, before entering on this part of our subject, we should recapitulate the laws respecting beauty of form which we arrived at in the abstract.

§ 3. Glancing back to the fourteenth and fifteenth paragraphs of the chapter on Infinity, in the second volume,

and to the third and tenth of the chapters on Unity,¹ the reader will find that abstract beauty of form is supposed to depend on continually varied curvatures of line and surface, associated so as to produce an effect of some unity among themselves, and opposed, in order to give them value, by more or less straight or rugged lines.

The reader will, perhaps, here ask why, if both the straight and curved lines are necessary, one should be considered more beautiful than the other. Exactly as we consider light beautiful and darkness ugly, in the abstract, though both are essential to all beauty. Darkness mingled with colour gives the delight of its depth or power; even pure blackness, in spots or chequered patterns, is often exquisitely delightful; and yet we do not therefore consider, in the abstract, blackness to be beautiful.

Just in the same way straightness mingled with curvature, that is to say, the close approximation of part of any curve to a straight line, gives to such curve all its spring, power, and nobleness: and even perfect straightness, limiting curves, or opposing them, is often pleasurable; yet in the abstract, straightness is always ugly, and curvature always beautiful.

Thus, in the figure at the side, the eye will instantly prefer the semicircle to the straight line; the trefoil (composed of three semicircles) to the triangle; and the cinqfoil to the pentagon. The mathematician may perhaps feel an opposite preference; but he must be conscious that he does so under the influence of feelings quite different from those with which he would admire (if he ever does admire) a picture or



Fig. 90

¹ [Vol. IV. pp. 87, 88, 94, 102.]
VI.

statue; and that if he could free himself from those associations, his judgment of the relative agreeableness of the forms would be altered. He may rest assured that, by the natural instinct of the eye and thought, the preference is given instantly, and always, to the curved form; and that no human being of unprejudiced perceptions would desire to substitute triangles for the ordinary shapes of clover leaves, or pentagons for those of potentillas.

§ 4. All curvature, however, is not equally agreeable;

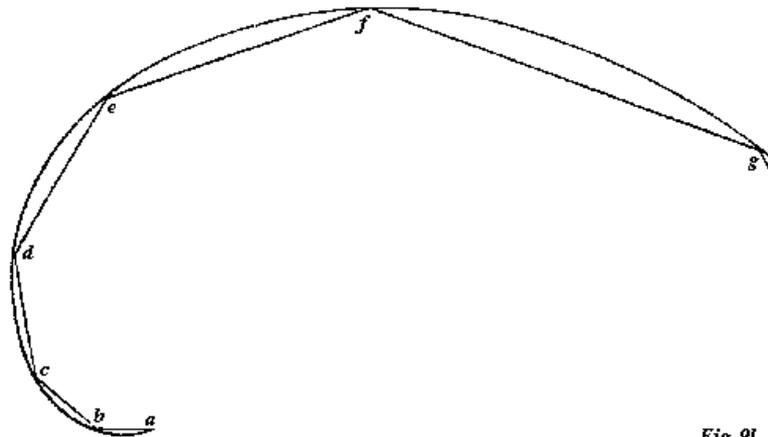


Fig. 91

but the examination of the laws which render one curve more beautiful than another, would, if carried out to any completeness, alone require a volume. The following few examples will be enough to put the reader in the way of pursuing the subject for himself.

Take any number of lines, *a b*, *b c*, *c d*, etc., Fig. 91, bearing any fixed proportion to each other. In this figure, *b c* is one-third longer than *a b*, and *c d* than *b c*; and so on. Arrange them in succession, keeping the inclination, or angle, which each makes with the preceding one always the same. Then a curve drawn through the extremities

of the lines will be a beautiful curve; for it is governed by consistent laws; every part of it is connected by those laws with every other, yet every part is different from every other; and the mode of its construction implies the possibility of its continuance to infinity; it would never return upon itself though prolonged for ever. These characters must be possessed by every perfectly beautiful curve.

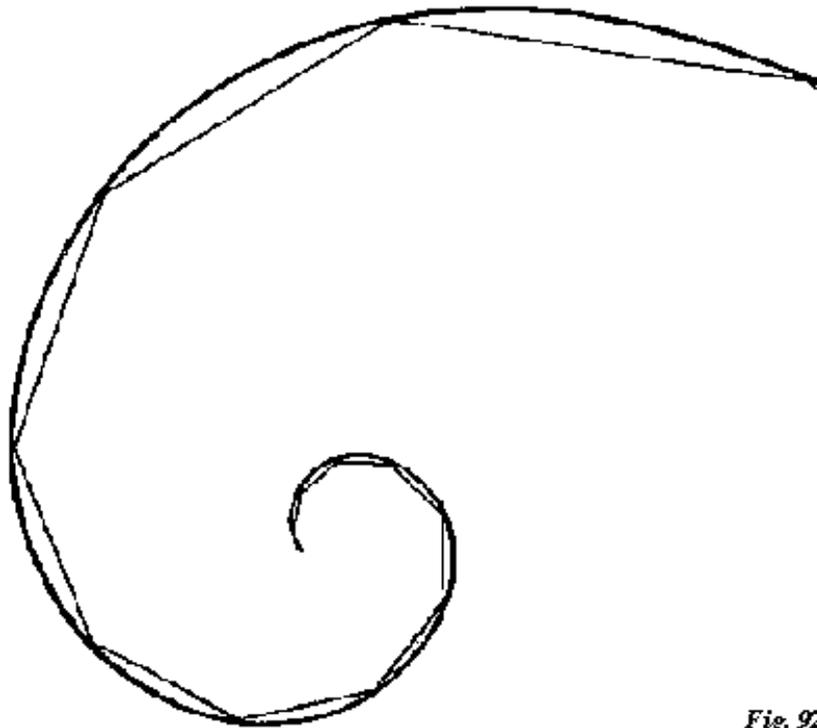


Fig. 92

If we make the difference between the component or measuring lines less, as in Fig. 92, in which each line is longer than the preceding one only by a fifth, the curve will be more contracted and less beautiful. If we enlarge the difference, as in Fig. 93, in which each line is treble the preceding one, the curve will suggest a more rapid proceeding into infinite space, and will be more beautiful. Of two curves, the same in other respects, that which suggests the quickest attainment of infinity is always the most beautiful.

§ 5. These three curves being all governed by the same general law, with a difference only in dimensions of lines, together with all the other curves so constructible, varied as they may be infinitely, either by changing the lengths of line, or the inclination of the lines of each other, are considered by mathematicians only as one curve, having this peculiar character about it, different from that of most other infinite lines, that any portion of it is a magnified repetition of the preceding portion; that is to say, the portion between

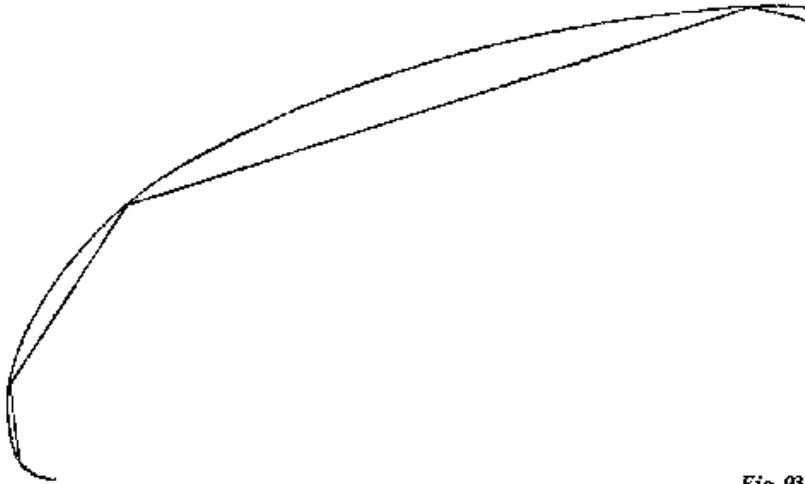


Fig. 93

e and *g* is precisely what that between *c* and *e* would look, if seen through a lens which magnified somewhat more than twice. There is therefore a peculiar equanimity and harmony about the look of lines of this kind, differing, I think, from the expression of any others except the circle. Beyond the point *a* the curve may be imagined to continue to an infinite degree of smallness, always circling nearer and nearer to a point, which, however, it can never reach.

§ 6. Again: if along the horizontal line *A B*, Fig. 94 over leaf, we measure any number of equal distances, *A b*,

b c, etc., and raise perpendiculars from the points *b*, *c*, *d*, etc., of which each perpendicular shall be longer, by some given proportion (in this figure it is one-third), than the preceding one, the curve *x y*, traced through their extremities, will continually change its direction, but will advance into space in the direction of *y* as long as we continue to measure distances along the line A B, always inclining more and more to the nature of a straight line, yet never becoming one, even if continued to infinity. It would, in like manner, continue to infinity in the direction of *x*, always approaching the line A B, yet never touching it.

§ 7. An infinite number of different lines, more or less violent in curvature according to the measurements we adopt in designing them, are included, or defined, by each of the laws just explained. But the number of these laws themselves is also infinite. There is no limit to the multitude of conditions which may be invented, each producing a group of curves of a certain common nature. Some of these laws, indeed, produce single curves, which, like the circle, can vary only in size: but, for the most part, they vary also, like the lines we have just traced, in the rapidity of their curvature. Among these innumerable lines, however, there is one source of difference in character which divides them, infinite as they are in number, into two great classes. The first class consists of those which are limited in their course, either ending abruptly, or returning to some point from which they set out; the second class, of those lines whose nature is to proceed for ever into space. Any portion of a circle, for instance, is, by the law of its being, compelled, if it continue its course, to return to the point from which it set out; so also any portion of the oval curve (called an ellipse), produced by cutting a cylinder obliquely across. And if a single point be marked on the rim of a carriage wheel, this point, as the wheel rolls along the road, will trace a curve in the air from one part of the road to another, which is called

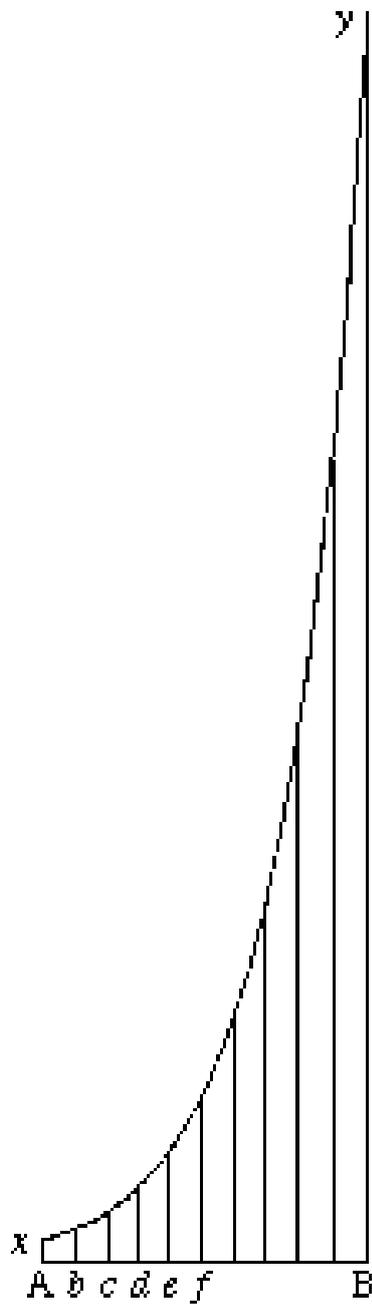


Fig. 94

a cycloid, and to which the law of its existence appoints that it shall always follow a similar course, and be terminated by the level line on which the wheel rolls. All such curves are of inferior beauty: and the curves which are incapable of being completely drawn, because, as in the two cases, above given, the law of their being supposes them to proceed for ever into space, are of a higher beauty.

§ 8. Thus, in the very first elements of form, a lesson is given us as to the true source of the nobleness and chooseableness of all things. The two classes of curves thus sternly separated from each other, may most properly be distinguished as the “Mortal and Immortal Curves”; the one having an appointed term of existence, the other absolutely incomprehensible and endless, only to be seen or grasped during a certain moment of their course. And it is found universally that the class to which the human mind is attached for its chief enjoyment are the Endless or Immortal lines.

§ 9. “Nay,” but the reader answers, “what right have you to say that one class is more

beautiful than the other? Suppose I like the finite curves best, who shall say which of us is right?"

No one. It is simply a question of experience. You will not, I think, continue to like the finite curves best as you contemplate them carefully, and compare them with the others. And if you should do so, it then yet becomes a question to be decided by longer trial, or more widely canvassed opinion. And when we find on examination that every form which, by the consent of human kind, has been received as lovely, in vases, flowing ornaments, embroideries, and all other things dependent on abstract line, is composed of these infinite curves, and that Nature uses them for every important contour, small or large, which she desires to recommend to human observance, we shall not, I think, doubt that the preference of such lines is a sign of healthy taste, and true instinct.

§ 10. I am not sure, however, how far the delightfulness of such lines is owing, not merely to their expression of infinity, but also to that of restraint or moderation. Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. chap. i. §§ 9–13,¹ where the subject is entered into at some length. Certainly the beauty of such curvature is owing, in a considerable degree, to both expressions; but when the line is sharply terminated, perhaps more to that of moderation than of infinity. For the most part, gentle or subdued sounds, and gentle or subdued colours, are more pleasing than either in their utmost force; nevertheless, in all the noblest compositions, this utmost power is permitted, but only for a short time, or over a small space. Music must rise to its utmost loudness, and fall from it; colour must be gradated to its extreme brightness, and descend from it; and I believe that absolutely perfect treatment would, in either case, permit the intensest sound and purest colour only for a point or for a moment.

Curvature is regulated by precisely the same laws. For

¹ [In this edition, Vol. XI. pp. 8–11. For other discussions of the laws of curvature, see *Elements of Drawing*, § 207; and *Two Paths*, § 80.]

the most part, delicate or slight curvature is more agreeable than violent or rapid curvature; nevertheless, in the best compositions, violent curvature is permitted, but permitted only over small spaces in the curve.

§ 11. The right line is to the curve what monotony is to melody, and what unvaried colour is to gradated colour. And as

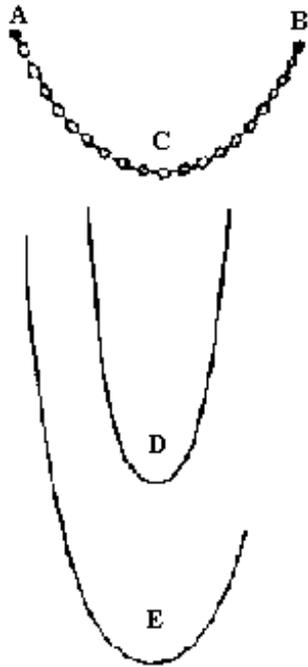


Fig. 95

often the sweetest music is so low and continuous as to approach a monotone; and as often the sweetest gradations so delicate and subdued as to approach to flatness, so the finest curves are apt to hover about the right line, nearly coinciding with it for a long space of their curve; never absolutely losing their own curvilinear character, but apparently every moment on the point of merging into the right line. When this is the case, the line generally returns into vigorous curvature at some part of its course, otherwise it is apt to be weak, or slightly rigid; multitudes of other curves, not approaching the right line so nearly, remain less vigorously bent in the rest of their course; so that the quantity* of curvature is the same in

both, though differently distributed.

§ 12. The modes in which Nature produces variable curves on a large scale are very numerous, but may generally be resolved into the gradual increase or diminution of some given force. Thus, if a chain hangs between two points A and B, Fig. 95, the weight of chain sustained by any given link increases gradually from the central link

* *Quantity* of curvature is as measurable as quantity of anything else; only observe that it depends on the nature of the line, not on its magnitude: thus, in simple circular curvature, *a b*, Fig. 96, being three-fourths of that in *any* circle,—the same as the quantity in the line *e f*.

at C, which has only its own weight to sustain, to the link at B, which sustains, besides its own, the weight of all the links between it and C. This increased weight is continually pulling the curve of the swinging chain more nearly straight, as it ascends towards B; and hence one of the most beautifully gradated natural curves—called the catenary—of course assumed not by chains only, but by all flexible and elongated substances, suspended between two points. If the points of suspension be near each other, we have such

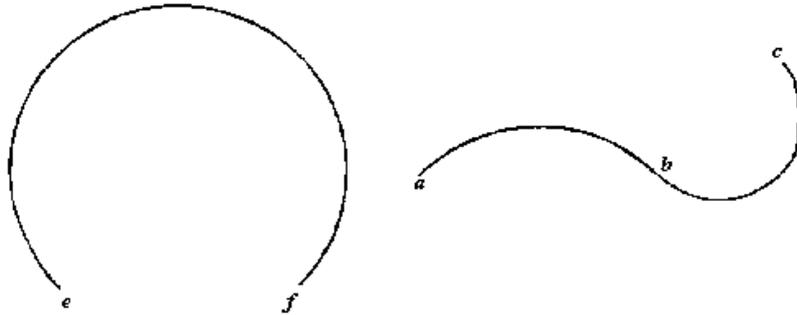


Fig. 96

curves as at D; and if, as in nine cases out of ten will be the case, one point of suspension is lower than the other, a still more varied and beautiful curve is formed, as at E. Such curves constitute nearly the whole beauty of general contour in fallen drapery, tendrils and festoons of weeds over rocks, and such other pendent objects.*

§ 13. Again. If any object be cast into the air, the force with which it is cast dies gradually away, and its own

* The catenary is not properly a curve capable of infinity, if its direction does not alter with its length; but it is capable of infinity, implying such alteration by the infinite removal of the points of suspension. It entirely corresponds in its effect on the eye and mind to the infinite curves. I do not know the exact nature of the apparent curves of suspension formed by a high and weighty waterfall; they are dependent on the gain in rapidity of descent by the central current, where its greater body is less arrested by the air; and, I apprehend, are catenary in character, though not in cause.

weight brings it downwards; at first slowly, then faster and faster every moment, in a curve which, as the line of fall necessarily nears the perpendicular, is continually approximating to a straight line. This curve—called the parabola—is that of all projected or bounding objects.

§ 14. Again. If a rod or stick of any kind gradually becomes more slender or more flexible, and is bent by any external force, the force will not only increase in effect as the rod becomes weaker, but the rod itself, once bent, will continually yield more willingly, and be more easily bent farther in the same direction, and will thus show a continual increase of curvature from its thickest or most rigid part to its extremity. This kind of line is that assumed by boughs of trees under wind.

§ 15. Again. Whenever any vital force is impressed on any organic substance, so as to die gradually away as the substance extends, an infinite curve is commonly produced by its outline. Thus, in the budding of the leaf, already examined, the gradual dying away of the exhilaration of the younger ribs produces an infinite curve in the outline of the leaf, which sometimes fades imperceptibly into a right line—sometimes is terminated sharply, by meeting the opposite curve at the point of the leaf.

§ 16. Nature, however, rarely condescends to use one curve only in any of her finer forms. She almost always unites two infinite ones, so as to form a reversed curve for each main line, and then modulates each of them into myriads of minor ones. In a single elm leaf, such as Fig. 4, Plate 8,* she uses three such—one for the stalk, and one for each of the sides,—to regulate their *general* flow; dividing afterwards each of their broad lateral lines into some twenty less curves by the jags of the leaf, and then again into minor waves. Thus, in any complicated group of leaves whatever, the infinite curves are themselves almost countless. In a single extremity of a magnolia spray, the

* Vol. III. p. 216. [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 264.]

uppermost figure in Plate 42, including only sixteen leaves, each leaf having some three to five distinct curves along its edge, the lines for separate study, including those of the stems, would be between sixty and eighty. In a single spring shoot of laburnum, the lower figure in the same plate, I leave the reader to count them for himself; all these, observe, being seen at one view only, and every change of position bringing into sight another equally numerous set of curves. For instance, in Plate 43 is a group of four withered leaves, in four positions, giving, each, a beautiful and well-composed group of curves, variable gradually into the next group as the branch is turned.

§ 17. The following Plate (44), representing a young shoot of independent ivy, just beginning to think it would like to get something to cling to, shows the way in which Nature brings subtle curvature into forms that at first seem rigid. The stems of the young leaves look nearly straight, and the sides of the projecting points, or bastions, of the leaves themselves nearly so; but on examination it will be found that there is not a stem nor a leaf-edge but is a portion of one infinite curve, if not of two or three. The main line of the supporting stem is a very lovely one; and the little half-opened leaves, in their thirteenth century segmental simplicity (compare Fig. 9, Plate 8, in Vol. III.),¹ singularly spirited and beautiful. It may, perhaps, interest the general reader to know that one of the infinite curves derives its name from its supposed resemblance to the climbing of ivy up a tree.²

§ 18. I spoke just now of “well composed” curves,—I mean curves so arranged as to oppose and set each other off, and yet united by a common law; for as the beauty of every curve depends on the unity of its several component lines, so the beauty of each group of curves depends on their submission to some general law. In forms which quickly attract the eye, the law which unites the curves

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 264.]

² [“Cissoïd” (kissoeïdhV), the curve of Diocles.]

is distinctly manifest; but, in the richer compositions of Nature, cunningly concealed by delicate infractions of it;—wilfulnesses they seem, and forgetfulnesses, which, if once the law be perceived, only increase our delight in it by showing that it is one of equity, not of rigour, and allows, within certain limits, a kind of individual liberty. Thus the system of unison which regulates the magnolia shoot,

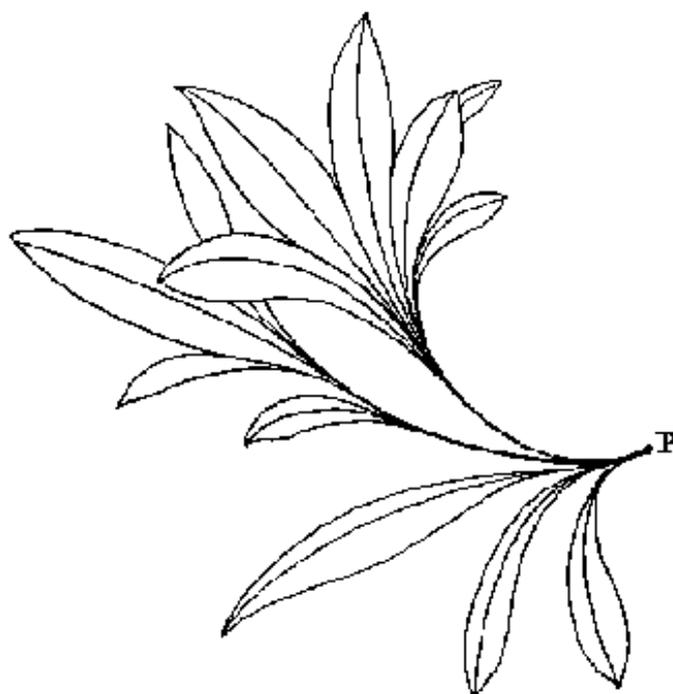


Fig. 97

in Plate 42, is formally expressed in Fig. 97. Every line has its origin in the point P, and the curves generally diminish in intensity towards the extremities of the leaves, one or two, however, again increasing their sweep near the points. In vulgar ornamentation, entirely rigid laws of line are always observed; and the common Greek honeysuckle and other such formalisms are attractive to uneducated eyes, owing to their manifest compliance with the first conditions of unity and symmetry; being to really noble ornamentation what the sing-song of a bad reader of

poetry, laying regular emphasis on every required syllable of every foot, is to the varied, irregular, unexpected, inimitable cadence of the voice of a person of sense and feeling reciting the same lines,—not incognizant of the rhythm, but delicately bending it to the expression of passion, and the natural sequence of the thought.

§ 19. In mechanically drawn patterns of dress, Alhambra and common Moorish ornament, Greek mouldings, common flamboyant traceries, common Corinthian and Ionic capitals, and such other work, lines of this declared kind (generally to be classed under the head of “doggrell ornamentation”) may be seen in rich profusion; and they are necessarily the only kind of lines which can be felt or enjoyed by persons who have been educated without reference to natural forms; their instincts being blunt, and their eyes naturally incapable of perceiving the inflexion of noble curves. But the moment the perceptions have been refined by reference to natural form, the eye requires perpetual variation and transgression of the formal law. Take the simplest possible condition of thirteenth-century scroll-work, Fig. 98. The law or cadence established is of a circling tendril, terminating in an ivy-leaf. In vulgar design, the curves of the circling tendril would have been similar to each other, and might have been drawn by a machine, or by some mathematical formula. But in good design all imitation by machinery is impossible. No curve is like another for an instant; no branch springs at an expected point. A cadence is observed, as in the returning clauses of a beautiful air in music; but every clause has its own change, its own surprises. The enclosing form is here stiff and (nearly) straight-sided, in order to oppose the circular scroll-work; but on looking close it will be found that each of its sides is a portion of an infinite curve, almost too delicate to be traced; except the short lowest one, which is made quite straight, to oppose the rest.

I give one more example from another leaf of the same manuscript, Fig. 99, merely to show the variety introduced

by the old designers between page and page. And, in general, the reader may take it for a settled law that, whatever can be done by machinery, or imitated by formula, is not worth doing or imitating at all.¹

§ 20. The quantity of admissible transgression of law varies with the degree in which the ornamentation involves or admits imitation of nature. Thus, if these ivy leaves in Fig. 99 were completely drawn in light and shade, they would not be properly



connected with the more or less regular sequences of the scroll; and in very subordinate ornament, something like complete symmetry may be admitted, as in bead mouldings, chequerings, etc. Also, the ways in which the transgression may be granted vary infinitely; in the finest compositions it is perpetual, and yet so balanced and atoned for as always to bring about more beauty than if there had been no transgression. In a truly fine mountain

or organic line, if it is looked at in detail, no one would believe in its being a continuous curve, or being subjected to any fixed law. It seems broken, and bending a thousand ways; perfectly free and wild, and yielding to every impulse. But, after following with the eye three or four of its impulses, we shall begin to trace some strange order among them; every added movement will make the ruling intent clearer; and when the whole life of the line is revealed at last, it will be found to have been, throughout, as obedient to the true law of its course as the stars in their orbits.

§ 21. Thus much may suffice for our immediate purpose respecting beautiful lines in general. We have now to consider the particular groups of them belonging to mountains.

The four systems of mountain line.

¹ [This is a confirmation, from another point of view, of a principle already laid down in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*; see Vol. VIII. pp. 86, 214.]

The lines which are produced by course of time upon hill contours are mainly divisible into four systems.

1. Lines of Fall. Those which are wrought out on the solid mass by the fall of water or of stones.

2. Lines of Projection. Those which are produced in débris by the bounding of the masses, under the influence of their falling force.

3. Lines of Escape. Those which are produced by the

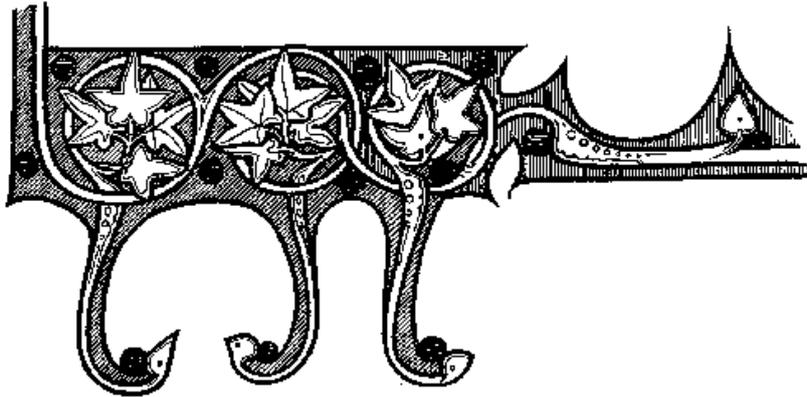


Fig. 99

spreading of débris from a given point over surfaces of varied shape.

4. Lines of Rest. Those which are assumed by débris when in a state of comparative permanence and stability.

1. Lines of Fall.

However little the reader may be acquainted with hills, I believe that, almost instinctively, he will perceive that the form supposed to belong to a wooded promontory at *a*, Fig. 100, is an impossible one; and that the form at *b* is not only a possible but probable one. The lines are equally formal in both. But in *a*, the curve is a portion of a

1. Lines of Fall. Produced by falling bodies upon hill-surfaces.

circle, meeting a level line: in *b* it is an infinite line, getting less and less steep as it ascends.

Whenever a mass of mountain is worn gradually away by forces descending from its top, it *necessarily* assumes, more or less perfectly, according to the time for which it has been exposed, and the tenderness of its substance, such contours as those at *b*, for the simple reason that every stream and every falling grain of sand gains in velocity

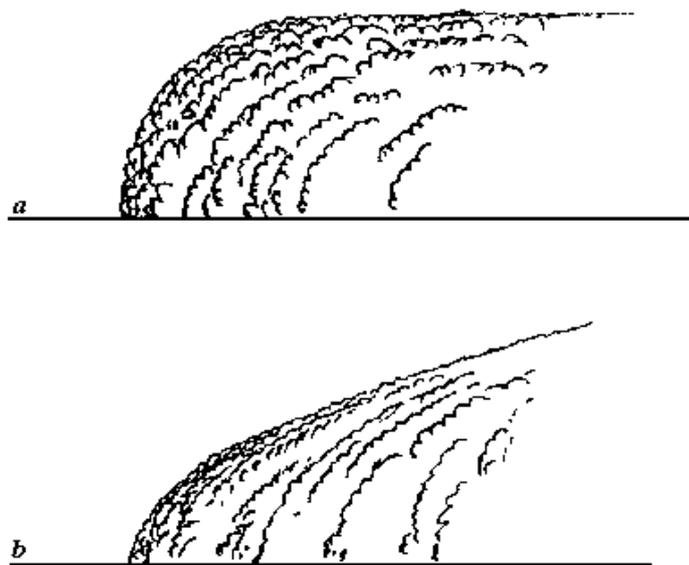


Fig. 100

and erosive power as it descends. Hence, cutting away the ground gradually faster and faster, they produce the most rapid curvature (provided the rock be hard enough) towards the bottom of the hill.*

§ 22. But farther: in *b* it will be noticed that the lines always get steeper as they fall more and more to the right;

* I am afraid of becoming tiresome by going too far into the intricacies of this most difficult subject; but I say "towards the bottom of the hill," because, when a certain degree of verticality is reached, a counter protective influence begins to establish itself, the stones and waterfalls bounding away from the brow of the precipice into the air, and wearing it at the top only. Also it is evident that when the curvature falls into a vertical cliff, as often happens, the maximum of curvature must be somewhere *above* the brow of the cliff, as in the cliff itself it has again died into a straight line.

and I should think the reader must feel that they look more natural, so drawn, than as at *a*, in unvarying curves.

This is no less easily accounted for. The simplest typical form under which a hill can occur is that of a cone. Let *A C B*, Fig. 101, have been its original contour. Then the aqueous forces will cut away the shaded portions, reducing it to the outline *d C e*. Farther, in doing so, the water will certainly have formed for itself gullies or channels from top to bottom. These, supposing them at equal distances round the cone, will appear, in perspective, in the lines *g h i*. It does not, of course, matter whether we consider the lines in this figure to represent the bottom

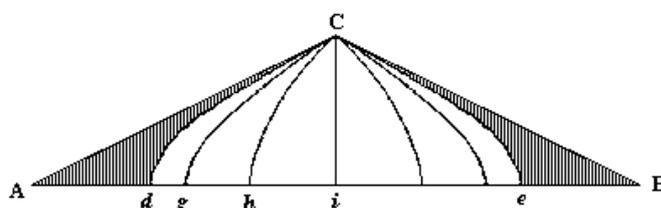


Fig. 101

of the ravines, or the ridges between, both being formed on similar curves; but the rounded lines in Fig. 100 would be those of forests seen on the edges of each detached ridge.

§ 23. Now although a mountain is rarely perfectly conical, and never divided by ravines at exactly equal distances, the law which is seen in entire simplicity in Fig. 101, applies with a sway more or less interrupted, but always manifest, to every convex and retiring mountain form. All banks that thus turn away from the spectator necessarily are thrown into perspectives like that of one side of this figure; and although not divided with equality, their irregular divisions crowd gradually together towards the distant edge, being then less steep, and separate themselves towards the body of the hill, being then more steep.

§ 24. It follows, also, that not only the whole of the nearer curves will be steeper, but, if seen from below,

the steepest parts of them will be the more important. Supposing each, instead of a curve, divided into a sloping line and a precipitous one, the perspective of the precipice, raising its top continually, will give the whole cone the shape of *a* or *b* in Fig. 102, in which, observe, the precipice is of more importance, and the slope of less, precisely in proportion to the nearness of the mass.

§ 25. Fig. 102, therefore, will be the general type of the form of a convex retiring hill symmetrically constructed. The precipitous part of it may vary in height or in slope according to original conformation; but, the heights being

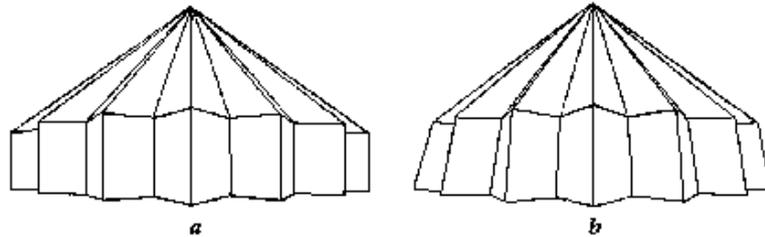


Fig. 102

supposed equal along the whole flank, the contours will be as in that figure; the various rise and fall of real height altering the perspective appearance accordingly, as we shall see presently, after examining the other three kinds of line.

2. Lines of Projection.

§ 26. The fragments carried down by the torrents from the flanks of the hill are of course deposited at the base of it. But they are deposited in various ways, of which it is most difficult to analyze the laws; for they are thrown down under the influence partly of flowing water, partly of their own gravity, partly of projectile force caused by their fall from the higher summits of the hill; while the débris itself, after it has fallen, undergoes farther modification by surface streamlets. But in a general way débris

*2. Lines of
Projection.
Produced by
fragments
bounding, or
carried for-
ward from the
bases of hills.*

descending from the hill side, $a b$, Fig. 103, will arrange itself in a form approximating to the concave line $d c$, the larger masses remaining undisturbed at the bottom, while

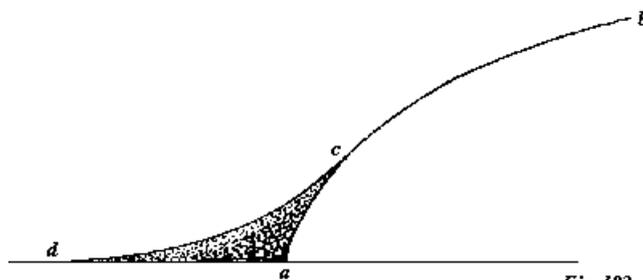


Fig. 103

the smaller are gradually carried farther and farther by surface streams.

3. Lines of Escape.

§ 27. But this form is much modified by the special direction of the descending force as it escapes from confinement. For a stream coming down a ravine is kept by the steep sides of its channel in concentrated force: but it no sooner reaches the bottom, and escapes from its ravine, than it spreads in all directions, or at least tries to choose a new channel at every flood. Let $a b c$, Fig. 104, be three ridges of mountain. The two torrents coming down the ravines between them meet, at d and e , with the heaps of ground formerly thrown down by their own agency. These heaps being more or less in the form of cones, the torrent has a tendency to divide upon their apex, like water poured on the top of a sugar-loaf, and branch into the radiating channels $e x$, $e y$, etc. The stronger it is, the more it is disposed to rush straightforward, or with little curvature, as in the line $e x$, with the impetus it has received in coming down the ravine; the weaker it is, the more readily it will lean to one side or the other, and fall away in the lines of escape, $e y$ or $e h$; but of course at times of

3. Lines of Escape. Produced by the lateral dissemination of the fragments.

highest flood it fills all its possible channels, and invents a few new ones, of which afterwards the straightest will be kept by the main stream, and the lateral curves occupied by smaller branches: the whole system corresponding precisely to the action of the ribs of the young leaf, as shown in Plate 8 of Vol. III.,¹ especially in Fig. 6,—the main torrent, like the main rib, making the largest fortune, *i.e.*, raising the highest heap of gravel and dust.

§ 28. It may easily be imagined that when the operation takes place on a large scale, the mass of earth thus deposited in a

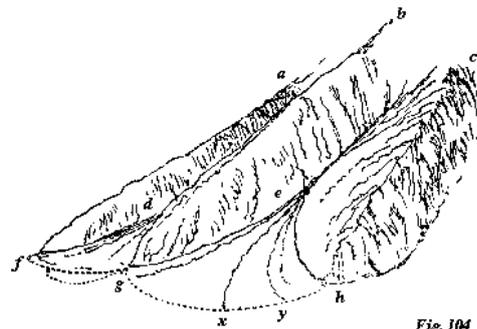


Fig. 104

gentle slope at the mountain's foot becomes available for agricultural purposes, and that then it is of the greatest importance to prevent the stream from branching into various channels at its will, and pouring fresh sand over

the cultivated fields. Accordingly, at the mouth of every large ravine in the Alps, where the peasants know how to live and how to work, the stream is artificially embanked, and compelled as far as possible to follow the central line down the cone. Hence, when the traveller passes along any great valley,—as that of the Rhone or Arve,—into which minor torrents are poured by lateral ravines, he will find himself every now and then ascending a hill of moderate slope, at the *top* of which he will cross a torrent, or its bed, and descend by another gradual slope to the usual level of the valley. In every such case, his road has ascended a tongue of débris, and has crossed the embanked torrent carried by force along its centre.

Under such circumstances, the entire tongue or heap

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 264.]

of land ceases of course to increase, until the bed of the confined torrent is partially choked by its perpetual deposit. Then in some day of violent ruin the waves burst their fetters, branch at their own will, cover the fields of some unfortunate farmer with stones and slime, according to the torrent's own idea of the new form which it has become time to give to the great tongue of land, carry away the road and the bridge together, and arrange everything to their own liking. But the road is again painfully traced among the newly fallen débris; the embankment and bridge again built for the stream, now satisfied with its outbreak; and the tongue of land submitted to new processes of cultivation for a certain series of years. When, however, the torrent is exceedingly savage, and generally of a republican temper, the outbreaks are too frequent and too violent to admit of any cultivation of the tongue of land. A few straggling alder or thorn bushes, their roots buried in shingle, and their lower branches fouled with slime, alone relieve with ragged spots of green the broad waste of stones and dust. The utmost that can be done is to keep the furious stream from choosing a new channel in every one of its fits of passion, and remaining in it afterwards, thus extending its devastation in entirely unforeseen directions. The land which it has brought down must be left a perpetual sacrifice to its rage; but in the moment of its lassitude it is brought back to its central course, and compelled to forego for a few weeks or months the luxury of deviation.

§ 29. On the other hand, when, owing to the nature of the valley above, the stream is gentle, and the sediment which it brings down small in quantity, it may be retained for long years in its constant path, while the sides of the bank of earth it has borne down are clothed with pasture and forest, seen in the distance of the great valley as a promontory of sweet verdure, along which the central stream passes with an influence of blessing, submitting itself to the will of the husbandman for irrigation, and of the mechanist

for toil; now nourishing the pasture, and now grinding the corn, of the land which it has first formed, and now waters.

§ 30. I have etched above, Plate 35 (p. 259), a portion of the flank of the valley of Chamouni, which presents nearly every class of line under discussion, and will enable the reader to understand their relations at once. It represents, as was before stated, the crests of the Montagnes de la Côte and Taconay, shown from base to summit, with the Glacier des Bossons and its moraine. The reference figure given at p. 260 will enable the reader to distinguish its several orders of curves, as follows:

h r. Aqueous curves of fall, at the base of the Tapia; very characteristic. Similar curves are seen in multitude on the two crests beyond as *b c, c B.*

d e. First lines of projection. The débris falling from the glacier and the heights above.

k, l, n. Three lines of escape. A considerable torrent (one of whose falls is the well-known Cascade des Pélerins*) descends from behind the promontory

* The following extract from my private diary, giving an account of the destruction of the beauty of this waterfall in the year 1849, which I happened to witness, may be interesting to those travellers who remember it before that period. The house spoken of as "Joseph's," is that of the guide Joseph Couttet,¹ in a village about a mile below the cascade, between it and the Arve: the place of the "old avalanche" is a hollow in the forest, cleft by a great avalanche which fell from the Aiguille du Midi in the spring of 1844. It struck down about a thousand full-grown pines, and left an open track in the midst of the wood, from the cascade nearly down to the village.

"*Evening, Thursday, June 28th.*—I set out for the Cascade des Pélerins as usual; when we reached Joseph's house, we heard a sound from the torrent like low thunder, or like that of a more distant and heavier fall. A peasant said something to Joseph, who stopped to listen, then nodded, and said to me, 'La cascade vient de se déborder.' Thinking there would be time enough afterwards to ask for explanations, I pushed up the hill almost without asking a question. When we reached the place of the old avalanche, Joseph called to me to stop and see the torrent increase. There was at this time a dark cloud on the Aiguille du Midi, down to its base; the upper part of the torrent was brown, the lower white, not larger than usual. The brown part came down, I thought, with exceeding slowness,

¹ [For whom, see Vol. IV. pp. xxiv.–xxv.]

h: its natural or proper course would be to dash straight forward down the line *f g*, and part of it does so; but erratic branches of it slide away round the promontory, in the lines of escape, *k*, *l*, etc. Each row of trees marks, therefore, an old torrent bed, for the torrent always throws heaps of stones up along its banks, on which the pines, growing higher than on the neighbouring ground, indicate its course by their supremacy. When the escaped stream is feeble, it steals quietly away down the steepest part of the slope; that is to say, close under the promontory, at *i*. If it is stronger, the impetus from the hill above shoots it farther out, in the line *k*; if stronger still, at *l*; in each case it curves gradually round as it loses its onward force, and falls more and more languidly to leeward, down the slope of the débris.

reaching the cascade gradually; as it did so, the fall rose to about once and a half its usual height, and in the five minutes' time that I paused (it could not be more) turned to the colour of slate. I then pushed on as hard as I could. When I reached the last ascent I was obliged to stop for breath, but got up before the fall could sensibly have diminished in body of water. It was then nearly twice as far cast out from the rock as last night, and the water nearly black in colour; and it had the appearance, as it broke and separated at the outer part of the fall, of a shower of fragments of flat slate. The reason of this appearance I could not comprehend, unless the water was so mixed with mud that it drew out flat and unctuously when it broke; but so it was: instead of spray it looked like a shower of dirty flat bits of slate—only with a lustre, as if they had been wet first. This, however, was the least of it, for the torrent carried with it nearly as much weight of stone as water; the stones varying in size, the average being, I suppose, about that of a hen's egg; but I do not suppose that at any instant the arch of water was without four or five as large as a man's fist, and often came larger ones,—all vomited forth with the explosive power of a small volcano, and falling in a continual shower as thick, constant, and, had it not been mixed with the crash of the fall, as loud as a heavy fire of infantry; they bounded and leaped in the basin of the fall like hailstones in a thunder-shower. As we watched the fall it seemed convulsively to diminish, and suddenly showed, as it shortened, the rock underneath it, which I could hardly see yesterday: as I cried out to Joseph it rose again, higher than ever, and continued to rise, till it all but reached the snow on the rock opposite. It then became very fantastic and variable, increasing and diminishing in the space of two

r s. A line which, perhaps, would be more properly termed of limitation than of escape, being that of the base or termination of the heap of torrent débris, which in shape corresponds exactly to the curved lip of a wave, after it has broken, as it slowly stops upon a shallow shore. Within this line the ground is entirely composed of heaps of stones, cemented by granite dust, and cushioned with moss, while outside of it all is smooth pasture. The pines enjoy the stony ground particularly, and hold large meetings upon it, but the alders are shy of it; and, when it has come to an end, form a triumphal procession all round its edge, following the concave line. The correspondent curves above are caused by similar lines in which the débris has formerly stopped.

§ 31. I found it a matter of the greatest difficulty to

or three seconds, and partially changing its directions. After watching it for half an hour or so, I determined to try and make some memoranda. Couttet brought me up a jug of water: I stooped to dip my brush, when Couttet caught my arm, saying, 'Tenez'; at the same instant I heard a blow, like the going off of a heavy gun, two or three miles away; I looked up, and as I did, the cascade sank before my eyes, and fell back to the rock. Neither of us spoke for an instant or two; then Couttet said, 'C'est une pierre, qui est logée dans le creux,' or words to that effect: in fact, he had seen the stone come down as he called to me. I thought also that nothing more had happened, and watched the destroyed fall only with interest, until, as suddenly as it had fallen, it rose again, though not to its former height; and Couttet, stooping down, exclaimed, 'Ce n'est pas ça, le roc est percé;' in effect, a hole was now distinctly visible in the cup which turned the stream, through which the water whizzed as from a burst pipe. The cascade, however, continued to increase, until this new channel was concealed, and I was maintaining to Couttet that he must have been mistaken (and that the water only *struck* on the outer rock, having changed its mode of fall above), when again it fell; and the two girls, who had come up from the châlet, expressed their opinion at once, that the 'cascade est finie.' This time all was plain; the water gushed in a violent jet d'eau through the new aperture, hardly any of it escaping above. It rose again gradually, as the hole was choked with stones, and again fell; but presently sprang out almost to its first elevation (the water being by this time in much less body); and retained very nearly the form it had yesterday, until I got tired of looking at it, and went down to the little châlet, and sat down before its door. I had not been there five minutes before the cascade fell, and rose no more."

investigate the picturesque characters of these lines of projection and escape, because, as presented to the eye, they are always modified by perspective; and it is almost a physical impossibility to get a true profile of any of the slopes, they round and melt so constantly into one another. Many of them, roughly measured, are nearly circular in tendency;* but I believe they are all portions of infinite curves either modified by the concealment or destruction of the lower lips of débris, or by their junction with straight lines of slope above, throwing the longest limb of the curve upwards. Fig. 1, in Plate 45 opposite, is a simple but complete example from Chamouni; the various overlapping and concave lines at the bottom being the limits of the mass at various periods, more or less broken afterwards by the peasants, either by removing stones for building, or throwing them back at the edges here and there, out of the way of the plough; but even with all these breaks, their natural unity is so sweet and perfect, that, if the reader will turn the plate upside down, he will see I have no difficulty (merely adding a quill or two) in turning them into a bird's wing (Fig. 2), a little ruffled indeed, but still graceful, and not of such a form as one would have supposed likely to be designed and drawn, as indeed it was, by the rage of a torrent.

But we saw in Chap. VII. § 10 [p. 127] that this very rage was, in fact, a beneficent power,—creative, not destructive; and as all its apparent cruelty is overruled by the law of love, so all its apparent disorder is overruled by the law of loveliness: the hand of God, leading the wrath of the torrent to minister to the life of mankind, guides also its

* It might be thought at first that the line to which such curves would approximate would be the cycloid, as the line of quickest descent. But in reality the contour is modified by perpetual sliding of the débris under the influence of rain; and by the bounding of detached fragments with continually increased momentum. I was quite unable to get at anything like the expression of a constant law among the examples I studied in the Alps, except only the great laws of delicacy and changefulness in all curves whatsoever.



J. H. H. H.

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45. Debris Curvature.

grim surges by the laws of their delight; and bridles the bounding rocks, and appeases the flying foam, till they lie down in the same lines that lead forth the fibres of the down on a cygnet's breast.

§ 32. The straight slopes with which these curves unite themselves below, in Plate 35 (*f g* in reference figure), are those spoken of in the outset¹ as lines of rest. But I defer to the next chapter² the examination of these, which are a separate family of lines (not curves at all), in order to reassemble the conclusions we have now obtained respecting *curvature* in mountains, and apply them to questions of art.

And, first, it is of course not to be supposed that these symmetrical laws are so manifest in their operation as to force themselves on the observance of men in general. They are interrupted, necessarily, by every fantastic accident in the original conformation of the hills, which, according to the hardness of their rocks, more or less accept or refuse the authority of general law. Still, the farther we extend our observance of hills, the more we shall be struck by the continual roundness and softness which it seems the object of nature to give to every form: so that, when crags look sharp and distorted, it is not so much that they are unrounded, as that the various curves are most subtly accommodated to the angles, and that, instead of being worn into one sweeping and smooth descent, like the surface of a knoll or down, the rock is wrought into innumerable minor undulations, its own fine anatomy showing through all.

§ 33. Perhaps the mountain which I have drawn on the opposite page (Plate 46*) is, in its original sternness of

* I owe Mr. Le Keux sincere thanks, and not a little admiration, for the care and skill with which he has followed, on a much reduced scale, the detail of this drawing.

¹ [See above, § 21.]

² [See below, p. 375.]



J. Franklin.

J. H. Le Heron,
Allen & Co. Sc.

46. The Buttresses of an Alp.

mass, and in the complexity of lines into which it has been chiselled, as characteristic an instance as could be given by way of general type. It is one of no name or popular interest, but of singular importance in the geography of Switzerland, being the angle buttress of the great northern chain of the Alps (the chain of the Jungfrau and Gemmi), and forming the promontory round which the Rhone turns to the north-west, at Martigny. It is composed of an intensely hard gneiss (slaty crystallines), in which the plates of mica are set for the most part against the angle, running nearly north and south, as in Fig. 105, and giving the point therefore the utmost possible strength, which, however, cannot prevent it from being rent gradually by enormous curved fissures, and separated into huge vertical flakes and chasms, just at the lower promontory, as seen in Plate 46, and (in plan) in Fig. 105. The whole of the upper surface of the promontory is wrought by the old glaciers into furrows and striæ more notable than any I ever saw in the Alps.



Fig. 105

§ 34. Now observe, we have here a piece of Nature's work which she has assuredly been long in executing, and which is in peculiarly firm and stable material. It is in her best rock (slaty crystalline), at a point important for all her geographical purposes, and at the degree of mountain elevation especially adapted to the observation of mankind. We shall therefore probably ascertain as much of Nature's mind about these things in this piece of work as she usually allows us to see all at once.

§ 35. If the reader will take a pencil, and, laying tracing paper over the plate, follow a few of its lines, he will (unless before accustomed to accurate mountain drawing) be soon amazed by the complexity, endlessness, and harmony of the curvatures. He will find that there is not one line in all that rock which is not an infinite curve, and united

in some intricate way with others, and suggesting others unseen; and if it were the reality, instead of my drawing, which he had to deal with, he would find the infinity, in a little while, altogether overwhelm him. But even in this imperfect sketch, as he traces the multitudinous involution of flowing line, passing from swift to slight curvature, or slight to swift, at every instant, he will, I think, find enough to convince him of the truth of what has been advanced respecting the natural appointment of curvature as the first element of all loveliness in form.

§ 36. "Nay, but there are hard and straight lines mingled with those curves continually." True, as we have said so often, just as shade is mixed with light. Angles and undulations may rise and flow continually, one through or over the other; but the opposition is in quantity nearly always the same, if the mass is to be pleasant to the eye. In the example previously given (Plate 40), the limestone bank above Villeneuve, it is managed in a different way, but is equal in degree; the lower portion of the hill is of soft rock in thin laminæ; the upper mass is a solid and firm bed, yet not so hard as to stand all weathers. The lower portion therefore is rounded into almost unbroken softness of bank; the upper surmounts it as a rugged wall, and the opposition of the curve and angle is just as complete as in the first example, in which one was continually mingled with the other.

§ 37. Next, note the *quantity* in these hills. It is an element on which I shall have to insist more in speaking of vegetation; but I must not pass it by, here, since, in fact, it constitutes one of the essential differences between hills of first-rate magnificence, and inferior ones. Not that there is want of quantity even in the lower ranges, but it is a quantity of inferior things, and therefore more easily represented or suggested. On a Highland hill side are multitudinous clusters of fern and heather; on an Alpine one, multitudinous groves of chestnut and pine. The number of the things may be the same, but the sense of infinity is in

the latter case far greater, because the number is of nobler things. Indeed, so far as mere magnitude of space occupied on the field of the horizon is the measure of objects, a bank of earth ten feet high may, if we stoop to the foot of it, be made to occupy just as much of the sky as that bank of mountain at Villeneuve; nay, in many respects its little ravines and escarpments, watched with some help of imagination, may become very sufficiently representative to us of those of the great mountain; and in classing all water-worn mountain-ground under the general and humble term of Banks, I mean to imply this relationship of structure between the smallest eminences and the highest. But in this matter of superimposed *quantity* the distinctions of rank are at once fixed. The heap of earth bears its few tufts of moss or knots of grass; the Highland or Cumberland mountain its honeyed heathers or scented ferns; but the mass of the bank at Martigny or Villeneuve has a vineyard in every cranny of its rocks, and a chestnut grove on every crest of them.

§ 38. This is no poetical exaggeration. Look close into that plate (46). Every little circular stroke in it among the rocks means, not a clump of copse nor wreath of fern, but a walnut tree, or a Spanish chestnut, fifty or sixty feet high. Nor are the little curves, thus significative of trees, laid on at random. They are not indeed counted, tree by tree, but they are most carefully distributed in the true proportion and quantity; or if I have erred at all, it was from mere fatigue, on the side of sparingness. The minute mounds and furrows scattered up the side of that great promontory, when they are actually approached, after three or four hours' climbing, turn into independent hills with true *parks* of lovely pasture land enclosed among them, and avenue after avenue of chestnuts, walnuts, and pines bending round their bases; while in the deeper dingles, unseen in the drawing, nestle populous villages, literally bound down to the rock by enormous trunks of vine, which, first trained lightly over the loose stone roofs, have in process of years

cast their fruitful net over the whole village, and fastened it to the ground under their purple weight and wayward coils, as securely as ever human heart was fastened to earth by the net of the Flatterer.¹

§ 39. And it is this very richness of incident and detail which renders Switzerland so little attractive in its subjects to the ordinary artist.² Observe, this study of mine

¹ [Proverbs xxix. 5.]

² [The first version of these sections (§§ 39, 40) was different, and occurs in the draft MS. in a different connexion—namely, in the chapter on the Naturalist Ideal (most of which was ultimately used as ch. vii. of the preceding volume):—

“I have never yet seen the landscape or fragment of landscape of whatever kind—from the straight road bordered by poplars which enters Carlsruhe, to the noblest scenes of the Alps—which, if painted by a good realistic artist precisely as it was, would not have made an impressive picture. Also, any scene whatever which is beautiful in nature, is beautiful in art, and if possible still more beautiful, than in reality, according to the power of imagination brought to bear upon it, as above experienced. What! the reader will perhaps ask, in some surprise, are the scenes in Switzerland which are so striking in reality, as fit to be painted as the softer scenery of Italy? Do not all artists agree that Switzerland is not fit for being painted, and Italy is? Yes. All artists (but one) that I know of do agree on this point. But that is not because Switzerland is not fit for painting, but because they cannot paint it. Those lights on the snow, those colours of the glaciers, those extents of massy size which delight us in the country itself, cannot be rendered by art. It is very easy to put a square cream-coloured house by a blue lake, with a black cypress on one side and a white statue on the other—everybody is delighted when it is done—but not so easy to paint a score of leagues of splintered rock, of every conceivable form, rising through rosy snow. It is very easy to paint trellises of vines or trunks of olives, not so easy to draw a slope of pines. There may perhaps be, in the space of a single Swiss valley which comes into a picture, from five to ten millions of well grown pines. Every one of these pines must be drawn before the scene can be. A pine cannot be represented by a round stroke, nor by an upright one, nor even by an angular one; no conventionality will express pine; it must be regularly drawn with a light side and dark side, and a soft gradation from the top downwards, or it does not look like a pine at all. Most artists think it not desirable to choose a subject which involves the drawing of ten millions of trees, one by one; and for this, and other similar reasons, they declare that Switzerland is not fit to be painted; that it *cannot* be painted is in many respects true, but if it could be, its scenery would be just as striking in a picture as they are in reality. This, then, may be universally received for true, that whatever is beautiful in nature, is beautiful in art, if it can be done; and nothing is so ugly in nature but that it becomes interesting in art; so that an artist of small inventive power need never trouble himself about choosing a subject, if he will only paint whatever he chooses, well.

“But though I have never seen a landscape which could not be painted, I have also never seen one, which, in arrangement of its parts, might not have been bettered by a great painter. It seems that it is intended by the Creator that the creature should be permitted to have some choosing and governing power of its own, not only in moral, but in pleasurable things.”]

in Plate 46 does not profess to be a *picture* at all. It is a mere sketch or catalogue of all that there is on the mountain side, faithfully written out, but no more than should be put down by any conscientious painter for mere guidance, before he begins his work, properly so called; and in finishing such a subject no trickery nor short-hand is of any avail whatsoever; there are a certain number of trees to be drawn; and drawn they must be, or the place will not bear its proper character. They are not misty wreaths of soft wood suggestible by a sweep or two of the brush; but arranged and lovely clusters of trees, clear in the mountain sunlight, each especially grouped, and as little admitting any carelessness of treatment, though five miles distant, as if they were within a few yards of us; the whole meaning and power of the scene being involved in that one fact of quantity. It is not large merely by multitude of tons of rock,—the number of tons is not measurable; it is not large by elevation of angle on the horizon,—a house-roof near us rises higher; it is not large by faintness of aerial perspective,—in a clear day it often looks as if we could touch the summit with the hand. But it is large by this one unescapable fact that, from the summit to the base of it, there are of timber trees so many countable thousands. The scene differs from subjects not Swiss by including hundreds of other scenes within itself, and is mighty, not by scale, but by aggregation.

§ 40. And this is more especially and humiliatingly true of pine forest. Nearly all other kinds of wood may be reduced, over large spaces, to undetailed masses; but there is nothing but patience for pines; and this has been one of the principal reasons why artists call Switzerland “unpicturesque.” There may perhaps be, in the space of a Swiss valley which comes into a picture, from five to ten millions of well grown pines.* Every one of these

* Allow ten feet square for average space to each pine; suppose the valley seen only for five miles of its length, and the pine district two miles broad on each side—a low estimate of breadth also; this would give five millions.

pinces must be drawn before the scene can be. And a pine cannot be represented by a round stroke nor by an upright one, nor even by an angular one; no conventionalism will express a pine; it must be legitimately drawn, with a light side and dark side, and a soft gradation from the top downwards, or it does not look like a pine at all. Most artists think it not desirable to choose a subject which involves the drawing of ten millions of trees; because, supposing they could even do four or five in a minute, and worked for ten hours a day, their picture would still take them ten years before they had finished its pine forests. For this, and other similar reasons, it is declared usually that Switzerland is ugly and unpicturesque; but that is not so; it is only that *we* cannot paint it. If we could, it would be as interesting on the canvas as it is in reality; and a painter of fruit and flowers might just as well call a human figure unpicturesque, because it was to him unmanageable, as the ordinary landscape-effect painter speak in depreciation of the Alps.¹

§ 41. It is not probable that any subject such as we have just been describing, involving a necessity of ten years' labour, will be executed by the modern landscape school,—at least, until its Pre-Raphaelitic tendencies become much more developed than they are yet; nor was it desirable that they should have been by Turner, whose fruitful invention would have been unwisely arrested for a length of time on any single subject, however beautiful. But with his usual certainty of perception, he fastened at once on this character of "quantity," as the thing to be expressed, in one way or another, in all grand mountain-drawing; and the subjects of his on which I have chiefly dwelt in the First Volume (chapter on the Inferior Mountains, § 16, etc.²) are distinguished from the work of other

¹ [On Ruskin's own labour in trying to draw countless pines, and on Turner's more prudent economy in this respect, see *Mornings in Florence*, § 108, and *Notes on Turner Drawings*, s. 26 R. and 29 R.]

² [Vol. III. pp. 460, 461.]

painters in nothing so much as in this redundance. Beautiful as they are in colour, graceful in fancy, powerful in execution,—in none of these things do they stand so much alone as in plain, calculable quantity; he having always on the average twenty trees or rocks where other people have only one, and winning his victories not more by skill of generalship than by overwhelming numerical superiority.

§ 42. I say his works are distinguished in this more than in anything else, not because this is their highest quality, but because it is peculiar to them. Invention, colour, grace of arrangement, we may find in Tintoret and Veronese in various manifestation; but the expression of the infinite redundance of natural landscape had never been attempted until Turner's time; and the treatment of the masses of mountain in the *Daphne* and *Leucippus*, *Golden Bough*, and *Modern Italy*, is wholly without precursorship in art.¹

Nor, observe, do I insist upon this quantity *merely* as arithmetical, or as if it were producible by repetition of similar things. It would be easy to be redundant, if multiplication of the same idea constituted fulness; and since Turner first introduced these types of landscape, myriads of vulgar imitations of them have been produced, whose perpetrators have supposed themselves disciples or rivals of Turner, in covering their hills with white dots for forests, and their foregrounds with yellow sparklings for herbage. But the Turnerian redundance is never monotonous. Of the thousands of groups of touches which, with him, are necessary to constitute a single bank of hill, not one but has some special character, and is as much a separate invention as the whole plan of the picture. Perhaps this may be sufficiently understood by an attentive examination

¹ [The "Daphne" is No. 520 in the National Gallery; the "Golden Bough" (No. 371) is lent to Dublin; "Modern Italy" (formerly in the Munro collection) is now in the Corporation Gallery, Glasgow. For remarks on the "quantity" in Turner's mountain drawings, see also *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (Vol. XIII.)]

of the detail introduced by him in his St. Gothard subject, as shown in Plate 37.

§ 43. I do not, indeed, know if the examples I have given from natural scenes, though they are as characteristic as I could well choose, are enough to accustom the reader to the character of true mountain lines, and to enable him to recognize such lines in other instances; but if not, at all events they may serve to elucidate the main points, and guide to more complete examination of the subject, if it interests him, among the hills themselves. And if, after he has pursued the inquiry long enough to feel the certitude of the laws which I have been endeavouring to illustrate, he turns back again to art, I am well assured it will be with a strange recognition of unconceived excellence, and a newly quickened pleasure in the unforeseen fidelity, that he will trace the pencilling of Turner upon his hill drawings. I do not choose to spend, in this work, the labour and time which would be necessary to analyze, as I have done the drawing of the St. Gothard, any other of Turner's important mountain designs; for the reader must feel the disadvantage they are under in being either reduced in scale, or divided into fragments: and therefore these chapters are always to be considered merely as memoranda for reference before the pictures which the reader may have it in his power to examine. But this one drawing of the St. Gothard, as it has already elucidated for us Turner's knowledge of crest structure, will be found no less wonderful in the fulness with which it illustrates his perception of the lower aqueous and other curvatures. If the reader will look back to the etching of the entire subject, Plate 21, he will now discern, I believe, without the necessity of my lettering them for him, the lines of fall, rounded down from the crests until they plunge into the overhanging precipices; the lines of projection, where the fallen stones extend the long concave sweep from the couloir, pushing the torrent against the bank on the other side; in the opening of the ravine he will perceive the oblique and parallel inclination

of its sides, following the cleavage of the beds in the diagonal line A B of the reference figure;¹ and, finally, in the great slope and precipice on the right of it, he will recognize one of the grandest types of the peculiar mountain mass which Turner always chose by preference to illustrate, the "slope above wall" of *d* in Fig. 13, p. 188; compare also the last chapter, §§ 26, 27. It will be seen by reference to my sketch at the spot, Plate 20, that this conformation does actually exist there with great definiteness: Turner has only enlarged and thrown it into more numerous alternations of light and shade. As these could not be shown in the etching, I have given, in the frontispiece, this passage nearly of its real size:² the exquisite greys and blues by which Turner has rounded and thrown it back, are necessarily lost in the plate; but the grandeur of his simple cliff and soft curves of sloping bank above is in some degree rendered.

We must yet dwell for a moment on the detail of the rocks on the left in Plate 37, as they approach nearer the eye, turning at the same time from the light. It cost me trouble to etch this passage, and yet half its refinements are still missed; for Turner has put his whole strength into it, and wrought out the curving of the gneiss beds with a subtlety which could not be at all approached in the time I had to spare for this plate. Enough, however, is expressed to illustrate the points in question.

§ 44. We have first, observe, a rounded bank, broken, at its edges, into cleavages by inclined beds. I thought it would be well, lest the reader should think I dwelt too much on this particular scene, to give an instance of similar structure from another spot; and therefore I daguerreotyped the cleavages of a slope of gneiss just above the Cascade des Pélerins, Chamouni, corresponding in position to this bank of Turner's. Plate 48 (facing p. 369), copied

¹ [Fig. 70, p. 272.]

² [In this edition reduced, and reproduced in photogravure (?).]

by Mr. Armytage from the daguerreotype, represents, necessarily in a quite unprejudiced and impartial way, the structure at present in question; and the reader may form a sufficient idea, from this plate, of the complexity of descending curve and foliated rent, in even a small piece of mountain foreground,* where the gneiss beds are tolerably continuous. But Turner had to add to such general complexity the expression of a more than ordinary undulation in the beds of the St. Gothard gneiss.

§ 45. If the reader will look back to Chapter II. § 13, he will find it stated that this scene is approached out of the defile of Dazio Grande, of which the impression was still strong on Turner's mind, and where only he could see, close at hand, the nature of the rocks in a good section. It most luckily happens that De Saussure was interested by the rocks at the same spot, and has given the following account of them, *Voyages*, §§ 1801, 1802:—

“À une lieue de Faïdo, l'on passe le Tésin pour le repasser bientôt après [see the old bridge in Turner's view, carried away in mine], et l'on trouve sur sa rive droite des couches d'une roche feuilletée, qui montent du côté du Nord.

“On voit clairement que depuis que les granits veinés ont été remplacés par des pierres moins solides, tantôt les rochers se sont éboulés et ont été recouverts par la terre végétale, tantôt leur situation primitive a subi des changements irréguliers.

“§ 1802. Mais bientôt après, *on monte par un chemin en corniche au-dessus du Tésin, qui se précipite entre des rochers avec la plus grande violence*. Ces rochers sont là si serrés, qu'il n'y a de place que pour la rivière et pour le chemin, et même en quelques endroits, celui-ci est entièrement pris sur le roc. Je fis à pied cette montée, pour examiner avec soin ces beaux rochers, *dignes de tout l'attention d'un amateur*.

* The white spots on the brow of the little cliff are lichens, only four or five inches broad.

“Les veines de ce granit forment en plusieurs endroits des *zigzags redoublés*, précisément comme ces anciennes tapisseries, connues sous le nom de points d’Hongrie; et là, on ne peut pas prononcer si les veines de la pierre sont ou ne sont pas parallèles à ses couches. Cependant ces veines reprennent, aussi dans quelques places, une direction constante, et cette direction est bien la même que celle des couches. Il paroît même qu’en divers endroits où ces veines ont la forme d’un *sigma* ou d’une M couchée M, ce sont les grandes jambes du *sigma*, qui ont la direction des couches. Enfin, j’observai plusieurs couches, qui dans le milieu du leur épaisseur paroisoient remplies de ces veines en zigzag, tandis qu’auprès de leurs bords, on les voyoit toutes en lignes droites.”¹

§ 46. If the reader will now examine Turner’s work at the point *x* in the reference figure, and again on the stones in the foreground, comparing it finally with the fragment of the rocks which happened fortunately to come into my foreground in Plate 20, rising towards the left, and of which I have etched the structure with some care, though at the time I had quite forgotten Saussure’s notice of the peculiar M-shaped zigzags of the gneiss at the spot, I believe he will have enough evidence before him, taken all in all, to convince him of Turner’s inevitable perception, and of the entire supremacy of his mountain drawing over all that had previously existed. And if he is able to refer, even to the engravings (though I desire always that what I state should be *tested* by the drawings only) of any others of his elaborate hill-subjects, and will examine their details with careful reference to the laws explained in this chapter, he will find that the Turnerian promontories and banks are always simply *right*, and that in all respects; that their gradated curvatures and nodding cliffs, and redundant sequence of folded glen and feathery

¹ See Ruskin’s paper “Of the Distinctions of Form in Silica” for another reference to, and a translation of, this passage. The paper, which formed ch. i. of *In Montibus Sanctis*, is reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]

glade, are, in all their seemingly fanciful beauty, literally the most downright plainspeaking that has as yet been uttered about hills; and differ from all antecedent work, not in being ideal, but in being, so to speak, pictorial *casts* of the ground. Such a drawing as that of the Yorkshire Richmond, looking down the river, in the England Series,¹ is even better than a model of the ground, because it gives the aerial perspective, and is better than a photograph of the ground, because it exaggerates no shadows, while it unites the veracities both of model and photograph.

§ 47. Nor let it be thought that it was an easy or creditable thing to treat mountain ground with this faithfulness in the days when Turner executed those drawings. In the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Edinburgh, 1797), under article "Drawing," the following are the directions given for the production of a landscape:—

"If he is to draw a landscape from nature, let him take his station on a rising ground, where he will have a large horizon, and mark his tablet into three divisions, downwards from top to the bottom; and divide in his own mind the landscape he is to take into three divisions also. Then let him turn his face directly opposite to the midst of the horizon, keeping his body fixed, and draw what is directly before his eyes upon the middle division of the tablet; then *turn his head, but not his body*,* to the left hand, and delineate what he views there, joining it properly to what he had done before; and, lastly, do the same by what is to be seen upon his right hand, laying down everything exactly, both with respect to distance and proportion. One example is given in plate clxviii.

"The best artists of late, in drawing their landscapes, make them shoot away, one part lower than another.

* What a *comfortable*, as well as intelligent, operation, sketching from nature must have been in those days!

¹ [This drawing (formerly in Ruskin's collection, afterwards given by him to Cambridge) is engraved as Plate 6, "Richmond from the Moors," in the next volume of *Modern Painters*.]

Those who make their landscapes mount up higher and higher, as if they stood at the bottom of a hill to take the prospect, commit a great error; the best way is to get upon a rising ground, make the nearest objects in the piece the highest, and those that are farther off to shoot away lower and lower till they come almost level with the line of the horizon, lessening everything proportionably to its distance, and observing also to make the objects fainter and less distinct the farther they are removed from the eye. He must make all his lights and shades fall one way, and let everything have its proper motion; as trees shaken by the wind, the small boughs bending more, and the large ones less; water agitated by the wind, and dashing against ships or boats, or falling from a precipice upon rocks and stones, and spirting up again into the air, and sprinkling all about; clouds also in the air now gathered with the winds; now violently condensed into hail, rain, and the like,—always remembering, that whatever motions are caused by the wind must be made all to move the same way, because the wind can blow but one way at once.”

Such was the state of the public mind, and of public instruction, at the time when Claude, Poussin, and Salvator were in the zenith of their reputation; such were the precepts which, even to the close of the century, it was necessary for a young painter to comply with during the best part of the years he gave to study. Take up one of Turner’s views of our Yorkshire dells, seen from about a hawk’s height of pause above the sweep of its river, and with it in your hand, side by side with the old *Encyclopædia* paragraph, consider what must have been the man’s strength, who, on a sudden, passed from such precept to such practice.

§ 48. On a sudden it was; for, even yet a youth, and retaining profound respect for all older artists’ ways of *work*, he followed his own will fearlessly in choice of *scene*; and already in the earliest of his coast drawings there are as

daring and strange decisions touching the site of the spectator as in his latest works; looking down and up into coves and clouds, as defiant of all former theories touching possible perspective, or graceful composure of subject, as, a few years later, his system of colour was of the theory of the brown tree.¹ Nor was the step remarkable merely for its magnitude,—for the amount of progress made in a few years. It was much more notable by its direction. The discovery of the true structure of hill banks had to be made by Turner, not merely in *advance* of the men of his day, but in *contradiction* to them. Examine the works of contemporary and preceding landscapists, and it will be found that the universal practice is to make the tops of all cliffs broken and rugged, their bases smooth and soft, or concealed with wood. No one had ever observed the contrary structure, the bank rounded at the top, and broken on the flank. And yet all the hills of any importance which are met with throughout Lowland Europe are, properly speaking, high banks, for the most part following the courses of rivers, and forming a step from the high ground, of which the country generally consists, to the river level. Thus almost the whole of France, though, on the face of it, flat, is raised from 300 to 500 feet above the level of the sea, and is traversed by valleys either formed by, or directing, the course of its great rivers. In these valleys lie all its principal towns, surrounded, almost without exception, by ranges of hills covered with wood or vineyard. Ascending these hills, we find ourselves at once in an elevated plain, covered with corn and lines of apple trees, extending to the next river side, where we come to the brow of another hill, and descend to the city and valley beneath it. Our own valleys in Northumberland, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Devonshire, are cut in the same manner through vast extents of elevated land; the scenery which interests the traveller chiefly, as he passes

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 45.]

through even the most broken parts of those counties, being simply that of the high *banks* which rise from the shores of the Dart or the Derwent, the Wharfe or the Tees. In all cases, when these banks are surmounted, the sensation is one of disappointment, as the adventurer finds himself, the moment he has left the edge of the ravine, in a waste of softly undulating moor or arable land, hardly deserving the title of hill country. As we advance into the upper districts, the fact remains still the same, although the banks to be climbed are higher, the ravines grander, and the intermediate land more broken. The majesty of an isolated peak is still comparatively rare, and nearly all the most interesting pieces of scenery are glens or passes, which, if seen from a height great enough to command them in all their relations, would be found in reality little more than trenches excavated through broad masses of elevated land, and expanding at intervals into the wide basins which are occupied by the glittering lake or smiling plain.

§ 49. All these facts have been entirely ignored by artists; nay, almost by geologists, before Turner's time. He saw them at once; fathomed them to the uttermost, and, partly owing to early association, partly, perhaps, to the natural pleasure of working a new mine discovered by himself, devoted his best powers to their illustration, passing by with somewhat less attention the conditions of broken-summitted rock, which had previously been the only ones observed. And if we now look back to his treatment of the crest of Mont Pilate, in the figure given at the close of the last chapter but one, we shall understand better the nature and strength of the instinct which compelled him to sacrifice the peaked summit, and to bring the whole mountain within a lower enclosing line.¹ In that figure, however, the dotted peak interferes with the perception of the form finally determined upon, which, therefore,

¹ [See above, Fig. 72, p. 277.]

I repeat here (Fig. 106), as Turner gave it in colour. The eye may not at first detect the law of ascent in the peaks, but if the height of any one of them were altered, the general form would instantly be perceived to be less agreeable. Fig. 107 shows that they are disposed within an



Fig. 106

infinite curve *A c*, from which the last crag falls a little to conceal the law, while the terminal line at the other extremity, *A b*, is a minor echo of the whole contour.

§ 50. I must pause to make one exception to my general statement that this structure had been entirely ignored.

The reader was, perhaps, surprised by the importance I attached



Fig. 107

to the fragment of mountain background by Masaccio, given in Plate 13 of the third volume.¹ If he looks back to it now, his surprise will be less. It was a complete recognition of the laws of the lines of aqueous sculpture, asserted as Turner's was, in the boldest opposition to the principles of rock drawing of the time. It

¹ [Vol. V. p. 396.]



J. Pradier.

J. H. Le Keux.
Allen & Co. Sc.

47. The quarries of Carrara.

presents even smoother and broader masses than any which I have shown as types of hill form, but it must be remembered that Masaccio had seen only the softer contours of the Apennine limestone. I have no memorandum by me of the hill lines near Florence; but Plate 47 shows the development of limestone structure, at a spot which has, I think, the best right to be given as an example of the Italian hills, the head of the valley of Carrara. The white scar on the hill side is the principal quarry; and the peaks above deserve observation, not so much for anything in their forms, as for the singular barrenness which was noted in the fifteenth chapter of the last volume (§ 8)¹ as too often occurring in the Apennines. Compare this plate with the previous one. The peak drawn in Plate 46 rises at least 7,500 feet above the sea,—yet is wooded to its top; this Carrara crag not above 5,000,*—yet it is wholly barren.

§ 51. Masaccio, however, as we saw,² was taken away by death before he could give any one of his thoughts complete expression. Turner was spared to do *his* work, in this respect at least, completely. It might be thought that, having had such adverse influence to struggle with, he would prevail against it but in part; and, though showing the way to much that was new, retain of necessity some old prejudices, and leave his successors to pursue in purer liberty, and with happier power, the path he had pointed out. But it was not so: he did the work so completely on the ground which he chose to illustrate, that nothing is left for future artists to accomplish in that kind. Some classes of scenery, as often pointed out in the preceding pages,³ he was unfamiliar with, or held in little affection,

* It is not one of the highest points of the Carrara chain. The chief summits are much more jagged, and very noble. See Chap. xx. § 20.

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 299. For another drawing of some of the peaks of Carrara, see Vol. II. p. 208; and compare Ruskin's note to his poem on that page.]

² [See again Vol. V. p. 396.]

³ [See, for instance, pp. 293, 300, 302; and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 236–240.)]

and out of that scenery, untouched by him, new motives may be obtained; but of such landscape as his favourite Yorkshire Wolds, and banks of Rhenish and French hill, and rocky mountains of Switzerland, like the St. Gothard, already so long dwelt upon, he has expressed the power in what I believe to be for ever a central and unmatched way. I do not say this with positiveness, because it is not demonstrable. Turner may be beaten on his own ground—so may Tintoret, so may Shakspeare, Dante, or Homer: but my *belief* is that all these first-rate men are lonely men; that the particular work they did was by them done for ever in the best way; and that this work done by Turner among the hills, joining the most intense appreciation of all tenderness with delight in all magnitude, and memory for all detail, is never to be rivalled, or looked upon in similitude again.

CHAPTER XVIII

RESULTING FORMS:—FIFTHLY, STONES

§ 1. It is somewhat singular that the indistinctness of treatment which has been so often noticed¹ as characteristic of our present art shows itself always most when there is least apparent reason for it. Modern artists, having some true sympathy with what is vague in nature, draw all that is uncertain and evasive without evasion, and render faithfully whatever can be discerned in faithless mist or mocking vapours; but having no sympathy with what is solid and serene, they seem to become uncertain themselves in proportion to the certainty of what they see; and while they render flakes of far-away cloud, or fringes of inextricable forest, with something like patience and fidelity, give nothing but the hastiest indication of the ground they can tread upon or touch. It is only in modern art that we find any complete representation of clouds, and only in ancient art that, generally speaking, we find any careful realization of Stones.

§ 2. This is all the more strange, because, as we saw some time back, the *ruggedness* of the stone is more pleasing to the modern than the mediæval, and he rarely completes any picture satisfactorily to himself unless large spaces of it are filled with irregular masonry, rocky banks, or shingly shores: whereas the mediæval could conceive no desirableness in the loose and unhewn masses; associated them generally in his mind with wicked men, and the martyrdom of St. Stephen; and always threw them out of his road, or garden, to the best of his power.

¹ [See, for instance, above, pp. 73, 74.]

Yet with all this difference in predilection, such was the honesty of the mediæval, and so firm his acknowledgment of the necessity to paint completely whatever was to be painted at all, that there is hardly a strip of earth under the feet of a saint, in any finished work of the early painters, but more, and better painted, stones are to be found upon it than in an entire exhibition full of modern mountain scenery.

§ 3. Not better painted in every respect. In those interesting and popular treatises on the art of drawing, which tell the public that their colours should neither be too warm nor too cold, and that their touches should always be characteristic of the object they are intended to represent, the directions given for the manufacture of stones usually enforce "crispness of outline" and "roughness of texture." And, accordingly, in certain expressions of frangibility, irregular accumulation, and easy resting of one block upon another, together with some conditions of lichenous or mossy texture, modern stone-painting is far beyond the ancient; for these are just the characters which first strike the eye, and enable the foreground to maintain its picturesque influence, without inviting careful examination. The mediæval painter, on the other hand, not caring for this picturesque general effect, nor being in any wise familiar with mountain scenery, perceived in stones, when he was forced to paint them, eminently the characters which they had in common with figures; that is to say, their curved outlines, rounded surfaces, and varieties of delicate colour: and, accordingly, was somewhat too apt to lose their angular and fragmentary character in a series of muscular lines resembling those of an anatomical preparation; for, although in large rocks the cleavable or frangible nature was the thing that necessarily struck him most, the pebbles under his feet were apt to be oval or rounded in the localities of almost all the important schools of Italy. In Lombardy, the mass of the ground is composed of nothing but Alpine gravel, consisting of rolled oval pebbles, on the average

about six inches long by four wide—awkward building materials, yet used in ingenious alternation with the bricks in all the lowland Italian fortresses. Besides this universal rotundity, the qualities of stones which rendered them valuable to the lapidary were forced on the painter's attention by the familiar arts of inlaying and mosaic. Hence, in looking at a pebble, his mind was divided between its roundnesses and its veins; and Leonardo covers the shelves of rock under the feet of St. Anne with variegated agate;¹ while Mantegna often strews the small stones about his mountain caves in a polished profusion, as if some repentant martyr princess had been just scattering her caskets of pearls into the dust.

§ 4. Some years ago, as I was talking of the curvilinear forms in a piece of rock to one of our academicians, he said to me, in a somewhat despondent accent, "If you look for curves, you will see curves; if you look for angles, you will see angles."

The saying appeared to me an infinitely sad one. It was the utterance of an experienced man; and in many ways true, for one of the most singular gifts, or, if abused, most singular weaknesses, of the human mind is its power of persuading itself to see whatever it chooses;—a great gift if directed to the discernment of the things needful and pertinent to its own work and being; a great weakness, if directed to the discovery of things profitless or discouraging. In all things throughout the world, the men who look for the crooked will see the crooked, and the men who look for the straight will see the straight. But yet the saying was a notably sad one; for it came of the conviction in the speaker's mind that there was in reality *no* crooked and *no* straight; that all so-called discernment was fancy, and that men might, with equal rectitude of judgment, and good-deserving of their fellow-men, perceive and paint whatever was convenient to them.

¹ [See "Notes on the Louvre," No. 1598, Vol. XII. p. 473.]

§ 5. Whereas things may always be seen truly by candid people, though never *completely*. No human capacity ever yet saw the whole of a thing; but we may see more and more of it the longer we look. Every individual temper will see something different in it: but supposing the tempers honest, all the differences are there. Every advance in our acuteness of perception will show us something new: but the old and first discerned thing will still be there, not falsified, only modified and enriched by the new perceptions, becoming continually more beautiful in its harmony with them, and more approved as a part of the Infinite truth.

§ 6. There are no natural objects out of which more can be thus learned than out of stones. They seem to have been created especially to reward a patient observer. Nearly all other objects in nature can be seen, to some extent, without patience, and are pleasant even in being half seen. Trees, clouds, and rivers are enjoyable even by the careless; but the stone under his foot has for carelessness nothing in it but stumbling: no pleasure is languidly to be had out of it, nor food, nor good of any kind; nothing but symbolism of the hard heart and the unfatherly gift. And yet, do but give it some reverence and watchfulness, and there is bread of thought in it, more than in any other lowly feature of all the landscape.

§ 7. For a stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature.¹ The fineness of Nature's work is so great, that into a single block, a foot or two in diameter, she can compress as many changes of form and structure, on a small scale, as she needs for her mountains on a large one; and, taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for crags, the surface of a stone, in by far the plurality of instances, is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill; more fantastic in form, and incomparably richer in colour,—the last quality being, in fact, so noble in most stones of good birth (that is to say,

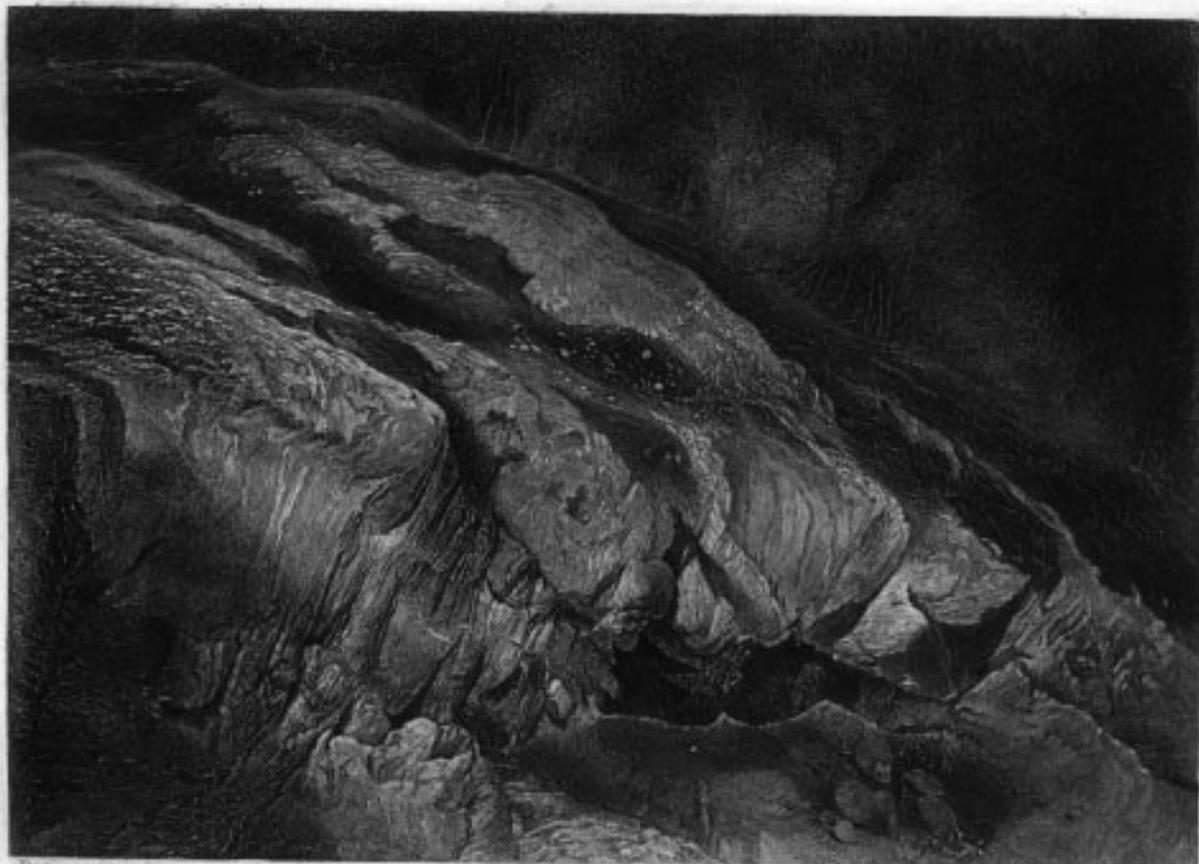
¹ [So Ruskin had observed in his early essay on *The Poetry of Architecture*, § 54 (Vol. I. p. 48).]

fallen from the crystalline mountain-ranges), that I shall be less able to illustrate this part of my subject satisfactorily by means of engraving than perhaps any other, except the colour of skies. I say, *shall* be less able, because the beauty of stone surface is in so great a degree dependent on the mosses and lichens which root themselves upon it, that I must place my richest examples in the section on vegetation. For instance, in the plate opposite, though the mass of rock is large and somewhat distant, the effect of it is as much owing to the white spots of silvery lichen in the centre and left, and to the flowing lines in which the darker mosses, growing in the cranny, have arranged themselves beyond, as to the character of the rock itself; nor could the beauty of the whole mass be explained, if we were to approach the least nearer, without more detailed drawing of this vegetation. For the present I shall only give a few examples of the drawing of stones roughly broken, or worn so as not to be materially affected by vegetation.

§ 8. We have already seen an example of Titian's treatment of mountain crests as compared with Turner's;¹ here is a parallel instance, from Titian, of stones in the bed of a torrent (Fig. 108), in many ways good and right, and expressing in its writhed and variously broken lines far more of real stone structure than the common water-colour dash of the moderns. Observe, especially, how Titian has understood that the fracture of the stone more or less depends on the undulating grain of its crystalline structure, following the cavity of the largest stone in the middle of the figure, with concentric lines; and compare in Plate 21 the top of Turner's largest stone on the left.

§ 9. If the reader sees nothing in this drawing (Fig. 108) that he can like,—although, indeed, I would have him prefer the work of Turner,—let him be assured that he does not yet understand on what Titian's reputation is founded. No painter's name is oftener in the mouth of the

¹ [See above, ch. xv. §§ 27, 34, pp. 266–267, 277.]



Daguerreotype.

J. G. Armytage.

48. Bank of Slaty Crystallines .

ordinary connoisseur, and no painter was ever less understood. His power of colour is indeed perfect, but so is Bonifazio's. Titian's *supremacy* above all the other Venetians, except Tintoret and Veronese, consists in the firm truth of his portraiture, and more or less masterly understanding



Fig. 108

of the nature of stones, trees, men, or whatever else he took in hand to paint; so that, without some correlative understanding in the spectator, Titian's work, in its highest qualities, must be utterly dead and unappealing to him.

§ 10. I give one more example from the lower part of the same print (Fig. 109), in which a stone, with an eddy round it, is nearly as well drawn as it can be in the simple

method of the early wood-engraving. Perhaps the reader will feel its truth better by contrast with a fragment or two of modern Idealism. Here, for instance (Fig. 110), is a group of stones, highly entertaining in their variety of form, out of the subject of "Christian vanquishing Apollyon," in the outlines of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, published by the Art-Union;¹ the idealism being here wrought to a pitch of extraordinary brilliancy by the exciting nature of



Fig. 109

the subject. Next (Fig. 111) is another poetical conception, one of Flaxman's, representing the eddies and stones of the Pool of Envy (Flaxman's Dante²), which may be conveniently compared with the Titianesque stones and streams. And, finally, Fig. 112 represents, also on Flaxman's authority, those stones of an "Alpine" character, of which Dante says that he

"Climbed with heart of proof the adverse steep."³

It seems at first curious that every one of the forms

¹ [Plate 12 in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, illustrated by engravings in outline, etc., by Henry C. Selous, 1844. The volume was edited by the honorary secretaries of the Art Union, the outlines having been awarded a prize in 1833.]

² [*Compositions by John Flaxman, Sculptor, R.A., from the Divine Poem of Dante Alighieri*, 1807. "The Pool of Envy" (*Inferno*, viii.) is Plate 9. Fig. 112 is from Plate 28 ("The Flaming Gulph"): see *Inferno*, xxvi.]

³ [This line is attached to the drawing by Flaxman, being a free rendering (from the version of the Rev. H. Boyd, 1802) of *Inferno*, xxvi. 17, 18. For the stones of an "Alpine" character, see *Inferno*, xii. (cited below, p. 382).]

that Flaxman has chanced upon should be an impossible one—a form which a stone never could assume; but this is the Nemesis of false idealism, and the inevitable one.



Fig. 110

§ 11. The chief incapacity in the modern work is not, however, so much in its outline, though that is wrong enough, as in the total absence of any effort to mark the

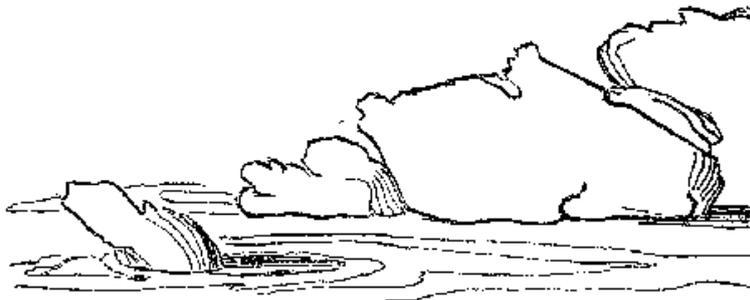


Fig. 111

surface roundings. It is not the *outline* of a stone, however true, that will make it solid or heavy; it is the interior markings, and thoroughly understood perspectives of its

sides. In the opposite plate the upper two subjects are by Turner, foregrounds out of the *Liber Studiorum* (Source of Arveron, and Ben Arthur); the lower by Claude, *Liber Veritatis*, No. 5. I think the reader cannot but feel that the blocks in the upper two subjects are massy and ponderous; in the lower, wholly without weight. If he examine their several treatment, he will find that Turner has perfect imaginative conception of every recess and projection

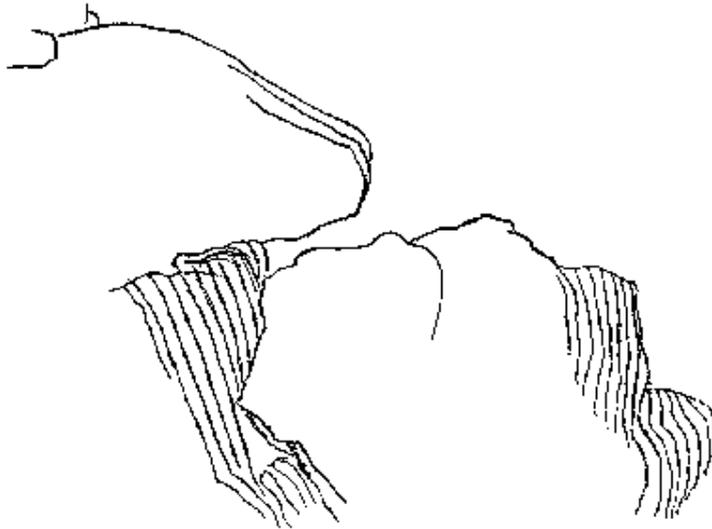


Fig. 112

over the whole surface, and *feels* the stone as he works over it; every touch, moreover, being full of tender gradation. But Claude, as he is obliged to hold to his outline in hills, so also clings to it in the stones,—cannot round them in the least, leaves their light surfaces wholly blank, and puts a few patches of dark here and there about their edges, as chance will have it.

§ 12. Turner's way of wedging the stones of the glacier moraine together in strength of disorder, in the upper subject, and his indication of the springing of the wild stems and leafage out of the rents in the boulders of the



Turner and Claude.

C. A. Tomkins
Allen & Co. So.

lower one, will hardly be appreciated unless the reader is *fondly* acquainted with the kind of scenery in question; and I cannot calculate on this being often the case, for few persons ever look at any near detail closely, and perhaps least of all at the heaps of débris which so often seem to encumber and disfigure mountain ground. But for the various reasons just stated (§ 7), Turner found more material for his power, and more excitement to his invention, among the fallen stones than in the highest summits of mountains; and his early designs among their thousand excellences and singularities, as opposed to all that had preceded them, count for not one of the least the elaborate care given to the drawing of torrent beds, shaly slopes, and other conditions of stony ground which all canons of art at the period pronounced inconsistent with dignity of composition; a convenient principle, since, of all foregrounds, one of loose stones is beyond comparison the most difficult to draw with any approach to realization. The Turnerian subjects, “Junction of the Greta and Tees” (Yorkshire Series, and illustrations to Scott); “Wycliffe, near Rokeby” (Yorkshire); “Hardraw Fall” (Yorkshire); “Ben Arthur” (Liber Studiorum); “Ulleswater” and the magnificent drawing of the “Upper Fall of the Tees” (England Series),¹ are sufficiently illustrative of what I mean.

§ 13. It is not, however, only in their separate condition, as materials of foreground, that we have to examine the effect of stones; they form a curiously important element of distant landscape in their aggregation on a large scale.

It will be remembered that in the course of the last chapter² we wholly left out of our account of mountain

¹ [For a fuller reference to the débris shown in the “Junction of the Greta and Tees,” where “every separate block is a study,” see Vol. III. p. 490; at the same place, pp. 486–491, the “Upper Fall of the Tees” is instanced as “a standard example of rock-drawing.”]

² [See above, p. 346.]

lines that group which was called "Lines of Rest." One reason for doing so was that, as these lines are produced by *débris* in a state of temporary repose, their beauty or deformity, or whatever character they may possess, is properly to be considered as belonging to stones rather than to rocks.

§ 14. Whenever heaps of loose stones or sand are increased by the continual fall of fresh fragments from above, or diminished by their removal from below, yet not in such mass or with such momentum as entirely to disturb those already accumulated, the materials on the surface arrange themselves in an equable slope, producing a straight line of profile in the bank or cone.

The heap formed by the sand falling in an hour-glass presents, in its straight sides, the simplest result of such a condition; and any heap of sand thrown up by the spade will show the slopes here and there, interrupted only by knotty portions, held together by moisture, or agglutinated by pressure,—interruptions which cannot occur to the same extent on a large scale, unless the soil is really hardened nearly to the nature of rock. As long as it remains incoherent, every removal of substance at the bottom of the heap, or addition of it at the top, occasions a sliding disturbance of the whole slope, which smooths it into rectitude of line; and there is hardly any great mountain mass among the Alps which does not show towards its foundation perfectly regular descents of this nature, often two or three miles long without a break. Several of considerable extent are seen on the left of Plate 46 (p. 346).

§ 15. I call these lines of rest, because, though the bulk of the mass may be continually increasing or diminishing, the line of the profile does not change, being fixed at a certain angle by the nature of the earth. It is usually stated carelessly as an angle of about 45 degrees, but it never really reaches such a slope. I measured carefully the angles of a very large number of slopes of mountain

in various parts of the Mont Blanc district. The few examples given in the note below are enough to exhibit the general fact that loose débris lies at various angles up to about 30° or 32°; débris protected by grass or pines may reach 35°, and rocky slopes 40° or 41°, but in continuous lines of rest I never found a steeper angle.*

§ 16. I speak of some rocky slopes as lines of rest, because, whenever a mountain side is composed of soft stone which splits and decomposes fast, it has a tendency to choke itself up with the ruins, and gradually to get abraded or ground down towards the débris slope; so that vast masses of the sides of Alpine valleys are formed by ascents of nearly uniform inclination, partly loose, partly of jagged rocks, which break, but do not materially alter the general line of the ground. In such cases the fragments usually have accumulated without disturbance at the foot of the slope, and the pine forests fasten the soil and prevent it from being carried down in large masses. But numerous

* Small fragments of limestone, five or six inches across, and flattish, sharp, angular on edges, and quite loose; slope near fountain of Maglans	31½
Somewhat larger stones, nearer Maglans; quite loose	31¾
Similar débris, slightly touched with vegetation	35
Débris on southern side of Maglans	33½
Slope of Montagne de la Côte, at the bottom, as seen from the village of Chamouni	40¾
Average slope of Montagne de Taconay, seen from Chamouni	38
Maximum slope of side of Breven	41
Slope of débris from ravine of Breven down to the village of Chamouni	14
Slopes of débris set with pines under Aiguille Verte, seen from Argentière	36
General slope of Tapia, from Argentière	34
Slopes of La Côte and Taconay, from Argentière	27¾
Profile of Breven, from near the Chapeau (a point commanding the valley of Chamouni in its truest longitude)	32½
Average slope of Montanvert, from same point	39½
Slope of La Côte, same point	36½
Eastern slope of Pain de Sucre, seen from Vevay	33
Western	36½
Slope of foot of Dent de Morcles, seen from Vevay	38½
" Midi, "	40

instances occur in which the mountain is consumed away gradually by its own torrents, not having strength enough to form clefts or precipices, but falling on each side of the ravines into even banks, which slide down from above as they are wasted below.

§ 17. By all these various expedients, Nature secures, in the midst of her mountain curvatures, vast series of perfectly straight lines opposing and relieving them; lines, however, which artists have almost universally agreed to alter or ignore, partly disliking them intrinsically, on account of their formality, and partly because the mind instantly associates them with the idea of mountain decay. Turner, however, saw that this very decay having its use and nobleness, the contours which were significative of it ought no more to be omitted than, in the portrait of an aged man, the furrows on his hand or brow; besides, he liked the lines themselves, for their contrast with the mountain wildness, just as he liked the straightness of sunbeams penetrating the soft waywardness of clouds.¹ He introduced them constantly into his noblest compositions; but in order to the full understanding of their employment in the instance I am about to give, one or two more points yet need to be noticed.

§ 18. Generally speaking, the curved lines of convex *fall* belong to mountains of hard rock, over whose surfaces the fragments *bound* to the valley, and which are worn by wrath of avalanches and wildness of torrents, like that of the Cascade des Pélerins, described in the note above.² Generally speaking, the straight lines of *rest* belong to softer mountains, or softer surfaces and places of mountains, which, exposed to no violent wearing from external force, nevertheless keep slipping and mouldering down spontaneously or receiving gradual accession of material from incoherent masses above them.

¹ [For Turner's rendering of sunbeams, see Vol. III. pp. 353–356.]

² [See p. 342.]

§ 19. It follows, farther, that where the gigantic wearing forces are in operation, the stones or fragments of rock brought down by the torrents and avalanches are likely, however hard, to be rounded on all their edges; but where the straight shaly slopes are found, the stones which glide or totter down their surfaces frequently retain all their angles, and form jagged and flaky heaps at the bottom.

And farther, it is to be supposed that the rocks which are habitually subjected to these colossal forces of destruction are in their own mass firm and secure, otherwise they would long ago have given way; but that where the gliding and crumbling surfaces are found without much external violence, it is very possible that the whole framework of the mountain may be full of flaws; and a danger exist of vast portions of its mass giving way, or slipping down in heaps, as the sand suddenly yields in an hour-glass after some moments of accumulation.

§ 20. Hence, generally, in the mind of any one familiar with mountains, the conditions will be associated, on the one hand, of the curved, convex, and overhanging bank or cliff, the roaring torrent, and the rounded boulder of massive stone; and, on the other, of the straight and even slope of bank, the comparatively quiet and peaceful lapse of streams, and the sharp-edged and unworn look of the fallen stones, together with a sense of danger greater, though more occult, than in the wilder scenery.

The drawing of the St. Gothard, which we have so laboriously analyzed, was designed, as before mentioned,¹ from a sketch taken in the year 1843. But with it was made another drawing. Turner brought home in that year a series of sketches taken in the neighbourhood of the pass; among others, one of the Valley of Goldau, covered as it is by the ruins of the Rossberg. Knowing his fondness for fallen stones, I chose this Goldau subject as a companion

¹ [See above, p. 37 (though Ruskin does not there mention the date).]

to the St. Gothard. The plate opposite will give some idea of the resultant drawing.¹

§ 21. *Some* idea only. It is a subject which, like the St. Gothard, is far too full of detail to admit of reduction; and I hope, therefore, soon to engrave it properly of its real size.² It is, besides, more than usually difficult to translate this drawing into black and white, because much of the light on the clouds is distinguished merely by orange or purple colour from the green greys, which, though not darker than the warm hues, have the effect of shade from their coldness, but cannot be marked as shade in the engraving without too great increase of depth. Enough, however, has been done to give some idea of the elements of Turner's design.

§ 22. Detailed accounts of the Rossberg Fall may be found in any ordinary Swill Guide; the only points we have to notice respecting it are, that the mountain was composed of an indurated gravel, disposed in oblique beds sloping *towards* the valley. A portion of one of these beds gave way, and half filled the valley beneath, burying five villages, together with the principal one of Goldau, and partially choking up a little lake, the streamlets which supplied it now forming irregular pools among the fallen fragments. I call the rock, and accurately, indurated gravel; but the induration is so complete that the mass breaks *through* the rolled pebbles chiefly composing it, and may be considered as a true rock, only always in its blocks rugged and formless when compared with the crystalline formations. Turner has chosen his position on some of the higher heaps of ruin, looking down towards the Lake of Zug, which is seen under the sunset, the spire of the tower of Arth on its shore just relieved against the light of the waves.

The Rossberg itself, never steep, and still more reduced

¹ [For this drawing, see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 65 (Vol. XIII.).]

² [For Ruskin's intentions in this matter, see also Vol. V. p. 9 and *n.*]



J. M. W. Turner.

J. Consett.
Allen & Co. Sc.

in terror by the fall of a portion of it, was not available to him as a form *explanatory* of the catastrophe; and even the slopes of the Rigi on the left are not, in reality, as uninterrupted in their slope as he has drawn them; but he felt the connection of this structure with the ruin amidst which he stood, and brought the long lines of danger clear against the sunset, and as straight as its own retiring rays.

§ 23. If the reader will now glance back to the St. Gothard subject, as illustrated in the two Plates 21 and 37, and compare it with this of Goldau, keeping in mind the general conclusions about the two great classes of mountain scenery which I have just stated, he will, I hope, at least cease to charge me with enthusiasm in anything that I have said of Turner's imagination, as always instinctively possessive of those truths which lie deepest, and are most essentially linked together, in the expression of a scene. I have only taken two drawings (though these of his best period) for the illustration of all the structures of the Alps which, in the course of half a volume, it has been possible for me to explain; and all my half-volume is abstracted in these two drawings, and that in the most consistent and complete way, as if they had been made on purpose to contain a perfect summary of Alpine truth.

§ 24. There are one or two points connected with them of yet more touching interest. They are the last drawings which Turner ever made with unabated power. The one of the St. Gothard, speaking with strict accuracy, is *the* last drawing; for that of Goldau, though majestic to the utmost in conception, is less carefully finished, and shows, in the execution of parts of the sky, signs of impatience, caused by the first feeling of decline of strength. Therefore I call the St. Gothard (Vol. III. Ch. xv. § 5)¹ the last mountain drawing he ever executed with perfect power. But the Goldau is still a noble companion to it,—more solemn in

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 296.]

thought, more sublime in colour, and, in certain points of poetical treatment, especially characteristic of the master's mind in earlier days. He was very definitely in the habit of indicating the association of any subject with circumstances of death, especially the death of multitudes, by placing it under one of his most deeply *crimsoned* sunset skies.¹ The colour of blood is thus plainly taken for the leading tone in the storm-clouds above the "Slave-ship." It occurs with similar distinctness in the much earlier picture of Ulysses and Polypheme, in that of Napoleon at St. Helena, and, subdued by softer hues, in the *Old Téméraire*.² The sky of this Goldau is, in its scarlet and crimson, the deepest in tone of all that I know in Turner's drawings. Another feeling, traceable in several of his former works, is an acute sense of the contrast between the careless interests and idle pleasures of daily life, and the state of those whose time for labour, or knowledge, or delight, is passed for ever. There is evidence of this feeling in the introduction of the boys at play in the churchyard of Kirkby Lonsdale, and the boy climbing for his kite among the thickets above the little mountain churchyard of Brignall-banks;³ it is in the same tone of thought that he has placed here the two figures fishing, leaning against these shattered flanks of rock,—the sepulchral stones of the great mountain Field of Death.

§ 25. Another character of these two drawings, which gives them especial interest as connected with our inquiries into mediæval landscape, is, that they are precisely and

¹ [Ruskin quotes this passage in *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century* (Note 5), as illustrative of Byron's description (in *Sardanapalus*) of the setting sun, red "like the blood he predicts"; and with regard to Turner's crimson skies, compare, in Vol. XIII., *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (No. 508).]

² [For the "Slave-ship" (Royal Academy, 1840), see Vol. III. pp. lv., 571–572, and Plate 12; "Ulysses" (National Gallery, No. 508) was exhibited in 1829; "Napoleon in St. Helena" (called "The Exile and the Rock Limpet"), No. 529 in the National Gallery (though withdrawn from exhibition), was at the Academy in 1842; the *Téméraire* (National Gallery, No. 524) was at the Academy in 1839.]

³ [For this incident in the "Kirkby Lonsdale," see above, p. 26. The "boy climbing for his kite" is in the drawing of "Brignall Church" (*Richmondshire*), for which see *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 36 (Vol. XII. p. 371).]

accurately illustrative of the two principal ideas of Dante about the Alps. I have already explained the rise of the first drawing out of Turner's early study of the "Male Bolge" of the Splügen and St. Gothard.¹ The Goldau, on the other hand, might have been drawn in purposeful illustration of the lines before referred to (Vol. III. Ch. xv. § 13)² as descriptive of a "loco *Alpestro*." I give now Dante's own words:

"Qual' è quella ruina, che nel fianco
Di quà da Trento l'Adice percosse,
O per tremuoto, o per sostegni manco,
Che da cima del monte, onde si mosse,
Al piano è sì la roccia discosciosa
Che alcuna via darebbe a chi su fosse;
Cotal di quel burrato era la scessa."

"As is that landslip, ere you come to Trent,
That smote the flank of Adige, through some stay
Sinking beneath it, or by earthquake rent;
Far from the summit, where of old it lay,
Plainwards the broken rock unto the feet
Of one above it might afford some way;
Such path adown this precipice we meet."³

—CAYLEY.

§ 26. Finally, there are two lessons to be gathered from the opposite conditions of mountain decay, represented in these designs, of perhaps a wider range of meaning than any which were suggested even by the states of mountain strength. In the first, we find the unyielding rock, undergoing no sudden danger, and capable of no total fall, yet, in its hardness of heart, worn away by perpetual trampling of torrent waves, and stress of wandering storm. Its fragments, fruitless and restless, are tossed into ever-changing heaps; no labour of man can subdue them to his service, nor can his utmost patience secure any dwelling-place among them. In this they are the type of all that humanity which, suffering under no sudden punishment or sorrow,

¹ [See Vol. V. p. 295.]

² [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 303.]

³ [*Inferno*, xii. 4–10.]

remains “stony ground,”¹ afflicted, indeed, continually by minor and vexing cares, but only broken by them into fruitless ruin of fatigued life. Of this ground not “corn-giving,”—this “rough valley, neither eared nor sown,”* of the common world, it is said, to those who have set up their idols in the wreck of it—

“Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot.”†

But, as we pass beneath the hills which have been shaken by earthquake and torn by convulsion, we find that periods of perfect repose succeed those of destruction. The pools of calm water lie clear beneath their fallen rocks, the water-lilies gleam, and the reeds whisper among their shadows; the village rises again over the forgotten graves, and its church-tower, white through the storm twilight, proclaims a renewed appeal to His protection in whose hand “are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also.” There is no loveliness of Alpine valley that does not teach the same lesson. It is just where “the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place,” that, in process of years, the fairest meadows bloom between the fragments, the clearest rivulets murmur from their crevices among the flowers, and the clustered cottages, each sheltered beneath some strength of mossy stone, now to be removed no more, and with their pastured flocks around them, safe from the eagle’s stoop and the wolf’s ravin, have written upon their fronts, in simple words, the mountaineer’s faith in the ancient promise—

“Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh;
“For thou shalt be in league with the Stones of the

* Deut. xxi. 4. So Amos, vi. 12: “Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen?”

† Isa. lvii. 5, 6.

1 [Mark iv. 5.]

Field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.”¹

¹ [The references here are Psalms xcv. 4; Job xiv. 18; and Job v. 21–23. These passages and the sentiment of rock scenery here described occurred to Ruskin at Venice in 1852. He writes in his diary there:—

“In passing by the fallen rocks in the fields of Sallenches I never thought of the verse of Job: ‘Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field’ (v. 23), neither did I ever understand till to-day (Feb. 1) the full force of Isaiah lvii. 6. In last vol. of *Modern Painters*, describe the opening of the scene from Gorge of Faido—the *power* of the stream and its rock walls—then the desolation and impotence of the loose, smooth stones below, and tottering mountain flanks. Then quote this verse, showing how the smooth stones of the stream were chosen as typical objects of idol worship in general—in their smoothness, powerlessness, incoherence, and fruitlessness and agitation.”]

CHAPTER XIX

THE MOUNTAIN GLOOM

§ 1. WE have now cursorily glanced over those conditions of mountain structure which appear constant in duration, and universal in extent; and we have found them, invariably, calculated for the delight, the advantage, or the teaching of men; prepared, it seems, so as to contain, alike in fortitude or feebleness, in kindness or in terror, some beneficence of gift, or profoundness of counsel. We have found that where at first all seemed disturbed and accidental, the most tender laws were appointed to produce forms of perpetual beauty; and that where to the careless or cold observer all seemed severe or purposeless, the well-being of man has been chiefly consulted, and his rightly directed powers, and sincerely awakened intelligence, may find wealth in every falling rock, and wisdom in every talking wave.

It remains for us to consider what actual effect upon the human race has been produced by the generosity, or the instruction of the hills; how far, in past ages, they have been thanked, or listened to; how far, in coming ages, it may be well for us to accept them for tutors, or seek them for friends.

§ 2. What they have already taught us may, one would think, be best discerned in the midst of them,—in some place where they have had their own way with the human soul; where no veil has been drawn between it and them, no contradicting voice has confused their ministries of sound, or broken their pathos of silence: where war has never streaked their streams with bloody foam, nor ambition sought for other throne than their cloud-courtiered pinnacles, nor

avarice for other treasure than, year by year, is given to their unlaborious rocks, in budded jewels and mossy gold.

§ 3. I do not know any district possessing a more pure or uninterrupted fulness of mountain character (and that of the highest order), or which appears to have been less disturbed by foreign agencies, than that which borders the course of the Trient between Valorcine and Martigny. The paths which lead to it out of the valley of the Rhone, rising at first in steep circles among the walnut trees, like winding stairs among the pillars of a Gothic tower, retire over the shoulders of the hills into a valley almost unknown, but thickly inhabited by an industrious and patient population. Along the ridges of the rocks, smoothed by old glaciers into long, dark, billowy swellings, like the backs of plunging dolphins, the peasant watches the slow colouring of the tufts of moss and roots of herb which, little by little, gather a feeble soil over the iron substance; then, supporting the narrow strip of clinging ground with a few stones, he subdues it to the spade; and in a year or two a little crest of corn is seen waving upon the rocky casque. The irregular meadows run in and out like inlets of lake among these harvested rocks, sweet with perpetual streamlets, that seem always to have chosen the steepest places to come down, for the sake of the leaps, scattering their handfuls of crystal this way and that, as the wind takes them, with all the grace, but with none of the formalism of fountains; dividing into fanciful change of dash and spring, yet with the seal of their granite channels upon them, as the lightest play of human speech may bear the seal of past toil; and closing back out of their spray to lave the rigid angles, and brighten with silver fringes and glassy films each lower and lower step of sable stone; until at last, gathered altogether again,—except, perhaps, some chance drops caught on the apple-blossom, where it has budded a little nearer the cascade than it did last spring,—they find their way down to the turf, and lose themselves in that silently; with quiet depth of clear water furrowing

among the grass blades, and looking only like their shadow, but presently emerging again in little startled gushes and laughing hurries, as if they had remembered suddenly that the day was too short for them to get down the hill.

Green field, and glowing rock, and glancing streamlet, all slope together in the sunshine towards the brows of ravines, where the pines take up their own dominion of saddened shade; and with everlasting roar in the twilight, the stronger torrents thunder down, pale from the glaciers, filling all their chasms with enchanted cold, beating themselves to pieces against the great rocks that they have themselves cast down, and forcing fierce way beneath their ghastly poise.

The mountain paths stoop to these glens in forkly zig-zags, leading to some grey and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curve with the ferns that fear the light; a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines, thin with excess of light; and, in its clear, consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange, faint silence of possession by the sunshine which has in it so deep a melancholy; full of power, yet as frail as shadows; lifeless, like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender fall of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds.¹

¹ [The careful revision given by the author to this chapter, as above mentioned (Introduction, p. xx.), may be illustrated from this passage, which in the MS. reads thus:—

“ . . . possession of the sunshine which seems as if looking like the eternal peace of a deserted heaven that all its angels had left to hapless light so far away—so full of power—so wild in form—so dim with drowning floods of purple rays—changeless like the walls of a sepulchre; beautiful

§ 4. High above all sorrow: yes; but not unwitnessing to it. The traveller on his happy journey, as his foot springs from the deep turf and strikes the pebbles gaily over the edge of the mountain road, sees with a glance of delight the clusters of nutbrown cottages that nestle among those sloping orchards, and glow beneath the boughs of the pines. Here it may well seem to him, if there be sometimes hardship, there must be at least innocence and peace, and fellowship of the human soul with nature. It is not so. The wild goats that leap along those rocks have as much passion of joy in all that fair work of God as the men that toil among them. Perhaps more. Enter the street of one of those villages, and you will find it foul with that gloomy foulness that is suffered only by torpor, or by anguish of soul. Here, it is torpor—not absolute suffering—not starvation or disease, but darkness of calm enduring; the spring known only as the time of the scythe, and the autumn as the time of the sickle, and the sun only as a warmth, the wind as a chill, and the mountains as a danger. They do not understand so much as the name of beauty, or of knowledge. They understand dimly that of virtue. Love, patience, hospitality, faith,—these things they know. To glean their meadows side by side, so happier; to bear the burden up the breathless mountain flank, uncomplainingly; to bid the stranger drink from their vessel of milk; to see at the foot of their low deathbeds a pale figure upon a cross, dying, also patiently;—in this they are different from the cattle and from the stones, but in all this unrewarded as far as concerns the present life. For them, there is neither hope nor passion of spirit; for them neither advance nor exultation. Black bread, rude roof, dark night, laborious day, weary arm at sunset; and life ebbs away. No books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest; except only sometimes a little sitting in the sun under the church wall, as

in crimson folds like the veil of some sea-spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne—stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between two golden clouds.”]

the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air; a pattering of a few prayers, not understood, by the altar rails of the dimly gilded chapel, and so back to the sombre home, with the cloud upon them still unbroken—that cloud of rocky gloom, born out of the wild torrents and ruinous stones, and unlightened, even in their religion, except by the vague promise of some better thing unknown, mingled with threatening, and obscured by an unspeakable horror,—a smoke, as it were, of martyrdom, coiling up with the incense, and, amidst the images of tortured bodies and lamenting spirits in hurtling flames, the very cross, for them, dashed more deeply than for others, with gouts of blood.¹

§ 5. Do not let this be thought a darkened picture of the life of these mountaineers. It is literal fact. No contrast can be more painful than that between the dwelling of any well-conducted English cottager, and that of the equally honest Savoyard. The one, set in the midst of its dull flat fields and uninteresting hedgerows, shows in itself the love of brightness and beauty; its daisy-studded garden-beds, its smoothly swept brick path to the threshold, its freshly sanded floor and orderly shelves of household furniture, all testify to energy of heart, and happiness in the simple course and simple possessions of daily life. The other cottage, in the midst of an inconceivable, inexpressible beauty, set on some sloping bank of golden sward, with clear fountains flowing beside it, and wild flowers, and noble trees, and goodly rocks gathered round into a perfection as of Paradise, is itself a dark and plaguelike stain in the midst of the gentle landscape. Within a certain distance of its threshold the ground is foul and cattle-trampled; its timbers are black with smoke, its garden choked with weeds and nameless refuse, its chambers empty and joyless, the light and wind gleaming and filtering through the crannies of their stones. All testifies that

¹ [For some remarks on § 4, and a comparison of the text with the manuscript, see above, Introduction, p. xxiv.]

to its inhabitant the world is labour and vanity; that for him neither flowers bloom, nor birds sing, nor fountains glisten; and that his soul hardly differs from the grey cloud that coils and dies upon his hills, except in having no fold of it touched by the sunbeams.

§ 6. Is it not strange to reflect, that hardly an evening passes in London or Paris, but one of those cottages is painted for the better amusement of the fair and idle, and shaded with pasteboard pines by the scene-shifter; and that good and kind people, poetically-minded, delight themselves in imagining the happy life led by peasants who dwell by Alpine fountains, and kneel to crosses upon peaks of rock?—that nightly we give our gold, to fashion forth simulacra of peasants, in gay ribands and white bodices, singing sweet songs, and bowing gracefully to the picturesque crosses: and all the while the veritable peasants are kneeling, songlessly, to veritable crosses, in another temper than the kind and fair audiences deem of, and assuredly with another kind of answer than is got out of the opera catastrophe; an answer having reference, it may be in dim futurity, to those very audiences themselves? If all the gold that has gone to paint the simulacra of the cottages, and to put new songs in the mouths of the simulacra of the peasants, had gone to brighten the existent cottages, and to put new songs in the mouths of the existent peasants, it might in the end, perhaps, have turned out better so, not only for the peasant, but for even the audience. For that form of the False Ideal has also its correspondent True Ideal,—consisting not in the naked beauty of statues, nor in the gauze flowers and crackling tinsel of theatres, but in the clothed and fed beauty of living men, and in the lights and laughs of happy homes. Night after night, the desire of such an ideal springs up in every idle human heart; and night after night, as far as idleness can, we work out this desire in costly lies. We paint the faded actress, build the lath landscape, feed our benevolence with fallacies of felicity, and satisfy our righteousness with poetry of

justice. The time will come when, as the heavy-folded curtain falls upon our own stage of life, we shall begin to comprehend that the justice we loved was intended to have been done in fact, and not in poetry, and the felicity we sympathized in, to have been bestowed and not feigned.¹ We talk much of money's worth, yet perhaps may one day be surprised to find that what the wise and charitable European public gave to one night's rehearsal of hypocrisy,—to one hour's pleasant warbling of Linda or Lucia,—would have filled a whole Alpine valley with happiness, and poured the waves of harvest over the famine of many a Lammermoor.*

* As I was correcting this sheet for press, the morning paper containing the account of the burning of Covent Garden theatre² furnished the following financial statements, bearing somewhat on the matter in hand; namely,

	£
That the interior fittings of the theatre, in 1846, cost	40,000
That it was opened on the 6th April, 1847; and that	
in 1848 the loss upon it was	34,756
in 1849 " "	25,455

	100,211

	£
And that in one year the vocal department cost	33,349
the ballet " "	8,105
the orchestra " "	10,048

	51,502

Mr. Albano³ afterwards corrected this statement, substituting 27,000 for 40,000; and perhaps the other sums may also have been exaggerated, but I leave the reader to consider what an annual expenditure of from 30,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* might effect in practical idealism in general, whether in Swiss valleys or elsewhere. I am not one of those who regard all theatrical entertainment as wrong or harmful.⁴ I only regret seeing out theatres so

¹ [With this passage compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. App. xxv. (Vol. IX. p. 473).]

² [The theatre was burnt down on the morning of March 5, 1856. The particulars here cited were given in the *Times* on the following day.]

³ [Mr. B. Albano, civil engineer, who had reconstructed the theatre in 1846–1847. His letter correcting the figures about the cost appeared in the *Times* of March 12, 1856.]

⁴ [For Ruskin's interest in the theatre, see *Præterita*, i. § 202; *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, ii. 270; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 34 and 39.]

§ 7. “Nay,” perhaps the reader answers, “it is vain to hope that this could ever be. The perfect beauty of the ideal must always be fictitious. It is rational to amuse ourselves with the fair imagination; but it would be madness to endeavour to put it into practice, in the face of the ordinances of Nature. Real shepherdesses must always be rude, and real peasants miserable; suffer us to turn away

conducted as to involve an expense which is worse than useless, in leading our audiences to look for mere stage effect, instead of good acting, good singing, or good sense. If we really loved music, or the drama, we should be content to hear well-managed voices, and see finished acting, without paying five or six thousand pounds to dress the songsters or decorate the stage. Simple and consistent dresses, and quiet landscape exquisitely painted, would have far more effect on the feelings of any sensible audience than the tinsel and extravagance of our common scenery; and our actors and actresses must have little respect for their own powers, if they think that dignity of gesture is dependent on the flash of jewellery, or the pathos of accents connected with the costliness of silk. Perfect execution of music by a limited orchestra is far more delightful, and far less fatiguing, than the irregular roar and hum of multitudinous mediocrity; and finished instrumentation by an adequate number of performers, exquisite acting, and sweetest singing, might be secured for the public at a fourth part of the cost now spent on operatic absurdities. There is no occasion whatever for decoration of the house; it is, on the contrary, the extreme of vulgarity. No person of good taste ever goes to a theatre to look at the fronts of the boxes. Comfortable and roomy seats, perfect cleanliness, decent and fitting curtains and other furniture, of good stuff, but neither costly nor tawdry, and convenient, but not dazzling, light, are the proper requirements in the furnishing of an opera-house. As for the persons who go there to look at each other—to show their dresses—to yawn away waste hours—to obtain a maximum of momentary excitement—or to say they were there, at next day’s three o’clock breakfast (and it is only for such persons that glare, cost, and noise are necessary), I commend to their consideration, or at least to such consideration as is possible to their capacities, the suggestions in the text. But to the true lovers of the drama I would submit, as another subject of inquiry, whether they ought not to separate themselves from the mob, and provide, for their own modest quiet, and guiltless entertainment, the truth of heartfelt impersonation, and the melody of the unforced and delicate voice, without extravagance of adjunct, unhealthy lateness of hours, or appeal to degraded passions. Such entertainment might be obtained at infinitely smaller cost, and yet at a price which would secure honourable and permanent remuneration to every performer; and I am mistaken in my notion of the best actors, if they would not rather play at a house where people went to hear and to feel, than weary themselves, even for four times the pay, before an audience insulting in its listlessness and ignorant in its applause.

our gentle eyes from their coarseness and their pain, and to seek comfort in cultivated voices and purchased smiles. We cannot hew down the rocks nor turn the sands of the torrent into gold.”

§ 8. This is no answer. Be assured of the great truth—that what is impossible in reality, is ridiculous in fancy. If it is not in the nature of things that peasants should be gentle and happy, then the imagination of such peasantry is ridiculous, and to delight in such imagination, wrong; as delight in any kind of falsehood is always. But if in the nature of things it be possible that among the wildness of hills the human heart should be refined, and if the comfort of dress, and the gentleness of language, and the joy of progress in knowledge, and of variety in thought, are possible to the mountaineer in his true existence, let us strive to write this true poetry upon the rocks before we indulge it in our visions, and try whether, among all the fine arts, one of the finest be not that of painting cheeks with health rather than rouge.¹

§ 9. “But is such refinement possible? Do not the conditions of the mountain peasant’s life, in the plurality of instances, necessarily forbid it?”

As bearing sternly on this question, it is necessary to examine one peculiarity of feeling which manifests itself among the European nations, so far as I have noticed, irregularly,—appearing sometimes to be the characteristic of a particular time, sometimes of a particular race, sometimes of a particular locality, and to involve at once much that is to be blamed and much that is praiseworthy. I mean the capability of enduring, or even delighting in, the contemplation of objects of terror—a sentiment which especially influences the temper of some groups of mountaineers, and of which it is necessary to examine the causes,

¹ [A constant thought with Ruskin from this time forward. See, for instance, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 137 (Vol. XII. p. 160), “it is not so much in *buying* pictures, as in *being* pictures, that you can encourage a noble school,” and *Lectures on Art*, § 116, where it is said that there has never been fine art “where the lips of youth, instead of being full with blood, were pinched with famine.”]

before we can form any conjecture whatever as to the real effect of mountains on human character.

§ 10. For instance, the unhappy alterations which have lately taken place in the town of Lucerne have still spared two of its ancient bridges;¹ both of which, being long covered walks, appear, in past times, to have been to the population of the town what the Mall was to London, or the Gardens of the Tuileries are to Paris. For the continual contemplation of those who sauntered from pier to pier, pictures were painted on the woodwork of the roof. These pictures, in the one bridge, represent all the important Swiss battles and victories; in the other they are the well-known series of which Longfellow has made so beautiful a use in *The Golden Legend*,² the *Dance of Death*.

Imagine the countenances with which a committee, appointed for the establishment of a new “promenade” in some flourishing modern town, would receive a proposal to adorn such promenade with pictures of the Dance of Death!

§ 11. Now just so far as the old bridge at Lucerne, with the pure, deep, and blue water of the Reuss eddying down between its piers, and with the sweet darkness of green hills, and far-away gleaming of lake and Alps alternating upon the eye on either side; and the gloomy lesson frowning in the shadow, as if the deep tone of a passing bell, overhead, were mingling for ever with the plashing of the river as it glides by beneath; just so far, I say, as this differs from the straight and smooth strip of level dust, between two rows of round-topped acacia trees, wherein the inhabitants of an English watering-place or French fortified town take their delight,—so far I believe the life of the old Lucernois, with all its happy waves of light, and mountain strength of will, and solemn expectation of eternity, to have differed from the generality of the lives of those who saunter for their habitual hour up and down the

¹ [Plate A, here introduced, is from Ruskin's drawing of one of these—the Kapellbrücke, which is painted with scenes from Swiss history: see below, p. 456 n.]

² [Part V., “A Covered Bridge at Lucerne”; for other references to *The Golden Legend*, see below, p. 446; Vol. V. p. 229 n.; and Vol. XII. p. 485.]



J. Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Kapellbrücke, Lucerne
(1862)

modern promenade. But the gloom is not always of this noble kind. As we penetrate farther among the hills we shall find it becoming very painful. We are walking, perhaps, in a summer afternoon, up the valley of Zermatt (a German valley), the sun shining brightly on grassy knolls and through fringes of pines, the goat leaping happily, and the cattle bells ringing sweetly, and the snowy mountains shining like heavenly castles far above. We see, a little way off, a small white chapel, sheltered behind one of the flowery hillocks of mountain turf; and we approach its little window, thinking to look through it into some quiet home of prayer; but the window is grated with iron, and open to the winds, and when we look through it, behold—a heap of white human bones mouldering into whiter dust!

So also in that same sweet valley, of which I have just been speaking, between Chamouni and the Valais, at every turn of the pleasant pathway, where the scent of the thyme lies richest upon its rock, we shall see a little cross and shrine set under one of them; and go up to it, hoping to receive some happy thought of the Redeemer, by whom all these lovely things were made, and still consist. But when we come near—behold, beneath the cross, a rude picture of souls tormented in red tongues of hell fire, and pierced by demons.

§ 12. As we pass towards Italy the appearance of this gloom deepens; and when we descend the southern slope of the Alps we shall find this bringing forward of the image of Death associated with an endurance of the most painful aspects of disease; so that conditions of human suffering, which in any other country would be confined in hospitals, are permitted to be openly exhibited by the wayside; and with this exposure of the degraded human form is farther connected an insensibility to ugliness and imperfection in other things; so that the ruined wall, neglected garden, and uncleansed chamber, seem to unite in expressing a gloom of spirit possessing the inhabitants of the whole land. It does not appear to arise from poverty, nor

careless contentment with little: there is here nothing of Irish recklessness or humour; but there seems a settled obscurity in the soul,—a chill and plague, as if risen out of a sepulchre, which partly deadens, partly darkens, the eyes and hearts of men, and breathes a leprosy of decay through every breeze, and every stone. “Instead of well-set hair, baldness, and burning instead of beauty.”¹

Nor are definite proofs wanting that the feeling is independent of mere poverty or indolence. In the most gorgeous and costly palace garden the statues will be found green with moss, the terraces defaced or broken; the palace itself, partly coated with marble, is left in other places rough with cementless and jagged brick, its iron balconies bent and rusted, its pavements overgrown with grass. The more energetic the effort has been to recover from this state, and to shake off all appearance of poverty, the more assuredly the curse seems to fasten on the scene, and the unslaked mortar, and unfinished wall, and ghastly desolation of incompleteness entangled in decay, strike a deeper despondency into the beholder.

§ 13. The feeling would be also more easily accounted for if it appeared inconsistent in its regardlessness of beauty,—if what was *done* were altogether as inefficient as what was deserted. But the balcony, though rusty and broken, is delicate in design, and supported on a nobly carved slab of marble; the window, though a mere black rent in ragged plaster, is encircled by a garland of vine and fronted by a thicket of the sharp leaves and aurora-coloured flowers of the oleander; the courtyard, overgrown by mournful grass, is terminated by a bright fresco of gardens and fountains; the corpse, borne with the bare face to heaven, is strewn with flowers; beauty is continually mingled with the shadow of death.

§ 14. So also is a kind of merriment,—not true cheerfulness, neither careless or idle jesting, but a determined effort at gaiety, a resolute laughter, mixed with much satire,

¹ [Isaiah iii. 24.]

grossness, and practical buffoonery, and, it always seemed to me, void of all comfort or hope,—with this eminent character in it also, that it is capable of touching with its bitterness even the most fearful subjects, so that as the love of beauty retains its tenderness in the presence of death, this love of jest also retains its boldness, and the skeleton becomes one of the standard masques of the Italian comedy. When I was in Venice, in 1850, the most popular piece of the *comic* opera was “Death and the Cobbler,” in which the point of the plot was the success of a village cobbler as a physician, in consequence of the appearance of Death to him beside the bed of every patient who was not to recover; and the most applauded scene in it was one in which the physician, insolent in success, and swollen with luxury, was himself taken down into the abode of death, and thrown into an agony of terror by being shown lives of men, under the form of wasting lamps, and his own ready to expire.

§ 15. I have also not the smallest doubt that this endurance or affronting of fearful images is partly associated with indecency, partly with general fatuity and weakness of mind. The men who applauded loudest when the actress put on, in an instant, her mask representing a skull, and when her sharp and clear “Sono la Morte” rang through the theatre, were just those whose disgusting habits rendered it impossible for women to pass through some of the principal streets in Venice,—just those who formed the gaping audience, when a mountebank offered a new quack medicine on the Riva dei Schiavoni. And, as fearful imagery is associated with the weakness of fever, so it seems to me that imbecility and love of terror are connected by a mysterious link throughout the whole life of man. There is a most touching instance of this in the last days of Sir Walter Scott, the publication of whose latter works, deeply to be regretted on many accounts, was yet, perhaps, on the whole, right, as affording a means of studying the conditions of the decay of overwrought

human intellect in one of the most noble of minds. Among the many signs of this decay at its uttermost, in *Castle Dangerous*, not one of the least notable was the introduction of the knight who bears on his black armour the likeness of a skeleton.¹

§ 16. The love of horror which is in this manner connected with feebleness of intellect, is not, however, to be confounded with that shown by the vulgar in general. The feeling which is calculated upon in the preparation of pieces full of terror and crime, at our lower theatres, and which is fed with greater art and elegance in the darker scenery of the popular French novelists, however morally unhealthy, is not *unnatural*; it is not the result of an apathy to such horror, but of a strong desire for excitement in minds coarse and dull, but not necessarily feeble. The scene of the murder of the jeweller in the *Count of Monte Cristo*, or those with the Squelette in the *Mystères de Paris*,² appeal to instincts which are as common to all mankind as those of thirst and hunger, and which are only debasing in the exaggerated condition consequent upon the dulness of other instincts higher than they. And the persons who, at one period of their life, might take chief pleasure in such narrations, at another may be brought into a temper of high tone and acute sensibility. But the love of horror respecting which we are now inquiring appears to be an unnatural and feeble feeling; it is not that the person needs excitement, or has any such strong perceptions as would cause excitement, but he is dead to the horror, and a strange evil influence guides his feebleness of mind rather to fearful images than to beautiful ones,—as our disturbed dreams are sometimes filled with ghastlinesses which seem not to arise out of any conceivable

¹ [The reference is to the “Knight of the tomb,” whose “armour was ingloriously painted to represent a skeleton”: see vol. ii. chs. 7–9 of the novel, which was published in 1831, the year before Scott’s death; for a further reference to the works of his later years, see *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, §§ 10–12.]

² [Ch. vii. of book iii. of *Monte Cristo* (“The Rain of Blood”), and ch. 157 of *Mystères de Paris*. For other references to Dumas, see Vol. V. p. 360; to Eugène Sue, *ibid.*, p. 372.]

association of our waking ideas, but to be a vapour out of the very chambers of the tomb, to which the mind, in its palsy, has approached.

§ 17. But even this imbecile revelling in terror is more comprehensible, more apparently natural, than the instinct which is found frequently connected with it, of absolute joy in *ugliness*. In some conditions of old German art we find the most singular insisting upon what is in all respects ugly and abortive, or frightful; not with any sense of sublimity in it, neither in mere foolishness, but with a resolute choice, such as I can completely account for on no acknowledged principle of human nature. For in the worst conditions of sensuality there is yet some perception of the beautiful, so that men utterly depraved in principle and habits of thought will yet admire beautiful things, and fair faces. But in the temper of which I am now speaking there is no preference even of the lower forms of loveliness; no effort at painting fair limbs or passionate faces, no evidence of any human or natural sensation,—a mere feeding on decay and rolling in slime, not apparently or conceivably with any pleasure in it, but under some fearful possession of an evil spirit.

§ 18. The most wonderful instance of this feeling at its uttermost which I remember, is the missal in the British Museum, Harl. MSS. 1892.¹ The drawings of the principal subjects in it appear to have been made first in black, by Martin Schöngauer (at all events by some copyist of his designs), and then another workman has been employed to paint these drawings over. No words can describe the intensity of the “plague of the heart”² in this man; the reader should examine the manuscript carefully if he desires to see how low human nature can sink. I had written a description of one or two of the drawings in order to give some

¹ [In the notes (in his diary of 1853–1854) on the library of the British Museum, Ruskin mentions this manuscript as follows: “The most dreadful and abominable work which I suppose is in the world, of its kind. See Scourging of Christ, and the clouds and trees, his seizure at Gethsemane.” The MS. is a “Manuele Precum et Psalterium,” with numerous pictures. A drawing in black and white, with some beginnings of colour, by Martin Schöngauer (about 1445–1488) is on folio 18.]

² [1 Kings viii. 38.]

conception of them to persons not able to refer to the book; but the mere description so saddened and polluted my pages that I could not retain it. I will only, therefore, name the principal characteristics which belong to the workman's mind.

§ 19. First, Perpetual tampering with death, whether there be occasion to allude to it or not,—especially insisting upon its associations with corruption. I do not pain the reader by dwelling on the details illustrative of this feeling.

Secondly, Delight in dismemberment, dislocation, and distortion of attitude.



Fig. 113

Distortion, to some extent, is a to some extent, is a universal characteristic of the German fifteenth and sixteenth century art; that is to say, there is a general aptitude for painting legs across, or feet twisted round, or bodies awkwardly bent rather than anything in a natural position; and Martin

Schöngauer himself exhibits this defect in no small degree. But here the finishing workman has dislocated nearly every joint which he has exposed, besides knitting and twisting the muscles into mere knots of cordage.¹

What, however, only amounts to dislocation in the limbs of the human figures, becomes actual dismemberment in the animals. Fig. 113 is a faithful copy of a tree with two *birds*, one on its bough, and one above it, seen in the background, behind a soldier's mace, in the drawing of the *Betrayal*.² In the engraving of this subject, by Schöngauer himself, the mace does not occur; it has been put in by the finishing workman in order to give greater expression

¹ [For instances of the same "plague in the heart" in modern fiction, etc., see *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 15 n.]

² [The drawing from which Fig. 113 is copied is on folio 47 of the MS. The engraving by Schöngauer is one of his plates of the *Passion*.]

of savageness to the boughs of the tree, which, joined with the spikes of the mace, form one mass of disorganized angles and thorns, while the birds look partly as if being torn to pieces, and partly like black spiders.

In the painting itself the sky also is covered with little detached and bent white strokes, by way of clouds, and the hair of the figures torn into ragged locks, like wood rent by a cannon shot.

This tendency to dismember and separate everything is one of the eminent conditions of a mind leaning to vice and ugliness; just as to connect and harmonize everything is that of a mind leaning to virtue and beauty. It is shown down to the smallest details; as, for instance, in the spotted backgrounds, which, instead of being chequered with connected patterns, as in the noble manuscripts (see Vol. III. Plate 7),¹ are covered with disorderly dashes and circles executed with the blunt pen or brush, Fig. 114. And one of the borders is composed of various detached heads, cut off at the neck or shoulders without the slightest endeavour to conceal or decorate the truncation. All this, of course, is associated with choice of the most abominable features in the countenance.

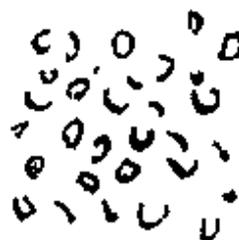


Fig. 114

§ 20. Thirdly, Pure ignorance. Necessarily such a mind as this must be incapable of perceiving the truth of any form; and therefore together with the distortion of all studied form is associated the utter negation of imperfection of that which is less studied.

Fourthly, Delight in blood. I cannot use the words which would be necessary to describe the second* painting of the Scourging, in this missal. But I may generally notice that the degree in which the peculiar feeling we are

* There are, unusually, two paintings of this subject, the first representing the preparations for the scourging, the second its close.

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 262. The "disorderly" backgrounds may be seen on folios 25 and 32 of the MS.; the border of detached heads, on folio 47; the second of two paintings of the Scourging in on folio 67.]

endeavouring to analyze is present in any district of Roman Catholic countries, may be almost accurately measured by the quantity of blood represented on the crucifixes.

The person employed to repaint, in the Campo Santo of Pisa, the portion of Orcagna's pictures representing the *Inferno*,¹ has furnished a very notable example of the same feeling; and it must be familiar to all travellers in countries thoroughly subjected to *modern* Romanism, a thing as different from thirteenth-century Romanism as a prison from a prince's chamber.

Lastly, Utter absence of inventive power. The only ghastliness which this workman is capable of is that of distortion. In ghastly *combination* he is impotent; he cannot even understand it or copy it when set before him, continually destroying any that exists in the drawings of Schöngauer.

§ 21. Such appear to be the principal component elements in the mind of the painter of this missal, and it possesses these in complete abstraction from nearly all others, showing, in deadly purity, the nature of the venom which in ordinary cases is tempered by counteracting elements. There are even certain feelings, evil enough themselves, but more *natural* than these, of which the slightest mingling would here be a sort of redemption. Vanity, for instance, would lead to a more finished execution, and more careful copying from nature, and of course subdue the ugliness by fidelity; love of pleasure would introduce occasionally a graceful or sensual form; malice would give some point and meaning to the bordering grotesques, nay, even insanity might have given them some inventive horror. But the pure mortiferousness of this mind, capable neither of patience, fidelity, grace, nor wit, in any place, or from any motive,—this horrible apathy of brain, which cannot ascend so high as insanity, but is capable only of putrefaction, saves us the task of all analysis, and leaves us only

¹ [See Vol. IV. p. 201.]

that of examining how this black aqua Tophana¹ mingles with other conditions of mind.²

§ 22. For I have led the reader over this dark ground, because it was essential to our determination of the influence of mountains that we should get what data we could as to the extent in other districts, and derivation from other causes, of the horror which at first we might

¹ [Tofana, a woman of Naples, who died 1730; immortalised by her invention of an insidious poison, called by her "Manna of St. Nicolas of Bari," but more commonly "Aqua Tofana."]

² [The draft here continues:—

"Add to it, in the first place, considerable artistic practice, and a familiarity with the beautiful in surrounding art, and we have the mind of Domenichino. In him, when he chose to give labour to his pictures, his Italian education necessitated such observance of the hackneyed laws of grace as should produce pictures of the quality of his Sybil and such others. But when he painted less carefully, and the real character of his mind showed itself (as it almost always does more in the sketch than in the finished work), this real character appears to be precisely that of the missal-painter whom we have been instancing, only educated to a higher degree of skill, and prevented from gloating over death by the society in which it moved, and the models it was obliged to follow.

"The following description of a Domenichino in the Louvre, taken from my private diary, contains no terms of reprobation in which I see anything to be withdrawn:

"No. 497. Domenichino: The Continenence of Scipio.

"The slackness of the arm which is haling the boy along is very characteristic of Domenichino's incapacity of any sort of truthful conception. In the picture also in the Louvre of [Hercules] stopping the Bull the hero performs this act of strength standing on tiptoe on one leg. Neither of these pictures exhibit the fifth element of the thirst for blood, but this is found to its full extent in the large pictures of the Innocents at Bologna.

"Add to the Domenichino mind some slight power of satire, and a wholesome love of finery (wholesome, I mean, in the sense in which we should say it was healthy in a woman to like rouge better than bone dust, and lace than shroud linen), and we have the Venetian spirit of the seventeenth century, which I have already enough examined. The tendency to gloat over death and decay is however still very strongly developed, even in this comparatively luxurious temper. I omitted, in the investigation of it in the *Stones of Venice* (vol. iii. chap. iii.), to note that there is a statue in the church of St. John and Paul which is a very accurate type of it. It represents a fair woman loosely dressed looking down at a mirror in her hand, in which is the image of a skull. There is a tradition respecting this statue, that a Venetian lady was once so fond of looking at her mirror, that she habitually carried one to church with her in her missal. One day as she was gazing into it she saw the reflection of her own face change into that of a death's-head, and was immediately turned into stone as she sate."

The note on Domenichino's "Continenence of Scipio," though cut out of Ruskin's diary of 1854 for use in this place, is not among the MS. sheets. For Domenichino's "Hercules and Achelous," No. 1614, see "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. p. 471. The statue in SS. Giovanni e Paolo is on the monument of "Melchior Lancea, Venetus,

have been led to connect too arbitrarily with hill scenery. And I wish that my knowledge permitted me to trace it over wider ground, for the observations hitherto stated leave the question still one of great difficulty. It might appear, to a traveller crossing and recrossing the Alps between Switzerland and Italy, that the main strength of the evil lay on the south of the chain, and was attributable to the peculiar circumstances and character of the Italian nation at this period. But as he examined the matter farther he would note that in the districts of Italy generally supposed to be *healthy*, the evidence of it was less, and that it seemed to gain ground in places exposed to malaria, centralizing itself in the Val d'Aosta. He would then, perhaps, think it inconsistent with justice to lay the blame on the mountains, and transfer his accusation to the marshes, yet would be compelled to admit that the evil manifested itself most where these marshes were surrounded by hills. He would next, probably, suppose it produced by the united effect of hardship, solitude, and unhealthy air; and be disposed to find fault with the mountains, at least so far as they required painful climbing and laborious agriculture:—but would again be thrown into doubt by remembering that one main branch of the feeling,—the love of ugliness, seemed to belong in a peculiar manner to Northern Germany. If at all familiar with the art of the North and South, he would perceive that the *endurance* of ugliness, which in Italy resulted from languor or depression (while the mind yet retained some apprehension of the difference between fairness and deformity, as above noted in § 12), was not to be confounded with that absence of perception of the Beautiful, which introduced a general hard-featuredness of figure into all German and Flemish early art, even when Germany and Flanders were in their brightest national

1674." On the top, beside a portrait of the man, is a skull; at the foot, the figure of a woman as described by Ruskin. By putting one's head between her and the mirror, one sees her face with the head-dress changed into a death's-head; her foot rests on the open pages of a book inscribed with the words *Rapit omnia finis*. The story is that Lancea's wife was vain, and that her husband thus recorded the fact.]

health and power. And as he followed out in detail the comparison of all the purest ideals north and south of the Alps, and perceived the perpetual contrast existing between the angular and bony sanctities of the one latitude, and the drooping graces and pensive pieties of the other, he would no longer attribute to the ruggedness, or miasma, of the mountains the origin of a feeling which showed itself so strongly in the comfortable streets of Antwerp and Nuremberg, and in the unweakened and active intellects of Van Eyck and Albert Dürer.

§ 23. As I think over these various difficulties, the following conclusions seem to me deducible from the data I at present possess. I am in no wise confident of their accuracy, but they may assist the reader in pursuing the inquiry farther.¹

*Conditions
which produce
the Mountain
gloom.*

I. It seems to me, first, that a fair degree of intellect and imagination is necessary before this kind of disease is possible. It does not seize on merely stupid peasantries, but on those which belong to intellectual races, and in whom the faculties of imagination and the sensibilities of heart were originally strong and tender. In flat land, with fresh air, the peasantry may be almost mindless, but not infected with this gloom.

*General power
of intellect.*

II. In the second place, I think it is closely connected with the Romanist religion, and that for several causes.

Romanism.

A. The habitual use of bad art (ill-made dolls and bad pictures), in the services of religion, naturally blunts the delicacy of the senses, by requiring reverence to be paid to ugliness, and familiarizing the eye to it in moments of strong and pure feeling; I do not think we can overrate the probable evil results of this enforced discordance between the slight and imagination.

B. The habitually dwelling on the penances, tortures, and martyrdoms of the Saints, as subjects of admiration

¹ [The subject was one which had often occupied Ruskin's thoughts; compare, with what follows here, the analysis of Gloom given in an appendix to vol. ii. of *Modern Painters* (Vol. IV. pp. 371–381).]

and sympathy, together with much meditation on Purgatorial suffering; rendered almost impossible to Protestants by the greater fearfulness of such reflections, when the punishment is supposed eternal.

C. Idleness, and neglect of the proper duties of daily life, during the large number of holidays in the year, together with want of proper cleanliness, induced by the idea that comfort and happy purity are less pleasing to God than discomfort and self-degradation. This indolence induces much despondency, a larger measure of real misery than is necessary under the given circumstances of life, and many forms of crime and disease besides.

D. Superstitious indignation. I do not know if it is as a result of the combination of these several causes, or if under a separate head, that I should class a certain strange awe which seems to attach itself to Romanism like its shadow, differing from the coarser gloom which we have been examining, in that it can attach itself to minds of the highest purity and keenness, and, indeed, does so to these more than to inferior ones. It is an indefinable pensiveness, leading to great severity of precept, mercilessness in punishment, and dark or discouraging thoughts of God and man.*

It is connected partly with a greater belief in the daily presence and power of evil spirits than is common in Protestants (except the more enthusiastic, and *also gloomy*, sects of Puritans), connected also with a sternness of belief in the condemnatory power and duty of the Church, leading to persecution, and to less tempered indignation at oppositions of opinion than characterizes the Protestant mind ordinarily; which, though waspish and bitter enough, is

* This character has, I think, been traced in the various writings of Mrs. Sherwood¹ better than in any others; she has a peculiar art of making it felt, and of striking the deep tone of it as from a passing-bell, contrasting it with the most cheerful, lovely, and sincere conditions of Protestantism.

¹ [For Ruskin's early reading in *The Lady of the Manor* and *Henry Milner*, see *Præterita*, i. ch. iv. § 80, ch. v. § 106.]

not liable to the peculiar heart-burning caused in a Papist by any insult to his Church, or by the aspect of what he believes to be heresy.

§ 24. For all these reasons, I think Romanism is very definitely connected with the gloom we are examining, so as without fail to produce some measure of it in all persons who sincerely hold that faith; and if such effect is ever not to be traced, it is because the Romanism is checked by infidelity. The atheism or dissipation of a large portion of the population in crowded capitals prevents this gloom from being felt in full force; but it resumes its power, in mountain solitudes, over the minds of the comparatively ignorant and more suffering peasantry; so that it is not an evil inherent in the hills themselves, but one result of the continuance in them of that old religious voice of warning, which, encouraging sacred feeling in general, encourages also whatever evil may essentially belong to the form of doctrine preached among them.

§ 25. III. It is assuredly connected also with a diseased state of health. Cheerfulness is just as natural to the heart of *Disease of*
a man in strong health as colour to his cheek; and *body.*
wherever there is habitual gloom, there must be either bad air, unwholesome food, improperly severe labour, or erring habits of life. Among mountains, all these various causes are frequently found in combination. The air is either too bleak, or it is impure; generally the peasants are exposed to alternations of both. Great hardship is sustained in various ways, severe labour undergone during summer, and a sedentary and confined life led during winter. Where the gloom exists in less elevated districts, as in Germany, I do not doubt, though I have not historical knowledge enough to prove this, that it is partly connected with habits of sedentary life, protracted study, and general derangement of the bodily system in consequence; when it exists in the gross form exhibited in the manuscript above examined, I have no doubt it has been fostered by habits of general vice, cruelty, and dissipation.

§ 26. IV. Considered as a natural insensibility to beauty, it is, I imagine, indicative of a certain want of cultivation in the race among whom it is found, perhaps without corporal or mental weakness, but produced by rudeness of life, absence of examples of beautiful art, defects in the mould of the national features, and such other adversities, generally belonging to northern nations as



Fig. 115



Fig. 116

opposed to southern. Here, however, again my historical knowledge is at fault, and I must leave the reader to follow out the question for himself, if it interests him. A single example may be useful to those who have not time for investigation, in order to show the kind of difference I mean.

Rudeness of life.

Fig. 115 is a St. Peter, from a German fifteenth-century MS., of good average execution; and Fig. 116 a Madonna, either of the best English, or second-rate French, work, from a service-book executed in 1290. The reader will, I doubt not, perceive at once the general grace and tenderness of sentiment in the lines of the drapery of the last,

and the comparatively delicate type of features. The hardness of line, gesture, and feature in the German example, though two centuries at least later, are, I think, equally notable. They are accompanied in the rest of the MS. by an excessive coarseness in choice of ornamental subject: beneath a female figure typical of the Church, for instance, there is painted a carcass, just butchered, and hung up with skewers through the legs.¹

§ 27. V. In many high mountain districts, not only are the inhabitants likely to be hurt by hardship of life, and retarded by roughness of manners, but their eyes are familiarized with certain conditions of ugliness and disorder, produced by the violence of the elements around them. Once accustomed to look upon these conditions as inevitable in nature, they may easily transfer the idea of inevitableness and fitness to the same appearances in their own houses. I said that mountains seem to have been created to show us the perfection of beauty; but we saw in the tenth chapter² that they also show sometimes the extreme of ugliness: and to the inhabitants of districts of this kind it

¹ [In Ruskin's diary of 1854 there is an earlier draft of this passage, which gives some further illustration of the subject from illuminated manuscripts:—

“It was noted in the missal which furnishes us with our root of evil, that the love of death associated itself with an endurance of ugliness, elsewhere unexampled. Now, generally speaking, the conditions of temper associated with the love of death in Germany are in a similar way connected with this endurance of ugliness; while in Italy, they are tempered by some feeble love or perception of beauty; and it is a matter of extreme difficulty to determine how far this permission of ugliness is a healthy or unhealthy character. Generally speaking, the whole art of illumination in Germany from the twelfth century downwards to the fourteenth, is characterised by a hardness, monstrosity of feature, and absence of all grace of composition, which appear almost *inhuman*, even beside the earliest Saxon or Irish work; while the French work is in comparison like that of angels, beside this something less than humanity . . . [references to illustrations from manuscripts]. Nor does this character disappear even in later work, for in a German manuscript in my own possession, executed evidently after Raphael's time, in which the borders are founded on Italian arabesques, one of the ornaments introduced conspicuously at the border of the service beginning ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, come and see the crown wherewith the Lord has crowned her,’ is the carcass of a swine, cut open and skewered, so as to show the inside of the ribs, with a tub full of blood underneath; the whole so highly and carefully finished, as to be a valuable example of the state of art at the period.”]

² [See above, p. 158.]

is almost necessary to their daily comfort that they should view without dislike aspects of desolation which would to others be frightful. And can we blame them, if, when the rivers are continually loading their fields with heaps of black slime, and rolling, in time of flood, over the thickets on their islets, leaving, when the flood is past, every leaf and bough dim with granite-dust,—never more to be green through all the parching of summer; when the landslip leaves a ghastly scar among the grassy mounds of the hill side;—the rocks above are torn by their glaciers into rifts and wounds that are never healed; and the ice itself blackened league after league with loose ruin cast upon it as if out of some long and foul excavation;—can we blame, I say, the peasant, if, beholding these things daily as necessary appointments in the strong nature around him, he is careless that the same disorders should appear in his household or his farm; nor feels discomforted, though his walls should be full of fissures like the rocks, his furniture covered with dust like the trees, and his garden like the glacier in unsightliness of trench and desolation of mound?

§ 28. Under these five heads are embraced, as far as I am able to trace them, the causes of the temper which we are examining; and it will be seen that only the last is quite peculiar to mountain and marsh districts, although there is a somewhat greater probability that the others also may be developed among hills more than in plains. When, by untoward accident, all are associated, and the conditions described under the fifth head are very distinct, the result is even sublime in its painfulness. Of places subjected to such evil influence, none are quite so characteristic as the town of Sion in the Valais. In the first place (see § 23), the material on which it works is good; the race of peasantry being there both handsome and intelligent, as far as they escape the adverse influences around them; so that on a fête-day or a Sunday, when the families come down from the hill châteaux where the air is healthier, many very pretty faces may be seen among the younger women, set

off by somewhat more pains in adjustment of the singular Valaisan costume than is now usual in other cantons of Switzerland.

§ 29. Secondly, it is a bishopric,¹ and quite the centre of Romanism in Switzerland, all the most definite Romanist doctrines being evidently believed sincerely, and by a majority of the population; Protestantism having no hold upon them at all; and republican infidelity, though active in the councils of the commune, having as yet, so far as I could see, little influence in the hearts of households. The prominence of the Valais among Roman Catholic states has always been considerable. The cardinal of Sion was, of old, one of the personages most troublesome to the Venetian ambassadors at the English Court.*

§ 30. Thirdly, it is in the midst of a marshy valley, pregnant with various disease; the water either stagnant, or disgorged in wild torrents charged with earth; the air, in the morning, stagnant also, hot, close, and infected; in the afternoon, rushing up from the outlet at Martigny in fitful and fierce whirlwind; one side of the valley in almost continual shade, the other (it running east and west) scorched by southern sun, and sending streams of heat into the air all night long from its torrid limestones; while less traceable plagues than any of these bring on the inhabitants, at a certain time of life, violent affections of goître, and often, in infancy, cretinism. Agriculture is attended with the greatest difficulties and dependencies; the land which the labour of a life has just rendered fruitful, is often buried in an hour; and the carriage of materials, as well as the traversing of land on the steep hill sides, attended with extraordinary fatigue.

* See *Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII.* (Dispatches of the Venetian ambassador Giustinian, translated by Mr. Rawdon Brown, 1854.)²

¹ [For the bishopric of Sion, and some further remarks on the character of the Swiss peasantry generally, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v., pt. vi. ch. ix. §§ 12, 13. On both subjects, compare *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. §§ 97, 98.]

² [For an earlier reference to this book, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 353 n.).]

§ 31. Owing to these various influences, Sion, the capital of the district, presents one of the most remarkable scenes for the study of the particular condition of human feeling at present under consideration that I know among mountains. It consists of little more than one main street, winding round the roots of two ridges of crag, and branching on the side towards the rocks, into a few narrow lanes, on the other, into spaces of waste ground, of which part serve for military exercises, part are enclosed in an uncertain and vague way; a ditch half-filled up, or wall half-broken down, seeming to indicate their belonging, or having been intended to belong, to some of the unfinished houses which are springing up amidst their weeds. But it is difficult to say, in any part of the town, what is garden ground and what is waste; still more, what is new building and what old. The houses have been for the most part built roughly of the coarse limestone of the neighbouring hills, then coated with plaster, and painted, in imitation of Palladian palaces, with grey architraves and pilasters, having draperies from capital to capital. With this false decoration is curiously contrasted a great deal of graceful, honest, and original ironwork, in bulging balconies, and floreted gratings of huge windows, and branching sprays, for any and every purpose of support or guard.¹ The plaster, with its fresco, has in most instances dropped away, leaving the houses peeled and scarred; daubed into uncertain restoration with new mortar, and in the best cases thus left; but commonly fallen also, more or less, into ruin, and either roofed over at the first story when the second has fallen, or hopelessly abandoned;—not pulled down, but left in white and ghastly shells to crumble into heaps of limestone and dust, a pauper or two still inhabiting where inhabitation is possible. The lanes wind among these ruins; the blue sky and mountain grass are seen through the windows of their rooms and over their partitions, on which old gaudy papers flaunt in rags: the weeds

¹ [For the ironwork of Sion, see *Two Paths*, § 168.]

gather, and the dogs scratch about their foundations; yet there are no luxuriant weeds, for their ragged leaves are blanched with lime, crushed under perpetually falling fragments, and worn away by listless standing of idle feet. There is always mason's work doing, always some fresh patching and whitening; a dull smell of mortar, mixed with that of stale foulness of every kind, rises with the dust, and defiles every current of air; the corners are filled with accumulations of stones, partly broken, with crusts of cement sticking to them, and blotches of nitre oozing out of their pores. The lichenous rocks and sunburnt slopes of grass stretch themselves hither and thither among the wreck, curiously traversed by stairs and walls and half-cut paths that disappear below starkly black arches, and cannot be followed, or rise in windings round the angles, and in unfenced slopes along the fronts, of the two masses of rock which bear, one the dark castle, the other the old church and convent of Sion; beneath, in a rudely inclosed square at the outskirts of the town, a still more ancient Lombardic church raises its grey tower, a kind of esplanade extending between it and the Episcopal palace, and laid out as a plot of grass, intersected by gravel walks; but the grass, in strange sympathy with the inhabitants, will not grow *as* grass, but chokes itself with a network of grey weeds, quite wonderful in their various expression of thorny discontent and savageness; the blue flower of the borage, which mingles with them in quantities, hardly interrupting their character, for the violent black spot in the centre of its blue takes away the tenderness of the flower, and it seems to have grown there in some supernatural mockery of its old renown of being good against melancholy.¹ The rest of the herbage is chiefly composed of the dwarf mallow, the wild succory, the wall-rocket, goose-foot, and milfoil;*

* *Malva rotundifolia*, *Cichorium Intybus*, *Sisymbrium tenuifolium*, *Chenopodium urbicum*, *Achillea Millefolium*.

¹ [So in Elyot (*Cast. Helth*, 1541), "Bourage comfortheth the harte, and maketh one merye"; and the old adage (cited in Hooker's *British Flora*), "I Borage always bring Courage."]

plants, nearly all of them, jagged in the leaf, broken and dimly clustered in flower, haunters of waste ground and places of outcast refuse.

Beyond this plot of ground the Episcopal palace, a half-deserted, barrack-like building, overlooks a *neglected vineyard*, of which the clusters, black on the under side, snow-white on the other with lime-dust, gather around them a melancholy hum of flies. Through the arches of this trellis-work the avenue of the great valley is seen in descending distance, enlarged with line beyond line of tufted foliage, languid and rich, degenerating at last into leagues of grey Maremma, wild with the thorn and the willow; on each side of it, sustaining themselves in mighty slopes and unbroken reaches of colossal promontory, the great mountains secede into supremacy through rosy depths of burning air, and the crescents of snow gleam over their dim summits, as—if there could be Mourning, as once there was War, in heaven¹—a line of waning moons might be set for lamps along the sides of some sepulchral chamber in the Infinite.

§ 32. I know not how far this universal grasp of the sorrowful spirit might be relaxed if sincere energy were directed to amend the ways of life of the Valaisan. But it has always appeared to me that there was, even in more healthy mountain districts, a certain degree of inevitable melancholy; nor could I ever escape from the feeling that here, where chiefly the beauty of God's working was manifested to men, warning was also given, and that to the full, of the enduring of His indignation against sin.

It seems one of the most cunning and frequent of self-deceptions to turn the heart away from this warning, and refuse to acknowledge anything in the fair scenes of the natural creation but beneficence. Men in general lean towards the light, so far as they contemplate such things at all, most of them passing "by on the other side,"² either in mere plodding pursuit of their own work, irrespective of

¹ [Revelation xii. 7.] ² [Luke x. 31.]

what good or evil is around them, or else in selfish gloom, or selfish delight, resulting from their own circumstances at the moment. Of those who give themselves to any true contemplation, the plurality, being humble, gentle, and kindly hearted, look only in nature for what is lovely and kind; partly, also, God gives the disposition to every healthy human mind in some degree to pass over or even harden itself against evil things, else the suffering would be too great to be borne; and humble people, with a quiet trust that everything is for the best, do not fairly represent the facts to themselves, thinking them none of their business. So, what between hard-hearted people, thoughtless people, busy people, humble people, and cheerfully-minded people,—giddiness of youth, and preoccupations of age,—philosophies of faith, and cruelties of folly,—priest and Levite, masquer and merchantman, all agreeing to keep their own side of the way,—the evil that God sends to warn us gets to be forgotten, and the evil that He sends to be mended by us gets left unmented. And then, because people shut their eyes to the dark indisputableness of the facts in front of them, their Faith, such as it is, is shaken or uprooted by every darkness in what is revealed to them. In the present day it is not easy to find a well-meaning man among our more earnest thinkers, who will not take upon himself to dispute the whole system of redemption, because he cannot unravel the mystery of the punishment of sin. But can he unravel the mystery of the punishment of NO sin? Can he entirely account for all that happens to a cab-horse?¹ Has he ever looked fairly at the fate of one of those beasts as it is dying,—measured the work it has done, and the reward it has got,—put his hand upon the bloody wounds through which its bones are piercing, and so looked up to Heaven with an entire understanding of Heaven's ways about the horse?² Yet the horse is a fact—

¹ [Compare Ruskin's passage on the cart-horse in *Love's Meinie*, § 138; and on the horse at railway-sidings in *Time and Tide*, § 20.]

[In one of his copies Ruskin wrote here:—

“ ‘Inmeritis franguntur crura caballis.’—JUVENAL, x. 60.”]

no dream—no revelation among the myrtle trees by night; and the dust it dies upon, and the dogs that eat it, are facts; and yonder happy person,—whose the horse was till its knees were broken over the hurdles, who had an immortal soul to begin with, and wealth and peace, to help forward his immortality; who has also devoted the powers of his soul, and body, and wealth, and peace, to the spoiling of houses, the corruption of the innocent, and the oppression of the poor; and has, at this actual moment of his prosperous life, as many curses waiting round about him in calm shadow, with their death's eyes fixed upon him, abiding their time, as ever the poor cab-horse had launched at him in meaningless blasphemies, when his failing feet stumbled at the stones,—this happy person shall have no stripes,—shall have only the horse's fate of annihilation; or, if other things are indeed reserved for him, Heaven's kindness or omnipotence is to be doubted therefore.

§ 33. We cannot reason of these things. But this I know—and this may by all men be known—that no good or lovely thing exists in this world without its correspondent darkness; and that the universe presents itself continually to mankind under the stern aspect of warning, or of choice, the good and the evil set on the right hand and the left.

And in this mountain gloom, which weighs so strongly upon the human heart that in all time hitherto, as we have seen, the hill defiles have been either avoided in terror or inhabited in penance, there is but the fulfilment of the universal law, that where the beauty and wisdom of the Divine working are most manifested, there also are manifested most clearly the terror of God's wrath, and inevitableness of His power.

Nor is this gloom less wonderful so far as it bears witness to the error of human choice, even when the nature of good and evil is most definitely set before it. The trees of Paradise were fair; but our first parents hid themselves from God "in medio ligni Paradisi,"—in the midst of the trees of the garden. The hills were ordained for the help



J. Keekin

Allen & Co. 5c.

The Mountain Gloom

From the drawing in the collection of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

of man; but instead of raising his eyes to the hills, from whence cometh his help, he does his idol sacrifice “upon every high hill and under every green tree.” The mountain of the Lord’s house is established above the hills; but Nadab and Abihu shall see under His feet the body of heaven in his clearness, yet go down to kindle the censer against their own souls. And so to the end of time it will be; to the end, that cry will still be heard along the Alpine winds, “Hear, oh ye mountains, the Lord’s controversy!” Still, their gulfs of thawless ice, and unretarded roar of tormented waves, and deathful falls of fruitless waste, and unredeemed decay, must be the image of the souls of those who have chosen the darkness, and whose cry shall be to the mountains to fall on them, and to the hills to cover them; and still, to the end of time, the clear waters of the unfailing springs, and the white pasture-lilies in their clothed multitude, and the abiding of the burning peaks in their nearness to the opened heaven, shall be the types, and the blessings, of those who have chosen light, and of whom it is written, “The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, righteousness.”¹

¹ [The Bible references here are Genesis iii. 8 (Vulgate); Psalms cxxi. 4; Jeremiah iii. 6; Isaiah ii. 2; Exodus xxiv. 1–10; Micah vi. 2; Hosea x. 8; Psalms lxxii. 3.]
VI. 2D

CHAPTER XX

THE MOUNTAIN GLORY¹

§ 1. I HAVE dwelt, in the foregoing chapter, on the sadness of the hills with the greater insistence that I feared my own excessive love for them might lead me into too favourable interpretation of their influences over the human heart; or, at least, that the reader might accuse me of fond prejudice, in the conclusions to which, finally, I desire to lead him concerning them. For, to myself, mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery; in them, and in the forms of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up; and though I can look with happy admiration at the lowland flowers, and woods, and open skies, the happiness is tranquil and cold, like that of examining detached flowers in a conservatory, or reading a pleasant book; and if the scenery be resolutely level, insisting upon the declaration of its own flatness in all the detail of it, as in Holland, or Lincolnshire, or Central Lombardy, it appears to me like a prison, and I cannot long endure it. But the slightest rise and fall in the road,—a mossy bank at the side of a crag of chalk, with brambles at its brow, overhanging it,—a ripple over three or four stones in the stream by the bridge,—above all, a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if, possibly, one might see a hill if one got to the other side of the trees, will instantly give me intense delight, because the shadow, or the hope, of the hills, is in them.

§ 2. And thus, although² there are few districts of Northern Europe, however apparently dull or tame, in which

¹ [With this chapter compare *The Art of England*, § 174.]

² [The passage from “Although there are few districts . . .” down to the end

I cannot find pleasure, though the whole of Northern France (except Champagne), dull as it seems to most travellers, is to me a perpetual Paradise; and, putting Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and one or two such other perfectly flat districts aside, there is not an English county which I should not find entertainment in exploring the cross-roads of, foot by foot; yet all my best enjoyment would be owing to the imagination of the hills, colouring, with their far-away memories, every lowland stone and herb. The pleasant French coteau, green in the sunshine, delights me, either by what real mountain character it has in itself (for in extent and succession of promontory the flanks of the French valleys have quite the sublimity of true mountain distances), or by its broken ground and rugged steps among the vines, and rise of the leafage above, against the blue sky, as it might rise at Vevay or Como. There is not a wave of the Seine but is associated in my mind with the first rise of the sandstones and forest pines of Fontainebleau; and with the hope of the Alps, as one leaves Paris with the horses' heads to the south-west, the morning sun flashing on the bright waves at Charenton. If there be *no* hope or association of this kind, and if I cannot deceive myself into fancying that perhaps at the next rise of the road there may be seen the film of a blue hill in the gleam of sky at the horizon, the landscape, however beautiful, produces in me even a kind of sickness and pain; and the whole view from Richmond Hill or Windsor Terrace,—nay, the gardens of Alcinous, with their perpetual summer,—or of the Hesperides (if they were flat, and not close to Atlas), golden apples

of § 2 is § 19 of *Frondees Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“This and the following passage have nothing to do with the general statements in the book. They occur with reference only to my own idiosyncrasy. I was much surprised to find how individual it was, by a Pre-Raphaelite painter's declaring a piece of unwholesome reedy fen to be more beautiful than Benvenue.”

The “following passage” in *Frondees* is the description of Calais Church (above, pp. 11–12).]

and all,—I would give away in an instant, for one mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady-fern.*

§ 3. I know that this is in great part idiosyncrasy; and that I must not trust to my own feelings, in this respect, as representative of the modern landscape instinct: yet I know it is not idiosyncrasy, in so far as there may be proved to be indeed an increase of the absolute beauty of all scenery in exact proportion to its mountainous character, providing that character be *healthily* mountainous. I do not mean to take the Col de Bonhomme as representative of hills, any more than I would take Romney Marsh as representative of plains; but putting Leicestershire or Staffordshire fairly beside Westmoreland, and Lombardy or Champagne fairly beside the Pays de Vaud or the Canton Berne, I find the increase in the calculable sum of elements of beauty to be steadily in proportion to the increase of mountainous character; and that the best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and corn-fields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above; this excellence not being in any wise a matter referable to feeling, or individual preferences, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colours on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment.

* In tracing the *whole* of the deep enjoyment to mountain association, I of course except whatever feelings are connected with the observance of rural life, or with that of architecture. None of these feelings arise out of the landscape, properly so called: the pleasure with which we see a peasant's garden fairly kept, or a ploughman doing his work well, or a group of children playing at a cottage door, being wholly separate from that which we find in the fields or commons around them; and the beauty of architecture, or the associations connected with it, in like manner often ennobling the most tame scenery;—yet not so but that we may always distinguish between the abstract character of the unassisted landscape, and the charm which it derives from the architecture. Much of the majesty of French landscape consists in its grand and grey village churches and turreted farmhouses, not to speak of its cathedrals, castles, and beautifully placed cities.

§ 4. For consider, first, the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape colour by the introductions of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In an ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky; the green of grass, which I will suppose (and this is an unnecessary concession to the lowlands) entirely fresh and bright; the green of trees; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in *addition* to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances; and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness; these azures and purples* passing into rose-colour of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose colour of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in colour means at all; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the far-away hill-purples he cannot conceive.

* One of the principal reasons for the false supposition that Switzerland is not picturesque, is the error of most sketchers and painters in representing pine forest in middle distance as dark *green*, or grey green, whereas its true colour is always purple, at distances of even two or three miles. Let any traveller coming down the Montanvert look for an aperture, three or four inches wide, between the near pine branches, through which, standing eight or ten feet from it, he can see the opposite forests on the Breven or Flegère. Those forests are not above two or two and a half miles from him; but he will find the aperture is filled by a tint of nearly pure azure or purple, not by green.¹

¹ [On “the quantity of purple in nature,” compare *Elements of Drawing*, § 165.]

§ 5. Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of colour, we have to estimate the influence of the finished inlaying and enamel-work of the colour-jewellery on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower; most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones. The wood hyacinth and wild rose are, indeed, the only *supreme* flowers that the lowlands can generally show; and the wild rose is also a mountaineer, and more fragrant in the hills,¹ while the wood hyacinth, or grape hyacinth, at its best, cannot match even the dark bell-gentian, leaving the light-blue star-gentian in its uncontested queenliness,² and the Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude. The violet, lily of the valley, crocus, and wood anemone are, I suppose, claimable partly by the plains as well as the hills; but the large orange lily and narcissus I have never seen but on hill pastures, and the exquisite oxalis is pre-eminently a mountaineer.*

§ 6. To this supremacy in mosses and flowers we have next to add an inestimable gain in the continual presence and power of water. Neither in its clearness, its colour, its fantasy of motion, its calmness of space, depth, and reflection, or its wrath, can water be conceived by a lowlander, out of sight of sea. A sea wave is far grander than any torrent—but of the sea and its influences we are not now speaking; and the sea itself, though it *can* be clear, is never calm, among our shores, in the sense that a mountain lake can be calm. The sea seems only to pause; the

* The Savoyard's name for its flower, "Pain du Bon Dieu," is very beautiful; from, I believe, the supposed resemblance of its white and scattered blossom to the fallen manna.³

¹ [Ruskin had specially noted this in his diary for 1854:—

"July 20.—Note that the wild roses, here in Chamouni, have the most perfect perfume I ever felt, like sweet-briar."]

² [For Ruskin's love of the gentian, see Vol. II. p. 431 *n*. In one of his diaries (Geneva, June 1, 1844) he describes "a lovely walk yesterday beyond Les Rousses, among the gentians. I never saw them in such profusion before, nor of such blue. It was as if Heaven had been left desolate and grass had grown on it."]

³ [On the Italian and Savoyard names of this flower, see Vol. III. p. 175 *n*.]

mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the cloud of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning,—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance.

§ 7. To this supremacy in wave and stream is joined a no less manifest pre-eminence in the character of trees. It is possible among plains, in the species of trees which properly belong to them, the poplars of Amiens, for instance, to obtain a serene simplicity of grace, which, as I said,¹ is a better help to the study of gracefulness, as such, than any of the wilder groupings of the hills; so, also, there are certain conditions of symmetrical luxuriance developed in the park and avenue, rarely rivalled in their way among mountains; and yet the mountain superiority in foliage is, on the whole, nearly as complete as it is in water: for exactly as there are some expressions in the broad reaches of a navigable lowland river, such as the Loire or Thames, not, in their way, to be matched among the rock rivers, and yet for all that a lowlander cannot be said to have truly seen the element of water at all; so even in the richest parks and avenues he cannot be said to have truly seen trees. For the resources of trees are not developed until they have difficulty to contend with; neither their tenderness of brotherly love and harmony, till they are forced to choose their ways of various life where there is contracted room for them, talking to each other with their restrained branches. The various action of trees rooting themselves in inhospitable rocks, stooping to look into ravines, hiding from the search of glacier winds, reaching forth to the

¹ [See Vol. V. p. 237.]

rays of rare sunshine, crowding down together to drink at sweetest streams, climbing hand in hand among the difficult slopes, opening in sudden dances round the mossy knolls, gathering into companies at rest among the fragrant fields, gliding in grave procession over the heavenward ridges—nothing of this can be conceived among the unvexed and unvaried felicities of the lowland forest: while to all these direct sources of greater beauty are added, first the power of redundancy,—the mere quantity of foliage visible in the folds and on the promontories of a single Alp being greater than that of an entire lowland landscape (unless a view from some cathedral tower); and to this charm of redundancy, that of clearer *visibility*,—tree after tree being constantly shown in successive height, one behind another, instead of the mere tops and flanks of masses, as in the plains; and the forms of multitudes of them continually defined against the clear sky, near and above, or against white clouds entangled among their branches, instead of being confused in dimness of distance.

§ 8. Finally, to this supremacy in foliage we have to add the still less questionable supremacy in clouds. There is no effect of sky possible in the lowlands which may not in equal perfection be seen among the hills; but there are effects by tens of thousands, for ever invisible and inconceivable to the inhabitant of the plains, manifested among the hills in the course of one day. The mere power of familiarity with the clouds, of walking with them and above them, alters and renders clear our whole conception of the baseless architecture of the sky; and for the beauty of it, there is more in a single wreath of early cloud, pacing its way up an avenue of pines, or pausing among the points of their fringes, than in all the white heaps that filled the arched sky of the plains from one horizon to the other. And of the nobler cloud manifestations,—the breaking of their troublous seas against the crags, their black spray sparkling with lightning; or the going forth of the morning¹

¹ [See Ezekiel vii. 10; Hosea vi. 3.]

along their pavements of moving marble, level-laid between dome and dome of snow;—of these things there can be as little imagination or understanding in an inhabitant of the plains as of the scenery of another planet than his own.

§ 9. And, observe, all these superiorities are matters plainly measurable and calculable, not in any wise to be referred to estimate of *sensation*. Of the grandeur or expression of the hills I have not spoken; how far they are great, or strong, or terrible, I do not for the moment consider, because vastness, and strength, and terror, are not to all minds subjects of desired contemplation. It may make no difference to some men whether a natural object be large or small, whether it be strong or feeble. But loveliness of colour, perfectness of form, endlessness of change, wonderfulness of structure, are precious to all undiseased human minds; and the superiority of the mountains in all these things to the lowland is, I repeat, as measurable as the richness of a painted window matched with a white one, or the wealth of a museum compared with that of a simply furnished chamber. They seem to have been built for the human race, as at once their schools and cathedrals; full of treasures of illuminated manuscript for the scholar, kindly in simple lessons to the worker, quiet in pale cloisters for the thinker, glorious in holiness for the worshipper. And of these great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of cloud, choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars,—of these, as we have seen, it was written, nor long ago, by one of the best of the poor human race for whom they were built, wondering in himself for whom their Creator *could* have made them, and thinking to have entirely discerned the Divine intent in them—“They are inhabited by the Beasts.”¹

§ 10. Was it then indeed thus with us, and so lately? Had mankind offered no worship in their mountain

¹ [See above, p. 120.]

churches? Was all that granite sculpture and floral painting done by the angels in vain?

Not so. It will need no prolonged thought to convince us that in the hills the purposes of their Maker have indeed been accomplished in such measure as, through the sin or folly of men, He ever permits them to be accomplished. It may not seem, from the general language held concerning them, or from any directly traceable results, that mountains have had serious influence on human intellect; but it will not, I think, be difficult to show that their occult influence has been both constant and essential to the progress of the race.

§ 11. Consider, first, whether we can justly refuse to attribute to their mountain scenery some share in giving the Greeks and Italians their intellectual lead among the nations of Europe.

There is not a single spot of land in either of these countries from which mountains are not discernible; almost always they form the principal feature of the scenery. The mountain outlines seen from Sparta, Corinth, Athens, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Verona, are of consummate beauty; and whatever dislike or contempt may be traceable in the mind of the Greeks for mountain ruggedness, their placing the shrine of Apollo under the cliffs of Delphi, and his throne upon Parnassus, was a testimony to all succeeding time that they themselves attributed the best part of their intellectual inspiration to the power of the hills. Nor would it be difficult to show that every great writer of either of those nations, however little definite regard he might manifest for the landscape of his country, had been mentally formed and disciplined by it, so that even such enjoyment as Homer's of the ploughed ground and poplar groves owes its intensity and delicacy to the excitement of the imagination produced, without his own consciousness, by other and grander features of the scenery to which he had been accustomed from a child; and differs in every respect from the tranquil, vegetative, and prosaic affection

with which the same ploughed land and poplars would be regarded by a native of the Netherlands.

The vague expression which I have just used— “intellectual lead,” may be expanded into four great heads; lead in Religion, Art and Literature, War, and Social Economy.

§ 12. It will be right to examine our subject eventually under these four heads; but I shall limit myself, for the present, to some consideration of the first two, for a reason presently to be stated.¹

I. We have before had occasion² to note the peculiar awe with which mountains were regarded in the Middle Ages, as bearing continual witness against the frivolity or luxury of the world. Though the sense of this influence of theirs is perhaps more clearly expressed by the mediæval Christians than by any other sect of religionists, the influence itself has been constant in all time. Mountains have always possessed the power, first, of exciting religious enthusiasm; secondly, of purifying religious faith. These two operations are partly contrary to one another: for the faith of enthusiasm is apt to be *impure*, and the mountains, by exciting morbid conditions of the imagination, have caused in great part the legendary and romantic forms of belief; on the other hand, by fostering simplicity of life and dignity of morals, they have purified by action what they falsified by imagination. But, even in their first and most dangerous influence, it is not the mountains that are to blame, but the human heart. While we mourn over the fictitious shape given to the religious visions of the anchorite, we may envy the sincerity and the depth of the emotion from which they spring: in the deep feeling, we have to acknowledge the solemn influences of the hills; but for the erring modes or forms of thought, it is human wilfulness, sin, and false teaching, that are answerable. We

*1st. Influence
of mountains
on religious
temperament.*

¹ [See below, § 39, p. 454.]

² [See Vol. V. pp. 253–255.]

are not to deny the nobleness of the imagination because its direction is illegitimate, nor the pathos of the legend because its circumstances are groundless; the ardour and abstraction of the spiritual life are to be honoured in themselves, though the one may be misguided and the other deceived; and the deserts of Osma, Assisi, and Monte Viso are still to be thanked for the zeal they gave, or guarded, whether we find it in St. Francis and St. Dominic, or in those whom God's hand hid from them in the clefts of the rocks.¹

§ 13. And, in fact, much of the apparently harmful influence of hills on the religion of the world is nothing else than their general gift of exciting, in peculiarly solemn tones, the poetical and inventive faculties. Their terror leads into devotional casts of thought; their beauty and wildness prompt the invention at the same time; and where the mind is not gifted with stern reasoning powers, or protected by purity of teaching, it is sure to mingle the invention with its creed, and the vision with its prayer. Strictly speaking, we ought to consider the superstitions of the hills, universally, as a form of poetry; regretting only that men have not yet learned how to distinguish poetry from well-founded faith. And if we do this, and enable ourselves thus to review, without carping or sneering, the shapes of solemn imagination which have arisen among the inhabitants of Europe, we shall find, on the one hand, the mountains of Greece and Italy forming all the loveliest dreams, first of the Pagan, then of the Christian mythology; on the other, those of Scandinavia to be the first sources of whatever mental (as well as military) power was brought by the Normans into Southern Europe. Normandy itself is to all intents and purposes a hill country; composed, over large extents, of granite and basalt, often

¹ [Osma, in Old Castile (Spain), where St. Dominic was for a time a Canon. For Ruskin's interest in St. Francis of Assisi, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 41, 45, 76 *St. Mark's Rest*, §§ 75, 76; *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 7-8, 43; *Val d'Arno*, § 178. For his interest in the Protestants of the Vaudois Valley, beneath Monte Viso, see Vol. XII. p. 139 *n*. The Bible reference is to Exodus xxxiii. 21, 22.]

rugged and covered with heather on the summits, and traversed by beautiful and singular dells, at once soft and secluded, fruitful and wild.¹ We have thus one branch of the Northern religious imagination rising among the Scandinavian fiords, tempered in France by various encounters with elements of Arabian, Italian, Provençal, or other Southern poetry, and then reacting upon Southern England; while other forms of the same rude religious imagination, resting like clouds upon the mountains of Scotland and Wales, met and mingled with the Norman Christianity, retaining even to the latest times some dark colour of superstition, but giving all its poetical and military pathos to Scottish poetry, and a peculiar sternness and wildness of tone to the Reformed faith, in its manifestations among the Scottish hills.

§ 14. It is on less disputable ground that I may claim the reader's gratitude to the mountains, as having been the centres not only of imaginative energy, but of purity both in doctrine and practice. The enthusiasm of the persecuted Covenanter, and his variously modified claims to miraculous protection or prophetic inspiration, hold exactly the same relation to the smooth proprieties of lowland Protestantism that the demon combats, fastings, visions, and miracles of the mountain monk or anchorite hold to the wealth and worldliness of the Vatican. It might indeed happen, whether at Canterbury, Rheims, or Rome, that a good bishop should occasionally grasp the crozier; and a vast amount of prudent, educated, and admirable piety is to be found among the ranks of the lowland clergy. But still the large aspect of the matter is always, among Protestants, that formalism, respectability, orthodoxy, caution, and propriety, live by the slow stream that encircles the lowland abbey or cathedral; and that enthusiasm, poverty, vital faith, and audacity of conduct, characterize the pastor dwelling by the torrent side. In

¹ [Compare the description of Normandy in a letter of 1848, Vol. VIII. p. xxix.]

like manner, taking the large aspects of Romanism, we see that its worst corruption, its cunning, its worldliness, and its permission of crime, are traceable for the most part to lowland prelacy; but its self-denials, its obediences, humilities, sincere claims to miraculous power, and faithful discharges of pastoral duty, are traceable chiefly to its anchorites and mountain clergy.

§ 15. It is true that the “Lady Poverty” of St. Francis¹ may share the influence of the hills in the formation of character; and that, since the clergy who have little interest at court or conclave are those who in general will be driven to undertake the hill services, we must often attribute to enforced simplicity of life, or natural bitterness of feeling, some of the tones of thought which we might otherwise have ascribed to the influence of mountain scenery. Such causes, however, affect the lowland as much as the highland religious character in all districts far from cities; but they do not produce the same effects. The curate or hermit of the field and fen, however simple his life, or painful his lodging, does not often attain the spirit of the hill pastor or recluse; we may find in him a decent virtue or a contented ignorance, rarely the prophetic vision or the martyr’s passion. Among the fair arable lands of England and Belgium, extends an orthodox Protestantism or Catholicism; prosperous, creditable, and drowsy; but it is among the purple moors of the highland border, the ravines of Mont Genève, and the crags of the Tyrol, that we shall find the simplest Evangelical faith, and the purest Romanist practice.

§ 16. Of course the inquiry into this branch of the hill influence is partly complicated with that into its operation on domestic habits and personal character, of which hereafter: but there is one curious witness borne to the general truth of the foregone conclusions, by an apparently slight, yet very significant circumstance in art. We have

¹ [See *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 41 and 45.]

seen, in the preceding volume,¹ how difficult it was sometimes to distinguish between honest painters, who truly chose to paint sacred subjects because they loved them, and the affected painters, who took sacred subjects for their own pride's sake, or for merely artistical delight. Amongst other means of arriving at a conclusion in this matter, there is one helpful test which may be applied to their various works, almost as easily and certainly as a foot-rule could be used to measure their size; and which remains an available test, down to the date of the rise of the Claudesque landscape schools. Nearly all the genuine religious painters use *steep mountain distances*. All the merely artistical ones, or those of intermediate temper, in proportion as they lose the religious element, use flat or simply architectural distances. Of course the law is liable to many exceptions, chiefly dependent on the place of birth and early associations of painters; but its force is, I think, strongly shown in this;—that, though the Flemish painters never showed any disposition to paint, *for its own sake*, other scenery than of their own land (compare Vol. III. Chap. XIII. § 20²), the sincerely religious ones continually used Alpine distances, bright with snow. In like manner Giotto, Perugino, Angelico, the young Raphael, and John Bellini, always, if, with any fitness to their subject, they can introduce them, use craggy or blue mountain distances, and this with definite expression of love towards them; Leonardo, conventionally, as feeling they were necessary for his sacred subjects, while yet his science and idealism had destroyed his mountain sincerity; Michael Angelo, wholly an artist, and Raphael in later years, show no love of mountains whatever, while the relative depths of feeling in Tintoret, Titian, and Veronese, are precisely measurable by their affection to mountains. Tintoret, though born in Venice, yet, because capable of the greatest reaches of feeling, is the first of the old painters who ever drew

¹ [See ch. iv., Vol. V. pp. 73 *seq.*]

² [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 238. Ruskin mentions a background such as is here referred to in his "Notes on the Louvre," No. 2202, Vol. XII. p. 472.]

mountain detail rightly:* Titian, though born in Cadore, and recurring to it constantly, yet being more worldly-minded, uses his hills somewhat more conventionally, though still in his most deeply felt pictures, such as the St. Jerome in the Brera,¹ giving to the rocks and forests a consummate nobleness; and Veronese, in his gay grasp of the outside aspects of the world, contentedly includes his philosophy within porticoes and pillars, or at the best overshadows it with a few sprays of laurel.

§ 17. The test fails, however, utterly when applied to the later or transitional landscape schools, mountains being there introduced in mere wanton savageness by Salvator, or vague conventionalism by Claude, Berghem, and hundreds more. This need not, however, in the least invalidate our general conclusions: we surely know already that it is possible to misuse the best gifts, and pervert the purest feelings; nor need we doubt the real purpose, or, on honest hearts, the real effect, of mountains, because various institutions have been founded among them by the banditti of Calabria, as well as by St. Bruno.²

§ 18. I cannot leave this part of my subject without recording a slight incident, which happened to myself, singularly illustrative of the religious character of the Alpine peasant when under favourable circumstances of teaching. I was coming down one evening from the Rochers de Naye, above Montreux, having been at work among the limestone rocks, where I could get no water, and both weary and thirsty. Coming to a spring at a turn of the path, conducted, as usual, by the herdsmen into a hollowed pinetrunk, I stooped to it, and drank deeply: as I raised my head, drawing breath heavily, some one behind me said,

* See reference to his painting of stones in the last note to § 28 of the chapter on Imagination Penetrative, Vol. II. [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 286.]

¹ [For this picture, see Vol. III. p. 181; Vol. IV. pp. 244, 247.]

² [For brigandage in Calabria, see *Time and Tide*, § 161; for St. Bruno, Vol. XII. p. 569 *n.*]

“Celui qui boira de cette eau-ci, aura encore soif.” I turned, not understanding for the moment what was meant; and saw one of the hill-peasants, probably returning to his châlet from the market-place at Vevay or Villeneuve. As I looked at him with an uncomprehending expression, he went on with the verse:—“Mais celui qui boira de l’eau que je lui donnerai, n’aura jamais soif.”

I doubt if this would have been thought of, or said, by even the most intelligent lowland peasant. The thought might have occurred to him, but the frankness of address, and expectation of being at once understood without a word of preparative explanation, as if the language of the Bible were familiar in all men, mark, I think, the mountaineer.

§ 19. II. We were next to examine the influence of hills on the artistical power of the human race. Which power, so far as it depends on the imagination, must evidently be fostered by the same influences which give vitality to religious vision. But so far as artistical productiveness and skill are concerned, it is evident that the mountaineer is at a radical and insurmountable disadvantage. The strength of his character depends upon the absence of luxury; but it is eminently by luxury that art is supported. We are not, therefore, to deny the mountain influence, because we do not find finished frescoes on the timbers of châlets, or delicate bas-reliefs on the bastion which protects the mountain church from the avalanche; but to consider how far the tone of mind shown by the artists labouring in the lowland is dependent for its intensity on the distant influences of the hills, whether during the childhood of those born among them, or under the casual contemplation of men advanced in life.

§ 20. Glancing broadly over the strength of the mediæval—that is to say, of the peculiar and energetic—art of Europe, so as to discern through the clear flowing of its waves over France, Italy, and England, the places in the

pool where the fountain heads are, and where the sand dances, I should first point to Normandy and Tuscany. From the cathedral of Pisa, and the sculpture of the Pisans, the course is straight to Giotto, Angelico and Raphael,—to Orcagna and Michael Angelo;¹—the Venetian school, in many respects mightier, being nevertheless, subsequent and derivative. From the cathedrals of Caen and Coutances the course is straight to the Gothic of Chartres and Notre Dame of Paris,² and thence forward to all French and English noble art, whether ecclesiastical or domestic. Now the mountain scenery above Pisa is precisely the most beautiful that surrounds any great Italian city, owing to the wonderful outlines of the peaks of Carrara.³ Milan and Verona have indeed finer ranges in sight, but rising farther in the distance, and therefore not so directly affecting the popular mind. The Norman imagination, as already noticed, is Scandinavian in origin, and fostered by the lovely granite scenery of Normandy itself. But there is, nevertheless, this great difference between French art and Italian, that the French paused strangely at a certain point, as the Norman hills are truncated at the summits, while the Italian rose steadily to a vortex, as the Carrara hills to their crests. Let us observe this a little more in detail.

§ 21. The sculpture of the Pisans was taken up and carried into various perfection by the Lucchese, Pistoians, Siennese, and Florentines. All these are inhabitants of truly mountain cities, Florence being as completely among the hills as Innsbruck is, only the hills have softer outlines. Those around Pistoja and Lucca are in a high degree majestic. Giotto was born and bred among these hills. Angelico lived upon their slope. The mountain towns of Perugia and Urbino furnish the only important branches of correlative

¹ [See, on this subject, the "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII. pp. 204–209; and on the Pisan school generally, see *Val d'Arno and Aratra Pentelici*.]

² [For the significance in this respect of the cathedrals of Caen and Coutances, see *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, preface to first edition, Vol. VIII. p. 6.]

³ [See above, p. 363 *n.*, and Plate 47; and compare *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 431.]

art; for Leonardo, however individually great, originated no new school; he only carried the *executive* delicacy of landscape detail so far beyond other painters as to necessitate my naming the fifteenth-century manner of landscape after him, though he did not invent it; and although the school of Milan is distinguished by several peculiarities, and definitely enough separable from the other schools of Italy, all its peculiarities are mannerisms, not inventions.

Correggio, indeed, created a new school, though he himself is almost its only master. I have given in the preceding volume the mountain outline seen from Parma.¹ But the only entirely great group of painters after the Tuscans are the Venetians, and they are headed by Titian and Tintoret, on whom we have noticed the influence of hills already; and although we cannot trace it in Paul Veronese, I will not quit the mountain claim upon him; for I believe all that gay and gladdening strength of his was fed by the breezes of the hills of Garda, and brightened by the swift glancing of the waves of the Adige.*

§ 22. Observe, however, before going farther, of all the painters we have named, the one who obtains most executive perfection is Leonardo, who on the whole lived at the greatest distance from the hills. The two who have most feeling are Giotto and Angelico, both hill-bred. And generally, I believe, we shall find that the hill country gives its inventive depth of feeling to art, as in the work of Orcagna, Perugino, and Angelico, and the plain country executive neatness. The executive precision is joined with feeling in Leonardo, who saw the Alps in the distance; it is totally unaccompanied by feeling in the pure Dutch schools, or schools of the dead flats.

* In saying this I do not, of course, forget the influence of the sea on the Pisans and Venetians; but that is a separate subject, and must be examined in the next volume.²

¹ [Plate 14, facing p. 397.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iii. ("The Wings of the Lion").]

§ 23. I do not know if any writer on art, or on the development of national mind, has given his attention to what seems to me one of the most singular phenomena in the history of Europe,—the pause of the English and French in pictorial art after the fourteenth century. From the days of Henry III. to those of Elizabeth, and of Louis IX. to those of Louis XIV., the general intellect of the two nations was steadily on the increase. But their art intellect was as steadily retrograde. The only art work that France and England have done nobly is that which is centralized by the Cathedral of Lincoln, and the Sainte Chapelle.¹ We had at that time (*we*—French and English—but the French first) the incontestable lead among European nations; no thirteenth-century work in Italy is comparable for majesty of conception, or wealth of imaginative detail, to the Cathedrals of Chartres, Rheims, Rouen, Amiens, Lincoln, Peterborough, Wells, or Lichfield. But every hour of the fourteenth century saw French and English art in precipitate decline, Italian in steady ascent; and by the time that painting and sculpture had developed themselves in an approximated perfection, in the work of Ghirlandajo and Mino of Fésolo, we had in France and England no workman, in any art, deserving a workman's name: nothing but skilful masons, with more or less love of the picturesque, and redundance of undisciplined imagination, flaming itself away in wild and rich traceries, and crowded bosses of grotesque figure sculpture, and expiring at last in barbarous imitation of the perfected skill and erring choice of Renaissance Italy. Painting could not decline, for it had not reached any eminence; the exquisite arts of illumination and glass design had led to no effective results in other materials; they themselves, incapable of any higher perfection than they had reached in the thirteenth century,

¹ [For Lincoln, see Vol. VIII. p. 12 *n.*; for the Sainte Chapelle, "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. p. 451; *Val d'Arno*, § 59; and a letter in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, i. 227, reprinted in a later volume of this edition. For references to the buildings next mentioned, see General Index.]

perished in the vain endeavour to emulate pictorial excellence, bad *drawing* being substituted, in books, for lovely *writing*, and opaque precision, in glass, for transparent power; nor in any single department of exertion did artists arise of such calibre or class as any of the great Italians; and yet all the while, in literature, *we* were gradually and steadily advancing in power up to the time of Shakespere; the Italians, on the contrary, not advancing after the time of Dante.

§ 24. Of course I have no space here to pursue a question such as this: but I may state my belief that *one* of the conditions involved in it was the mountain influence of Italian scenery, inducing a disposition to such indolent or enthusiastic reverie, as could only express itself in the visions of art; while the comparatively flat scenery, and severer climate, of England and France, fostering less enthusiasm, and urging to more exertion, brought about a practical and rational temperament, progressive in policy, science, and literature, but wholly retrograde in art; that is to say (for great art may be properly so defined), in the Art of *Dreaming*.

§ 25. III. In admitting this, we seem to involve the supposition that mountain influence is either unfavourable or inessential to literary power; but for this also the mountain influence is still necessary, only in a subordinate degree. It is true, indeed, that the Avon is no mountain torrent, and that the hills round the vale of Stratford are not sublime; true, moreover, that the cantons Berne and Uri have never yet, so far as I know, produced a great poet; but neither, on the other hand, has Antwerp or Amsterdam. And, I believe, the natural scenery which will be found, on the whole, productive of most literary intellect is that mingled of hill and plain, as all available light is of flame and darkness; the flame being the active element, and the darkness the tempering one.

§ 26. In noting such evidence as bears upon this subject,

*3rd. Influence
of mountains
on literary
power.*

the reader must always remember that the mountains are at an unfair disadvantage, in being much *out of the way* of the masses of men employed in intellectual pursuits. The position of a city is dictated by military necessity or commercial convenience: it rises, flourishes, and absorbs into its activity whatever leading intellect is in the surrounding population. The persons who are able and desirous to give their children education naturally resort to it; the best schools, the best society, and the strongest motives assist and excite those born within its walls; and youth after youth rises to distinction out of its streets, while among the blue mountains, twenty miles away, the goatherds live and die in unregarded lowliness. And yet this is no proof that the mountains have little effect upon the mind, or that the streets have a helpful one. The men who are formed by the schools and polished by the society of the capital, may yet in many ways have their powers shortened by the absence of natural scenery; and the mountaineer, neglected, ignorant, and unambitious, may have been taught things by the clouds and streams which he could not have learned in a college, or a coterie.

§ 27. And in reasoning about the effect of mountains we are therefore under a difficulty like that which would occur to us if we had to determine the good or bad effect of light on the human constitution, in some place where all corporal exercise was necessarily in partial darkness, and only idle people lived in the light. The exercise might give an advantage to the occupants of the gloom, but we should neither be justified in therefore denying the preciousness of light in general, nor the necessity to the workers of the few rays they possessed; and thus I suppose the hills around Stratford, and such glimpses as Shakespere had of sandstone and pines in Warwickshire, or of chalk cliffs in Kent, to have been essential to the development of his genius. This supposition can only be proved false by the rising of a Shakespere at Rotterdam or Bergen-op-Zoom, which I think not probable; whereas, on the other

hand, it is confirmed by myriads of collateral evidences. The matter could only be *tested* by placing for half a century the British universities at Keswick and Beddgelert, and making Grenoble the capital of France; but if, throughout the history of Britain and France, we contrast the general invention and pathetic power, in ballads or legends, of the inhabitants of the Scottish Border with those manifested in Suffolk or Essex; and similarly the inventive power of Normandy, Provence, and the Béarnois¹ with that of Champagne or Picardy, we shall obtain some convincing evidence respecting the operation of hills on the masses of mankind, and be disposed to admit, with less hesitation, that the apparent inconsistencies in the effect of scenery on greater minds proceed in each case from specialities of education, accident, and original temper, which it would be impossible to follow out in detail. Sometimes only, when the original resemblance in character of intellect is very marked in two individuals, and they are submitted to definitely contrary circumstances of education, an approximation to evidence may be obtained. Thus Bacon and Pascal appear to be men naturally very similar in their temper and powers of mind. One, born in York House, Strand, of courtly parents, educated in court atmosphere, and replying, almost as soon as he could speak, to the queen asking how old he was— “Two years younger than Your Majesty’s happy reign!”—has the world’s meanness and cunning engrafted into his intellect, and remains smooth, serene, unenthusiastic, and in some degree base, even with all his sincere devotion and universal wisdom; bearing, to the end of life, the likeness of a marble palace in the street of a great city, fairly furnished within, and bright in wall and battlement, yet noisome in places about the foundations. The other, born at Clermont, in Auvergne, under the shadow of the Puy de Dôme, though taken to

¹ [Béarn, formerly a separate province, is now included in the department of Basses-Pyrénées.]

Paris at eight years old, retains for ever the impress of his birthplace; pursuing natural philosophy with the same zeal as Bacon, he returns to his own mountains to put himself under their tutelage, and by their help first discovers the great relations of the earth and the air: struck at last with mortal disease; gloomy, enthusiastic, and superstitious, with a conscience burning like lava, and inflexible like iron, the clouds gather about the majesty of him fold after fold; and, with his spirit buried in ashes, and rent by earthquake, yet fruitful of true thought and faithful affection, he stands like that mound of desolate scoria that crowns the hill ranges of his native land, with its sable summit far in heaven, and its foundations green with the ordered garden and the trellised vine.

§ 28. When, however, our inquiry thus branches into the successive analysis of individual characters, it is time for us to leave it; noting only one or two points respecting Shakespere, whom, I doubt not, the reader was surprised to find left out of all our comparisons in the preceding volume. He seems to have been sent essentially to take universal and equal grasp of the *human* nature; and to have been removed, therefore, from all influences which could in the least warp or bias his thoughts. It was necessary that he should lean *no* way; that he should contemplate, with absolute equality of judgment, the life of the court, cloister, and tavern, and be able to sympathize so completely with all creatures as to deprive himself, together with his personal identity, even of his conscience, as he casts himself into their hearts. He must be able to enter into the soul of Falstaff or Shylock with no more sense of contempt or horror than Falstaff or Shylock themselves feel for or in themselves; otherwise his own conscience and indignation would make him unjust to them; he would turn aside from something, miss some good, or overlook some essential palliation. He must be utterly without anger, utterly without purpose; for if a man has any serious purpose in life, that which runs

counter to it, or is foreign to it, will be looked at frowningly or carelessly by him. Shakespere was forbidden of Heaven to have any *plans*. To *do* any good or *get* any good, in the common sense of good, was not to be within his permitted range of work. Not, for him, the founding of institutions, the preaching of doctrines, or the repression of abuses. Neither he, nor the sun, did on any morning that they rose together, receive charge from their Maker concerning such things. They were both of them to shine on the evil and good;¹ both to behold unoffendedly all that was upon the earth, to burn unappalled upon the spears of kings, and undisdaining, upon the reeds of the river.

§ 29. Therefore, so far as nature had influence over the early training of this man, it was essential to its perfectness that the nature should be quiet. No mountain passions were to be allowed in him. Inflict upon him but one pang of the monastic conscience; cast upon him but one cloud of the mountain gloom; and his serenity had been gone for ever—his equity—his infinity. You would have made another Dante of him; and all that he would have ever uttered about poor, soiled, and frail humanity would have been the quarrel between Sinon and Adam of Brescia,²—speedily retired from, as not worthy a man's hearing, nay, not to be heard without heavy fault. All your Falstaffs, Slenders, Quicklys, Sir Tobys, Launces, Touchstones, and Quinces, would have been lost in that. Shakespere could be allowed no mountains; nay, not even any supreme natural beauty. He had to be left with his kingcups and clover;—pansies—the passing clouds—the Avon's flow—and the undulating hills and woods of Warwick; nay, he was not to love even these in any exceeding measure, lest it might make him in the least overrate their power upon the strong, full-fledged minds of men. He makes the quarrelling fairies concerned about them; poor lost Ophelia find

¹ [See Proverbs xv. 3.]

² [For Sinon, "that false Greek from Troy," and Adam of Brescia, a coiner of false money, see *Inferno*, xxx. 61, 98 *seq.*]

some comfort in them; fearful, fair, wise-hearted Perdita trust the speaking of her good will and good hostess-ship to them; and one of the brothers of Imogen confide his sorrow to them,—rebuked instantly by his brother for “wench-like words”;^{*} but any thought of them in his mighty men I do not find: it is not usually in the nature of such men; and if he had loved the flowers the *least* better himself, he would assuredly have been offended at this, and given a botanical turn of mind to Cæsar, or Othello.

§ 30. And it is even among the most curious proofs of the necessity to all high imagination that it should paint straight from the life, that he has *not* given such a turn of mind to some of his great men;—Henry the Fifth, for instance. Doubtless some of my readers, having been accustomed to hear it repeated thoughtlessly from mouth to mouth that Shakespere conceived the spirit of all ages, were as much offended as surprised at my saying that

* “With fairest flowers
While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I’ll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
The flower that’s like thy face—pale primrose, nor
The azured harebell—like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Outsweetened not thy breath. The ruddock would
With charitable bill . . . bring thee all this;
Yea, and furrowed moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse.

Gui. Prithee, have done,
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious.”

Imogen herself, afterwards, in deeper passion, will give weeds—not flowers,—and something more:

“And when
With wildwood leaves and weeds, I have strewed his grave,
And on it said a century of prayers,
Such as I can, twice o’er, I’ll weep, and sigh,
And, leaving so his service, follow you.”¹

¹ [The references here and in the text above are to *Cymbeline*, Act iv. sc. 2; *Mid-summer Night’s Dream*, Act ii. sc. 1; *Hamlet*, Act iv. sc. 5; *Winter’s Tale*, Act iv. sc. 3.]

he only painted human nature as he saw it in his own time.¹ They will find, if they look into his work closely, as much antiquarianism as they do geography, and no more. The commonly received notions about the things that had been, Shakespere took as he found them, animating them with pure human nature, of any time and all time; but inquiries into the minor detail of temporary feeling, he despised as utterly as he did maps; and wheresoever the temporary feeling was in anywise contrary to that of his own day, he errs frankly, and paints from his own time. For instance in this matter of love of flowers; we have traced already,² far enough for our general purposes, the mediæval interest in them, whether to be enjoyed in the fields, or to be used for types of ornamentation in dress. If Shakespere had cared to enter into the spirit even of the early fifteenth century, he would assuredly have marked this affection in some of his knights, and indicated even then, in heroic tempers, the peculiar respect for loveliness of *dress* which we find constantly in Dante.³ But he could not do this; he had not seen it in real life. In his time dress had become an affectation and absurdity. Only fools, or wise men in their weak moments, showed much concern about it; and the facts of human nature which appeared to him general in the matter were the soldier's disdain, and the coxcomb's care of it. Hence Shakespere's good soldier is almost always in plain or battered armour; even the speech of Vernon in *Henry the Fourth*,⁴ which, as far as I remember, is the only one that bears fully upon the beauty of armour, leans more upon the spirit and hearts of men— "bated, like eagles having lately bathed;" and has an under-current of slight contempt running through the following line, "Glittering

¹ [See Vol. V. pp. 127–128.]

² [See Vol. V. pp. 250 *seq.*; 276 *seq.*; and compare Vol. IV. p. 255.]

³ [See, for instance, his descriptions of the dress of Beatrice in *Vita Nuova*, § § 2, 3, 40, and in *Purgatorio*, xxx. 31–33.]

⁴ [*Henry IV.*, Act iv. sc. 1.]

in golden coats, *like images*; “while the beauty of the young Harry is essentially the beauty of fiery and perfect youth, answering as much to the Greek, or Roman, or Elizabethan knight as to the mediæval one; whereas the definite interest in armour and dress is opposed by Shakespere in the French (meaning to depreciate them), to the English rude soldierliness:

“*Con.* Tut, I have the best armour of the world. Would it were day!
Orl. You have an excellent armour, but let my horse have his due.”

And again:

“My lord constable, the armour that I saw in your tent to-night, are those stars, or suns, upon it?”

while Henry, half proud of his poorness of array, speaks of armorial splendour scornfully; the main idea being still of its being a gilded show and vanity—

“Our gayness and our *gilt* are all besmirched.”¹

This is essentially Elizabethan. The quarterings on a knight’s shield, or the inlaying of his armour, would never have been thought of by him as mere “gayness or gilt” in earlier days.* In like manner, throughout every scale of rank or feeling, from that of the French knights down to Falstaff’s “I looked he should have sent me two-and-twenty yards of satin, as I am true knight, and he sends me security!”² care for dress is always considered by Shakespere as contemptible; and Mrs. Quickly distinguishes herself from a true fairy by a solicitude to scour the *chairs of*

* If the reader thinks that in Henry the Fifth’s time the Elizabethan temper might already have been manifesting itself, let him compare the English herald’s speech, act 2 scene 2 of *King John*; and by way of specimen of Shakespere’s historical care, or regard of mediæval character, the large use of *artillery* in the previous scene.

¹ [*Henry V.*, Act iii. sc. 7; Act iv. sc. 3.]

² [*2 Henry IV.*, Act ii. sc. 2. For Shakespere’s contempt of dress, see *1 Henry IV.*, Act i. sc. 3, l. 28 *seq.*, and *Taming of the Shrew*, Act iv. sc. 3, l. 171 *seq.*]

order—and “each fair instalment, coat, and several crest”;¹ and the association in her mind of the flowers in the fairy rings with the

“Sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood’s bending knee;”

while the true fairies, in field simplicity, are only anxious to “sweep the dust behind the door”; and

“With this field dew consecrate,
Every several chamber bless
Through this palace with sweet peace.”²

Note the expression “Field dew consecrate.” Shakespere loved courts and camps; but he felt that sacredness and peace were in the dew of the Fields only.

§ 31. There is another respect in which he was wholly incapable of entering into the spirit of the Middle Ages. He had no great art of any kind around him in his own country, and was, consequently, just as powerless to conceive the general influence of former art, as a man of the most inferior calibre. Therefore it was, that I did not care to quote his authority respecting the power of imitation, in the second chapter of the preceding volume. If it had been needful to add his testimony to that of Dante (given in § 5),³ I might have quoted multitudes of passages wholly concurring with that, of which the “fair Portia’s counterfeit,”⁴ with the following lines, and the implied ideal of sculpture in the *Winter’s Tale*, are wholly unanswerable instances. But Shakespere’s evidence in matters of art is as narrow as the range of Elizabethan art in England, and resolves itself wholly into admiration of two things,—mockery of life (as in this instance of Hermione as a statue), or absolute splendour, as in the close of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the notion of *gold* as

¹ [*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act v. sc. 5.]

² [*Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act v. sc. 2.]

³ [See Vol. V. p. 38.]

⁴ [*Merchant of Venice*, Act iii. sc. 3.]

the chief source of dignity of aspect, coming down to Shakespere from the times of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and, as I said before, strictly Elizabethan, would interfere seriously with the pathos of the whole passage, but for the sense of sacrifice implied in it:

“As *rich* shall Romeo by his lady lie,
Poor sacrifices of our enmity.”¹

§ 32. And observe, I am not giving these examples as proof of any smallness in Shakespere, but of his greatness; that is to say, of his contentment, like every other great man who ever breathed, to paint nothing but *what he saw*;² and therefore giving perpetual evidence that his sight was of the sixteenth, and not of the thirteenth century, beneath all the broad and eternal humanity of his imagination. How far in these modern days, emptied of splendour, it may be necessary for great men having certain sympathies for those earlier ages, to act in this differently from all their predecessors; and how far they may succeed in the resuscitation of the past by habitually dwelling in all their thoughts among vanished generations, are questions, of all practical and present ones concerning art, the most difficult to decide; for already in poetry several of our truest men have set themselves to this task, and have indeed put more vitality into the shadows of the dead than most others can give the presences of the living. Thus Longfellow, in the *Golden Legend*, has entered more closely into the temper of the Monk,³ for good and for evil, than ever yet theological writer or historian, though they may have given their life's labour to the analysis; and, again, Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art, with which we have been specially concerned, there is

¹ [*Romeo and Juliet*, Act v. sc. 3. Compare *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 91, where the passage is again quoted.]

² [Compare Vol. V. pp. 114–115.]

³ [See “Lectures on Colour,” where passages from “The Scriptorium” are quoted: Vol. XII. p. 485; and for another quotation from the poem, see Vol. V. p. 229 n.]

hardly a principle connected with the mediæval temper, that he has not struck upon in those seemingly careless and too rugged rhymes of his. There is a curious instance, by the way, in a short poem referring to this very subject of tomb and image sculpture; and illustrating just one of those phases of local human character which, though belonging to Shakespere's own age, he never noticed, because it was specially Italian and un-English; connected also closely with the influence of mountains on the heart, and therefore with out immediate inquiries. I mean the kind of admiration with which a southern artist regarded the *stone* he worked in; and the pride which populace or priest took in the possession of precious mountain substance, worked into the pavements of their cathedrals, and the shafts of their tombs.

§ 33. Observe, Shakespere, in the midst of architecture and tombs of wood, or freestone, or brass, naturally thinks of *gold*¹ as the best enriching and ennobling substance for them;—in the midst also of the fever of the Renaissance he writes, as every one else did, in praise of precisely the most vicious master of that school—Giulio Romano;² but the modern poet, living much in Italy, and quit of the Renaissance influence, is able fully to enter into the Italian feeling, and to see the evil of the Renaissance tendency, not because he is greater than Shakespere, but because he is in another element, and has *seen* other things. I miss fragments here and there not needed for my purpose in the passage quoted, without putting asterisks, for I weaken the poem enough by the omissions, without spoiling it also by breaks.³

¹ [See *Romeo and Juliet*, Act v. sc. 3, l. 299.]

² [See *The Winter's Tale*, Act v. sc. 2: "that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape." For another reference to the painter, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 45).]

³ [Ruskin's omissions here, and still more his coupling Browning with Longfellow, did not please another poet: see the passage from D. G. Rossetti's *Letters to William Allingham*, cited in Vol. V. p. lvii.]

“The Bishop orders his Tomb in St. Praxed’s Church.

“As here I lie
 In this state chamber, dying by degrees,
 Hours, and long hours, in the dead night, I ask
 Do I live—am I dead? Peace, peace seems all:
 St. Praxed’s ever was the church for peace.
 And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
 With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know;
 Old Gandolf* cozened me, despite my care.
 Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south
 He graced his carrion with.
 Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
 One sees the pulpit o’ the epistle-side,
 And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats:
 And up into the aery dome where live
 The angels, and a sunbeam’s sure to lurk.
 And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
 And ‘neath my tabernacle take my rest,
 With those nine columns round me, two and two,
 The odd one at my feet, where Anselm † stands;
 Peach-blossom marble all.
 Swift as a weaver’s shuttle fleet our years:
 Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
 Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
 ’Twas ever antique-black ‡ I meant! How else
 Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
 The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
 Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
 Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
 The Saviour at His sermon on the mount,
 St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan,
 And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
 Ye marked me not! What do they whisper thee,
 Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
 To revel down my villas while I gasp,
 Bricked o’er with beggar’s mouldy travertine,
 Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
 Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
 There’s plenty jasper somewhere in the world—

* The last bishop.

† His favourite son; nominally his nephew.

‡ “Nero Antico” is more familiar to our ears: but Browning does right in translating it; as afterwards “cipollino” into “onion-stone.” Our stupid habit of using foreign words without translation is continually losing us half the force of the foreign language. How many travellers hearing the term “cipollino” recognize the intended sense of a stone splitting into concentric coats, like an onion?

And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
 Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts?
 That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
 Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
 No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
 Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves *his* need."

§ 34. I know no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the *Stones of Venice* put into as many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work.¹ The worst of it is that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the reader can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give the thing up as insoluble; thought, truly, it ought to be to the current of common thought like Saladin's talisman, dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal.²

§ 35. It is interesting, by the way, with respect to this love of stones in the Italian mind, to consider the difference necessitated in the English temper merely by the general domestic use of wood instead of marble. In that old Shakesperian England, men must have rendered a grateful homage to their oak forests, in the sense of all that they owed to their goodly timbers in the wainscot and furniture of the rooms they loved best, when the blue of the frosty midnight was contrasted, in the dark diamonds of the lattice, with the glowing brown of the warm, firelighted, crimson-tapestried walls. Not less would an Italian look with a grateful regard on the hill summits, to which he owed, in the scorching of his summer noonday, escape into

¹ [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. pp. 43–134, and especially 81–115 (description of the tombs), published in 1853; Browning's "The Tomb at St. Praxed's" was first published in No. vii. of *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845.]

² [See Scott's *Talisman* (vol. i. chs. 8 and 9, vol. ii. ch. 5); the reference is to the bag or purse put by El Hakim into the water, which he gives Richard as medicine. For another reference to the talisman of Saladin, see *St. Mark's Rest*, § 187.]

the marble corridor or crypt palpitating only with cold and smooth variegation of the unfevered mountain veins. In some sort, as, both in our stubbornness and our comfort, we not unfitly describe ourselves typically as Hearts of Oak, the Italians might in their strange and variegated mingling of passion, like purple colour, with a cruel sternness, like white rock, truly describe themselves as hearts of Stone.

§ 36. Into this feeling about marble in domestic use, Shakespere, having seen it even in northern luxury, could partly enter, and marks it in several passages of his Italian plays.¹ But if the reader still doubts his limitation to his own experience in all subjects of imagination, let him consider how the removal from mountain influence in his youth, so necessary for the perfection of his lower human sympathy, prevented him from ever rendering with any force the feelings of the mountain anchorite, or indicating in any of his monks the deep spirit of monasticism. Worldly cardinals or nuncios he can fathom to the uttermost; but where, in all his thoughts, do we find St. Francis, or Abbot Samson?² The “Friar” of Shakespere’s plays is almost the only stage conventionalism which he admitted; generally nothing more than a weak old man, who lives in a cell, and has a rope about his waist.

§ 37. While, finally, in such slight allusions as he makes to mountain scenery itself, it is very curious to observe the accurate limitation of his sympathies to such things as he had known in his youth; and his entire preference of human interest, and of courtly and kingly dignities, to the nobleness of the hills. This is most marked in *Cymbeline*, where the term “mountaineer”³ is, as with Dante, always one of reproach, and the noble birth of Arviragus

¹ [*i.e.*, in those and others where the scenes or characters are southern. So, for instance, of the apparition of Jupiter in *Cymbeline* (v. 4): “Peep through thy marble mansion,” and “The marble pavement closes; he is enter’d His radiant roof”; and in *Antony and Cleopatra* (v. 2): “I am marble-constant.”]

² [See Carlyle’s *Past and Present*, book ii. (first published 1843).]

³ [For Dante’s use of the term in reproach, see *Purgatorio*, xxvi. 67–69; for Shakespere’s, *Cymbeline*, iv. 2, “villain mountaineer”; the other references are to iii. 2, 3; *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, iv. 1, iii. 2; *Richard II.*, i. 3; *Henry V.*, iii. 5.]

and Guiderius is shown by their holding their mountain cave as

“A cell of ignorance; travelling abed;
A prison for a debtor;”

and themselves, educated among hills, as in all things contemptible:

“We are beastly; subtle as the fox, for prey;
Like warlike as the wolf, for what we eat;
Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage
We make our choir, as doth the prisoned bird.”

A few phrases occur here and there which might justify the supposition that he had seen high mountains, but never implying awe or admiration. Thus Demetrius:

“These things seem *small and indistinguishable,*
Like far off mountains, turned into clouds.”

“Taurus snow,” and the “frosty Caucasus,” are used merely as types of purity or cold; and though the avalanche is once spoken of as an image of power, it is with instantly following depreciation:

“Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow
Upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat
The Alps doth spit, and void his rheum upon.”

§ 38. There was only one thing belonging to hills that Shakespeare seemed to feel as noble—the pine tree, and that was because he had seen it in Warwickshire, clumps of pine occasionally rising on little sandstone mounds, as at the place of execution of Piers Gaveston, above the lowland woods.¹ He touches on this tree fondly again and again:

“As rough,
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rud’st wind,
That by his top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale.”

“The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.”

¹ [At Blacklow Hill, a mile or two from Warwick on the left of the Coventry road; on the top of the hill, among the trees, is a monument erected in 1821 to mark the spot where Piers Gaveston was executed on July 1, 1312. The references in § 38 are to *Cymbeline*, iv. 2; *Tempest*, v. 1; *Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1; *Richard II.*, iii. 2. The last passage is quoted also in *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 295 n.).]

Where note his observance of the peculiar horizontal roots of the pine, spurred as it is by them like the claw of a bird, and partly propped, as the aiguilles by those rock promontories at their bases which I have always called their spurs, this observance of the pine's strength and animal-like grasp being the chief reason for his choosing it, above other trees, for Ariel's prison. Again:

“You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven.”

And yet again:

“But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines.”

We may judge, by the impression which this single feature of hill scenery seems to have made on Shakespere's mind, because he had seen it in his youth, how his whole temper would have been changed if he had lived in a more sublime country, and how essential it was to his power of contemplation of mankind that he should be removed from the sterner influences of nature. For the rest, so far as Shakespere's work has imperfections of any kind,—the trivialness of many of his adopted plots, for instance, and the comparative rarity with which he admits the ideal of an enthusiastic virtue arising out of principle; virtue being with him, for the most part, founded simply on the affections joined with inherent purity in his women, or on mere manly pride and honour in his men;*—in a word, whatever

* I mean that Shakespere almost always implies a total difference in *nature* between one human being and another; one being from the birth pure and affectionate, another base and cruel; and he displays each, in its sphere, as having the nature of dove, wolf, or lion, never much implying the government or change of nature by any external principle. There can be no question that in the main he is right in this view of human nature: still, the other form of virtue does exist occasionally, and was never, as far as I recollect, taken much note of by him. And with this stern view of humanity, Shakespere joined a sorrowful view of Fate, closely resembling that of the ancients. He is distinguished from Dante eminently by his always dwelling on last causes instead of first causes. Dante invariably points to the moment of the soul's choice which fixed its fate, to

difference, involving inferiority, there exists between him and Dante, in his conceptions of the relation between this world and the next, we may partly trace, as we did the difference between Bacon and Pascal,¹ to the less noble character of the scenes around him in his youth; and admit that, though it was necessary for his special work that he should be put, as it were, on a level with his race, on those plains of Stratford, we should see in this a proof, instead of a negation, of the mountain power over human intellect. For breadth and perfectness of condescending sight, the Shakesperian mind stands alone; but in *ascending* sight it is limited. The breadth of grasp was innate; the stoop and slightness of it were given by the circumstances of scene: and the difference between those careless masques of heathen gods, or unbelieved, though mightily conceived visions of fairy, witch, or risen spirit, and the earnest faith of Dante's vision of Paradise, is the true measure of the difference in influence between the willowy banks of Avon, and the purple hills of Arno.

§ 39. Our third inquiry, into the influence of mountains

the instant of the day when it read no farther, or determined to give bad advice about Penestrino.² But Shakespere always leans on the force of Fate, as it urges the final evil; and dwells with infinite bitterness on the power of the wicked, and the infinitude of result dependent seemingly on little things. A fool brings the last piece of news from Verona, and the dearest lives of its noble houses are lost; they might have been saved if the sacristan had not stumbled as he walked. Othello mislays his handkerchief, and there remains nothing for him but death. Hamlet gets hold of the wrong foil, and the rest is silence. Edmund's runner is a moment too late at the prison, and the feather will not move at Cordelia's lips. Salisbury a moment too late at the tower, and Arthur lies on the stones dead. Goneril and Iago have on the whole, in this world, Shakespere sees, much of their own way, though they come to a bad end. It is a pin that Death pierces the king's fortress wall with; and Carelessness and Folly sit sceptred and dreadful, side by side with the pin-armed skeleton.³

¹ [See above, p. 439.]

² [See, for the references to Dante, *Inferno*, v. 135 and xxvii. 102; compare also *Inferno*, xxxiii. 129–131; *Purgatorio*, iii. 118–120 and v. 100–101.]

³ [The references in Shakespeare are to *Romeo and Juliet*, v. 2; *Othello*, iii. 3, 1. 287; *Hamlet*, v. 2, 1. 279; *King Lear*, v. 3, 1. 246; *King John*, iv. 3; *Richard II.*, iii. 2, 1. 160.]

on domestic and military character, was, we said, to be deferred; for this reason, that it is too much involved with the consideration of the influence of simple rural life in unmountainous districts, to be entered upon with advantage until we have examined the general beauty of vegetation, whether lowland or mountainous. I hope to pursue this inquiry, therefore, at the close of the next volume;¹ only desiring, in the meantime, to bring one or two points connected with it under the consideration of our English travellers.

§ 40. For, it will be remembered, we first entered on this subject² in order to obtain some data as to the possibility of a Practical Ideal in Swiss life, correspondent, in some measure, to the poetical ideal of the same, which so largely entertains the European public. Of which possibility, I do not think, after what we have even already seen of the true effect of mountains on the human mind, there is any reason to doubt, even if that ideal had not been presented to us already in some measure, in the older life of the Swiss republics. But of its possibility, *under present circumstances*, there is, I grieve to say, the deepest reason to doubt; and that the more, because the question is not whether the mountaineer can be raised into a happier life by the help of the active nations of the plains; but whether he can yet be protected from the infection of the folly and vanity of those nations. I urged, in the preceding chapter, some consideration of what might be accomplished, if we chose to devote to the help, what we now devote to the mockery, of the Swiss. But I would that the enlightened population of Paris and London were content with doing nothing;—that they were satisfied with expenditure upon their idle pleasures, in their idle way; and would leave the Swiss to their own mountain gloom of unadvancing independence. I believe that every franc now spent by

¹ [The inquiry was not pursued expressly in this form; but the subject was touched on in ch. xi. of pt. ix. ("The Hesperid Æglè").]

² [See above, pp. 389–394.]

travellers among the Alps tends more or less to the undermining of whatever special greatness there is in the Swiss character; and the persons I met in Switzerland, whose position and modes of life rendered them best able to give me true information respecting the present state of their country, among many causes of national deterioration, spoke with chief fear of the influx of English wealth, gradually connecting all industry with the wants and ways of strangers, and inviting all idleness to depend upon their casual help; thus gradually resolving the ancient consistency and pastoral simplicity of the mountain life into the two irregular trades of innkeeper* and mendicant.

§ 41. I could say much on this subject if I had any hope of doing good by saying anything. But I have none. The influx of foreigners into Switzerland must necessarily be greater every year, and the greater it is, the larger in the crowd will be the majority of persons whose objects in travelling will be, first, to get as fast as possible from place to place, and, secondly, at every place where they arrive, to obtain the kind of accommodation and amusement to which they are accustomed in Paris, London, Brighton, or Baden. Railroads are already projected round the head of the Lake of Geneva, and through the town of Fribourg;¹ the head of the Lake of Geneva being precisely and accurately the one spot of Europe whose character, and influence on human mind, are special; and unreplaceable if destroyed, no other spot resembling, or being in any wise comparable to it, in its peculiar way: while the town

* Not the old hospitable innkeeper, who honoured his guests, and was honoured by them, than whom I do not know a more useful or worthy character; but the modern innkeeper, proprietor of a building in the shape of a factory, making up three hundred beds; who necessarily regards his guests in the light of Numbers 1, 2, 3–300, and is too often felt or apprehended by them only as a presiding influence of extortion.

¹ [These railways were constructed between 1856 and 1862. The former is referred to as an accomplished fact in the next volume of *Modern Painters* (1860), pt. ix. ch. xi. § 15 n.]

of Fribourg is in like manner the only mediæval mountain town of importance left to us; Innsbruck and such others being wholly modern, while Fribourg yet retains much of the aspect it had in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The valley of Chamouni, another spot also unique in its way, is rapidly being turned into a kind of Cremorne Gardens;¹ and I can foresee, within the perspective of but few years, the town of Lucerne consisting of a row of symmetrical hotels round the foot of the lake, its old bridges destroyed, an iron one built over the Reuss, and an acacia promenade carried along the lake-shore, with a German band playing under a Chinese temple at the end of it, and the enlightened travellers, representatives of European civilization, performing before the Alps, in each afternoon summer sunlight, in their modern manner, the Dance of Death.²

§ 42. All this is inevitable; and it has its good as well as its evil side. I can imagine the zealous modernist replying to me that when all this is happily accomplished, my melancholy peasants of the valley of Trient will be turned into thriving shopkeepers, the desolate streets of Sion into glittering thoroughfares, and the marshes of the Valais into prosperous market-gardens. I hope so; and indeed am striving every day to conceive more accurately, and regulate all my efforts by the expectation of, the state of society, not now, I suppose, much more than twenty years in advance of us, when Europe, having satisfactorily effaced all memorials of the past, and reduced itself to

¹ [In Ruskin's diary of 1851 he notes:—

“I find the following advertisement in the *Galignani* of 21st August, this year, 1851.

“GLACIERS OF CHAMOUNI

“A Casino is open for the season at this favourite summer resort. Music, refreshments, and reading-rooms. *N. B.*—Every kind of amusements, as at Baden-Baden, Hombourg, etc. Branch establishment at the Spa of Evian, on the Lake of Geneva.”]

² [Prophecies which every year since Ruskin wrote (1856) has done something to fulfil. Two of the old bridges remain—the Mühlenbrücke (1408), with the Dance of Death, and the Kapellbrücke (1303). The still longer Hofbrücke was removed in 1852, when the shores were extended and embanked for the construction of new hotels. The iron bridge over the Reuss was built in 1869–1870.]

the likeness of America, or of any other new country (only with less room for exertion), shall begin to consider what is next to be done, and to what newness of arts and interests may best be devoted the wealth of its marts, and the strength of its multitudes. Which anticipations and estimates, however, I have never been able, as yet, to carry out with any clearness, being always arrested by the confused notion of a necessity for solitude, disdain of buying and selling, and other elements of that old mediæval and mountain gloom, as in some way connected with the efforts of nearly all men who have either seen far into the destiny, or been much helpful to the souls, of their race. And the grounds of this feeling, whether right or wrong, I hope to analyze more fully in the next volume;¹ only noting, finally, in this, one or two points for the consideration of those among us with whom it may sometimes become a question, whether they will help forward, or not, the turning of a sweet mountain valley into an abyss of factory-stench and toil, or the carrying of a line of traffic through some green place of shepherd solitude.

§ 43. For, if there be any truth in the impression which I have always felt, and just now endeavoured to enforce, that the mountains of the earth are its natural cathedrals, or natural altars, overlaid with gold, and bright with brodered work of flowers, and with their clouds resting on them as the smoke of a continual sacrifice, it may surely be a question with some of us, whether the tables of the moneychanger,² however fit and commendable they may be as furniture in other places, are precisely the things which it is the whole duty of man to get well set up in the mountain temple.

§ 44. And perhaps it may help to the better determination of this question, if we endeavour, for a few patient moments, to bear with that weakness of our forefathers in feeling an *awe* for the hills; and, divesting ourselves, as

¹ [Here, again, see pt. ix. ch. xi.]

² [Matthew xxi. 12, etc.]

far as may be, of our modern experimental or exploring activity, and habit of regarding mountains chiefly as places for gymnastic exercise,¹ try to understand the temper, not indeed altogether exemplary, but yet having certain truths and dignities in it, to which we owe the founding of the Benedictine and Carthusian cloisters in the thin Alpine air. And this monkish temper we may, I suppose, best understand by considering the aspect under which mountains are represented in the Monk's book. I found that in my late lectures, at Edinburgh, I gave great offence by supposing, or implying, that scriptural expressions could have any force as bearing upon modern practical questions;² so that I do not now, nor shall I any more, allude to such expressions as in any wise necessarily bearing on the worldly business of the practical Protestant,³ but only as necessary to be glanced at in order to understand the temper of those old monks, who had the awkward habit of understanding the Bible literally; and to get any little good which momentary sympathy with the hearts of a large and earnest class of men may surely bring to us.

§ 45. The monkish view of mountains, then, already alluded to,* was derived wholly from that Latin Vulgate of theirs; and, speaking as a monk, it may perhaps be permitted me to mark the significance⁴ of the earliest mention of mountains in the Mosaic books; at least, of those in which some Divine appointment or command is stated respecting them. They are first brought before us as

* Vol. III. Chap. xiv. § 10. [Vol. V. pp. 253–255.]

¹ [On this subject, see preface to the second edition of *Sesame and Lilies*.]

² [See Vol. XII. pp. 51, 52. Such passages were strongly objected to by *Blackwood's Magazine*, at pp. 742, 756, of the review cited in Vol. XII. p. xxxvi. n.]

³ [Compare the author's Introduction to *Crown of Wild Olive*, §§ 10 *seq.*]

⁴ [The passage—"It may perhaps be permitted me . . ." to the end of the chapter—is § 90 in *Frondees Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following footnote:—

"With reference to the choice of mountain dwellings by the greater monastic orders."

On this subject, see ch. i. § 1 ("The Homes of the Hermits") of W. G. Collingwood's *Limestone Alps of Savoy*, and Ruskin's introduction to that work.]

refuges for God's people from the two judgments, of water and fire. The ark *rests* upon "the mountains of Ararat"; and man, having passed through that great baptism unto death, kneels upon the earth first where it is nearest heaven, and mingles with the mountain clouds the smoke of his sacrifice of thanksgiving. Again: from the midst of the first judgment by fire, the command of the Deity to His servant is, "Escape to the mountain"; and the morbid fear of the hills, which fills any human mind after long stay in places of luxury and sin, is strangely marked in Lot's complaining reply: "I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me." The third mention, in way of ordinance, is a far more solemn one: "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." "The Place," the Mountain of Myrrh, or of bitterness, chosen to fulfil to all the seed of Abraham, far off and near, the inner meaning of promise regarded in that vow: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help."

And the fourth is the delivery of the law on Sinai.¹

§ 46. It seemed, then, to the monks, that the mountains were appointed by their Maker to be to man, refuges from Judgment, signs of Redemption, and altars of Sanctification and Obedience; and they saw them afterwards connected, in the manner the most touching and gracious, with the death, after his task had been accomplished, of the first anointed Priest; the death, in like manner, of the first inspired Lawgiver; and, lastly, with the assumption of his office by the Eternal Priest, Lawgiver, and Saviour.

Observe the connection of these three events. Although the *time* of the deaths of Aaron and Moses was hastened by God's displeasure, we have not, it seems to me, the slightest warrant for concluding that the *manner* of their deaths was intended to be grievous or dishonourable to them. Far from this: it cannot, I think, be doubted that

¹ [The Bible references in § 45 are Genesis viii. 4, xix. 17, 19, xxii. 4; Psalms cxxi. 1; Exodus xxxi. 18. In one of his copies Ruskin adds another reference to "the top of the mountain where he (David) worshipped God" (2 Samuel xv. 32).]

in the denial of the permission to enter the Promised Land, the whole punishment of their sin was included; and that as far as regarded the manner of their deaths, it must have been appointed for them by their Master in all tenderness and love; and with full purpose of ennobling the close of their service upon the earth. It might have seemed to *us* more honourable that both should have been permitted to die beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle, the congregation of Israel watching by their side; and all whom they loved gathered together to receive the last message from the lips of the meek lawgiver, and the last blessing from the prayer of the anointed priest. But it was not thus they were permitted to die. Try to realize that going forth of Aaron from the midst of the congregation. He who had so often done sacrifice for their sin, going forth now to offer up his own spirit. He who had stood, among them, between the dead and the living,¹ and had seen the eyes of all that great multitude turned to him, that by his intercession their breath might yet be drawn a moment more, going forth now to meet the Angel of Death face to face, and deliver himself into his hand. Try if you cannot walk, in thought, with those two brothers, and the son, as they passed the outmost tents of Israel, and turned, while yet the dew lay round about the camp, towards the slopes of Mount Hor; talking together for the last time, as, step by step, they felt the steeper rising of the rocks, and hour after hour, beneath the ascending sun, the horizon grew broader as they climbed, and all the folded hills of Idumea, one by one subdued, showed amidst their hollows in the haze of noon, the windings of that long desert journey, now at last to close. But who shall enter into the thoughts of the High Priest, as his eye followed those paths of ancient pilgrimage; and, through the silence of the arid and endless hills, stretching even to the dim peak of Sinai, the whole history of those forty years was

¹ [Numbers xvi. 48; and for the following references, see Numbers xx. 27, 28.]

unfolded before him, and the mystery of his own ministries revealed to him; and that other Holy of Holies, of which the mountain peaks were the altars, and the mountain clouds the veil, the firmament of his Father's dwelling, opened to him still more brightly and infinitely as he drew nearer his death; until at last, on the shadeless summit,—from him on whom sin was to be laid no more—from him, on whose heart the names of sinful nations were to press their graven fire no longer,—the brother and the son took breastplate and ephod, and left him to his rest.

§ 47. There is indeed a secretness in this calm faith and deep restraint of sorrow, into which it is difficult for us to enter; but the death of Moses himself is more easily to be conceived, and had in it circumstances still more touching, as far as regards the influence of the external scene. For forty years Moses had not been alone. The care and burden of all the people, the weight of their woe, and guilt, and death, had been upon him continually. The multitude had been laid upon him as if he had conceived them; their tears had been his meat, night and day, until he had felt as if God had withdrawn His favour from him, and he had prayed that he might be slain, and not see his wretchedness.* And now, at last, the command came, "Get thee up into this mountain."¹ The weary hands that had been so long stayed up against the enemies of Israel, might lean again upon the shepherd's staff, and fold themselves for the shepherd's prayer—for the shepherd's slumber. Not strange to his feet, though forty years unknown, the roughness of the bare mountain-path, as he climbed from ledge to ledge of Abarim; not strange to his aged eyes the scattered clusters of the mountain herbage, and the broken shadows of the cliffs, indented far across the silence of uninhabited ravines; scenes such as

* Numbers xi. 12–15.

¹ [Deuteronomy xxxii. 49. The following references are Exodus xvii. 17; Deuteronomy xxxiv. 7; Psalms xxxii. 7; 2 Kings ii. 11; Luke ix. 30, 31.]

those among which, with none, as now, beside him but God, he had led his flocks so often; and which he had left, how painfully! taking upon him the appointed power, to make of the fenced city a wilderness, and to fill the desert with songs of deliverance. It was not to embitter the last hours of his life that God restored to him, for a day, the beloved solitudes he had lost; and breathed the peace of the perpetual hills around him, and cast the world in which he had laboured and sinned far beneath his feet, in that mist of dying blue;—all sin, all wandering, soon to be forgotten for ever; the Dead Sea—a type of God’s anger understood by him, of all men, most clearly, who had seen the earth open her mouth, and the sea his depth, to overwhelm the companies of those who contended with his Master—laid waveless beneath him; and beyond it, the fair hills of Judah, and the soft plains and banks of Jordan, purple in the evening light as with the blood of redemption, and fading in their distant fulness into mysteries of promise and of love. There, with his unabated strength, his undimmed glance, lying down upon the utmost rocks, with angels waiting near to contend for the spoils of his spirit, he put off his earthly armour. We do deep reverence to his companion prophet, for whom the chariot of fire came down from heaven; but was his death less noble, whom his Lord Himself buried in the vales of Moab, keeping, in the secrets of the eternal counsels, the knowledge of a sepulchre, from which he was to be called, in the fulness of time, to talk with that Lord, upon Hermon, of the death that He should accomplish at Jerusalem?

And lastly, let us turn our thoughts for a few moments to the cause of the resurrection of these two prophets. We are all of us too much in the habit of passing it by, as a thing mystical and inconceivable, taking place in the life of Christ for some purpose not by us to be understood, or, at the best, merely as a manifestation of His divinity by brightness of heavenly light, and the ministering of the spirits of the dead, intended to strengthen the faith of His

three chosen apostles. And in this, as in many other events recorded by the Evangelists, we lose half the meaning, and evade the practical power upon ourselves, by never accepting in its fulness the idea that our Lord was “perfect man,” “tempted in all things like as we are.”¹ Our preachers are continually trying, in all manner of subtle ways, to explain the union of the Divinity with the Manhood, an explanation which certainly involves first their being able to describe the nature of Deity itself, or, in plain words, to comprehend God. They never can explain, in any one particular, the union of the natures; they only succeed in weakening the faith of their hearers as to the entireness of either. The thing they have to do is precisely the contrary of this—to insist upon the *entireness* of both. We never think of Christ enough as God, never enough as Man; the instinctive habit of our minds being always to miss of the Divinity, and the reasoning and enforced habit to miss of the Humanity. We are afraid to harbour in our own hearts, or to utter in the hearing of others, any thought of our Lord, as hungering, tired, sorrowful, having a human soul, a human will, and affected by events of human life as a finite creature is; and yet one half of the efficiency of His atonement, and the whole of the efficiency of His example, depend on His having been this to the full.

§ 48. Consider, therefore, the Transfiguration as it relates to the human feelings of our Lord.² It was the first definite preparation for His death. He had foretold it to His disciples six days before; then takes with Him the three chosen ones into “an high mountain apart.” From an exceeding high mountain, at the first taking on Him the ministry of life, He had beheld, and rejected the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory; now, on a high mountain, He takes upon Him the ministry of death. Peter and they that were with Him, as in Gethsemane, were heavy with sleep. Christ’s work had to be done alone.

¹ [Ephesians iv. 13; Hebrews iv. 15.]

² [See Matthew xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Matthew iv. 8; Luke ix. 28–32.]

The tradition is, that the Mount of Transfiguration was the summit of Tabor; but Tabor is neither a high mountain, nor was it in any sense a mountain “*apart*”; being in those years both inhabited and fortified. All the immediately preceding ministries of Christ had been at Cesarea Philippi. There is no mention of travel southward in the six days that intervened between the warning given to His disciples, and the going up into the hill. What other hill could it be than the southward slope of that goodly mountain, Hermon, which is indeed the centre of all the Promised Land, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt; the mount of fruitfulness, from which the springs of Jordan descended to the valleys of Israel? Along its mighty forest avenues, until the grass grew fair with the mountain lilies, His feet dashed in the dew of Hermon, He must have gone to pray His first recorded prayer about death; and from the steep of it, before He knelt, could see to the south all the dwelling-place of the people that had sat in darkness, and seen the great light, the land of Zabulon and of Naphtali, Galilee of the nations;¹—could see, even with His human sight, the gleam of that lake by Capernaum and Chorazin, and many a place loved by Him, and vainly ministered to, whose house was now left unto them desolate; and, chief of all, far in the utmost blue, the hills above Nazareth, sloping down to His old home: hills on which yet the stones lay loose, that had been taken up to cast at Him, when He left them for ever.

§ 49. “And as He prayed, two men stood by Him.”² Among the many ways in which we miss the help and hold of Scripture, none is more subtle than our habit of supposing that, even as man, Christ was free from the Fear of Death. How could He then have been tempted as we are? since among all the trials of the earth, none spring

¹ [Matthew iv. 16; and for the following references, see Matthew xxiii. 28; Luke xiii. 35.]

² [Luke ix. 29. The other references in § 49 are Matthew iv. 11, xvii. 3; Numbers xxvii. 12, 13; 2 Kings ii. 11; Luke ix. 30, 31; Matthew ii. 9, xvii. 1, 2, 5.]

from the dust more terrible than that Fear. It had to be borne by Him, indeed, in a unity, which we can never comprehend, with the foreknowledge of victory,—as His sorrow for Lazarus, with the consciousness of the power to restore him; but it *had* to be borne, and that in its full earthly terror; and the presence of it is surely marked for us enough by the rising of those two at His side. When, in the desert, He was girding Himself for the work of life, angels of life came and ministered unto Him: now, in the fair world, when He is girding Himself for the work of death, the ministrants come to Him from the grave.

But from the grave conquered. One, from that tomb under Abarim, which His own hand¹ had sealed so long ago; the other, from the rest into which He had entered, without seeing corruption. There stood by Him Moses and Elias, and spake of His decease.

Then, when the prayer is ended, the task accepted, first, since the star paused over Him at Bethlehem, the full glory falls upon Him from heaven, and the testimony is borne to His everlasting Sonship and power. “Hear ye Him.”

If, in their remembrance of these things, and in their endeavour to follow in the footsteps of their Master, religious men of bygone days, closing themselves in the hill solitudes, forgot sometimes, and sometimes feared, the duties they owed to the active world, we may perhaps pardon them more easily than we ought to pardon ourselves, if we neither seek any influence for good nor submit to it unsought, in scenes to which thus all the men whose writings we receive as inspired, together with their Lord, retired whenever they had any task or trial laid upon them needing more than their usual strength of spirit. Nor, perhaps, should we have unprofitably entered into the mind of the earlier ages, if among our other thoughts, as we watch the chains of the snowy mountains rise on the horizon, we

¹ [On this passage see *The Lord's Prayer and the Church*, § 232 in *On the Old Road*, vol. iii. (ed. 1899). In one of his copies for revision, Ruskin alters “decease” to “Death,” but the former is the Biblical word (Luke ix. 31).]

should sometimes admit the memory of the hour in which their Creator, among their solitudes, entered on His travail for the salvation of our race; and indulge the dream, that as the flaming and trembling mountains of the earth seem to be the monuments of the manifesting of His terror on Sinai,—these pure and white hills, near to the heaven, and sources of all good to the earth, are the appointed memorials of that Light of His Mercy, that fell, snow-like, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

APPENDIX

- I. MODERN GROTESQUE
- II. ROCK CLEAVAGE
- III. LOGICAL EDUCATION

(ADDED IN THIS EDITION)

- IV. PREFACE TO "COELI ENARRANT" (1885)

I

MODERN GROTESQUE

1. THE reader may perhaps be somewhat confused by the different tone with which, in various passages of these volumes, I have spoken of the dignity of Expression.¹ He must remember that there are three distinct schools of expression, and that it is impossible, on every occasion when the term is used, to repeat the definition of the three, and distinguish the school spoken of.

There is, first, the Great Expressional School, consisting of the sincerely thoughtful and affectionate painters of early times, masters of their art, as far as it was known in their days. Orcagna, John Bellini, Perugino, and Angelico, are its leading masters. All the men who compose it are, without exception, *colourists*. The modern Pre-Raphaelites belong to it.

Secondly, the Pseudo-Expressional school, wholly of modern development, consisting of men who have never mastered their art, and are probably incapable of mastering it, but who hope to substitute sentiment for good painting. It is eminently characterized by its contempt of colour, and may be most definitely distinguished as the School of Clay.

Thirdly, the Grotesque Expressional School, consisting of men who, having peculiar powers of observation for the stronger signs of character in anything, and sincerely delighting in them, lose sight of the associated refinements or beauties. This school is apt, more or less, to catch at faults or strangenesses; and associating its powers of observation with wit or malice, produces the wild, gay, or satirical grotesque in early sculpture, and in modern times, our rich and various popular caricature.

2. I took no note of this branch of art in the chapter on the Grotesque Ideal;² partly because I did not wish to disturb the reader's mind in our examination of the great imaginative grotesque, and also because I did not feel able to give a distinct account of this branch, having never thoroughly considered the powers of eye and hand involved in its finer examples. But assuredly men of strong intellect and fine sense are found among the caricaturists, and it is to them

¹ [See above, p. 72, where the reader is referred by Ruskin to this Appendix, and where the passages cited in § 2 here occur. For passages speaking of expression as a more dignified branch of art, see ch. iii. in the preceding volume. Vol. V. pp. 51, 52.]

² [See Vol. V. ch. viii.]

that I allude in saying that the most subtle expression is often attained by “slight studies”; while it is of the pseudo-expressionist, or “high art” school that I am speaking, when I say that expression may “sometimes be elaborated by the toil of the dull”; in neither case meaning to depreciate the work, wholly different in every way, of the great expressional schools.

3. I regret that I have not been able, as yet, to examine with care the powers of mind involved in modern caricature.¹ They are, however, always partial and imperfect; for the very habit of looking for the leading lines, by the smallest possible number of which the expression may be attained, warps the power of *general* attention, and blunts the perception of the delicacies of the entire form and colour. Not that caricature, or exaggeration of points of character, may not be occasionally indulged in by the greatest men—as constantly by Leonardo;² but then it will be found that the caricature consists, not in imperfect or violent *drawing*, but in delicate and perfect drawing of strange and exaggerated forms quaintly combined: and even thus, I believe, the habit of looking for such conditions will be found injurious; I strongly suspect its operation on Leonardo to have been the increase of his non-natural tendencies in his higher works. A certain acknowledgment of the ludicrous element is admitted in corners of the pictures of Veronese—in dwarfs or monkeys; but it is *never* caricatured or exaggerated. Tintoret and Titian hardly admit the element at all. They admit the noble grotesque to the full, in all its quaintness, brilliancy, and awe; but never any form of it depending on exaggeration, partiality, or fallacy.*

I believe, therefore, whatever wit, delicate appreciation of ordinary character, or other intellectual power may belong to the modern masters of caricature, their method of study for ever incapacitates them from passing beyond a certain point, and either reaching any of the perfect forms of art themselves, or understanding them in others. Generally speaking, their power is limited to the use of the pen or pencil—they cannot touch colour without discomfiture; and even those whose work is of higher aim, and wrought habitually in colour, are prevented by their pursuit of *piquant* expression from understanding noble expression. Leslie furnishes several curious examples of this defect of perception in his late work on Art;—talking, for instance, of the “insipid faces of Francia.”³

* Compare *Stones of Venice*, Vol. III. Chap. III. § 74. [Vol. XI. pp. 191–192.]

¹ [Ruskin afterwards gave some attention to the subject of modern caricature—in *The Art of England*, § 139; see also a letter of 1883, reprinted in *Ruskiniana*, 1890, and in a later volume of this edition.]

² [On the subject of Leonardo’s grotesque drawings, of which specimens may be seen in most collections, the reader may consult Eugène Muntz’s *Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. i. pp. 217–218 of the English edition.]

³ [*A Handbook for Young Painters*, 1855, p. 33. For another criticism of this book, see in the preceding volume, Appendix i., p. 423.]

4. On the other hand, all the real masters of caricature deserve honour in this respect, that their gift is peculiarly their own—innate and incommunicable. No teaching, no hard study, will ever enable other people to equal, in their several ways, the works of Leech or Cruikshank;¹ whereas, the power of pure drawing is communicable, within certain limits, to every one who has good sight and industry. I do not, indeed, know how far, by devoting the attention to points of character, caricaturist skill may be laboriously attained; but certainly the power is, in the masters of the school, innate from their childhood.

Farther. It is evident that many subjects of thought may be dealt with by this kind of art which are inapproachable by any other, and that its influence over the popular mind must always be great; hence it may often happen that men of strong purpose may rather express themselves in this way (and continue to make such expression a matter of earnest study), than turn to any less influential, though more dignified, or even more intrinsically meritorious, branch of art. And when the powers of quaint fancy are associated (as is frequently the case) with stern understanding of the nature of evil, and tender human sympathy, there results a bitter, or pathetic spirit of grotesque to which mankind at the present day owe more thorough moral teaching than to any branch of art whatsoever.

5. In poetry, the temper is seen, in perfect manifestation, in the works of Thomas Hood;² in art, it is found both in various works of the Germans,—their finest and their least thought of; and more or less in the works of George Cruikshank,* and in many of the illustrations of our popular journals. On the whole, the most impressive examples of it, in poetry and in art, which I remember are the Song of the Shirt, and the woodcuts of Alfred Rethel, before spoken of.³ A correspondent, though coarser, work appeared some little time back in *Punch*, namely, the “General Février turned Traitor.”⁴

The reception of the woodcut last named was in several respects a curious test of modern feeling. For the sake of the general reader, it may be well to state the occasion and character of it. It will be

* Taken all in all, the works of Cruikshank have the most sterling value of any belonging to this class, produced in England.

¹ [For Ruskin’s high appreciation of Leech, see his introduction to a *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Outlines by the late John Leech*, 1872 (here reprinted in Vol. XIV.); and *The Art of England*, Lecture v. For Cruikshank, see *Elements of Drawing*, §§ iii., 91, 239, 257; *Time and Tide*, §§ 63, 69, 116; *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 11 n.; *Queen of the Air*, §§ 138, 139; Introduction to *German Popular Stories* (reprinted in a later volume of this edition); *Ariadne Florentina*, § 259; and *Præterita*, i., ch. iv. § 82.]

² [Often quoted, and praised, by Ruskin; see, for instance, *Elements of Drawing*, § 258; *My first Editor*, in *On the Old Road*, vol. i. § 15 (reprinted in a later volume of this edition); and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 82.]

³ [See Vol. V. p. 138.]

⁴ [This was a cartoon by John Leech which appeared in *Punch*, February 10, 1855.]

remembered by all that early in the winter of 1854–55, so fatal by its inclemency, and by our own providence, to our army in the Crimea, the late Emperor of Russia said, or was reported to have said, that “his best commanders, General January and General February, were not yet come.” The word, if ever spoken, was at once base, cruel, and blasphemous;—base, in precisely reversing the temper of all true soldiers, so nobly instanced by the son of Saladin, when he sent, at the very instant of the discomfiture of his own army, two horses to Cœur de Lion, whose horse had been killed under him in the mêlée;¹ cruel, inasmuch as he ought not to have exulted in the thought of the death, by slow suffering, of brave men; blasphemous, inasmuch as it contained an appeal to Heaven, of which he knew the hypocrisy. He himself died in February; and the woodcut of which I speak represented a skeleton in soldier’s armour, entering his chamber, the driven sleet white on its cloak and crest; laying its hand on his heart as he lay dead.

6. There were some points to be regretted in the execution of the design, but the thought was a grand one; the memory of the word spoken, and of its answer, could hardly in any more impressive way have been recorded for the people; and I believe that to all persons accustomed to the earnest forms of art, it contained a profound and touching lesson. The notable thing was, however, that it offended all persons *not* in earnest, and was loudly cried out against by the polite formalism of society. This fate is, I believe, the almost inevitable one of thoroughly genuine work, in these days, whether poetry or painting; but what added to the singularity in this case was that *coarse* heartlessness was even more offended than polite heartlessness. Thus, *Blackwood’s Magazine*,—which from the time that, with grace, judgment, and tenderness peculiarly its own, it bid the dying Keats “back to his gallipots,”* to that in which it partly arrested the last efforts, and

* “The notice in *Blackwood* is still more scurrilous; the circumstance of Keats having been brought up a surgeon is the staple of the jokes of the piece.² He is told ‘it is a better and wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet.’ ”—Milnes’ *Life of Keats*, vol. i., p. 200, and compare pp. 193, 194. It may perhaps be said that I attach too much importance to the evil of base criticism; but those who think so have never rightly understood its scope, nor the reach of that stern saying of Johnson’s (*Idler*, No. 3, April 29, 1758): “Little does he (who assumes the character of a critic) think how many harmless men he involves in his own guilt, by teaching them to be noxious without malignity, and to repeat objections which they do not understand.” And truly, not in this kind only, but in all things whatsoever, there is not, to my mind, a more woful or wonderful matter of thought than the power of a fool. In the world’s

¹ [At the battle of Jaffa in the Third Crusade, A.D. 1192: see Lingard’s *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 267; it is the brother, not the son, of Saladin of whom the anecdote is told.]

² [See *Blackwood’s Magazine*, August 1818, vol. 3, pp. 519–524, being the fourth of a series of articles (attributed to Lockhart) “On the Cockney School of Poetry.”]

shortened the life of Turner, had, with an infallible instinct for the wrong, given what pain it could, and withered what strength it could, in every great mind that was in anywise within its reach; and had made itself, to the utmost of its power, frost and disease of the heart to the most noble spirits of England,—took upon itself to be generously offended at this triumphing over the death of England's enemy, because, "by proving that he is obliged to undergo the common lot of all, his brotherhood is at once reasserted."* He was not, then, a brother while he was alive? or is our brother's blood in general not to be acknowledged by us till it rushes up against us from the ground?¹ I know that this is a common creed, whether a peculiarly wise or Christian one may be doubted. It may not, indeed, be well to triumph over the dead, but perhaps it is less well that the world so often tries to triumph over the living. And as for exultation over a fallen foe (though there was *none* in the mind of the man who drew that monarch dead), it may be remembered that there have been worthy persons, before now, guilty of this great wickedness,—nay, who have even fitted the words of their exultation to timbrels, and gone forth to sing them in dances. There have even been those—women, too,—who could make a mock at the agony of a mother weeping over her lost son, when that son had been the enemy of their country; and their mock has been preserved, as worthy to be read by the human eyes. "The mother of Sisera looked out at a window. 'Hath he not sped?' "² I do not say this was right, still less that it was wrong; but only that it would be well for us if we could quit our habit of thinking that what we say of the dead is of more weight

affairs there is no design so great or good but it will take twenty wise men to help it forward a few inches, and a single fool can stop it; there is no evil so great or so terrible but that, after a multitude of counsellors have taken means to avert it, a single fool will bring it down. Pestilence, famine, and the sword,³ are given into the fool's hand as the arrows into the hand of the giant: and if he were fairly set forth in the right motley, the web of it should be sackcloth and sable; the bells on his cap, passing bells; his badge, a bear robbed of her whelps; and his bauble, a sexton's spade.

* By the way, this doubt of the possibility of an emperor's death till he *proves* it, is a curious fact in the history of Scottish metaphysics in the nineteenth century.⁴

¹ [See Genesis iv. 10.]

² [Judges v. 28. For some remarks on the Song of Deborah—"to me as sacred as the Magnificat"—see *Præterita*, iii., ch. i. § 14.]

³ [Ezekiel vi. 11, vii. 15.]

⁴ [See *Blackwood's Magazine* for April 1855, vol. 77, p. 483, in an article on "The Death of Nicholas." The remarks on the cartoon in *Punch* were these: "We will take the opportunity of expressing our regret at the sad feeling which dictated a caricature in a very popular weekly paper. It looked so much like exultation over a fallen foe, that it brought perforce to mind Æsop's story of the dead lion, and the insult he received. It was dictated by an un-English feeling: we hope it was only an error of thoughtlessness; but thoughtlessness in print is a very grave error."]

than what we say of the living. The dead either know nothing, or know enough to despise both us and our insults or adulation.

7. "Well, but," it is answered, "there will always be this weakness in our human nature; we shall for ever, in spite of reason, take pleasure in doing funereal honour to the corpse, and writing sacredness to memory upon marble." Then, if you are to do this,—if you are to put off your kindness until death,—why not, in God's name, put off also your enmity? and if you choose to write your lingering affections upon stones, wreak also your delayed anger upon clay. This would be just, and, in the last case, little as you think it, generous. The true baseness is in the bitter reverse—the strange iniquity of our folly. Is a man to be praised, honoured, pleaded for? It might do harm to praise or plead for him while he lived. Wait till he is dead. Is he to be maligned, dishonoured, and discomfited? See that you do it while he is alive. It would be too ungenerous to slander him when he could feel malice no more; too contemptible to try to hurt him when he was past anguish. Make yourselves busy, ye unjust, ye lying, ye hungry for pain! Death is near. This is your hour, and the power of darkness.¹ Wait, ye just, ye merciful, ye faithful in love! Wait but for a little while, for this is not your rest.

8. "Well, but," it is still answered, "is it not, indeed, ungenerous to speak ill of the dead, since they cannot defend themselves?"

Why should they? If you speak ill of them falsely, it concerns you, not them. Those lies of thine will "hurt a man as thou art,"² assuredly they will hurt thyself; but that clay, or the delivered soul of it, in no wise. Ajacean shield, seven-folded, never stayed lance-thrust as that turf will, with daisies pied.³ What you say of those quiet ones is wholly and utterly the world's affair and yours. The lie will, indeed, cost its proper price, and work its appointed work; you may ruin living myriads by it,—you may stop the progress of centuries by it,—you may have to pay your own soul for it,—but as for ruffling one corner of the folded shroud by it, think it not. The dead have none to defend them! Nay, they have two defenders, strong enough for the need—God, and the worm.⁴

¹ [Luke xxii. 53.]

² [Job xxxv. 8.]

³ [*Love's Labour Lost*, v. 2.]

⁴ [With the subject of these sections—the vanity of memorials to the dead, the duty of encouragement to the living—compare Vol. III. p. 645; *A Joy for Ever*, § 26; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 16.]

II

ROCK CLEAVAGE

I AM well aware how insufficient, and, in some measure, how disputable, the account given in the preceding chapters of the cleavages of the slaty crystallines must appear to geologists. But I had several reasons, good or bad as they may be, for treating the subject in such a manner. The first was, that considering the science of the artist as eminently the science of *aspects* (see Vol. III. Chap. xvii. § 43),¹ I kept myself, in all my investigations of natural objects, as much as possible in the state of an uninformed spectator of the outside of things, receiving simply what impressions the external phenomena first induce. For the natural tendency of accurate science is to make the possessor of it look for, and eminently see, the things connected with his special pieces of knowledge; and as all accurate science must be sternly limited, his sight of nature gets limited accordingly. I observe that all our young figure-painters were rendered, to all intents and purposes, *blind* by their knowledge of anatomy.² They saw only certain muscles and bones, of which they had learned the positions by rote, but could not, on account of the very prominence in their minds of these bits of fragmentary knowledge, see the real movement, colour, rounding, or any other subtle quality of the human form. And I was quite sure that if I examined the mountain anatomy scientifically, I should go wrong, in like manner, touching the external aspects. Therefore in beginning the inquiries of which the results are given in the preceding pages, I closed all geological books, and set myself, as far as I could, to see the Alps in a simple, thoughtless, and untheorising manner; but to *see* them, if it might be, thoroughly. If I am wrong in any of the statements made after this kind of examination, the very fact of this error is an interesting one, as showing the kind of deception which the external aspects of hills are calculated to induce in an unprejudiced observer; but, whether wrong or right, I believe the results I have given are those which naturally would strike an artist, and *ought* to strike him, just as the apparently domical form of

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 387.]

² [For Ruskin's references to the relation of anatomy and art, see Vol. IV. p. 155 *n.*, Vol. XI. p. 60 *n.*, and compare p. 232, above.]

the sky, and radiation of the sun's light, ought to be marked by him as pictorial phenomena, though the sky is not domical, and though the radiation of sunbeams is a perspective deception. There are, however, one or two points on which my opinions might seem more adverse to the usual positions of geologists than they really are, owing to my having left out many *qualifying* statements for fear of confusing the reader. These I must here briefly touch upon. And, first, I know that I shall be questioned for not having sufficiently dwelt upon slaty cleavages running transversely across series of beds, and for generally speaking as if the slaty crystalline rocks were merely dried beds of micaceous sand, in which the flakes of mica naturally lay parallel with the beds, or only at such an angle to them as is constantly assumed by particles of drift. Now the reason of this is simply that my own mountain experience has led me *always* among rocks which induced such an impression; that, in general, artists seeking for the noblest hill scenery will also get among such rocks, and that, therefore, I judged it best to explain their structure completely, merely alluding (in Chap. x. § 7¹) to the curious results of cross cleavage among the softer slates, and leaving the reader to pursue the inquiry, if he cared to do so; although, in reality, it matters very little to the artist whether the slaty cleavage be across the beds or not, for to him the cleavage itself is always the important matter; and the stratification, if contrary to it, is usually so obscure as to be naturally, and therefore properly, lost sight of. And touching the disputed question whether the micaceous arrangements of metamorphic rocks are the results of subsequent crystallization, or of aqueous deposition, I had no special call to speak; the whole subject appeared to me only more mysterious the more I examined it; but my own impressions were always strongly for the aqueous deposition: nor in such cases as that of the beds of the Matterhorn (drawn in Plate 39), respecting which, somewhat exceptionally, I have allowed myself to theorise a little, does the matter appear to me disputable.

2. And I was confirmed in this feeling by De Saussure; the only writer whose help I did not refuse in the course of these inquiries. *His* I received, for this reason—all other geological writers whose works I had examined were engaged in the maintenance of some theory or other, and always gathering materials to support it. But I found Saussure had gone to the Alps, as I desired to go myself, only to *look* at them, and describe them as they were, loving them heartily—loving them, the positive Alps, more than himself, or than science, or than any theories of science; and I found his descriptions, therefore, clear and trustworthy; and that when I had not visited any place myself, Saussure's report upon it might always be received without question.

Not but that Saussure himself has a pet theory, like other human beings; only it is quite subordinate to his love of the Alps. He is a steady advocate of the aqueous crystallization of rocks, and never loses a

¹ [See above, p. 160.]

fair opportunity of a blow at the Huttonians;¹ but his opportunities are always *fair*, his description of what he sees is wholly impartial: it is only when he gets home and arranges his papers that he puts in the little aqueously inclined paragraphs, and never a paragraph without just cause. He may, perhaps, overlook the evidence on the opposite side; but in the Alps the igneous alteration of the rocks, and the modes of their upheaval, seem to me subjects of intense difficulty and mystery, and as such Saussure always treats them; the evidence for the original *deposition* by water of the slaty crystallines appears to him, as it does to me, often perfectly distinct.

Now Saussure's universal principle was exactly the one on which I have founded my account of the slaty crystallines:—"Fidèle à mon principe, de ne regarder comme de couches, dans les montagnes schisteuses, que les divisions parallèles aux feuillets des schistes dont elles sont composées."—*Voyages*, § 1747. I know that this is an arbitrary, and in some cases an assuredly false, principle; but the assumption of it by De Saussure proves all that I want to prove,—namely, that the beds of the slaty crystallines are in the Alps in so large a plurality of instances correspondent in direction to their folia, as to induce even a cautious reasoner to assume such correspondence to be universal.

3. The next point, however, on which I shall be opposed, is one on which I speak with far less confidence, for in this Saussure himself is against me,—namely, the parallelism of the beds sloping under the Mont Blanc.² Saussure states twice, §§ 656, 677, that they are arranged in the form of a fan. I can only repeat that every measurement and every drawing I made in Chamouni led me to the conclusions stated in the text, and so I leave the subject to better investigators; this one fact being indisputable, and the only one on which for my purpose it is necessary to insist, that, whether at Chamouni the beds be radiant or not, to an artist's eye they are usually parallel; and throughout the Alps no phenomenon is more constant than the rounding of surfaces across the extremities of beds sloping outwards, as seen in my plates **37**, **40**, and **48**, and this especially in the most majestic mountain masses. Compare De Saussure of the Grimsel, § 1712: "Toujours il est bien remarquable que ces feuillets, verticaux au sommet, s'inclinent ensuite, comme à Chamouni, contre le dehors de la montagne;" and again of the granite at Guttannen, § 1679: "Ces couches ne sont pas tout-à-fait verticales; elles s'appuyent un peu contre le Nord-Est, ou, comme à Chamouni, contre le dehors de la montagne." Again of the "quartz micacé" of Zumloch, § 1723: "Ces rochers sont en couches à peu près verticales, dont les plans courent du Nord-Est au Sud-Ouest, en s'appuyant, *suivant l'usage*, contre l'extérieur de la montagne, ou contre la vallée." Again, on the Pass of the Gries, § 1738: "Le rocher présente des couches d'un schiste micacé rayé comme

¹ [James Hutton (1726–1797), one of the founders of geological science, and originator of the uniformitarian theory. Five years after his death, one of his friends (John Playfair) published a well-known volume, entitled *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth*.]

² [See ch. xiv. § 3, p. 217, and ch. xv. §§ 15, 16, pp. 252–257.]

une étoffe; comme, de l'autre côté, ils surplombent vers le dehors de la montagne." Without referring to other passages, I think Saussure's simple words, "suivant l'usage," are enough to justify my statement in Chap. XIV. § 3; only the reader must of course always remember that every conceivable position of beds takes place in the Alps, and all I mean to assert generally is, that where the masses are most enormous and impressive, and formed of slaty crystalline rocks, there the run of the beds up, as it were, from within the mountain to its surface will, in all probability, become a notable feature in the scene as regarded by an artist. One somewhat unusual form assumed by horizontal beds of slaty crystallines, or of granite, is described by Saussure with unusual admiration; and the passage is worth extracting, as bearing on the terraced ideal of rocks in the Middle Ages. The scene is in the Val Formazza.

"Indépendamment de l'intérêt que ces couches présentent au géologue sous un nombre de rapports qu'il seroit trop long et peut-être inutile de détailler, elles présentent, même pour le peintre, un superbe tableau. Je n'ai jamais vu de plus beaux rochers, et distribués en plus grandes masses; ici, blancs; là, noircis par les lichens; là, peints de ces belles couleurs variées que nous admirions au Grimsel, et entremêlés d'arbres, dont les uns couronnent le faite de la montagne, et d'autres sont inégalement jetés sur les corniches qui en séparent les couches. Vers le bas de la montagne l'œil se repose sur de beaux vergers, dans de prairies dont le terrain est inégal et varié, et sur de magnifiques châtaigniers, dont les branches étendues ombragent les rochers contre lesquels ils croissent. En général, ces granits en couches horizontales rendent ce pays charmant; car, quoiqu'il y ait, comme je l'ai dit, des couches qui forment des saillies, cependant elles sont pour l'ordinaire arrangées en gradins, ou en grandes assises posées en reculement les unes derrière les autres, et les bords de ces gradins sont couverts de la plus belle verdure, et d'arbres distribués de la manière la plus pittoresque. On voit même des montagnes très-élevées, qui ont la forme de pain de sucre, et qui sont entourées et couronnées, jusqu'à leur sommet, de guirlandes d'arbres assis sur les intervalles des couches, et qui forment l'effet du monde le plus singulier."—*Voyages*, § 1758.

Another statement, which I made generally, referring, for those qualifications which it is so difficult to give without confusing the reader, to this Appendix,¹ was that of the usually greater hardness of the tops of mountains as compared with their flanks. My own experience among the Alps has furnished me with few exceptions to this law; but there is a very interesting one, according to Saussure, in the range of the Furca del Bosco. (*Voyages*, § 1779.)

4. Lastly, at page 231 of this volume, I have alluded to the various cleavages of the aiguilles, out of which one only has been explained and illustrated. I had not intended to treat the subject so partially; and had actually prepared a long chapter, explaining the

¹ [See above, p. 216.]

relations of five different and important systems of cleavage in the Chamouni aiguilles. When it was written, however, I found it looked so repulsive to readers in general, and proved so little that was of interest even to readers in particular, that I cancelled it, leaving only the account of what I might, perhaps, not unjustifiably (from the first representation of it in the *Liber Studiorum*)¹ call Turner's cleavage. The following passage, which was the introduction to the chapter, may serve to show that I have not ignored the others, though I found, after long examination, that Turner's was the principal one:—

“One of the principal distinctions between these crystalline masses and stratified rocks, with respect to their outwardly apparent structure, is the subtle complexity and number of *ranks* in their crystalline cleavages. The stratified masses have always a simply intelligible organization; their beds lie in one direction, and certain fissures and fractures of those beds lie in other clearly ascertainable directions; seldom more than two or three *distinct* directions of these fractures being admitted. But if the traveller will set himself deliberately to watch the shadows on the aiguilles of Chamouni as the sun moves round them, he will find that nearly every quarter of an hour a new *set* of cleavages becomes visible, not confused and orderless, but a series of lines inclining in some one definite direction, and that so positively, that if he had only seen the aiguille at that moment he would assuredly have supposed its internal structure to be altogether regulated by the lines of bed or cleavage then in sight. Let him, however, wait for another quarter of an hour, and he will see those lines fade entirely away as the sun rounds them; and another set, perhaps quite adverse to them, and assuredly lying in another direction, will as gradually become visible, to die away in their turn, and be succeeded by a third scheme of structure.

“These ‘dissolving views’ of the geology of the aiguilles have often thrown me into despair of ever being able to give any account of their formation; but just in proportion as I became aware of the infinite complexity of their framework, the one great fact rose into more prominent and wonderful relief,—that through this inextricable complexity there was always manifested *some* authoritative principle. It mattered not at what hour of the day the aiguilles were examined, at that hour they had a system of structure belonging to the moment. No confusion nor anarchy ever appeared amidst their strength, but an ineffable order, only the more perfect because incomprehensible. They differed from lower mountains, not merely in being more compact, but in being more disciplined.

“For, observe, the lines which cause these far-away effects of shadow, are not, as often in less noble rocks, caused by real cracks through the body of the mountain; for, were this so, it would follow, from what has just been stated, that these aiguilles were cracked

¹ [See above, p. 237, and Plate 32.]

through and through in every direction, and therefore actually weaker, instead of stronger, than other rocks. But the appearance of fracture is entirely external, and the sympathy or parallelism of the lines indicates, not an actual splitting through the rock, but a mere disposition in the rock to split harmoniously when it is compelled to do so. Thus, in the shell-like fractures on the flank of the Aiguille Blaitière, the rock is not actually divided, as it appears to be, into successive hollow plates. Go up close to the inner angle between one bed of rock and the next, and the whole mass will be found as firmly united as a piece of glass. There is absolutely no crack between the beds,—no, not so much as would allow the blade of a penknife to enter for a quarter of an inch;* but such a subtle disposition to symmetry of fracture in the heart of the solid rock, that the next thunderbolt which strikes on that edge of it will rend away a shell-shaped fragment or series of fragments; and will either break it so as to continue the line of one of the existing sides, or in some other line parallel to that. And yet this resolvedness to break into shell-shaped fragments running north and south is only characteristic of the rock at this spot, and at certain other spots where similar circumstances have brought out this peculiar humour. Forty yards farther on it will be equally determined to break in another direction, and nothing will persuade it to the contrary. Forty yards farther it will change its mind again, and face its beds round to another quarter of the compass; and yet all these alternating caprices are each parts of one mighty continuous caprice, which is only masked for a time; as threads of one colour are in a patterned stuff by threads of another; and thus from a distance, precisely the same cleavage is seen repeated again and again in different places,

* The following extract from my diary¹ refers to the only instance in which I remember any appearance of a spring, or welling of water through inner fissures, in the aiguilles.

“*20th August.*—Ascended the moraine till I reached the base of Blaitière; the upper part of the moraine excessively loose and edgy; covered with fresh snow; the rocks were wreathed in mist, and a light sleet, composed of small grains of kneaded snow, kept beating in my face; it was bitter cold too, though the thermometer was at 43°, but the wind was like that of an English December thaw. I got to the base of the aiguille, however, one of the most grand and sweeping bits of granite I have ever seen; a small gurgling streamlet, escaping from a fissure not wide enough to let in my hand, made a strange hollow ringing in the compact rock, and came welling out over its ledges with the sound, and successive wave, of water out of a narrow-necked bottle, covering the rock with ice (which must have been frozen there last night) two inches thick. I levelled the Breven top, and found it a little beneath me; the Charmoz glacier on the left, sank from the moraine in broken fragments of névé, and swept back under the dark walls of the Charmoz, lost in cloud.”

[At Chamouni, in 1849.]

forming a systematic structure; while other groups of cleavages will become visible in their turn, either as we change our place of observation, or as the sunlight changes the direction of its fall.”

5. One part of these rocks, I think, no geologist interested in this subject should pass without examination; viz., the little spur of Blaitière drawn in Plate 29, Fig. 3. It is seen, as there shown, from the moraine of the Charmoz glacier, its summit bearing s. 40° w.; and its cleavage beds leaning to the left or s.e., against the Aiguille Blaitière. If, however, we go down to the extremity of the rocks themselves, on the right, we shall find that all those thick beams of rock are actually *sawn into vertical timbers* by another cleavage, sometimes so fine as to look almost slaty, directed straight s.e., against the aiguille, as if, continued, it would saw it through and through; finally, cross the spur and go down to the glacier below, between it and the Aiguille du Plan, and the bottom of the spur will be found presenting the most splendid mossy surfaces, through which the true gneissitic cleavage is faintly traceable, dipping *at right angles* to the beds in Fig. 3, or under the Aiguille Blaitière, thus concurring with the beds of La Côte.

I forgot to note that the view of this Aiguille Blaitière, given in Plate 31,¹ was taken from the station marked *q* in the reference figure, p. 204; and the sketch of the Aiguille du Plan at p. 233, from the station marked *r* in the same figure, a highly interesting point of observation in many respects; while the course of transition from the protogine into gneiss presents more remarkable phenomena on the descents from that point *r* to the Tapia T, than at any other easily accessible spot.²

Various interesting descriptions of granite cleavage will be found in De Saussure, chiefly in his accounts of the Grimsel and St. Gothard. The following summary of his observations on their positions of beds (§ 1774), may serve to show the reader how long I should have detained him if I had endeavoured to give a description of all the attendant phenomena:—“Il est aussi bien curieux de voir ces gneiss, et ces granits veinés, en couches verticales à Guttannen; mélangées d’horizontales et de verticales au Lauteraar; toutes verticales au Grimsel et au Griès; toutes horizontales dans le Val Formazza, et enfin pour la troisième fois verticales à la sortie des Alpes à l’entrée du Lac Majeur.”

¹ [In all previous editions this reference has been erroneously given as “Plate 39.”]

² [See above, p. 256.]

III

LOGICAL EDUCATION

1. IN the Preface to the third volume I alluded to the conviction daily gaining ground upon me, of the need of a more accurately logical education of our youth.¹ Truly among the most pitiable and practically hurtful weaknesses of the modern English mind, its usual inability to grasp the connection between any two ideas which have elements of opposition in them, as well as of connection, is perhaps the chief. It is shown with singular fatality in the vague efforts made by our divines to meet the objections raised by free-thinkers, bearing on the nature and origin of evil; but there is hardly a sentence written on any matter requiring careful analysis, by writers who have not yet begun to perceive the influence of their own vanity (and there are too many such among divines), which will not involve some half-lamentable, half-ludicrous, logical flaw,—such flaws being the invariable consequence of a man's straining to say anything in a learned instead of an intelligible manner.

Take a sentence, for example, from J. A. James's *Anxious Inquirer*:²—"It is a great principle that *subjective religion, or in other words, religion in us*, is produced and sustained by fixing the mind on *objective religion, or the facts and doctrines of the Word of God*."

Cut entirely out the words I have put in italics, and the sentence has a meaning (though not by any means an important one). But by its verbosities it is extended into pure nonsense; for "facts" are neither "objective" nor "subjective"* religion; they are not religion at all. The belief of them, attended with certain feelings, is religion; and it must always be religion "in us," for in whom else should it be? (unless in angels; which would not make it less "subjective.") It is just as

* If these two unlucky words get much more hold in the language, we shall soon have our philosophers refusing to call their dinner "dinner," but speaking of it always as their "objective appetite."³

¹ [See Vol. V. p. 9; and compare Appendix 7 in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 258).]

² [*The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation*, 1834, p. 91; often reprinted and translated; by John Angell James (1785–1859), for many years Independent minister of Carr Lane's Chapel, Birmingham.]

³ [Compare Vol. V. p. 201 n.]

rational to call doctrines “objective religion,” as to call entreaties “objective compassion”; and the only fact of any notability deducible from the sentence is, that the writer desired earnestly to say something profound, and had nothing profound to say.

2. To the same defect of intellect must, in charity, be attributed many of the wretched cases of special pleading which we continually hear from the pulpit. In the year 1853, I heard in Edinburgh a sermon from a leading and excellent Presbyterian clergyman, on a subject generally grateful to Protestant audiences, namely, the impropriety and wickedness of Fasting.¹ The preacher entirely denied that there was any authority for fasting in the New Testament; declared that there were many feasts appointed, but no fasts; insisted with great energy on the words “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,” etc., as descriptive of Romanism, and *never once*, throughout a long sermon, ventured so much as a single syllable that might recall to his audience’s recollection the existence of such texts as Matthew iv. 2 and vi. 16, or Mark ix. 29. I have heard many sermons from Roman Catholic priests, but I never yet heard, in the strongest holds of Romanism, any so monstrous an instance of special pleading; in fact, it never could have occurred in a sermon by any respectable Roman Catholic divine; for the Romanists are trained to arguments from their youth, and are always to some extent plausible.

3. It is of course impossible to determine, in such cases, how far the preacher, having conscientiously made up his mind on the subject by foregoing thought, and honestly desiring to impress his conclusion on his congregation, may think his object will be best, and even justifiably attained by insisting on all that is in favour of his position, and trusting to the weak heads of his hearers not to find out the arguments for the contrary; fearing that if he stated, in any proportionate measure, the considerations on the other side, he might not be able, in the time allotted to him, to bring out his conclusion fairly. This, though I hold it an entirely false view, is nevertheless a comprehensible and pardonable one, especially in a man familiar with the reasoning capacities of the public; though those capacities themselves owe half their short-comings to being so unworthily treated. But, on the whole, and looking broadly at the way the speakers and teachers of the nation set about their business, there is an almost fathomless failure in the results, owing to the general admission of special pleading as an *art to be taught* to youth. The main thing which we ought to teach our youth is to *see* something,—all that the eyes which God has given them are capable of seeing. The sum of what we *do* teach them is to *say* something. As far as I have experience of instruction, no man ever dreams of teaching a boy to get to the root of a matter; to think it out; to get quit of passion and desire in the process of thinking; or to fear no

¹ [The preacher was Dr. Guthrie, for whom see Vol. XII. pp. xxx.–xxxi.; Ruskin made in his diary, at Edinburgh, November 28, the notes which he here uses.]

face of man in plainly asserting the ascertained result. But to *say* anything in a glib and graceful manner,—to give an epigrammatic turn to nothing,—to quench the dim perceptions of a feeble adversary, and parry cunningly the home thrusts of a strong one,—to invent blanknesses in speech for breathing time, and slipperinesses in speech for hiding time,—to polish malice to the deadliest edge, shape profession to the seemliest shadow, and mask self-interest under the fairest pretext,—all these skills we teach definitely, as the main arts of business and life. There is a strange significance in the admission of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*¹ at our universities as a class-book. Cheating at cards is a base profession enough, but truly it would be wiser to print a code of gambler's legerdemain, and give *that* for a class-book, than to make the legerdemain of human speech, and the clever shuffling of the black spots in the human heart, the first study of our politic youth. Again, the *Ethics* of Aristotle, though containing some shrewd talk, interesting for an *old* reader, are yet so absurdly illogical and sophistical, that if a young man has once read them with any faith, it must take years before he recovers from the induced confusions of thought and false habits of argument. If there were the slightest dexterity or ingenuity in maintaining the false theory, there might be some excuse for retaining the *Ethics* as a school-book, provided only the tutor were careful to point out, on first opening it, that the Christian virtues,—namely, to love with all the heart, soul, and strength; to fight, not as one that beateth the air; and to do with *might* whatsoever the hand findeth to do,—could not in anywise be defined as "habits of choice in moderation."² But the Aristotelian quibbles are so shallow, that I look upon the retention of the book as a confession by our universities that they consider practice in shallow quibbling one of the essential disciplines of youth. Take, for instance, the distinction made between "Envy" and "Rejoicing at Evil" (φθονος and επιχαιρεκακια), in the second book of the *Ethics*, viz. that envy is grieved when any one meets with good-fortune; but "the rejoicer at evil so far misses of grieving, as even to rejoice" (the distinction between the *good* and *evil*, as subjects of the emotion, being thus omitted, and merely the verbal opposition of grief and joy caught at); and conceive the result, in the minds of most youths, of being forced to take tricks of words such as this (and there are too many of them in even the best Greek writers) for subjects of daily study and admiration; the theory of the *Ethics* being, besides, so hopelessly untenable,³ that even quibbling will not always face it out,—nay, will not help it in exactly the first and most important example of virtue

¹ [For Ruskin's "detestation" of this book, see Vol. I. p. xxxv., and for his opinion of Aristotle generally, *ibid.*, p. 419.]

² [The references here are to Luke x. 27; 1 Corinthians ix. 26; Ecclesiastes ix. 10; *Ethics*, ii. 5, 15 (εξις προαιρετικη εν μεσοτητι); ii. 7, 15 (ο δ επιχ τδεφυπεισθκιωσ τκαιντορ ελνειπει ;iii. 11, 7 (ου τετε λεδοτοιουτος ονοματος δια το μη πανυ); iii. 11, 7 (οο ιουτος ονοματος δια το μη παντο μη πανυ γινεσθαι).]

³ [See, for another reference to the Aristotelian theory of the mean, Vol. V. p. 385 *n.*]

which Aristotle has to give, and the very one which we might have thought his theory would have fitted most neatly; for defining “temperance” as a mean, and intemperance as one relative extreme, not being able to find an opposite extreme, he escapes with the apology that the kind of person who sins in the other extreme “has no precise name; because, on the whole, he does not exist!”

4. I know well the common censure by which objections to such futilities of so-called education are met, by the men who have been ruined by them,—the common plea that anything does to “exercise the mind upon.” It is an utterly false one. The human soul, in youth, is *not* a machine of which you can polish the cogs with any kelp or brickdust near at hand; and, having got it into working order, and good, empty, and oiled serviceableness, start your immortal locomotive, at twenty-five years old or thirty, express from the Strait Gate, on the Narrow Road.¹ The whole period of youth is one essentially of formation, edification, instruction; I use the words with their weight in them; intaking of stores, establishment in vital habits, hopes, and faiths. There is not an hour of it but is trembling with destinies,—not a moment of which, once past, the appointed work can ever be done again, or the neglected blow struck on the cold iron. Take your vase of Venice glass out of the furnace, and strew chaff over it in its transparent heat, and recover *that* to its clearness and rubied glory when the north wind has blown upon it; but do not think to strew chaff over the child fresh from God’s presence, and to bring the heavenly colours back to him—at least in this world.

¹ [Matthew vii. 13, 14.]

[Added in this Edition]

IV

PREFACE TO “COELI ENARRANT”¹

(1885)

THE studies of the nature and form of clouds, reprinted in the following pages from the fourth and fifth volumes of *Modern Painters*, will be in this series third in order, as they are in those volumes, of the treatises on natural history which were there made the foundation of judgment in landscape art. But the essay on trees will require more careful annotation than I have at present time for, and I am also desirous of placing these cloud studies quickly in the hands of any one who may have been interested in my account of recent storms.²

I find nothing to alter,* and little to explain, in the following portions of my former work, in which such passages as the eighth and ninth paragraphs of the opening chapter—usually thought of by the public merely as word-painting, but which are in reality accurately abstracted, and finally concentrated, expressions of the general laws of natural phenomena†—are

* Sometimes a now useless reference to other parts of the book is omitted, or one necessary to connect the sentence broken by such omission; otherwise I do not retouch the original text.

† Thus the sentence at page 13,³ “murmuring only when the winds raise them, or rocks divide,” does not describe, or word-paint, the sound of waters, but (with only the admitted art of a carefully reiterated “t”) sums the general causes of it; while, again, the immediately following one, defining the limitations of sea and river, “restrained by established shores, and guided through unchanging channels,” attempts no word-painting either of coast or burnside; but states, with only such ornament of its simplicity as could be got of the doubled “t” and doubled “ch,” the fact of the stability of existing rock structure which I was, at that time, alone among geologists in asserting.

¹ [Being “Studies of Cloud Form and its Visible Causes, selected from *Modern Painters*.” For Bibliographical Note, see Vol. III. p. lxiii. The chapters reprinted in Part I. (the only one issued) were ch. vi. in the present volume, and ch. i. of Part VII. in the next volume.]

² [*The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century: Two Lectures delivered at the London Institution, February 4 and 11, 1884*, reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]

³ [*i.e.*, of *Coeli Enarrant*; p. 112, above.]

indeed among the best I have ever written, and in their way, I am not ashamed to express my conviction, unlikely to be surpassed by any other author. But it may be necessary to advise the student of these now isolated chapters not to interpret any of their expressions of awe or wonder as meaning to attribute any supernatural, or in any special sense miraculous, character to the phenomena described, other than that of their adaptation to human feeling or need. I did not in the least mean to insinuate, because it was not easy to explain the buoyancy of clouds, that they were supported in the air as St. Francis in his ecstasy; or because the forms of a thundercloud were terrific, that they were less natural than those of a diamond; but in all the forms and actions of non-sentient things, I recognized, (as more at length explained in the conclusion of my essay on the plague cloud) constant miracle, and according to the need and deserving of man, more or less constantly manifest Deity. Time, and times, have since passed over my head, and have taught me to hope for more than this;—nay, perhaps so much more as that in English cities, where two or three are gathered in His name, such vision as that recorded by the sea-king Dandolo* might again be seen, when he was commanded that in the midst of the city he should build a church, "in the place above which he should see a red cloud rest."

J. RUSKIN.

OXFORD, *November 8th*, 1884.

* St. Mark's.¹

¹ [i.e., *St. Mark's Rest*, § 73, where the legend is quoted.]



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THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

Two thousand and sixty-two copies of this edition—of which two thousand are for sale in England and America—have been printed at the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh, and the type has been distributed.



Painted by Fra Angelico.

Drawn by J. Ruskin.

Engraved by W. Bell.

Ancilla Domini .

LIBRARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF

JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

NEW YORK: LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO

1905

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LIBRARY EDITION

VOLUME VII

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME V

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME V

COMPLETING THE WORK, AND CONTAINING

PARTS

VI. OF LEAF BEAUTY—VII. OF CLOUD
BEAUTY

VIII. OF IDEAS OF RELATION

I. OF INVENTION FORMAL

IX. OF IDEAS OF RELATION

2. OF INVENTION SPIRITUAL

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

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

WORDSWORTH

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1905

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¹ [In this edition reproduced in most cases by photogravure: see note on p. xviii.]

² [From a drawing by Ruskin of a picture by that artist; see below, p. 369.]

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¹ [There has been no Plate 77 in any edition: see below, p. lxxii.]

² [The above are the pages where the Plates themselves will be found, and where in most cases they are referred to in the text. For the author's other references to the Plates see also:—

For <i>Frontispiece</i> , p. 369		For Plate 69, pp. 145, 167, 173 <i>n</i>
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” ” 63, p. 158 <i>n.</i>		” ” 84, Introduction, pp.
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¹ Figs. 74-78 are printed together on a separate page.

² For another reference to this figure, see part viii. ch. ii. § 14 (p. 228).

³ Figs. 88-90 are printed together on a separate page.

⁴ Ruskin does not state the subject of this woodcut, or otherwise refer to it. In the MS. list of woodcuts it is called "Rising Drift-cloud," Nos. 88-90 on one page.

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

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

Several of the drawings from which the Plates were engraved have been exhibited at the Coniston Exhibition, 1900; the Ruskin Exhibition at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1901; and the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester, 1904. No. 53 (a water-colour, the same size as the original Plate) was at Manchester No. 64. No. 55 (pen and brush, again the same size) was at Coniston No. 132, and at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, No. 221. No. 68 was at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours No. 218 (the same size, but the sky was altered in engraving). No. 76 was, at the Society also, No. 45 (pen and ink, 12¼ x 16). The drawing of Plate A was at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours No. 368, and at Manchester, No. 231. That of Plate B was No. 304 at the Royal Water-Colour Society, and No. 361 at Manchester; that of Plate C was No. 154 at the Royal Water-Colour Society; and that of Plate F was No. 353 at the Royal Water-Colour Society, and No. 129 at Manchester.

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. VII

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

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

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

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

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

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

1856

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

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

¹ Vol. XIII. p. xxxi.

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

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

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

¹ Vol. V. p. xxxii.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 11.

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

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

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

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

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

² *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 46.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1857

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

¹ Compare Vol. XII. pp. 448–473.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ See *Lectures on Landscape*, § 36.

² See below, Preface, § 1, p. 3.

³ Vol. XII. p. xxvi. (Plate I.).

⁴ See Vol. XIII. p. xxxv.



J. Kuhn

Allen & Co. Ill.

Rock at Killtecrankie
1857

It was on collections of memoranda such as these, made both in pen and in pencil during a long series of years, that the chapters on the Clouds in this volume were based. Ruskin's study-windows commanded, as we have said,¹ a wide expanse of open country; and in the large garden behind his house at Denmark Hill he had materials ready to hand for his studies in trees and leaves and flowers. The autumn flowers he did not love as he did the autumn skies. "Garden spoiled," he notes in his diary, "by vile chrysanthemums." The poetry of these "autumn fairies," which Maeterlinck has expressed so prettily,² seldom appealed to Ruskin. He loved best the most natural flowers, and "the pensiveness which falls upon us as the leaves drift by in their fading,"³ filled him often with sadness. In later years he disliked the season of autumn, and always longed for the return of spring. Mrs. Severn would sometimes call his attention to the beauty of the autumn woods, but he had made up his mind against them.⁴

1858

Ruskin's work at the National Gallery, which moreover was not allowed to interrupt his teaching at the Working Men's College, did not exhaust his energies during the winter of 1857-1858. In January, February, and April he gave lectures (see Vol. XVI. p. xviii.), and in May there were again *Academy Notes* to be written (Vol. XIV.). By the time that these were off his hands, and that he had finished the arrangement of the Turner drawings, he was thoroughly tired out,⁵ and he set forth in May for a long holiday in Switzerland and Italy. On this occasion his parents did not accompany him, and the daily letter to his father gives us full particulars of his movements and impressions. "I mean," he said to his father (Calais, May 13, 1858), "to write my diary as much as I can by letter; it will amuse mamma and you, and be just as useful to me as if in a book."⁶

¹ Vol. III. p. xxviii.

² In *The Double Garden* (1904).

³ See below, part vi. ch. viii. § 20 (p. 100).

⁴ Herein Ruskin was of one mind with Burne-Jones. "I hate the country," wrote the painter during an autumn visit. "I remember," explains his biographer, "his dread of anything that appealed to the sadness which he shared with all imaginative natures, who 'don't need to be *made* to feel,' he said, and I believe that this 'hatred' was partly an instinct of self-preservation from the melancholy of autumn in the country" (*Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 1904, vol. i. p. 211).

⁵ See Preface, § 3; below, p. 5.

⁶ The itinerary of this tour, on which Ruskin was accompanied by his servant Crawley as well as by Couttet, was as follows: Calais (May 13), Paris (May 14), Bar-le-Duc (May 16), Bâle (May 18), Rheinfelden (May 19), Brugg (May 27),

He stayed a few days in Paris, visiting there the Count and Countess de la Maison; she was the sister of Adèle. As soon as he reached the open country his sensibility to the charms of French landscape expanded enthusiastically after his severe spell of work at home:—

“BAR-LE-DUC, *May* 16.—Anything so exquisite as this place I haven’t seen this many a day. I thought it was only a village under vines; it is an old French town of strange fantasy, richness, and quaintness, its gardens now all abloom with that purple tree which you remember at Meaux, the Arbre de Judée, and nodding lilac, over grey walls with strange Italian wealth of sweet herbage about them—wild strawberry and hawthorn white beside all the walks between the vines; low-roofed cottages just like Italy, with the Italian tiles, which I am amazed to see thus far north, and an old bridge with a little chapel on it and another bridge seen through it, and the hills all green-brown with budding vines far away down each river-side.”

And in another letter, written later on the same day:—

“I’ve had another exquisite walk among the vines; the sun coming out clear and soft, showing through the hawthorn hedges with fresh rain upon them; and the nightingales making such a noise, it was almost as bad as the children, who are very shrill-voiced here, and not sparing in use of the faculty. But I delight so in the vineyard walls, for it is a Jura limestone country and they are rough built, and go winding about under the hills, so [pen-and-ink sketch of wall and vineyard], with rich tiled coverings on the tops, held down by loose stones; most difficult to draw well, but exquisite when well done; and when the walls stop, come banks of potentilla leaves and forget-me-nots and veronica in blossom, and the soft French air breathing over all so tenderly.”

The tour which thus began so pleasantly lasted four months; and it became a long journey in more than one sense. He was to be led into trains of thought and study which largely modified his artistic standpoint, and which made the criticism in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* different, in some vital points, from that in its predecessors.

Bremgarten (May 28), Zug (May 30), Brunnen (June 3), Fluelen (June 9), Hospenthal (June 11), Bellinzona (June 12), Locarno (July 4), Bellinzona (July 6), Isola Bella (July 9), Baveno (July 10), Arona (July 14), Turin (July 15), St. Ambrogio (August 14), Turin (August 16), La Tour (August 20), Turin (August 21), Susa (August 31), Lanslebourg (September 1), Annecy (September 3), Bonneville (September 6), St. Gervais (September 7, a day’s expedition to Chamouni), Bonneville (September 10), Geneva (September 11), Paris (September 12).

From Bar-le-Duc Ruskin went to Bâle—starting, we may note, at four in the morning, breakfasting at Strasburg, and reaching “The Three Kings” in time for dinner. “Up at four this morning,” he writes from Bâle, and “walk in intense sweet sunshine till six.” From Bâle he drove over to Rheinfelden, where he stayed a week. One of the objects of his tour was to identify the scene of some of Turner’s sketches in the National Gallery:—

“RHEINFELDEN, *May 19.*—I was just in time here; the bridge is standing, but I should think will not be allowed to stand more than another year, it is too pretty. I was too late at Basle. They’ve put iron arches instead of the old wooden ones between the bridge piers, and taken the roof off the old chapel in the middle and put on a modern flat piece of railroad station work, so there’s an end to general views of the town of Basle.”

“*May 20.*—If you want to see where I am, just call at the National Gallery as soon as you go back to town, and ask Wornum to let you look at the frames Nos. 86, 87, 88, 89, 90; they are all very like, except only that the town, which Mr. Turner has made about the size of Strasburg, consists of one street and a few lanes, and what he had drawn as mountains are only the wooded Jura, but pretty in shape. I have got very comfortable parlour and bedroom, looking out on a fountain and statue of Tell; behind is Crawley’s and Joseph’s¹ room, opening from mine and looking out on the Rhine, which rushes past over a rocky bed, all foaming under the bridge:—blue and white; beyond are the hills of the Black Forest. The garden at the back of the Jura is full of tulips and lilac (honeysuckle just budding), and slopes to the river side—an arbour of rose-trees, not yet in flower, runs out quite to the water, under the walls of a ruined Gothic chapel with beautiful traceried windows filled with timber [sketch]—it is used as a timber shed. But the most beautiful thing of all is the old moat round the whole town, now filled with the sweetest possible gardens, chiefly in flower with white narcissus and deep red tulips,—not striped, but one mass of red, bloomed with blue like a plum, and others purple; the grey walls above covered with ivy, and with all their towers yet unfallen: you will see them in Turner’s sketches. And all the plain round full of apple-trees, partly in blossom, and bright green corn.”

“*May 24.*—I am getting on very well with my drawing; the worst of it is that unless it be as good as Turner’s, it doesn’t please me; so that on the whole I am seldom pleased, and I find it very difficult to sketch after having accustomed myself to finish; but I force myself to it.”

¹ Couttet; for whom see Vol. IV. p. xxv. *n.*

The old moat described in one of these letters is the subject of the drawing which was engraved for Plate 84 in *Modern Painters* and entitled "Peace."¹ Another of his drawing of Rheinfelden is engraved at the same place (Plate 83), being one of those which Ruskin made "to show the exact modifications made by Turner as he composed his subjects." A third is here reproduced in colours.

From Rheinfelden Ruskin went by Stein (looking across the Rhine to the old town of Sakingen) and Lauffenbourg to Brugg. From thence he went over to see and sketch the Castle of Hapsburg. His drawing, with the letters referring to it, is reproduced in Vol. XVI. (Plate IV. and pp. lxxii., 190). The next halting-place was Bremgarten,² whence he passed to Zug, a town still little known to the tourist—the Swiss Nuremberg, some call it—combining the interest of many old buildings with a sylvan lake and pastoral scenery. The art of the Swiss did not impress Ruskin,³ but the quiet landscape lapped him round in contented peace—

"the blue lake and green pastured hills glowing in soft colours of sunset—no wind moving the woods, only the stock-doves answering one another, and deep-voiced, mellow-worded cuckoos—all the meadows one murmur of bees;—and faint tones of the bells of the villages tolling from beyond their lake for their services of the eve of the Sabbath; for they keep all the 'eves' here, it being one of the quiet old Catholic-hearted Cantons—still strangely simple, wild, and ignorant; solemn in unprogressive peace."⁴

In his next letter⁵ he returns to the beauty of the sounds in pastoral Switzerland:—

"Zug, *Sunday* [May 30].—I was thinking, as I walked here yesterday among the villages, why it was that I am so especially fond of Switzerland, as distinguished from other countries; and I find the reason to be that I am so peculiarly sociable (provided only that people don't talk to me). In all other countries the masses of the people are collected in cities, and one passes through large extents of and without seeing more than a few cottages of agricultural labourers; but in Switzerland the mass of the people is dispersed through the

¹ See below, p. 437.

² Ruskin's letter describing some memorials, which he found there, of Madame de Genlis, is given in Vol. XV. p. 228.

³ Compare Vol. XVI. pp. 190–191, and 191 *n*.

⁴ Letter to his father, May 30. A preceding portion of this letter has been quoted in Vol. XV. p. 228 *n*.

⁵ Written later on the same day.



J. Ruskin

Rheinfelden
1858

From the drawing in the possession of Mr. G. Allen

Rheinfelden 1858
W. G. Allen
M. Lopez & Co. Engrs., Edin.

whole country: their power and life are mainly there and one passes, not through field after field of merely cultivated land, but through estate after estate of various families, each having its family mansion, its garden, meadow and corn land, and the cheerfulness and bustle of all kinds of business, together with the various character of old and young, of master and servant, of labour and, in a certain simple way, luxury. There is also a kind of society in the mere redundance of animal life which is very pleasing to me. In going over the Northumberland moors near Lady Trevelyan's, if you stop and listen, you will hear nothing but the wind whistling—a rattling brook perhaps among some stones, now and then the cry of a curlew, now and then the bleat of a lamb; all plaintive and melancholy. Yesterday, as I told you, the evening was quite windless, and when I stopped and listened there were all the following sounds going on at once:—

“1. Grasshoppers. Very merry indeed.

“2. Grilles (a brown insect, half grasshopper, half fly; more shrill and clear in voice than the grasshopper—like a quantity of little Jews' harps among the grass). Very merry also.

“3. Birds in general, twittering softly, but in great numbers.

“4. Bees. Very loud everywhere.

“5. Runlets of water in the grass and from wooden pipes—a peculiarly Swiss sound, quite different from the noise of stony streams.

“6. Doves.

“7. Cuckoos.

“8. Church bells.

“9. Peasant cracking his whip, some way off in a bye-road (objectionable, except that it seemed to please *him*).

“10. Ditto singing ‘Ranz des vaches’ (objectionable also, but romantic¹).

“Now that's companionable and pleasant.”²

“ZUG, *June 1*.—Do you remember, in the view from the shore here over the lake, how nobly Mont Pilate rises? or was it under cloud? I remember only sketching the Rigi from the little pier (which is now a much larger pier, with an avenue of limes on it), but Mont Pilate is more beautiful from this point than from any that I know, and the Wetterhorn and Eigers are seen beyond. The weather is quite lovely; and the meadow walks in the morning, all bright with dew, and winding from cottage to cottage up the hill sides, are unspeakably lovely.”

¹ Compare Vol. I. pp. 38, 272.

² Compare *Unto this Last*, § 82: “No air is sweet that is silent,” etc.

With this impression of pastoral peace, recollections of human endurance and valour mingled in Ruskin's mind and letters, as afterwards in the pages of this volume of *Modern Painters*;¹ for from Zug he drove to one of the sacred spots of Swiss history—"round the shore of the Lake of Egeri; found the field of Morgarten, which is peculiarly distinct and unmistakable, not at all obscure like Killiecrankie"; and then on to Brunnen, in the heart of the Tell country:—

"BRUNNEN, *Thursday evening, 3rd June.*—How you would have enjoyed this evening, here; it is one of their fêtes, and they have been playing pretty music on wind instruments in a boat just off the shore, the cloudless twilight fading over Mont Pilate, and staying long on the snowy mountains of the Bay of Uri—all exquisitely calm, lovely, and solemn—the stars casting long reflections in the lake. I am surprised to find what a complete centre of the history of Europe, in politics and religion, this lake of Lucerne is, as Venice is a centre of the history of art. First, the whole Swiss nation taking its name from the little town of Schwytz, just above this, because the Schwytzers were to the Austrian Emperors the first representatives of republican power, in their stand at Morgarten; then, the league of the three cantons to defend each other against all enemies, first signed and sealed in this little village of Brunnen; followed by the victories of Laupen, Sempach, Granson, Morat,² and gradually gained power on the other side of the Alps in Italy until the Swiss literally gave away the duchy of Milan, the competitors for it pleading their causes before the Swiss Council at Baden; and meantime, the great Reformation disputes in religion making these hills the place of their central struggle, till Zwingli was killed in the battle with these same three Catholic cantons, just beyond Zug on the road down from the Albis; whilst, on the other hand, the Republican party at Geneva was Protestant, and binding itself by oath in imitation of the oath of these three cantons, and calling itself Eidgenossen—'bound by oath'—gets this word corrupted by the French into 'Huguenots,' and so to stand generally for the Protestant party in France also."

In these letters we see how full Ruskin still was of Swiss history. The projected work on Swiss Towns with some Sketch of their History was not to be written; but his studies coloured many a page in

¹ See below, pp. 113, 439 *n.*

² A tower now commemorates the victory which the Confederates won at Laupen in 1339. For the battle of Sempach (1386), see Vol. XIV. p. 416; and for Granson (1476) and Morat (1476), Vol. II. p. 433 *n.* For the Swiss giving away the Duchy of Milan, see the account of the Diet and Treaty of Baden (1512) in Vieusseux's *History of Switzerland*, pp. 112–113. For the death of Zwingli, see below, p. 112.

this volume. At Brunnen there was the added interest of identifying Turner's views.

“June 5.—I never saw such exquisite weather in June before, all the mornings cloudless, and the evenings with only so much cloud as helps them to be rosy. If I had known I was going to stay here so long I could have told you, by the help of the Turners, pretty nearly where I was all the day long; which, next thing to knowing I am in my study, ought to have been satisfactory to mama, for this is only a larger study a little farther off. In the morning, when you are at breakfast, I am also at mine at one of the windows of those white houses in Turner's Brunnen. Then in the forenoon, I am on those hills beyond the white cottage on the left in the Lake Lucerne of the drawing-room; and in the evening, under the bank of pines on the left in the Fluelen of the drawing-room, of which the middle distance is about half-way between Fluelen and this.”

After some days at Brunnen he moved on to Fluelen, where he met his painter-friend, Inchbold. Ruskin was always meaning to leave next morning, and trying to persuade himself that it was (as he says in a letter of June 9) “an entire humbug and failure of a lake,” but the attempt was not very successful:—

“June 9.—The hills were so lovely this morning that I really couldn't leave the place; but positively go to-morrow. To-day I have hardly been doing anything but watch the clouds, as it is the first cloudy and sunny day I have had among the hills; a heavy hailstorm came on last night and the lake was very grand, and this morning all was wreathen cloud among field and pine.

“June 11.—You will be quite vexed at always seeing the same date, but I post this before leaving. My hand shakes, for I have been up since five o'clock working very hard to get the pretty porch of the church here—and I've got it nicely; but it was a race with the sun, who was coming up, up, up over the mountains all the while, and who spoils the porch as soon as he gets into it.”

These days on the Bay of Uri were to be fruitful by-and-by. Among the most beautiful passages in the present volume is that which describes the lake and woods of the Vierwaldstätter-see;¹ and in after years Ruskin took pleasure in the thought that, whatever else may have been faulty in his work, he had at least done full justice to the Unterwalden Pine.² He looked back, too, with fondness to “the old boating

¹ See below, pp. 113–114.

² See Vol. VI. p. 170 *n*.

days when one could dabble about like a wild duck at the lake shores," under the cliffs which "the beatified modern tourist"¹ sees only from a big steamer or in glimpses through a tunnel.

From Fluelen he drove over the St. Gothard to Bellinzona. He was already familiar with the town, as the lecture on "Iron" shows (see Vol. XVI. pp. 375–411). On this occasion he had intended to make but a short halt there, but was so charmed with the place—in those days before the railway—that he stayed a month:²—

"BELLINZONA, *Sunday morning, 13th June.*—It is a cloudless morning, cloudless at least to all intents and ends: a white flake or two resting above the hill ridges to the south. A green sea of vines opens wide from below my window, about two miles broad, and endless, losing itself in blue mist towards the hollow where the Lago Maggiore lies, and on each side of the vine-sea rise the large *soft* mountains in faint golden-green and purple-gray. The broad roof still keeps my balcony shaded; the slightest possible breeze is stirring the petals of the geraniums upon it, and stealing in softly through the long windows open to the ground.

[*June 14.*]—" . . . I have never yet seen elsewhere quite such a place as this Bellinzona. It is now just six years since I left Italy by this very road, and I remember well that even then—wearied and tormented as I had been at Venice—I was much struck with it; but now, coming to it comfortably and from the English winter, it is quite like a wonderful dream. What the climate is you may guess by the white mulberries being now ripe; they are stripping the trees, and the ground is white with fallen fruit, luscious as honey. Imagine this climate in the midst of gneiss rocks—exactly like those of the Garry at Killiecrankie, only vaster—and towering back into ridge beyond ridge of mountain, terrace, and crest; you can hardly conceive how wonderful it is to stand beside the torrents, sweeping in bright waves over these rocks, with all the look of the loveliest Highland stream, but above—instead of mountain ash and low heath—groves and overhanging shades of sweet chestnut and roofs of continuous vine, the rock ferns shooting out among the vine tendrils. I have often seen Italian scenery of this kind in limestone, but never yet in gneiss, flecked with quartz like that of the Matterhorn, and glittering with broad plates of black mica; painted oratories at every turn, and little chapels; the brooks coming down through the very vineyards over stony beds crossed by foot-bridges; the great fortresses showing their towers continually

¹ See Vol. XIII. p. 510.

² His inn was the Aquila d'Oro.

through the gaps in the leaves above; and the people—not pale and diseased as in Val d’Aosta, nor ugly as in Switzerland, but nearly all beautiful and full of quick sight and power, faces burning with intelligence and strength of sensation—useless, on account of idleness, but bright to look upon. And with all this, in an hour and a half, if I like, I can be in the climate of Cumberland, without the damp of it, for the hills rise steep on both sides of the valley to the snow-line—no glaciers, nor perpetual snow, but, for a month yet, snow in all the hollows; and, to make things complete in a not unimportant point, superb trout—none of your white lake-bred things, but stream trout—pink like roses, and fresh like cream.”

These were weeks of quiet thinking and of sketching. Thus he writes from Bellinzona (June 17): “I am much stronger than when I left home, and shall probably soon begin writing a little *M. P.* in the mornings, but I want to get a couple of months of nearly perfect rest before putting any push of shoulder to it.”

The longer Ruskin stayed, the better he liked the place. “I still think this place,” he wrote (June 20), “the most beautiful I have yet found among the hills.” Its history—with the three castles built in 1445 by Italian engineers for the Duke of Milan, and afterwards the residences of the bailiffs of the Cantons of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwalden—was necessary for his projected work on Swiss towns; the charm of its scenery and surroundings is described in the letters; and the spot was moreover especially liked by Turner. The collection in the National Gallery is full of sketches and memoranda made by him of this most picturesque of all Swiss towns. Ruskin rejoiced, too, in ideal conditions for sketching:—

“BELLINZONA, *June 29.*—My sketching-place here is the pleasantest without exception I have ever had to work in. There are three castles, which anciently belonged to the three forest cantons—the largest castle to Uri; the central one, smaller, to Schwytz; and the smallest, on the side of the hill above, to Unterwalden. The castle of Schwytz, though roofless, is complete in its circuit of wall and tower, which encloses a farm of considerable extent, consisting chiefly of vineyard, with potatoes, corn, and meadow land—variously scattered through the old courtyards and castle gardens. There is no dwelling-house, as at Habsburg, and though the place professes to be always locked up, one has nothing to do but to slide the bolt of the old gate, and slide it back again, and one may choose one’s place to sit in all day long, to draw either bits of that castle itself, or either of the other castles, or the roofs and cortiles of Bellinzona, or the valley and mountains—

west, east, or south—always being able to find shade, either of castle wall, or vine, or cherry tree, and with fresh pure turf to rest on when one is tired—nobody ever coming near one.”

His performance did not, in his opinion, equal his opportunities. He was for ever comparing his work in dissatisfied failure with Turner’s, and the more elaborate of his drawings at Bellinzona was, he says, “a smash.”¹ Here, we give two of his sketches of the Castle of Schwytz.

From Bellinzona (after a day or two’s excursion to Locarno) Ruskin drove to the head of the lake, and took the steamer for Baveno and the Isola Bella. Writing thence to his father (July 8), Ruskin records another of his defeats in sketching; and, in the same letter, mentions a political observation which made a great impression on him, for he used it more than once as an illustration in his economic writings:²—

“No pity nor respect can be felt for these people, who have sunk and remain sunk, merely by idleness and wantonness in the midst of all blessings and advantages: who cannot so much as bank out—or in—a mountain stream, because, as one of their priests told me the other day, every man always acts for himself: they will never act together and do anything at common expense for the common good; but every man tries to embank his own land and throw the stream upon his neighbours; and so the stream masters them all and sweeps its way down all the valley in victory. This I heard from the curate of a mountain chapel at Bellinzona, when I went every evening to draw his garden; and where, by the steps cut in its rock, and the winding paths round it, and the vines hanging over it, and the little patch of golden corn at the bottom of it, and the white lily growing on a rock in the midst of it, and the white church tower holding the dark bells over it, and the deep purple mountains encompassing it, I got so frightfully and hopelessly beaten. It was partly the priest’s fault too, for he cut the white lily to present to the Madonna one festa day—not knowing that it was just the heart of my subject—and a day or two afterwards he cut his corn (and planted languid little lettuces or some such thing in its stead), which took away all my gold as before he had taken all my silver, and so discouraged me.”

By the time he was on the lake he had persuaded himself that he cared no more for the hills:—

“I think the last three or four years,” he writes (Isola Bella, July 9), “have completed a change in me which began some ten

¹ In a letter to his father from Turin, July 29.

² See *Unto this Last*, § 72 n., and a letter on Inundations reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. p. 169, and in a later volume of this edition.



Bellingona - 5R, 1857



J. Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

Bellingona

1858

years ago, and which has enabled me to sympathise with you almost entirely in your feelings about mountains—almost (for I still differ a little in liking glaciers and loose stones). To my great amazement I felt Hospenthal and the top of St. Gothard—snow, gentians, and all—neither more nor less than melancholy and even ‘dull’! I was glad to get down to Airolo, gladder to get farther down to Faido, gladdest to get quite down among the vines at Giornico and Bellinzona; and now I think the walk on the Simplon road by the lake side here—with soft golden sky over *far away* hills (we must be content, I fear, to acknowledge more justice in Count Chabrellan’s¹ opinion than we used to do), and tender olives and laurels sending softest reflections into the quiet water—far pleasanter than all. I have nearly given up climbing the hills, finding, as somebody used to say, the sweetest views are from the turnpike road, and, climax of all conceivable change, I am actually thinking it will be rather amusing to ‘see the palace’ at Turin !!!

“I saw yesterday, by way of farewell to Bellinzona, almost the only ‘ideal’ thing I have ever seen in my life; the only piece of human nature which would have made into a St. Gothard vignette, or an early Raphael picture, without the slightest alteration or ‘improvement.’ It was a group of three children—a girl of about twelve teaching her little brother and sister to sing. They were sitting on a little bank under a vine trellis at an angle of the path, so that I came upon them suddenly; all three *quite* beautiful, and—better—quite clean, even to the bare feet—bare altogether in the two youngest—the elder girl’s being thrust into the rough sandal made of a piece of wood with a broad band of leather across the instep, which the peasants of the Tessin wear universally. She was working at some needlework as she sate, the two others leaning against her, watching her face as she led their chant. When I came upon them she stopped, looking up with a slight, reserved, gentle smile, raising her eyes only, not her head; when I passed on, they went on with their singing—their favourite Madonna hymn. I think the peasants hardly ever sing anything else; but one never tires of it, except in the woful feeling of its never doing any of them the least good. They quarrel with much louder voices than they sing.”

From Baveno Ruskin climbed the Monterone, and condemned it as the stupidest “of all stupid mountains—grass all the way, no rocks, no interest, and the dullest view of the Alps I ever yet saw in my life” (July 13). At Arona he stopped a night and made some notes on Turnerian Topography there,² and thence he went by rail to Turin.

¹ Count Chabrellan was the husband of one of Adèle’s sisters.

² See the letter cited at Vol. XIII. p. 457.

There he stayed five or six weeks, enjoying the town life after his seclusion in the mountains:—

“TURIN, *July 15.*—It is just two months since I arrived late at Bar-le-Duc from Paris, and was shown up the rough wooden stairs to the rougher room of a French country inn. With the exception of a single evening at the Trois Rois at Basle, my life since has been entirely rural, not to say savage—it having been my chance or need to lodge in an unbroken succession of either primitive or decidedly bad inns. I am very sorry to say that after this rustication I find much contentment in a large room looking into your favourite square, a note or two of band, a Parisian dinner, and half a pint of Moet’s champagne with Monte Viso ice in it.”

The diary (still in the form of letters) shows him as keenly observant as ever, noting, for instance, the contrasts between French and Italian dress, and studying “the Paul Veronese types” in the streets.

“I have made up my mind,” he writes (August 19), “that it is quite impossible for anybody to be a figure painter in the North, except in the stiff Holbein way. The myriads of beautiful things one sees in this climate—where heads are always bare, and generally necks and arms; where people live in the open air, and in walking along a street, one walks through household after household, watching all their little domestic ways of going on—are more to a real painter than all the Academy teaching he could get in a lifetime.”

The comfort and gaiety of Turin—still, it will be remembered, the capital of the Sardinian kingdom—made Ruskin in the mood to enjoy the pictures by Paolo Veronese which are among the principal treasures of the Gallery in that city:—

“I assure you,” he had written (July 15), “I do miss you very much, and especially here, where I used to grumble so at being kept sometimes; but my mind is much altered. I do not think the alteration in all respects a gain—in some it is certainly, and I hope the increased love of order and splendour is no harm. I now like much better walking up the pure white marble staircase of this inn than I do the rickety wooden ladders of Bar-le-Duc or St. Gothard; therefore, I enjoy also Paul Veronese much more than I used to do, having more sympathy with his symmetry, splendour, and lordly human life. I have been to the Gallery this morning and find three Paul Veroneses of great size and intense interest; one *consummate* Vandyck with full-sized horse—three or four good average Vandycks; a second-rate, but genuine Rubens, or two; five or six genuine and very perfect Flemish pictures, including a valuable early

Rembrandt; five or six early Italian pictures of interest; and to crown all, the unexpected treasure of a Madonna and Child of Angelico, quite first-rate. I find the officials polite, the rooms cool, and nearly empty—without draughts—sketching allowed without any trouble, the band playing nearly all the morning under the windows, and the upshot of all is that you may now think of anything you wish to say, or send, at your leisure, and send it me here, as I shall certainly not stir for a week at least, and will wait at any rate for the answer to this letter—and as much longer as said answer may require my staying. A great many things came into my head about the pictures, which I shall write in these letters; so you must be prepared for ‘Notes on the Gallery of Turin.’”¹

To the studies thus commenced in the Gallery at Turin Ruskin always attached a turning-point in his mental development, so far as the criticism of art was concerned. He partly traces the path of his critical pilgrimage in the Preface to this volume. He had started out spell-bound by the “physical art-power of Rubens.” Then, under strong reaction, he fell into the arms of the Primitives, and Angelico was the god of his artistic idolatry. He was fully conscious of the power and charm of the Venetians, but he regarded their art as “partly luxurious and sensual” (below, p. 9), and their religion as insincere. His study of Veronese at Turin, and afterwards of Titian in the German Galleries,

¹ Various “Notes on the Turin Gallery” were duly sent to his father—partly in the letters themselves, sometimes as enclosures. He thus noted:—

1. Vandyck’s “Prince Carignano” compared with Vernet’s “Charles Albert.” The MS. of this he used as “copy” for *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 23 *n.* (see p. 358).

2. Vandyck’s “Children of Charles I.” The MS. of this note is unknown to the editors. There is an allusion to the picture in pt. vi. ch. x. § 5 (p. 118); and under No. 3 there are some further notes on the picture, there given.

3. Lomi’s “Annunciation.” The MS. of most of this note, and of the whole of the next, is in possession of Miss Blanche Atkinson of Barmouth, at one time in constant correspondence with Ruskin. Passages from it are quoted on the next page. (Another piece of the MS. of the note is among the MSS. of *Modern Painters*.)

4. Poussin’s “Margaret.” Some of this note is given below, p. 324 *n.*

5. Wouwermans’ “Battle-piece.” The MS. of this note Ruskin used as “copy” for *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. viii. §§ 7, 8 (see p. 367).

Here his numbering comes to an end. But probably there was a No. 6, viz. Angelico (as in the above letter he notes “an unexpected treasure of an Angelico” at Turin); and doubtless the chapter “Wouwermans and Angelico” was thus suggested.

Of course there was a No. 7—“Queen of Sheba,” fully described in successive letters (Vol. XVI., Introduction and p. 185), and in this volume, p. 293 (where again he probably used up the MS. “Notes”).

For other notices of pictures in the Turin Gallery, see Vol. XVI. p. 192 (Albani’s “Four Elements”); and in this volume, p. 336 (Veronese’s “Magdalen”); p. 358 *n.* (Vernet’s “Charles Albert”).

drew him away once more from the Purist to the Naturalist ideal, and Titian and Veronese became to him standards of “worldly visible truth,” no less than of perfection in art—the earlier school, “workshippers not of a worldly and visible Truth, but of a visionary one doing less perfect work.” Ruskin was to undergo one other transition and no more—discovering at Assisi in 1874 “the fallacy that Religious artists were weaker than Irreligious.” The story of these “oscillations of temper and progressions of discovery” is fully told by Ruskin himself in *Fors Clavigera*.¹ It is with the last stage but one that we are now concerned—the stage which Ruskin had reached when he sat down to write the concluding chapters of *Modern Painters*, with “the enchanted voice of Venice” sounding in his ears. The new problems which began to compel his attention as he worked and wondered before Veronese’s pictures at Turin are stated very clearly in one of those “Notes on the Turin Gallery” mentioned above. Among the pictures thus noted by him was an “Annunciation” by Orazio Lomi:²—

“Besides being well studied in arrangement, the features of both figures are finely drawn in the Roman style—the ‘high’ or Raphaellesque manner—and very exquisitely finished; and yet they are essentially ignoble; while, without the least effort, merely treating their figures as pieces of decoration, Titian and Veronese are always noble; and the curious point is that both of *these* are sensual painters, working apparently with no high motive, and Titian perpetually with definitely sensual aim, and yet invariably noble; while this Gentileschi is perfectly modest and pious, and yet base. And Michael Angelo goes even greater lengths, or to lower depths, than Titian; and the lower he stoops, the more his inalienable nobleness shows itself. Certainly it seems intended that strong and frank animality, rejecting all tendency to asceticism, monachism, pietism, and so on, should be connected with the strongest intellects. Dante, indeed, is severe, at least, of all nameable great men; he is the severest I know. But Homer, Shakespeare, Tintoret, Veronese, Titian, Michael Angelo, Sir Joshua, Rubens, Velasquez, Correggio, Turner, are all of them boldly Animal. Francia and Angelico, and all the purists, however beautiful, are poor weak creatures in comparison. I don’t understand it; one would have thought purity gave strength, but it doesn’t. A good, stout, self-commanding, magnificent Animality is the make for poets and artists, it seems to me.

¹ Letter 76 (March 1877).

² Orazio Gentileschi, called Lomi after his step-father, born at Pisa in 1562; died in 1647 in London, where he had worked and resided for twelve years. There are pictures by him at Marlborough House and Hampton Court.

“One day when I was working from the beautiful maid of honour in Veronese’s picture, I was struck by the Gorgeousness of life which the world seems to be constituted to develop, when it is made the best of. The band was playing some passages of brilliant music at the time, and this music blended so thoroughly with Veronese’s splendour; the beautiful notes seeming to form one whole with the lovely forms and colours, and powerful human creatures. Can it be possible that all this power and beauty is adverse to the honour of the Maker of it? Has God made faces beautiful and limbs strong, and created these strange, fiery, fantastic energies, and created the splendour of substance and the love of it; created gold, and pearls, and crystal, and the sun that makes them gorgeous; and filled human fancy with all splendid thoughts; and given to the human touch its power of placing and brightening and perfecting, only that all these things may lead His creatures away from Him? And is this mighty Paul Veronese, in whose soul there is a strength as of the snowy mountains, and within whose brain all the pomp and majesty of humanity floats in a marshalled glory, capacious and serene like clouds at sunset—this man whose finger is as fire, and whose eye is like the morning—is he a servant of the devil; and is the poor little wretch in a tidy black tie, to whom I have been listening this Sunday morning expounding Nothing with a twang—is he a servant of God?

“It is a great mystery. I begin to suspect we are all wrong together—Paul Veronese in letting his power waste into wantonness, and the religious people in mistaking their weakness and dulness for seriousness and piety. It is all very well for people to fast, who can’t eat; and to preach, who cannot talk nor sing; and to walk barefoot, who cannot ride, and then think themselves good. Let them learn to master the world before they abuse it.”

The laborious study which Ruskin gave to Veronese’s great picture is fully set out in another place;¹ the picture itself is described in this volume.² What we may call the revelation of Paolo Veronese had a religious as well as an artistic significance: the two things being indeed, in Ruskin’s mind, essentially connected. The process of “un-conversion,” as he calls it—the abandonment of his old evangelical faith—was accomplished when he returned from a service in the Waldensian chapel to the “Queen of Sheba” in the Gallery. He has described the process both in *Fors Clavigera* and in *Præterita*,³ explaining in the latter place that

¹ Introduction to Vol. XVI. pp. xxxvii.–xl.

² See below, pt. ix. ch. iii. § 33 (p. 293).

³ *Fors*, Letter 76; and *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 23.

“the hour’s meditation,” which ended in his putting away his evangelical beliefs, “only concluded the courses of thought which had been leading me to such end through many years.” The broader view which Ruskin was henceforth to take appears in a note to his lecture at Cambridge (October 1858¹). He has told us how, when he was a boy, he had been trained by his parents to notice some vital distinction whenever he passed from a Protestant to a Catholic canton. On the present journey he had passed from pastoral cantons in Catholic Switzerland to the Protestant valleys of the Vaudois. He had made a little tour among them from his headquarters at Turin:—

“TURIN, *August 23*.—I am so much accustomed now to be disappointed in going to any new place that I was pleasantly surprised at not being very much disappointed with those Protestant valleys. La Tour itself, indeed, is a most disagreeable place, the houses having no character whatever—either Swiss, Italian, or English—they are merely ill-built and clumsy; the valley itself ragged, monotonous, and, for an Alpine valley, mean in scale. But the little side ravines are very beautiful, and, after sermon, I pursued one of the lateral ridges with Couttet for four hours and a half of steady climb at our fastest safe pace, which gives us regularly 1200 feet of perpendicular in the hour. We started from the church door at twelve o’clock, and at half-past four we had got to a peak which, when the weather is fine, must command certainly one of the finest and most interesting views in the world. It was unfortunately not fine, and the Viso, which rises on the opposite side of the valley of La Tour, was veiled half-way down without one rent in the clouds; but on the other side of the ridge, luckily, the clouds lay only in broken heaps at about 2000 feet underneath us, and 2400 above the plain of Turin, which was seen between the rounded heaps and towers of the cumuli in strange gulfs of spotted and tufted blue. Turin itself, and the Superga—about twenty-eight miles away as the bird flies—looked quite near; and on the other side similarly the scattered towns of Piedmont—Cavour, Saluzzo, Bra, Carmagnola, etc., all as clear as on a pocket-map where the clouds opened. Beyond Turin the plain stretched for thirty miles further towards Vercelli; just underneath us lay the whole valley of Angrogna, celebrated in Vaudois tradition, and full of broken walls of rock—every one of which had indeed in its time been a fortress. On the other side, between us and the Viso, first the fertile valley of Luserna, above La Tour, and then a chain of lower mountains which separate it from the valley under the Viso itself; above these the flanks of the Viso, seamed with the ravines of the sources of the Po,

¹ See Vol. XVI. p. 190.

rose gloomily into their grey veil. The air, strangely enough on so exposed a summit, was quite calm, and I lay down for a few minutes on the hill grass—starred with deep crimson, wild pinks (or query, Sweet William—no scent and jagged at edges, this size [sketch])—and could have gone to sleep with perfect safety if I had liked. However, my theological Professor was to come at seven, so Couttet and I started again down hill at a quarter to five, and I believe few people of the respective ages of sixty-eight and forty would have entered the village square of La Tour as the clock struck seven without considerably hotter faces. The Professor had come five minutes before his time, but that was not my fault. I took off my boots and washed my face, and was making him his tea in ten minutes.”

The theological Professor did not convince him that there was any saving efficacy in Protestantism, as such, which was denied to sincere and honest believers of a different creed. “Good and true pieces of God’s work” had been done, he wrote, by stout and stern Roman Catholics among the Swiss mountains no less than by the Vaudois peasants.¹ He was thus reaching what he elsewhere calls the true “religion of humanity”—the religion whose rule of conduct is “that human work must be done honourably and thoroughly, because we are now Men;—whether we ever expect to be angels, or ever were slugs, being practically no matter;” and “that in resolving to do our work well is the only sound foundation of any religion whatsoever.”² This is the principle which in the present volume colours many of Ruskin’s chapters.

Some other thoughts that came to Ruskin in the Gallery at Turin or on the Capuchin Hill and the Superga are recorded in the Cambridge lecture already referred to.³ As always, he observed and recorded the passing effects of cloud and storm, and in the present volume some of the observations taken in the neighbourhood of Turin are recorded. In the town itself glorious sunsets were sometimes to be seen:—

“TURIN, 23rd [July].— . . . In the afternoon I have always ten minutes of a great treat, when the soldiers go back to their barracks down the great street which there seems no end to. They go down precisely at sunset, and the sun sets precisely at the end of the street, blazing down it like a comet, and melting among all the distant houses and their blinds and draperies into one fiery ghost of a street, down which the regiment swings to its band with all its

¹ See his letter to the *Scotsman* of June 6, 1859, referred to in Vol. XVI. p. 190 *n*.

² *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76.

³ See Vol. XVI. pp. 193 *seq*.

bayonets dark against the sun. I have never seen anything so exciting in stage effect in my life; and then, just as the band finishes, the sun drops behind the Mont Iseran, the fire dies away, and nothing is seen at the end of the street but the one dark mountain peak, and the zone of twilight above.”

“July 31.—I had also a very wonderful sunset last night, the first I have had since I have been here. The weather has been both in Switzerland and Italy much too fine to admit of many grand effects; but yesterday a storm came up in *fragments* along the plain, just like an army in detached columns, with open sky between, and when it got to the Alps they began to play with it in the most wonderful way. First it broke up against them, and great foaming thunder-clouds dashed up here and there just like the spray of tremendous waves broken on the ridge. Then the Alps broke through these spray-clouds, and laid them this way and that on their sides, and made necklaces of them, and threw them out in long sheets far over the plain, shadowing it into deep blue; while the sun, traversing over the peaks, sent long red rays over the sheets of foam between every gap of the rocks, pieces of pure and perfect blue sky set here and there so calmly in the midst of all the anger; and a purple range of unclouded peaks retiring one behind another, in the way you are so fond of seeing them—far to the north beyond the Lago Maggiore. Not a soul was there to see. On fine afternoons, when all is quiet and stupid, the people go up to the convent terrace often enough, merely to see the Alps and plains suffused with one yellow mist of light; but in these stormy afternoons, when all the most wonderful things are doing, nobody stirs out of the streets; so it is no wonder they declare all paintings of such things to be unnatural.”

Among other excursions which Ruskin made from Turin was that to the Sanctuary of S. Michele, the romantic building which crowns the Monte Pirchiriano above the town of S. Ambrogio:¹—

“ST. AMBROGIO, *Sunday 15th* [August].

“You recollect in coming from Susa to Turin that fine pyramid of rock on the right, with castle on top, dedicated to St. Michael. I had always a great fancy to get up to it; so yesterday, after finishing my work, I took an hour’s quiet rail, and arrived here at four o’clock. I walked up to the castle, and saw some most marvellous playing of cloud about it and up the Cenis valley; I shall walk up again this evening, and return to Turin by six o’clock train to

¹ Some interesting chapters on S. Michele are contained in Samuel Butler’s *Alps and Sanctuaries* (1882).

breakfast and Paul Veronese to-morrow morning. I am sorry to find, however, that though the rough inns gave great zest to the Turin good one, the Turin good one doesn't at all give zest to country rough ones, and my little parlour here, though quite as large as our little friend at St. Martin's—and looking our similarly on a stableyard—does not at all give me the same satisfaction. There are also rather more cocks and bells in the town than are pleasant, and the whole place is melancholy in its dirt and ruin, the peasants all in rags—good-natured in face and manner, and with the making of worthy people in them, but wholly neglected and neglectful. They say the King of Sardinia is going to bury himself (when he wants burying) in the convent at the top of the hill, instead of Superga;¹ if instead of burying himself at the top, he would bestir himself at the bottom, it would be more to purpose. I wish poor Mrs. Tovey² were young again; I would give her a travelling pension, to employ herself everywhere in dusting and washing, till she was stopped by the police, for making Italy unwholesomely damp. This Piedmont is really the slovenliest part of Italy I have seen. Venice and Verona are melancholy enough, and dirty enough in dirty places; but there is nothing in St. Mark's Place like the moats which surround the castle in the central square at Turin, and are full of rotten gourds, pigeon-castings, rags, and dust."

"SANT' AMBROZIO, *Sunday evening* [15th August 1858].

"I have been up again to St. Michael's, and this time I went into the monastery, and certainly as the little scene I saw at Bellinzona was the most complete piece of ideal I ever met with, so this monastery is the most tremendous bit of romance. Its buildings are on the precipice side, wholly of the ninth to thirteenth century—all the modern work being luckily towards the hill, inside where the aspect is not so wonderful—and the rocks are of serpentine, which is, in its Alpine form, the most fantastic of all rocks, rising, itself, in piers and buttresses rather than crags, and mingling with the walls, not merely outside, but inside of the building. There is little carving, except some rude figures on the capitals outside; but within, the great staircase which ascends to the chapel is the most striking thing of the kind I ever saw. Imagine a Norman (*i.e.*, tenth century) vaulted staircase with pillars from sixty to eighty feet high, and its winding stairs at least twenty feet wide, broken in upon irregularly by huge masses of the serpentine rock, mixed with the buttresses

¹ The Superga had contained the remains of most of the members of the Royal house, but King Charles Albert caused several of them to be removed to S. Michele. Victor Emmanuel lies in the Pantheon at Rome.

² "Our perennial parlour-maid": *Præterita*, ii. § 108.

and pillars, a grey marble arch covered with fantastic sculptured figures on its deep mouldings at the head of the staircase, and in a recess at the side of it, above the rocks, six or eight* dead bodies, holding crosses in their hands—whiter and more like statues, therefore much grander than those of the St. Bernard—and their shrouds hanging over their limbs, not in rags, but in dusty folds. Fancy all this seen by sunset light, and outside the crags falling in one vast slope of 2500 feet to the valley, and the mighty flanks of the Cenis Alps retiring one behind another to the west, with two deep blue peaks above, seen through a rent of cloud.

* Accurately, as far as I remember, seven; four bolt upright, a man and a woman stooping forward as if to speak, and one fallen."

Another excursion was to Rivoli—now connected with Turin by railway—which commands another glorious view;¹ and these various days spent at the foot of the Alps, or among the valleys of the Cenis, yielded some of the cloud-studies given in the present volume.²

Ruskin's work at Turin was at last concluded, and he went north to Susa, walking thence over the Cenis in order to geologise. From St. Jean de Maurienne he took the railway to Aix, finding it, strange to say, "very enjoyable, though dusty; where the scenery is so huge, the railroad merely makes a splendid moving panorama of it, not a whizzing dream."³ After a few days at Annecy, Ruskin drove to Bonneville, and so to St. Gervais, where he met Mr. and Mrs. Simon. Here Ruskin was once more "among his own mountains." "I am very glad to find," he writes from Annecy (September 3), "that my feeling for my dear old Genevoise country is not dulled; I never thought it more beautiful." And so again from St. Gervais (September 7): "There is nothing comes within a hundred miles of this district—

¹ Ruskin's attendants on this tour, like George on a former one (Vol. IV. p. xxiv. n.), entered into their master's tastes. "I had a very delightful evening yesterday," he writes to his father (August 14). "I drove to Rivoli (the battle of Rivoli place), which is an old Italian town on the first gneiss rock that rises out of the plain, at the foot of the Alps. It looks up the valley of the Cenis westwards, but projects so far into the plain that it commands the whole range of the Alps on both sides as completely as the Superga does. . . . Couttet and Crawley had been disputing which was the finest view, this or the Superga, Couttet holding for this. On my giving the verdict in his favour, he was very triumphant (and came to me for judgment), and crowed over Crawley considerably; but I only heard of it Crawley's final and unanswerable statement, 'Chack personn conny song goo.' " It was Crawley who, in reporting his master's ill-health to Burne-Jones, said, "how much he wished he could see him 'take pleasure in a Halp again' " (*Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 1904, vol. ii. p. 85).

² See p. 172.

³ Letter to his father from Annecy, September 3. One may compare Stevenson's plea for the charm of landscape as seen from the railway train (see his "Ordered South" in *Virginibus Puerisque*).

for beauty. . . . The woods and fields about Bonneville and Cluse on the Brezon slopes and Reposoir valley are quite ineffably lovely." He walked over to Chamouni to see the Couttets, and then returned by Geneva to Paris (where he saw the Brownings), and so home. He had much work before him—much food, too, for thought received during his travels to be digested. The quiet country lanes which then surrounded his home were grateful to him. Such hours are noted in the diary:—

“*Monday, October 18th.*—The loveliest two days, Saturday and yesterday, I ever saw at this season. On Saturday, sitting for an hour in the lane under Knight’s Hill, the ground covered with gossamer, all the fields rippling with a stream of sunshine like a lake, yet no perceptible wind.”

1859

“The winter was spent mainly,” says Ruskin of 1858–1859, “in trying to get at the mind of Titian; not a light winter’s task.”¹ But he had much else on hand—a paper for the Social Science Congress, an address at Cambridge, a second letter to Acland on the Oxford Museum (see Vol. XVI. pp. xviii.–xix.). There were friends across the sea who rejoiced in his activity and growing influence. “It is delightful to hear,” wrote Mrs. Browning from Rome on New Year’s Day, “of all you are *permitted* to do for England meanwhile in matters of art.” “Go on again,” added Robert Browning, “like the noble and dear man you are to us all, and especially to us two out of them all. Whenever I chance on an extract, a report, it lights up the dull newspaper stuff wrapt round it, and makes me glad at heart and clearer in head.”² Then came the lectures at Manchester and Bradford; Ruskin’s movements at the time of their delivery are traced in another volume.³

His father regretted all this dispersion of energy, and the delay which it caused to the completion of *Modern Painters*. But for a little tour which he worked in with the lectures in the North Ruskin was able to make a good plea: he was continuing his studies in Turnerian Topography:—

“*BOLTON BRIDGE (February 25, 1859).*—This is just a splendid place, and never was there so true a drawing as our Bolton. The hills are just about five times as high as they really are, but they

¹ See Preface, § 4; below, p. 6.

² *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 1897, vol. ii. pp. 300, 302.

³ See Vol. XVI. pp. lxi.–lxiv.

are enlargements of Facts, and more facts than the reality and the trees and shingle bank are all there.”

“BOLTON, *Sunday (February 27)*.—Nothing can well be more splendid than the dark moors on the other side of the valley against the clear blue of the sky to-day; and their brooklets and rocks in the glens are as good as those of true mountain country, the limestones forming beautiful shelves and steps for the brooks to leap over.”

“BOLTON BRIDGE, *Monday (February 28)*.—Do you ever recollect noticing a white sort of heaped cloud in this part of the world? It looks exactly like a piece of the moorlands covered with snow, rising above the real dark moorland, like this—[sketch]. I never saw anything like it elsewhere. It seems to mean wind.”

“BOLTON BRIDGE, *Tuesday (March 1)*.—I am very sorry to stay away from home so long, but it is necessary for me to see these Yorkshire subjects, which I look upon as on the whole the chief tutors of Turner’s mind, before finishing my fifth volume. His exaggerations are not entirely excusable, and it is very interesting to determine exactly where, and when, he first went wrong. He is to landscape precisely the kind of romance writer that Scott was to history, at once truer and falsier than anybody else.”

“KNARESBOROUGH, *Wednesday evening (March 2)*.—Is it not curious that those trees have remained so like at Bolton, though it must be fifty years—or forty-five at the very least—since Turner made his sketch.”

“RICHMOND, *Thursday evening (March 3)*.—Knaresborough is a grand place, grander than this on the whole, the houses much rougher and more picturesque, and the cliffs higher. It is curious that Turner has not got what seems to me quite the grandest point of this place; and to make out his views from other places, he has to make the bank immensely steeper than it is. But in the oldest Richmond¹—when the girl is gathering the flower, or picking up the stone for the dog—the winding path, and small house beyond, and large tree are still all there. I am very much surprised to find the *trees* so little altered.”

“RICHMOND, *Friday evening (March 4)*.—I have had a beautiful day here—could not have been more fortunate—being precisely the weather of the Richmond with far distance; and for once, Turner has hardly done justice to that distance—it is one of the most beautiful, richest, bluest, most variable in flow of low hill, that I ever have seen. Turner combines the other features of the scene in the strangest way;

¹ This is the drawing engraved by W. R. Smith as the second Plate in *Richmondshire*. A piece of the foreground is engraved below, in Plate 55: see p. 56.

nothing is where it is, but everything where it explains itself. For instance, the bridge on the left (in the one from the riverside over chimney-piece¹) is in reality far away round the corner of castle: instead of being at *a*, it would be seen if you could see right through the castle to the other side of it, at *b* [rough sketch]. But it is there, and Turner had no other way of explaining that it is there but by bringing it into sight. I am delighted to have come in time to ascertain the fact of the brick chimney built up by the square tower, which he has marked so particularly in that same drawing. The bed of the Swale under the castle is fine, but the water not clear.”

“HAWES, *Sunday (March 6)*.—I had a most interesting drive yesterday, and Aysgarth force is out and out the finest thing I’ve seen in water in these islands; or perhaps the Falls of Clyde may be better; but nothing else certainly can come near this for body of water, and one gets as close to it as to the fall of the Rhine, the rocks going out in perfectly flat tables above it. The country round large in scale and beautifully rustic—wild walls everywhere—moss, crag, and mist, wilder than in Highlands. This is a fine little inn—white home-made bread, fresh trout, etc.—and really something like mountains visible out of the back window. Didn’t see Hartleap Well yesterday, however.”

“SETTLE, *7th, Evening*.—The drive to-day has been the most interesting by far I ever had in England; a truly wonderful country—like the top of the Cenis for desolation. Ingleborough a really fine mass of hill, the streams in the limestones behaving in the most extraordinary manner, perpetually falling into holes and coming out again half a mile afterwards. Pen-y-Ghent a fine hill too; and a wind blowing over the whole that seemed as if it would blow Ingleborough into Lancaster Bay. I got out near the top of the moors as the horses were feeding, just to feel what the wind was, and walked backwards and forwards for half an hour, and felt all the better for it. I should think I had got fresh air enough to last me for six months, at least.

“The afternoon got splendidly clear as I got down off the moors, and the mosses on the stone walls were just one perpetual blaze of green fire; such curious villages too—all stone-built of course, and on stone: nothing else to build upon—fitted into the little hollows by the streams—nice respectable three-windowed houses—that kind of thing [sketch]—with tidy gardens and doors with brass knockers and all sorts of respectabilities, standing on ledges of the roughest rock just jutting over the rushing streams, where one would expect nothing but a Highland bothy—stepping-stones instead of bridges up to the doors.”

On returning home from this Yorkshire tour, Ruskin prepared for

¹ This is the drawing engraved by J. Archer as frontispiece to *Richmondshire*. For another note upon it, see Vol. XIII. p. 431.

publication under the title *The Two Paths* the lectures he had recently given, and next wrote his *Academy Notes*. Then he was ready for another Continental tour. It was to be the last on which his parents accompanied him, and before they reached their favourite haunts in Savoy and Switzerland they broke new ground.¹ Ruskin had been asked somewhat pointedly by the National Gallery Site Commission whether he had “recently been at Dresden” or was “acquainted with the Munich Gallery.” He had never been to either place.² This omission he felt bound to repair. Moreover he was now particularly anxious, in connection with his studies of Titian, to see the works of that master in the German galleries.³ They went accordingly by Brussels to Cologne, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Dresden, and Munich, and Ruskin’s diary is mainly occupied with notes on the pictures at these places. Most of these are now printed in an Appendix (p. 488), in order to illustrate various passages in the present volume. Among the notes made at Dresden, many references will be found to pictures discussed in the text. Ruskin was especially delighted with the Family Group by Paolo Veronese (see below, p. 290), and devoted much study to it. A careful copy of a portion of the picture, which he made at this time, is preserved at Brantwood, and is here reproduced. To the great Raphael in the Dresden Gallery he does not refer in the present volume, but his note in the diary is worth putting on record—if only to show his independence of accepted opinions. In earlier days, when he wrote of the picture on report or in the light of engravings, he took it as “a standard of beauty”;⁴ his impressions, when he actually saw the picture, were very different:—

“SAN SISTO.—If one supposes oneself—looking at the Madonna—to have one’s back to the north and to be looking straight south (the Madonna coming out of the south as it were), then the Madonna

¹ The itinerary of this tour was as follows: Calais (May 20), Brussels (May 21), Aix-la-Chapelle (May 25), Cologne (May 29), Düsseldorf (May 30), Münster (June 1), Hanover (June 2), Brunswick (June 5), Magdeburg (June 8), Berlin (June 9), Dresden (June 17), Königstein (June 25), Dresden (June 26), Leipsic (July 1), Hof (July 5), Nuremberg (July 5), Augsburg (July 12), Munich (July 13), Kempten (July 25), Constance (July 27), Schaffhausen (July 30), Baden (August 1), Berne (August 8), Thun (August 9), Interlachen (August 22), Thun (August 23), Berne (August 25), Neuchâtel (August 27), Lausanne (August 28), Geneva (August 31), Bonneville (September 3), Chamouni (September 5), Montanvert (September 7), Bonneville (September 8), Geneva (September 9), Lausanne (September 10), Neuchâtel (September 12), Bienne (September 14), Bâle (September 15), Strasburg (September 17), Nancy (September 19), Chalons (September 20), Paris (September 21 to October 1). Ruskin gave some account of his German tour in a lecture at the Working Men’s College: see Vol. XVI. pp. 469–471.

² Questions 33, 35. See Vol. XIII. p. 543.

³ See Preface, § 4; below, p. 6.

⁴ See Vol. IV. p. 369.

is lighted from the north, Christ from the north-east; St. Barbara from the east, St. Sixtus from the west; his mitre from the north-west, and the clouds and curtains from nowhere in particular. The effect of the Christ depends mainly on his having a large white dot in one eye, and none in the other; the irises very round and black and staring; body muscular and herculean; the hair is very beautiful. There's a little Christ in a Palma Vecchio¹ hugging St. John round the neck, looking back and up at the same time to a saint in yellow who sits looking on (the Madonna being recumbent), who is worth a myriad of Raphael's—so also the heavenly little Christ in Veronese's Magi. The Madonna has no light on either eye, so that the white dot on the infant's produces great effect. Sixtus mean and contemptible."

Of the Munich Gallery, also, Ruskin made notes, and many of those, given in the Appendix, are of interest in connexion with passages in the present volume. His notes were accompanied, as usual, by many pen-and-ink sketches, too rough for reproduction, but illustrative of his close study. At Munich, too, he made a careful water-colour copy of the little girl in one of Vandyck's portrait-pieces (see below, p. 495). With the Berlin Gallery—alike in its arrangement and its contents—Ruskin was much delighted. Among its greatest treasures he reckoned Holbein's portrait of George Gyzen; this he described in his paper on "Sir Joshua and Holbein."² A general impression of the Gallery, with an account of this German tour generally, is given in a letter to Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.:³—

"DRESDEN, 23rd June [1859].

"DEAR MR. STANFIELD,—Time goes fast when it is travel spent, and I am ashamed to think how long it is since we left home, and I have not told you—as you said you would like me to do—what adventures we have met with in the disturbed state of the Continent. In the first place, we met with a very excited old gentleman in Brunswick, who told us the French were in Milan, and looked at us fiercely as if he thought it was our fault. We told him it wasn't, and that we wanted the sexton to let us into the Cathedral, upon which the old gentleman went to get him for us; and in the second place, we saw fifteen thousand fighting men in helmets of this shape [sketch] (the ornament at the top being in appearance a hall candlestick and its function a ventilator) march past Prince Frederick William at Berlin. We were smothered in dust, and very late in getting breakfast, but the

¹ This is the "Holy Family" with St. Joseph and St. Catherine, No. 191.

² *Cornhill Magazine*, March 1860; reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

³ This letter, and the one next following, have been communicated to the editors by the artist's son.

fifteen thousand candlestick men did us no other harm. In the third place, we heard the Austrian National Hymn played three times over to some people in a tea-garden in Hanover, but no popular movement followed.

“And in the last place, five boys in paper caps made a very disagreeable noise for three-quarters of an hour in a back lane under my window at Berlin, one evening, which I have reason to think was intended for an imitation of Prussian military music playing national airs. I have no remembrance at present of any other inconvenience resulting from the disturbed state of the Continent.

“I was thinking of you yesterday as we were watching a ferry-boat cross the Elbe with a cart and horse in it, just one of the pretty little flat bits with a strong figure group which you like. And I thought of you very often among the shining Dutch brown boats and picturesque Meuse ones. Those Dutch boats are certainly very pretty, but I don’t like the Dutch water. I never saw such a pestiferous extent of pond as in the lower town of Brussels—a sort of canal part with handsome houses on each side, and very much in its own character what the Thames would be without a tide. This Elbe is a fine river however, and its hill shores beautiful with vines and roses. The foxglove, I see, is here a cultivated flower. The Gallery at Berlin surprised me; it is not usually spoken of by travellers with much interest, and it is far the most beautiful in aspect and arrangement I have ever seen. The Louvre is splendid, but this Berlin one has pillars of solid marble of exquisite beauty, floors of mosaic, walls of fresco, which, though not of the best, give it a dignity much greater than that of the Louvre. The collection of pictures is far richer than I expected; it is a fine cast of pictures too, for though they have only one Titian, they have a noble series of earlier Italian masters, and of early Flemish—Van Eyck and Memling, good Vandycks, and the best Holbein I ever saw in my life. They have three Raphaels, one very good.

“Here, though their renowned group of pictures is indeed magnificent, the setting of them and general tone of the collection is bad. Instead of early Italian they have late Carlo Maratti, and such like; instead of early Flemish, quantities of Dows and Ostades, and so on, mixed with an enormous quantity of mere rubbish, and with rascally black Spanish things, Riberas and Zubbarans. And all these pictures are shown to disadvantage, not excepting even the Madonna di San Sisto; she has a room to herself, but it is in a feeble light. The Dresden Venus is twelve feet above the eye.¹

“Don’t trouble to answer this, I will write again when I get to

¹ Presumably the Sleeping Venus, lying on a red drapery, now attributed to Giorgione.

Switzerland; my servant who delivers this will tell me how you are.
My father and mother join in sincerest regard.

“Believe me, dear Mr. Stanfield,

“Faithfully and respectfully yours,

“J. RUSKIN.”

We have often seen already how poor an opinion Ruskin had of modern German art; the closer study of it during this tour did not modify his views, as will be seen from this later letter to the same correspondent:—

“THUN, *22nd August* [1859].

“DEAR MR. STANFIELD,—I should have written again before now if I had not been in a state of sulkiness and suffering under German art which was wholly inexpressible; having escaped from its influence and got to the lakes and hills, I am slowly recovering a little temper and appetite and the use of my tongue, which I can’t use more truly than in assuring you, first of all, that English painters do not think half enough of themselves. They are veritably the only painters of landscape existing—and they and the French are the only living painters of anything. German landscape is, as you must well know (for that much I knew before going to Germany), fit only for fire-screens and card-cases; but what I did not even suspect before going to Germany is that all their boasted figure-painters’ work is as utterly abortive. They have much real feeling and extensive knowledge and considerable power of thought, the whole rendered *utterly* valueless by the intensest, most naïve, most ridiculous, most absorbing, most hopelessly ineradicable vanity that ever paralysed Human art. I could not have believed anything so ludicrous unless I had actually seen it. If every German painter walked about in the streets with a spread peacock’s tail pinned to his breeches by way of decoration, they would not be more manifestly, not one whit more amazingly ridiculous than they are in the way they have exhibited their vanity in the frescoes at Munich.

“Of these, Kaulbach’s are the most ludicrous, Cornelius’s the most atrocious. Hess’s the least excusable—for he might have been a painter but for his vanity, while Kaulbach and Cornelius never could have painted under any circumstances. But enough of them.

“I saw a vast mass of Dutch pictures of good quality (as Dutch) at Dresden and Munich, and dislike them—the landscapes I mean—more than ever. Gerard Terburg does some fine things when he is simple (in figures), but I really think you Academicians ought to help me a little in abusing those precious grey things of the Dutch landscapists. There is a most elaborate Wouvermans at Munich—a hunting party by a lake—a broad lake with hills and villas and all sorts of ruins and

things on its shores, and actually the water is drawn in flat grey like a slate table, not one reflection nor any ripple on its surface.¹

“If you and Creswick and a few more Academicians would tell people when you are talking quietly with them that this kind of thing is not good painting—whatever its reputation—instead of scornfully leaving the poor public to find it out for itself too late, you would do quite incalculable good.

“We came down to Munich from Lindau and Constance. The old wooden building at Constance (in the lake), which you drew by moonlight, is gone. Fine pier instead for steamers. Your old subject in the town of Schaffhausen (the upright) is still safe—curiously uninjured. The fall of the Rhine is much improved, the chateau of Lauffen being nearly all rebuilt in modern pastrycook Gothic, and a railroad bridge carried over the river above the fall [sketch].

“There is, however, an advantage in this which the creatures never thought of—one had no idea before of the real quantity of water in the rapids. It is, as you know, all green and pure, and to me it was more delightful—looking at it in its irregular depths and strength among those rocks—than even in the fall itself. But the general aspect of the fall is wholly destroyed, and what is much worse, the quantity of steamers on the lakes I think slightly foul the water in these small ones. This Thun is only ten miles long, and for the most part only two or three hundred feet deep, with gravelly shore; and I think steamers up and down it four or five times a day keep the sediment from settling as completely as it used to do, or perhaps eyes at forty don’t see such clear water as they do at twenty. But I think I have accustomed myself to accurate estimates, and neither this lake nor Constance seem to me as clear as they were. We have all kept well. I hope this letter will not find you at home, but that you are enjoying yourself with recovered health on some nice southern coast, or—who knows—shall we have a battle of Solferino, with gardens in the distance, in the Academy next year? *Do*, pray!

“Always, dear Mr. Stanfield,

“Faithfully and respectfully yours,

“J. RUSKIN.”

Further notes and impressions on modern German art occur in Ruskin’s diary; some of these are also given in the Appendix, as illustrating what he says in this volume about “German heroics.”² A few appreciative notices of the early German painters will be found; but in modern German art, whether in painting or in sculpture, Ruskin could find nothing to admire. He was not sorry, we may expect, when

¹ For this picture, see below, p. 365.

² Part ix. ch. viii. § 1 (p. 363).

his work in Germany was finished, and he was free to turn southwards once more. But his visit to Nuremberg made a strong impression on him; it is reflected both in the text and in the illustrations of this volume. During his sojourn in Germany the Franco-Sardinian war with Austria was raging; the battle of Magenta was fought on June 4, and Solferino on June 24. Ruskin was keenly interested on the Italian side, and the English attitude of non-intervention was hateful to him. He threw off a series of letters to the press, containing incidentally some notes on German art: these are reserved for publication in a later volume.¹ The French “breach of faith,”² in the peace of Villafranca, drew Ruskin back in disgust to his other studies. From Nuremberg he went to Munich, and thence to Schaffhausen. Writing to Professor Norton from that place (July 31), he refers to the conclusion of *Modern Painters*:—

“I am at work upon it, in a careless, listless way—but it won’t be the worse for the different tempers it will be written in. There will be little or no bombast in it, I hope, and some deeper truths than I knew—even a year ago.”³

“I was up at three,” he says in the same letter, “to watch the dawn on the spray of the Fall.” Next he spent a month in the Bernese Oberland; and then leaving his parents for a while at Geneva, he went yet again to his beloved valley of Chamouni. There, and afterwards at Neuchâtel, he travelled with his friend Mrs. Beecher Stowe and her daughter.⁴ At Chamouni, as usual, he worked hard at the rocks; but his diary shows that his thoughts were turned also to other subjects. There is the beginning, for instance, of an essay on Political Economy. His habitual study of the Bible took the form of notes on St. Matthew’s Gospel, and an essay on Faith. His literary companion was Dante.

After ten days in Paris, Ruskin reached home early in October 1859. A little later he went on a visit to Miss Bell’s school at Winnington, where he worked upon *The Elements of Perspective*, and then there was no further interruption until *Modern Painters* was finished. The volume was written, in a sense, under pressure—the closest and most compelling that could have been applied—the pressure of entreaty from his father. Ruskin described it in one of his Oxford lectures.⁵ His father had seen

¹ They were reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. pp. 3–21. It is interesting to remember that the same events led to the first prose essay of Matthew Arnold—his *England and the Italian Question* (1859).

² See *Letters of John Ruskin to Charles Eliot Norton*, 1904, vol. i. p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴ See *Time and Tide*, Appendix (Vol. XVII.).

⁵ “Readings in *Modern Painters*”: see a later volume of this edition.

him collecting materials for fifteen years, and was weary of waiting for the conclusion. It was by the first volume of *Modern Painters* that his son had leapt into fame; it would be by this great work, as the father rightly foresaw, that the fame would be most securely established. He yearned to see before he died the end crown the work. Accordingly, “when he came home from the long journey of 1859 and found signs of infirmity increasing upon him, he said to me one day, ‘John, if you don’t finish that book now I shall never see it.’ So I said I would do it for him forthwith, and did it—as I could.”

“As I could, not as I would;” perhaps Ruskin was thinking, as he wrote, of this motto of the most minute and conscientious of Flemish painters.¹ The world of art and letters is under some debt to the father who thus constrained his son; for whether, if left to himself, Ruskin would ever have finished his greatest book at all, may well be doubted. His industry was prodigious, but it was equalled by his curiosity, and hence he lacked the habit of concentration. Moreover, his mind was at this time becoming increasingly absorbed in quite other questions than those which were immediately involved in the concluding parts of *Modern Painters*. One sees what was to come in several passages in this volume. Thus, in discussing the effect upon the human mind of beauty in art, he refers to the unsettlement of his convictions, and to his doubts of “the just limits of the hope in which he may permit himself to continue to labour in any course of Art.”² And so, again, his discussions of painters and pictures were, he tells us, “continually altered in shape, and even warped and broken, by digressions respecting social questions, which had for me an interest tenfold greater than the work I had been forced into undertaking.”³ At the end of the volume we see the transition towards economic questions in progress. He is ostensibly still discussing the choice of subjects and ideas in pictures; but the inquiry leads him to consider “the right economy of labour.”⁴ In the summer which saw the publication of this fifth volume, the digressions established themselves as Ruskin’s first pre-occupation. If it had not been for his father’s pressure, Ruskin might have been caught in the maelstrom of economics before *Modern Painters* had been finished at all. The book may thus be said to be a monument of a double allegiance—of devotion to his master, Turner, and also of devotion to his father, of whose mingled

¹ The first words of the Flemish proverb are inscribed by Jan Van Eyck on his *Portrait of a Man* in the National Gallery (No. 222).

² Part ix. ch. xi. § 16 (p. 423).

³ Part ix. ch. i. § 7 (p. 257).

⁴ Part ix. ch. xi. § 22 (p. 427).

shrewdness, affection, and good sense the reader of the correspondence in this edition must already, I think, have received a strong impression. The force of the motive derived from the defence of Turner was by this time spent. Ruskin's advocacy had won the case, but had won it too late, for Turner had passed "beyond these voices." Nor was that all. It was a main object with Ruskin to teach that "all great art depended on nobleness of life." What he had gathered of Turner's life had not shaken his conviction; but it had suggested the difficulty of proving it in a case where the gold was so much mixed with the clay. "I knew his life had been noble," said Ruskin in after years, "but not in ways that I could convince others of, and it seemed to me that all my work had been in vain."¹ And there were other difficulties which beset the completion of his task. He describes them in his Preface; and we must take note of them here, for the discussion will serve to bring out some characteristics of the volume.

First, then, Ruskin had to resume threads which had been dropped for some time. It is not indeed to be supposed that the whole of this volume was composed during the winter of 1859–1860. We have already given reasons for thinking that some portions were written, in first draft, at the same time with the fourth volume.² And in the MS. of the first chapter Ruskin himself says that some of it was written "long ago."³ Other portions were written at Turin in 1858. "I get now," he says to his father, "a good many spare half-hours for thinking over *Modern Painters*, and sometimes doing a little, and hope soon to get into the run of it. It will be a finished, I hope *glowing* volume, but perhaps a little less sparkling than younger ones."⁴ Among the passages written at Turin were (as already said) the notes on various pictures and some of the studies of skies.⁵ But the whole material had to be sifted and rearranged; this process was laborious, and may well have been disheartening.

For the longer he had worked and studied the more conscious he became of the amount of work and study which remained to be done. The scheme of the treatise required him in this final volume to deal successively with Beauty of Water, Beauty of Vegetation, and Beauty of Sky. With Beauty of Mountains he had dealt in the preceding volume, and the subject had occupied him for 338 pages. And these discussions were only subdivisions of Ideas of Beauty; the whole subject of Ideas

¹ See, again, "Readings in *Modern Painters*."

² See Vol. V. p. lii.

³ See below, part vi. ch. i. § 7 n. (pp. 18, 19).

⁴ Letter from Turin, July 27, 1858.

⁵ See below, pp. 168, 172.

of Relation remained to be treated also. Had the full scheme been carried out on the scale of the discussion of Mountain Beauty, there had been no counting of the volumes which should have been written. The first step was to throw some of the cargo overboard. "I cut away," he wrote to Dr. John Brown, "half of what I had written."¹ The proposed section on Sea Beauty was given up altogether, as Ruskin explains in the Preface. It appears from what he there says that he had much in his mind on the subject. All, however, that the editors have found among his papers are some rough jottings in one of his diaries of the proposed contents; these are here printed in an Appendix (p. 484). It should be remembered, however, that Ruskin had already thrown off in the form of an Introduction to *The Harbours of England* a singularly interesting essay on the painting of sea and ships.

Next, Ruskin found it impossible to deal as exhaustively as he had desired with Beauty of Vegetation. He had, indeed, for many years been a diligent botanist; understanding by the term botany the study of the aspects of flowers.² With their laws of growth he was not familiar; this was a new subject of inquiry, and with Ruskin to take up a new subject meant to turn upside down anybody else's treatment of it.³ "Many of the results" of his inquiry into "the origin of wood" could "only be given," he says, "if ever, in a detached form."⁴ Some of these results he gave in the year following the publication of the fifth volume in a lecture at the Royal Institution on "Tree Twigs." A report and abstract of this lecture are accordingly printed here in an Appendix (p. 467). The lecture on "Tree Twigs," though containing some further illustrations, corresponded in method and in spirit with the chapters in this volume. There was in it the same close study of natural aspects combined with poetical fancy, and the same imaginative connexion of those aspects with ideas of morality and mythology. The poetry of the leaf-aspects, as Ruskin draws it out in these chapters, might serve as a commentary on Shelley's lines:—

"No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother."

Ruskin, as Froude well remarks, had the gift of converting the minutest observations of natural phenomena into a poem.⁵ Very characteristic

¹ See the letter cited in the Introduction to Vol. XVII.

² See, on the distinction between the botanist's and the artist's ways of regarding plants, part vi. ch. ii. § 2 (pp. 20–21), and compare p. 129 *n*.

³ See his letter to Mrs. Carlyle in Vol. V. p. 1.

⁴ See Preface, § 5; below, p. 7.

⁵ *Carlyle's Life in London*, 1885, vol. ii. p. 245, where also the following letter is printed.

of Ruskin is the division and subdivision of plants, with names for the categories which are themselves felicitous of poetical observation—the division into (A) Tented Plants, so called because they pass as the tented Arab passes, leaving no memorial of themselves; and (B) Building Plants—builders because it is by the work of the leaves that the tree is built up; and then the subdivision, as of (B) into (*a*) Shield builders, and (*b*) Sword builders; according as the leaves resemble broad shields, or sharp swords. His method, at once discursive and comprehensive, was characteristically hit off by Carlyle, who had heard the lecture on “Tree Twigs”:—

“Friday last,” he wrote to his brother John (April 23, 1861), “I was persuaded—in fact had unwarily compelled myself, as it were—to a lecture of Ruskin’s at the Institution, Albemarle Street—lecture on Tree Leaves as physiological, pictorial, moral, symbolical objects. A crammed house, but tolerable to me even in the gallery. The lecture was thought to ‘break down,’ and indeed it quite did ‘*as a lecture*’; but only did from *embarras des richesses*—a rare case. Ruskin did blow asunder as by gunpowder explosions his leaf notions, which were manifold, curious, genial; and, in fact, I do not recollect to have heard in that place any neatest thing I liked so well as this chaotic one.”¹

Ruskin, it will be observed, leaves many questions open in his botanical chapters, and alludes sometimes to inquiries of which he had, as yet, learnt only the fringe.² For adequate statement of the present condition of botanical knowledge on questions left open by the author, the reader may be referred to recent works by Dr. Scott, F. Darwin, Professor Marshall Ward, and more especially to the English editions of Kerner’s *Natural History of Plants*, and of Professor Sachs’ treatises.³ Ruskin, as we know from remarks in his own copy of the fifth volume (annotated ten or more years later), would have revised some of its

¹ Another note on this lecture, though at second hand, is given in the *Letters of James Smetham* (p. 94): “I went,” he writes, “to Gilchrist’s on Saturday. Found him living next door to Carlyle, and to be an intimate friend of his. The day before he had gone with C. to hear Ruskin lecture at the Royal Institution. (Carlyle kept inquiring the time every ten minutes, and at last said, ‘I think he ought to give over now.’) Ruskin is a favourite of his, or he would not have gone at all, for he hates art in reality; but R. sent him a ticket. Gilchrist and several others we heard of thought the lecture a failure; but C. would not add the weight of his opinion to this, whatever he might think.” Ruskin himself speaks of the failure as “gnawing” him (see a letter cited in the Introduction to Vol. XVII.).

² See below, part vi. ch. ii. § 4 and *n.*; part vi. ch. vi. § 3 *n.*; and § 5 *n.* (pp. 22, 59, 61). For his interest at a later date in researches into the nature of the colouring matter of leaves and flowers, see *Time and Tide*, § 165.

³ For instance, D. H. Scott: *Introduction to Structural Botany*, 1894. F. Darwin and E. H. Acton: *Practical Physiology of Plants*, 1895. Harry Marshall Ward: *The Oak: a Popular Introduction to Forest Botany*, 1892. Anton Kerner von Marilann: *The Natural History of Plants*, translated by F. W. Oliver, 1894–1895. J. Sachs: *Text-book of Botany*, 1882; and *Lectures on the Physiology of Plants*, 1887.

passages in the light of subsequent researches.¹ He had intended, as we have seen, to reissue the chapters on Trees in a revised form, corresponding to *In Montibus Sanctis* and *Cæli Enarrant*; but this scheme was put aside.² His later studies in botany were the subject of a separate work—*Proserpina*—which unhappily remains a fragment.

With the next subject of his inquiry—"Of Cloud Beauty"—Ruskin was entirely at home. These Introductions have already shown how long and careful and minute had been his study of the clouds.³ But here, too, the more he knew the more he became conscious of the depth of the unknown. Looking back upon his work some years later he said that *Modern Painters* was "a mere sketch of intention, in analysis of the forms of cloud and wave": there were not enough scientific data, he said, to render the analysis complete.⁴ The note of diffidence which makes itself heard in this volume was finely commented upon by one of its most sympathetic readers at the time:—

"Such a sky! (writes Smetham, August 24, 1861). Such films and threads of infinite tenuity! Such flat roofs of cirri, lying high up in perspective, beyond the reach of science! Ruskin's 'don't know' in the last volume about clouds is very manly and noble after his spouterism in the first volume of *Modern Painters* on the same subject. There he spoke as if he had 'entered into the Springs of the Sea'; 'walked in search of the Depth'; 'seen the treasures of the Snow, the treasures of the Hail,' and 'by which way the light is parted,' and 'the way for the lightning of thunder,' and knew whether the 'rain had a father, and who had begotten the drops of dew and had numbered the clouds of heaven.' I love him more for the subdued, reverential, renunciatory tone of his last writings, which come not from less knowledge but more wisdom."⁵

Ruskin notes the change of temper himself. The reader is now to find him, "though dogmatic (it is said) upon some occasions, anything rather than dogmatic respecting clouds." "I have learned," he says again, "during the sixteen years to say little where I said much, and to see difficulties where I saw none." "This," he says of another passage, "is a fifth-volume passage, and so worth something."⁶ Again, under the head of clouds, Ruskin did not get all done that he had intended.

¹ See on this subject a letter to C. E. Norton of June 2, 1861, reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

² See Vol. III. p. xlix.

³ See, for instance, Vol. I. pp. xxx.-xxxi., and Vol. III. pp. xxv.-xxvii.

⁴ *Eagle's Nest*, § 129. The following sections (130-132) should also be compared with the Cloud studies in this volume.

⁵ *Letters of James Smetham*, 1891, p. 97. Smetham's quotations are from the book of Job (ch. xxxviii.), so often quoted by Ruskin. For Smetham, see Vol. XIV. pp. 460 *seq.*

⁶ See below, pp. 144, 163, 134 *n.*

“I may, perhaps, some day,” he says, “systematise and publish my studies of clouds separately.”¹ The studies were to be accompanied by numerous illustrations, for which his sketch-books and diaries would have afforded abundant material. This plan was not carried out; though it would perhaps have been in some measure fulfilled, if his health had allowed him to continue the publication of *Cæli Enarrant*—a collection of passages dealing with the clouds, of which only one part appeared (1885). A second part was, however, prepared; corrections and additional matter, bearing upon the present volume, are in this edition supplied from the printed chapter and the unpublished sequel of that work. In connexion with it Ruskin had been in correspondence with Sir Oliver Lodge, who sent a letter which Ruskin prepared for publication as a postscript to one of the chapters. This, in accordance with Ruskin’s intention and by permission of the writer, is now included at the place indicated in Ruskin’s proof-sheets of *Cæli Enarrant* (see p. 141). Ruskin refers in it to the new light which Sir Oliver Lodge’s summary of scientific knowledge on the causes of cloud-motions threw upon his own inquiries, and looks forward to revising his chapters accordingly. That was not to be; and the fact should be borne in mind by readers of these chapters as they stand. Ruskin leaves open many questions which, had he been able to complete his revision, he might have treated differently. Just when his pen had to be laid aside, Ruskin felt that he was beginning to learn. “This has been a very bright day to me,” he wrote to Miss Kate Greenaway on June 26, 1885. “I’ve found out why clouds float, for one thing !!! and think what a big thing that is.” And again, on June 29:—

“Clouds are warmer and colder according to the general temperature of the air, but always enable the sun to warm the air within them in the fine weather, when they float high. I have yet to learn all about the wet weather on this new condition myself.”

At about the same time that he was preparing *Cæli Enarrant*, Ruskin gave two lectures at the London Institution on skies and clouds. These—entitled *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*—are reserved for publication in a later volume; but references to passages in which *Modern Painters* was cited are here supplied in footnotes.

The Part in this volume treating “Of Cloud Beauty” introduces us to a new note in Ruskin’s work, which was henceforth often to recur. In connexion with his cloud-studies, and also with the mythological interest which was strongly shown in many of Turner’s pictures, Ruskin

¹ See below, p. 169 *n.*

was led to the examination of Greek myths. Their physical and their moral significance alike attracted him; and the studies, commenced in this volume, were afterwards continued in *The Queen of the Air*, as well as in some minor essays. A glance at the titles which he gave to Plates in this volume will show at once the fascination which the subject had for him—the rain-clouds became “The Graiæ,” the storm-clouds “Medusa” or “The Locks of Typhon”; the fading splendour of Giorgione’s fresco, “The Hesperid Æglé.” There will be more to say on this subject when we come to what Ruskin called his “Myth Book”;¹ but here we may note from his diaries how constant during these years of preparation for the present volume had been his classical studies. The *Clouds* of Aristophanes had long been a favourite play.² During the summer of 1858 he read “three or four times over in two months” the *Plutus*—a reading which was suggestive in many ways.³ But meanwhile it gave him, he says, “disgust with himself, for not knowing Greek enough to translate it.”⁴ This is a piece of self-depreciation which need not be taken too literally; for his diary shows that he studied the play deeply, analysing its characters, discussing its purpose, and collecting from it passages illustrative of Greek life and thought. He read the classics in this way constantly, and few English authors show a more familiar knowledge of them. In the present volume we may note the beginning of that minute study of words which he carried forward in *Munera Pulveris* and elsewhere. In plunging into the perilous sea of etymological derivation, perhaps with inadequate equipment, fancy, or *prima facie* impressions, sometimes led him astray.⁵ But, though he troubled himself with little *apparatus classicus*, he read his books over and over again, and noted carefully any allusion, suggestion, or usage which fitted in with his own line of thought. Of commentaries on the classics he made very little use, and (during the Continental journeys on which much of his work was done) even an adequate supply of the harmless, necessary dictionaries he had not always at hand; his work was all done for himself; and he

¹ See below, p. 184 *n*.

² See, for instance, Vol. III. p. 26; Vol. V. pp. 318, 377; Vol. VI. p. 73.

³ See, for instance, *Unto this Last*, § 65 *n*., and the title-page of *The Crown of Wild Olive*.

⁴ *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 22.

⁵ Thus in this volume the connexion between *fides* and *fio*, on which he finds an argument (see p. 213, and compare p. 326), can hardly be sustained. The suggested connexion of *Muse* and *Mother* is another case in point (p. 215). It should be remembered that at the time of Ruskin’s writing there was in this country little general knowledge of the results and methods of Comparative Philology: Peile’s *Introduction to Greek and Latin Etymology* was only published in 1869.

had made much study, before writing this volume, of Euripides and Sophocles and Aristophanes, of Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, of Plato and Lucian. In Euripides, in particular, he found (he says) the essence of Greek tragedy.¹ In his interpretation of Greek myths, Ruskin's fancy perhaps carried him further than many scholars will care to follow. But, after all, it requires a poet to interpret a poet. The Greek poets refined upon the popular mythology, as each one's imagination led him; and Ruskin, who studied nature with the eye of an artist and the heart of a poet, was well equipped for interpreting these poetical refinements. The study of nature may be a better preparation than mere poring over texts for reaching the heart of nature-poets, and Ruskin claimed, not without justification, that he had the eye to see "what Homer and Pindar saw."²

The next Part in the volume—that which deals with "Invention Formal," or, in more common parlance, with Artistic Composition—though it contains some of the most acute of Ruskin's analyses of Turner's work, is hardly on the same scale of thoroughness as other parts of the work. Here, again, the author seems to have been in some measure oppressed by his subject. He had sometimes been supposed to slight the quality of composition in pictures; it was, he says, on the contrary the quality which, above all others, gave him delight;³ but the more he studied it, the more difficult of exposition did it turn out to be. When he began the volume it is clear that he meant the section on Composition to be much fuller than it ultimately became. Thus in one of the chapters on Vegetation (p. 128) he introduces Plates from Turner's "Richmond," as it were incidentally, remarking that what he has "chiefly to say of them belongs to our section on Composition;" but such principal discussion did not get itself said. When he came to the place (p. 228) he finds that the subject is too large, and in part hardly susceptible of analysis except by the method of actual copying of the works of great composers. But here, too, his habit of dispersing himself over various books must be remembered. He had already dealt with the subject of composition—very methodically and suggestively, if incompletely—in *The Elements of Drawing*. The student of Ruskin should, therefore, read together those pages and these on the same subject here. Among the inquiries which, under the head of "Invention Formal," Ruskin had intended to take up was that of "the effects of colour-masses in juxtaposition;"⁴

¹ See part ix. ch. ii. § 15 (p. 273 *n.*).

² *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, 1884, p. 119.

³ See below, part viii. ch. i. § 2 (p. 204).

⁴ See his statement in the paper entitled "The Black Arts," Vol. XIV. p. 362.

but this also he put aside: the subject proved difficult, and its treatment would have delayed the appearance, and increased the bulk, of the volume. In this section of the work, as in those preceding it, Ruskin had intended to make considerable revision. An interesting scheme of rearrangement, which he had mapped out, is now given in an Appendix (p. 486).

The last Part of the volume deals with "Invention Spiritual"; that is to say, with those "Ideas of Relation" which pictures may convey by their "choice of subject and the mode and order of its history." The subject is endless; and Ruskin said, in after years, that though he had finished *Modern Painters*, it had no conclusion.¹ It is clear that here, also, he largely curtailed his original scheme. Thus towards the beginning of the volume (p. 119) he promises a discussion of Sublimity among other "Ideas of Relation"; but this intention was only in part carried out. Some additional passages on the subject, preserved by Ruskin, as "important," among his MSS., are now given in an Appendix (p. 481). But these final chapters contain, nevertheless, as they stand, much that is the most instructive in all his criticism, whether of art or of life; much also that is finest in expression. The chapters (part ix. ch. ii. to ch. ix.), in which he traces the outlook of men in successive ages upon problems of death and destiny, are more than a history of "ideas of relation" in art—full of suggestion though they are from this point of view; they are also, as a reviewer said at the time of their first appearance, "a splendid rhapsody on human progress."² What Ruskin said of the volume, in the letter already quoted—that it would be "glowing" if "perhaps a little less sparkling"—is here pre-eminently true; and the altered note marks the transition to Ruskin's later style—a style which has been characterised by Professor Norton; the diction is "simpler, less elaborate, for the most part less self-conscious;" the "purple patches" are less frequent, but "its whole substance is crimsoned with the passionate feeling that courses through the eager and animated words."³ The sentences tend to become shorter;⁴ the argument is more concentrated; the points are closer packed; and the images or allusions are

¹ See, again, "Readings in *Modern Painters*"; and compare what he says on p. 441, below.

² "Shirley" in *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1860, p. 729.

³ Introductions to the American ("Brantwood") editions of *Val d'Arno* and *Sesame and Lilies*.

⁴ The descriptions of Venice (part ix. ch. ix. § 1) may be cited as instances of compression; as this: "Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable,—every word a fate—sate her senate." Or this, for a picture in a short sentence: "Ethereal strength of Alps, dreamlike, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west."

brought from a wider range and charged fuller with meaning; the epithets are less frequent, but each of them throbs with intensity.

The publication of this fifth volume concluding the work attracted very general attention in the press, and called forth a chorus of congratulation, the more noticeable by contrast with the chorus of condemnation which was to greet the author's next appearance in the literary arena. "From 1845 to 1860," he said afterwards, "I went on with more or less of public applause; and then in 1860 people saw a change come over me which they highly disapproved, and I went on from 1860 to 1875 under the weight of continually increasing public recusancy and reprobation."¹ In 1860 Ruskin's reputation, if the voice of the public organs of opinion were the test, stood probably at its highest point. "No author of our day," wrote a reviewer of the time, "has at once excited more admiration, and yet been assailed with more vehement censure than John Ruskin."² But by this time he had conquered most of his assailants.³ "He has outlived," wrote another critic, "and outwritten the obloquy and abuse that once assailed him; and while yet in the prime of life has attained the proud position of one of the greatest of all writers, living or dead, on the subject of art."⁴ Of the main purpose of the book—the defence of Turner—it was said afterwards by a distinguished critic that it was "the most triumphant vindication of the kind ever published;"⁵ and now that the treatise was at last finished, and its full scope revealed, the grandeur of the task was appreciated. The general verdict was expressed by a literary journal which had published much bitter depreciation of the author's earlier volumes. "Our duty is," said the *Athenæum*, "to report that the work is well, admirably, and nobly done. In method, single, clear, and as a whole eloquent to a marvel, as the world knows; and taken in the mass, these five volumes contain the most valuable contributions to art-literature the language can show." It was a work, wrote another critic (not hitherto favourable), not only of criticism, but of poetical creation. "Several poems in this closing volume," said "Shirley," "are

¹ See again "Readings in *Modern Painters*."

² *The Christian Observer*, September 1862, vol. 62, pp. 658–678: an article on "John Ruskin as a Religious Writer," being a review of *Modern Painters* and his other works.

³ *Blackwood's Magazine* was an exception. In an article signed "Peregrine" and entitled "A Day at Antwerp: Rubens and Ruskin" (September 1861, vol. 90, pp. 365–372), the fifth volume was noticed, and opportunity was taken to introduce a coarse personal attack upon the author. The reviewer was apparently proud of his bad taste, for the article was reprinted in 1874 (*Paradoxes and Puzzles*, by John Paget, pp. 437–449).

⁴ *The Eclectic Review*, November 1860, N.S., vol. 4, pp. 478–488.

⁵ Sir Leslie Stephen in the *National Review*, April 1900.

superb. There is a grand song about the Pine, such as some grey-beard bard in the Halls of Horsa might have sung; a glorious Greek hymn of Death and Resurrection; idylls about the leaves and the lichen and the mosses; an ode to Venice, blue and vivid as its own sea and sky. The very titles to the chapters are chosen by a poet." Various instances were given; and "here," said "Shirley" in conclusion, "we close our criticisms; and here (there having been strife between us) we must record our conviction that Mr. Ruskin has completed a book which is destined to live, and that this, its closing volume, is its flower and crown."¹

¹ *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1860, vol. 62, pp. 719–734 ("Mr. Ruskin at the Seaside: a Vacation Medley," by "Shirley" (John Skelton). In addition to those mentioned above, Reviews appeared in the *Dial*, June 22 and 29, 1860; the *Athenæum*, June 23 and 30; the *Leader*, June 30; the *Literary Gazette*, July 7; *Weldon's Register*, August 1860; the *Patriot*, August 2; the *Critic*, August 4 and 11, and September 1; the *Morning Post*, August 9; the *Spectator*, August 11 and September 1; the *Press*, August 18 and 25; the *Builder*, August 25; the *Weekly Mail*, August 25; the *Montrose Standard*, September 7; the *Saturday Review*, September 1 and 8; the *Witness*, September 12 and 19; the *Sun*, September 17; the *Illustrated London News*, September 29 and October 13 (hostile); the *London Review*, October 1860 (vol. 15, pp. 63–111); the *British Quarterly Review*, October 1860 (vol. 32, pp. 412–439); the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, October 1860 (New York: vol. 42, pp. 533–554—review by the Rev. Gilbert Haven); the *Eclectic Review*, November 1860 (vol. 92, pp. 478–488); the *Scottish Review*, January 1861 (No. 33, pp. 1–16); the *Christian Examiner*, January 1861 (Boston: vol. 70, pp. 29–48—an article headed "The Place of 'Modern Painters' in Art-Literature" (enthusiastic); the *Boston Review* (U.S.A.), July 1861, vol. i. pp. 323–338 (enthusiastic); and vol. ii. pp. 491–512 ("Ruskin's Literary Spirit"); the *Dublin University Magazine*, June 1861, vol. 57, pp. 687–695 ("Modern Pre-Raphaelitism"—hostile); the *North British Review*, February 1862, vol. 36, pp. 1–36 ("The Writings of Mr. Ruskin"). This last review was reprinted, with some omissions, in *Essays and Reviews*, by H. H. Lancaster, with prefatory notice by B. Jowett, 1876, pp. 297–350. (The writer incidentally censured the "buffoonery" of *Blackwood*, "which would be thought vulgar in a barrack-yard.") Mention may also be made of the *Weekly Review*, November 29, 1862, in which appeared "Venice in the time of Giorgione and Titian: versified from a passage in *Modern Painters*, Vol. V." Signed "Ellis V." One stanza may be quoted, if only to show how poetry may sometimes be marred by rhyme:—

"He went down to the marble city; there
The fiery heart of its great life to be.
A marble city, said I? Frankly dare
A golden city to proclaim; the sea
Flowed in its smooth streets, pulsing tenderly,
In liquid emerald; its turrets threw
The gleam of gold or jasper far and free,
While, from beyond, the circling ocean blue
Still, to and fro, its green waves eddying drew."

Some of the Reviews of Thornbury's *Life of Turner* also noticed Ruskin's fifth volume; for instance, the *Quarterly Review*, April 1862, vol. iii. pp. 450–482 (an extract from this article is given below, p. 445 n.); and the *Westminster Review*, April 1862, N.S., vol. 21, pp. 417–445. An article in the same review on "The Critical Character" (October 1863, N.S., vol. 24, pp. 468–482) noticed books by Ruskin and Matthew Arnold.

The book was destined to live, and to live more widely as years went on. In America, as already noted, Ruskin was from the first largely read. The cheap, pirated editions which were promptly issued in the United States, introduced him to a wider circle than the luxurious and expensive volumes could reach at first hand in his own country. On the Continent, too, his work began to attract attention. In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* Monsieur Joseph Milsand, a friend of Robert Browning, celebrated the completion of *Modern Painters* by an elaborate examination of Ruskin's æsthetic theories, and this "study" was presently republished in book form;¹ but it was not till a later date, as will be noticed in a later volume, that the cult of Ruskin obtained any considerable vogue in France. His vogue in Germany, now very extensive, was also of later growth.

The history of the later English editions of *Modern Painters* has already been told;² of this fifth volume no second edition appeared until 1873, when it formed part of the re-issue of the whole work. Another re-issue, again of the whole work, appeared in 1888; and for that issue Ruskin wrote the Epilogue here included (p. 461). The biographical particulars belong to a much later volume. It may here be stated briefly that Ruskin's health had failed again in the summer of 1887, and he left Brantwood for Folkestone in the August of that year. Thence he moved to Sandgate, and was there—on and off—till June 1888, when he went abroad, first by Boulogne to Abbeville, with Mr. Arthur Severn (June 10), and then on into Switzerland. Early in September he was at St. Cergues and Sallenches, and on September 15 reached Chamouni once more after an absence of fourteen years (1874). On September 16 he there writes in his diary:—

"Have just written the last clause to the Epilogue to *Modern Painters* in the perfected light of Mont Blanc, after being at mass and a little walk on fresh grass towards Source of Arveron."

The Epilogue, it will be seen, restates emphatically the fundamental consistency of the main aim and principle of *Modern Painters*.

The *text* of the Fifth Volume of *Modern Painters* shows few variations of any importance between different editions. It was not revised

¹ See the article entitled "De l'influence littéraire dans les beaux-arts," in the *Revue* for August 15, 1861 (vol. 34, pp. 870–915). Milsand had contributed a previous article ("Une nouvelle théorie de l'art en Angleterre"), dealing mainly with Ruskin's architectural theories, to the *Revue* of July 1, 1860. These articles were revised and republished in 1864 under the title "L'Esthétique Anglaise Étude sur M. John Ruskin. Par J. Milsand"; Paris: Germer Baillière, Libraire-Éditeur, etc., 1864.

² Vol. III. pp. xlvii.–l.

by the author either for the collected edition of 1873 or for that of 1888. In one of his own copies he had, however, marked a few alterations; and he made others in reprinting chapter i. of part vii. in *Cæli Enarrant* (and see above, p. lxi.). In that work, as also in *Fronde Agrestes*, he added a few notes. These are here given below the text. References to *Fronde* are only given where such notes occur; a general collation of the passages included in that volume having been already supplied (Vol. III. p. lxi.).

The editors have also had access to another of Ruskin's copies of the book (given by him to Arthur Burgess, and now in possession of Mr. Hugh Allen), in which he had marked out a partial scheme of rearrangement.

The contents of the *Appendix* added in this edition of the volume have already been mentioned. Appendix I. contains a report of Ruskin's Lecture on Tree Twigs, above referred to, p. lix.; Appendix II. gives additional passages from the MS. (see above, pp. lviii., lxiv.); Appendix III., the author's proposed rearrangement just mentioned; and Appendix IV., the "Notes on German Galleries" (see above, p. l.). The *Index* to the original edition was made under Miss Bell's superintendence by the girls at her school at Winnington, unhelped by the author.¹ Mr. Wedderburn's index, substituted in the edition of 1888, is reserved for incorporation in the General Index volume.

The *manuscript* of the Fifth Volume is in the possession of Mr. Pierpont Morgan (formerly in that of Mr. Allen). It is written on the author's usual foolscap. The MS. of chapter ii. part viii. ("The Task of the Least") is missing, as also that of part ix. chapter xii. §§ 1–4. The MS. shows that the author rewrote and revised as carefully as in other volumes. *Facsimiles* of two pages are given (pp. 374, 458), and a few instances of the author's revisions are supplied in footnotes (see, *e.g.*, pp. 15, 19, 65, 134, 257, 281). There are also among the Pierpont Morgan MSS. several loose sheets of matter apparently intended for this volume; some of this is printed in the Appendix (p. 479). The MS. of the Epilogue was never in Mr. Allen's hands.

The *illustrations* prepared by Ruskin for the volume were elaborate, and caused him, as he explains, much work and anxiety. Of the 34 engraved Plates which were given in the original edition, 16 were from Ruskin's own drawings, 4 others from his drawings after Turner or other masters, while three of the Plates were etched by the author himself. But he had prepared many other Plates which, for one reason

¹ So stated by Ruskin in a letter to Sir J. Nasmyth, April 5, 1861.

or another, were held over.¹ The trouble he took with the preparation of the Plates has been described in another volume;² to the skill and patience put into the work by Armytage, Cuff, and Cousen he pays a tribute in the Preface. Le Keux's work had been already highly commended.³ Other Plates were engraved by Mr. J. Emslie—a student under Ruskin at the Working Men's College, who has contributed to a recent publication some interesting reminiscences of Ruskin's classes.⁴ In the edition of 1873 the original Plates were again used. When the work was again issued in 1888, five of the Plates having become much worn or having been destroyed, the subjects were re-engraved by Mr. G. Cook (see Vol. III. p. lx.). In that edition three additional Plates were inserted, which have been reproduced in all subsequent editions—Nos. 85, 86, and 87. These were etchings by Ruskin⁵ (afterwards mezzotinted by Lupton) from Turner's drawings. Ruskin made the etchings in 1859, and the Plates were intended for the volume; but there was some delay in the preparation of them, and they were held over (as Mr. Allen remembers) in consequence of the anxiety of Ruskin's father to see the work out of hand. Some copies of the three engravings were printed shortly after the publication of the volume, and were issued, by Ruskin's permission, to a few friends and others specially interested in the work. These three Plates may be included among the illustrations which Ruskin mentions as being held over; but he had also schemes on hand, as we have already seen,⁶ for reproducing many of Turner's drawings on a larger scale (p. 56). Among his schemes for the future was another tour in Turner's footsteps, "to take such record of his best-beloved places as may fully interpret the designs he left" (p. 436 *n.*); but this and many another scheme were to be drowned in other tasks.

In addition to the numerous engravings on steel, the Fifth Volume included 101 woodcuts; many of these are (as in previous editions⁷)

¹ See below, Preface, § 6, p. 8; and a letter to Dr. John Brown cited in the Introduction to Vol. XVII.

² Vol. IX. pp. l., li.

³ See Vol. V. pp. lxii., 10.

⁴ *The Working Men's College, 1854–1904*, edited by J. Ll. Davies, 1904, pp. 39–53.

⁵ The catalogue of the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester, 1904, contained the following item:—

"535. The etching-needle contrived for Ruskin in order to make six strokes at once, but discarded by him as being too mechanical, though used for the mountains in his etching of Turner's 'Lake of Zug,' *Modern Painters*, vol. v. edition of 1888" [Plate 87].

⁶ See Vol. XIII. p. lix. Some further notice of the scheme will be found in the Introduction to Vol. XVII., dealing with Ruskin's sojourn at Mornex, during which he took up the work for a while.

⁷ In the small editions of the work this was not the case: see Bibliographical Note, p. lxxiii.

printed separately from the text, as being of considerable elaboration. Here, again, many more were prepared than were ultimately embodied in the volume. Thus Miss Byfield prepared three separate wood-engravings, which were not used—two after woodcuts by Dürer, one after a picture by Titian.¹

In the present edition all the original woodcuts have been employed. In the case, however, of the Plates, the necessity of reduction, owing to the size of the page, or the defective state of the original steels, has, in most cases, necessitated the process of reproduction by photogravure. Particulars of these matters are given in a note to the List of Illustrations (p. xviii.).

Seven additional Plates are introduced in this edition. Three of them are placed in this Introduction, being reproductions of drawings made by Ruskin during the years when the volume was in preparation.

Plate A is a photogravure of the drawing of rocks at Killiecrankie (1857), already mentioned (p. xxvi.). The drawing, which is in water-colours (11 x 9½), is at Herne Hill.

Plate B is a chromo-lithograph from a drawing of Rheinfelden (1858): see above, p. xxix. It is in water-colours (16½ x 13), and is in Mr. Allen's possession.

Plate C is a photogravure of two sketches of the Castle of Schwytz at Bellinzona (1858): see above, p. xxxv. The sketches, which are in water-colours (each 5¾ x 8¼), are at Brantwood.

The four other Plates are reproductions of works described by Ruskin in the text. Plate D ("The Knight and Death") and Plate E ("Melencolia") will enable the reader to follow more easily Ruskin's interpretations of Dürer's designs, and will be useful for reference in later volumes where he again discusses the same Plates, while Plate G shows the equestrian portrait by Vandyck in the Turin Gallery, which is one of the pictures most fully described by Ruskin in the present volume (pp. 358–361 *nn.*). Plate F is from Ruskin's copy of a portion of the Family Group by Paolo Veronese, already mentioned (p. l.). The copy, which is in pen and ink (10¾ x 13), is at Brantwood.

E. T. C.

¹ *Bibliography of Ruskin*, by Wise and Smart, vol. ii. p. 33. Ruskin gave these engraved blocks to Arthur Burgess, and they are now in the possession of Mr. Hugh Allen.

(*This volume is followed in the chronological order by Vol. XVII. The Introduction to that volume should therefore be read next.*)

[*Bibliographical Note.*—Of this volume in a separate form there was only one edition (though of this there were two issues), published in 1860, with the following title-page:—

Modern Painters | Volume V. | Completing the work, and containing | Parts
| VI. Of Leaf Beauty.—VII. Of Cloud Beauty. | VIII. Of Ideas of Relation. | 1.
Of Invention Formal. | IX. Of Ideas of Relation. | 2. Of Invention Spiritual.
| By John Ruskin, M.A., | Author of “The Stones of Venice,” “Seven
Lamps of Architecture,” | etc. etc. | [*quotation* from Wordsworth, as in vols. i.,
ii., iii., and iv.] | London: | Smith, Elder & Co., 65 Cornhill. | 1860. | [*The
Author reserves the Right of Translation.*]

Imperial 8vo, pp. xvi.+384. The Preface occupied pp. v.-xii.; Contents, pp. xiii.-xiv.; List of Engravings on Steel, p. xv.; List of “Separate Engravings on Wood,” and “Errata,” p. xvi.; Text, pp. 1–357; Indices, pp. 359–384. The imprint at the foot of the last page (and at the foot of the reverse of the half-title) is “London: Printed by Smith, Elder & Co., Little Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey, E.C.” Issued on June 14, 1860, in green cloth boards, uniform with volumes iii. and iv. Price 50s. The price of the complete work in its original form was thus £8, 0s. 6d.

The first issue of all contained, as the list of “Errata” mentioned above, two items only, thus:—

- p. 13, line 9 from bottom, omit the words “Fig. 1.”
- p. 123, line 17 from top, for “opposite,” read “facing p. 343.”

This issue contains a variation on p. x. (here p. 8 *n.*). In the footnote it reads, “Aid, just as disinterested, . . . has been given me . . .; and by Mr. Robin Allen, in accurate line studies from nature. . . .” The helper really referred to was Mr. George Allen; and Ruskin’s father, when the mistake was discovered, cancelled the sheet in order that it might be corrected at once. In the later copies, therefore, “Mr. G. Allen” was substituted for “Mr. Robin Allen”; the mistake no doubt arose through the help given to Ruskin in another matter by Mr. Robin Allen (see below, p. 311). Curiously, another mistake in the same note was not corrected (see below, p. lxxiii.); but some further items were added to the list of Errata, which, in the second issue, was as follows:—

- p. 13, line 9 from bottom, omit the words “Fig. 1.”
- p. 39, line 22 from top, for “simplest,” read “swiftest.”
- p. 123, line 17 ” for “opposite,” read “facing p. 343.”
- p. 146, line 12 ” for “conveyance” read “convergence.”
- p. 161, line 25 ” for “fired” read “hard.”
- p. 216, in Greek couplet, for “*goon*” read “*noon*.”
- p. 264, line 15 from top, for “boating” read “boxing.”

The third of these errata explains a peculiarity in the Plates. Ruskin had first intended to insert the Plate in question, “Monte Rosa: Sunset,” at

p. 123; it would there have followed Plate 67, and is in the List of Plates called No. 68. But its place was afterwards changed to p. 343, where it followed Plate 84; the Plate itself was accordingly not numbered. It should be noted further that there was no Plate 77; the drawing from Angelico, "Ecce Ancilla Domini," was (as the MS. shows) to have been No. 77, and to have been inserted at p. 369, but it was afterwards used as the Frontispiece: presumably an illustration that Ruskin had intended for frontispiece fell through at the last moment. In order not to disturb the original numbering, the number 77 has similarly been skipped in all subsequent editions.

No other edition of the volume was published until 1873, when the whole book was reissued. (For the bibliography of the complete work, and of selections from it, see Vol. III. pp. lviii.-lxii.) There was thus no second edition of the fifth volume in a separate form, as had been the case with the third and fourth volumes. Accordingly when the "New and Complete Edition" of 1888 was issued, 250 extra copies were printed of the fifth volume "in order to supply the wants of those whose sets are incomplete." The price of these copies was three guineas (reduced in July 1900 to 30s.).

Varia Lectiones.—The following is a list of all the variations in editions of the volume; a few differences of spelling and punctuation and some minor differences in references, owing to changes in the pagination, being excepted:—

List of Engravings on Steel.—In the 1888 edition there were the following alterations necessitated by various changes and additions: Plates 52 and 58, the engraver's name was changed from "R. P. Cuff" to "G. Cook"; Plates 68, 80, and 81, it was changed from "J. C. Armytage" to "G. Cook"; Plates 73 and 74, the artist's name was changed from "J. M. W. Turner" to "J. Ruskin, from J. M. W. Turner," and the engraver's from "J. Ruskin" to "Boussod, Valadon, and Co." And Plates 85–87 were added as in the list here. The List, which in the two previous editions finished on a single page, was continued on the following one, which had previously contained the list of "Separate Engravings on Wood" only, as follows:—

Figure	56	<i>To face page</i>	67
"	61	"	71
"	75–78	"	100
"	85	"	120
"	87	"	131
"	88–90	"	132
"	98	"	189
"	100	"	288

This list in the 1888 edition followed the List of Engravings. The subjects of the woodcuts thus separately printed were not stated in any edition before the present. Also "Figures 75 to 78" were given as being printed on a separate page; this should have been "Figures 74 to 78." In the present

edition Figure 91 is also separately printed. In the small edition, the list of "Separate Engravings on Wood" disappeared; Nos. 58, 61, 85, 87, 88–90, 98, and 100, were separately printed; Nos. 74–77 were printed on a separate page, but No. 78 was printed in the text: this rearrangement necessitated some consequential alterations in the references to the figures in the text. In the small edition, the "List of Engravings on Steel" became "List of Plates to Vol. V.," for "Artists," as the heading, it read "Drawn by," and for "Engravers," "Reproduced from Engravings by." Plates 73 and 74 were now again attributed under those headings to "J. M. W. Turner" and "J. Ruskin" respectively. Owing to the reduction in size necessitated by the *format* of the small edition, the words "reduced in this edition" were added in footnotes at places where Ruskin referred for any reason to the size of his illustrations—viz. in his references to Figs. 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 94, 98, and Plates 57, 61, 80, 81.

Preface.—§ 1, line 16, "Dumblane" is here altered to "Dunblane"; § 5, line 8, "mathematicians" misprinted "mathematicains" in ed. 1; line 25, "lost" in all previous editions is here corrected to "cost" in accordance with Ruskin's copy for revision; § 6 *n.*, last line but one, eds. 1 and 1873 read "though only one is engraved"; there are, however, two (Plates 52 and 58); the correction was made in 1888.

Part vi.—*Ch. i.* § 2, line 8, "as" has been here inserted (omitted in all previous editions.)

Ch. iii. § 5, line 3, ed. 1 reads "Fig. 1" before "Plate 51."

Ch. v. § 6, line 16, "page 90" in all previous editions is here corrected to "96"; § 8, the reference here given in a footnote was supplied by Ruskin in the text, and was to the page of ed. 1; § 9, line 3, ed. 1 reads "simplest" for "swiftest."

Ch. vii. § 3, six lines from end, eds. 1 and 1873 read "all" before "its branches," and, four lines lower, "decent" for "gentle"; these two alterations were introduced in the 1888 edition from Ruskin's corrected copy.

Ch. viii. § 13, line 9, "Lefèvre" in all previous editions is here corrected to "Lefèbre"; § 13, at end, the reference here given in a footnote was supplied by the author in the text; § 18, line 24, "Here" was altered in the small editions to "Overleaf."

Ch. ix. § 9, lines 5–13, see p. 108 *n.*; § 14, last line, "Thurm" in all previous editions here corrected to "Thurn."

Ch. x., in the small editions some changes of reference were introduced in the text owing to the fact that Figs. 74–78 were not printed on one page but interspersed in the text; § 18, line 9, edition 1873 misprinted "aborescence."

Part vii.—*Ch. i.* § 2, lines 17, 18, "rises" and "descends" are here italicised in accordance with *Cæli Enarrant*; and so "perfect" in § 3, line 6; § 9 *n.*, in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875) the concluding paragraph of § 9 is the end of § 24, the author's footnote being there shortened to "Compare, in *Sartor Resartus*, the boy's watching from the garden wall": see also p. 141 *n.*

Ch. ii. § 1, line 8, "in" and "with" are here italicised in accordance with the author's proof for *Cæli Enarrant*; and so also the word "produced" in the last line of § 2; § 3, line 4, ed. 1873 misprinted "cirrous";

line 14, “always finely divided” here italicised (as above); and seven lines lower, “rain-cloud” is here quoted; § 6, line 1 “(Fig. 80)” is here inserted from Ruskin’s proof for *Cæli Enarrant*; similarly, in line 16, “plighted” is italicised; § 6, author’s note, line 1, “method” in all previous editions here altered to “methods”; § 6 *n.*, line 15, “opposite page . . .” (a different page in different editions) is here altered to “opposite this page”; § 6 *n.*, nine lines from end, the page reference (which has differed in successive editions)—“At page . . .”—is here altered to “In Fig. 66”; § 7, last line but one, the small edition misprints “trust” for “thrust”; § 8, line 4, see p. 151 *n.*; § 13, line 15, “Pools” is here corrected to “Pool”; § 17, line 19, ed. 1 reads “Opposite” for “Facing page”; the Plate, however, was not there inserted, but at p. 343 (in this edition, p. 441). In the edition of 1873 and later (that place being retained) the necessary alteration in the text here was made; § 19, line 18, ed. 1873 misprinted “Wovermans”; § 19, last line, the words “the next range in level below these” are added from Ruskin’s proof for *Cæli Enarrant*.

Ch. iv. § 4, line 2, see p. 177 *n.*; § 15 *ad. fin.*, ed. 1 reads “conveyance” for “convergence”; § 16, line 6, “Slaver” (in all previous editions) is here corrected to “Slavers”; § 17, fourth line from end, see p. 189 *n.*

Part viii.—*Ch. i.* § 20, author’s footnotes, wrong references (in all previous editions) to Plato are here corrected; from “Phaedo 66” to “Phaedo 28,” and from “Phaedo 11” to “Phaedo 4.”

Ch. iii. § 4, in the quotation from Michelet a few misprints in all previous editions have here been corrected.

Ch. iv. § 6, line 3, eds. 1 and 1873 read correctly “of parts”; all later editions hitherto, “or parts.”

Part ix.—*Ch. ii.* § 9, line 6, see p. 267 *n.*; § 14 *n.*, ed. 1873 misprinted “Hess.” for “Hes.”; § 19 *n.*, ed. 1 reads “goon” for “noon.”

Ch. iii. § 10 *n.*, the reference to Herodotus (“i. 59” in all previous editions) has here been corrected to “i. 159.” Similarly the reference to *Hippias Major* has been corrected from 208 to 290 D.; § 33, line 15, “enchanter’s,” in ed. 1 and 1873, was in later editions incorrectly printed “enchanters’.”

Ch. v. § 11, three lines from end. Possessors of other editions should note that Ruskin gave a wrong reference to Vol. II., viz. “p. 151” (of the original editions), which should have been “p. 144”; the wrong reference was given in all successive editions. The right reference is to pt. iii. sec. ii. ch. ii. § 4. § 12, line 2, all editions hitherto have misprinted “carrying” for “causing” (in the MS.); § 17, line 6, eds. 1 and 1873 read “incomparably.”

Ch. vi. § 22, line 3, the small editions misprint “painter” for “painters”; line 29, ed. 1 reads “boating” for “boxing.”

Ch. vii. § 6, line 11, ed. 1 reads correctly “royalest”; all later editions misprint “royalist.”

Ch. viii. § 5, line 8, in eds. 1 and 1873 (and in the MS.) “Kishon”—an obvious slip of the pen for “Pison,” which was substituted in the edition of 1888. Kishon—though the scene of two famous incidents, the

defeat of Sisera and the destruction of the prophets of Baal by Elijah—is but a small torrent or winter-stream in Palestine. Pison is the first river of Paradise (Genesis ii. 11), and it is of Paradise that Ruskin is here speaking. § 13, lines 19–30, this passage has hitherto been wrongly enclosed in quotation marks.

Ch. ix. § 1, line 11, in the reprint of this passage in *The Stones of Venice* (see here, p. 375 *n.*) “emeralds” was printed for “emerald,” and in line 30 the reprint read, “. . . ether, a world,” etc. These were not revisions by Ruskin, but the inaccuracies of a secretary who copied the passage for the press.

Ch. x. § 14, in the first line of the quotation from Cary’s *Dante* all previous editions read “backing”; Cary wrote “backening,” which word is here substituted.

Ch. xi. § 18, line 29, the chapter from this point, down to the end of it, was reprinted by Ruskin in his *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (see Vol. XIII. p. 497). The passage there ran as follows: “Looking broadly, etc., . . . good for him” (§ 22). Then the footnote (here pp. 427–428) ran straight on in the text—“. . . good for him. I cannot repeat too often . . . for her mistress.” The main text then continued—“. . . for her mistress. I believe an immense gain (§ 23) . . . *Miroir des Paysans*” (end of § 24). The footnote (here p. 430) then ran straight on—“. . . *Miroir des Paysans*. This last book . . . its close.” The main text then continued—“. . . its close. How far this simple (§ 25) . . . vanity of human life” (§ 26). The footnote (here p. 431) then ran on in the text—“. . . of human life. The Cumæan Sibyl, . . . known only by her voice” (the quotation marks and the terminal words “(See my notes on the Turner Gallery)” being omitted. The text then resumed with a passage adapted from *ch. x.* § 8, thus—“. . . only by her voice. The Hesperid *Æglé* from whom this chapter is named, was the daughter of *Æsculapius*, by one of the daughters of the Sun. She is the healing power of Evening light. She is thus spoken of, with her three companions, *Hesperids* in the chapter on *Turner’s Garden!* Their names are, *Æglé*,—*Brightness*; *Erytheia*,—*Blushing*; *Hestia*,—the (spirit of the) *Hearth*; *Arethusa*,—the *Ministering*. O English reader! hast thou ever heard of these fair and true daughters of *Sunset beyond the Mighty Sea?*” § 26 is then resumed—“. . . the mighty sea. He painted these . . . ‘but together’ ” (§ 30). The footnote (here pp. 434–435) is then given as a continuation of the main text—“. . . ‘but together.’ *Turner* appears . . . would not tell me.” The text then continued (§ 30)—“The meaning of the entire . . . *Minos and Rhadamanthus*.” The footnote (here pp. 435–436) was then given in the main text, with some omissions referring to plates in *Modern Painters*, thus—“. . . *Minos and Rhadamanthus*. I limit myself in this book . . . designs he left.” Breaking off the footnote at this point, the text continued—“. . . designs he left. I need not trace (§ 31) . . . thread of *Atropos*.” The footnote (here pp. 437–439), again with some omissions, was then carried into the text, thus—“. . . thread of *Atropos*. I have not followed out . . . *Morgarten*.” The main text was then resumed (§ 31)—“. . . *Morgarten*. I will only point out, in conclusion, . . . enchanted voice of *Venice*.”

In the reprint Ruskin introduced some italics and added some footnotes; these are indicated in footnotes under the text of this volume: see pp. 425, 426, 428, 435. § 31, author's note, the references to "Plate 86" and "Plate 87" were first introduced in the edition of 1888 (see above); § 32, author's note, some misprints (which have occurred in all previous editions) in the quotation from Zanetti are now corrected.

The *headlines* in all editions hitherto have been the title of the chapter, both on the left-hand and right-hand pages, with the number of the Part in the corner of the former, that of the chapter in the corner of the latter.]

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME V

VII.

A

PREFACE

1. THE disproportion between the length of time occupied in the preparation of this volume, and the slightness of apparent result, is so vexatious to me, and must seem so strange to the reader, that he will perhaps bear with my stating some of the matters which have employed or interrupted me between 1855 and 1860.¹ I needed rest after finishing the fourth volume, and did little in the following summer. The winter of 1856 was spent in writing the *Elements of Drawing*, for which I thought there was immediate need; and in examining with more attention than they deserved, some of the modern theories of political economy, to which there was necessarily reference in my addresses at Manchester. The Manchester Exhibition then gave me some work, chiefly in its magnificent Reynolds' constellation;² and thence I went on into Scotland, to look at Dunblane and Jedburgh, and some other favourite sites of Turner's;³ which I had not all seen, when I received notice from Mr. Wornum that he had obtained for me permission, from the Trustees of the National Gallery, to arrange, as I thought best, the Turner drawings belonging to the nation; on which I returned to London immediately.

¹ [For further account of Ruskin's work, summarised in this paragraph, the reader may consult the Introductions to Vol. XIII. (Turner); Vol. XIV. (*Academy Notes*); Vol. XV. (*Elements of Drawing*); and Vol. XVI. (Manchester addresses on *Political Economy of Art*, etc.).]

² [For another reference to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, see Vol. XVI. p. 9. Nearly fifty pictures by Reynolds were in the Exhibition. They included a large number of portraits, and such famous pictures as "Robinetta" and "Mrs. Pelham feeding Chickens." One fruit of Ruskin's study was the paper on "Sir Joshua and Holbein" (*Cornhill Magazine*, March 1860), reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]

³ [For the tour in Scotland, see above, Introduction, pp. xxv.-xxvi.]

2. In seven tin boxes in the lower room of the National Gallery I found upwards of nineteen thousand pieces of paper, drawn upon by Turner in one way or another.¹ Many on both sides; some with four, five, or six subjects on each side (the pencil point digging spiritedly through from the foregrounds of the front into the tender pieces of sky on the back); some in chalk, which the touch of the finger would sweep away;* others in ink, rotted into holes; others (some splendid coloured drawings among them) long eaten away by damp and mildew, and falling into dust at the edges, in capes and bays of fragile decay; others wormeaten, some mouse-eaten, many torn, half-way through; numbers doubled (quadrupled, I should say,) up into four, being Turner's favourite mode of packing for travelling; nearly all rudely flattened out from the bundles in which Turner had finally rolled them up and squeezed them into his drawers in Queen Anne Street. Dust of thirty years' accumulation, black, dense, and sooty, lay in the rents of the crushed and crumpled edges of these flattened bundles, looking like a jagged black frame, and producing altogether unexpected effects in brilliant portions of skies, whence an accidental or experimental finger mark of the first bundle-unfolder had swept it away.

About half, or rather more, of the entire number consisted of pencil sketches, in flat oblong pocket-books, dropping to pieces at the back, tearing laterally whenever opened, and every drawing rubbing itself into the one opposite. These first I paged with my own hand; then unbound; and laid every leaf separately in a clean sheet of perfectly smooth

* The best book of studies for his great shipwrecks contained about a quarter of a pound of chalk débris, black and white, broken off the crayons with which Turner had drawn furiously on both sides of the leaves; every leaf, with peculiar foresight, and consideration of difficulties to be met by future mounters, containing half of one subject on the front of it, and half of another on the back.

¹ [The MS. gives the precise number as 19,723; the official report gives it as 19,331 (see *Report of the Director of the National Gallery*, 1857, p. 38). For particulars of the work here described by Ruskin, compare Vol. XIII. pp. xxxi.-xxxix., 185-345.]

writing paper, so that it might receive no farther injury. Then, enclosing the contents and boards of each book (usually ninety-two leaves, more or less drawn on both sides, with two sketches on the boards at the beginning and end,) in a separate sealed packet, I returned it to its tin box. The loose sketches needed more trouble. The dust had first to be got off them; (from the chalk ones it could only be blown off;) then they had to be variously flattened; the torn ones to be laid down, the loveliest guarded, so as to prevent all future friction; and four hundred of the most characteristic framed and glazed, and cabinets constructed for them which would admit of their free use by the public. With two assistants,¹ I was at work all the autumn and winter of 1857, every day, all day long, and often far into the night.

3. The manual labour would not have hurt me; but the excitement involved in seeing unfolded the whole career of Turner's mind during his life,² joined with much sorrow at the state in which nearly all his most precious work had been left, and with great anxiety, and heavy sense of responsibility besides, were very trying; and I have never in my life felt so much exhausted as when I locked the last box, and gave the keys to Mr. Wornum, in May, 1858. Among the later coloured sketches, there was one magnificent series, which appeared to be of some towns along the course of the Rhine on the north of Switzerland. Knowing that these towns were peculiarly liable to be injured by modern railroad works, I thought I might rest myself by hunting down these Turner subjects, and sketching what I could of them, in order to illustrate his compositions.

As I expected, the subjects in question were all on or near that east and west reach of the Rhine between Constance and Basle. Most of them are of Rheinfelden, Säkingen, Lauffenburg, Schaffhausen, and the Swiss Baden.³

¹ [Mr. George Allen and Mr. William Ward.]

² [Compare Ruskin's letter to his father, cited in Vol. XIII. p. 555 *n.*]

³ [For Ruskin's notes on some of these drawings, written before he had identified the places, see Vol. XIII. pp. 221, 222.]

4. Having made what notes were possible to me of these subjects in the summer (one or two are used in this volume¹), I was crossing Lombardy in order to examine some points of the shepherd character in the Vaudois valleys, thinking to get my book finished next spring; when I unexpectedly found some good Paul Veroneses at Turin.² There were several questions respecting the real motives of Venetian work that still troubled me not a little, and which I had intended to work out in the Louvre; but seeing that Turin was a good place wherein to keep out of people's way, I settled there instead, and began with Veronese's Queen of Sheba;—when, with much consternation, but more delight, I found that I had never got to the roots of the moral power of the Venetians, and that they needed still another and a very stern course of study.³ There was nothing for it but to give up the book for that year. The winter was spent mainly in trying to get at the mind of Titian; not a light winter's task; of which the issue, being in many ways very unexpected to me (the reader will find it partly told towards the close of this volume⁴), necessitated my going in the spring to Berlin, to see Titian's portrait of Lavinia there, and to Dresden to see the Tribute Money, the elder Lavinia, and girl in white, with the flag fan. Another portrait, at Dresden, of a lady in a dress of rose and gold, by me unheard of before, and one of an admiral, at Munich, had like to have kept me in Germany all summer.⁵

¹ [On Rheinfelden, see below, pp. 436–437 *nn.*; on Lauffenburg, p. 223; on Schaffhausen, p. 221.]

² [Compare Vol. XVI. pp. xxxvii., 185; and see above, Introduction, p. xxxviii.]

³ [See the Introduction, above, pp. xxxix.-xli.]

⁴ [See Part ix. ch. iii.]

⁵ [For Titian's "Lavinias" at Berlin and Dresden respectively, see below, p. 117. The "girl in white with a flag fan" is also a portrait of the painter's daughter, Lavinia—as a bride, the fan in the form of a little flag being carried in Venice by newly betrothed brides (see Morelli's *Italian Masters in German Galleries*, 1883, p. 174). The portrait of "a lady in a dress of rose and gold" is also by Titian; see below, p. 490. The "portrait of an Admiral" at Munich, once attributed to Titian, is a life-size portrait of the Grand Admiral Luigi Grimani, standing; he has only one eye; he wears a long red mantle over his armour, and holds a staff in his right hand. The picture is ascribed in the catalogue of the Gallery to the "school of Tintoretto."]

5. Getting home at last, and having put myself to arrange materials of which it was not easy, after so much interruption, to recover the command;—which also were now not reducible to a single volume—two questions occurred in the outset, one in the section on vegetation, respecting the origin of wood; the other in the section on sea, respecting curves of waves; to neither of which, from botanists or mathematicians, any sufficient answer seemed obtainable.

In other respects also the section on the sea was wholly unsatisfactory to me: I knew little of ships, nothing of blue open water. Turner's pathetic interest in the sea, and his inexhaustible knowledge of shipping, deserved more complete and accurate illustration than was at all possible to me; and the mathematical difficulty lay at the beginning of all demonstration of facts. I determined to do this piece of work well, or not at all, and threw the proposed section out of this volume. If I ever am able to do what I want with it (and this is barely probable), it will be a separate book;¹ which on other accounts, I do not regret, since many persons might be interested in studies of the shipping of the old Nelson times, and of the sea-waves and sailor character of all times, who would not care to encumber themselves with five volumes of a work on Art.

The vegetation question had, however, at all cost, to be made out as best might be; and again cost me much time. Many of the results of this inquiry, also, can only be given, if ever, in a detached form.²

6. During these various discouragements, the preparation of the Plates could not go on prosperously. Drawing is difficult enough, undertaken in quietness: it is impossible to bring it to any point of fine rightness with half-applied energy.

Many experiments were made in hope of expressing

¹ [For a fragmentary outline of Ruskin's scheme, see below, Appendix II. 4, p. 484. No other MSS. dealing with this proposed portion of the work have been found among Ruskin's papers.]

² [An intention partially carried out many years later in *Proserpina*: see also the lecture on "Tree Twigs" in Appendix I.; below, p. 467.]

Turner's peculiar execution and touch by facsimile. They cost time, and strength, and, for the present, have failed; many elaborate drawings, made during the winter of 1858, having been at last thrown aside.¹ Some good may afterwards come of these; but certainly not by reduction to the size of the page of this book, for which, even of smaller subjects, I have not prepared the most interesting, for I do not wish the possession of any effective and valuable engravings from Turner to be contingent on the purchasing a book of mine.*

Feebly and faultfully, therefore, yet as well as I can do it under these discouragements, the book is at last done; respecting the general course of which, it will be kind and well if the reader will note these few points that follow.

7. The first volume was the expansion of a reply to a magazine article;² and was not begun because I then thought myself qualified to write a systematic treatise on Art; but because I at least knew, and knew it to be demonstrable, that Turner was right and true, and that his critics were wrong, false, and base. At that time I had seen much of nature, and had been several times in Italy, wintering once in Rome; but had chiefly delighted in northern art, beginning, when a mere boy, with Rubens and Rembrandt.

* To Mr. Armytage, Mr. Cuff, and Mr. Cousen, I have to express my sincere thanks for the patience, and my sincere admiration of the skill, with which they have helped me. Their patience, especially, has been put to severe trial by the rewardless toil required to produce facsimiles of drawings in which the slightness of subject could never attract any due notice to the excellence of workmanship.

Aid, just as disinterested, and deserving of as earnest acknowledgment, has been given me by Miss Byfield, in her faultless facsimiles of my careless sketches; by Miss O. Hill, who prepared the copies which I required from portions of the pictures of the old masters; and by Mr. G. Allen, in accurate line studies from nature, of which, though only two are engraved in this volume,³ many others have been most serviceable both to it and to me.

¹ [On this subject, see a letter to Dr. John Brown cited in the Introduction to Vol. XVII.; and compare in this volume pp. 56, 128, 156–157, 204, 401 *n.*]

² [See Vol. III. pp. xviii., 635 *seq.*]

³ [Namely, Plates 52 and 58. For Armytage and Cuff, see Vol. IX. p. 1. John Cousen (1804–1880) was much employed by Turner. For Miss Byfield, see Vol. V. pp. lxii., 12; for Miss Octavia Hill, Vol. XV. p. 134 *n.*]

It was long before I got quit of a boy's veneration for Rubens' physical art-power; and the reader will, perhaps, on this ground forgive the strong expressions of admiration for Rubens, which, to my great regret, occur in the first volume.¹

Finding myself, however, engaged seriously in the essay, I went, before writing the second volume, to study in Italy; where the strong reaction from the influence of Rubens threw me at first too far under that of Angelico and Raphael; and, which was the worst harm that came of that Rubens influence, blinded me long to the deepest qualities of Venetian art; which, the reader may see by expressions occurring not only in the second, but even in the third and fourth volumes, I thought, however powerful, yet partly luxurious and sensual, until I was led into the final inquiries above related.

8. These oscillations of temper, and progressions of discovery, extending over a period of seventeen years, ought not to diminish the reader's confidence in the book. Let him be assured of this, that unless important changes are occurring in his opinions continually, all his life long, not one of those opinions can be on any questionable subject true. All true opinions are living, and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change. But their change is that of a tree—not of a cloud.

In the main aim and principle of the book, there is no variation, from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with, or subjection to that. And it differs from most books, and has a chance

¹ [Ruskin's first visit to Italy was in 1833 (see Vol. I. p. xxix., and for his admiration of Rubens, Vol. II. pp. 351–352); his second, in 1835 (Vol. II. p. 395). For the winter in Rome (1841–1842), see Vol. III. pp. xx., xxi. For some of "the strong expressions of admiration for Rubens," see *ibid.*, pp. 124, 187, 276, 290. See also *Præterita*, ii. §§ 101, 104. The study in Italy preparatory to the second volume of *Modern Painters* is described in Vol. IV. pp. xxiv.-xxxix. For some of the passages referred to on Angelico and Raphael, and the Venetian School, see Vol. IV. pp. 321–322 (Angelico and Raphael), pp. 85–86, 195 (Venetians); Vol. V. p. 93; Vol. VI. p. 432.]

of being in some respects better for the difference, in that it has not been written either for fame, or for money, or for conscience-sake, but of necessity.

It has not been written for praise. Had I wished to gain present reputation, by a little flattery adroitly used in some places, a sharp word or two withheld in others, and the substitution of verbiage generally for investigation, I could have made the circulation of these volumes tenfold what it has been in modern society. Had I wished for future fame I should have written one volume, not five. Also, it has not been written for money. In this wealth-producing country, seventeen years' labour could hardly have been invested with less chance of equivalent return.

Also, it has not been written for conscience-sake. I had no definite hope in writing it; still less any sense of its being required of me as a duty. It seems to me, and seemed always, probable, that I might have done much more good in some other way. But it has been written of necessity. I saw an injustice done, and tried to remedy it. I heard falsehood taught, and was compelled to deny it. Nothing else was possible to me. I knew not how little or how much might come of the business, or whether I was fit for it; but here was the lie full set in front of me, and there was no way round it, but only over it. So that, as the work changed like a tree, it was also rooted like a tree—not where it would, but where need was; on which, if any fruit grow such as you can like, you are welcome to gather it without thanks; and so far as it is poor or bitter, it will be your justice to refuse it without reviling.

PART VI
OF LEAF BEAUTY

CHAPTER I

THE EARTH-VEIL

§ 1. “To dress it and to keep it.”

That, then, was to be our work. Alas! what work have we set ourselves upon instead! How have we ravaged the garden instead of kept it—feeding out war-horses with its flowers, and splintering its trees into spear-shafts!

“And at the East a flaming sword.”¹

Is its flame quenchless? and are those gates that keep the way indeed passable no more? or is it not rather that we no more desire to enter? For what can we conceive of that first Eden which we might not yet win back, if we chose? It was a place full of flowers, we say. Well: the flowers are always striving to grow wherever we suffer them; and the fairer, the closer. There may, indeed, have been a Fall of Flowers, as a Fall of Man; but assuredly creatures such as we are can now fancy nothing lovelier than roses and lilies, which would grow for us side by side, leaf overlapping leaf, till the Earth was white and red with them, if we cared to have it so. And Paradise was full of pleasant shades and fruitful avenues. Well: what hinders us from covering as much of the world as we like with pleasant shade, and pure blossom, and goodly fruit? Who forbids its valleys to be covered over with corn till they laugh and sing? Who prevents its dark forests, ghostly and uninhabitable, from being changed into infinite orchards, wreathing the hills with frail-floreted snow, far away to the half-lighted horizon of April, and flushing the face of all the autumnal earth with glow of clustered food? But Paradise

¹ [Genesis ii. 15; iii. 24.]

was a place of peace, we say, and all the animals were gentle servants to us. Well: the world would yet be a place of peace if we were all peacemakers, and gentle service should we have of its creatures if we gave them gentle mastery. But so long as we make sport of slaying bird and beast,¹ so long as we choose to contend rather with our fellows than with our faults, and make battlefield of our meadows instead of pasture—so long, truly, the Flaming Sword will still turn every way, and the gates of Eden remain barred close enough, till we have sheathed the sharper flame of our own passions, and broken down the closer gates of our own hearts.

§ 2. I have been led to see and feel this more and more, as I considered the service which the flowers and trees, which man was at first appointed to keep, were intended to render to him in return for his care; and the services they still render to him, as far as he allows their influence, or fulfils his own task towards them. For what infinite wonderfulness there is in this vegetation, considered, as indeed it is, [as] the means by which the earth becomes the companion of man—his friend and his teacher! In the conditions which we have traced in its rocks, there could only be seen preparation for his existence;—the characters which enable him to live on it safely, and to work with it easily—in all these it has been inanimate and passive; but vegetation is to it as an imperfect soul, given to meet the soul of man. The earth in its depths must remain dead and cold, incapable except of slow crystalline change; but at its surface,² which human beings look upon and deal with, it ministers to them through a veil of strange intermediate being: which breathes, but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its

¹ [On this subject, see below, pp. 340–341.]

² [The following passage was much rewritten; the first draft stood thus:—

“. . . ; but at its surface, when human beings are to touch and look upon it, it is permitted to minister to them through a veil of strange intermediate being; and the plant, with its root in the cold rock, and the rough and strange substance that has life without consciousness, death without bitterness, is neither alive nor dead, which moves and cannot leave its appointed place: has this message of life and death—a youth without expectation, and age without sorrow.”]

appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty of youth, without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age, without its regret.

§ 3. And in this mystery of intermediate being, entirely subordinate to us, with which we can deal as we choose, having just the greater power as we have the less responsibility for our treatment of the unsuffering creature, most of the pleasures which we need from the external world are gathered, and most of the lessons we need are written,¹ all kinds of precious grace and teaching being united in this link between the Earth and Man; wonderful in universal adaptation to his need, desire, and discipline; God's daily preparation of the earth for him, with beautiful means of life. First, a carpet to make it soft for him; then, a coloured fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun heat, and shade also the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss.

¹ [Ruskin here curtailed in revising. The MS. has the following additional passage:—

“. . . are written. Animals are wayward teachers; we cannot always tell what they are meant to say to us; it looks as if the bee rather overdid her pattern things of industry: and one would be glad if the sheep were a little more intelligent in her innocence, and knew a little better what she was about. But a tree can do no wrong, cannot fall short in any way of being what it ought to be: if it fails in any wise, we know it is its misfortune, not its fault: and we can learn of it nothing but the truth and right, under any circumstances. So also we need not be under any troublesome remorse in putting it to our service. We may ill-treat it, forget it, starve it, overwork it, and yet have no weight of misery laid at our door, and if we waste its goodness, we shall in the end suffer for it ourselves only, which it is satisfactory to generous people to know—when they have ill-treated any creatures. And the more we think of it, the more wonderful appears this link between the Earth and Man; wonderful in its universal adaptation to his need, desire, and discipline. To his need—for it is his food, his clothing, his shade, and his heat. Of serviceable animals, those are most necessary to him which feed most on plants—which are, in fact, little more than vital transferring powers, turning the pasture into milk, or refining the mulberry leaf into thread. But supposing no animals existed at all, so long as man has corn, wine, fruit, flax, cotton, and wood, of which coal is only a compressed and undecaying form, his life is possible to him, and may be pleasurable. Plants are, in fact, the visible, beautiful means of life—God's preparation of the Earth before him daily. First, a carpet . . .”]

Stout wood to bear this leafage: easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him, or instruments (lanceshaft, or plough-handle, according to his temper); useless it had been, if harder; useless, if less fibrous; useless, if less elastic. Winter comes, and the shade of leafage falls away, to let the sun warm the earth; the strong boughs remain, breaking the strength of winter winds. The seeds which are to prolong the race, innumerable according to the need, are made beautiful and palatable, varied into infinitude of appeal to the fancy of man, or provision for his service: cold juice, or glowing spice, or balm, or incense, softening oil, preserving resin, medicine of styptic, febrifuge, or lulling charm: and all these presented in forms of endless change. Fragility or force, softness and strength, in all degrees and aspects; unerring uprightness, as of temple pillars, or unguided wandering of feeble tendrils on the ground; mighty resistances of rigid arm and limb to the storms of ages, or wavings to and fro with faintest pulse of summer streamlet. Roots cleaving the strength of rock, or binding the transience of the sand; crests basking in sunshine of the desert, or hiding by dripping spring and lightless cave; foliage far tossing in entangled fields beneath every wave of ocean—clothing, with variegated, everlasting films, the peaks of the trackless mountains, or ministering at cottage doors to every gentlest passion and simplest joy of humanity.

§ 4. Being thus prepared for us in all ways, and made beautiful, and good for food, and for building, and for instruments of our hands, this race of plants, deserving boundless affection and admiration from us, becomes, in proportion to their obtaining it, a nearly perfect test of our being in right temper of mind and way of life; so that no one can be far wrong in either who loves the trees enough, and every one is assuredly wrong in both who does not love them, if his life has brought them in his way. It is clearly possible to do without them, for the great companionship of the sea and sky are all that sailors need; and many a noble heart has been taught the best it had to learn between

dark stone walls. Still if human life be cast among trees at all, the love borne to them is a sure test of its purity. And it is a sorrowful proof of the mistaken ways of the world that the “country,” in the simple sense of a place of fields and trees, has hitherto been the source of reproach to its inhabitants, and that the words “countryman, rustic, clown, paysan, villager,” still signify a rude and untaught person, as opposed to the words “townsman” and “citizen.”¹ We accept this usage of words, or the evil which it signifies, somewhat too quietly; as if it were quite necessary and natural that country-people should be rude, and townspeople gentle. Whereas I believe that the result of each mode of life may, in some stages of the world’s progress, be the exact reverse; and that another use of words may be forced upon us by a new aspect of facts, so that we may find ourselves saying: “Such and such a person is very gentle and kind—he is quite rustic; and such and such another person is very rude and ill-taught—he is quite urbane.”

§ 5. At all events, cities have hitherto gained the better part of their good report through our evil ways of going on in the world generally; chiefly and eminently through our bad habit of fighting with each other. No field, in the Middle Ages, being safe from devastation, and every country lane yielding easier passage to the marauders, peacefully-minded men necessarily congregated in cities, and walled themselves in, making as few cross-country roads as possible: while the men who sowed and reaped the harvests of Europe were only the servants or slaves of the barons. The disdain of all agricultural pursuits by the nobility, and of all plain facts by the monks, kept educated Europe in a state of mind over which natural phenomena could have no power; body and intellect being lost in the practice of war without purpose, and the meditation of words without meaning. Men learned the dexterity with sword and syllogism, which they

¹ [In writing to his father from Lucerne (October 28, 1861) Ruskin says:

“In the first chapter of my fifth volume, in speaking of the names of country people which have a reproachful signification, I believe I missed ‘villain.’ It should be put in the margin.”]

mistook for education, within cloister and tilt-yard; and looked on all the broad space of the world of God mainly as a place for exercise of horses, or for growth of food.

§ 6. There is a beautiful type of this neglect of the perfectness of the Earth's beauty, by reason of the passions of men, in that picture of Paul Uccello's of the battle of Sant' Egidio,* in which the armies meet on a country road beside a hedge of wild roses; the tender red flowers tossing above the helmets, and glowing between the lowered lances. For in like manner the whole of Nature only shone hitherto for man between the tossing of helmet-crests; and sometimes I cannot but think of the trees of the earth as capable of a kind of sorrow,¹ in that imperfect life of theirs, as they opened their innocent leaves in the warm springtime, in vain for men; and all along the dells of England her beeches cast their dappled shade only where the outlaw drew his bow, and the king rode his careless chase; and by the sweet French rivers their long ranks of poplar waved in the twilight, only to show the flames of burning cities on the horizon, through the tracery of their stems; amidst the fair defiles of the Apennines, the twisted olivetrunks hid the ambushes of treachery; and on their valley meadows, day by day, the lilies which were white at the dawn were washed with crimson at sunset.

§ 7. And indeed I had once purposed, in this work, to show² what kind of evidence existed respecting the possible influence of country life on men; it seeming to me, then, likely that here and there a reader would perceive this to

* In our own National Gallery. It is quaint and imperfect, but of great interest.³

¹ [Compare *Time and Tide*, § 166, where Ruskin quotes this "dreaming fancy of long ago."]

² [The first draft reads:—

"§ 7. Thus far I had written long ago; it then presenting itself strongly to my mind, as an integral part of my task, to show . . ."]

³ [No. 583. The picture has been supposed to represent the battle of Sant' Egidio, July 7, 1416, in which Carlo Malatesta and his nephew, Galeazzo, were taken prisoners by Braccio di Montone, Lord of Perugia; but this identification of the subject is open to some doubt (see an article in the *Monthly Review*, October 1901). Ruskin refers again to the picture below (p. 368).]

be a grave question, more than most which we contend about, political or social, and might care to follow it out with me earnestly.

The day will assuredly come when men will see that it *is* a grave question; at which period, also, I doubt not, there will arise persons able to investigate it. For the present, the movements of the world seem little likely to be influenced by botanical law; or by any other considerations respecting trees, than the probable price of timber.¹ I shall limit myself, therefore, to my own simple woodman's work, and try to hew this book into its final shape, with the limited and humble aim that I had in beginning it, namely, to prove how far the idle and peaceable persons, who have hitherto cared about leaves and clouds, have rightly seen, or faithfully reported of them.

¹ [Here, again, the first draft is different:—

“. . . price of timber. Having been now three years diverted from my work, and had occasion in the meantime to examine into a few of the mainsprings of the world's motions, I perceive that those motions are by no means likely to be influenced by Vegetation—nor by any considerations arising out of the contemplation of it. The world will probably for a few years set little store by any sort of leaves; and by leaves of the tree of life, least of all; and will accordingly gather not many, needing rather for its healthy medicine—it may cheerfully be hoped—leaves of nettle and thistle than such as are for the healing of the nations.”

These passages are of value in fixing the date of composition; see above, Introduction, p. lvii.]

CHAPTER II

THE LEAF-ORDERS

§ 1. As in our sketch of the structure of mountains it seemed advisable to adopt a classification of their forms, which, though inconsistent with absolute scientific precision, was convenient for order of successive inquiry, and gave useful largeness of view;¹ so, and with yet stronger reason, in glancing at the first laws of vegetable life, it will be best to follow an arrangement easily remembered and broadly true, however incapable of being carried out into entirely consistent detail. I say, “with yet stronger reason,” because more questions are at issue among botanists than among geologists; a greater number of classifications have been suggested for plants than for rocks; nor is it unlikely that those now accepted may be hereafter modified. I take an arrangement, therefore, involving no theory; serviceable enough for all working purposes, and sure to remain thus serviceable, in its rough generality, whatever views may hereafter be developed among botanists.

§ 2. A child’s division of plants is into “trees and flowers.” If, however, we were to take him in spring, after he had gathered his lapful of daisies, from the lawn into the orchard, and ask him how he would call those wreaths of richer floret, whose frail petals tossed their foam of promise between him and the sky, he would at once see the need of some intermediate name, and call them, perhaps, “tree-flowers.” If, then, we took him to a birch-wood, and showed him that catkins were flowers, as well as cherry-blossoms, he might, with a little help, reach so far as to divide all flowers into two classes; one, those that grew

¹ [See Vol. VI. pp. 128–133.]

on ground; and another, those that grew on trees. The botanist might smile at such a division; but an artist would not. To him, as to the child, there is something specific and distinctive in those rough trunks that carry the higher flowers. To him, it makes the main difference between one plant and another, whether it is to tell as a light upon the ground, or as a shade upon the sky. And if, after this, we asked for a little help from the botanist, and he were to lead us, leaving the blossoms, to look more carefully at leaves and buds, we should find ourselves able in some sort to justify, even to him, our childish classification. For our present purposes, justifiable or not, it is the most suggestive and convenient. Plants are, indeed, broadly referable to two great classes. The first we may, perhaps, not inexpediently call TENTED PLANTS.¹ They live in encampments, on the ground, as lilies; or on surfaces of rock, or stems of other plants, as lichens and mosses. They live—some for a year, some for many years, some for myriads of years; but, perishing, they pass as the tented Arab passes; they leave *no memorials of themselves*,² except the seed, or bulb, or root which is to perpetuate the race.

§ 3. The other great class of plants we may perhaps best call BUILDING PLANTS. These will *not* live on the ground, but eagerly raise edifices above it. Each works hard with solemn forethought all its life. Perishing, it leaves its work in the form which will be most useful to its successors—its own monument, and their inheritance. These architectural edifices we call “Trees.”

It may be thought that this nomenclature already involves a theory. But I care about neither the nomenclature, nor about anything questionable in my description of the classes. The reader is welcome to give them what names he likes, and to render what account of them he thinks fittest. But to us, as artists, or lovers of art, this

¹ [In the MS. Ruskin had called them “Ground Plants,” living “either on the ground or on surfaces which are ground to them, as lichens . . .”]

² [See Ecclesiasticus xliv. 9.]

is the first and most vital question concerning a plant: "Has it a fixed form or a changing one? Shall I find it always as I do to-day—this *Parnassia palustris*—with one leaf and one flower? or may it some day have incalculable pomp of leaves and unmeasured treasure of flowers? Will it rise only to the height of a man—as an ear of corn—and perish like a man; or will it spread its boughs to the sea and branches to the river,¹ and enlarge its circle of shade in heaven for a thousand years?"

§ 4. This, I repeat, is the *first* question I ask the plant. And as it answers, I range it on one side or the other, among those that rest or those that toil; tent-dwellers, who toil not, neither do they spin;² or tree-builders, whose days are as the days of a people. I find again, on farther questioning these plants who rest, that one group of them does indeed rest always, contentedly, on the ground, but that those of another group, more ambitious, emulate the builders; and though they cannot build rightly, raise for themselves pillars out of the remains of past generations, on which they themselves, living the life of St. Simeon Stylites, are called, by courtesy, Trees; being, in fact, many of them (palms, for instance) quite as stately as real trees.*

These two classes we might call earth-plants, and pillar-plants.

§ 5. Again, in questioning the true builders as to their modes of work, I find that they also are divisible into two great classes. Without in the least wishing the reader to accept the fanciful nomenclature, I think he may yet most

* I am not sure that this is a fair account of palms. I have never had opportunity of studying stems of *Endogens*, and I cannot understand the descriptions given of them in books, nor do I know how far some of their branched conditions approximate to real tree-structure. If this work, whatever errors it may involve, provokes the curiosity of the reader so as to lead him to seek for more and better knowledge, it will do all the service I hope from it.

¹ [Psalm lxxx. 11.]

² [Matthew vi. 28.]

conveniently remember these as “Builders with the shield,” and “Builders with the sword.”

Builders with the shield have expanded leaves, more or less resembling shields, partly in shape, but still more in office; for under their lifted shadow the young bud of the next year is kept from harm. These are the gentlest of the builders, and live in pleasant places, providing food and shelter for man. Builders with the sword, on the contrary, have sharp leaves in the shape of swords, and the young buds, instead of being as numerous as the leaves, crouching each under a leaf-shadow, are few in number, and grow fearlessly, each in the midst of a sheaf of swords. These builders live in savage places, are sternly dark in colour, and though they give much help to man by their merely physical strength, they (with few exceptions) give him no food, and imperfect shelter. Their mode of building is ruder than that of the shield-builders, and they in many ways resemble the pillar-plants of the opposite order. We call them generally “Pines.”

§ 6. Our work, in this section, will lie only among the shield-builders, sword-builders, and plants of rest. The Pillar-plants belong, for the most part, to other climates. I could not analyze them rightly: and the labour given to them would be comparatively useless for our present purposes. The chief mystery of vegetation, so far as respects external form, is among the fair shield-builders. These, at least, we must examine fondly and earnestly.

CHAPTER III

THE BUD

§ 1. IF you gather, in summer time, an outer spray of any shield-leaved tree, you will find it consists of a slender rod, throwing out leaves, perhaps on every side, perhaps on two sides only, with usually a cluster of closer leaves at the end. In order to understand its structure, we must reduce it to a simple general type. Nay, even to a very inaccurate type. For a tree-branch is essentially a complex thing, and no "simple" type can, therefore, be a right one.

§ 2. This type I am going to give you is full of fallacies and inaccuracies; but out of these fallacies we will bring the truth by casting them aside one by one.

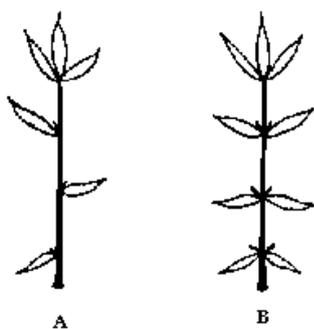


Fig. 1

Let the tree spray be represented under one of these two types, A or B, Fig. 1, the cluster at the end being in each case supposed to consist of three leaves only (a most impertinent supposition, for it must at least have four, only the fourth would be in a puzzling perspective in A, and hidden behind the central leaf in B). So, receive this false type patiently. When leaves are set on the stalk one after another as in A, they are called "alternate"; when placed as in B, "opposite." It is necessary you should remember this not very difficult piece of nomenclature.

If you examine the branch you have gathered, you will see that for some little way below the full-leaf cluster at

the end, the stalk is smooth, and the leaves are set regularly on it. But at six, eight, or ten inches down, there comes an awkward knot; something seems to have gone wrong, perhaps another spray branches off there; at all events, the stem gets suddenly thicker, and you may break it there (probably) easier than anywhere else.

That is the junction of two stories of the building. The smooth piece has all been done this summer. At the knot the foundation was left during the winter.

The year's work is called a "shoot." I shall be glad if you will break it off to look at, as my A and B types are supposed to go no farther down than the knot.

The alternate form A is more frequent than B, and some botanists think includes B. We will, therefore, begin with it.

§ 3. If you look close at the figure, you will see small projecting points at the roots of the leaves. These represent buds, which you may find, most probably, in the shoot you have in your hand. Whether you find them or not, they are there—visible, or latent, does not matter. Every leaf has assuredly an infant bud to take care of, laid tenderly, as in a cradle, just where the leaf-stalk forms a safe niche between it and the main stem. The child-bud is thus fondly guarded all summer; but its protecting leaf dies in the autumn; and then the boy-bud is put out to rough winter-schooling, by which he is prepared for personal entrance into public life in the spring.

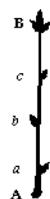


Fig. 2

Let us suppose autumn to have come, and the leaves to have fallen. Then our A of Fig. 1, the buds only being left, one for each leaf, will appear as A B, in Fig. 2. We will call the buds grouped at B, terminal buds, and those at *a*, *b*, and *c*, lateral buds.

This budded rod is the true year's work of the building plant, at that part of its edifice. You may consider the little spray, if you like, as one pinnacle of the tree-cathedral, which has taken a year to fashion; innumerable

other pinnacles having been built at the same time on other branches.

§ 4. Now, every one of these buds, *a*, *b*, and *c*, as well as every terminal bud, has the power and disposition to raise himself, in the spring, into just such another pinnacle as A B is.

This development is the process we have mainly to study in this chapter; but, in the outset, let us see clearly what it is to end in.

Each bud, I said, has the power and disposition to make a pinnacle of himself, but he has not always the opportunity. What

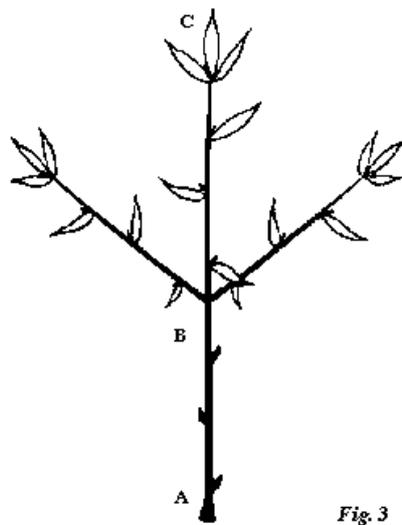


Fig. 3

may hinder him we shall see presently. Meantime, the reader will, perhaps, kindly allow me to assume that the buds *a*, *b*, and *c*, come to nothing, and only the three terminal ones build forward. Each of these producing the image of the first pinnacle, we have the type for our next summer bough of Fig. 3; in which observe the original shoot A B has become thicker; its lateral buds having proved abortive, are now only seen as

little knobs on its sides. Its terminal buds have each risen into a new pinnacle. The central or strongest one, B C, has become the very image of what his parent shoot, A B, was last year. The two lateral ones are weaker and shorter, one probably longer than the other. The joint at B is the knot or foundation for each shoot above spoken of.

Knowing now what we are about, we will go into closer detail.

§ 5. Let us return to the type in Fig. 2, of the fully accomplished summer's work: the rod with its bare buds.

Plate 51,¹ opposite, represents, of about half its real size, an outer spray of oak in winter. It is not growing strongly, and is as simple as possible in ramification. You may easily see, in each branch, the continuous piece of shoot produced last year. The wrinkles which make these shoots look like old branches are caused by drying, as the stalk of a bunch of raisins is furrowed (the oak-shoot fresh gathered is round as a grape stalk). I draw them thus, because the furrows are important clues to structure. Fig. 4 is the top of one of these oak sprays magnified for reference. The little brackets, *x*, *y*, etc., which project beneath each bud and sustain it, are the remains of the leaf-stalks. Those stalks were jointed at that place, and the leaves fell without leaving a scar, only a crescent-shaped, somewhat blank-looking flat space, which you may study at your ease on a horse-chestnut stem, where the spaces are very large.

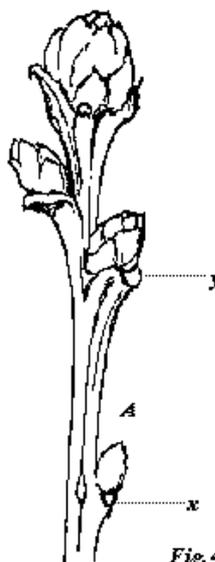


Fig. 4

§ 6. Now, if you cut your oak spray neatly through, just above a bud, as at *A*, Fig. 4, and look at it with a not very powerful magnifier, you will find it present the pretty section, Fig. 5.



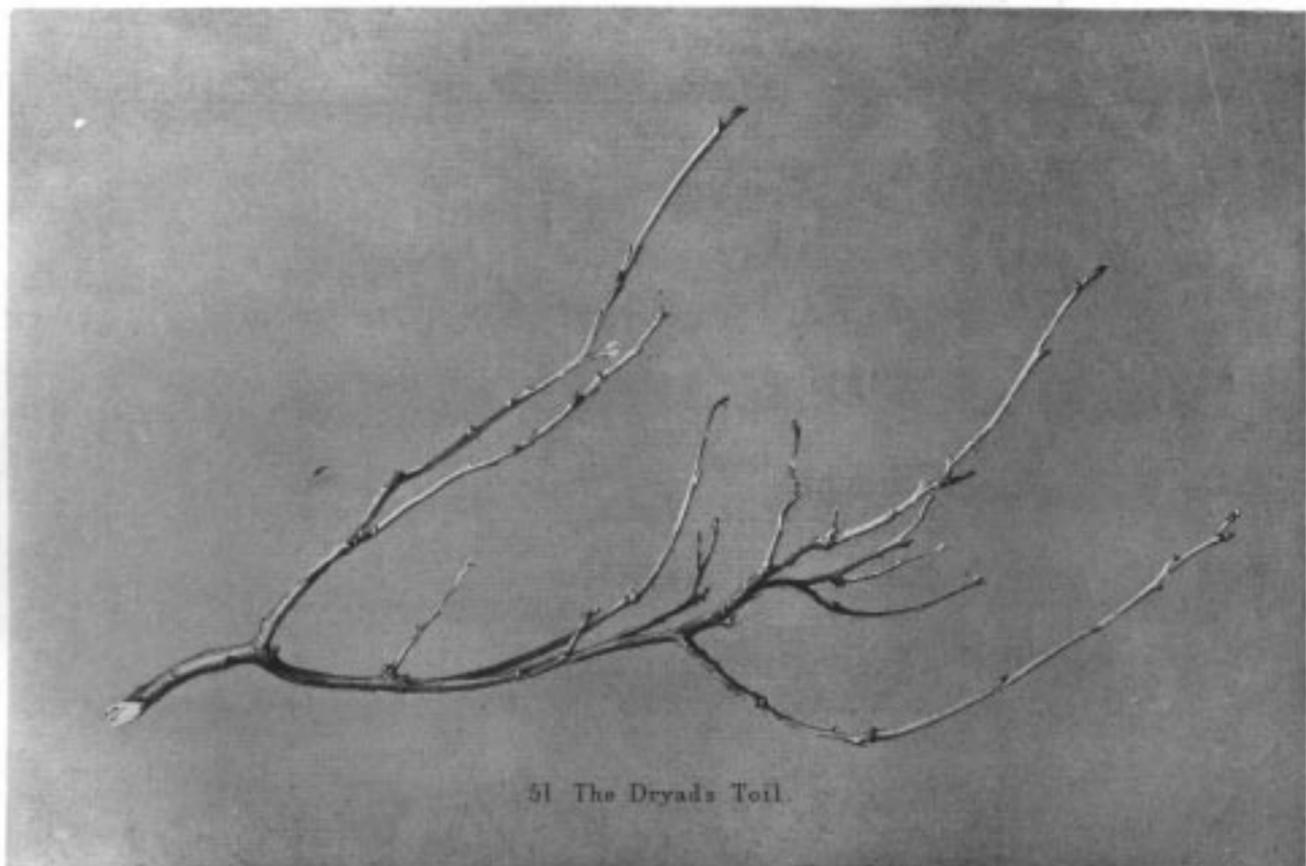
Fig. 5

That is the proper or normal section of an oak spray. Never quite regular. Sure to have one of the projections a little larger than the rest, and to have its bark (the black line) not quite regularly put round it, but exquisitely finished, down to a little white star in the very centre, which I

have not drawn, because it would look in the woodcut black, not white; and be too conspicuous.

The oak spray, however, will not keep this form unchanged for an instant. Cut it through a little way above your first

¹ [For a note on this Plate, see Vol. XV. p. xxiii. *n.*]



51 The Dryads Toil.

section, and you will find the largest projection is increasing till, just where it opens* at last into the leaf-stalk, its section is Fig. 6. If, therefore, you choose to consider every interval between bud



Fig. 6

and bud as one story of your tower or pinnacle, you find that there is literally not a hair's-breadth of the work in which the *plan* of the tower does not change. You may see in Plate 51 that every shoot is affected by a subtle (in nature an *infinitely* subtle) change of contour between bud and bud.

§ 7. But farther, observe in what succession those buds are put round the bearing stem. Let the section of the stem be represented by the small central circle in Fig. 8; and suppose it surrounded by a *nearly* regular pentagon (in the figure it is quite regular for clearness' sake). Let the first of any ascending series of buds be represented by the curved projection filling the nearest angle of the pentagon at 1. Then the next bud, above, will fill the angle at 2; the next above at 3, the next at 4, the next at 5. The sixth will come nearly over the first. That is to say, each projecting portion of the section, Fig. 5, expands into its bud, not successively,

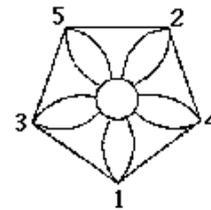


Fig. 8

* The added portion, surrounding two of the sides of the pentagon, is the preparation for the stalk of the leaf, which, on detaching itself from the stem, presents variable sections, of which those numbered 1 to 4, Fig. 7, are

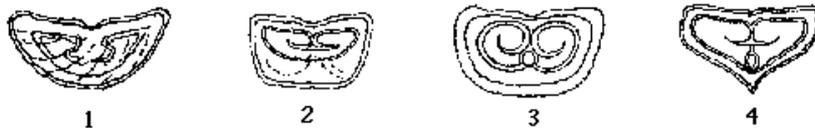
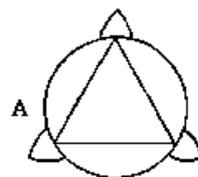


Fig. 7

examples. I cannot determine the proper normal form. The bulb-shaped spot in the heart of the uppermost of the five projections in Fig. 6 is the root of the bud.

but by leaps, always to the *next but one*; the buds being thus placed in a nearly regular spiral order.

§ 8. I say nearly regular—for there are subtleties of variation in plan which it would be merely tiresome to enter into. All that we need care about is the general law, of which the oak spray furnishes a striking example,—that the buds of the first great group of alternate builders rise in a spiral order round the stem (I believe, for the most part, the spiral proceeds from right to left). And this spiral succession very frequently approximates to the pentagonal order, which it takes with great accuracy in an oak; for, merely assuming that each ascending bud places itself as far as it can easily out of the way of the one beneath, and yet not quite on the opposite side of the stem, we find the interval between the two must generally approximate to that left between 1 and 2, or 2 and 3, in Fig. 8.*



§ 9. Should the interval be consistently a little *less* than that which brings out the pentagonal structure, the plant seems to get at first into much difficulty. For, in such case, there is a probability of the buds falling into a triangle, as at A, Fig. 9; and then the fourth must come over the first, which would be inadmissible (we shall soon see why).

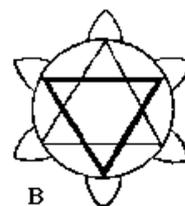


Fig. 9

Nevertheless, the plant seems to like the triangular result for its outline, and sets itself to get out of the difficulty with much ingenuity, by methods of succession which I will examine farther in the next chapter:¹ it being enough for us to know at present that the puzzled but persevering vegetable *does* get out of its difficulty, and issues triumphantly, and with a peculiar expression of leafy exultation, in a hexagonal star, composed of two distinct

* For more accurate information the reader may consult Professor Lindley's Introduction to Botany (Longman, 1848), vol. i. p. 245, et seq.

¹ [See § 12, p. 45; and for the following reference, §§ 9–10, pp. 42–43.]

triangles, normally as at B, Fig. 9. Why the buds do not like to be one above another, we shall see in next chapter. Meantime I

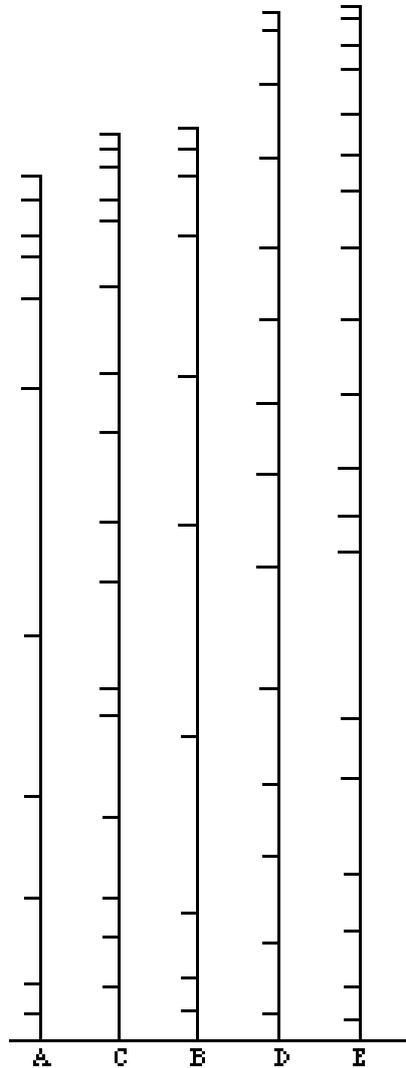


Fig. 10

must shortly warn the reader of what we shall then discover, that, though we have spoken of the projections of our pentagonal tower as if they were first built to sustain each its leaf, they are themselves chiefly built by the leaf they seem to sustain. Without troubling ourselves about this yet, let us fix in our minds broadly the effective aspect of the matter, which is all we want, by a simple practical illustration.

§ 10. Take a piece of stick half an inch thick, and a yard or two long, and tie large knots, at any *equal* distances you choose, on a piece of pack-thread. Then wind the pack-thread round the stick, with any number of equidistant turns you choose, from one end to the other, and the knots will take the position of buds in the general type of alternate vegetation. By

varying the number of knots and the turns of the thread, you may get the system of any tree, with the exception of one character only, viz., that since the shoot grows faster at one time than

another, the buds run closer together when the growth is slow. You cannot imitate this structure by closing the coils of your string, for that would alter the positions of your knots irregularly. The intervals between the buds are, by this gradual acceleration or retardation of growth, usually varied in lovely proportions. Fig. 10 shows the elevations of the buds on five different sprays of oak; A and B being of the real size (short shoots); C, D, and E, on a reduced scale. I have not traced the cause of the apparent tendency of the buds to follow in pairs, in these longer shoots.

§ 11. Lastly: if the spiral be constructed so as to bring the buds nearly on opposite sides of the stem, though alternate in succession, the stem, most probably, will shoot a little away from each bud after throwing it off, and thus establish the oscillatory form *b*, Fig. 11, which, when the buds are placed, as in this case, at diminishing intervals, is very beautiful.*

§ 12. I fear this has been a tiresome chapter; but it is necessary to master the elementary structure, if we are to understand anything of trees; and the reader will therefore, perhaps, take patience enough to look at one or two examples of the spray structure of the second great class of builders, in which the leaves are opposite.

Nearly all opposite-leaved trees grow, normally, like vegetable weather-cocks run to seed, with north and south, and east and west pointers thrown off alternately one over another, as in Fig. 12.

This, I say, is the normal condition. Under certain

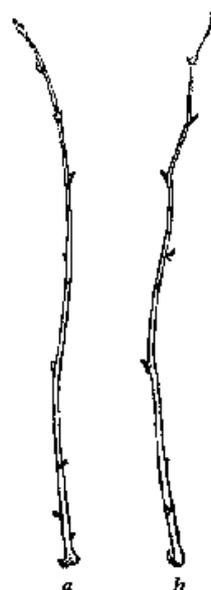


Fig. 11

* Fig. 11 is a shoot of the lime, drawn on two sides, to show its continuous curve in one direction, and alternated curves in another. The buds, which may be seen to be at equal heights in the two figures, are exquisitely proportioned in their distances. There is no end to the refinement of system, if we choose to pursue it.

circumstances, north and south pointers set themselves north-east and south-west; this concession being acknowledged and imitated by the east and west pointers at the next opportunity; but for the present, let us keep to our simple form.

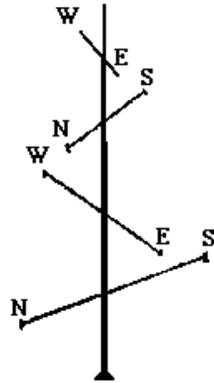


Fig. 12

The first business of the budding stem, is to get every pair of buds set accurately at right angles to the one below. Here are some examples of the way it contrives this. A, Fig. 13, is the section of the stem of a spray of box, magnified eight or nine times, just where it throws off two of its leaves, suppose on north and south sides. The crescents below and above are sections through the leaf-stalks thrown off on each side. Just above this joint, the section of the stem is B,

which is the normal section of a box-stem, as Fig. 5 is of an oak's. This, as it ascends, becomes C, elongating itself now east and west; and the section next to C would be again A turned that way; or, taking the succession completely through two joints, and of the real size, it would be thus: Fig. 14.

The stem of the spotted aucuba is normally hexagonal, as that of the box is normally square. It is very dexterous and delicate in its mode of transformation to the two sides. Through the joint it is A, Fig. 15. Above joint, B, normal passing on into C, and D for the next joint.

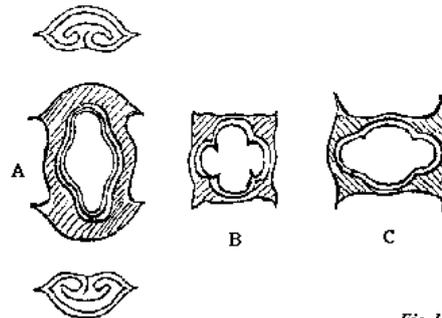


Fig. 13

While in the horse-chestnut, a larger tree, and, as we shall see hereafter, therefore less regular in conduct, the section, normally hexagonal, is much rounded and softened

into irregularities; A, Fig. 16, becoming, as it buds, B and C. The dark diamond beside C is a section through a bud, in which, however small, the quatrefoil disposition is always seen complete: the four little infant leaves with a queen leaf in the middle, all laid in their fan-shaped feebleness, safe in a white cloud of miniature woollen blanket.

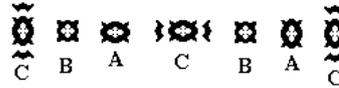


Fig. 14

§ 13. The elementary structure of all important trees may, I think, thus be resolved into three principal forms: three-leaved, Fig. 9; four-leaved, Figs. 13 to 16; and five-leaved, Fig. 8. Or, in well-known terms, trefoil, quatrefoil, cinqfoil. And these are essential classes, more complicated forms being usually, it seems to me, resolvable into these, but these not into each other. The simplest arrangement (Fig. 11), in which the buds are nearly opposite in position, though alternate in

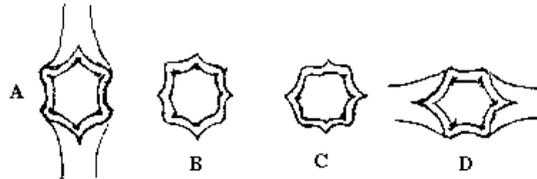


Fig. 15

elevation, cannot, I believe, constitute a separate class, being only an accidental condition of the spiral. If it did, it might be called difoil; but the important classes are three:—

- Trefoil, Fig. 9: Type, Rhododendron.
- Quatrefoil, Fig. 13: Type, Horse-chestnut.
- Cinqfoil, Fig. 5: Type, Oak.

§ 14. The coincidences between beautiful architecture and the construction of trees must more and more have become marked in the reader's mind as we advanced; and if he will now look at what I have said in other places of the use and

meaning of the trefoil, quatrefoil, and cinquefoil, in Gothic architecture,¹ he will see why I could hardly help thinking and speaking of all trees as builders. But there is yet one more subtlety in their way of building which we have not noticed. If the reader will look carefully at the separate shoots in Plate 51, he will see that the furrows of the stems fall in almost every case into continuous spiral curves, carrying the whole system of buds with them. This superinduced spiral action, of which we shall

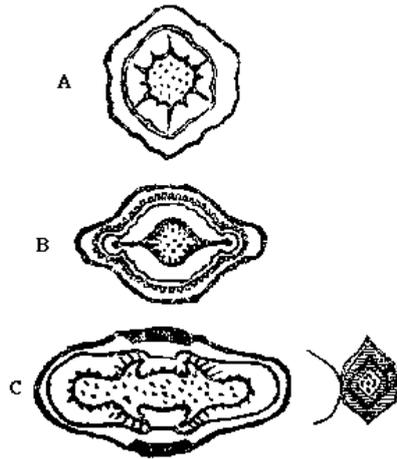


Fig. 16

perhaps presently discover the cause, often takes place vigorously, producing completely twisted stems of great thickness. It is nearly always existent slightly, giving farther grace and change to the whole wonderful structure. And thus we have, as the final result of one year's vegetative labour on any single spray, a twisted tower, not similar at any height of its building: or (for,

as we shall see presently, it loses in diameter at each bud) a twisted spire, correspondent somewhat in principle to the twisted spire of Dijon, or twisted fountain of Ulm, or twisted shafts of Verona.² Bossed as it ascends with living sculpture, chiselled, not by diminution but through increase, it rises by one consistent impulse from its base to

¹ [See *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. pp. 126, 129 n., 133; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 53, 257–258, 259–260); and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 244).]

² [The "twisted spire" of Dijon no longer exists; the old spire of the Cathedral of St. Benigné was slightly bent, but it was rebuilt without the twist in 1894–1895. The old spire is alluded to in the opening lines of Miss Betham-Edwards's *Romance of Dijon*; Ruskin refers to it again in *Ethics of the Dust*, § 97. The wreathed fountain in the market-square of Ulm is the work of Jörg Syrlin the elder (1482); Ruskin was there in 1835 (see his drawing of the cathedral, Plate 1 in Vol. I.). For the twisted shafts of Verona, see Fig. 18 and Plate 17 in *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. pp. xxxiv., 132, 377).]

its minaret, ready, in spring-time, to throw round it at the crest at once the radiance of fresh youth and the promise of restoration after that youth has passed away. A marvellous creation; nay, might we not almost say, a marvellous creature, full of prescience in its infancy, foreboding even, in the earliest gladness of its opening to sunshine, the hour of fainting strength and falling leaf, and guarding under the shade of its faithful shields the bud that is to bear its hope through winter's shieldless sleep?

Men often look to bring about great results by violent and unprepared effort. But it is only in fair and forecast order, "as the earth bringeth forth her bud,"¹ that righteousness and praise may spring forth before the nations.

¹ [Isaiah lxi. 11.]

CHAPTER IV

THE LEAF

§ 1. HAVING now some clear idea of the position of the bud, we have next to examine the forms and structure of its shield—the leaf which guards it. You will form the best general idea of the flattened leaf of shield-builders by thinking of it as you would of a mast and sail. More consistently with our classification, we might perhaps say, by thinking always of the arm sustaining the shield; but we should be in danger of carrying fancy too far, and the likeness of mast and sail is closer, for the mast tapers as the leaf-rib does, while the hand holding the uppermost strap of the buckler clenches itself. Whichever figure we use, it will cure us of the bad habit of imagining a leaf composed of a short stalk with a broad expansion at the end of it. Whereas we should always think of the stalk as running right up the leaf to its point, and carrying the expanded, or foliate part, as the mast of a lugger does its sail. To some extent, indeed, it has yards also, ribs branching from the innermost one; only the yards of the leaf will not run up and down, which is one essential function of a sailyard.

§ 2. The analogy will, however, serve one step more. As the sail must be on one side of the mast, so the expansion of a leaf is on one side of its central rib, or of its system of ribs. It is laid over them as if it were stretched over a frame, so that on the upper surface it is comparatively smooth; on the lower, barred. The understanding of the broad relations of these parts is the principal work we have to do in this chapter.

§ 3. First, then, you may roughly assume that the section

of any leaf-mast will be a crescent, as at *a*, Fig. 17 (compare Fig. 7 above). The flat side is the uppermost, the round side underneath, and the flat or upper side carries the leaf. You can at once see the convenience of this structure for fitting to a central stem. Suppose the central stem has a little hole in the centre, *b*, Fig. 17, and that you cut it down through the middle (as terrible knights used to cut their enemies in the dark ages, so that half the head fell on one side, and half on the other): Pull the two halves separate, *c*, and they will nearly represent the shape and position of opposite leaf-ribs. In reality the leaf-stalks have to fit themselves to the central stem, *a*, and as we shall see presently, to lap round it; but we must not go too fast.

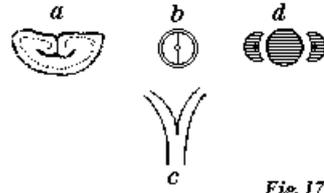


Fig. 17

§ 4. Now, *a*, Fig. 17, being the general type of a leaf-stalk, Fig. 18 is the general type of the way it expands

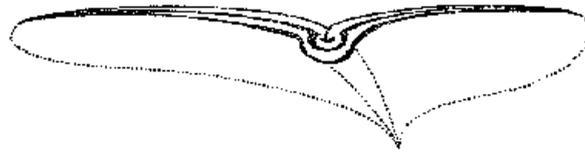


Fig. 18

into and carries its leaf;* this figure being the enlargement of a typical section right across any leaf, the dotted lines show the under surface foreshortened. You see I have made one side broader than the other. I mean that. It is typically so. Nature cannot endure two sides of a leaf to be alike. By encouraging one side more than the other, either by giving it more air or light, or perhaps in a chief

* I believe the undermost of the two divisions of the leaf represents vegetable tissue returning from the extremity. See Lindley's *Introduction to Botany* (1848), vol. i. p. 253.

degree by the mere fact of the moisture necessarily accumulating on the lower edge when it rains, and the other always drying first, she contrives it so, that if the essential form or idea of the leaf be *a*, Fig. 19, the actual form will always be *c*, or an

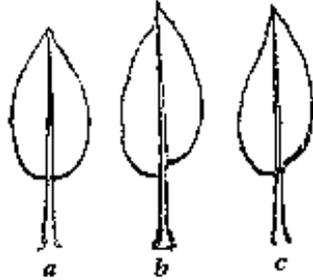


Fig. 19

approximation to it; one half being pushed in advance of the other, as at *b*, and all reconciled by soft curvature, *c*. The effort of the leaf to keep itself symmetrical rights it, however, often at the point, so that the insertion of the stalk only makes the inequality manifest. But it follows that the sides of a straight section

across the leaf are unequal all the way up, as in my drawing, except at one point.

§ 5. I have represented the two wings of the leaf as slightly convex on the upper surface. This is also on the whole a typical character. I use the expression “wings of the leaf,” because, supposing we exaggerate the main rib a little, the section will generally resemble a bad painter’s type of a bird (*a*, Fig. 20). Sometimes the outer edges curl up, *b*, but an entirely concave form, *c*, is rare. When *b* is strongly developed, closing well in, the leaf gets a good deal the look of a boat with a keel.

§ 6. If now you take this oblique form of sail, and cut it into any required number of pieces down to its mast, as in Fig. 21, A, and then suppose each of the pieces to contract into studdingsails at the side, you will have whatever type of divided leaf you choose to shape it for. In Fig. 21, A, B, I have taken the rose, as the simplest type. The leaf is given in separate contour at C; but that

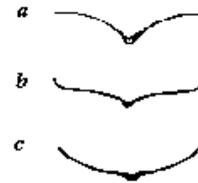
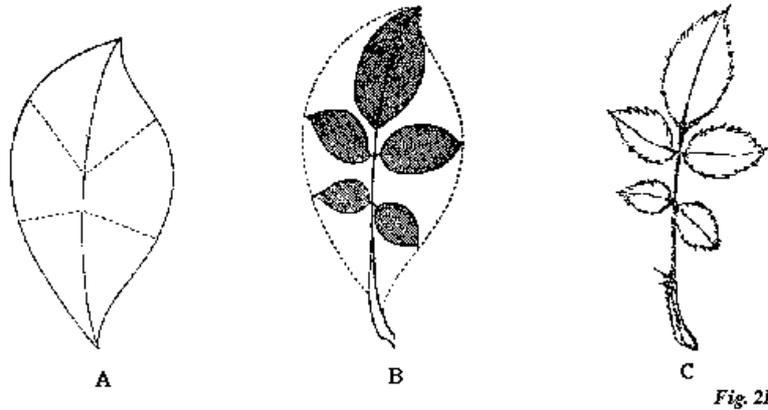


Fig. 20

of the mountain ash, A, Fig. 22, suggests the original oval form which encloses all the subdivisions much more beautifully. Each of the studding-sails in this ash-leaf looks much at first as if he were himself a mainsail. But you may know him always to be a subordinate, by observing that the inequality of the two sides,

which is brought about by accidental influences in the mainsail, is an organic law in the studding-sail. The real leaf tries to set itself evenly on its mast; and the inequality is only a graceful concession to circumstances. But the subordinate or studding-sail is always *by law* larger at one side than the other; and if he is himself again divided into smaller sails, he will have larger sails on the lowest side, or one more sail on the lowest side, than he has on the other. He always wears, therefore, a servant's, or, at least, subordinate's dress. You may know him anywhere as



not the master. Even in the ash leaflet, of which I have outlined one separately, B, Fig. 22, this is clearly seen; but it is much more distinct in more finely divided leaves.*

§ 7. Observe, then, that leaves are broadly divisible into mainsails and studding-sails; but that the word *leaf* is properly to be used only of the mainsail; leaflet is the best word for minor divisions; and whether these minor members are only separated by deep cuts, or become complete stalked leaflets, still they are always to be thought of merely as parts of a true leaf.

It follows from the mode of their construction that leaflets must always lie more or less *flat*, or edge to edge, in

* For farther notes on this subject, see my *Elements of Drawing*, p. 286 [now § 214, Vol. XV. p. 186].

a continuous plane. This position distinguishes them from true leaves as much as their oblique form, and distinguishes them with the same delicate likeness of system; for as the true leaf takes, accidentally and partially, the oblique outline which is legally required in the subordinate, so the true leaf takes accidentally and partially the flat disposition which is legally

required in the subordinate. And this point of position we must now study. Henceforward, throughout this chapter, the reader will please note that I speak only of true *leaves*, not of *leaflets*.

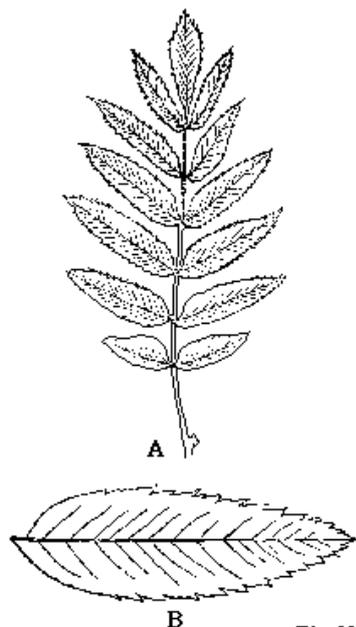


Fig. 22

§ 8. LAW I. THE LAW OF DEFLECTION.—The first law, then, respecting position in true leaves, is that they fall gradually back from the uppermost one, or uppermost group. They are never set as at *a*, Fig. 23, but always as at *b*. The reader may see at once that they have more room and comfort by means of the latter arrangement. The law is carried

out with more or less distinctness according to the habit of the plant; but is always acknowledged.

In strong-leaved shrubs or trees it is shown with great distinctness and beauty: the phillyrea shoot, for instance, Fig. 24, is almost in as true symmetry as a Greek honey-suckle ornament.¹ In the hawthorn shoot, central in Plate 52, opposite,² the law is seen very slightly, yet it rules all

¹ [Compare *Laws of Fésole* (Vol. XV. pp. 411–412).]

² [The figure on the left is a branch of blackthorn (see below, ch. viii. § 14 *n.*); that on the right is a bell-handle in wrought-iron from a house at Nuremburg (see below, p. 304 *n.*).]



G. Allen.

G. Cook
Allen & Co. So.

the play and fantasy of the varied leaves, gradually depressing their lines as they are set lower. In crowded foliage of large trees, the disposition of each separate leaf is not so manifest. For there is a strange coincidence in this between trees and communities of men. When the community is small, people fall more easily into their places, and take, each in his place, a firmer standing than can be obtained by the individuals of a great nation. The members of a vast community are separately weaker, as an aspen or elm leaf is thin, tremulous, and directionless, compared with the spear-like setting and firm substance of a rhododendron or laurel leaf. The laurel and rhododendron are like the Athenian or Florentine republics;¹ the aspen like England—

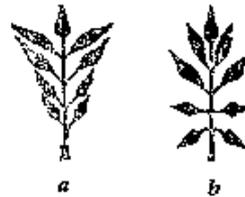


Fig. 23



Fig. 24

strong-trunked enough when put to proof, and very good for making cartwheels of, but shaking pale with epidemic panic at every breeze.² Nevertheless, the aspen has the better of the great nation, in that if you take it bough by

¹ [Compare on this subject, Vol. XII. p. 171 and *n.*]

² [Compare the lines from Scott's *Marmion*, canto vi. stanza 17 (quoted by Ruskin in *Aratra Pentelici*, § 205):—

“ . . . variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made.”]

bough, you shall find the gentle law of respect and room for each other truly observed by the leaves in such broken way as they can manage it; but in the nation you find every one scrambling for his neighbour's place.

This, then, is our first law, which we may generally call the Law of Deflection, or, if the position of the leaves with respect to the root be regarded, of Radiation. The second is more curious, and we must go back over our ground a little to get at it.

§ 9. LAW II. THE LAW OF SUCCESSION.—From what we saw of the position of buds,¹ it follows that in every tree the leaves at the end of the spray, taking the direction given

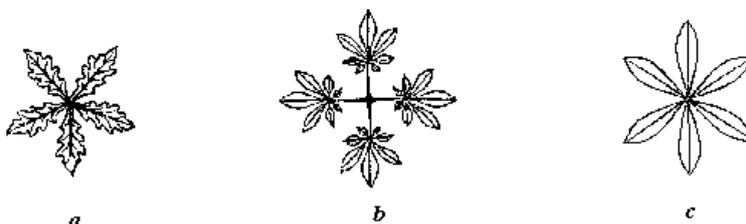


Fig. 25

them by the uppermost cycle or spiral of the buds, will fall naturally into a starry group, expressive of the order of their growth. In an oak we shall have a cluster of five leaves, in a horse-chestnut of four, in a rhododendron of six, and so on. But observe, if we draw the oak-leaves all equal, as at *a*, Fig. 25, or the chestnuts (*b*), or the rhododendron's (*c*), you instantly will feel, or ought to feel, that something is wrong; that those are not foliage forms—not even normally or typically so—but dead forms, like crystals of snow. Considering this, and looking back to last chapter, you will see that the buds which throw out these leaves do not grow side by side, but one above another. In the oak and rhododendron, all five and all six buds are at different heights; in the chestnut, one couple is above the other couple.

¹ [Above, ch. iii. §§ 6–11.]

§ 10. Now, so surely as one bud is above another, it must be stronger or weaker than that other. The shoot may either be increasing in strength as it advances, or declining; in either case, the buds must vary in power, and the leaves in size. At the top of the shoot, the last or uppermost leaves are mostly the smallest; of course always so in spring as they develop.

Let us then apply these conditions to our formal figure above, and suppose each leaf to be weaker in its order of succession. The oak becomes as *a*, Fig. 26, the chestnut shoot as *b*, the rhododendron, *c*. These, I should think, it

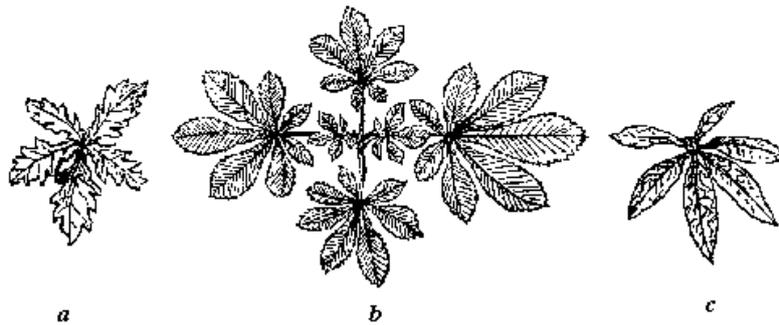


Fig. 26

can hardly be necessary to tell the reader, are true normal forms; respecting which one or two points must be noticed in detail.

§ 11. The magnitude of the leaves in the oak star diminishes, of course, in alternate order. The largest leaf is the lowest, 1 in Fig. 8, p. 28. While the largest leaf forms the bottom, next it, opposite each other, come the third and fourth, in order and magnitude, and the fifth and second from the top. An oak star is, therefore, always an oblique star; but in the chestnut and other quatrefoil trees, though the uppermost couple of leaves must always be smaller than the lowermost couple, there appears no geometrical reason why the opposite leaves of each couple should vary in size. Nevertheless, they always do, so that the quatrefoil becomes oblique as well as the cinqfoil, as you see it is in Fig. 26.

The normal of four-foils is therefore as in Fig. 27, A (maple), with magnitudes, in order numbered; but it often happens that an opposite pair agree to become largest and

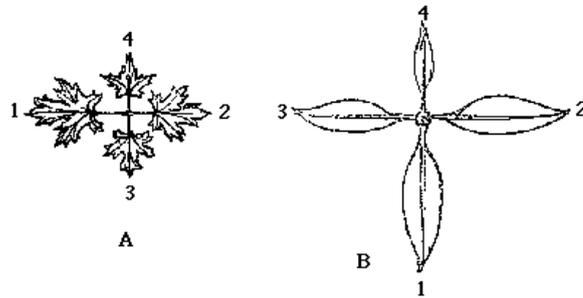


Fig. 27

smallest: thus giving the pretty symmetry, Fig. 27, B, (spotted aucuba). Of course the quatrefoil in reality is always less formal, one pair of leaves more or less hiding

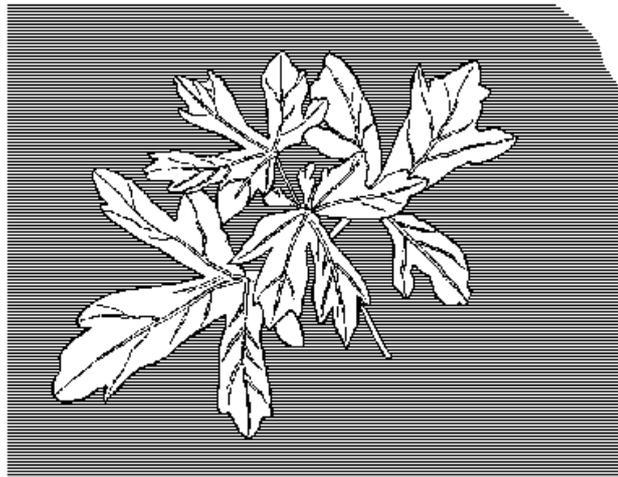


Fig. 28

or preceding the other. Fig. 28 is the outline of a young one in the maple.

§ 12. The third form is more complex, and we must take the pains to follow out what we left unobserved in

last chapter respecting the way a triplicate plant gets out of its difficulties.¹

Draw a circle as in Fig. 29, and two lines, AB , BC , touching it, equal to each other, and each divided accurately in half where they touch the circle, so that AP shall be equal to PB , BQ , and QC . And let the lines AB and BC be so placed that a dotted line AC , joining their extremities, would not be much longer than either of them.

Continue to draw lines of the same length all round the circle. Lay five of them, AB , BC , CD , DE , EF . Then

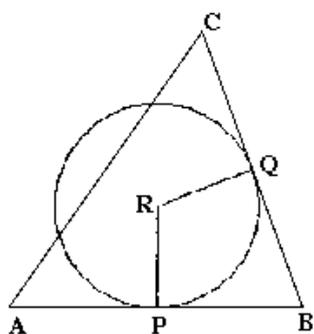


Fig. 29

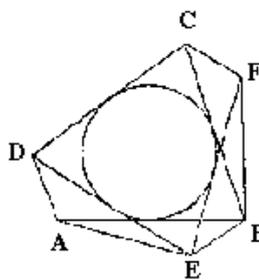


Fig. 30

join the points, AD , EB , and CF , and you have Fig. 30, which is a hexagon, with the following curious properties. It has one side largest, CD , two sides less, but equal to each other, AE and BF ; and three sides less still, and equal to each other, AD , CF , and BE .

Now put leaves into this hexagon, Fig. 31, and you will see how charmingly the rhododendron has got out of its difficulties. The next cycle will put a leaf in at the gap at the top, and begin a new hexagon. Observe, however, this geometrical figure is only to the rhododendron what the a in Fig. 25 is to the oak, the icy or dead form. To get the living normal form we must introduce our law of succession. That is to say, the five lines AB , BC , etc.,

¹ [See above, § 9, p. 29.]

must continually diminish, as they proceed, and therefore, continually approach the centre; roughly as in Fig. 32.

§ 13. I dread entering into the finer properties of this construction, but the reader cannot now fail to feel their

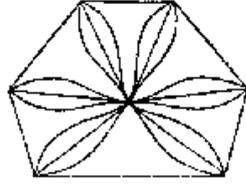


Fig. 31

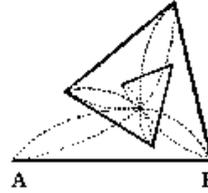


Fig. 32

beautiful result either in the cluster in Fig. 26, or here in Fig. 33, which is a richer and more oblique one. The three leaves of the uppermost triad are perfectly seen, closing over the bud; and the general form is clear, though the lower triads are confused to the eye by unequal development, as in these complex arrangements

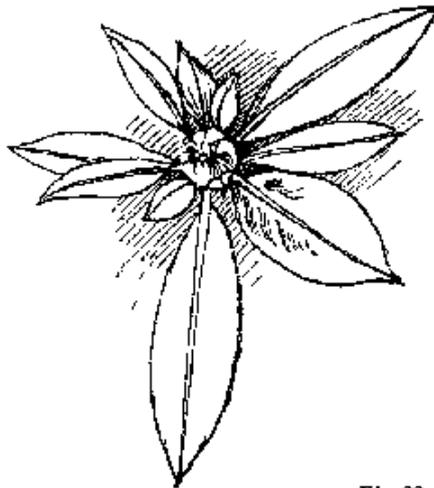


Fig. 33

is almost always the case. The more difficulties are to be encountered the more license is given to the plant in dealing with them, and we shall hardly ever find a rhododendron shoot fulfilling its splendid spiral as an oak does its simple one.

Here, for instance, is the actual order of ascending leaves in four rhododendron shoots which I gather at random.

Of these, A is the only quite well-conducted one; B takes one short step; C, one step backwards; and D, two steps back, and one, too short, forward.

§ 14. LAW III. THE LAW OF RESILIENCE.—If you have been gathering any branches from the trees I have

named among quatrefoils (the box is the best for exemplification), you have perhaps been embarrassed by finding that the leaves, instead of growing on four sides of the stem, did practically grow oppositely on two. But if you look closely at the places of their insertion, you will find they indeed spring on all four sides; and that in order to take the flattened opposite position, each leaf twists round on its

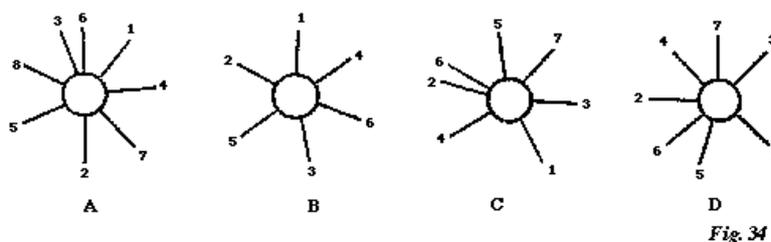


Fig. 34

stalk, as in Fig. 35, which represents a box-leaf magnified and foreshortened. The leaves do this in order to avoid growing downwards, where the position of the bough and bud would, if the leaves regularly kept their places, involve downward growth. The leaves always rise up on each side from beneath, and form a flattened group, more or less distinctly in proportion to the horizontality of the bough, and the contiguity of foliage below and above. I shall not trouble myself to illustrate this law, as you have only to gather a few tree-sprays to see its effect. But you must note the resulting characters on *every* leaf; namely, that not one leaf in a thousand grows without a fixed turn in its stalk, warping and varying the whole of the curve on the two edges throughout its length, and thus producing the loveliest conditions of its form. We shall presently trace the law of resilience farther on a larger scale: meanwhile, in summing the results of our inquiry thus far, let us remember that every one of these laws is observed



Fig. 35

with varying accuracy and gentle equity, according not only to the strength and fellowship of foliage on the spray itself, but according to the place and circumstances of its growth.

§ 15. For the leaves, as we shall see immediately, are the feeders of the plant. Their own orderly habits of succession must not interfere with their main business of finding food. Where the sun and air are, the leaf must go, whether it be out of order or not. So, therefore, in any group, the first consideration with the young leaves is much like that of young bees, how to keep out of each other's way, that every one may at once leave its neighbours as much free-air pasture as possible, and obtain a relative freedom for itself. This would be a quite simple matter, and produce other simply balanced forms, if each branch, with open air all round it, had nothing to think of but reconciliation of interests among its own leaves. But every branch has others to meet or to cross, sharing with them, in various advantage, what shade, or sun, or rain is to be had. Hence every single leaf-cluster presents the general aspect of a little family, entirely at unity among themselves, but obliged to get their living by various shifts, concessions, and infringements of the family rules, in order not to invade the privileges of other people in their neighbourhood.

§ 16. And in the arrangement of these concessions there is an exquisite sensibility among the leaves. They do not grow each to his own liking, till they run against one another, and then turn back sulkily; but by a watchful instinct, far apart, they anticipate their companions' courses, as ships at sea, and in every new unfolding of their edged tissue, guide themselves by the sense of each other's remote presence, and by a watchful penetration of leafy purpose in the far future. So that every shadow which one casts on the next, and every glint of sun which each reflects to the next, and every touch which in toss of storm each receives from the next, aid or arrest the development of their advancing form, and direct, as will be safest and best, the curve of every fold and the current of every vein.

§ 17. And this peculiar character exists in all the structures thus developed, that they are always visibly the result of a volition on the part of the leaf, meeting an external force or fate, to which it is never passively subjected. Upon it, as on a mineral in the course of formation, the great merciless influences of the universe, and the oppressive powers of minor things immediately near it, act continually. Heat and cold, gravity and the other attractions, windy pressure, or local and unhealthy restraint, must, in certain inevitable degrees, affect the whole of its life. But it is *life* which they affect;—a life of progress and will,—not a merely passive accumulation of substance. This may be seen by a single glance. The mineral—suppose an agate in the course of formation—shows in every line nothing but a dead submission to surrounding force. Flowing, or congealing, its substance is here repelled, there attracted, unresistingly to its place, and its languid sinuosities follow the clefts of the rock that contains them, in servile deflexion and compulsory cohesion, impotently calculable, and cold. But the leaf, full of fears and affections, shrinks and seeks, as it obeys. Not thrust, but awed into its retiring; not dragged, but won to its advance; not bent aside, as by a bridle, into new courses of growth: but persuaded and converted through tender continuance of voluntary change.

§ 18. The mineral and it differing thus widely in separate being, they differ no less in modes of companionship. The mineral crystals group themselves neither in succession, nor in sympathy; but great and small recklessly strive for place, and deface or distort each other as they gather into opponent asperities. The confused crowd fills the rock cavity, hanging together in a glittering, yet sordid heap, in which nearly every crystal, owing to their vain contention, is imperfect, or impure. Here and there one, at the cost and in defiance of the rest, rises into unwarped shape or unstained clearness. But the order of the leaves is one of soft and subdued concession. Patiently each awaits its appointed time, accepts its prepared place, yields its required observance. Under

every oppression of external accident, the group yet follows a law laid down in its own heart; and all the members of it, whether in sickness or health, in strength or languor, combine to carry out this first and last heart law; receiving, and seeming to desire for themselves and for each other, only life which they may communicate, and loveliness which they may reflect.

CHAPTER V

LEAF ASPECTS

§ 1. BEFORE following farther our inquiry into tree structure, it will rest us, and perhaps forward our work a little, to make some use of what we know already.

It results generally from what we have seen, that any group of four or five leaves, presenting itself in its natural position to the eye, consists of a series of forms connected by exquisite and complex symmetries, and that these forms will be not only varied in themselves, but every one of them seen under a different condition of foreshortening.

The facility of drawing the group may be judged of by a comparison. Suppose five or six boats, very beautifully built, and sharp in the prow, to start all from one point, and the first bearing up into the wind, the other three or four to fall off from it in succession an equal number of points,* taking each, in consequence, a different slope of deck from the stem of the sail. Suppose, also, that the bows of these boats were transparent, so that you could see the under sides of their decks, as well as the upper;—and that it were required of you to draw all their five decks, the under or upper side, as their curve showed it, in true foreshortened perspective, indicating the exact distance each boat had reached at a given moment from the central point they started from.

If you can do that, you can draw a rose-leaf. Not otherwise.

§ 2. When, some few years ago, the pre - Raphaelites began to lead our wandering artists back into the eternal

* I don't know that this is rightly expressed; but the meaning will be understood.

paths of all great Art, and showed that whatever men drew at all, ought to be drawn accurately and knowingly; not blunderingly nor by guess (leaves of trees, among other things): as ignorant pride on the one hand refused their teaching, ignorant hope caught at it on the other. "What !" said many a feeble young student to himself. "Painting is not a matter of science then, nor of supreme skill, nor of inventive brain. I have only to go and paint the leaves of the trees as they grow, and I shall produce beautiful landscapes directly."

Alas! my innocent young friend. "Paint the leaves as they grow !" If you can paint *one* leaf, you can paint the world.¹ These pre-Raphaelite laws, which you think so light, lay stern on the strength of Apelles and Zeuxis; put Titian to thoughtful trouble; are unrelaxed yet, and unrelaxable for ever. Paint a leaf indeed ! Above-named Titian has done it: Correggio, moreover, and Giorgione: and Leonardo, very nearly, trying hard. Holbein, three or four times, in precious pieces, highest wrought. Raphael, it may be, in one or two crowns of Muse or Sibyl. If any one else, in later times, we have to consider.²

§ 3. At least until recently, the perception of organic leaf form was absolutely, in all painters whatsoever, proportionate to their power of drawing the human figure. All the great Italian designers drew leaves thoroughly well, though none quite so fondly as Correggio. Rubens drew them coarsely and vigorously,³ just as he drew limbs. Among the inferior Dutch painters, the leaf-painting degenerates in proportion to the diminishing power in figure. Cuyp, Wouvermans, and Paul Potter, paint better foliage than either Hobbima⁴ or Ruysdael.

¹ [So in *The Elements of Drawing*, § 42, "if you can draw the stone *rightly*, everything within the reach of art is also within yours" (Vol. XV. p. 49); and compare the lecture on "Tree Twigs," § 4; below, Appendix I. p. 469.]

² [For Titian's foliage, see below, § 8 *n*. For Correggio's, see below, § 5. Among the masters of leaf-painting Ruskin elsewhere includes Mantegna: see *Catalogue of the Educational Series*.]

³ [For his flowers, see below, ch. x. § 5.]

⁴ [For Hobbima's foliage, see Vol. III. pp. 592-593.]

§ 4. In like manner the power of treating vegetation in sculpture is absolutely commensurate with nobleness of figure design. The quantity, richness, or deceptive finish may be greater in third-rate work; but in true understanding and force of arrangement the leaf and the human figure show always parallel skill. The leaf-mouldings of Lorenzo Ghiberti are unrivalled, as his bas-reliefs are, and the severe foliage of the Cathedral of Chartres is as grand as its queen-statues.¹

§ 5. The greatest draughtsmen draw leaves, like everything else, of their full life-size in the nearest part of the picture. They cannot be rightly drawn on any other terms. It is impossible to reduce a group so treated without losing much of its character; and more painfully impossible to represent by engraving any good workman's handling. I intended to have inserted in this place an engraving of the cluster of oak-leaves above Correggio's Antiope in the Louvre,² but it is too lovely; and if I am able to engrave it at all, it must be separately, and of its own size. So I draw roughly, instead, a group of oak-leaves on a young shoot, a little curled with autumn frost: Plate 53. I could not draw them accurately enough if I drew them in spring. They would droop and lose their relations. Thus roughly drawn, and losing some of their grace, by withering, they, nevertheless, have enough left to show how noble leaf form is; and to prove, it seems to me, that Dutch draughtsmen do not wholly express it. For instance, Fig. 3, Plate 54, is a facsimile of a bit of the nearest oak foliage out of Hobbima's Scene with the Water-mill, No. 131, in the Dulwich Gallery.³ Compared with the real forms of oak-leaf, in Plate 53, it may, I hope, at least enable my readers to

¹ [For Ghiberti, see Vol. VIII. pp. 149, 154; and for the queen-statues of Chartres, *Two Paths*, § 35 (Vol. XVI. p. 280, and Plate XV.)]

² [For other references to this picture, see below, p. 117; Vol. V. p. 93; Vol. X. p. 227; Vol. XII. pp. 145, 472; Vol. XV. p. 193; and below, pp. 117, 179.]

³ [Now No. 87: "Woody Landscape with a Large Water-Mill"; for other references to the picture, see below, ch. viii. § 12 *n.*, and Vol. III. p. 524 (§ 18).]



83 The Dread Crown

understand, if they choose, why, never having ceased to rate the Dutch painters for their meanness or minuteness, I yet accepted the leaf-painting of the pre-Raphaelites with reverence and hope.

§ 6. No word has been more harmfully misused than that ugly one of “niggling.” I should be glad if it were entirely banished from service and record.¹ The only essential question about drawing is whether it be right or wrong; that it be small or large, swift or slow, is a matter of convenience only. But so far as the word may be legitimately used at all, it belongs especially to such execution as this of Hobbima’s²—execution which substitutes, on whatever scale, a mechanical trick or habit of hand for true drawing of known or intended forms. So long as the work is thoughtfully directed, there is no niggling. In a small Greek coin³ the muscles of the human body are as grandly treated as in a colossal statue; and a fine vignette of Turner’s will show separate touches often more extended in intention, and stronger in result, than those of his largest oil pictures. In the vignette of the picture of Ginevra,⁴ at page 96 of Rogers’s *Italy*, the forefinger touching the lip is entirely and rightly drawn, bent at the two joints, within the length of the thirtieth of an inch, and the whole hand within the space of one of those “niggling” touches of Hobbima. But if this work were magnified, it would be seen to be a strong and simple expression of a hand by thick black lines.

§ 7. Niggling, therefore, essentially means disorganized and mechanical work, applied on a scale which may deceive a vulgar or ignorant person into the idea of its being true: a definition applicable to the whole of the leaf-painting of the Dutch landscapists in distant effect, and for the most part to that of their near subjects also. Cuypp

¹ [Compare *Elements of Drawing*, § 16 (Vol. XV. p. 36).]

² [Ruskin had applied the word to him in the first volume of *Modern Painters*: see Vol. III. p. 339.]

³ [For another reference to Greek coins, see below, p. 356.]

⁴ [By Stothard; engraved by Goodall.]

and Wouwermans, as before stated, and others, in proportion to their power over the figure, drew leaves better in the foreground, yet never altogether well; for though Cuyp often draws a single leaf carefully (weedy ground-vegetation especially, with great truth), he never felt the connection of leaves, but scattered them on the boughs at random. Fig. 1 in Plate 54 is nearly a *facsimile* of part of the branch on the left side in our National Gallery picture.¹ Its entire want of grace and organization ought to be felt at a glance, after the work we have gone through. The average conditions of leafage-painting among the Dutch are better represented by Fig. 2, Plate 54, which is a piece of the foliage from the Cuyp in the Dulwich Gallery, No. 163.² It is merely wrought with a mechanical play of brush in a well-trained hand, gradating the colour irregularly and agreeably, but with no more feeling or knowledge of leafage than a paper-stainer shows in graining a pattern. A bit of the stalk is seen on the left; it might just as well have been on the other side, for any connection the leaves have with it. As the leafage retires into distance, the Dutch painters merely diminish their *scale* of touch. The touch itself remains the same, but its effect is false; for though the separate stains or blots in Fig. 2 do not rightly represent the forms of leaves, they may not inaccurately represent the number of leaves on that spray. But in distance, when, instead of one spray, we have thousands in sight, no human industry, nor possible diminution of touch, can represent their mist of foliage, and the Dutch work becomes doubly base, by reason of false form, and lost infinity.

§ 8. Hence what I said in our first inquiry about foliage. “A single dusty roll of Turner’s brush is more truly expressive of the infinitude of foliage than the niggling of Hobbima could have rendered his canvas, if he had worked

¹ [No. 53: “An Evening Landscape”; for another reference to the picture, see Vol. III. p. 272.]

² [Now No. 124: “A Road near a River.”]



Copp and Robbins.

J. Cozzen.
Allen & Co. So.

on it till doomsday.”¹ And this brings me to the main difficulty I have had in preparing this section. That infinitude of Turner’s execution attaches not only to his distant work, but in due degree to the nearest pieces of his trees. As I have shown in the chapter on mystery,² he perfected the system of art, as applicable to landscape, by the introduction of this infiniteness. In other qualities he is often only equal, in some inferior, to great preceding painters; but in this mystery he stands alone. He could not paint a cluster of leaves better than Titian,³ but he could a bough, much more a distant mass of foliage. No man ever before painted a distant tree rightly, or a full-leaved branch rightly. All Titian’s distant branches are ponderous flakes, as if covered with seaweed, while Veronese’s and Raphael’s are conventional, being exquisitely ornamental arrangements of small perfect leaves. See the background of the Parnassus in Volpato’s plate.⁴ It is very lovely, however.

§ 9. But this peculiar execution of Turner’s is entirely uncopiable; least of all to be copied in engraving. It is at once so dexterous and so keenly cunning, swiftest play of hand being applied with concentrated attention on every movement, that no care in facsimile will render it. The delay in the conclusion of this work has been partly caused by the failure of repeated attempts to express this execution. I see my way now to some partial result; but must get the writing done, and give undivided care to it before I attempt to produce costly plates.⁵ Meanwhile, the little cluster of foliage opposite, from the thicket which runs up the bank on the right-hand side of the drawing of

¹ [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 339).]

² [In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* (Vol. VI. pp. 73–105).]

³ [For Titian’s trees and foliage, see Vol. III. pp. 171–172, 252, 584–585, 595 *n.*; Vol. IV. p. 126; and Vol. VI. p. 232; and compare Vol. XII. pp. 115–116.]

⁴ [Giovanni Volpato (1733–1803), draughtsman and engraver, was the principal artist employed on a set of coloured prints from the works of Raphael in the Vatican. For references to the Parnassus in other connexions, see Vol. XII. pp. 148–149, and *n.*]

⁵ [See above, p. 8; and compare Vol. VI. pp. 3–4.]



J. M. W. Turner

J. C. Armitage

Richmond, looking up the river, in the Yorkshire series,¹ will give the reader some idea of the mingled definiteness and mystery of Turner's work, as opposed to the mechanism of the Dutch on the one side, and the conventional severity of the Italians on the other. It should be compared with the published engraving in the Yorkshire series; for just as much increase, both in quantity and refinement, would be necessary in every portion of the picture, before any true conception could be given of the richness of Turner's designs. A fragment of distant foliage I may give farther on;² but, in order to judge rightly of either example, we must know one or two points in the structure of branches, requiring yet some irksome patience of inquiry, which I am compelled to ask the reader to grant me through another two chapters.

¹ [For particulars of this drawing see the entry, "Richmond, from the Banks of the River," in Index I. of Vol. XIII. (p. 604).]

² [See below, Figs. 56 and 63.]

CHAPTER VI

THE BRANCH

§ 1. WE have hitherto spoken of each shoot as either straight or only warped by its spiral tendency; but no shoot of any length, except those of the sapling, ever can be straight; for, as the family of leaves which it bears are forced unanimously to take some given direction in search of food or light, the stalk necessarily obeys the same impulse, and bends itself so as to sustain them in their adopted position, with the greatest ease to itself and comfort for them.

In doing this, it has two main influences to comply or contend with: the first, the direct action of the leaves in drawing it this way or that, as they themselves seek particular situations; the second, the pressure of their absolute weight after they have taken their places, depressing each bough in a given degree; the leverage increasing as the leaf extends. To these principal forces may frequently be added that of some prevalent wind, which, on a majority of days in the year, bends the bough, leaves and all, for hours together, out of its normal position. Owing to these three forces, the shoot is nearly sure to be curved in at least two directions;* that is to say, not merely as the rim of a wine-glass is curved (so that, looking at it horizontally, the circle becomes a straight line), but as the edge of a lip or an eyebrow is curved, partly upwards, partly forwards, so that in no possible perspective can it be seen as a straight line. Similarly, no perspective will usually bring a shoot of a free-growing tree to appear a straight line.

* See the note on Fig. 11, at page 31, which shows these two directions in a shoot of lime.

§ 2. It is evident that the more leaves the stalk has to sustain, the more strength it requires. It might appear, therefore, not unadvisable that every leaf should, as it grew, pay a small tax to the stalk for its sustenance; so that there might be no fear of any number of leaves being too oppressive to their bearer. Which, accordingly, is just what the leaves do. Each, from the moment of his complete majority, pays a stated tax to the stalk; that is to say, collects for it a certain quantity of wood, or materials for wood, and sends this wood, or what ultimately will become wood, *down* the stalk to add to its thickness.

§ 3. “Down the stalk?” yes, and down a great way farther. For as the leaves, if they did not thus contribute to their own support, would soon be too heavy for the spray, so if the spray, with its family of leaves, contributed nothing to the thickness of the branch, the leaf-families would soon break down their sustaining branches. And, similarly, if the branches gave nothing to the stem, the stem would soon fall under its boughs. Therefore by a power of which I believe no sufficient account exists,* as each leaf adds to the thickness of the shoot, so each shoot to the branch, so each branch to the stem, and that with so perfect an order and regularity of duty, that from every leaf in all the countless crowd at the tree’s summit, one

* I find that the office and nature of cambium, the causes of the action of the sap, and the real mode of the formation of buds, are all still under the investigation of botanists.¹ I do not lose time in stating the doubts or probabilities which exist on these subjects. For us, the mechanical fact of the increase of thickness by every leaf’s action is all that needs attention. The reader who wishes for information as accurate as the present state of science admits, may consult Lindley’s *Introduction to Botany*,² and an interesting little book by Dr. Alexander Harvey on *Trees and their Nature* (Nisbet and Co., 1856), to which I owe much help.

¹ [Compare the lecture on “Tree Twigs,” below, p. 467.]

² [By John Lindley, F.R.S., 2 vols., 1848. For a reference to standard works of a later date, see above, p. lix. The full title of the other book referred to is *Trees and their Nature; or, The Bud and its Attributes. In a Series of Letters to his Sons*. Alexander Harvey, M.D.]

slender fibre, or at least fibre's thickness of wood, descends through shoot, through spray, through branch, and through stem; and having thus added, in its due proportion, to form the strength of the tree, labours yet farther and more painfully to provide for its security; and thrusting forward into the root, loses nothing of its mighty energy until, mining through the darkness, it has taken hold in cleft of rock or depth of earth, as extended as the sweep of its green crest in the free air.

§ 4. Such at least is the mechanical aspect of the tree. The work of its construction, considered as a branched tower, partly propped by buttresses, partly lashed by cables, is thus shared in by every leaf. But considering it as a living body to be nourished, it is probably an inaccurate analogy to speak of the leaves being taxed for the enlargement of the trunk. Strictly speaking, the trunk enlarges by sustaining them. For each leaf, however far removed from the ground, stands in need of nourishment derived from the ground, as well as of that which it finds in the air; and it simply sends its root down along the stem of the tree, until it reaches the ground and obtains the necessary mineral elements. The trunk has been therefore called by some botanists a "bundle of roots," but I think inaccurately. It is rather a messenger to the roots.* A root, properly so called, is a fibre, spongy or absorbent at the extremity, which secretes certain elements from the earth. The stem is by this definition no more a cluster of roots than a cluster of leaves, but a channel of intercourse between the roots and the leaves. It can gather no nourishment. It only carries nourishment, being, in fact, a group of canals for the conveyance of marketable commodities, with an electric telegraph attached to each,

* In the true sense, "a mediator" (mesithV).¹

¹ [See, in the Greek Testament, 1 Timothy ii. 5: "one mediator (mesithV) between God and men."]

transmitting messages from leaf to root, and root to leaf, up and down the tree. But whatever view we take of the operative causes, the external and visible fact is simply that every leaf does send down from its stalk a slender thread of woody matter along the sides of the shoot it grows upon; and that the increase of thickness in stem, proportioned to the advance of the leaves, corresponds with an increase of thickness in roots, proportioned to the advance of their outer fibres. How far interchange of elements takes place between root and leaf, it is not our work here to examine; the general and broad idea is this, that the whole tree is fed partly by the earth, partly by the air; strengthened and sustained by the one, agitated and educated by the other; all of it which is best, in substance, life and beauty, being drawn more from the dew of heaven than the fatness of the earth.¹ The results of this nourishment of the bough by the leaf in external aspect, are the object of our immediate inquiry.

§ 5. Hitherto we have considered the shoot as an ascending body, throwing off buds at intervals. This it is indeed; but the part of it which ascends is not seen externally. Look back to Plate 51. You will observe that each shoot is furrowed,² and that the ridges between the furrows rise in slightly spiral lines, terminating in the armllets under the buds which bore last year's leaves. These ridges, which rib the shoot so distinctly, are not on the ascending part of it. They are the contributions of each successive leaf thrown out as it ascended. Every leaf sent down a slender cord, covering and clinging to the shoot beneath, and increasing its thickness. Each, according to his size and strength, wove his little strand of cable, as a spider his thread; and cast it down the side of the springing tower by a marvellous magic—irresistible! The fall of a granite pyramid from an Alp may perhaps be stayed; the descending force of that silver thread shall not be stayed. It will split the rocks

¹ [Genesis xxvii. 28.]

² [Ruskin in his own copy has marked § 5 for revision.]

themselves at its roots, if need be, rather than fail in its work.

So many leaves, so many silver cords. Count—for by just the thickness of one cord, beneath each leaf, let fall in fivefold order round and round, the shoot increases in thickness to its root:—a spire built downwards from the heaven.

And now we see why the leaves dislike being above each other.¹ Each seeks a vacant place, where he may freely let fall the cord. The turning aside of the cable to avoid the buds beneath, is one of the main causes of spiral curvature, as the shoot increases. It required all the care I could give to the drawing, and all Mr. Armytage's skill in engraving Plate 51, to express, though drawing them nearly of their full size, the principal courses of curvature in even this least graceful of trees.

§ 6. According to the structure thus ascertained, the body of the shoot may at any point be considered as formed by a central rod, represented by the shaded inner circle, *a*, Fig. 36, surrounded by as many rods of descending external wood as there are leaves above the point where the section is made. The first five leaves above send down the first dark rods; and the next above send down those between, which, being from younger leaves, are less, but yet fill the interstices; then the third group sending down the smallest, it will be seen at a glance how a spiral action is produced. But it would lead us

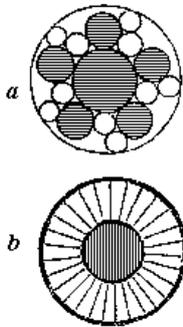


Fig. 36

into too subtle detail if I traced the forces of this gradual superimposition. I must be content to let the reader pursue this part of the subject for himself, if it amuses him, and proceed to larger questions.

§ 7. Broadly and practically, we may consider the whole cluster of woody material in Fig. 36 as one circle of fibrous substance formed round a small central rod. The real

¹ [See above, p. 30.]

appearance in most trees is approximately as in *b*, Fig. 36, the radiating structure becoming more distinct in proportion to the largeness and compactness of the wood.*

Now the next question is, how this descending external coating of wood will behave itself when it comes to the forking of the shoots. To simplify the examination of this, let us suppose the original or growing shoot (whose section is the shaded inner circle in Fig. 36) to have been in the form of a letter Y, and no thicker than a stout iron wire, as in Fig. 37. Down the arms of this letter Y, we have two fibrous streams running in the direction of the arrows. If the depth or thickness of these streams be such as at *b* and *c*, what will their thickness be when they unite at *e*? Evidently, the quantity of wood surrounding the vertical wire at *e* must be twice as great as that surrounding the wires *b* and *c*.

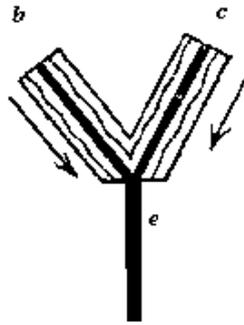


Fig. 37

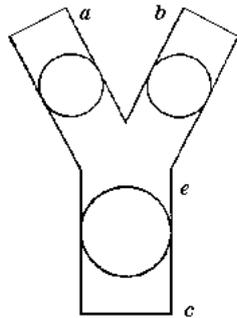


Fig. 38

§ 8. The reader will, perhaps, be good enough to take it on my word (if he does not know enough of geometry to ascertain), that the large circle, in Fig. 38, contains twice as much area as either of the two smaller circles. Putting these circles in position, so as to guide us, and supposing the trunk to be bounded by straight lines, we have for the outline of the fork that in Fig. 38. How, then, do the two minor circles change into one large one? The section of the stem at *a* is a circle; and at *b*, is a circle; and at *c*, a circle. But what is it at *e*? Evidently, if the two circles merely united gradually, without change of form through a series of figures, such as

* The gradual development of this radiating structure, which is organic and essential, composed of what are called by botanists medullary rays, is still a great mystery and wonder to me.

those at the top of Fig. 39, the quantity of wood, instead of remaining the same, would diminish from the contents of two circles to the contents of one. So for every loss, which the circles sustain at this junction, an equal quantity of wood must be thrust out somehow to the side. Thus, to enable the circles to run into each other, as far as shown at *b*, in Fig. 39, there must be a loss between them of as much wood as the shaded space. Therefore, half of that space must be added, or rather pushed out on each side, and the section of the uniting branch becomes approximately

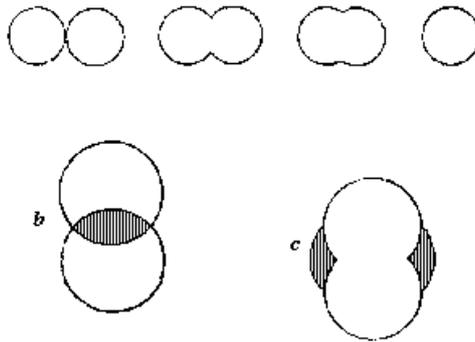


Fig. 39

as in *c*, Fig. 39; the wood squeezed out encompassing the stem more as the circles close, until the whole is reconciled into one larger single circle.

§ 9. I fear the reader would have no patience with me, if I asked him to examine, in longitudinal section, the lines of the descending currents of wood as they eddy into the increased single river. Of course, it is just what would take place if two strong streams, filling each a cylindrical pipe, ran together into one large cylinder, with a central rod passing up every tube. But, as this central rod increases, and, at the same time, the supply of the stream from above, every added leaf contributing its little current, the eddies of wood about the fork become intensely curious and interesting; of which thus much the reader may observe in a

moment by gathering a branch of any tree (laburnum shows it better, I think, than most), that the two meeting currents, first wrinkling a little, then rise in a low wave in the hollow of the fork, and flow over at the side, making their way to diffuse themselves round the stem, as in Fig. 40. Seen laterally, the bough bulges out below the fork, rather curiously and awkwardly, especially if more than two boughs meet at the same place, growing in one plane, so as to show the sudden increase on the profile. If the reader is interested in the subject, he will find strangely complicated and wonderful arrangements of stream when smaller boughs meet larger (one example is given in Plate 3, Vol. III.,¹ where the current of a smaller bough, entering upwards, pushes its way into the stronger rivers of the stem). But I cannot, of course, enter into such detail here.

§ 10. The little ringed accumulation, repelled from the wood of the larger trunk at the base of small boughs, may be seen at a glance in any tree, and needs no illustration; but I give one from Salvator, Fig. 41 (from his own etching,

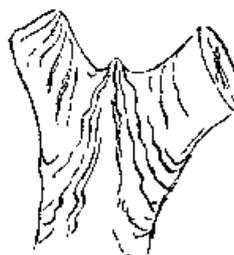


Fig. 40

Democritus omnium Derisor),² which is interesting, because it shows the swelling at the bases of insertion, which yet, Salvator's eye not being quick enough to detect the law of descent in the fibres, he, with his usual love of ugliness, fastens on this swollen character,

¹ ["Strength of Old Pine": Vol. V. p. 159.]

² [Ruskin's MS. shows that he had intended to contrast this Fig. 41 with one from Turner's *Liber Studiorum*—namely, the "Æsacus and Hesperie" (now reproduced in *Lectures on Landscape*):—

"I will anticipate our examination of branch aspects so far as to take a single example of junction of boughs from the etching of Æsacus and Hesperie. It shows at once the projection at the root of two minor boughs, highest on left, and the way their wood runs down the trunk, spreading round it as it descends. At the lower fork, where a large branch has been broken away, the size of it is told by the accumulation of the overflowing wave of wood; and at the bottom the little ringed projections are seen at the bases of minor branches joining the main stem. A magnificent example is given further on from the pollard willow."

For the pollard willow, see below, Fig. 61, p. 92.]

and exaggerates it into an appearance of disease. The same

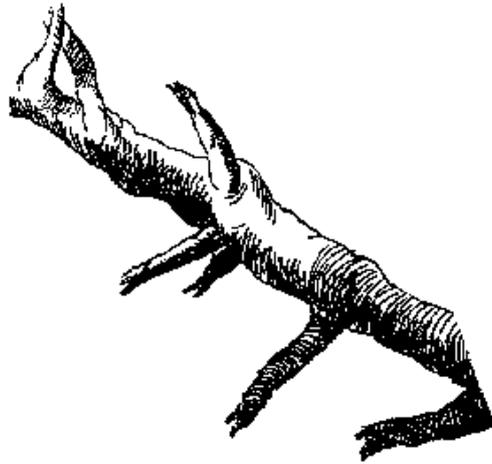


Fig. 41

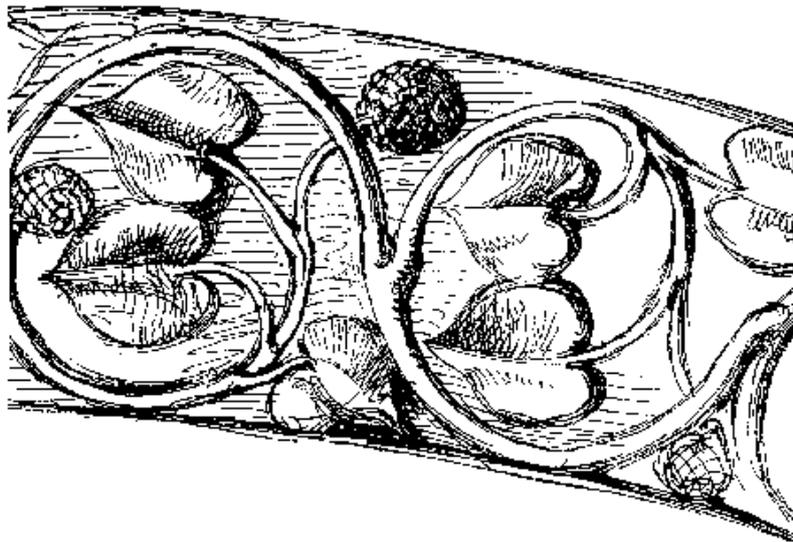


Fig. 42

bloated aspect may be seen in the example already given from another etching, Vol. III., Plate 4, Fig. 8.¹

¹ [From Salvator's "Finding of oedipus": Vol. V. p. 159, and the Plate facing p. 160.]

§ 11. I do not give any more examples from Claude. We have had enough already in Plate 4, Vol. III., which the reader should examine carefully. If he will then look

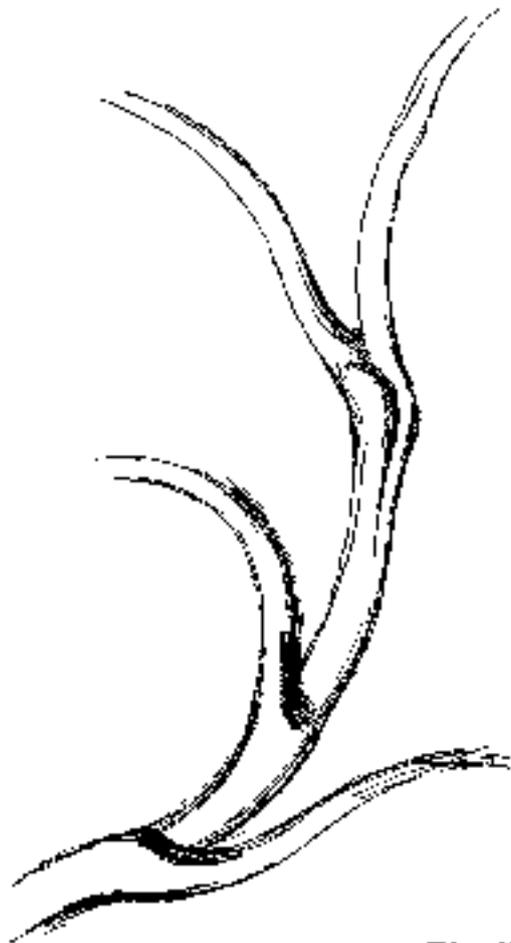


Fig. 43

forward to Fig. 61 here [p. 92], he will see how Turner inserts branches, and with what certain and strange instinct of fidelity he marks the wrinkled enlargement and sinuous eddies of the wood rivers where they meet.

And remember always that Turner's greatness and rightness in all these points successively depend on no scientific knowledge.¹ He was entirely ignorant of all the laws we have been developing. He had merely accustomed himself to see impartially, intensely, and fearlessly.

§ 12. It may, perhaps, be interesting to compare, with the rude fallacies of Claude and Salvator, a little piece of earliest art, wrought by men who could see and feel. The scroll, Fig. 42, is a portion of that which surrounds the arch in San Zeno of Verona, above the pillar engraved in the *Stones of Venice*, Plate 17, Vol. I.² It is, therefore, twelfth, or earliest thirteenth-century work. Yet the foliage is already full of spring and life; and in the part of the stem, which I have given of its real size in Fig. 43, the reader will perhaps be surprised to see at the junctions the laws of vegetation, which escaped the sight of all the degenerate landscape-painters of Italy, expressed by one of her simple architectural workmen six hundred years ago.

We now know enough, I think, of the internal conditions which regulate tree-structure to enable us to investigate, finally, the great laws of branch and stem aspect. But they are very beautiful; and we will give them a separate chapter.

¹ [For a similar remark upon Turner's geological accuracy, see note at Vol. III. p. 429.]

² [In this edition, Vol. IX. p. 383.]

CHAPTER VII

THE STEM¹

§ 1. WE must be content, in this most complex subject, to advance very slowly; and our easiest, if not our only way, will be to examine, first, the conditions under which boughs would form, supposing them all to divide in one plane, as your hand divides when you lay it flat on the table, with the fingers as wide apart as you can. And then we will deduce the laws of ramification which follow on the real structure of branches, which truly divide, not in one plane, but as your fingers separate if you hold a large round ball with them.

The reader has, I hope, a clear idea by this time of the main principle of tree-growth; namely, that the increase is by addition, or superimposition, not extension. A branch does not stretch itself out as a leech stretches its body. But it receives additions at its extremity, and proportional additions to its thickness. For although the actual living shoot, or growing point, of any year, lengthens itself gradually until it reaches its terminal bud, after that bud is formed, its length is fixed. It is thenceforth one joint of the tree, like the joint of a pillar, on which other joints of marble may be laid to elongate the pillar, but which will not itself stretch. A tree is thus truly edified, or built, like a house.

§ 2. I am not sure with what absolute stringency this law is observed, or what slight lengthening of substance may be traceable by close measurement among inferior branches.

¹ [With this chapter Ruskin's lecture on "Tree Twigs" should be compared; see below, Appendix I., pp. 467 *seq.*]

For practical purposes, we may assume that the law is final, and that if we represent the state of a plant, or extremity of branch, in any given year under the simplest possible type, Fig. 44, *a*, of two shoots, with terminal buds, springing from one stem, its growth next year may be expressed by the type, Fig. 44, *b*, in

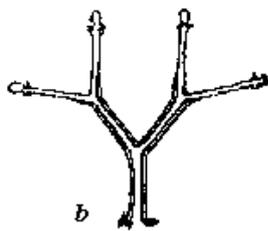


Fig. 44

which, the original stems not changing or increasing, the terminal buds have built up each another story of plant, or repetition of the original form; and, in order to support this new edifice, have sent down roots all the way to the ground, so as to enclose and thicken the inferior stem.

But if this is so, how does the original stem, which never lengthens, ever become the tall trunk of a tree? The arrangement just stated provides very satisfactorily for making it stout, but not for making it tall. If the ramification proceeds in this way, the tree must assuredly become a round

compact ball of short sticks, attached to the ground by a very stout, almost invisible, stem, like a puff-ball.

For if we take the form above, on a small scale, merely to see what comes of it, and carry its branching three steps farther, we get the successive conditions in Fig. 45, of which the last comes already round to the ground.

“But those forms really look something like trees!” Yes, if they were on a large scale. But each of the little shoots is only six or seven inches long; the whole cluster would but be three or four feet over, and touches the ground already at its extremity. It would enlarge if it went on growing, but never rise from the ground.

§ 3. This is an interesting question: one, also, which, I fear, we must solve, so far as yet it can be solved, with little help. Perhaps nothing is more curious in the history of human mind than the way in which the science of

botany has become oppressed by nomenclature.¹ Here is perhaps the first question which an intelligent child would think of asking about a tree: “Mamma, how does it make its trunk?” and you may open one botanical work after another, and good ones too, and by sensible men,—you shall not find this child’s question fairly put, much less fairly answered. You will be told gravely that a stem has received many names, such as *culmus*, *stipes*, and *truncus*; that twigs were once called *flagella*, but are now called *ramuli*; and that Mr. Link² calls a straight stem, with branches on its sides, a *caulis excurrentis*; and a stem, which at a certain distance above the earth breaks out into



Fig. 45

irregular ramifications, a *caulis deliquescentis*. All thanks and honour be to Mr. Link! But at this moment, when we want to know *why* one stem breaks out “at a certain distance,” and the other not at all, we find no great help in those splendid excurrenties and deliquescenties. “At a certain distance?” Yes: but why not before? or why then? How was it that, for many and many a year, the young shoots agreed to construct a vertical tower, or, at least, the nucleus of one, and then, one merry day, changed their minds, and built about their metropolis in all directions, nobody knows where, far into the air in free delight? How is it that yonder larch-stem grows straight and true, while its branches, constructed by the same process as the mother trunk, and under the mother trunk’s careful inspection and direction, nevertheless have lost all their manners, and go forking and flashing about, more like

¹ [Compare *Lectures on Art*, § 106; and Introduction to *Proserpina*.]

² [Heinrich Friedrich Link (1767–1851), Professor of Natural History and Director of the Botanical Garden at Berlin; author of numerous works on Botany.]

cracklings of spitefullest lightning than gentle branches of trees that dip green leaves in dew?

§ 4. We have probably, many of us, missed the point of such questions as these, because we too readily associated the structure of trees with that of flowers. The flowering part of a plant shoots out or up, in some given direction, until, at a stated period, it opens or branches into perfect form by a law just as fixed, and just as inexplicable, as that which numbers the joints of an animal's skeleton, and puts the head on its right joint. In many forms of flowers—foxglove, aloe, hemlock, or blossom of maize—the structure of the flowering part so far assimilates itself to that of a tree, that we not unnaturally think of a tree only as a large flower, or large remnant of flower, run to seed. And we suppose the time and place of its branching to be just as organically determined as the height of the stalk of straw, or hemlock pipe, and the fashion of its branching just as fixed as the shape of petals in a pansy or cowslip.

§ 5. But that is not so; not so in anywise. So far as you can watch a tree, it is produced throughout by repetitions of the same process, which repetitions, however, are arbitrarily directed so as to produce one effect at one time, and another at another time. A young sapling has his branches as much as the tall tree. He does not shoot up in a long thin rod, and begin to branch when he is ten or fifteen feet high, as the hemlock or foxglove does when each has reached its ten or fifteen inches. The young sapling conducts himself with all the dignity of a tree from the first;—only he so manages his branches as to form a support for his future life, in a strong straight trunk, that will hold him well off the ground. Prudent little sapling!—but how does he manage this? how keep the young branches from rambling about, till the proper time, or on what plea dismiss them from his service if they will not help his provident purpose? So again, there is no difference in mode of construction between the trunk of a pine and its

branch. But external circumstances so far interfere with the results of this repeated construction, that a stone pine rises for a hundred feet like a pillar, and then suddenly bursts into a cloud. It is the knowledge of the mode in which such change may take place which forms the true natural history of trees;—or, more accurately, their moral history. An animal is born with so many limbs, and a head of such a shape. That is, strictly speaking, not its history, but one fact in its history: a fact of which no other account can be given than that it was so appointed. But a tree is born without a head. It has got to make its own head. It is born like a little family from which a great nation is to spring; and at a certain time, under peculiar external circumstances, this nation, every individual of which remains the same in nature and temper, yet gives itself a new political constitution, and sends out branch colonies, which enforce forms of law and life entirely different from those of the parent state. That is the history of the state. It is also the history of a tree.

§ 6. Of these hidden histories, I know and can tell you as little as I did of the making of rocks.¹ It will be enough for me if I can put the difficulty fairly before you, show you clearly such facts as are necessary to the understanding of great Art, and so leave you to pursue, at your pleasure, the graceful mystery of this imperfect leafage life.

I took in the outset² the type of a *triple* bud as the most general that could be given of all trees, because it represents a prevalently upright main tendency, with a capacity of branching on both sides. I would have shown the power of branching on *all* sides if I could; but we must be content at first with the simplest condition. From what we have seen since of bud structure, we may now make our type more complete by giving each bud a root proportioned to its size. And our elementary type of tree plant will be as in Fig. 46.

¹ [See Vol. VI. p. 146.]

² [See above, p. 24.]

§ 7. Now these three buds, though differently placed, have all one mind. No bud has an oblique mind. Every one would like, if he could, to grow upright, and it is because the midmost one has entirely his own way in this matter, that he is largest. He is an elder brother;—his birthright is to grow straight towards the sky. A younger child may perhaps supplant him, if he does not care for his privilege. In the meantime all are of one family, and love each other,—so that the two lateral buds do not stoop aside



Fig. 46

because they like it, but to let their more favoured brother grow in peace. All the three buds and roots have at heart the same desire;—which is, the one to grow as straight as he can towards bright heaven, the other as deep as he can into dark earth. Up to light and down to shade;—into air and into rock:—that is their mind and purpose for ever. So far as they can, in kindness to each other, and by sufferance of external circumstances, work out that destiny, they will. But their beauty will not result from their working it out,—only from their maintained purpose and resolve to do so, if it may be. They will fail—certainly two, perhaps all three of them: fail egregiously;—ridiculously;—it may be, agonizingly. Instead of growing up, they may be wholly sacrificed to happier buds above, and have to grow *down*, sideways, roundabout ways, all sorts of ways. Instead of getting down quietly into the convent of the earth, they may have to cling and crawl about hardest and hottest angles of it, full in sight of man and beast, and roughly trodden under foot by them;—stumbling-blocks to many.

Yet out of such sacrifice, gracefully made—such misfortune, gloriously sustained—all their true beauty is to arise. Yes, and from more than sacrifice—more than misfortune: from *death*. Yes, and more than death: from the worst kind of death: not natural, coming to each in its due time; but premature, oppressed, unnatural, misguided—or so it would seem—to the poor dying sprays. Yet, without such death, no strong trunk were ever possible; no grace of

glorious limb or glittering leaf; no companionship with the rest of nature or with man.

§ 8. Let us see how this must be. We return to our poor little threefold type, Fig. 46, above. Next year he will become as in Fig. 47. The two lateral buds keeping as much as may be out of their brother's way, and yet growing upwards with a will, strike diagonal lines, and in moderate comfort accomplish their year's life and terminal buds. But what is to be done next? Forming the triple terminal head on this diagonal line, we find that one of our next year's buds, *c*, will have to grow down again, which is very hard; and another, *b*, will run right against the lateral branch of the upper bud, *A*, which must not be allowed under any circumstances.

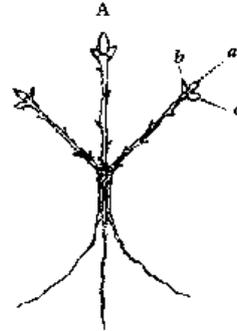


Fig. 47

What are we to do?

§ 9. The best we can. Give up our straightness, and some of our length, and consent to grow short, and crooked. Bud *b* shall

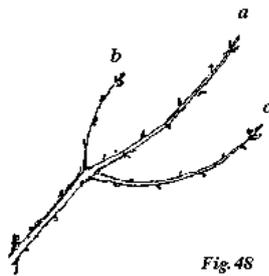


Fig. 48

be ordered to stoop forward and keep his head out of the great bough's way, as in Fig. 48, and grow as he best may, with the consumptive pain in his chest. To give him a little more room, the elder brother, *a*, shall stoop a little forward also, recovering himself when he has got out of *b*'s way; and bud *c* shall be encouraged to bend himself bravely round and up, after his first start in that disagreeable downward direction. Poor *b*, withdrawn from air and light between *a* and *A*, and having to live stooping besides, cannot make much of himself, and is stunted and feeble; *c*, having free play for his energies, bends up with a will, and becomes handsomer, to our minds, than if he had been straight, and *a* is none the worse for his concession to unhappy *b* in early life.

So far well for this year. But how for next? *b* is already too near the spray above him, even for his own strength and comfort; much less, with his weak constitution, will he be able to throw up any strong new shoots. And if he did, they would only run into those of the bough above. (If the reader will proceed in the construction of the whole figure he will see that this is so.) Under these discouragements and deficiencies, *b* is probably frost-bitten, and drops off. The bough proceeds, mutilated, and itself some what discouraged. But it repeats its sincere and



Fig. 49

good-natured compliances, and at the close of the year, new wood from all the leaves having concealed the stump, and effaced the memory of poor lost *b*, and perhaps a consolatory bud lower down having thrown out a tiny spray to

make the most of the vacant space near the main stem, we shall find the bough in some such shape as Fig. 49.

§ 10. Wherein we already see the germ of our irregularly bending branch, which might ultimately be much the prettier for the loss of *b*. Alas! the Fates have forbidden even this. While the low bough is making all these exertions, the boughs of *A*, above him, higher in air, have made the same under happier auspices. Every year their thicker leaves more and more forbid the light; and, after rain, shed their own drops unwittingly on the unfortunate lower bough, and prevent the air or sun from drying his bark or checking the chill in his medullary rays. Slowly a hopeless languor gains upon him. He buds here or there, faintly, in the spring; but the flow of strong wood from above oppresses him even about his root, where it joins the

trunk. The very sap does not turn aside to him, but rushes up to the stronger, laughing leaves far above. Life is no more worth having; and abandoning all effort, the poor bough drops, and finds consummation of destiny in helping an old woman's fire.

When he is gone, the one next above is left with greater freedom, and will shoot now from points of its sprays which were before likely to perish. Hence another condition of irregularity in form. But that bough also will fall in its turn, though after longer persistence. Gradually thus the central trunk is built, and the branches by whose help it was formed cast off, leaving here and there scars, which are all effaced by years, or lost sight of among the roughness and furrows of the aged surface. The work is continually advancing, and thus the head of foliage on any tree is not an expansion at a given height, like a flower-bell, but the collective group of boughs, or workmen, who have got up so far, and will get up higher next year, still losing one or two of their number underneath.

§ 11. So far well. But this only accounts for the formation of a vertical trunk. How is it that at a certain height this vertical trunk ceases to be built; and irregular branches spread in all directions?

First: In a great number of trees, the vertical trunk never ceases to be built. It is confused, at the top of the tree, among other radiating branches, being at first, of course, just as slender as they, and only prevailing over them in time. It shows at the top the same degree of irregularity and undulation as a sapling; and is transformed gradually into straightness lower down (see Fig. 50). The reader has only to take an hour's ramble, to see for himself how many trees are thus constructed, if circumstances are favourable to their growth. Again, the mystery of blossoming has great influence in increasing the tendency to dispersion among the upper boughs; but this part of vegetative structure I cannot enter into; it is too subtle, and has, besides, no absolute bearing on our subject; the principal conditions which

produce the varied play of branches being purely mechanical. The point at which they show a determined tendency to spread is generally to be conceived as a place of *rest* for the tree, where it has reached the height from the ground at which ground-mist, imperfect circulation of air, etc., have ceased to operate injuriously on it, and where it has free room, and air, and light for its growth.

§ 12. I find there is quite an infinite interest in watching the different ways in which trees part their sprays at this resting-place, and the sometimes abrupt, sometimes gentle and undiscoverable, severing of the upright stem into the wandering and wilful branches; but a volume, instead of a chapter or two,

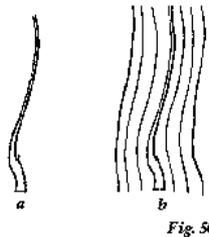


Fig. 50

and quite a little gallery of plates would be needed to illustrate the various grace of this division, associated as it is with an exquisitely subtle effacing of undulation in the thicker stems, by the flowing down of the wood from above; the curves which are too violent in the branches being filled up, so that what was as at *a*, Fig. 50, becomes as at *b*, and when the main stem is old, passes at last into straightness by almost imperceptible curves, a continually graduated emphasis of curvature being carried to the branch extremities.

§ 13. Hitherto we have confined ourselves entirely to examination of stems in one plane. We must glance—though only to ascertain how impossible it is to do more than glance—at the conditions of form which result from the throwing out of branches, not in one plane, but on all sides. “As your fingers divide when they hold a ball,” I said:¹ or, better, a large cup, without a handle. Consider how such ramification will appear in one of the bud groups, that of our old friend the oak. We saw it opened usually into five shoots. Imagine then (Fig. 51), a five-sided cup or funnel with a stout rod running through the centre of

¹ [See above, § 1, p. 69.]

it. In the figure it is seen from above, so as partly to show the inside, and a little obliquely, that the central rod may not hide any of the angles. Then let us suppose that, where the angles of this cup were, we have, instead, five rods, as in Fig. 52, A, like the ribs of a pentagonal umbrella turned inside out by the wind. I dot the pentagon which connects their extremities, to keep their positions clear. Then these five rods, with the central one, will represent the five shoots, and the leader, from a vigorous young oak-spray. Put the leaves on each; the five-foiled star at its extremity, and the others, now not quite formally, but still on the whole as in Fig. 3 above [p. 26], and we have the result, Fig. 52, B—rather a pretty one.



Fig. 51

§ 14. By considering the various aspects which the five rods would take in Fig. 52, as the entire group was seen from below or above, and at different angles and distances, the reader may find out for himself what changes of aspect are possible in even so regular a structure as this. But the branchings soon take more complex symmetry. We know that next year each of these five subordinate rods is to enter into life on its own account, and to repeat the branching of the first. Thus, we shall have five pentagonal cups surrounding a large central pentagonal cup. This figure, if the reader likes a pretty perspective problem, he may construct for his own pleasure:—which having done, or conceived, he is then to apply the great principles of subjection and resilience, not to three branches only, as in Fig. 49, but to the five of each cup;—by which the cups get flattened out and bent up, as you may have seen vessels of Venetian glass, so that every cup actually takes something the shape of a thick aloe or artichoke leaf; and they surround the central one, not as a bunch of grapes surrounds

a grape at the end of it, but as the petals grow round the centre of a rose. So that any one of these lateral branches—though, seen from above, it would present a symmetrical figure, as if it were not flattened (A, Fig. 53)—seen sideways, or in profile, will show itself to be at least as much flattened as at B.

§ 15. You may thus regard the whole tree as composed of a series of such thick, flat, branch-leaves; only incomparably

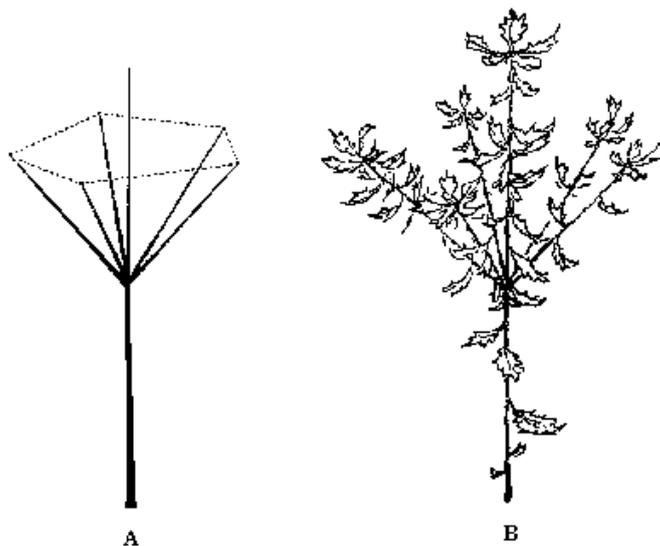


Fig. 52

more varied and enriched in framework as they spread; and arranged more or less in spirals round the trunk. Gather a cone of a Scotch fir; begin at the bottom of it, and pull off the seeds, so as to show one of the spiral rows of them continuously, from the bottom to the top, leaving enough seeds above them to support the row. Then the gradual lengthening of the seeds from the root, their spiral arrangement, and their limitation within a curved, convex form, furnish the best *severe* type you can have of the branch system of all stemmed trees; and each seed of the cone represents, not badly, the sort of flattened solid

leaf-shape which all complete branches have. Also, if you will try to draw the spiral of the fir-cone, you will understand something about tree-perspective, which may be generally useful. Finally, if you note the way in which the seeds of the cone slip each farther and farther over each other, so as to change sides in the middle of the cone, and obtain a reversed action of spiral lines in the upper half, you may imagine what a piece of work it would be for both of us, if we were to try to follow the complexities of branch order in trees of irregular growth, such as the rhododendron.



Fig. 53

I tried to do it, at least, for the pine, in section, but saw I was getting into a perfect maelström of spirals, from which no efforts would have freed me, in any imaginable time, and the only safe way was to keep wholly out of the stream.

§ 16. The alternate system, leading especially to the formation of forked trees, is more manageable; and if the reader is master of perspective, he may proceed some distance in the examination of that for himself. But I do not care to frighten the general reader by many diagrams: the book is always sure to open at them when he takes it up. I will venture on one which has perhaps something a little amusing about it, and is really of importance.

§ 17. Let X, Fig. 54, represent a shoot of any opposite-leaved tree. The mode in which it will grow into a tree

depends, mainly, on its disposition to lose the leader or a lateral shoot. If it keeps the leader, but drops the lateral, it takes the form A, and next year by a repetition of the process, B. But if it keeps the laterals, and drops the leader, it becomes, first, C, and next year, D. The form A is almost universal in spiral or alternate trees; and it is

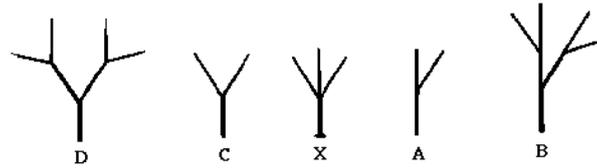


Fig. 54

especially to be noted as bringing about this result, that in any given forking, one bough always goes on in its own direct course, and the other leaves it softly: they do not separate as if one was repelled from the other. Thus in Fig. 55, a perfect and nearly symmetrical piece of ramification, by Turner (lowest bough but one in the tree on the left in the “Château of La belle Gabrielle”¹), the leading bough,

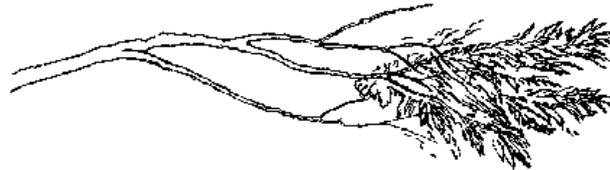


Fig. 55

going on in its own curve, throws off, first, a bough to the right, then one to the left, then two small ones to the right, and proceeds itself, hidden by leaves, to form the farthest upper point of the branch.

The lower secondary bough—the first thrown off—proceeds in its own curve, branching first to left, then to right.

¹ [In the *Keepsake* for 1834; for another reference to the foliage in this drawing, see Vol. III. p. 587.]

The upper bough proceeds in the same way, throwing off first to left, then to right. And this is the commonest and most graceful structure. But if the tree loses the leader, as at C, Fig. 54 (and many opposite trees have a trick of doing so), a very curious result is arrived at, which I will give in a geometrical form.

§ 18. The number of branches which die, so as to leave the main stem bare, is always greatest low down, or near the interior of the tree. It follows that the lengths of stem which do not fork diminish gradually to the extremities, in a fixed proportion. This is a general law. Assume, for example's sake, the stem to separate always into two branches, at an equal angle, and that each branch is three-quarters of the length of the preceding one. Diminish their thicknesses in proportion, and carry out the figure any extent you like. In Plate 56, opposite, Fig. 1,¹ you have it at its ninth branch; in which I wish you to notice, first, the delicate curve formed by every complete line of the branches (compare Vol. IV. Fig. 91²) and, secondly, the very curious result of the top of the tree being a broad flat line, which passes at an angle into lateral shorter lines, and so down to the extremities. It is this property which renders the contours of tops of trees so intensely difficult to draw rightly, without making their curves too smooth and insipid.

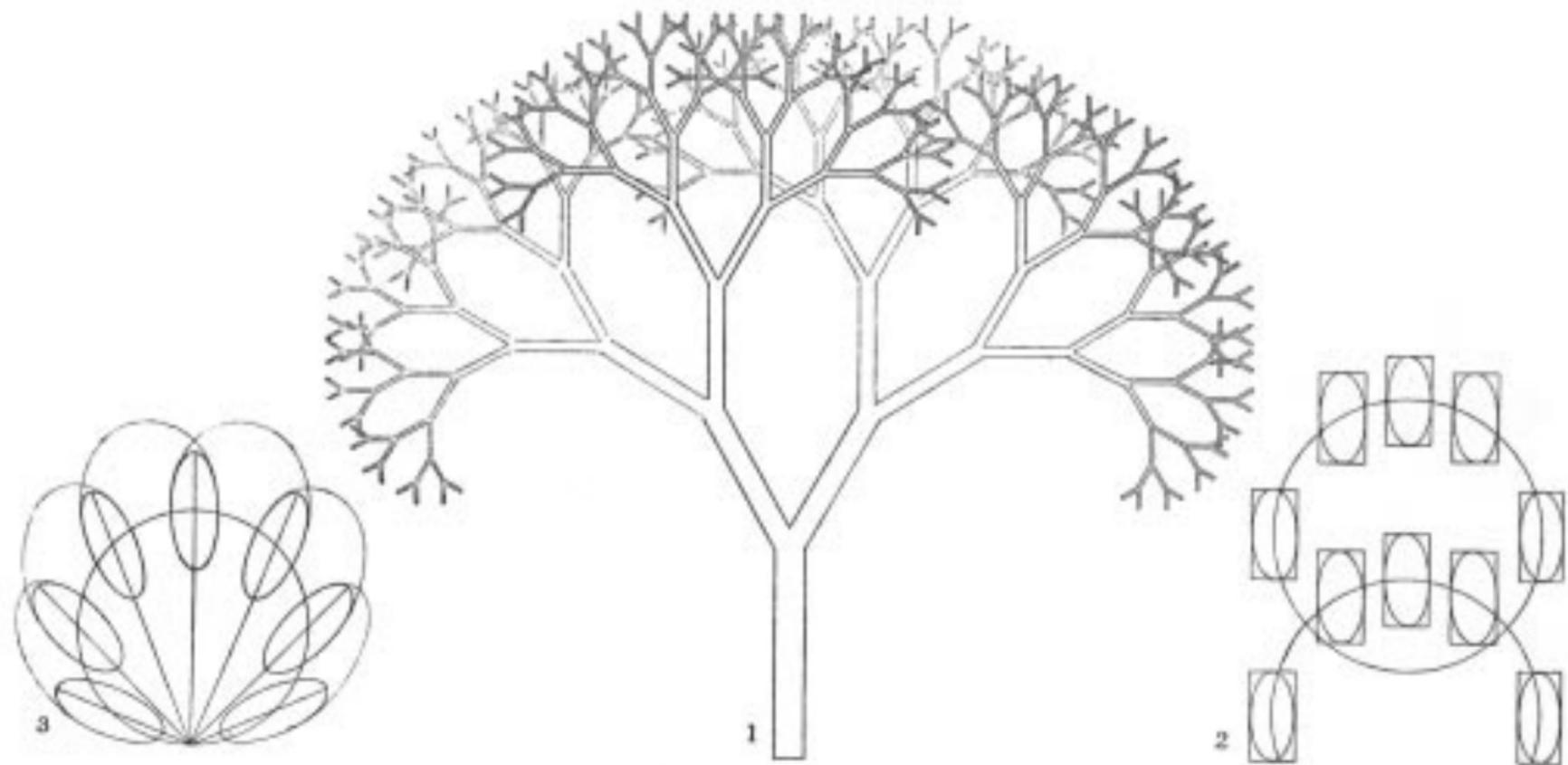
Observe, also, that the great weight of the foliage being thrown on the outside of each main fork, the tendency of forked trees is very often to droop and diminish the bough on one side, and erect the other into a principal mass.*

* This is Harding's favourite form of tree.³ You will find it much insisted on in his works on foliage. I intended to have given a figure to show the results of the pressure of the weight of all the leafage on a great lateral bough, in modifying its curves, the strength of timber being greatest where the leverage of the mass tells most. But I find nobody ever reads things which it takes any trouble to understand, so that it is of no use to write them.

¹ [For the references to Figs. 2 and 3 on this Plate, see below, pp. 155–156.]

² [In this edition, Vol. VI. p. 322.]

³ [For the foliage of Harding, see Vol. III. pp. 578–579, 591, 596 *seq.* Vol. VI. pp. 100–101; and Vol. XV. pp. 112 *seq.*]



J. Franklin,

56. Sketch by a Clerk of the Works.

J. Franklin
André & Steig, St.

§ 19. But the form in a perfect tree is dependent on the revolution of this sectional profile, so as to produce a mushroom-shaped or cauliflower-shaped mass, of which I leave the reader to enjoy the perspective drawing by himself, adding, after he has completed it, the effect of the law of resilience to the extremities. Only, he must note this: that in real trees, as the branches rise from the ground, the open spaces underneath are partly filled by subsequent branchings, so that a real tree has not so much the shape of a mushroom, as of an apple, or, if elongated, a pear.

§ 20. And now you may just begin to understand a little of Turner's meaning in those odd pear-shaped trees of his,¹ in the "Mercury and Argus," and other such compositions: which, however, before we can do completely, we must gather our evidence together, and see what general results will come of it respecting the hearts and fancies of trees, no less than their forms.

¹ [See Vol. VI. p. 300. For "Mercury and Argus," see Plate 14 in Vol. III. (p. 638).]

CHAPTER VIII

THE LEAF MONUMENTS

§ 1. AND now, having ascertained in its main points the system on which the leaf-workers build, let us see, finally, what results in aspect, and appeal to human mind, their building must present. In some sort it resembles that of the coral animal, differing, however, in two main points. First, the animal which forms branched coral, builds, I believe, in calm water, and has few accidents of current, light, or heat to contend with. He builds in monotonous ramification, untormented, therefore unbeautiful. Secondly, each coral animal builds for himself, adding his cell to what has been before constructed, as a bee adds another cell to the comb. He obtains no essential connection with the root and foundation of the whole structure. That foundation is thickened clumsily, by a fused and encumbering aggregation, as a stalactite increases;—not by threads proceeding from the extremities to the root.

§ 2. The leaf, as we have seen, builds in both respects under opposite conditions. It leads a life of endurance, effort, and various success, issuing in various beauty; and it connects itself with the whole previous edifice by one sustaining thread, continuing its appointed piece of work all the way from top to root. Whence result three great conditions in branch aspect, for which I cannot find good names, but must use the imperfect ones of “Spring,” “Caprice,” “Fellowship.”

§ 3. I. SPRING: or the appearance of elastic and progressive power, as opposed to the look of a bent piece of cord.—This follows partly on the poise of the bough,

partly on its action in seeking or shunning. Every branchline expresses both these. It takes a curve accurately showing the relations between the strength of the sprays in that position (growing downward, upward, or laterally), and the weight of leaves they carry; and again, it takes a curve expressive of the will or aim of those sprays, during all their life, and handed down from sire to son, in steady inheritance of resolution to reach forward in a given direction, or bend away from some given evil influence.

And all these proportionate strengths and measured efforts of the bough produce its loveliness, and ought to be felt, in looking at it, not by any mathematical evidence, but by the same fine instinct which enables us to perceive, when a girl dances rightly, that she moves easily, and with delight to herself; that her limbs are strong enough, and her body tender enough, to move precisely as she wills them to move. You cannot say of any bend of arm or foot what precise relations of their curves to the whole figure manifest, in their changeful melodies, that ease of motion; yet you feel that they do so, and you feel it by a true instinct. And if you reason on the matter farther, you may know, though you cannot see, that an absolute mathematical necessity proportions every bend of the body to the rate and direction of its motion, and that the momentary fancy and fire of the will measure themselves, even in their gaily-fancied freedom, by stern laws of nervous life, and material attraction, which regulate eternally every pulse of the strength of man, and every sweep of the stars of heaven.

§ 4. Observe, also, the balance of the bough of a tree is quite as subtle as that of a figure in motion. It is a balance between the elasticity of the bough and the weight of leaves, affected in curvature, literally, by the growth of *every* leaf; and besides this, when it moves, it is partly supported by the resistance of the air, greater or less, according to the shape of leaf;—so that branches float on the wind more than they yield to it; and in their tossing



do not so much bend under a force, as rise on a wave, which penetrates in liquid threads through all their sprays.

§ 5. I am not sure how far, by any illustration, I can exemplify these subtle conditions of form. All my plans have been shortened, and I have learned to content myself with yet more contracted issues of them after the shortening, because I know that nearly all in such matters must be said or shown, unavailably. No saying will teach the truth. Nothing but doing. If the reader will draw boughs of trees long and faithfully, giving previous pains to gain the power (how rare!) of drawing *anything* faithfully, he will come to see what Turner's work is, or any other right work; but not by reading, nor thinking, nor idly looking. However, in some degree, even our ordinary instinctive perception of grace and balance may serve us, if we choose to pay any accurate attention to the matter.

§ 6. Look back to Fig. 55. That bough of Turner's is exactly and exquisitely poised, leaves and all, for its present horizontal position. Turn the book so as to put the spray upright, with the leaves at the top. You ought to see they would then be wrong;—that they must, in that position, have adjusted themselves more directly above the main stem, and more firmly, the curves of the lighter sprays being a deflection caused by their weight in the horizontal position. Again, Fig. 56 represents, enlarged to four times the size of the original, the two Scotch firs in Turner's etching of Inverary.* These are both in perfect poise, representing a double action: the warping of the trees away from the sea-wind, and the continual growing out of the boughs on the right-hand side, to recover the balance.

* They are enlarged, partly, in order to show the care and minuteness of Turner's drawing on the smallest scale, partly to save the reader the trouble of using a magnifying glass, partly because this woodcut will print safely; while if I had facsimiled the fine Turner etching,¹ the block might have been spoiled after a hundred impressions.

¹ [In *Liber Studiorum*; the drawing for the Plate is No. 501 in the National Gallery.]

Turn the page so as to be horizontal, and you ought to feel that, considered now as branches, both would be out of balance. If you turn the heads of the trees to your right,

*Fig. 57**Fig. 58*

they are wrong, because gravity would have bent them more downwards; if to your left, wrong, because the law of resilience would have raised them more at the extremities.

§ 7. Now take two branches of Salvator's, Figs. 57 and

58.* You ought to feel that these have neither poise nor spring; their leaves are incoherent, ragged, hanging together in decay.

Immediately after these, turn to Plate 57 opposite. The branch at the top is facsimiled from that in the hand of Adam, in Dürer's Adam and Eve.† It is full of the most exquisite vitality and spring in every line. Look at it for five minutes carefully. Then turn back to Salvator's, Fig. 57. Are you as well satisfied with it? You ought to feel that it is not strong enough at the origin to sustain the leaves; and that if it were, those leaves themselves are in broken or forced relations with each other. Such relations might, indeed, exist in a partially withered tree, and one of these branches is intended to be partially withered, but the other is not; and if it were, Salvator's choice of the withered tree is precisely the sign of his preferring ugliness to beauty, decrepitude and disorganization to life and youth. The leaves on the spray, by Dürer, hold themselves as the girl holds herself in dancing; those on Salvator's, as an old man, partially palsied, totters along with broken motion, and loose deflection of limb.

§ 8. Next, let us take a spray by Paul Veronese‡—the

* Magnified to twice the size of the original, but otherwise facsimiled from his own etchings of *œdipus*, and the *School of Plato*.

† The parrot perched on it is removed, which may be done without altering the curve, as the bird is set where its weight would not have bent the wood.¹

‡ The largest laurel spray in the background of the "Susanna," Louvre²—reduced to about a fifth of the original. The drawing was made for me by M. Hippolyte Dubois,³ and I am glad it is not one of my own, lest I should be charged with exaggerating Veronese's accuracy.

This group of leaves is, in the original, of the life-size; the circle which interferes with the spray on the right being the outline of the head of one of the elders; and, as painted for distant effect, there is no care in completing the stems:—they are struck with a few broken touches of the brush, which cannot be imitated in the engraving, and much of their spirit is lost in consequence.

¹ [For other references to the "Adam and Eve," see Vol. V. p. 159 and *n.*]

² [For another references to the "exquisitely painted laurel leaves" in this picture, see "Notes on the Louvre" (Vol. XII. p. 460). The original Plate has been slightly reduced for this edition.]

³ [Henri Pierre Hippolyte Dubois, French engraver, 1837–1890.]



H. Debus

H. P. Coff
Allen & Co. St.

57. Leafage by Durer and Veronese.

lower figure in Plate 57. It is just as if we had gathered one out of the garden. Though every line and leaf in the quadruple group is necessary to join with other parts of the composition of the noble picture, every line and leaf is also as free and true as if it were growing. None are confused, yet none are loose; all are individual, yet none separate, in tender poise of pliant strength and fair order of accomplished grace, each, by due force of the indulgent bough, set and sustained.¹

§ 9. Observe, however, that in all these instances from earlier



Fig. 59

masters, the expression of the universal botanical law of poise is independent of accuracy in rendering of species. As before noticed,² the neglect of specific distinction long restrained the advance of landscape, and even hindered Turner himself in many respects. The sprays of Veronese are a conventional type of laurel; Albert Dürer's, an imaginary branch of paradisiacal vegetation; Salvator's, a rude reminiscence of sweet chestnut; Turner's only is a faithful rendering of the Scotch fir.

§ 10. To show how the principle of balance is carried out by Nature herself, here is a little terminal upright spray of willow, the most graceful of English trees (Fig. 59). I have drawn it carefully; and if the reader

will study its curves, or, better, trace and pencil them with a perfectly fine point, he will feel, I think, without difficulty, their finished relation to the leaves they sustain. Then, if

¹ [The MS. adds here:—

“That Paul Veronese is botanically right in every line is the natural result of the tender thought which makes him seek the loveliness of every line. Salvator's preference for distortion makes his very distortion false. Veronese's delight in what is perfect and fair makes all his fairness true.”]

² [See, on the subject of generalisation, the Preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters*, vol. i. §§ 27 *seq.* (Vol. III. pp. 33 *seq.*, and compare *ibid.*, pp. 333, 435, and Vol. IV. pp. 173–174).]

we turn suddenly to a piece of Dutch branch-drawing (Fig. 60), facsimiled from No. 160 Dulwich Gallery (Berghem),¹ he will understand, I believe, also the qualities of that, without comment of mine. It is of course not so dark in

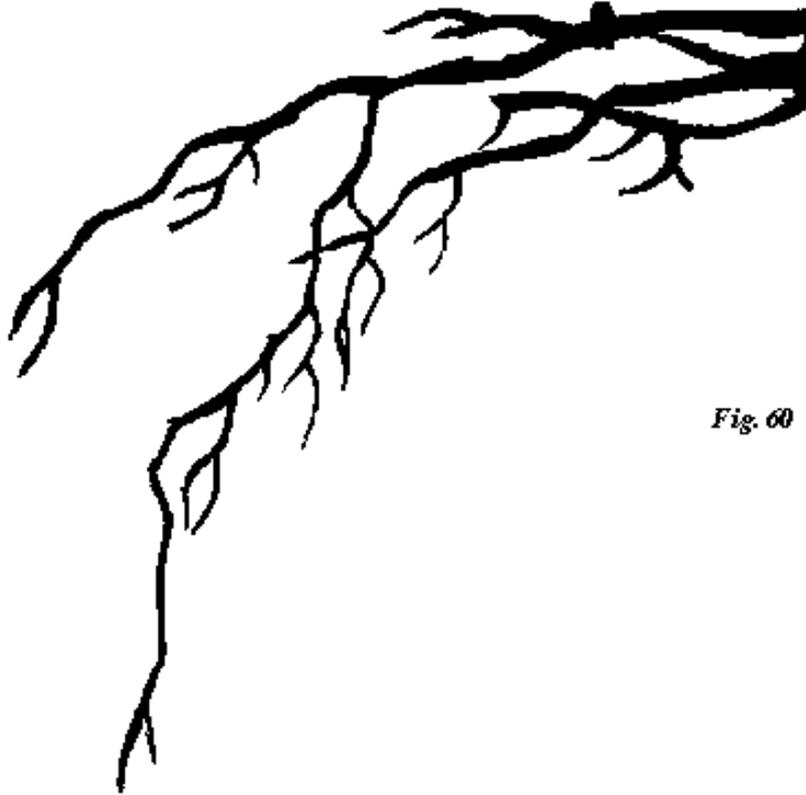


Fig. 60

the original, being drawn with the chance dashes of a brush loaded with brown, but the contours are absolutely as in the woodcut. This Dutch design is a very characteristic example of two faults in tree-drawing; namely, the loss not only of grace and spring, but of woodiness. A branch is

¹ [Now No. 122: "A Road through a Wood, with Figures."]

not elastic as steel is, neither as a carter's whip is. It is a combination, wholly peculiar, of elasticity with half-dead and sapless stubbornness, and of continuous curve with pauses of knottiness, every bough having its blunted, affronted, fatigued, or repentant moments of existence, and mingling crabbed rugosities and fretful changes of mind with the main tendencies of its growth. The piece of pollard willow (Fig. 61), facsimiled from Turner's etching of "Young Anglers," in the *Liber Studiorum*,¹ has all these characters in perfectness, and may serve for sufficient study of them. It is impossible to explain in what the expression of the woody strength consists, unless it be felt. One very obvious condition is the excessive fineness of curvature, approximating continually to a straight line. In order to get a piece of branch curvature given as accurately as I could by an unprejudiced person, I set one of my pupils at the Working Men's College (a joiner by trade)² to draw, last spring, a lilac branch of its real size, as it grew, before it budded. It was about six feet long, and before he could get it quite right, the buds came out and interrupted him; but the fragment he got drawn is engraved in flat profile, in Plate 58. It has suffered much by reduction, one or two of its finest curves having become lost in the mere thickness of the lines. Nevertheless, if the reader will compare it carefully with the Dutch work, it will teach him something about trees.

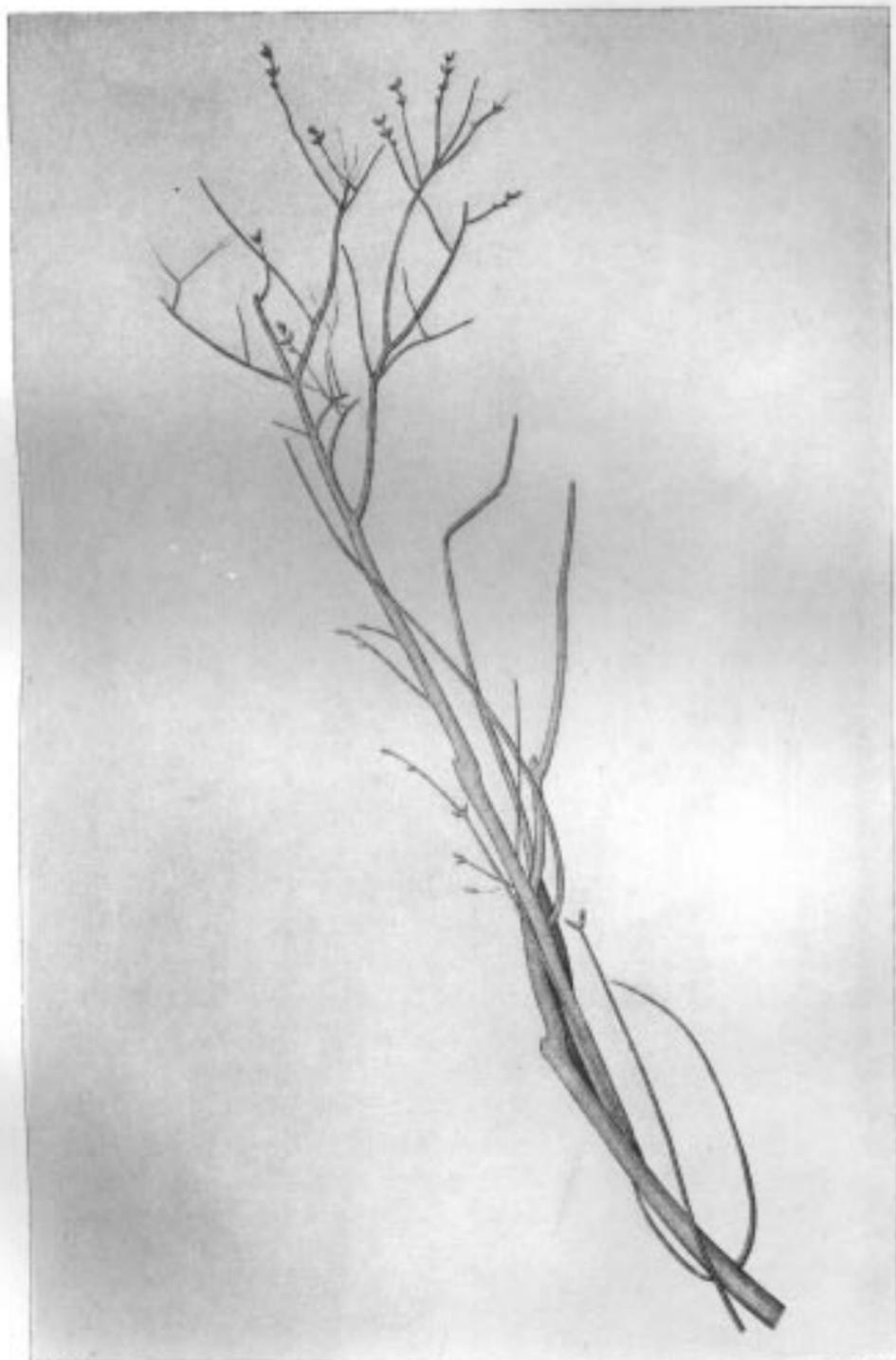
§ 11. II. CAPRICE.—The next character we had to note of the leaf-builders was their capriciousness, noted partly in Vol. III. Chap. IX. § 14.³ It is a character connected with the ruggedness and ill-temperedness just spoken of, and an essential source of branch beauty: being in reality the written story of all the branch's life,—of the theories it formed, the accidents it suffered, the fits of enthusiasm to which it yielded in certain delicious warm springs; the

¹ [The drawing for the Plate is No. 510 in the National Gallery.]

² [Mr. George Allen.]

³ [Vol. V. p. 163.]





G. Allen.

G. Cook.
Allen & Co. Sc.

58. Branch Curvature.

disgusts at weeks of east wind, the mortifications of itself for its friends' sakes; or the sudden and successful inventions of new ways of getting out to the sun. The reader will understand this character in a moment, by merely comparing Fig. 62, which is a branch of Salvator's,* with Fig. 63, which I have traced from the engraving, in the Yorkshire series, of Turner's "Aske Hall."¹ You cannot but feel at once, not



Fig. 62



Fig. 63

only the wrongness of Salvator's, but its dulness. It is not now a question either of poise, or grace, or gravity; only of wit. That bough has got no sense; it has not been struck by a single new idea from the beginning of it to the end; dares not even cross itself with one of its own sprays. You will be amazed, in taking up any of these old engravings, to see how seldom the boughs *do* cross each other. Whereas,

* The longest in "Apollo and the Sibyl," engraved by Boydell. (Reduced one-half.)

¹ [For another reference to the "Aske Hall," see Vol. III. p. 586.]

in nature, not only is the intersection of extremities a mathematical necessity (see Plate 56), but out of this intersection and crossing of curve by curve, and the opposition of line it involves, the best part of their composition arises. Look at the way the boughs are interwoven in that piece of lilac stem (Plate 58).

§ 12. Again: As it seldom struck the old painters that boughs must cross each other, so it never seems to have occurred to them that they must be sometimes foreshortened. I chose this bit from “Aske Hall,” that you might see at once, both how Turner foreshortens the main stem, and how, in doing so, he shows the turning aside, and outwards, of the one next to it, to the left, to get more air.* Indeed, this foreshortening lies at the core of the business; for unless it be well understood, no branch-form can ever be rightly drawn. I placed the oak spray in Plate 51, so as to be seen as nearly straight on its flank as possible. It is the most uninteresting position in which a bough can be drawn; but it shows the first simple action of the law of resilience. I will now turn the bough with its extremity towards us, and foreshorten it (Plate 59), which being done, you perceive another tendency in the whole branch, not seen at all in the first Plate, to throw its sprays to its own right (or to your left), which it does to avoid the branch next it, while the *forward* action is in a sweeping curve round to your right, or to the branch’s left: a curve which it takes to recover position after its first concession. The lines of the nearer and smaller shoots are very nearly—thus foreshortened—those of a boat’s bow. Here is a piece of Dutch foreshortening for you to compare with it, Fig. 64.†

* The foreshortening of the bough to the right is a piece of great audacity; it comes towards us two or three feet sharply, after forking, so as to look suddenly half as thick again as at the fork; then bends back again, and outwards.

† Hobbima. Dulwich Gallery, No. 131.¹ Turn the book with its outer edge down.

¹ [Now No. 87. See above, Part vi. ch. v. § 5.]



J. Franklin.

R. P. Cuff
Allen & Co. So.

59. The Dryad's Waywardness.

§ 13. In this final perfection of bough-drawing, Turner stands *wholly alone*. Even Titian does not foreshorten his boughs rightly. Of course he could, if he had cared to do so; for if you can foreshorten a limb or a hand, much more a tree branch. But either he had never looked at a tree carefully enough to feel that it was necessary, or, which is more likely, he disliked to introduce in a background elements of vigorous projection. Be the reason what it may, if you take Lefèbre's plates¹ of the Peter Martyr and St. Jerome—the only ones I know which give any idea of Titian's tree-drawing, you will observe at once that the boughs lie in flakes, artificially set to the right and left, and are not intricate or varied, even where the foliage indicates some foreshortening;—completing thus the evidence for my statement long ago given, that no man but Turner had ever drawn the stem of a tree.²



Fig. 64

§ 14. It may be well also to note, for the advantage of the general student of design, that, in foliage and bough drawing, all the final grace and general utility of the study

¹ [For particulars of these Plates, see below, Part viii. ch. ii. § 12. The "St. Jerome" (the second plate in Lefèbre's collection) is in the Church of S. Maria Nova in Venice; the "Peter Martyr" (for which see Vol. III. p. 28 *n.*) is the third Plate.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 252), and compare *ibid.*, p. 585.]

depend on its being well foreshortened; and that, till the power of doing so quite accurately is obtained, no landscape-drawing is of the least value; nor can the character of any tree be known at all until not only its branches, but its minutest extremities, have been drawn in the severest foreshortening, with little accompanying plans of the arrangements of the leaves or buds, or thorns, on the stem. Thus Fig. 65 is the extremity of a single shoot of spruce fir, foreshortened, showing the resilience of its swords from beneath; and Fig. 66 is a little ground-plan, showing the position of the three lowest triple groups of thorn on



Fig. 65

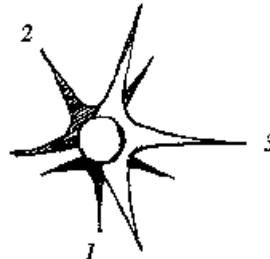


Fig. 66

shoot of gooseberry.* The fir shoot is carelessly drawn; but it is not worth while to do it better, unless I engraved it on steel, so as to show the fine relations of shade.

§ 15. III. FELLOWSHIP.—The compactness of mass presented by this little sheaf of pine-swords may lead us to the consideration of the last character I have to note of boughs; namely, the mode of their association in masses. It follows, of course, from all the laws of growth we have ascertained, that the terminal outline of any tree or branch must be a simple one, containing within it, at a given height or level, the series of leaves of the year; only we

* Their change from groups of three to groups of two, and then to single thorns at the end of the spray, will be found very beautiful in a real shoot. The figure on the left in Plate 52 [p. 40] is a branch of blackthorn with its spines (which are a peculiar condition of branch, and can bud like branches, while thorns have no root nor power of development). Such a branch gives good practice without too much difficulty.

have not yet noticed the kind of from which results, in each branch, from the part it has to take in forming the mass of the tree. The systems of branching are indeed infinite, and could not be exemplified by any number of types; but here are two common types, in section, which will enough explain what I mean.

§ 16. If a tree branches with a concave tendency, it is apt to carry its boughs to the outer curve of limitation, as

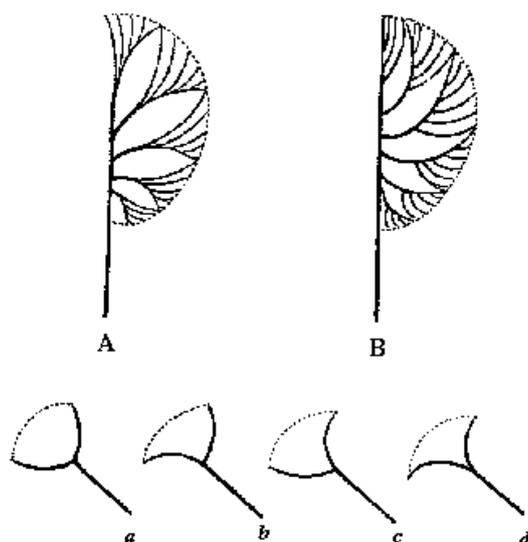


Fig. 67

at A, Fig. 67, and if with a convex tendency, as at B. In either case the vertical section, or profile, of a bough will give a triangular mass, terminated by curves, and elongated at one extremity. These triangular masses you may see at a glance, prevailing in the branch system of any tree in winter. They may, of course, be mathematically reduced to the four types, *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, Fig. 67, but are capable of endless variety of expression in action, and in the adjustment of their weights to the bearing stem.

§ 17. To conclude, then, we find that the beauty of these buildings of the leaves consists, from the first step of

it to the last, in its showing their perfect fellowship; and a single aim uniting them under circumstances of various distress, trial, and pleasure. Without the fellowship, no beauty; without the steady purpose, no beauty; without trouble, and death, no beauty; without individual pleasure, freedom, and caprice, so far as may be consistent with the universal good, no beauty.



Fig. 68

§ 18. Tree-loveliness might be thus lost or killed in many ways. Discordance would kill it—of one leaf with another; disobedience would kill it—of any leaf to the ruling law; indulgence would kill it, and the doing away with pain; or slavish symmetry would kill it, and the doing away with delight. And this is so, down to the smallest atom and beginning of life: so soon as there is life at all, there are these four conditions of it;—harmony, obedience, distress, and delightful inequality. Here is the magnified section of an oak-bud, not the size of a wheat grain (Fig. 68). Already its nascent leaves are seen arranged under the perfect law of resilience, preparing for stoutest work on the right side. Here is a dogwood bud just opening into life (Fig. 69). Its ruling law is to be four square, but see how the uppermost leaf takes the lead, and the lower bends up, already a little distressed by the effort. Here is a birch-bud, farther advanced (Fig. 70). Who shall say how many humours the little thing has in its mind already; or how many adventures it has passed through? And so to the end. Help, submission, sorrow, dissimilarity, are the sources of all good;—war, disobedience, luxury, equality, the sources of all evil.



Fig. 69

§ 19. There is yet another and a deeply laid lesson to be received from the leaf-builders, which I hope the reader has already perceived. Every leaf, we have seen, connects its work with the entire and accumulated result of the work of its predecessors. Their previous construction served it during its life, raised it towards the light, gave it more free sway and motion in the wind, and removed it from the



Fig. 70

noxiousness of earth exhalation. Dying, it leaves its own small but well-laboured thread, adding, though imperceptibly, yet essentially, to the strength, from roof to crest, of the trunk on which it had lived, and fitting that trunk for better service to succeeding races of leaves.

We men, sometimes, in what we presume to be humility, compare ourselves with leaves; but we have as yet no right to do so. The leaves may well scorn the comparison. We, who live for ourselves, and neither know how to

use nor keep the work of past time, may humbly learn,—as from the ant, foresight,—from the leaf, reverence. The power of every great people, as of every living tree, depends on its not effacing, but confirming and concluding, the labours of its ancestors. Looking back to the history of nations, we may date the beginning of their decline from the moment when they ceased to be reverent in heart, and accumulative in hand and brain; from the moment when the redundant fruit of age hid in them the hollowness of heart, whence the simplicities of custom and sinews of tradition had withered away. Had men but guarded the righteous laws, and protected the precious works of their fathers, with half the industry they have given to change and to ravage, they would not now have been seeking vainly, in millennial visions and mechanic servitudes, the accomplishment of the promise made to them so long ago: “As the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands; they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”¹

§ 20. This lesson we have to take from the leaf’s life. One more we may receive from its death. If ever, in autumn, a pensiveness falls upon us as the leaves drift by in their fading, may we not wisely look up in hope to their mighty monuments? Behold how fair, how far prolonged, in arch and aisle, the avenues of the valleys; the fringes of the hills! So stately,—so eternal; the joy of man, the comfort of all living creatures, the glory of the earth,—they are but the monuments of those poor leaves that flit faintly past us to die. Let them not pass, without our understanding their last counsel and example: that we also, careless of monument by the grave, may build it in the world—monument by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died, but where we lived.

¹ [Isaiah lxxv. 23.]

CHAPTER IX

THE LEAF SHADOWS

§ 1. It may be judged, by the time which it has taken to arrive at any clear idea of the structure of shield-builders, what a task would open to us if we endeavoured to trace the more wonderful forms of the wild builders with the sword.¹ Not that they are more complex; but they are more definite, and cannot be so easily generalized. The conditions which produce the spire of the cypress, and flaked breadth of the cedar, the rounded head of the stone pine, and perfect pyramid of the black spruce, are far more distinct, and would require more accurate and curious diagrams to illustrate them, than the graceful, but in some degree monotonous, branching of shield-builders. In broad principle they are, however, alike. The leaves construct the sprays in the same accumulative way: the only essential difference being that in the sword-builders the leaves are all set close, and at equal intervals. Instead of admitting extended and variable spaces between them, the whole spray is one tower of leaf-roots, set in a perfect spiral. Thus, Fig. 71, at A, represents a fragment of spray of Scotch fir of its real size. B is the same piece magnified, the diamond-like spaces being the points on which the leaves grew. The dotted lines show the regularity of the spiral. As the minor stems join in boughs, the scars left by the leaves are gradually effaced, and a thick, but broken and scaly bark forms instead.²

¹ [See above, p. 23.]

² [With Fig. 71 compare the drawing (Figs. 7–10) in the lecture on “Tree Twigs”; below, p. 471.]

§ 2. A sword-builder may therefore be generally considered as a shield-builder put under the severest military restraint. The graceful and thin leaf is concentrated into a strong, narrow, pointed rod; and the insertion of these rods on the stem is in a

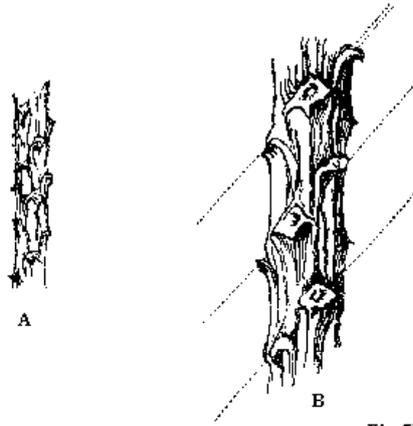


Fig. 71

close and perfectly timed order. In some ambiguous trees connected with the tribe (as the *arbor vitæ*¹) there is no proper stem to the outer leaves, but all the extremities form a kind of coralline leaf, flat and fern-like, but articulated like a crustacean animal, which gradually concentrates and embrowns itself into the stem. The thicker branches

of these trees are exquisitely fantastic; and the mode in which the flat system of leaf first produces an irregular branch, and then adapts itself to the symmetrical cone of the whole tree, is one of the most interesting processes of form which I know in vegetation.

§ 3. Neither this, however, nor any other of the pine formations, have we space here to examine in detail; while without detail, all discussion of them is in vain. I shall only permit myself to note a few points respecting my favourite tree,² the black spruce, not with any view to art criticism (though we might get at some curious results by a comparison of popular pine-drawing in Germany, America, and other dark-wooded countries, with the true natural forms), but because I think the expression of this tree has

¹ [For this tree, see the illustration in Ruskin's lecture on "Tree Twigs"; below, Appendix I., p. 472.]

² [Compare *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 124), and *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 187).]

not been rightly understood by travellers in Switzerland, and that with a little watching of it, they might easily obtain a juster feeling.

§ 4. Of the many marked adaptations of nature to the mind of man, it seems one of the most singular, that trees intended especially for the adornment of the wildest mountains should be in broad outline the most formal of trees. The vine, which is to be the companion of man, is way-wardly docile in its growth, falling into festoons beside his cornfields, or roofing his garden-walks, or casting its shadow all summer upon his door. Associated always with the trimness of cultivation, it introduces all possible elements of sweet wildness. The pine, placed nearly always among scenes disordered and desolate, brings into them all possible elements of order and precision. Lowland trees may lean to this side and that, though it is but a meadow breeze that bends them, or a bank of cowslips from which their trunks lean aslope. But let storm and avalanche do their worst, and let the pine find only a ledge of vertical precipice to cling to, it will nevertheless grow straight. Thrust a rod from its last shoot down the stem; it shall point to the centre of the earth as long as the tree lives.

§ 5. Also it may be well for lowland branches to reach hither and thither for what they need, and to take all kinds of irregular shape and extension. But the pine is trained to need nothing, and to endure everything. It is resolvedly whole, self-contained, desiring nothing but rightness, content with restricted completion. Tall or short, it will be straight. Small or large, it will be round. It may be permitted also to these soft lowland trees that they should make themselves gay with show of blossom, and glad with pretty charities of fruitfulness. We builders with the sword have harder work to do for man, and must do it in close-set troops. To stay the sliding of the mountain snows, which would bury him; to hold in divided drops, at our sword-points, the rain which would sweep away him and his

treasure-fields; to nurse in shade among our brown fallen leaves the tricklings that feed the brooks in drought; to give massive shield against the winter wind, which shrieks through the bare branches of the plain:—such service must we do him stedfastly while we live. Our bodies, also, are at his service: softer than the bodies of other trees, though our toil is harder than theirs. Let him take them as pleases him, for his houses and ships. So also it may be well for these timid lowland trees to tremble with all their leaves, or turn their paleness to the sky, if but a rush of rain passes by them; or to let fall their leaves at last, sick and sere. But we pines must live carelessly amidst the wrath of clouds. We only wave our branches to and fro when the storm pleads with us, as men toss their arms in a dream.

And finally, these weak lowland trees may struggle fondly for the last remnants of life, and send up feeble saplings again from their roots when they are cut down. But we builders with the sword perish boldly; our dying shall be perfect and solemn, as our warring: we give up our lives without reluctance, and for ever.*

§ 6. I wish the reader to fix his attention for a moment on these two great characters of the pine, its straightness and rounded perfectness; both wonderful, and in their issue lovely, though they have hitherto prevented the tree from being drawn. I say, first, its straightness. Because we constantly see it in the wildest scenery, we are apt to remember only as characteristic examples of it those which have been disturbed by violent accident or disease. Of course such instances are frequent. The soil of the pine is subject to continual change; perhaps the rock in which it is rooted splits in frost and falls forward, throwing the young stems aslope, or the whole mass of earth round it is undermined by rain, or a huge boulder falls on its stem from above,

* “Cræsus, therefore, having heard these things, sent word to the people of Lampsacus that they should let Miltiades go; and, if not, he would cut them down like a pine-tree.”—*Herod.* vi. 37.

and forces it for twenty years to grow with weight of a couple of tons leaning on its side. Hence, especially at edges of loose cliffs, about waterfalls, or at glacier banks, and in other places liable to disturbance, the pine may be seen distorted and oblique; and in Turner's "Source of the Arveron,"¹ he has, with his usual unerring perception of the main point in any matter, fastened on this means of relating the glacier's history. The glacier cannot explain its own motion; and ordinary observers saw in it only its rigidity; but Turner saw that the wonderful thing was its nonrigidity. Other ice is fixed, only this ice stirs. All the banks are staggering beneath its waves, crumbling and withered as by the blast of a perpetual storm. He made the rocks of his foreground loose—rolling and tottering down together; the pines smitten aside by them, their tops dead, bared by the ice wind.

§ 7. Nevertheless, this is not the truest or universal expression of the pine's character. I said long ago, even of Turner: "Into the spirit of the pine he cannot enter."² He understood the glacier at once; he had seen the force of sea on shore too often to miss the action of those crystalcrested waves. But the pine was strange to him, adverse to his delight in broad and flowing line; he refused its magnificent erectness. Magnificent!—nay, sometimes almost terrible. Other trees, tufting crag or hill, yield to the form and sway of the ground, clothe it with soft compliance, are partly its subjects, partly its flatterers, partly its comforters. But the pine rises in serene resistance, self-contained; nor can I ever without awe stay long under a great Alpine cliff, far from all house or work of men, looking up to its companies of pines, as they stand on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in

¹ [In the *Liber Studiorum*; the drawing for the Plate is No. 879 in the National Gallery. For another reference to the Plate, see Vol. VI. p. 373. For drawings of pines by Turner and by Ruskin respectively, see Plates 3 and 4 in Vol. III. (pp. 238, 240).]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 236), and compare Vol. VI. p. 170 *n.*, and Vol. XIII. p. 513.]

quiet multitudes, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other—dumb for ever. You cannot reach them, cannot cry to them;—those trees never heard human voice; they are far above all sound but of the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs. All comfortless they stand, between the two eternities of the Vacancy and the Rock: yet with such iron will, that the rock itself looks bent and shattered beside them—fragile, weak, inconsistent, compared to their dark energy of delicate life, and monotony of enchanted pride:—unnumbered, unconquerable.

§ 8. Then note, farther, their perfectness. The impression on most people's minds must have been received more from pictures than reality, so far as I can judge:—so ragged they think the pine; whereas its chief character in health is green and full *roundness*. It stands compact, like one of its own cones, slightly curved on its sides, finished and quaint as a carved tree in some Elizabethan garden; and instead of being wild in expression, forms the softest of all forest scenery; for other trees show their trunks and twisting boughs: but the pine, growing either in luxuriant mass or in happy isolation, allows no branch to be seen. Summit behind summit rise its pyramidal ranges, or down to the very grass sweep the circlets of its boughs; so that there is nothing but green cone and green carpet. Nor is it only softer, but in one sense more cheerful than other foliage; for it casts only a pyramidal shadow. Lowland forest arches overhead, and chequers the ground with darkness; but the pine, growing in scattered groups, leaves the glades between emerald-bright. Its gloom is all its own; narrowing into the sky, it lets the sunshine strike down to the dew. And if ever a superstitious feeling comes over me among the pine-glades, it is never tainted with the old German forest fear; but is only a more solemn tone of the fairy enchantment that haunts our English meadows; so that I have always called the prettiest pine-glade in Chamouni, "Fairies"

Hollow.” It is in the glen beneath the steep ascent above Pont Pelissier, and may be reached by a little winding path which goes down from the top of the hill;¹ being, indeed, not truly a glen, but a broad ledge of moss and turf, leaning in a formidable precipice (which, however, the gentle branches hide) over the Arve. An almost isolated rock promontory, many-coloured, rises at the end of it. On the other sides it is bordered by cliffs, from which a little cascade falls, literally, down among the pines, for it is so light, shaking itself into mere showers of seed pearl in the sun, that the pines don’t know it from mist, and grow through it without minding. Underneath, there is only the mossy silence, and above, for ever, the snow of the Nameless Aiguille.

§ 9. And then the third character which I want you to notice in the pine is its exquisite fineness. Other trees rise against the sky in dots and knots, but this in fringes.* You

* Keats, (as is his way) puts nearly all that may be said of the pine into one verse, though they are only figurative pines of which he is speaking. I have come to that pass of admiration for him now, that I dare not read him, so discontented he makes me with my own work:² but others must not leave

¹ [The passage, beginning in the eighth line of § 7—“Magnificent!”—and ending at the end of § 10, is § 47 in *Fronde Agrestes*, where, however, the author’s footnote to § 9 and the words “And then the third character . . . fineness” are omitted. At this point Ruskin added the following note in *Fronde*:—

“The new road to Chamouni has been carried right through it. A cascade on the right, as you ascend, marks the place spoken of in the text,—once as lovely as Corrie-nan-shian.”

(The name Corrie-nan-shian—Gaelic for “Glen of the Fairies”—is given to many spots in the Highlands (see, *e.g.*, Scott’s *Monastery*, ch. viii.). The old rough char-road from St. Martin to Chamouni kept to the right bank of the Arve (compare Vol. II. p. 425 *n.*), which it crossed at Pont Pélissier, thence reaching Chamouni by a steep and rough ascent called Les Montets or Montées. The new road keeps to the left bank of the river, the old road falling into it at the Hôtel des Montets. About a mile and a half before this stands the Restaurant du Châtelard, in the grassy glade which was once “Fairies’ Hollow.” The Electric Railway (opened in 1901) passes the spot in a tunnel. The Aiguille Sans Nom (seen in the distance) is the western buttress of the Aiguille Verte. In a MS. plan for vol. iii. of *Præterita* it appears that the tenth chapter was to be called “Fairies’ Hollow at Chamouni,” and to treat of “my last happy days there with old Couttet.”)

² [Whereas Ruskin’s feeling for Shelley’s poetry fluctuated (see Vol. I. p. 253 *n.*), his admiration for Keats was constant. He placed Keats, indeed, in his second class of poets—among those, that is, who are subject to “the pathetic fallacy” (Vol. V. p. 210); and he notices the morbid strain in Keats (see, *e.g.*, Vol. V. pp. 338, 343). But

never see the edges of it, so subtle are they; and for this reason, it, chiefly of trees,¹ is capable of the fiery change which we saw before had been noticed by Shakespere.² When the sun rises behind a ridge crested with pine, provided the ridge be at a distance of about two miles, and

unread, in considering the influence of trees upon the human soul, that marvellous Ode to Psyche. Here is the piece about pines:—

“Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branchèd thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines, shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains, steep by steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull’d to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreath’d trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e’er could feign,
 Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the same;
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win;
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in.”

it is a “gentle depth of sadness” (*Art of England*, § 176); the poet’s mind is compared to Turner’s (see below, pt. ix. ch. ix. § 9), and, like Turner, he suffered from want of appreciation (Vol. VI. p. 472, and below, pt. ix. ch. xii. § 14). His fancy is exquisite (Vol. IV. p. 293); his colouring, “rich even to excess” (Vol. V. p. 328); if his themes are sometimes horrible, they are executed with perfection of art (Vol. IV. p. 380); his descriptions have an “exquisite sincerity” (Vol. V. p. 208); his sense of beauty is comparable with Turner’s (below, part ix. ch. xi. § 26); his imagination enabled him to interpret accurately the religion of the Greeks (*Queen of the Air*, § 17). For Ruskin’s numerous quotations from Keats, see the General Index. In connexion with the present passage a reminiscence by Lady Burne-Jones, referring to a tour in Switzerland with Ruskin in 1862, may be cited: “I have a vision of us all three sitting together that evening (at Fluelen), in a room with an exquisitely clean bareboarded floor, and Mr. Ruskin reading Keats to us” (*Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, vol. i. p. 243). In one of his last lectures at Oxford Ruskin told his pupils to “read as much Keats as possible” (Vol. I. p. 254 *n.*.)

¹ [Editions 1 and 1873 (and *Fronde Agrestes*) read here: “. . . it alone of trees, so far as I know, is capable . . .,” and seven lines lower:—

“. . . the sun itself. I thought at first this was owing to the actual lustre of the leaves; but I believe now it is caused by the cloud-dew upon them,—every minutest leaf carrying its diamond. It seems . . .”

The alterations in the text above were first introduced in the edition of 1888, from Ruskin’s revised copy.]

² [See Vol. VI. p. 452.]

seen clear, all the trees, for about three or four degrees on each side of the sun, become trees of light, seen in clear flame against the darker sky, and dazzling as the sun itself. This is owing to the lustre of the leaves, and their minute division. It seems as if these trees, living always among the clouds, had caught part of their glory from them; and themselves the darkest of vegetation, could yet add splendour to the sun itself.

§ 10. Yet I have been more struck by their character of finished delicacy at a distance from the central Alps, among the pastoral hills of the Emmenthal, or lowland districts of Berne, where they are set in groups between the cottages, whose shingle roofs (they also of pine) of deep gray blue, and lightly carved fronts, golden and orange in the autumn sunshine,* gleam on the banks and lawns of hill-side,—endless lawns, mounded, and studded, and bossed all over with deeper green hay-heaps, orderly set, like jewellery (the mountain hay, when the pastures are full of springs, being strangely dark and fresh in verdure for a whole day after it is cut). And amidst this delicate delight of cottage and field, the young pines stand delicatest of all, scented as with frankincense, their slender stems straight as arrows, and crystal white, looking as if they would break with a touch like needles; and their arabesques of dark leaf pierced through and through by the pale radiance of clear sky, opal blue, where they follow each other along the soft hill-ridges, up and down.

§ 11. I have watched them in such scenes with the deeper interest, because of all trees they have hitherto had most influence on human character. The effect of other vegetation, however great, has been divided by mingled species; elm and oak in England, poplar in France, birch in Scotland, olive in Italy and Spain, share their power

* There has been much cottage-building about the hills lately, with very pretty carving, the skill in which has been encouraged by travellers; and the fresh-cut larch is splendid in colour under rosy sunlight.

with inferior trees, and with all the changing charm of successive agriculture. But the tremendous unity of the pine absorbs and moulds the life of a race. The pine shadows rest upon a nation. The Northern peoples, century after century, lived under one or other of the two great powers of the Pine and the Sea, both infinite. They dwelt amidst the forests, as they wandered on the waves, and saw no end, nor any other horizon; still the dark green trees, or the dark green waters, jagged the dawn with their fringe or their foam. And whatever elements of imagination, or of warrior strength, or of domestic justice, were brought down by the Norwegian and the Goth against the dissoluteness or degradation of the South of Europe, were taught them under the green roofs and wild penitentials of the pine.

§ 12. I do not attempt, delightful as the task would be, to trace this influence (mixed with superstition) in Scandinavia, or North Germany; but let us at least note it in the instance which we speak of so frequently, yet so seldom take to heart. There has been much dispute respecting the character of the Swiss, arising out of the difficulty which other nations had to understand their simplicity. They were assumed to be either romantically virtuous, or basely mercenary, when in fact they were neither heroic nor base, but were true-hearted men, stubborn with more than any recorded stubbornness; not much regarding their lives, yet not casting them causelessly away; forming no high ideal of improvement, but never relaxing their grasp of a good they had once gained; devoid of all romantic sentiment, yet loving with a practical and patient love that neither wearied nor forsook; little given to enthusiasm in religion, but maintaining their faith in a purity which no worldliness deadened, and no hypocrisy soiled; neither chivalrously generous nor pathetically humane, yet never pursuing their defeated enemies, not suffering their poor to perish; proud, yet not allowing their pride to prick them into unwary or unworthy quarrel; avaricious, yet contentedly rendering to their neighbour his due; dull, but clear-sighted to all

the principles of justice; and patient, without ever allowing delay to be prolonged by sloth, or forbearance by fear.

§ 13. This temper of Swiss mind, while it animated the whole confederacy, was rooted chiefly in one small district which formed the heart of their country, yet lay not among its highest mountains. Beneath the glaciers of Zermatt and Evolena, and on the scorching slopes of the Valais, the peasants remained in an aimless torpor, unheard of but as the obedient vassals of the great Bishopric of Sion. But where the lower ledges of calcareous rock were broken by the inlets of the Lake Lucerne, and bracing winds penetrating from the north forbade the growth of the vine, compelling the peasantry to adopt an entirely pastoral life, was reared another race of men. Their narrow domain should be marked by a small green spot on every map of Europe. It is about forty miles from east to west; as many from north to south; yet on that shred of rugged ground, while every kingdom of the world around it rose or fell in fatal change, and every multitudinous race mingled or wasted itself in various dispersion and decline, the simple shepherd dynasty remained changeless. There is no record of their origin. They are neither Goths, Burgundians, Romans, nor Germans. They have been for ever Helvetii, and for ever free. Voluntarily placing themselves under the protection of the House of Hapsburg, they acknowledged its supremacy, but resisted its oppression; and rose against the unjust governors it appointed over them, not to gain, but to redeem, their liberties. Victorious in the struggle by the Lake of Egeri,¹ they stood the foremost standard-bearers among the nations of Europe in the cause of loyalty and life—loyalty in its highest sense, to the laws of God's helpful justice, and of man's faithful and brotherly fortitude.

§ 14. You will find among them, as I said, no subtle

¹ [On the shore of this lake, not far from Zug, was the battlefield of Morgarten, where on November 16, 1315, the Confederates won their first victory over the Hapsburgs; Ruskin visited the spot in 1858: see above, Introduction, p. xxxii. For other references to the battle, see Vol. V. p. 415; Vol. XVI. p. 190; *Eagle's Nest*, § 199; and *Præterita*, i. § 131.]

wit nor high enthusiasm, only an undeceivable common sense, and an obstinate rectitude. They cannot be persuaded into their duties, but they feel them; they use no phrases of friendship, but do not fail you at your need. Questions of creed, which other nations sought to solve by logic or reverie, these shepherds brought to practical tests; sustained with tranquillity the excommunication of abbots who wanted to feed their cattle on other people's fields, and, halbert in hand, struck down the Swiss Reformation, because the Evangelicals of Zurich refused to send them their due supplies of salt.¹ Not readily yielding to the demands of superstition, they were patient under those of economy; they would purchase the remission of taxes, but not of sins; and while the sale of indulgences was arrested in the church of Einsiedeln as boldly as at the gates of Wittenberg, the inhabitants of the valley of Frutigen* ate no meat for seven years, in order peacefully to free themselves and their descendants from the seigniorial claims of the Baron of Thurn.

§ 15. What praise may be justly due to this modest and rational virtue, we have perhaps no sufficient grounds for defining. It must long remain questionable how far the vices of superior civilization may be atoned for by its

* This valley is on the pass of the Gemmi in Canton Berne, but the people are the same in temper as those of the Waldstätten.

¹ ["In 1531, Zurich, in order to force the Catholic cantons to submit to its dictation, forbade all commerce with them, and even prevented the supply of necessary articles of provisions, such as salt, which the people of the Waldstätten used to receive through Zurich . . . 'The sword alone can unloose the knot,' was the cry in the Waldstätten" (Vieusseux: *History of Switzerland*, 1840, p. 143). Ruskin refers again to this incident in *Time and Tide*, § 45. See the same *History*, p. 125, for the account of Zwingli's repulse of Friar Samson, who had come to sell indulgences at Einsiedeln in 1518. "The fine and extensive valley of Frütigen was sold to Bern by the Baron of Thurn, whose mismanagement had involved him in difficulties. When the inhabitants of Frütigen heard of the negotiation for the sale, they all agreed to strain every nerve in order to redeem the seigniorial fines and dues which had been transferred to their new masters. Every one contributed for this purpose his little savings, and it is stated in an old song that the whole valley engaged not to eat beef for seven years in order to free themselves and their descendants from feudal burdens" (*ibid.*, p. 66; the date is 1385).]

achievements, and the errors of more transcendental devotion forgiven to its rapture. But, take it for what we may, the character of this peasantry is, at least, serviceable to others and sufficient for their own peace; and in its consistency and simplicity, it stands alone in the history of the human heart. How far it was developed by circumstances of natural phenomena may also be disputed; nor should I enter into such dispute with any strongly held conviction. The Swiss have certainly no feelings respecting their mountains in anywise correspondent with ours. It was rather as fortresses of defence, than as spectacles of splendour, that the cliffs of the Rothstock¹ bare rule over the destinies of those who dwelt at their feet; and the training for which the mountain children had to thank the slopes of the Muotta-Thal, was in soundness of breath, and steadiness of limb, far more than in elevation of idea. But the point which I desire the reader to note is, that the character of the scene which, if any, appears to have been impressive to the inhabitant, is not that which we ourselves feel when we enter the district. It was not from their lakes, nor their cliffs, nor their glaciers—though these were all peculiarly their possession, that the three venerable cantons or states received their name. They were not called the States of the Rock, nor the States of the Lake, but the States of the *Forest*. And the one of the three which contains the most touching record of the spiritual power of Swiss religion, in the name of the convent of the “Hill of Angels,”² has, for its own, none but the sweet childish name of “Under the Woods.”

§ 16. And indeed you may pass under them if, leaving the most sacred spot in Swiss history, the Meadow of the

¹ [These cliffs tower above the Bay of Uri and the Meadow of Rütli, where are the Three Fountains which gushed forth from the spot on which the Three Confederates had stood on November 7, 1307 (see Vol. XIII. p. 511); it was in the Muotta-Thal that the Russians under Suwaroff were repulsed in 1799 (see Vol. XIII. p. 512).]

² [The original Forest Cantons were three—Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden; the fourth—Lucerne—joined them in 1332. The legend of the origin of the name Engelberg is told by Wordsworth in his *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*, xvii.]

Three Fountains, you bid the boatman row southward a little way by the shore of the Bay of Uri.¹ Steepest there on its western side, the walls of its rocks ascend to heaven. Far in the blue of evening, like a great cathedral pavement, lies the lake in its darkness; and you may hear the whisper of innumerable falling waters return from the hollows of the cliff, like the voices of a multitude praying under their breath. From time to time the beat of a wave, slow lifted, where the rocks lean over the black depth, dies heavily as the last note of a requiem. Opposite, green with steep grass, and set with châlet villages, the Frohnalp rises in one solemn glow of pastoral light and peace; and above, against the clouds of twilight, ghostly on the gray precipice, stand, myriad by myriad, the shadowy armies of the Unterwalden pine.*

I have seen that it is possible for the stranger to pass through this great chapel, with its font of waters, and mountain pillars, and vaults of clouds, without being touched by one noble thought, or stirred by any sacred passion; but for those who received from its waves the baptism of their youth, and learned beneath its rocks the fidelity of their manhood, and watched amidst its clouds the likeness of the dream of life, with the eyes of age—for these I will not believe that the mountain shrine was built, or the calm of its forest-shadows guarded by their God, in vain.

* The cliff immediately bordering the lake is in Canton Uri; the green hills of Unterwalden rise above. This is the grandest piece of the shore of Lake Lucerne; the rocks near Tell's Chapel are neither so lofty nor so precipitous.

¹ [For Ruskin's own excursion here, see the Introduction, above, p. xxxiii.; and compare Vol. XIII. pp. 510–511.]

CHAPTER X

LEAVES MOTIONLESS

§ 1. It will be remembered that our final inquiry was to be into the sources of beauty in the tented plants,¹ or flowers of the field; which the reader may perhaps suppose one of no great difficulty, the beauty of flowers being somewhat generally admitted and comprehended.

Admitted? yes. Comprehended? no; and, which is worse, in all its highest characters, for many a day yet, incomprehensible: though with a little steady application, I suppose we might soon know more than we do now about the colours of flowers,—being tangible enough, and staying longer than those of clouds. We have discovered something definite about colours of opal and of peacock's plume; perhaps, also, in due time we may give some account of that true gold (the only gold of intrinsic value) which gilds buttercups; and understand how the spots are laid, in painting a pansy.²

Art of interest, when we may win any of its secrets; but to such knowledge the road lies not up brick streets. And howsoever that flower-painting may be done, one thing is certain, it is not by machinery.

§ 2. Perhaps, it may be thought, if we understood flowers better, we might love them less.

We do not love them much, as it is. Few people really care about flowers. Many, indeed, are fond of finding a new shape of blossom, caring for it as a child cares about a kaleidoscope. Many, also, like a fair service of flowers in the greenhouse, as a fair service of plate on the table. Many

¹ [See above, p. 21.]

² [For discussions of such matters, see the recent botanical works cited above, p. lix.]

are scientifically interested in them, though even these in the nomenclature¹ rather than the flowers. And a few enjoy their gardens: but I have never heard of a piece of land, which would let well on a building lease, remaining unlet because it was a flowery piece. I have never heard of parks being kept for wild hyacinths, though often of their being kept for wild beasts. And the blossoming time of the year being principally spring, I perceive it to be the mind of most people, during that period to stay in towns.²

§ 3. A year or two ago, a keen-sighted and eccentrically-minded friend of mine, having taken it into his head to violate this national custom, and go to the Tyrol in spring, was passing through a valley near Landeck, with several similarly headstrong companions. A strange mountain appeared in the distance, belted about its breast with a zone of blue, like our English Queen. Was it a blue cloud? a blue horizontal bar of the air that Titian breathed in youth, seen now far away, which mortal might never breathe again? Was it a mirage—a meteor? Would it stay to be approached? (ten miles of winding road yet between them, and the foot of its mountain). Such questioning had they concerning it. My keen-sighted friend alone maintained it to be substantial: whatever it might be, it was not air, and would not vanish. The ten miles of road were overpassed, the carriage left, the mountain climbed. It stayed patiently, expanding still into richer breadth and heavenlier glow—a belt of gentians. Such things may verily be seen among the Alps in spring, and in spring only. Which being so, I observe most people prefer going in autumn.

§ 4. Nevertheless, without any special affection for them, most of us, at least, languidly consent to the beauty of flowers, and occasionally gather them, and prefer them from among other forms of vegetation. This, strange to say, is precisely what great painters do *not*.

¹ [Compare p. 71, above.]

² [Compare *Two Paths*, § 137 (Vol. XVI. p. 372).]

Every other kind of object they paint, in its due place and office, with respect;—but, except compulsorily and imperfectly, never flowers. A curious fact this! Here are men whose lives are spent in the study of colour, and the one thing they will not paint is a flower! Anything but that. A furred mantle, a jewelled zone, a silken gown, a brazen corslet, nay, an old leathern chair, or a wall-paper if you will, with utmost care and delight;—but a flower by no manner of means, if avoidable. When the thing has perforce to be done, the great painters of course do it rightly. Titian, in his early work, sometimes carries a blossom or two out with affection, as the columbines in our Bacchus and Ariadne.¹ So also Holbein. But in his later and mightier work, Titian will only paint a fan or wristband intensely, never a flower. In his portrait of Lavinia, at Berlin, the roses are just touched finely enough to fill their place, with no affection whatever, and with the most subdued red possible; while in the later portrait of her at Dresden, there are no roses at all, but a belt of chased golden balls, on every stud of which Titian has concentrated his strength, and I verily believe forgot the face a little, so much has his mind been set on them.²

§ 5. In Paul Veronese's Europa, at Dresden, the entire foreground is covered with flowers, but they are executed with sharp and crude touches like those of a decorative painter. In Correggio's paintings, at Dresden,³ and in the Antiope of the Louvre, there are lovely pieces of foliage, but no flowers.⁴ A large garland of oranges and lemons,

¹ [No. 35 in the National Gallery; see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 29).]

² [For the two Lavinias, see also above, Preface, p. 6. The Lavinia at Berlin was painted by Titian in about 1549, and represents her holding up a dish of flowers and fruit; a reproduction of it is given at p. 82 of *The Later Work of Titian*, by Claude Phillips. For the portrait of Lavinia as a bride, painted in 1555, which is at Dresden, see above, p. 6. In the same Gallery is the other portrait of Lavinia here described, painted about 1565–1570, and showing her as a matron. Compare below, p. 491.]

³ [Correggio's "St. George" is "The Madonna and Child, with St. George and other Saints": the scene is enclosed above by an arch decorated with a garland. For a note on the picture, see below, p. 492.]

⁴ [For Ruskin's note on the "superb vegetation" in Correggio's pictures at Dresden, see again below, p. 492; and for other references to the foliage in the "Antiope," see above, p. 53.]

with their leaves, above the St. George, at Dresden, is connected traditionally with the garlanded backgrounds of Ghirlandajo and Mantegna, but the studious absence of flowers renders it almost disagreeably ponderous. I do not remember any painted by Velasquez, or by Tintoret, except compulsory Annunciation lilies. The flowers of Rubens are gross and rude; those of Vandyck vague, slight, and subdued in colour, so as not to contend with the flesh.¹ In his portraits of King Charles's children, at Turin, an enchanting picture, there is a rose-thicket, in which the roses seem to be enchanted the wrong way, for their leaves are all gray, and the flowers dull brick-red. Yet it is right.²

§ 6. One reason for this is that all great men like their inferior forms to follow and obey contours of large surfaces, or group themselves in connected masses. Patterns do the first, leaves the last; but flowers stand separately.

¹ [For the foliage of Rubens, see above, p. 52; of Mantegna, *Art of England*, § 206; of Ghirlandajo, Vol. III. p. 175.]

² [In his "Notes on the Gallery of Turin" (see above, p. xxxix. *n.*), Ruskin has some further remarks on this picture:—

"In case I forget, note of Vandyck's three children that the sky and rose-leaves in the background are in their quiet, pretty rounded, innocent-looking forms entirely sympathetic with the little curls and caps and bossy hands and apple-like cheeks of the children; while in the Prince of Carrignano the rolling clouds and sombre thistle of the foreground are just as sympathetic with the power of the rider. This is evidently not done by any formal rule: the spirit of the painter changes with his subject; he could not have put the angry clouds behind the children; could not have painted one of their drifts in the temper he was in at the time—the creamy little tufts of cloud in the blue came as naturally to his pencil as gentleness of voice would, if he had spoken to the little people. This instinctive harmony is a great charm in all Vandyck's work. Note the intense soberness of colour in the roses of this picture—the green leaves are all grey, and the roses brickred, bringing out the flesh colour in perfect beauty.

"One of the curious and provoking points in art criticism is that one always finds anything may be done, and justified, by a great man. Everything that one determines shouldn't be done, your great painter will some day do in your face, and laugh at you. In this Vandyck one might find a complete exemplification of all Sir Joshua's falsest rules. The roses are subdued in colour, and the draperies touched with extreme breadth and incompleteness—to bring out the children's faces more perfectly—and very wonderful it is to see the loveliness Vandyck can get out of gray and brown where anybody else would have used green and crimson.

"The more I see of painting, the more all criticism resolves itself into—this fellow *can* paint, and that fellow *can't*; and the difference between can and can't becomes in my thoughts every day more infinite and more inexplicable."]

Another reason is that the beauty of flower-petals and texture can only be seen by looking at it close; but flat patterns can be seen far off, as well as gleaming of metal-work. All the great men calculate their work for effect at some distance, and with that object, know it to be lost time to complete the drawing of flowers. Farther, the forms of flowers being determined, require a painful attention, and restrain the fancy; whereas, in painting fur, jewels, or bronze, the colour and touch may be varied almost at pleasure, and without effort.

Again, much of what is best in flowers is inimitable in painting; and a thoroughly good workman feels the feebleness of his means when he matches them fairly with Nature, and gives up the attempt frankly—painting the rose dull red, rather than trying to rival its flush in sunshine.

And, lastly, in nearly all good landscape-painting, the breadth of foreground included implies such a distance of the spectator from the nearest object as must entirely prevent his seeing flower detail.

§ 7. There is, however, a deeper reason than all these; namely, that flowers have no sublimity. We shall have to examine the nature of sublimity in our following and last section, among other ideas of relation.¹ Here I only note the fact briefly, that impressions of awe and sorrow being at the root of the sensation of sublimity, and the beauty of separate flowers not being of the kind which connects itself with such sensation, there is a wide distinction, in general, between flower-loving minds and minds of the highest order. Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity: children love them; quiet, tender, contented ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered: they are the cottager's treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in whose heart rests the covenant of peace.

¹ [The examination, however, was not very fully carried out in Part ix. ch. iii.; but compare Appendix II. 3, below, p. 481, and Appendix i. § 5 in Vol. IV. p. 369.]

Passionate or religious minds contemplate them with fond, feverish intensity; the affection is seen severely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open and true country sentiment in those of our own Pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always.¹ But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets, but rarely for their own sake. They fall forgotten from the great workmen's and soldiers' hands. Such men will take, in thankfulness, crowns of leaves, or crowns of thorns—not crowns of flowers.

§ 8. Some beautiful things have been done lately, and more beautiful are likely to be done, by our younger painters, in representing blossoms of the orchard and the field in mass and extent. I have had something to do with the encouragement of this impulse;² and truly, if pictures are to be essentially imitative rather than inventive, it is better to spend care in painting hyacinths than dead leaves, and roses rather than stubble. Such work, however, as I stated in my first essay on this subject, in the year 1851,* can only connect itself with the great schools by becoming inventive instead of copyist; and for the most part, I believe these young painters would do well to remember that the best beauty of flowers being wholly inimitable, and their sweetest service unrenderable by art, the picture involves some approach to an unsatisfying mockery in the cold imagery of what Nature has given to be breathed

* *Pre-Raphaelitism*: p. 28, and the note at p. 27; compare p. 63.³ The essay contains some important notes on Turner's work, which, therefore, I do not repeat in this volume.

¹ [Compare Vol. V. p. 372 *n.*, and Vol. XIV. pp. 92–93.]

² [See Vol. XIV. p. xxiv.]

³ [Ruskin's references are to the first edition of the pamphlet: see in this edition Vol. XII. pp. 357–358, 388.]

with the profuse winds of spring, and touched by the happy footsteps of youth.

§ 9. Among the greater masters, as I have said, there is little laborious or affectionate flower-painting.¹ The utmost that Turner ever allows in his foregrounds is a water-lily or two, a cluster of health or fox-glove, a thistle sometimes, a violet or daisy, or a bindweed-bell; just enough to lead the eye into the understanding of the rich mystery of his more distant leafage. Rich mystery, indeed, respecting which these following facts about the foliage of tented plants must be noted carefully.

§ 10. Two characters seem especially aimed at by nature in the earth-plants; first, that they should be characteristic and interesting; secondly, that they should not be very visibly injured by crushing.

I say, first, characteristic. The leaves of large trees take approximately simple forms, slightly monotonous. They are intended to be seen in mass. But the leaves of the herbage at our feet take all kinds of strange shapes, as if to invite us to examine them. Star-shaped, heart-shaped, spear-shaped, arrow-shaped, fretted, fringed, cleft, furrowed, serrated, sinuated; in whorls, in tufts, in spires, in wreaths, endlessly expressive, deceptive, fantastic, never the same from footstalk to blossom; they seem perpetually to tempt our watchfulness, and take delight in outstripping our wonder.

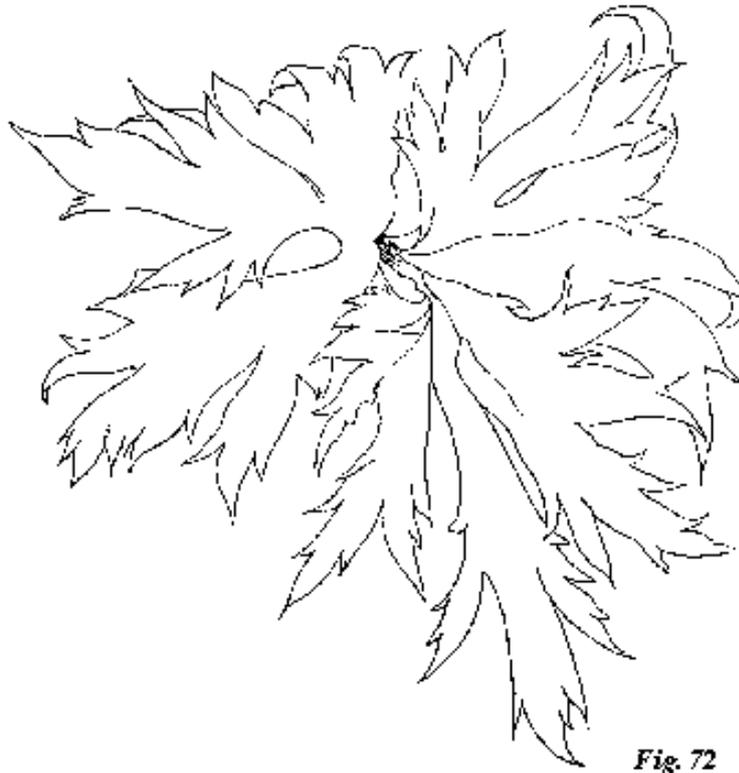
§ 11. Secondly, observe, their forms are such as will not be visibly injured by crushing. Their complexity is already disordered: jags and rents are their laws of being; rent by the footstep, they betray no harm. Here, for instance (Fig. 72), is the mere outline of a buttercup-leaf in full

¹ [The MS. here inserts an additional passage:—

“The blossoms in the Peter Martyr might be mistaken for clouds; the borage blossoms on the table in the Supper at Emmaus are distinct, but no more; and except, as I said, Annunciation lilies, it would be difficult [to find] any complete flower-painting in subsequent Venetian work.”

On the absence of “laborious or affectionate flower-painting,” in the old masters and in Turner, compare Vol. XIII. p. 520. But when given, the flowers are sometimes given with great care: see Vol. III. pp. 28–29; and for Titian’s “Supper at Emmaus,” Vol. XII. p. 471.]

free growth; which, perhaps, may be taken as a good common type of earth foliage. Fig. 73 is a less advanced one, placed so as to show its symmetrical bounding form. But both, how various;—how delicately rent into beauty! As in the aiguilles of the great Alps, so in this lowest fieldherb,



where rending is the law of being,¹ it is the law of loveliness.

§ 12. One class, however, of these torn leaves, peculiar to the tented plants, has, it seems to me, a strange expressional function. I mean the group of leaves rent into *alternate* gaps, typically represented by the thistle. The alternation

¹ [See Vol. VI. pp. 231–237.]

of the rent, if not absolutely, is, effectively, peculiar to the earth-plants. Leaves of the builders are rent symmetrically, so as to form radiating groups, as in the horse-chestnut, or they are irregularly sinuous, as in the oak; but the earth-plants continually present forms such as those in the opposite Plate:¹ a kind of web-footed leaf, so to speak; a continuous tissue, enlarged alternately on each side of the

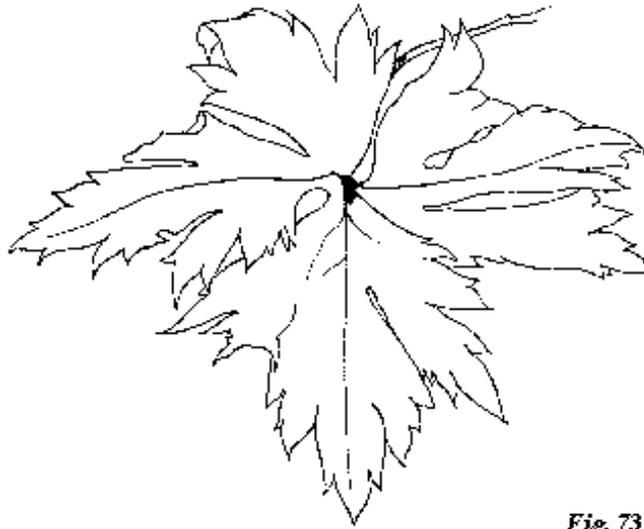


Fig. 73

stalk. Leaves of this form have necessarily a kind of limping gait, as if they grew not all at once, but first a little bit on one side, and then a little bit on the other, and wherever they occur in quantity, give the expression to foreground vegetation which we feel and call “ragged.”

§ 13. It is strange that the mere alternation of the rent should give this effect; the more so, because alternate leaves, completely separate from each other, produce one of the most graceful types of building plants. Yet the fact is indeed so, that the alternate rent in the earth-leaf is the

¹ [Ruskin in his copy identifies the plant as the greater celandine.]



J. Buxton.



J. Crossen.
Allen & Co. Se.

principal cause of its ragged effect. However deeply it may be rent symmetrically, as in the alchemilla, or butter-cup just instanced, and however finely divided, as in the parsleys, the result is always a delicate richness, unless the jags are alternate, and the leaf-tissue continuous at the stem; and the moment these conditions appear, so does the raggedness.

§ 14. It is yet more worthy of note that the proper duty of these leaves, which catch the eye so clearly and powerfully, would appear to be to draw the attention of man to spots where his work is needed, for they nearly all habitually grow on ruins or neglected ground: not noble ruins, or on *wild* ground, but on heaps of rubbish, or pieces of land which have been indolently cultivated or much disturbed. The leaf on the right of the three in the Plate, which is the most characteristic of the class, is that of the *Sisymbrium Irio*,¹ which grows, by choice, always on ruins left by fire. The plant, which, as far as I have observed, grows first on earth that has been moved, is the coltsfoot: its broad covering leaf is much jagged, but only irregular, not alternate in the rent; but the weeds that mark habitual neglect, such as the thistle, give clear alternation.

§ 15. The aspects of complexity and carelessness of injury are farther increased in the herb of the field, because it is “herb yielding seed”;² that is to say, a seed different in character from that which trees form in their fruit.

I am somewhat alarmed in reading over the above sentence, lest a botanist, or other scientific person, should open the book at it. For of course the essential character of either fruit or seed being only that in the smallest compass, the vital principle of the plant is rendered portable, and for some time preservable, we ought to call every such vegetable dormitory a “fruit” or a “seed” indifferently. But with respect to man there is a notable difference between them.

¹ [The London rocket.]

² [Genesis i. 11.]

A seed is what we “sow.”

A fruit, what we “enjoy.”

Fruit is seed prepared especially for the sight and taste of man and animals; and in this sense we have true fruit and traitorous fruit (poisonous); but it is perhaps the best available distinction,* that, seed being the part necessary for the renewed birth of the plant, a fruit is such seed enclosed or sustained by some extraneous substance, which is soft and juicy, and beautifully coloured, pleasing and useful to animals and men.

§ 16. I find it convenient in this volume, and wish I had thought of the expedient before, whenever I get into a difficulty, to leave the reader to work it out. He will perhaps, therefore, be so good as to define fruit for himself. Having defined it, he will find that the sentence about which I was alarmed above is, in the main, true, and that tented plants principally are herbs yielding seed, while building plants give fruit. The berried shrubs of rock and wood, however dwarfed in stature, are true builders. The strawberry-plant is the only important exception—a tender Bedouin.

§ 17. Of course the principal reason for this is the plain, practical one, that fruit should not be trampled on, and had better perhaps be put a little out of easy reach than too near the hand, so that it may not be gathered wantonly or without some little trouble, and may be waited for until it is properly ripe; while the plants meant to be trampled on have small and multitudinous seed, hard and wooden, which may be shaken and scattered about without harm.

Also, fine fruit is often only to be brought forth with patience: not by young and hurried trees—but in due time, after much suffering; and the best fruit is often to be

* I say the “best available distinction.” It is, of course, no real distinction. A pea-pod is a kind of central type of seed and seed-vessel, and it is difficult so to define fruit as to keep clear of it. Pea-shells are boiled and eaten in some countries rather than pease. It does not sound like a scientific distinction to say that fruit is a “shell which is good without being boiled.”

an adornment of old age, so as to supply the want of other grace. While the plants which will not work, but only bloom and wander, do not (except the grasses) bring forth fruit of high service, but only the seed that prolongs their race, the grasses alone having great honour put on them for their humility, as we saw in our first account of them.

§ 18. This being so, we find another element of very complex effect added to the others which exist in tented plants, namely, that of minute, granular, feathery, or downy seed-vessels, mingling quaint brown punctuation, and dusty tremors of dancing grain, with the bloom of the nearer fields; and casting a gossamer'd grayness and softness of plummy mist along their surfaces far away; mysterious evermore, not only with dew in the morning or mirage at noon, but with the shaking threads of fine arborescence, each a little belfry of grain-bells, all a-chime.

§ 19. I feel sorely tempted to draw one of these same spires of the fine grasses, with its sweet changing proportions of pendent grain, but it would be a useless piece of finesse, as such form, of course, never enters into general foreground effect.* I have, however, engraved at the top of the group of woodcuts opposite (Fig. 74), a single leaf

Nay, even if we humiliate ourselves into this practical reference to the kitchen, we are still far from success. For the pulp of a strawberry is not a "shell," the seeds being on the outside of it. The available part of a pomegranate or orange, though a seed envelope, is itself shut within a less useful rind. While in an almond the shell becomes less profitable still, and all goodness retires into the seed itself, as in a grain of corn.

* For the same reason, I enter into no consideration respecting the geometrical forms of flowers, though they are deeply interesting, and perhaps some day I may give a few studies of them separately. The reader should note, however, that beauty of form in flowers is chiefly dependent on a more accurately finished or more studiously varied development of the tre-foil, quatre-foil, and cinq-foil structures which we have seen irregularly approached by leaf-buds. The most beautiful six-foiled flowers (like the rhododendron-shoot) are composed of two triangular groups, one superimposed on the other, as in the narcissus; and the most interesting types both of six-foils and cinq-foils are unequally leaved, symmetrical on opposite sides, as the iris and violet.



Fig. 75



Fig. 74



Fig. 76



Fig. 77



Fig. 78

cluster of Dürer's foreground in the St. Hubert,¹ which is interesting in several ways; as an example of modern work, no less than old; for it is a facsimile twice removed; being first drawn from the plate with the pen, by Mr. Allen, and then facsimiled on wood by Miss Byfield; and if the reader can compare it with the original, he will find it still come tolerably close in most parts (though the nearest large leaf has got spoiled), and of course some of the finest and most precious qualities of Dürer's work are lost. Still, it gives a fair idea of his perfectness of conception, every leaf being thoroughly set in perspective, and drawn with unerring decision. On each side of it (Figs. 75, 76) are two pieces from a fairly good modern etching,² which I oppose to the Dürer in order to show the difference between true work and that which pretends to give detail, but is without feeling or knowledge. There are a great many leaves in the piece on the left, but they are all set the same way; the draughtsman has not conceived their real positions, but draws one after another as he would deliver a tale of bricks. The grasses on the right look delicate, but are a mere series of inorganic lines. Look how Dürer's grass-blades cross each other. If you take a pen and copy a little piece of each example, you will soon feel the difference. Underneath, in the centre (Fig. 77), is a piece of grass out of Landseer's etching of the "Ladies' Pets," more massive and effective than the two lateral fragments, but still loose and uncomposed. Then underneath [Fig. 78] is a piece of firm and good work again, which will stand with Dürer's; it is the outline only of a group of leaves out of Turner's foreground in the Richmond from the Moors,³ of which I give

¹ [For other references to this Plate, see below, p. 306; Vol. XI. p. 58; *Lectures on Art*, § 47; and *Eagle's Nest*, Preface.]

² [In a MS. list of the woodcuts in this volume Ruskin calls it a "French etching," but does not otherwise identify it.]

³ [For another reference to this group of leaves, see below, p. 228; and for the drawing, "uniting the veracities both of model and photography," see the preceding volume (Vol. VI. p. 358); while for other particulars about it, Index I. in Vol. XIII. pp. 603-604. The plates have had to be further reduced somewhat for this edition; see below, Fig. 101, p. 417, for a facsimile of the hook of drapery in the foreground of Plate 61.]



M. W. Turner

J. C. Armitage
Allen & Co. Sc.

61. Richmond from the Moors.

a reduced etching, Plate 61, for the sake of the foreground principally, and in Plate 62, the group of leaves in question, in their light and shade, with the bridge beyond. What I have chiefly to say of them belongs to our section on composition;¹ but this mere fragment of a Turner foreground may perhaps lead the reader to take note in his great pictures of the almost inconceivable labour with which he has sought to express the redundance and delicacy of ground leafage.

§ 20. By comparing the etching in Plate 61 with the published engraving, it will be seen how much yet remains to be done before any approximately just representation of Turner foreground can be put within the reach of the public. This Plate has been reduced by Mr. Armytage from a pen-drawing of mine, as large as the original of Turner's (18 inches by 11 inches). It will look a little better under a magnifying-glass; but only a most costly engraving of the real size could give any idea of the richness of mossy and ferny leafage included in the real design. And if this be so on one of the ordinary England drawings of a barren Yorkshire moor, it may be imagined what the task would be of engraving truly such a foreground as that of the "Bay of Baiaæ" or "Daphne and Leucippus," in which Turner's aim has been luxuriance.²

§ 21. His mind recurred, in all these classical foregrounds, to strong impressions made upon him during his studies at Rome, by the masses of vegetation which enrich its heaps of ruin with their embroidery and bloom. I have always partly regretted these Roman studies,³ thinking that they led him into too great fondness of wandering luxuriance in vegetation, associated with decay; and prevented his giving affection enough to the more solemn and more sacred infinity with which, among the mightier ruins of the

¹ [In that place, however, Ruskin contents himself with a passing reference to Fig. 78 only; see p. 228, and compare p. lxiii.]

² [For other references to the "luxuriance" in these pictures (both in the National Gallery), see Vol. XIII. pp. 133, 150.]

³ [See, for instance, Vol. V. p. 392.]



J.M.W. Turner.

J. C. Aronpage,
Allen & Co. So.

62. By the Brookside.

Alpine Rome, glow the pure and motionless splendours of the gentian and the rose.

§ 22. Leaves motionless. The strong pines wave above them, and the weak grasses tremble beside them; but the blue stars rest upon the earth with a peace as of heaven; and far along the ridges of iron rock, moveless as they, the rubied crests of Alpine rose flush in the low rays of morning. Nor these yet the stillest leaves. Others there are subdued to a deeper quietness, the mute slaves of the earth, to whom we owe, perhaps, thanks, and tenderness, the most profound of all we have to render for the leaf ministries.

§ 23. It is strange to think of the gradually diminished power and withdrawn freedom among the orders of leaves—from the sweep of the chestnut and gadding of the vine, down to the close shrinking trefoil, and contented daisy, pressed on earth; and, at last, to the leaves that are not merely close to earth, but themselves a part of it; fastened down to it by their sides, here and there only a wrinkled edge rising from the granite crystals. We have found beauty in the tree yielding fruit, and in the herb yielding seed.¹ How of the herb yielding *no* seed,* the fruitless, flowerless lichen of the rock?

§ 24. Lichen, and mosses (though these last in their luxuriance are deep and rich as herbage, yet both for the most part humblest of the green things that live),—how of these? Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin,—laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How

* The reader must remember always that my work is concerning the *aspects* of things only. Of course, a lichen has seeds, just as other plants have, but not effectually or visibly for man.

¹ [Genesis i. 11.]
vii.

is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green,—the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass,—the trceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace? They will not be gathered, like the flowers, for chaplet or love-token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow.

And, as the earth's first mercy, so they are its last gift to us. When all other service is vain, from plant and tree, the soft mosses and gray lichen take up their watch by the head-stone. The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a time, but these do service for ever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, moss for the grave.

§ 25. Yet as in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honoured of the earth-children. Unfading, as motionless, the worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not. Strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal tapestries of the hills; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the dropping of its cowslip-gold,—far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen-spots rest, star-like, on the stone; and the gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years.

PART VII
OF CLOUD BEAUTY

CHAPTER I

THE CLOUD-BALANCINGS¹

§ 1. WE have seen² that when the earth had to be prepared for the habitation of man, a veil, as it were, of intermediate being was spread between him and its darkness, in which were joined, in a subdued measure, the stability and insensibility of the earth, and the passion and perishing of mankind.

But the heavens, also, had to be prepared for his habitation.

Between their burning light,—their deep vacuity, and man, as between the earth's gloom of iron substance, and man, a veil had to be spread of intermediate being;—which should appease the unendurable glory to the level of human feebleness, and sign the changeless motion of the heavens with a semblance of human vicissitude.

Between the earth and man arose the leaf. Between the heaven and man came the cloud. His life being partly as the falling leaf, and partly as the flying vapour.³

§ 2. Has the reader any distinct idea of what clouds are? We had some talk about them long ago,⁴ and perhaps thought their nature, though at that time not clear to us, would be easily enough understandable when we put ourselves seriously to make it out. Shall we begin with one or two easiest questions?

¹ [This chapter was reprinted by Ruskin in 1884 as Chapter II. of *Cæli Enarrant* (for which, see Vol. III. p. lxxiii.), with a few alterations and additions, here given in their places or noted in the list above, p. lxxiii.]

² [See above, ch. i., "The Earth Veil"; p. 13.]

³ [See James iv. 14. Compare Vol. XIII. p. 316.]

⁴ [In the first volume of *Modern Painters*.]

That mist¹ which lies in the morning so softly in the valley, level and white, through which the tops of the trees rise as if through an inundation—why is *it* so heavy? and why does it lie so low, being yet so thin and frail that it will melt away utterly into splendour of morning, when the sun has shone on it but a few moments more? Those colossal pyramids, huge and firm, with outlines as of rocks, and strength to bear the beating of the high sun full on their fiery flanks—why are *they* so light,—their bases high over our heads, high over the heads of Alps? why will these melt away, not as the sun *rises*, but as he *descends*, and leave the stars of twilight clear, while the valley vapour gains again upon the earth like a shroud?

Or that ghost of a cloud, which steals by yonder clump of pines: nay, which does *not* steal by them, but haunts them, wreathing yet round them, and yet—and yet, slowly: now falling in a fair waved line like a woman's veil; now fading, now gone: we look away for an instant, and look back, and it is again there.² What has it to do with that clump of pines, that it broods by them and weaves itself among their branches, to and fro? Has it hidden a cloudy treasure among the moss at their roots, which it watches thus? Or has some strong enchanter charmed it into fond returning, or bound it fast within those bars of bough? And yonder filmy crescent, bent like an archer's bow above the snowy summit, the highest of all the hill,—that white arch which never forms but over the supreme crest,—how is it stayed there, repelled apparently from the snow—nowhere touching it, the clear sky seen between it and the

¹ [§ 2 (with the omission of the words “We had some talk . . . easiest questions”) is part of § 24 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where it follows passages about the clouds from the first volume of *Modern Painters*. At this point in *Fronde* Ruskin adds the footnote:—

“This is a fifth volume bit, and worth more attention.”]

² [As an instance of the care with which every sentence of these chapters was revised, the MS. version of this passage may be given:—

“Or that ghost of a cloud, which wraps itself about yonder tuft of pines: nay, which does not steal by it, but haunts it, wreathing still round it, and yet—and yet so slowly: like a woman's veil; now fading, now gone: we look away for an instant, and back again, and behold it is again there.”]

mountain edge, yet never leaving it—poised as a white bird hovers over its nest?

Or those war-clouds that gather on the horizon, dragon-crested, tongued with fire;—how is their barbed strength bridled? what bits are these they are champing with their vaporous lips; flinging off flakes of black foam? Leagued leviathans of the Sea of Heaven, out of their nostrils goeth smoke, and their eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. The sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold; the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.¹ Where ride the captains of their armies? Where are set the measures of their march? Fierce murmurers, answering each other from morning until evening—what rebuke is this which has awed them into peace? what hand has reined them back by the way by which they came?

§ 3. I know not if the reader will think at first that questions like these are easily answered. So far from it, I rather believe that some of the mysteries of the clouds never will be understood by us at all. “Knowest thou the balancings of the clouds?” Is the answer ever to be one of pride? “The wondrous works of Him which is *perfect* is knowledge?”² Is *our* knowledge ever to be so?

It is one of the most discouraging consequences of the varied character of this work of mine, that I am wholly unable to take note of the advance of modern science. What has conclusively been discovered or observed about clouds, I know not; but by the chance inquiry possible to me I find no book which fairly states the difficulties of accounting for even the ordinary aspects of the sky. I shall, therefore, be able in this section to do little more than suggest inquiries to the reader, putting the subject in a clear form for him. All men accustomed to investigation will confirm me in saying that it is a great step when we are personally quite certain what we do *not* know.

¹ [Job xli. 18, 20, 26.]

² [Job xxxvii. 16.]

§ 4. First, then, I believe we do not know what makes clouds float. Clouds are water, in some fine form or another; but water is heavier than air, and the finest form you can give a heavy thing will not make it float in a light thing.¹ *On* it, yes; as a boat; but *in* it, no. Clouds are not boats, nor boat-shaped; and they float in the air, not on the top of it. “Nay, but though unlike boats, may they not be like feathers? If out of quill substance there may be constructed eider-down, and out of vegetable tissue, thistle-down, both buoyant enough for a time, surely of water-tissue may be constructed also water-down, which will be buoyant enough for all cloudy purposes.” Not so. Throw out your eider plumage in a calm day, and it will all come settling to the ground: slowly indeed, to aspect; but practically so fast that all our finest clouds would be here in a heap about our ears in an hour or two, if they were only made of water-feathers. “But may they not be quill feathers, and have air inside them? May not all their particles be minute little balloons?”

A balloon only floats when the air inside it is either specifically, or by heating, lighter than the air it floats in. If the cloud-feathers had warm air inside their quills, a cloud would be warmer than the air about it, which it is not (I believe). And if the cloud-feathers had hydrogen inside their quills, a cloud would be unwholesome for breathing, which it is not—at least so it seems to me.

“But may they not have nothing inside their quills?” Then they would rise, as bubbles do through water, just as certainly as, if they were solid feathers, they would fall. All

¹ [Here in *Cæli Enarrant* (1884) Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Compare the old note to § 6 [p. 138]; but I had not, when I wrote it, enough reflected on the horrible buoyancy of smoke, nor did I know over what spaces volcanic ashes were diffusible. Will any of my scientific friends now state for me the approximate weight and bulk of a particle of dust of any solid substance which would be buoyant in air of a given density?”

For the answer to this question, see the Postscript of 1884; below, p. 141. Ruskin repeated his questions in *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, 1884, p. 76. For some later notes on such questions, see the extracts from Ruskin’s letters to Kate Greenaway, given in the Introduction; above, p. lxi.]

our clouds would go up to the top of the air, and swim in eddies of cloud-foam.

“But is not that just what they do?” No. They float at different heights, and with definite forms, in the body of the air itself. If they rose like foam, the sky on a cloudy day would look like a very large flat glass of champagne seen from below, with a stream of bubbles (or clouds) going up as fast as they could to a flat foam-ceiling.

“But may they not be just so nicely mixed out of something and nothing, as to float where they are wanted?”

Yes; that is just what they not only may, but must be: only this way of mixing something and nothing is the very thing I want to explain or have explained, and cannot do it, nor get it done.

§ 5. Except thus far. It is conceivable that minute hollow spherical globules might be formed of water, in which the enclosed vacuity just balanced the weight of the enclosing water, and that the arched sphere formed by the watery film was strong enough to prevent the pressure of the atmosphere from breaking it in. Such a globule would float like a balloon at the height in the atmosphere where the equipoise between the vacuum it enclosed, and its own excess of weight above that of the air, was exact. It would, probably, approach its companion globules by reciprocal attraction, and form aggregations which might be visible.¹

This is, I believe, the view usually taken by meteorologists. I state it as a possibility, to be taken into account in examining the question—a possibility confirmed by the Scriptural words which I have taken for the title of this chapter.

§ 6. Nevertheless, I state it as a possibility only, not seeing how any known operation of physical law could explain the formation of such molecules. This, however, is not the only difficulty. Whatever shape the water is thrown into, it seems at first improbable that it should lose its

¹ [For a note by Sir Oliver Lodge on this passage, see the Postscript, below, p. 142.]

property of wetness. Minute division of rain, as in “Scotch mist,” makes it capable of floating farther,* or floating up and down a little, just as dust will float, though pebbles will not; or gold-leaf, though a sovereign will not; but minutely divided rain wets as much as any other kind, whereas a cloud, partially always, sometimes entirely, loses its power of moistening. Some low clouds look, when you are in them, as if they were made of specks of dust, like short hairs; and these clouds are entirely dry. And also many clouds will wet some substances, but not others. So that we must grant farther, if we are to be happy in our theory, that the spherical molecules are held together by an attraction which prevents their adhering to any foreign body, or perhaps ceases only under some peculiar electric conditions.

§ 7. The question remains, even supposing their production accounted for,—What intermediate states of water may exist between these spherical hollow molecules and pure vapour?

* The buoyancy of solid bodies of a given specific gravity, in a given fluid, depends, first on their size, then on their forms.

First, on their size; that is to say, on the proportion of the magnitude of the object (irrespective of the distribution of its particles) to the magnitude of the particles of the air.

Thus, a grain of sand is buoyant in wind, but a large stone is not; and pebbles and sand are buoyant in water in proportion to their smallness, fine dust taking long to sink, while a large stone sinks at once. Thus we see that water may be arranged in drops of any magnitude, from the largest rain-drop, about the size of a large pea, to an atom so small as not to be separately visible, the smallest rain passing gradually into mist. Of these drops of different sizes (supposing the strength of the wind the same), the largest fall fastest, the smaller drops are more buoyant, and the small misty rain floats about like a cloud, as often up as down, so that an umbrella is useless in it; though in a heavy thunderstorm, if there is no wind, one may stand gathered up under an umbrella without a drop touching the feet.

Secondly, buoyancy depends on the amount of surface which a given weight of the substance exposes to the resistance of the substance it floats in. Thus, gold-leaf is in a high degree buoyant, while the same quantity of gold in a compact grain would fall like a shot; and a feather is buoyant, though the same quantity of animal matter in a compact form would be as heavy as a little stone. A slate blows far from a house-top, while a brick falls vertically, or nearly so.

Has the reader ever considered the relations of commonest forms of volatile substance? The invisible particles which cause the scent of the rose-leaf, how minute, how multitudinous, passing richly away into the air continually! The visible cloud of frankincense—why visible? Is it in consequence of the greater quantity, or larger size of the particles, and how does the heat act in throwing them off in this quantity, or of this size?

Ask the same questions respecting water. It dries, that is, becomes volatile, invisibly, at (any?) temperature. Snow dries, as water does. Under increase of heat, it volatilizes faster, so as to become dimly visible in large mass, as a heat-haze. It reaches boiling point, then becomes entirely visible. But compress it, so that no air shall get between the watery particles—it is invisible again. At the first issuing from the steam-pipe the steam is transparent; but opaque, or visible, as it diffuses itself. The water is indeed closer, because cooler, in that diffusion; but more air is between its particles. Then this very question of visibility is an endless one, wavering between form of substance and action of light. The clearest (or least visible) stream becomes brightly opaque by more minute division in its foam, and the clearest dew in hoar-frost. Dust, unperceived in shade, becomes constantly visible in sunbeam; and watery vapour in the atmosphere, which is itself opaque, when there is promise of fine weather, becomes exquisitely transparent; and (questionably) blue when it is going to rain.

§ 8. Questionably blue: for besides knowing very little about water, we know what, except by courtesy, must, I think, be called nothing—about air. Is it the watery vapour, or the air itself, which is blue? Is neither blue, but only white, producing blue when seen over dark spaces? If either blue, or white, why, when crimson is their commanded dress, are the most distant clouds crimsonest? Clouds close to us may be blue, but far off golden—a strange result, if the air is blue. And again, if blue, why are rays that come through large spaces of it red; and that

Alp, or anything else that catches far away light, why coloured red, at dawn and sunset? No one knows, I believe. It is true that many substances, as opal, are blue, or green, by reflected light, yellow by transmitted; but air, if blue at all, is blue always by transmitted light. I hear of a wonderful solution of nettles, or other unlovely herb, which is green when shallow,—red when deep.¹ Perhaps some day, as the motion of the heavenly bodies by help of an apple, their light by help of a nettle, may be explained to mankind.

§ 9. But farther: these questions of volatility, and visibility, and hue, are all complicated with those of shape. How is a cloud outlined? Granted whatever you choose to ask, concerning its material, or its aspect, its loftiness and luminousness,—how of its limitation? What hews it into a heap, or spins it into a web? Cold is usually shapeless, I suppose, extending over large spaces equally, or with gradual diminution. You cannot have, in the open air, angles, and wedges, and coils, and cliffs of cold. Yet the vapour stops suddenly, sharp and steep as a rock, or thrusts itself across the gates of heaven in likeness of a brazen bar; or braids itself in and out, and across and across, like a tissue of tapestry; or falls into ripples like sand; or into waving shreds and tongues, as fire. On what anvils and wheels is the vapour pointed, twisted, hammered, whirled, as the potter's clay? By what hands is the incense of the sea built up into domes of marble?²

And, lastly, all these questions respecting substance, and aspect, and shape, and line, and division, are involved with others as inscrutable, concerning action. The curves in which clouds move are unknown;—nay, the very method of their motion, or apparent motion, how far it is by change of place, how far by appearance in one place and vanishing from another. And these questions about movement lead

¹ [Ruskin here seems to be referring to the phenomena of fluorescence; see under that heading in the article upon "Light" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ix. p. 602 (9th edition).]

² [Compare *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, where Ruskin again raises similar questions, and quotes this § 9. Compare also *Eagle's Nest*, § 131.]

partly far away into high mathematics, where I cannot follow them, and partly into theories concerning electricity and infinite space, where I suppose at present no one can follow them.

What, then, is the use of asking the questions?

For my own part, I enjoy the mystery, and perhaps the reader may. I think he ought. He should not be less grateful for summer rain, or see less beauty in the clouds of morning, because they come to prove him with hard questions; to which, perhaps, if we look close at the heavenly scroll,* we may find also a syllable or two of answer illuminated here and there.

POSTSCRIPT [1884]¹

I AM happy in finding that the saucy saying in my Preface, "I find nothing to alter," must even already be withdrawn; and that probably every chapter henceforward may have its postscript of correction or addition, bringing it to due level with the state of modern science. I had not hoped to have time for this revision; but by the kindness of Professor Oliver Lodge, of University College, Liverpool,² I have been at once put in possession of the facts bearing on all main points in immediate question,—with the farther permission to refer to him as others occur. To begin with, he tells me, respecting the buoyancy of dust in the atmosphere, and its functions there (see above, the note at p. 138), many more things than can be dealt with in a postscript,—they must be considered in their proper places in additional chapters,—and at once relieves me from farther trouble

* There is a beautiful passage in *Sartor Resartus* concerning this old Hebrew scroll, in its deeper meanings, and the child's watching it, though long illegible for him, yet "with an eye to the gilding." It signifies in a word or two nearly all that is to be said about clouds.³

¹ [This postscript was put into type by Ruskin for *Cæli Enarrant*, but the publication of that reprint from *Modern Painters* was suspended before the Part, in which the postscript was to be included, had appeared—headed "Postscript to Chapter II." (*i.e.*, of *Cæli*, ch. i. of Part vii. here). The "Preface" referred to is in this edition printed at the end of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* (Vol. VI. pp. 486, 487).]

² [Now Sir Oliver Lodge, Principal of the Birmingham University.]

³ [See Book ii. ch. ii. of *Sartor*. In *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin added at the end of his note "(Not quite. J. R., 1884)," and this addition was incorporated in the edition of 1888 and later.]

or error about floating bubbles by his following note on the fifth paragraph of the second chapter:¹—"A sphere of perfectly flexible, inextensible and incompressible substance *would* stand pressure exactly as you suggest,—not so when it is compressible, and so absolutely compressible as a water-film would be: collapsible, not because it is crumpled, but because its walls thicken, and its internal cavity instantly closes. A *free* globule must be spherical, and cannot be a hollow sphere."

Professor Lodge has also explained to me for the first time the expansion of aqueous vapour (as of other gaseous elements) independently of the air. I had always imagined that dry air sucked up water into the pores of it, like a sponge, and was saturated with water as water is by salt. (See the expression to that effect in the first paragraph of the following chapter.) The real fact, of immense importance to us in future conclusions, I have not recovered enough from my astonishment—not to say consternation—in learning, to follow out, yet, to any conclusions, but I give them at once in Professor Lodge's words:—"The amount of water which is able to evaporate into a space of a thousand cubic feet" (or any other fixed number, a thousand being only the term of my question) "depends entirely on the temperature, and on nothing else. It does not depend on the quantity of air in the vessel. Whether it be high-pressure air or low-pressure air, or vacuum, or any other dry gas or mixture of gases, all these things matter nothing,—they do not affect the quantity of water which evaporates; they do affect the rapidity with which the process takes place, as we shall see later, but they do not affect its ultimate amount. The distribution of moisture through the air is brought about by 'diffusion' aided by 'convection.' The molecules or atoms of matter (I draw no distinction between 'atoms' and molecules for present purposes) in the *liquid* state are mutually connected or bound in some way, and they are very close together; they are commonly said to be 'within range of each other's attraction,' and there is sound meaning involved in this rather uncomfortable phrase. They are believed (known, I might say) to be in rapid motion of some kind, but they are so clogged by the crowd of others that *loco*-motion is extremely slow. But the molecules or atoms of a vapour or gas are almost or quite free from each other's influence, and the motion of these consists in rushing wildly about—striking against obstacles and rebounding—but, except during collision, pursuing a straight path with a velocity comparable to that of a rifle bullet. (This molecular velocity is accurately known for different gases, and depends, for any one gas, solely on temperature. Here is a little table of these velocities at the freezing-point of water:—

Hydrogen	6110 feet a second
Oxygen	1525 " "
Carbonic acid	1250 " "
Steam	2035 " ")"

I have not yet been able to master the idea of this state of things, and still less that of the communicable agitation of fluorescence, shown

¹ [The "second chapter" in *Cæli Enarrant*; see here, p. 137.]

me by Mr. Huggins,¹ to whom, being happily for me my neighbour when I am in London, I can have recourse for safety in what I say or think about light. Meantime I go on with my old book, exulting now in the hope of at last appeasing some of its thirsty questions, and massing what statements in it I may get leave to ratify in more useful and intelligible order.

¹ [Sir William Huggins, K.C.B., President of the Royal Society; he had built his private observatory at 90 Upper Tulse Hill in 1856.]

CHAPTER II

THE CLOUD-FLOCKS¹

§ 1. FROM the tenor of the foregoing chapter, the reader will, I hope, be prepared to find me, though dogmatic (it is said) upon some occasions,² anything rather than dogmatic respecting clouds. I will assume nothing concerning them, beyond the simple fact, that as a floating³ sediment forms in a saturated liquid, vapour forms in the body of the air; and all that I want the reader to be clear about, in the outset, is that this vapour floats *in* and *with* the wind (as, if you throw any thick colouring-matter into a river, it floats with the stream), and that it is not blown before a denser volume of the wind, as a fleece of wool would be.

§ 2. At whatever height they form, clouds may be broadly considered as of two species only, massive and striated. I cannot find a better word than massive, though it is not a good one, for I mean it only to signify a fleecy arrangement in which no *lines* are visible. The fleece may be so bright as to look like flying thistle-down, or so diffused as to show no visible outline at all. Still if it is all of one common texture, like a handful of wool, or a wreath of smoke, I call it massive.

On the other hand, if divided by parallel lines, so as to look more or less like spun-glass, I call it striated. In

¹ [Among Ruskin's papers is a proof and revise of this chapter which he intended to print as a further chapter in *Cæli Enarrant* (see above, p. lxi.). The proof contains a few alterations and added notes, which are here given in their places or noted in the list of "Variæ Lectiones" (p. lxxiii.). For the title of the present chapter, see below, § 5.]

² [Compare *Time and Tide*, § 33, and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 85.]

³ [Here, for *Cæli Enarrant*, Ruskin added the following footnote:—
"More accurately 'suspended'; see postscript to preceding chapter."]

Plate 69,¹ Fig. 4, the top of the Aiguille Dru (Chamouni) is seen emergent above low straited clouds, with heaped massive cloud beyond. I do not know in the least what causes this striation, except that it depends on the nature of the cloud, not on the wind. The strongest wind will not throw a cloud, massive by nature, into the linear form. It will toss it about, and tear it to pieces, but not spin it into threads. On the other hand, often without any wind at all, the cloud will spin itself into threads fine as gossamer. These threads are often said to be a prognostic of storm; but they are not *produced* by storm.

§ 3. In the first volume, we considered all clouds as belonging to three regions, that of the cirrus, the central cloud, and the rain-cloud.² It is of course an arrangement more of convenience than of true description, for cirrus clouds sometimes form low as well as high; and rain sometimes falls high as well as low. I will, nevertheless, retain this old arrangement, which is practically as serviceable as any.

Allowing, also, for various exceptions and modifications, these three bodies of cloud may be generally distinguished in our minds thus. The clouds of upper region are for the most part quiet, or seem to be so, owing to their distance. They are formed now of striated, now of massive substance; but *always finely divided*.³ The central clouds are entirely of massive substance, but divided into large ragged flakes or ponderous heaps. These heaps (cumuli) and flakes, or drifts, present different phenomena, but must be joined in our minds under the head of central cloud. The lower clouds, bearing rain abundantly, are composed partly of striated, partly of massive substance; but may generally be comprehended under the term "rain-cloud."

¹ [Opposite p. 166. In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* this was "In Plate I. (Atlas), Fig. 4," thus showing that Ruskin intended to issue, as a companion volume to his reprints from *Modern Painters*, a series of separate Plates.]

² [See Vol. III. p. 359.]

³ [In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin here added the following footnote:—
"See the correction of this too general statement in note to section 4."]

Our business in this chapter then is with the upper clouds, which, owing to their quietness and multitude, we may perhaps conveniently think of as the “cloud-flocks.” And we have to discover if any laws of beauty attach to them, such as we have seen in mountains or tree-branches.

§ 4. On one of the few mornings of this winter,¹ when the sky was clear, and one of the far fewer, on which its clearness was visible from the neighbourhood of London,—which now entirely loses at least two out of three sunrises, owing to the environing smoke,—the dawn broke beneath a broad field of level purple cloud,² under which floated ranks of divided cirri, composed of finely striated vapour.

It was not a sky containing any extraordinary number of these minor clouds; but each was more than usually distinct in separation from its neighbour, and as they showed in nearly pure pale scarlet on the dark purple ground, they were easily to be counted.

§ 5. There were five or six ranks, from the zenith to the horizon; that is to say, three distinct ones, and then two or three

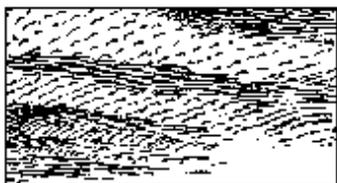


Fig. 79

more running together, and losing themselves in distance, in the manner roughly shown in Fig. 79. The nearest rank was composed of more than 150 rows of cloud, set obliquely, as in the figure. I counted 150, which was near the mark, and then stopped, lest the light should fail, to count the separate clouds in some of the rows. The average number was 60 in each row, rather more than less.

¹ [In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin here inserted the date “(1859–60).” For his study of skies at Denmark Hill, see above, Introduction, p. xxvi.]

² [Here in the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Curiously, my first instance contradicts my first italicized generalization, that the upper clouds are *always* finely divided,—for this level purple cloud was higher, since it served as a ground for the cirri described, yet it was broad and unbroken. I ought to have said, ‘finely divided if divided at all’—and even that is not true of the spaces left by openings in their level fields. It is true only that they are never massive, usually of small horizontal depth,—and characteristically subject to multiplied division.”]

There were therefore 150 x 60, that is, 9,000, separate clouds in this one rank, or about 50,000 in the field of sight. Flocks of Admetus under Apollo's keeping.¹ Who else could shepherd such? He by day, dog Sirius by night; or huntress Diana herself—her bright arrows driving away the clouds of prey that would ravage her fair flocks. We



Fig. 80

must leave fancies, however; these wonderful clouds need close looking at. I will try to draw one or two of them before they fade.

§ 6. On doing which (Fig. 80) we find, after all, they are not much more like sheep than *Canis Major* is like a dog. They resemble more some of our old friends, the pine branches, covered with snow. The three, forming the uppermost figure, in the Plate opposite, are as like three of

¹ [For the story of Apollo, when banished from heaven, tending the flocks of Admetus, see Euripides, *Alcestis*, 569 *seq.*]



J. P. Smith.

J. C. Assortage,
Allen & Co. N.

63. The Cloud-Flocks.

the fifty thousand as I could get them; complex enough in structure, even this single group. Busy workers they must be, that twine the braiding of them all to the horizon, and down beyond it.

And who are these workers? You have two questions here, both difficult. What separates these thousands of clouds each from the other, and each about equally from the other? How can they be drawn asunder, yet not allowed to part? Looped lace as it were, richest point—invisible threads fastening embroidered cloud to cloud—the “*plighted* clouds” of Milton,—creatures of the element—

“That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play in the plighted clouds.”¹

Compare Geraldine dressing:—

“Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight.”

And Britomart’s—

“Her well-plighted frock
She low let fall, that flowed from her lanck side,
Down to her foot with careless modesty.”

And, secondly, what bends each of them into these flam-like curves, tender and various, as motions of a bird, hither and thither? Perhaps you may hardly see the curves well in the softly finished forms; here they are plainer in rude outline, Fig. 80.*

* Before going farther, I must say a word or two respecting methods of drawing clouds.

Absolutely well no cloud *can* be drawn with the point; nothing but the most delicate management of the brush will express its variety of edge

¹ [*Comus*, line 298. (For a reference to the word *plighted* in this passage, see a letter to Dr. Furnivall of September 29, 1878, printed in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, ii. 260, and reprinted in a later volume of this edition.) In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin here added the following footnote:—

“I do not doubt that Milton had seen, before any of us, the rainbow colours in the plighted clouds themselves. See lectures on ‘Storm Cloud,’ i. p. 27. For this use of the word plight, ‘Compare Geraldine dressing:—... careless modesty.’ ”

For Geraldine, see Coleridge’s *Christabel*, part ii.; and for Britomart, *Faerie Queene*, book iii. canto ix. 21.]



J.M.W. Turner

J.C. Assietage
Allen & Co. So.

§ 7. What is it that throws them into these lines?

Eddies of wind?

Nay, an eddy of wind will not stay quiet for three minutes, as that cloud did to be drawn; as all the others did, each in his place. You see there is perfect harmony among the curves. They all flow into each other as the

and texture. By laborious and tender engraving, a close approximation may be obtained either to nature or to good painting; and the engravings of sky by our modern line engravers are often admirable;—in many respects as good as can be, and to my mind the best part of their work. There still exist some early proofs of Miller's Plate of the Grand Canal, Venice,¹ in which the sky is the likest thing to Turner's work I have ever seen in large engravings. The Plate was spoiled after a few impressions were taken off by desire of the publisher. The sky was so exactly like Turner's that he thought it would not please the public, and had all the fine cloud-drawing rubbed away to make it soft.

The Plate² opposite this page, by Mr. Armytage, is also, I think,³ a superb specimen of engraving, though, in result, not so good as the one just spoken of, because this was done from my copy of Turner's sky, not from the picture itself.

But engraving of this finished kind cannot, by reason of its costliness, be given for every illustration of cloud-form. Nor, if it could, can skies be sketched with the completion which would bear it. It is sometimes possible to draw one cloud out of fifty thousand with something like fidelity before it fades. But if we want the arrangement of the fifty thousand, they can only be indicated with the rudest lines, and finished from memory. It was, as we shall see presently, only by his gigantic powers of memory that Turner was enabled to draw skies as he did.

Now I look upon my own memory of clouds, or of anything else, as of no value whatever.⁴ All the drawings on which I have ever rested an assertion have been made without stirring from the spot; and in sketching clouds from nature, it is very seldom desirable to use the

¹ [The picture referred to is "Venice from the Porch of Madonna della Salute"; for particulars of it, and of Miller's engraving, see Vol. XIII. p. 498 (a note on a fine early impression of the Plate exhibited by Ruskin in 1878–1879).]

² [For a further reference to this Plate, see again Vol. XIII. pp. 498–499 (a note on the Plate exhibited by Ruskin on the same occasion).]

³ [In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin struck out the words "I think."]

⁴ [Here in the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin added:—

" . . . no value whatever. (This statement is one of those which I *do* admit require some slight modification in this final edition. By value I mean evidence in court; and neither of conversations, events, nor aspects of things, do I ever allege what I have not made memoranda of on the instant.) All the drawings . . ."

Compare *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 94, where Ruskin says, "I myself have written down memoranda of many skies, but have forgotten the skies themselves. Turner wrote nothing,—but remembered all."]

currents of a stream do. If you throw dust that will float on the surface of a slow river, it will arrange itself in lines somewhat like these. To a certain extent, indeed, it is true that there are gentle currents of change in the atmosphere, which move slowly enough to permit in the clouds that follow them some appearance of stability. But how to obtain change so complex in an infinite number of consecutive spaces;—fifty thousand separate groups of current in half of a morning sky, with quiet invisible vapour between, or none;—and yet all obedient to one ruling law, gone forth through their companies;—each marshalled to their white standards, in great unity of warlike march, unarrested, unconfused? “One shall not thrust another, they shall walk every one in his own path.”¹

brush. For broad effects and notes of colour (though these, hastily made, are always inaccurate, and letters indicating the colour do nearly as well) the brush may be sometimes useful; but, in most cases, a dark pencil, which will lay shade with its side and draw lines with its point, is the best instrument. Turner almost always outlined merely with the point, being able to remember the relations of shade without the slightest chance of error. The point, at all events, is needful, however much stump work may be added to it.

Now, in translating sketches made with the pencil point into engraving, we must either engrave delicately and expensively, or be content to substitute for the soft varied pencil lines the finer and uncloudlike touches of the pen. It is best to do this boldly, if at all, and without the least aim at fineness of effect, to lay down a vigorous black line as the limit of the cloud-form or action. The more subtle a painter's finished work, the more fearless he is in using the vigorous black line when he is making memoranda, or treating his subject conventionally. In Fig. 66 Vol. IV.,² the reader may see the kind of outline which Titian uses for clouds in his pen work. Usually he is even bolder and coarser. And in the rude woodcuts I am going to employ here, I believe the reader will find ultimately that, with whatever ill success used by me, the means of expression are the fullest and most convenient that can be adopted, short of finished engraving, while there are some conditions of cloud-action which I satisfy myself better in expressing by these coarse lines than in any other way.

¹ [Joel ii. 8. In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“This favourite text is again used of the cumulus, in the passage quoted from *Fors*—‘Storm Cloud,’ i. p. 41.”

The passage referred to is quoted not from *Fors*, but from *Eagle's Nest* (§ 130).]

² [In this edition, Vol. VI. p. 268.]

§ 8. These questions occur, at first sight, respecting every group of cirrus cloud. Whatever the form may be, whether branched, as in this instance, or merely rippled, or thrown into oval masses,¹ as in Fig. 81—a frequent arrangement—there is still the same difficulty in accounting satisfactorily for the individual forces which regulate the similar shape of each mass, while all are moved by a general force that has apparently no influence on the divided structure. Thus the mass of clouds disposed as in Fig. 81 will probably move, mutually, in the direction of the arrow; that is to say, sideways, as far as their separate curvature is concerned. I suppose it probable that as the science of electricity is more perfectly systematized, the explanation of many circumstances of cloud-form will be rendered by it. At present I see no use in troubling the reader or myself with conjectures which a year's progress in science might either effectively contradict or supersede. All that I want is, that we should have our questions ready to put clearly to the electricians when the electricians are ready to answer us.

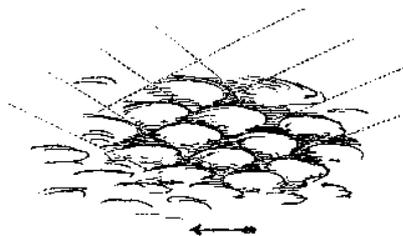


Fig. 81

§ 9. It is possible that some of the loveliest conditions of these parallel clouds may be owing to a structure which I forgot to explain, when it occurred in rocks, in the course of the last volume.

When they are finely stratified, and their surfaces abraded by broad, shallow furrows, the edges of the beds, of course, are thrown into undulations, and at some distance, where the furrows disappear, the surface looks as if the rock had flowed over it in successive waves. Such a condition is seen on the left at the top in Fig. 17 in Vol. IV.²

¹ ["Oval masses" is a correction from Ruskin's proof for *Cæli Enarrant*, where he added as a footnote:—

"Shield-like segments in the old book, which was nonsense."]

² [In this edition, Vol. VI. p. 193.]

Supposing a series of beds of vapour cut across by a straight sloping current of air, and so placed as to catch the light on their edges, we should have a series of curved lights, looking like independent clouds.

§ 10. I believe conditions of form like those in Fig. 82 (turn the book with its outside edge down) may not unfrequently be thus, owing to stratification, when they occur in the nearer sky. This line of cloud is far off at the horizon, drifting towards the left (the points of course forward), and is, I suppose, a series of nearly circular eddies seen in perspective.

Which question of perspective we must examine a little before going a step farther.¹

In order to simplify it, let us assume that the under surfaces of clouds are flat, and lie in a horizontal extended field. This is in great measure the fact, and notable perspective phenomena depend on the approximation of clouds to such a condition.

§ 11. Referring the reader to my *Elements of Perspective*² for statements of law which would be in this place tiresome, I can only ask him to take my word for it that the three figures in Plate 64 represent limiting lines of sky perspective, as they would appear over a large space of the sky. Supposing that the breadth included was one-fourth of the horizon, the shaded portions in the central figure represent square fields of cloud,* and

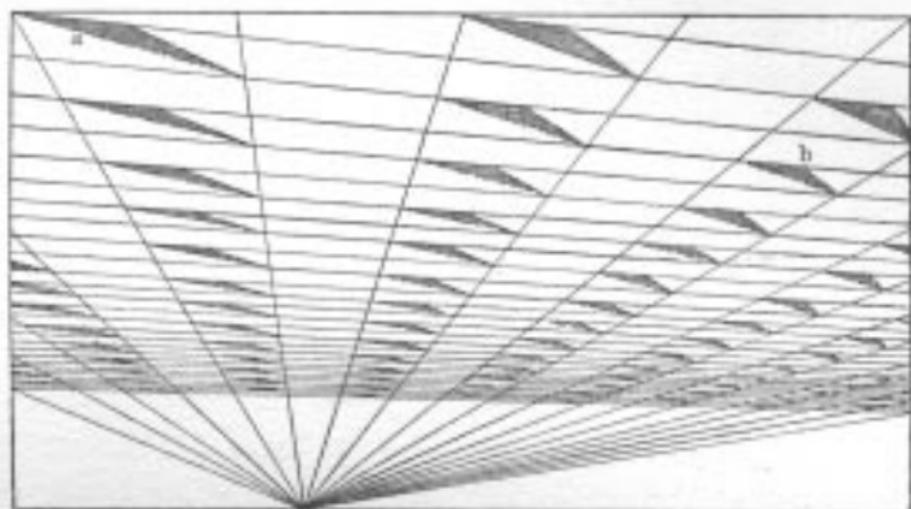
* If the figures are supposed to include less than one-fourth of the horizon, the shaded figures represent diamond-shaped clouds; but the reader cannot understand this without studying perspective laws accurately.

¹ [In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin omitted from "Which question of perspective" down to "parallel lines" (line 12 of § 12), putting the following footnote note:—

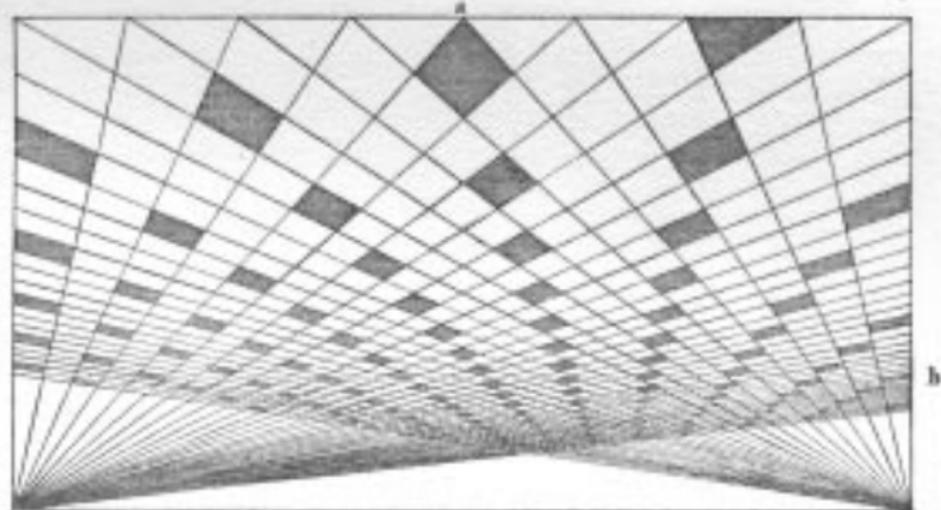
"I omit in this place four paragraphs on the perspectives, with the plates illustrating them, in which I never heard any one express the slightest interest, or intimate that they had put them to any use."

He retained from "In Plate 66" (line 13 of § 12) down to "becomes embarrassing" (line 4 of § 13), and then omitted from "The central figure" (line 5) down to "including curve; and" (line 13 of § 14), resuming ". . . embarrassing. A common painter . . ."]

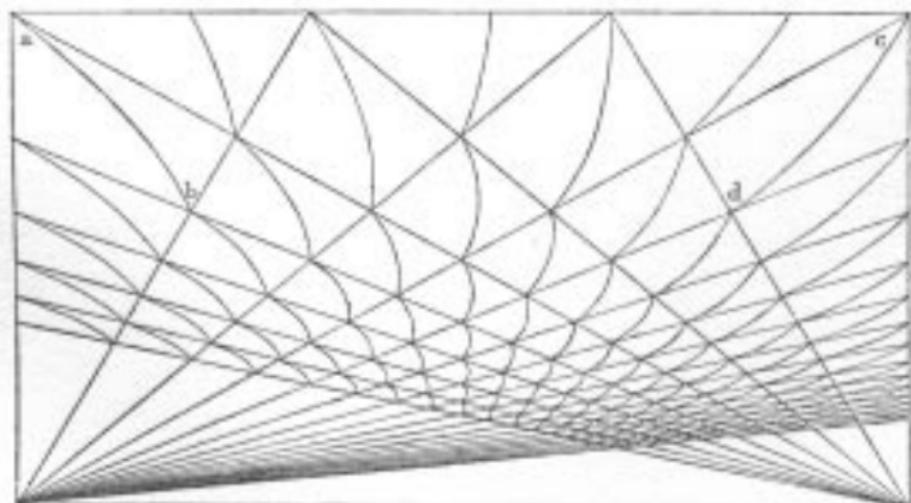
² [Vol. XV.]



1



2



3

J. Ruskin.

J. H. Russell.
Amfot & Hough. Co.

64. Cloud Perspective (Rectilinear).

those in the uppermost figure narrow triangles, with their shortest side next us, but sloping a little away from us.

In each figure, the shaded portions show the perspective limits of cloud-masses, which, in reality, are arranged in perfectly straight lines, are all similar, and are equidistant from each other. Their exact relative positions are marked by the lines connecting them, and may be determined by the reader if he knows perspective. If he does not, he may be surprised at first to be told that the stubborn and blunt little triangle, *b*, Fig. 1, Plate 64, represents a cloud precisely similar, and similarly situated, to that represented by the thin triangle, *a*; and, in like manner, the stout diamond, *a*, Fig. 2, represents precisely the same form and size of cloud as the thin strip at *b*. He may perhaps think it still more curious that the retiring perspective which causes stoutness in the triangle, causes leanness in the diamond.*

§ 12. Still greater confusion in aspect is induced by the apparent change caused by perspective in the direction of the wind. If Fig. 3 [Plate 64] be supposed to include a quarter of the horizon, the spaces, into which its straight lines divide it, represent squares of sky. The curved lines, which cross these spaces from corner to corner, are precisely parallel throughout; and, therefore, two clouds moving, one on the curved line from *a* to *b*, and the other on the other side, from *c* to *d*, would, in



Fig. 82

* In reality, the retiring ranks of cloud, if long enough, would, of course, go on converging to the horizon. I do not continue them, because the figures would become too compressed.

reality, be moving with the same wind, in parallel lines. In Plate 66, which is a sketch of an actual sunset behind Beauvais cathedral (the point of the roof of the apse, a little to the left of the centre, shows it to be a summer sunset), the white cirri in the high light are all moving eastward, away from the sun, in perfectly parallel lines, curving a little round to the south. Underneath, are two straight ranks of rainy cirri, crossing each other; one directed south-east; the other, north-west. The meeting perspective of these, in extreme distance, determines the shape of the angular light which opens above the cathedral. Underneath all, fragments of true rain-cloud are floating between us and the sun, governed by curves of their own. They are, nevertheless, connected with the straight cirri by the dark semi-cumulus in the middle of the shade above the cathedral.

§ 13. Sky perspective, however, remains perfectly simple, so long as it can be reduced to any rectilinear arrangement; but when nearly the whole system is curved, which nine times out of ten is the case, it becomes embarrassing. The central figure in Plate 65 represents the simplest possible combination of perspective of straight lines with that of curves, a group of concentric circles of small clouds being supposed to cast shadows from the sun near the horizon. Such shadows are often cast in misty air; the aspect of rays about the sun being, in fact, only caused by spaces between them. They are carried out formally and far in the Plate, to show how curiously they may modify the arrangement of light in a sky. The woodcut, Fig. 83, gives roughly the arrangement of the clouds in Turner's *Pool of Solomon*,¹ in which he has employed a concentric system of circles of this kind, and thus lighted. In the perspective figure the clouds are represented as small square masses, for the sake of greater simplicity, and are so beaded or strung as it were on the curves in

¹ [For this drawing (formerly in Ruskin's collection and presented by him to Cambridge), see Vol. XIII. pp. 447, 558; and compare Vol. III. p. 383.]



J. Doolittle.

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66 . Light in the West, Beauvais .

which they move, as to keep their distances precisely equal, and their sides parallel. This is the usual condition of cloud: for though arranged in curved ranks, each cloud has its face to the



Fig. 83

front, or, at all events, acts in some parallel

line—generally another curve—with those next to it: being rarely, except in the form of fine radiating striæ, arranged on the curves as at *a*, Fig. 84; but as at *b*, or *c*. It would make the diagram too complex if I gave one of

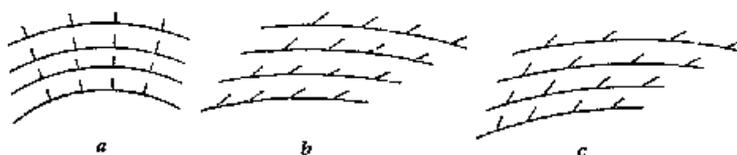


Fig. 84

intersecting curves; but the lowest figure in Plate 65 represents, in perspective, two groups of ellipses arranged in equidistant straight and parallel lines, and following each other on two circular curves. Their exact relative position is shown in Fig. 2, Plate 56 [p. 83]. While the uppermost

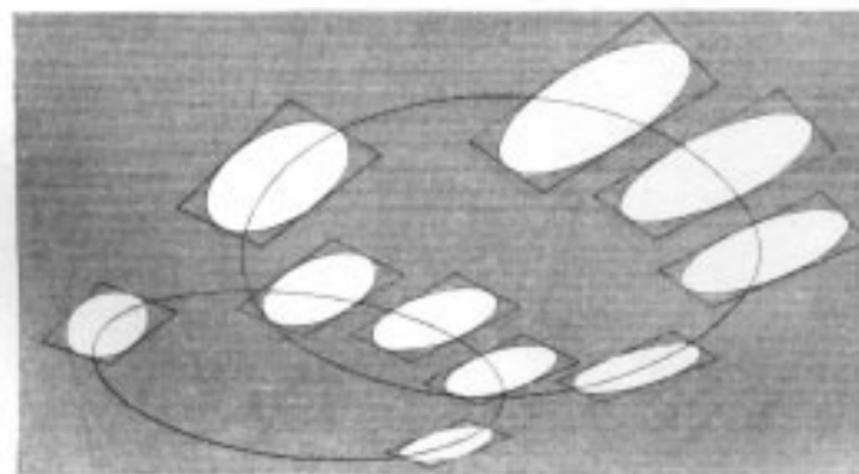
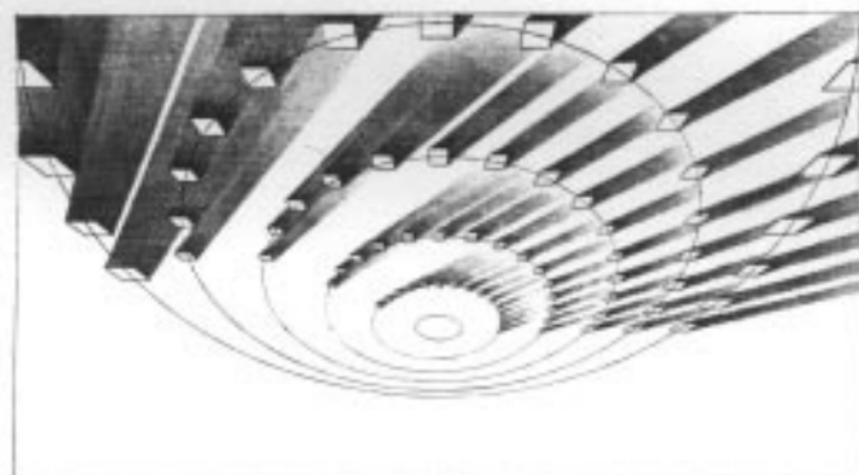
figure in Plate 65 represents, in parallel perspective, a series of ellipses arranged in radiation on a circle, their exact relative size and position are shown in Fig. 3, Plate 56, and the lines of such a sky as would be produced by them, roughly, in Fig. 90, page 170.*

§ 14. And in these figures, which, if we look up the subject rightly, would be but the first and simplest of the series necessary to illustrate the action of the upper cirri, the reader may see, at once, how necessarily painters, untrained in observance of proportion, and ignorant of perspective, must lose in every touch the expression of buoyancy and space in sky. The absolute forms of each cloud are, indeed, not alike, as the ellipses in the engraving; but assuredly, when moving in groups of this kind, there are among them the same proportioned inequalities of relative distance, the same gradated changes from ponderous to elongated form, the same exquisite suggestions of including curve; and a common painter, dotting his clouds down at random, or in more or less equal masses, can no more paint a sky, than he could, by random dashes for its ruined arches, paint the Coliseum.

§ 15. Whatever approximation to the character of upper clouds may have been reached by some of our modern students, it will be found, on careful analysis, that Turner stands more absolutely alone in this gift of cloud-drawing than in any other of his great powers. Observe, I say, *cloud-drawing*; other great men coloured clouds beautifully; none but he ever drew them truly: this power coming from his constant habit of drawing skies, like everything else, with the pencil point.¹ It is quite impossible to

* I use ellipses in order to make these figures easily intelligible; the curves actually are variable curves, of the nature of the cycloid, or other curves of continuous motion; probably produced by a current moving in some such direction as that indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 3, Plate 56.

¹ [For Ruskin's insistence upon this practice of Turner's, see his *Catalogue of the Sketches in the National Gallery*, Vol. XIII. pp. 242 *seq.*; and compare *Laws of Fésôle*, Vol. XV. p. 439.]



J. Bushkin

J. Emslie
Allen & Co. Co.

65. Cloud Perspective. (Curvilinear)



engrave any of his large finished skies on a small scale;¹ but the woodcut, Fig. 85, will give some idea of the forms of cloud involved in one of his small drawings. It is only half of the sky in question, that of Rouen from St. Catherine's Hill, in the Rivers of France.² Its clouds are arranged on two systems of intersecting circles, crossed beneath by long bars very slightly bent. The form of every separate cloud is completely studied; the manner of drawing them will be understood better by help of the Plate opposite, which is a piece of the sky above the "Campo Santo,"* at Venice, exhibited in 1842. It is exquisite in rounding of the separate fragments and buoyancy of the rising central group, as well as in its expression of the wayward influence of curved lines of breeze on a generally rectilinear system of cloud.

§ 16. To follow the subject farther would, however, lead us into doctrine of circular storms, and all kinds of pleasant, but infinite, difficulty, from which temptation I keep clear, believing that enough is now stated to enable the reader to understand what he is to look for in Turner's skies; and what kind of power, thought, and science are involved continually in the little white or purple dashes of cloud-spray, which, in such pictures as the San Benedetto, looking to Fusina, the Napoleon, or the Temeraire,³ guide the eye to the horizon more by their true perspective than by their

* Now in the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq., who kindly lent me the picture, that I might make this drawing from it carefully.⁴

¹ [On this matter, compare the Preface, § 6; above, p. 8.]

² [For this drawing (also formerly in Ruskin's collection), see Vol. XIII. pp. 273, 449, 451, 534; and compare Vol. III. p. 338.]

³ [For the "San Benedetto, looking to Fusina" (No. 534 in the National Gallery), see Vol. III. p. 251 *n.*, and Vol. XIII. p. 164 and *n.* For "the Napoleon"—*i.e.*, "The Exile and the Rock Limpet" (No. 529 in the National Gallery), see Vol. III. pp. 273, 297, 364, 422, 474; Vol. VI. p. 381; Vol. XIII. p. 160; and in this volume, pp. 435 *n.*, 438 *n.* For "the Temeraire" (No. 524 in the National Gallery), see Vol. XIII. p. 167, and the other passages there referred to in a note.]

⁴ [For this picture, which Ruskin elsewhere calls "Murano and Cemetery," compare Vol. III. p. 251 *n.* For Mr. Bicknell, see *ibid.*, p. 244 *n.*]

aerial tone, and are buoyant, not so much by expression of lightness as of motion.*

§ 17. I say the “white or purple” cloud-spray. One word yet may be permitted me respecting the mystery of that colour. What should we have thought—if we had lived in a country where there were no clouds, but only low mist or fog—of any stranger who had told us that, in his country, these mists rose into the air and became purple, crimson, scarlet, and gold? I am aware of no sufficient explanation of these hues of the upper clouds, nor of their strange mingling of opacity with a power of absorbing light. All clouds are so opaque that, however delicate they may be, you never see one through another. Six feet depth of them, at a little distance, will wholly veil the darkest mountain edge; so that, whether for light or shade, they tell upon the sky as body colour on canvas; they have always a perfect surface and bloom;—delicate as a rose-leaf, when required of them, but never poor or meagre in hue, like old-fashioned water-colours. And, if needed, in mass, they will bear themselves for solid force of hue against any rock. Facing p. 441, I have engraved a memorandum made of a clear sunset after rain, from the top of Milan Cathedral.¹ The greater part of the outline is granite²—Monte Rosa—the rest cloud: but it and the granite were dark alike. Frequently, in effects of this kind, the cloud

* I cannot yet engrave these; but the little study of a single rank of cirrus, the lowest in Plate 63, may serve to show the value of perspective in expressing buoyancy. It is not, however, though beautifully engraved by Mr. Armytage, as delicate as it should be, in the finer threads which indicate increasing distance at the extremity. Compare the rising of the lines of curve at the edges of this mass, with the similar action on a larger scale, of Turner’s cloud, facing p. 157.

¹ [In the proof for *Cæli Enarrant* Ruskin adds in a footnote:—

“Exquisitely engraved by Mr. Armytage.”

Ruskin’s original drawing of this subject—on a leaf of a sketch-book—was shown at the Ruskin Exhibition in Manchester, 1904: No. 218, “Sunset from Milan, July 18th, 1846.” Compare the closing words in the Preface to the second edition of *Sesame and Lilies* (Vol. XVIII.)]

² [Here, again, in the proof Ruskin adds a footnote:—

“Snow, I should have said,—but rock and snow are alike, seen against the twilight, and far away.”]

is darker of the two.* And this opacity is, nevertheless, obtained without destroying the gift they have of letting broken light through them, so that, between us and the sun, they may become golden fleeces, and float as fields of light.¹

Now their distant colours depend on these two properties together; partly on the opacity, which enables them to reflect light strongly; partly on a sponge-like power of gathering light into their bodies.

§ 18. Long ago it was noted by Aristotle, and again by Leonardo,² that vaporous bodies looked russet, or even red, when warm light was seen through them, and blue, when deep shade was seen through them. Both colours may, generally, be seen on any wreath of cottage smoke.

Whereon, easy conclusion has been sometimes founded by modern reasoners. All red in sky is caused by light seen through vapour, and all blue by shade seen through vapour.

* In the Autobiography of John Newton³ there is an interesting account of the deception of a whole ship's company by cloud, taking the aspect and outline of mountainous land. They ate the last provision in the ship, so sure were they of its being land, and were nearly starved to death in consequence.

¹ [Here, as the following passage in the MS. shows, Ruskin had intended to introduce another plate:—

“There is much mystery in the way they do this—as indeed in all they do. Opposite, for instance, is a note of an opening one evening on Lago Maggiore after storm. The Simplon snows are in the distance: between them and us, low down, float fragments of unlighted clouds. Their light must be wholly by transparency, for all are far above the eye, and the position of the mountain shows they are lighted from above. And yet the clouds which enclose the opening are dark. Though in substance apparently as dense as the rest, it is not easy to conceive each of the luminous clouds as a thin horizontal film. This, however, is possible; how far, we shall see presently, when we come to cloud perspective: all that we have to note here is the capacity which, at some given thickness, cloud possesses of becoming wholly luminous.”]

² [See Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting*, § 233 in Bohn's translation: “This is observed in the smoke coming out of a chimney, which, when passing through the black soot, appears bluish, but as it ascends against the blue of the sky, it changes its appearance into a reddish brown.” Aristotle notices similar phenomena in his *De Coloribus*, ch. iii.]

³ [*The Life of John Newton, formerly Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, with Selections from his Correspondence*, ch. iii. pp. 43–44 (ed. 1855). For another reference to Newton, see Vol. XII. p. 571.]

Easy, indeed, but not sure, even in cloud-colour only. It is true that the smoke of a town may be of a rich brick red against golden twilight; and of a very lovely, though not bright, blue against shade. But I never saw crimson or scarlet smoke, nor ultramarine smoke.

Even granting that watery vapour in its purity may give the colours more clearly, the red colours are by no means always relieved against light. The finest scarlets are constantly seen in broken flakes on a deep purple ground of heavier cloud beyond, and some of the loveliest rose-colours on clouds in the east, opposite the sunset, or in the west in the morning. Nor are blues always attainable by throwing vapour over shade. Especially, you cannot get them by putting it over blue itself. A thin vapour on dark blue sky is of a warm gray, not blue. A thunder-cloud, deep enough to conceal everything behind it, is often dark lead colour, or sulphurous blue; but the thin vapours crossing it, milky white. The vividest hues are connected also with another attribute of clouds, their lustre—metallic in effect, watery in reality. They not only reflect colour as dust or wool would, but, when far off, as water would; sometimes even giving a distinct image of the sun underneath the orb itself; in all cases becoming dazzling in lustre, when at a low angle, capable of strong reflection. Practically, this low angle is only obtained when the cloud seems near the sun, and hence we get into the careless habit of looking at the golden reflected light, as if it were actually caused by nearness to the fiery ball.

§ 19. Without, however, troubling ourselves at all about laws, or causes of colour, the visible consequences of their operation are notably these—that when near us, clouds present only subdued and uncertain colours; but when far from us, and struck by the sun on their under surfaces—so that the greater part of the light they receive is reflected—they may become golden, purple, scarlet, and intense fiery white, mingled in all kinds of gradations, such as I tried to describe in the chapter on the upper clouds in the first

volume, in hope of being able to return to them “when we knew what was beautiful.”¹

The question before us now is, therefore, What value ought this attribute of clouds to possess in the human mind? Ought we to admire their colours, or despise them? Is it well to watch them as Turner does, and strive to paint them through all deficiency and darkness of inadequate material? Or, is it wiser and nobler—like Claude, Salvator, Ruysdael, Wouvermans—never to look for them—never to pourtray? We must yet have patience a little before deciding this, because we have to ascertain some facts respecting the typical meaning of colour itself; which reserving for another place,² let us proceed here to learn the forms of the inferior clouds, the next range in level below these.

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 369.]

² [See below, pp. 412 *seq.*]

CHAPTER III

THE CLOUD-CHARIOTS

§ 1. BETWEEN the flocks of small countless clouds which occupy the highest heavens, and the gray undivided film of the true rain-cloud, form the fixed masses or torn fleeces, sometimes collected and calm, sometimes fiercely drifting, which are, nevertheless, known under one general name of cumulus, or heaped cloud.

The true cumulus, the most majestic of clouds, and almost the only one which attracts the notice of ordinary observers, is for the most part windless; the movements of its masses being solemn, continuous, inexplicable, a steady advance or retiring, as if they were animated by an inner will, or compelled by an unseen power. They appear to be peculiarly connected with heat, forming perfectly only in the afternoon, and melting away in the evening. Their noblest conditions are strongly electric, and connect themselves with storm-cloud and true thunder-cloud. When there is thunder in the air, they will form in cold weather, or early in the day.

§ 2. I have never succeeded in drawing a cumulus. Its divisions of surface are grotesque and endless, as those of a mountain; perfectly defined, brilliant beyond all power of colour, and transitory as a dream. Even Turner never attempted to paint them, any more than he did the snows of the high Alps.¹

Nor can I explain them any more than I can draw them. The ordinary account given of their structure is, I believe, that the moisture raised from the earth by the sun's heat

¹ [Compare Vol. XIII. p. 509, where it is said that Turner knew "he might as well have set himself to paint opals or rubies" as the upper snows.]

becomes visible by condensation at a certain height in the colder air, that the level of the condensing point is that of the cloud's base, and that above it, the heaps are pushed up higher and higher as more vapour accumulates, till, towards evening, the supply beneath ceases; and at sunset, the fall of dew enables the surrounding atmosphere to absorb and melt them away. Very plausible. But it seems to me herein unexplained how the vapour is held together in those heaps. If the clear air about and above it has no aqueous vapour in it, or at least a much less quantity, why does not the clear air keep pulling the cloud to pieces, eating it away, as steam is consumed in open air? Or, if any cause prevents such rapid devouring of it, why does not the aqueous vapour diffuse itself softly in the air like smoke, so that one would not know where the cloud ended? What should make it bind itself in those solid mounds, and stay so:—positive, fantastic, defiant, determined?

§ 3. If ever I am able to understand the process of the cumulus formation,* it will become to me one of the most interesting of all subjects of study to trace the connection of the threatening and terrible outlines of thunder-cloud with the increased action of the electric power. I am for the present utterly unable to speak respecting this matter, and must pass it by, in all humility, to say what little I have ascertained respecting the more broken and rapidly moving forms of the central clouds, which connect themselves with mountains, and may, therefore, among mountains, be seen close and truly.

§ 4. Yet even of these, I can only reason with great doubt and continual pause. This last volume ought certainly to be better than the first of the series, for two reasons. I have learned during the sixteen years to say little where I said much, and to see difficulties where I

* One of the great difficulties in doing this is to distinguish the portions of cloud outline which really slope upwards from those which only appear to do so, being in reality horizontal, and thrown into apparent inclination by perspective.

saw none. And I am in a great state of marvel in looking back to my first account of clouds, not only at myself, but even at my dear master, M. de Saussure. To think that both of us should have looked at drifting mountain clouds, for years together, and been content with the theory which you will find set forth in § 4, of the chapter on the central cloud region (Vol. I.), respecting the action of the snowy summits on watery vapour passing them.¹ It is quite true that this action takes place, and that the said fourth paragraph is right, as far as it reaches. But both Saussure and I ought to have known—we both did know, but did not think of it,—that the covering or cap-cloud forms on hot summits as well as cold ones;—that the red and bare rocks of Mont Pilate, hotter, certainly, after a day's sunshine than the cold storm-wind which sweeps to them from the Alps, nevertheless have been renowned for their helmet of cloud, ever since the Romans watched the cloven summit, gray against the south, from the ramparts of Vindonissa,² giving it the name from which the good Catholics of Lucerne have warped out their favourite piece of terrific sacred biography.* And both my master and I should also

* *Pileatus*, capped (strictly speaking, with the cap of liberty; stormy cloud enough sometimes on men's brows as well as on mountains'), corrupted into Pilatus, and Pilate.

¹ [In this edition, Vol. III. pp. 371–372. Saussure's discussion of the subject is to be found in his *Voyages dans les Alpes*, vol. iv., 1796, §§ 20, 70 *seq.* From him Ruskin adopted the explanation that, as "clouds are not so much local vapour as vapour rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature," so "a cloud whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together." The same explanation is given by Tyndall in his *Glaciers of the Alps* (p. 146, ed. 1860). Ruskin here proceeds to show the insufficiency of the explanation with respect to the cap or helmet cloud; but he retains the explanation of Saussure for the lee-side cloud. See *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, Lecture ii. (note 11), where Ruskin refers to and quotes from the present chapter; pointing out that his explanation of the lee-side cloud is insufficient, as not explaining the fact "that such cloud is constant in certain states of weather, under precipitous rocks;—but never developed with distinctness by domes of snow."]

² [The name of Vindonissa, the strongest of the Roman fortresses in Helvetia, is preserved in the modern village of Windisch. Ruskin, it will be seen, adopts the guess of etymologists that the name Pilatus is a corruption of *pileatus*. Discussions

have reflected that if our theory about its formation had been generally true, the helmet cloud ought to form on every cold summit, at the approach of rain, in approximating proportions to the bulk of the glaciers; which is so far from being the case that not only (A) the cap-cloud may often be seen on lower summits of grass or rock, while the higher ones are splendidly clear (which may be accounted for by supposing the wind containing the moisture not to have risen so high); but (B) the cap-cloud always shows a preference for hills of a conical form, such as the Mole or Niesen, which can have very little power in chilling the air, even supposing they were cold themselves, while it will entirely refuse to form round huge masses of mountain, which, supposing them of chilly temperament, must have discomforted the atmosphere in their neighbourhood for leagues. And finally (C) reversing the principle under letter A, the cap-cloud constantly forms on the summit of Mont Blanc, while it will obstinately refuse to appear on the Dome du Goûté or Aiguille Sans-nom, where the snow-fields are of greater extent, and the air must be moister, because lower.

§ 5. The fact is, that the explanation given in that fourth paragraph can, in reality, account only for what may properly be termed "lee-side cloud," slightly noticed in the continuation of the same chapter, but deserving most attentive illustration, as one of the most beautiful phenomena of the Alps. When a moist wind blows in clear weather over a cold summit, it has not time to get chilled as it approaches the rock, and therefore the air remains clear, and the sky bright on the windward side; but under the lee of the peak, there is partly a back eddy, and partly still air; and in that lull and eddy the wind gets time to be chilled by the rock, and the cloud appears, as a boiling mass of white vapour, rising

of the subject, with curious particulars of the antiquity of the Pontius Pilate legend and its survival for some centuries, may be found in J. Sowerby's *Forest Cantons of Switzerland*, 1892, pp. 213–215, and J. Hardmeyer's *Mont Pilatus Railway*, pp. 41–48.]

continually with the return current to the upper edge of the mountain, where it is caught by the straight wind and partly torn, partly melted away in broken fragments. In Fig. 86 the dark mass represents the mountain peak, the arrow the main direction of the wind, the curved lines show the directions of such current and its concentration, and the dotted line encloses the space in which

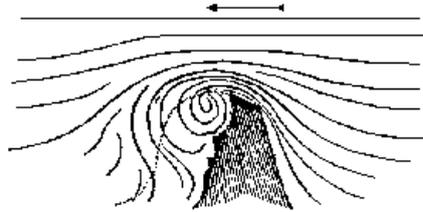


Fig. 86

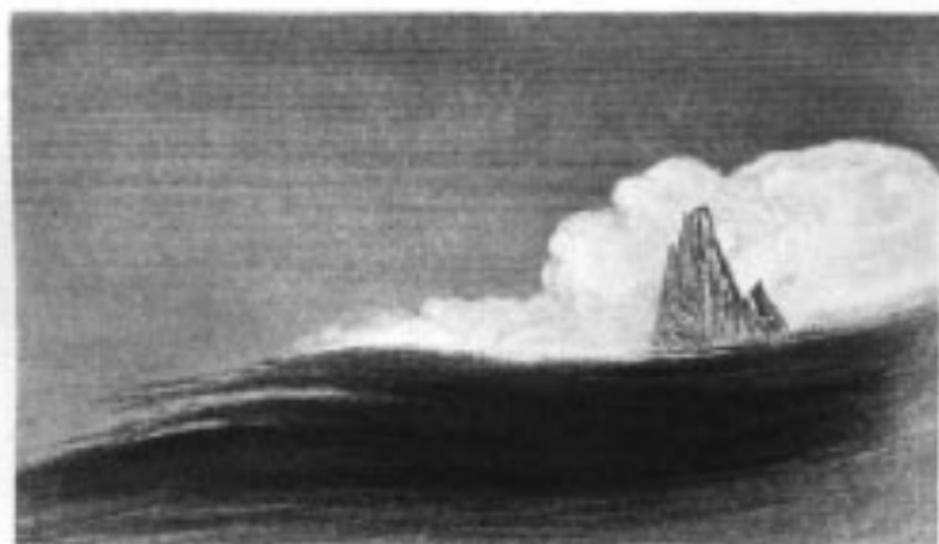
cloud forms densely, floating away beyond and above in irregular tongues and flakes. The third figure from the top in Plate 69 represents the actual aspect of it when in full development, with a strong

south wind, in a clear day, on the Aiguille Dru, the sky being perfectly blue and lovely around.¹

So far all is satisfactory. But the true helmet cloud will not allow itself to be thus explained away. The uppermost figure in Plate 69 represents the loveliest form of it, seen in that perfect arch, so far as I know, only over the highest piece of earth in Europe.

§ 6. Respecting which there are two mysteries:—First, why it should form only at a certain distance above the snow, showing blue sky between it and the summit. Secondly, why, so forming, it should always show as an arch, not as a concave cup. This last question puzzles me especially. For, if it be a true arch, and not a cup, it ought to show itself in certain positions of the spectator, or directions of the wind, like the ring of Saturn, as a mere line, or as a spot of cloud pausing over the hill-top. But I never saw it so. While, as above noticed, the lowest form of the helmet cloud is not white as of silver, but like Dolon's

¹ [Ruskin remarks in *The Storm-Cloud* that this formation of the "lee-side cloud" was afterwards represented by Tyndall under the title of "Banner-Cloud"; see the frontispiece and §§ 84, 227 in Tyndall's *The Forms of Water in Clouds and Rivers, Ice and Glaciers* (first published in 1872).]



J. Buckin.

J. C. Arnytago
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helmet of wolf-skin,¹—it is a gray, flaky veil, lapping itself over the shoulders of a more or less conical peak; and of this, also, I have no word to utter but the old one, “Electricity,” and I might as well say nothing.

§ 7. Neither the helmet cloud, nor the lee-side cloud, however, though most interesting and beautiful, is of much importance in picturesque effect. They are too isolated and strange. But the great mountain cloud, which seems to be a blending of the two with independent forms of vapour (that is to say, a greater development, in consequence of the mountain’s action, of clouds which would in some way or other have formed anywhere), requires prolonged attention, as the principal element of the sky in noblest landscape.

§ 8. For which purpose, first, it may be well to clear a few clouds out of the way. I believe the true cumulus is never seen in a great mountain region, at least never associated with hills. It is always broken up and modified by them. Boiling and rounded masses of vapour occur continually, as behind the Aiguille Dru (lowest figure in Plate 69); but the quiet, thoroughly defined, infinitely divided and modelled pyramid never develops itself. It would be very grand if one ever saw a great mountain peak breaking through the domed shoulders of a true cumulus; but this I have never seen.

§ 9. Again, the true high cirri never cross a mountain in Europe. How often have I hoped to see an Alp rising through and above their level-laid and rippled fields! but those white harvest-fields are heaven’s own. And, finally, even the low, level cirrus (used so largely in Martin’s pictures²) rarely crosses a mountain. If it does, it usually becomes slightly waved or broken, so as to destroy its character. Sometimes, however, at great distances, a very

¹ [See Euripides, *Rhesus*, 208 *seq.* (lukeion amfi nwton ayomai doran), and *Iliad*, 10, 334:—

essato d ektosqen rinon polioio lukoio, krati d epi ktidehn kunehn:
“and put on thereover the skin of a grey wolf, and on his head a helm of weasel.”]

² [For other references to Martin, see Vol. III. pp. 3 *n.*, 5, 29, 36, 389; Vol. IV. pp. 311, 366; Vol. XII. pp. 125, 223.]

level bar of cloud will strike across a peak; but nearer, too much of the under surface of the field is seen, so that a well-defined bar across a peak seen at a high angle, is of the greatest rarity.

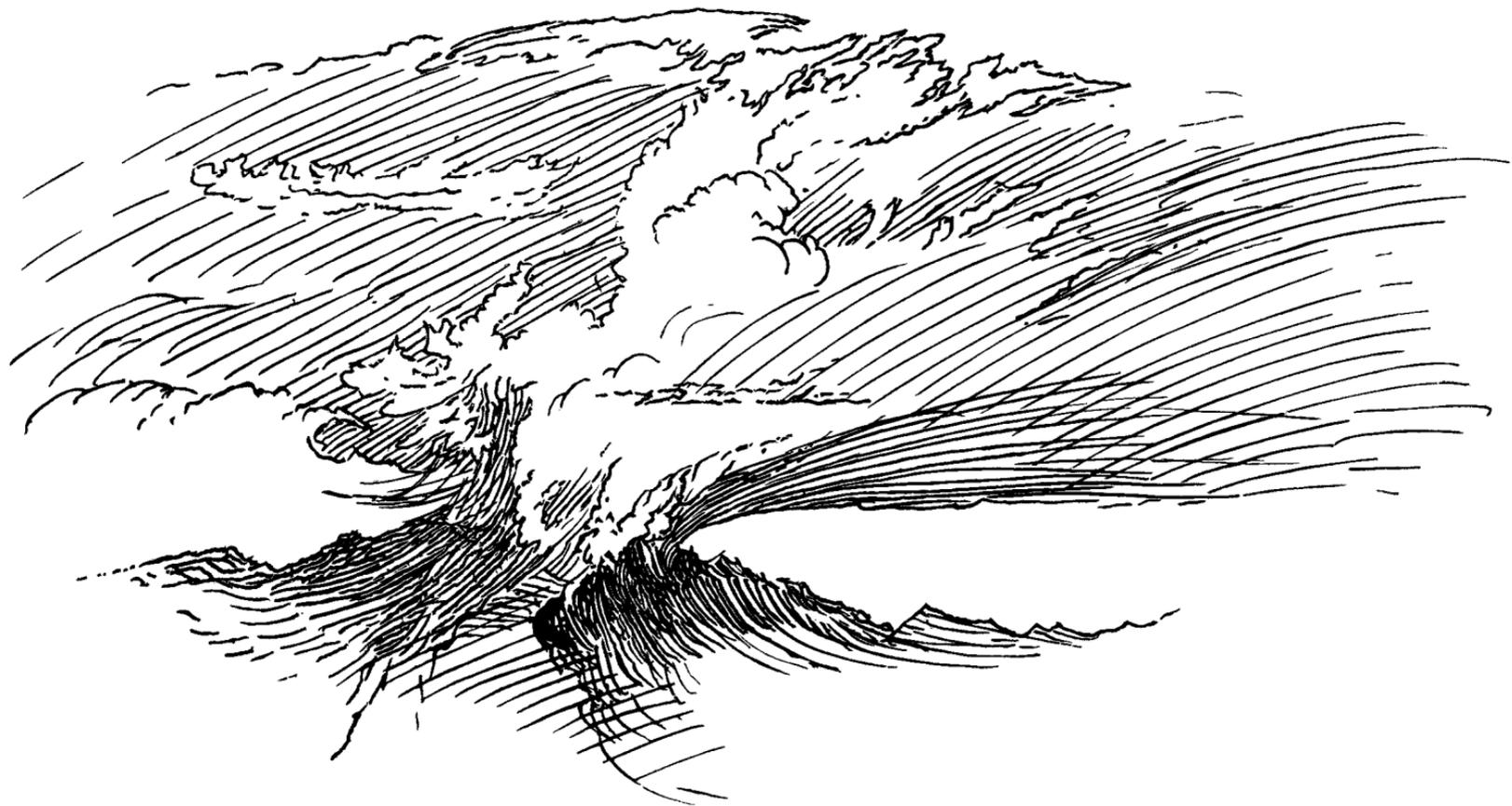
§ 10. The ordinary mountain cloud, therefore, if well defined, divides itself into two kinds: a broken condition of cumulus, grand in proportion as it is solid and quiet,—and a strange modification of drift-cloud, midway, as I said, between the helmet and the lee-side forms. The broken, quiet cumulus impressed Turner exceedingly when he first saw it on hills. He uses it, slightly exaggerating its definiteness, in all his early studies among the mountains of the Chartreuse,¹ and very beautifully in the vignette of St. Maurice in Rogers's *Italy*. There is nothing, however, to be specially observed of it, as it only differs from the cumulus of the plains, by being smaller and more broken.

§ 11. Not so the mountain drift-cloud, which is as peculiar as it is majestic. The Plates 70 and 71 show, as well as I can express, two successive phases of it on a mountain crest;² (in this instance the great limestone ridge above St. Michel, in Savoy³). But what colossal proportions this noble cloud assumes may be best gathered from the rude sketch, Fig. 87, in which I have simply put firm black ink over the actual pencil-lines made at the moment, giving the form of a single wreath of the drift-cloud, stretching about five miles in a direct line from the summit of one of the Alps of the Val d'Aosta, as seen from the plain of Turin. It has a grand volcanic look, but I believe its aspect of rising from the peak to be almost, if not altogether, deceptive; and that the apparently gigantic column is a nearly horizontal stream of lee-side cloud, tapered into the distance by perspective, and thus rising at its apparently lowest, but

¹ [Several of these are in the National Gallery: see Vol. XIII. p. 375. For the "St. Maurice," see Vol. XIII. p. 616, and the other passages there noted.]

² [For the meaning of the title of Plate 70, "The Graiæ," see below, ch. iv. § 10 (p. 182); for "Venga Medusa" (Plate 71), see Vol. V. p. 285, and below, p. 184. For a further reference to both Plates, see below, ch. iv. § 17 (p. 188).]

³ [Ruskin was at St. Michel (now a station on the Mont Cenis railway, between St. Jean de Maurienne and Modane) in 1858: see above, Introduction, p. xlvi.]





J. Ruskin.

J. C. Armitage.

70. The Graiae.



J. Rowland

71. "Venga Medusa."

J.C. Armytage
Allen & Co. B.C.

in reality most distant point, from the mountain summit whose shade calls it into being out of the clear winds.

Whether this be so or not, the apparent origin of the cloud on the peak, and radiation from it, distinguish it from the drift-cloud of level country, which arranges itself at the horizon in broken masses, such as Fig. 89, showing no point of origin; and I do not know how far they are vertical cliffs or horizontally extended fields. They are apt to be very precipitous in aspect, breaking into fragments with an apparently concentric motion, as in the figure; but of this motion also—whether vertical or horizontal—I can say nothing positive.

§ 12. The absolute scale of such clouds may be seen, or at least demonstrated, more clearly in Fig. 88, which is a rough note of an effect of sky behind the tower of Berne Cathedral. It was made from the mound beside the railroad bridge. The Cathedral tower is half-a-mile distant. The great Eiger of Grindelwald is seen just on the right of it. This mountain is distant from the tower thirty-four miles as the crow flies, and ten thousand feet above it in height. The drift-cloud behind it, therefore, being in full light, and showing no overhanging surfaces, must rise at least twenty thousand feet into the air.

§ 13. The extreme whiteness of the volume of vapour in this case (not, I fear, very intelligible in the woodcut*) may be partly owing to recent rain, which, by its evaporation, gives a peculiar density and brightness to some forms of clearing cloud. In order to understand this, we must

* I could not properly illustrate the subject of clouds without numbers of these rude drawings, which would probably offend the general reader by their coarseness, while the cost of engraving them in facsimile is considerable, and would much add to the price of the book. If I find people at all interested in the subject, I may, perhaps, some day systematize and publish my studies of cloud separately.¹ I am sorry not to have given in this volume a careful study of a rich cirrus sky, but no wood-engraving that I can employ on this scale will express the finer threads and waves.

¹ [This idea was not carried out. *Coeli Enarrant*, if continued, might have done it, as Ruskin intended to supplement that work by an “atlas” of plates (see above, p. 145 *n.*.)]

consider another set of facts. When weather is thoroughly wet among hills, we ought no more to accuse the mountains of forming the clouds, than we do the plains in similar circumstances. The unbroken mist buries the mountains to their bases; but that is not their fault. It may be just as wet and just as cloudy elsewhere. (This is not true of Scottish mountain, by the way.) But when the wet weather is breaking, and the clouds pass, perhaps, in great measure, away from the plains, leaving large spaces of blue sky, the mountains begin to shape clouds for themselves. The fallen moisture evaporates from the plain invisibly; but not so from the hill-side. There, what quantity of rain has not gone down in the torrents, ascends again to heaven instantly in white clouds. The storm passes as if it had tormented the crags, and the strong mountains smoke like tired horses.

§ 14. Here is another question for us of some interest. Why does the much greater quantity of moisture lying on the horizontal fields send up no visible vapour, and the less quantity left on the rocks glorify itself into a magnificent wreath of soaring snow?

First, for the very reason that it is less in quantity, and more distributed; as a wet cloth smokes when you put it near the fire, but a basin of water not.

The previous heat of the crags, noticed in the first volume, p. 249,¹ is only a part of the cause. It operates only locally, and on remains of sudden showers. But after any number of days and nights of rain, and in all places exposed to returning sunshine and breezes, the *distribution* of the moisture tells. So soon as the rain has ceased, all water that can run off is of course gone from the steep hill-sides; there remains only the thin adherent film of moisture to be dried; but that film is spread over a complex texture—all manner of crannies, and bosses, and projections, and filaments of moss and lichen, exposing a vast

¹ [Ruskin's reference was to the first edition; see now Vol. III. p. 402.]



Fig. 88



Fig. 89



extent of drying surface to the air. And the evaporation is rapid in proportion.

§ 15. Its rapidity, however, observe, does not account for its visibility, and this is one of the questions I cannot clearly solve, unless I were sure of the nature of the vesicular vapour. When our breath becomes visible on a frosty day, it is easily enough understood that the moisture which was invisible, carried by the warm air from the lungs, becomes visible when condensed or precipitated by the surrounding chill; but one does not see why air passing over a moist surface quite as cold as itself should take up one particle of water more than it can conveniently—that is to say, invisibly—carry. Whenever you *see* vapour, you may not inaccurately consider the air as having got more than it can properly hold, and dropping some. Now it is easily understood how it should take up much in the lungs, and let some of it fall when it is pinched by the frost outside; but why should it overload itself there on the hills, when it is at perfect liberty to fly away as soon as it likes, and come back for more? I do not see my way well in this. I do not see it clearly, even through the wet cloth. I shall leave all the embarrassment of the matter, however, to my reader, contenting myself, as usual, with the actual fact, that the hill-side air does behave in this covetous and unreasonable manner; and that, in consequence, when the weather is breaking (and sometimes, provokingly, when it is not), phantom clouds form and rise in sudden crowds of wild and spectral imagery along all the far succession of the hill slopes and ravines.

§ 16. There is this distinction, however, between the clouds that form during the rain and after it. In the worst weather, the rain-cloud keeps rather high, and is unbroken; but when there is a disposition in the rain to relax, every now and then a sudden company of white clouds will form quite low down (in Chamouni or Grindelwald, and such high districts, even down to the bottom of the valley),

which will remain, perhaps, for ten minutes, filling all the air, then disappear as suddenly as they came, leaving the gray upper cloud and steady rain to their work. These “clouds of relaxation,” if we may so call them, are usually flaky and horizontal, sometimes tending to the silky cirrus, yet showing no fine forms of drift; but when the rain has passed, and the air is getting warm, forms the true clearing cloud, in wreaths that ascend continually, with a slow circling motion, melting as they rise. The woodcut, Fig. 91, is a rude note of it floating more quietly from the hill of the Superga, the church (nearly as large as St. Paul’s) appearing above, and thus showing the scale of the wreath.

§ 17. This cloud of evaporation, however, does not always rise. It sometimes rests in absolute stillness, low laid in the hollows of the hills, their peaks emergent from it. Fig. 92 shows this condition of it, seen from a distance, among the Cenis hills.¹ I do not know what gives it this disposition to rest in the ravines, nor whether there is a greater chill in the hollows, or a real action of gravity on the particles of cloud. In general, the position seems to depend on the temperature. Thus, in Chamouni, the crests of La Côte and Taconay continually appear in stormy weather as in Plate 36, Vol. IV.,² in which I intended to represent rising drift-cloud, made dense between the crests by the chill from the glaciers. But in the condition shown in Fig. 92, on a comparatively open sweep of hillside, the thermometer would certainly indicate a higher temperature in the sheltered valley than on the exposed peaks; yet the cloud still subsides into the valleys like folds of a garment; and, more than this, sometimes conditions of morning cloud, dependent, I believe, chiefly on dew evaporation, form first on the *tops* of the soft hills of wooded Switzerland, and droop down in rent fringes, and separate tongues, clinging close to all the hill-sides, and giving them exactly the

¹ [From a note in the MS. it seems that this sketch was made in the “Cenis Valley near S. Ambrogio, below Susa.”]

² [See in this edition, Vol. VI. p. 260.]



appearance of being covered with white fringed cloth, falling over them in torn or divided folds. It always looks like a true action of gravity. How far it is, in reality, the indication of the power of the rising sun causing evaporation, first on the hill-top, and then in separate streams, by its divided light on the ravines, I cannot tell. The subject is, as the reader perceives, always inextricably complicated by these three necessities—that to get a cloud in any given



Fig. 92

spot, you must have moisture to form the material of it, heat to develop it, and cold* to show it; and the adverse causes inducing the moisture, the evaporation, and the visibility are continually interchanged in presence and in power. And thus, also, the phenomena which properly belong to

* We might say light, as well as cold; for it wholly depends on the degree of light in the sky how far delicate cloud is seen.

The second figure from the top in Plate 69 shows an effect of morning light on the range of the Aiguille Bouchard (Chamouni). Every crag casts its shadow up into apparently clear sky. The shadow is, in such cases, a bluish gray, the colour of clear sky; and the defining light is caused by the sunbeams showing mist which otherwise would have been unperceived. The shadows are not irregular enough in outline—the sketch was made for their colour and sharpness, not their shape,—and I cannot now put them right, so I leave them as they were drawn at the moment.

a certain elevation are confused, among hills at least, with those which in plains would have been lower or higher.

I have been led unavoidably in this chapter to speak of some conditions of the rain-cloud; nor can we finally understand the forms even of the cumulus, without considering those into which it descends or diffuses itself. Which, however, being, I think, a little more interesting than our work hitherto, we will leave this chapter to its dulness, and begin another.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANGEL OF THE SEA

§ 1. PERHAPS the best and truest piece of work done in the first volume of this book, was the account given in it of the rain-cloud;¹ to which I have here little, descriptively, to add. But the question before us now is, not who has drawn the rain-cloud best, but if it were worth drawing at all. Our English artists naturally painted it often and rightly; but are their pictures the better for it? We have seen how mountains are beautiful; how trees are beautiful; how sunlighted clouds are beautiful; but can rain be beautiful?

I spoke roughly of the Italian painters in that chapter,² because they could only draw distinct clouds, or violent storms, “massive concretions,” while our northern painters could represent every phase of mist and fall of shower.

But is this indeed so delightful? Is English wet weather, indeed, one of the things which we should desire to see Art give perpetuity to?

Yes, assuredly. I have given some reasons for this answer in the fifth chapter of last volume;³ one or two, yet unnoticed, belong to the present division of our subject.

§ 2. The climates or lands into which our globe is divided may, with respect to their fitness for Art, be perhaps conveniently ranged under five heads:—

1. Forest-lands, sustaining the great mass of the magnificent vegetation of the tropics, for the most part characterized by moist and unhealthy heat, and watered by

¹ [See in this edition Vol. III. pp. 393–419.]

² [Or rather of the painters, French or Italian, who painted the Roman Campagna; it is to Gaspar Poussin’s storms that the phrase “massive concretions” is applied: see Vol. III. p. 396.]

³ [See Vol. VI. pp. 88, 89.]

enormous rivers, or periodical rains. This country cannot, I believe, develop the mind or art of man. He may reach great subtlety of intellect, as the Indian, but not become learned, nor produce any noble art, only a savage or grotesque form of it.¹ Even supposing the evil influences of climate could be vanquished, the scenery is on too large a scale. It would be difficult to conceive of groves less fit for academic purposes than those mentioned by Humboldt, into which no one can enter except under a stout wooden shield, to avoid the chance of being killed by the fall of a nut.²

2. Sand-lands, including the desert and dry rock-plains of the earth, inhabited generally by a nomad population, capable of high mental cultivation and of solemn monumental or religious art, but not of art in which pleasureableness forms a large element, their life being essentially one of hardship.

3. Grape and wheat lands, namely, rocks and hills, such as are good for the vine, associated with arable ground, forming the noblest and best ground given to man. In these districts only art of the highest kind seems possible, the religious art of the sand-lands being here joined with that of pleasure or sense.

4. Meadow-lands, including the great pastoral and agricultural districts of the north, capable only of an inferior art: apt to lose its spirituality and become wholly material.

5. Moss-lands, including the rude forest and mountain

¹ [Compare *Two Paths*, §§ 3 *seq.* (Vol. XVI. pp. 261 *seq.*), where Ruskin speaks of the artistic temper of Scotland and of India, corresponding to the "moss" and "forest lands" here.]

² [This is stated by Humboldt in his account of almendron, or *juvia*. The great *drupe*, like a cocoa-nut, which contains the almond, is as large as the human head: "The weight of these fruits is so enormous that the savages dare not enter the forests without covering their heads and shoulders with a buckler of very hard wood. These bucklers are unknown to the natives of Esmeralda, but they told us of the danger incurred when the fruit ripens and falls from a height of fifty or sixty feet" (ch. xxiv. of the *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the years 1799-1804*. By Alexander von Humboldt and Aimè Bonpland. Translated by Thomasina Ross. Bohn's edition, 1852, vol. ii. p. 450.)]

ground of the North, inhabited by a healthy race, capable of high mental cultivation and moral energy, but wholly incapable of art, except savage, like that of the forest-lands, or as in Scandinavia.

We might carry out these divisions into others, but these are, I think, essential, and easily remembered in a tabular form; saying “wood” instead of “forest,” and “field” for “meadow,” we can get such a form shortly worded:—

Wood-lands	Shrewd intellect	No Art.
Sand-lands	High intellect	Religious Art.
Vine-lands	Highest intellect	Perfect Art.
Field-lands	High intellect	Material Art.
Moss-lands	Shrewd intellect	No Art.

§ 3. In this table the moss-lands appear symmetrically opposed to the wood-lands, which in a sort they are; the too diminutive vegetation under bleakest heaven, opposed to the too colossal under sultriest heaven, while the perfect ministry of the elements, represented by bread and wine, produces the perfect soul of man.

But this is not altogether so. The moss-lands have one great advantage over the forest-lands, namely, sight of the sky.

And not only sight of it, but continual and beneficent help from it. What they have to separate them from barren rock, namely, their moss and streams, being dependent on its direct help, not on great rivers coming from distant mountain chains, nor on vast tracts of oceanmist, coming up at evening, but on the continual play and change of sun and cloud.

§ 4. Note this word “change.” The moss-lands have an infinite advantage, not only in sight,¹ but in liberty; they are the freest ground in all the world. You can only traverse the great woods by crawling like a lizard, or

¹ [So in all editions; but the MS. reads “light.”]

climbing like a monkey—the great sands with slow steps and veiled head. But bare-headed, and open-eyed, and free-limbed, commanding all the horizon's space of changeful light, and all the horizon's compass of tossing ground, you traverse the moss-land. In discipline it is severe as the desert, but it is a discipline compelling to action; and the moss-lands seem, therefore, the rough schools of the world, in which its strongest human frames are knit and tried, and so sent down, like the northern winds, to brace and brighten the languor into which the repose of more favoured districts may degenerate.

§ 5. It would be strange, indeed, if there were no beauty in the phenomena by which this great renovating and purifying work is done. And it is done almost entirely by the great Angel of the Sea—rain;—the Angel, observe, the messenger sent to a special place on a special errand. Not the diffused perpetual presence of the burden of mist, but the going and returning of intermittent cloud. All turns upon that intermittence. Soft moss on stone and rock;—cave fern of tangled glen;—wayside well—perennial, patient, silent, clear; stealing through its square font of rough-hewn stone; ever thus deep, no more; which the winter wreck sullies not, the summer thirst wastes not, incapable of stain as of decline;—where the fallen leaf floats undecayed, and the insect darts undefiling: cressed brook and ever-eddying river, lifted even in flood scarcely over its stepping-stones,—but through all sweet summer keeping tremulous music with harp-strings of dark water among the silver fingering of the pebbles. Far away in the south the strong river Gods have all hasted, and gone down to the sea. Wasted and burning, white furnaces of blasting sand, their broad beds lie ghastly and bare; but here in the moss-lands, the soft wings of the Sea Angel droop still with dew, and the shadows of their plumes falter on the hills: strange laughings and glitterings of silver streamlets, born suddenly, and twined about the

mossy heights in trickling tinsel, answering to them as they wave.*

§ 6. Nor are those wings colourless. We habitually think of the rain-cloud only as dark and gray; not knowing that we owe to it perhaps the fairest, though not the most dazzling of the hues of heaven.¹ Often in our English mornings, the rain-clouds in the dawn form soft, level fields, which melt imperceptibly into the blue; or, when of less extent, gather into apparent bars, crossing the sheets of broader cloud above; and all these bathed throughout in an unspeakable light of pure rose-colour, and purple, and amber, and blue; not shining, but misty-soft; the barred masses, when seen nearer, composed of clusters or tresses of cloud, like floss silk; looking as if each knot were a little swathe or sheaf of lighted rain. No clouds form such skies, none are so tender, various, inimitable. Turner himself never caught them. Correggio, putting out his whole strength, could have painted them, no other man.†

§ 7. For these are the robes of love of the Angel of the

* Compare the beautiful stanza beginning the epilogue of the *Golden Legend*.²

† I do not mean that Correggio is greater than Turner, but that only *his* way of work, the touch which he has used for the golden hair of Antiope,³ for instance, could have painted these clouds. In open lowland country I have never been able to come to any satisfactory conclusion about their height, so strangely do they blend with each other. Here, for instance, is the arrangement of an actual group of them. The space at *a* was deep, purest ultramarine blue, traversed by streaks of absolutely pure and perfect rose-colour. The blue passed downwards imperceptibly into gray at *g*, and then into amber, and at the white edge below into gold. On this amber ground the streaks

¹ [Compare *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, note 2.]

² ["God sent his messenger, the rain,
And said unto the mountain brook,
'Rise up, and from thy caverns look
And leap, with naked, snow-white feet,
From the cool hills into the heat
Of the broad, arid plain.'"]

For other references to the *Golden Legend* of Longfellow, see Vol. V. pp. lvii., 229, 430; Vol. VI. pp. 394, 446; and Vol. XII. pp. 485–486.]

³ [For other references to this picture, see above, p. 53 *n.*]

Sea. To these that name is chiefly given, the “spreadings of the clouds,”¹ from their extent, their gentleness, their fulness of rain. Note how they are spoken of in Job, xxxvi. 31–33.² “By them judgeth He the people; He giveth meat in abundance. With clouds He covereth the light.* He hath hidden the light in His hands, and commanded it that

p were dark purple, and, finally, the spaces at *b b*, again clearest and most precious blue, paler than that at *a*. The *two* levels of these clouds are always very notable. After a continuance of fine weather among the Alps, the determined approach of rain is usually announced by a soft, unbroken film of level cloud, white and thin at the approaching edge, gray at the horizon, covering the whole sky from side to side, and advancing steadily from the south-west.

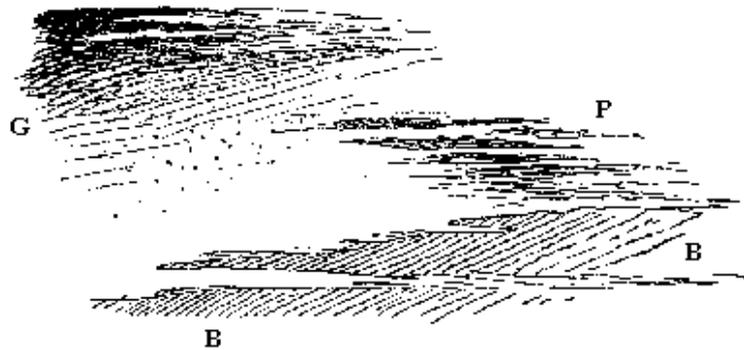


Fig. 93

Under its gray veil, as it approaches, are formed detached bars, darker or lighter than the field above, according to the position of the sun. These bars are usually of a very sharply elongated oval shape, something like fish. I habitually call them “fish-clouds,” and look upon them with much discomfort, if any excursions of interest have been planned within the next three days. Their oval shape is a perspective deception dependent on their flatness; they are probably thin, extended fields, irregularly circular.

* I do not copy the interpolated words which follow, “and commandeth it *not to shine*.” The closing verse of the chapter, as we have it, is unintelligible; not so in the Vulgate, the reading of which I give.³

¹ [Job xxxvi. 29.]

² [These verses came to have a special significance to Ruskin: see *Laws of Fésole* (Vol. XV. p. 417 *n.*).]

³ [In the English version: “The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour”; made clearer in the Revised version: “The noise thereof telleth concerning him, The cattle also concerning the storm that cometh up.” In the Vulgate: “Annunciat de ea amico suo quod possessio ejus sit et ad eam possit ascendere.”]

it should return. He speaks of it to His friend; that it is his possession, and that he may ascend thereto.”

That, then, is the Sea Angel’s message to God’s friends; *that*, the meaning of those strange golden lights and purple flushes before the morning rain. The rain is sent to judge, and feed us; but the light is the possession of the friends of God, and they may ascend thereto,—where the tabernacle veil will cross and part its rays no more.

§ 8. But the Angel of the Sea has also another message,—in the “great rain of his strength,”¹ rain of trial, sweeping away ill-set foundations. Then his robe is not spread softly over the whole heaven, as a veil, but sweeps back from his shoulders, ponderous, oblique, terrible—leaving his sword-arm free.

The approach of trial-storm, hurricane-storm, is indeed in its vastness as the clouds of the softer rain. But it is not slow nor horizontal, but swift and steep: swift with passion of ravenous winds; steep as slope of some dark, hollowed hill. The fronting clouds come leaning forward, one thrusting the other aside, or on; impatient, ponderous, impendent, like globes of rock tossed of Titans—Ossa on Olympus—but hurled forward all, in one wave of cloud-lava—cloud whose throat is as a sepulchre. Fierce behind them rages the oblique wrath of the rain, white as ashes, dense as showers of driven steel; the pillars of it full of ghastly life; Rain-Furies, shrieking as they fly;—scourging, as with whips of scorpions;—the earth ringing and trembling under them, heaven wailing wildly, the trees stooped blindly down, covering their faces, quivering in every leaf with horror, ruin of their branches flying by them like black stubble.

§ 9. I wrote Furies. I ought to have written Gorgons. Perhaps the reader does not know that the Gorgons are not dead, are ever undying. We shall have to take our chance of being turned into stones by looking them in the face, presently. Meantime, I gather what part of the great Greek story of the Sea Angels has meaning for us here.

¹ [Job xxxvii. 6.]

Nereus,¹ the God of the Sea, who dwells in it always (Neptune being the God who rules it from Olympus), has children by the Earth; namely, Thaumas, the father of Iris; that is, the “wonderful” or miracle-working angel of the sea; Phorcys, the malignant angel of it (you will find him degraded through many forms, at last, in the story of Sinbad, into the old man of the sea); Ceto, the deep places of the sea, meaning its bays among rocks, therefore called by Hesiod “Fair-cheeked” Ceto; and Eurybia, the tidal force or sway of the sea, of whom more hereafter.²

§ 10. Phorcys and Ceto, the malignant angel of the sea and the spirit of its deep rocky places, have children, namely, first, Graiæ, the soft rain-clouds. The Greeks had a greater dislike of storm than we have, and therefore whatever violence is in the action of rain, they represented by harsher types than we should—types given in one group by Aristophanes (speaking in mockery of the poets): “This was the reason, then, that they made so much talk about the fierce rushing of the moist clouds, coiled in glittering; and the locks of the hundred-headed Typhon; and the blowing storms: and the bent-clawed birds drifted on the breeze, fresh, and aerial.”³ Note the expression “bent-clawed birds.”⁴ It illustrates two characters of these clouds; partly their coiling form; but more directly the way they tear down the earth from the hill-sides; especially those twisted storm-clouds which in violent action become the waterspout. These always strike at a narrow point, often opening the earth on a hill-side into a trench as a great pickaxe would

¹ [Here Ruskin does not quite follow Hesiod, who makes Thaumas, like Nereus, the child of Pontus (*Theogony*, 237). Thaumas in turn weds Electra (lustre), and from their union springs Iris (the rainbow). For Phorcys, see also the *Odyssey*, xiii. 96, where he is called “the ancient one of the sea.” For Ceto (kalliparhon) and Eurybia, see *Theogony*, 238, 239; which continues (270 *seq.*): “Next to Phorcys, fair-cheeked Ceto bare the Graiæ, gray from their birth, whom in truth immortal gods as well as men walking on the earth call Graiæ; namely, Pephredo the well-robed, and Enyo the crocus-robed, and the Gorgons who dwell beyond famous Ocean, in the most remote quarter night-ward, where are the clear-voiced Hesperides, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa.”]

² [See below, pp. 396, 397.]

³ [*Clouds*, 335–337.]

⁴ [gamyouV oiwnouV.]

(whence the Graiæ are said to have only one beak between them¹). Nevertheless, the rain-cloud was, on the whole, looked upon by the Greeks as beneficent, so that it is boasted of in the *œdipus Coloneus* for its perpetual feeding of the springs of Cephisus,* and elsewhere often; and the opening song of the rain-clouds in Aristophanes is entirely beautiful:²—

“O eternal Clouds! let us raise into open sight our dewy existence, from the deep-sounding Sea, our Father, up to the crests of the wooded hills, whence we look down over the sacred land, nourishing its fruits, and over the rippling of the divine rivers, and over the low murmuring bays of the deep.” I cannot satisfy myself about the meaning of the names of the Graiæ—Pephredo and Enuo³—but the epithets which Hesiod gives them are interesting; “Pephredo, the well-robed; Enuo, the crocus-robed;” probably, it seems to me, from their beautiful colours in morning.

§ 11. Next to the Graiæ, Phorcys and Ceto begat the Gorgons, which are the true storm-clouds.⁴ The Graiæ have only one beak or tooth, but all the Gorgons have tusks like boars; brazen hands (brass being the word used for the

* I assume the *aupnoi krhnai nomadeV* to mean clouds, not springs; but this does not matter, the whole passage being one of rejoicing in moisture and dew of heaven.⁵

¹ [See below, § 11.]

² [The chorus in the *Clouds*, lines 275–284.]

³ [Probably derived from *frazw* (h *pefradousa*), she who gives counsel—possibly the cloud that gives warning; but one MS. reads *Tefrhdw*, “ashy.” “The meaning of *enuo* is quite unknown, and is probably not Greek (? Thracian)” (Leaf on *Iliad*, xvii. 211); *Enuo* was also the name of the sister of Mars, so that it might here be interpreted as the “war-cloud.” The reading of the line in Hesiod is considered doubtful, for *Æschylus* (*Prom.*, 814) says that the Graiæ were three, and only two are here mentioned, and Apollodorus (ii. 4) gives the name of the third as *Deinw*.]

⁴ [So in *Ethics of the Dust*, § 112, Ruskin says of the Queen of the Air that “the Greek, in a climate of alternate storm and calm, represented the wild fringes of the storm-cloud by the serpents of her ægis; and the lightning and cold of the highest thunder-clouds, by the Gorgon on her shield.” See also *Queen of the Air*, § 94.]

⁵ [See lines 685–687. Ruskin refers to another passage in the same chorus in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xiv. § 45 (Vol. V. p. 282). For “elsewhere often,” see, among numerous passages, *Odyssey*, ix. 111; xiii. 245.]

metal of which the Greeks made their spears), and golden wings.¹

Their names are “Steino” (straitened), of storms compressed into narrow compass; “Euryale” (having wide threshing-floor), of storms spread over great space; “Medusa” (the dominant), the most terrible. She is essentially the highest storm-cloud; therefore the hail-cloud or cloud of cold, her countenance turning all who behold it to stone. (“He casteth forth His ice like morsels. Who can stand before His cold?”²) The serpents about her head are the fringes of the hail, the idea of coldness being connected by the Greeks with the bite of the serpent, as with the hemlock.

§ 12. On Minerva’s shield, her head signifies, I believe, the cloudy coldness of knowledge, and its venomous character (“Knowledge puffeth up,” compare Bacon in *Advancement of Learning*³). But the idea of serpents rose essentially from the change of form in the cloud as it broke; the cumulus cloud not breaking into full storm till it is cloven by the cirrus; which is twice hinted at in the story of Perseus; only we must go back a little to gather it together.⁴

¹ [For this description of the Graiæ, see Æschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus*, 795–796: *koinon omm ekthmenai, monodonte*V. For the boar’s tusks of the Gorgons (as always shown in early Greek art), their brazen hands and golden wings, see Apollodorus, *Biblioth.*, ii. 2.]

² [Psalms cxlvii. 17.]

³ [1 Corinthians viii. 1. For the reference to Bacon, see the note on *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. § 30 (Vol. XI. p. 67), where Ruskin similarly brings together the two passages.]

⁴ [Here in the margin of his own copy Ruskin afterwards wrote: “See Perseus in my own Myth Book,” referring to the *Queen of the Air*, § 30, where he says that the birth of Perseus connects the legends of the Danaïdes “with that of the Gorgons and the Graiæ, who are the true clouds of thunderous and ruinous tempest.” He there notes further that “the form of the sword or sickle of Perseus, with which he kills Medusa, is another image of the whirling harpy vortex.” Compare also *Verona and its Rivers*, § 31, where Ruskin says of Lombardy that “every drift of rain that swells the mountain torrents, if it were caught where it falls, is more truly rain of gold than fell in the tower of Danaë.” For the explanation of the sieves of the Danaïdes, as referring to the discovery of the wells at Argos, see Strabo, viii. p. 371 (Casaubon’s ed.); there is a verse, says Strabo, about it: *ArgoV anudron eon Danaai qesan ArgoV enudron*. For their bringing the mysteries of Ceres from Egypt, see Herodotus, ii. 171: “And of the mystic rites of Demeter . . . I shall leave unspoken all except so much as piety permits me to tell. The daughters of Danaüs were they who brought this rite out of Egypt and taught it to the women of the Pelasgians.” The names Danaüs and Dana#ame are commonly derived from *danov*

Perseus was the son of Jupiter by Danaë, who being shut in a brazen tower, Jupiter came to her in a shower of gold: the brazen tower being, I think, only another expression for the cumulus or Medusa cloud; and the golden rain for the rays of the sun striking it; but we have not only this rain of Danaë's to remember in connection with the Gorgon, but that also of the sieves of the Danaïdes, said to represent the provision of Argos with water by their father Danaüs, who dug wells about the Acropolis; nor only wells, but opened, I doubt not, channels of irrigation for the fields, because the Danaïdes are said to have brought the mysteries of Ceres from Egypt. And though I cannot trace the root of the names Danaüs and Danaë, there is assuredly some farther link of connection in the deaths of the lovers of the Danaïdes, whom they slew, as Perseus Medusa. And again note, that when the father of Danaë, Acrisius, is detained in Seriphos by storms, a disk thrown by Perseus is carried *by the wind against his head*, and kills him; and lastly, when Perseus cuts off the head of Medusa, from her blood springs Chrysaor, "wielder of the golden sword," the Angel of the Lightning, and Pegasus, the Angel of the "Wild Fountains," that is to say, the fastest flying or lower rain-cloud; winged, but racing as upon the earth.

§ 13. I say, "wild" fountains; because the kind of fountain from which Pegasus is named is especially the "fountain of the great deep"¹ of Genesis; sudden and furious, (cataracts of heaven, not windows, in the Septuagint);—the

(burnt, parched)—Danaë thus being supposed to be the dry earth, whose fructification is expressed in the fable of Zeus and Danaë. For the deaths of the lovers of the Danaïdes, see, among other places, Æschylus, *Prom. Vincit*, 853–869, and Horace, *Odes*, iii. 11. For the story of Acrisius, see Hyginus, Fab. 63: "Qui (Acrisius) cum tempestate retineretur, Polydectes moritur. Cui cum funebres ludos facerent, Perseus disco misso, quem ventus distulit in caput Acrisii, eum interfecit." Then we resume the *Theogony* (280–283): "From her too (Medusa), when, as the tale is, Perseus had cut off the head, up sprang huge Chrysaor and the steed Pegasus. Thus called, because he was born near the springs (*phgai*) of ocean; whilst the other had a golden sword in his hands."]

¹ [Genesis vii. 11: "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were broken." In the Septuagint: *erraghshan pasai ai phgai ths abussou kai oi katarraktai tou ouranou hnewcghsan.*]

mountain torrent caused by thunderous storm, or as our “fountain”—a Geyser-like leaping forth of water. Therefore, it is the deep and full source of streams, and so used typically of the source of evils, or of passions;¹ whereas the word “spring” with the Greeks is like our “well-head”—a gentle issuing forth of water continually. But, because both the lightning-fire and the gushing forth, as of a fountain, are the signs of the poet’s true power, together with perpetuity, it is Pegasus who strikes the earth with his foot, on Helicon,* and causes Hippocrene to spring forth²—“the horse’s well-head.” It is perpetual; but has, nevertheless, the Pegasean storm-power.

§ 14. Wherein we may find, I think, sufficient cause for putting honour upon the rain-cloud. Few of us, perhaps, have thought, in watching its career across our own mossy hills, or listening to the murmur of the springs amidst the mountain quietness, that the chief masters of the human imagination owed, and confessed that they owed, the force of their noblest thoughts, not to the flowers of the valley, nor the majesty of the hill, but to the flying cloud.

Yet they never saw it fly, as we may in our own England. So far, at least, as I know the clouds of the south, they are often more terrible than ours, but the English Pegasus is swifter. On the Yorkshire and Derbyshire hills, when the rain-cloud is low and much broken, and the steady west wind fills all space with its strength, †

* I believe, however, that when Pegasus strikes forth this fountain, he is to be regarded, not as springing from Medusa’s blood, but as born of Medusa by Neptune; the true horse was given by Neptune striking the earth with his trident; the divine horse is born to Neptune and the storm-cloud.

† I have been often at great heights on the Alps in rough weather, and have seen strong gusts of storm in the plains of the south. But, to get full expression of the very heart and the meaning of wind, there is no place like a Yorkshire moor. I think Scottish breezes are thinner, very bleak and piercing, but not substantial. If you lean on them they will let you fall,

¹ [For *phgai potamwn*, the gushing water of rivers, see *Iliad*, xx. 9, etc.; and for *phgh kakwn*, *Æsch. Persæ*, 743, etc.]

² [For this legend, see Pausanias, ix. 31, 3.]



J. M. W. Turner

J. C. Arrington

the sun-gleams fly like golden vultures: they are flashes rather than shinings; the dark spaces and the dazzling race and skim along the acclivities, and dart and dip from crag to dell, swallow-like;¹—no Graiæ these,—gray and withered: Grey Hounds rather, following the Cerinthian² stag with the golden antlers.

§ 15. There is one character about these lower rain-clouds, partly affecting all their connection with the upper sky, which I have never been able to account for; that which, as before noticed, Aristophanes fastened on at once for their distinctive character—their obliquity.³ They always fly in an oblique position, as in the Plate opposite, which is a careful facsimile of the first advancing mass of the rain-cloud in Turner's *Slave Ship*.⁴ When the head of the cloud is foremost, as in this instance, and rain falling beneath, it is easy to imagine that its drops, increasing in size as they fall, may exercise some retarding action on the wind. But the head of the cloud is not always first, the base of it is sometimes advanced.* The only certainty is, that it will not shape itself horizontally, its thin-drawn lines and main contours will always be oblique, though its motion is horizontal; and, which is still more curious, their sloping lines

but one may rest against a Yorkshire breeze as one would on a quickset-set hedge. I shall not soon forget,—having had the good fortune to meet a vigorous one on an April morning, between Hawes and Settle, just on the flat under Wherside,—the vague sense of wonder with which I watched Ingleborough stand without rocking.⁵

* When there is a violent current of wind near the ground, the rain columns slope *forward* at the foot. See the Entrance to Fowey Harbour, of the England Series.⁶

¹ [With this passage and the author's footnote to it, compare *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, Lecture ii., where Ruskin quotes them; remarking of the note that it is "a precious little piece, not of word-painting, but of simply told feeling," and illustrating the similitude—"swallow-like"—by further observations.]

² [A slip of the pen, the reference being to the Ceryneian stag with the golden antlers, pursued by Hercules (Apollodorus, 2, 5, 3).]

³ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 26).]

⁴ [For this picture, see in Vol. III. Plate 12 and pp. 571 *seq.*]

⁵ [The exact date was March 7, 1859. See the letter given above, Introduction, p. xlix., where Ruskin says it seemed as if the wind "would blow Ingleborough into Lancaster Bay."]

⁶ [For other references to this drawing, see Vol. III. p. 421.]

are hardly ever modified in their descent by any distinct retiring tendency or perspective convergence. A troop of leaning clouds will follow one another, each stooping forward at the same apparent slope, round a fourth of the horizon.

§ 16. Another circumstance which the reader should note in this cloud of Turner's, is the witch-like look of drifted or erected locks of hair at its left side. We have just read the words of the old Greek poet, "Locks of the hundred-headed Typhon";¹ and must remember that Turner's account of this picture, in the Academy catalogue, was "Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and Dying. *Typhoon* coming on." The resemblance to wildly drifted hair is stronger in the picture than in the engraving; the gray and purple tints of torn cloud being relieved against golden sky beyond.

§ 17. It was not, however, as we saw, merely to locks of hair, but to serpents, that the Greeks likened the dissolving of the Medusa cloud in blood. Of that sanguine rain, or of its meaning, I cannot yet speak. It is connected with other and higher types, which must be traced in another place.*

But the likeness to serpents we may illustrate here. The two Plates already given, 70 and 71 (at page 168), represent successive conditions of the Medusa cloud on one of the Cenis hills (the great limestone precipice above St. Michel, between Lanslebourg and St. Jean de Maurienne).† In the first, the cloud is approaching, with the lee-side cloud forming beyond it; in the second, it has approached, increased, and broken, the Medusa serpents writhing about the central peak, the rounded tops of the broken cumulus showing above. In this instance, they take nearly the forms of

* See Part IX. chap. 2, "The Hesperid *Æglé*."

† The reader must remember that sketches made as these are, on the instant, cannot be far carried, and would lose all their use, if they were finished at home. These were both made in pencil, and merely washed with gray on returning to the inn, enough to secure the main forms.

¹ [Above, § 10, p. 182.]

flame; but when the storm is more violent, they are torn into fragments, and magnificent revolving wheels of vapour are formed, broken, and tossed into the air, as the grass is tossed in the hayfield from the toothed wheels of the raking-machine;¹ (perhaps, in common with all other inventions of the kind, likely to bring more evil upon men than ever the Medusa cloud did, and turn them more effectually into stone.*)

§ 18. I have named in the first volume the principal works of Turner representing these clouds;² and until I am able to draw them better, it is useless to say more of them; but in connection with the subject we have been examining, I should be glad if the reader could turn to the engravings of the England drawings of Salisbury and Stonehenge. What opportunities Turner had of acquainting himself with classical literature, and how he used them, we shall see presently.³ In the meantime, let me simply assure the reader that, in various byways, he had gained a knowledge of most of the great Greek traditions, and that he felt them more than he knew them; his mind being affected, up to a certain point, precisely as an ancient painter's would have been, by external phenomena of nature. To him, as to the Greek, the storm—clouds seemed messengers of fate. He feared them, while he revered; nor does he ever introduce them without some hidden purpose, bearing upon the expression of the scene he is painting.

* I do not say this carelessly, nor because machines throw the labouring man "out of work." The labouring man will always have more work than he wants. I speak thus because the use of such machinery involves the destruction of all pleasures in rural labour;⁴ and I doubt not, in that destruction, the essential deterioration of the national mind.

¹ [In eds. 1 and 1873, "mowing-machine"; altered in 1888 to "raking" in accordance with Ruskin's corrected copy. Such machines were introduced from America in 1858 and 1859.]

² [See again Vol. III. pp. 393–419. The "Stonehenge" is there described, p. 413. For the "Salisbury," see Vol. XIII. pp. 441, 593.]

³ [Below, pt. ix. ch. x., pp. 392 *seq.*]

⁴ [On this subject, compare *Time and Tide*, § 152; *Lectures on Art*, § 116; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 45 and 67.]

§ 19. On that plain of Salisbury, he had been struck first by its widely-spacious pastoral life; and secondly, by its monuments of the two great religions of England—Druidical and Christian.

He was not a man to miss the possible connection of these impressions. He treats the shepherd life as a type of the ecclesiastical; and composes his two drawings so as to illustrate both.

In the drawing of Salisbury, the plain is swept by rapid but not distressful rain. The cathedral occupies the centre of the picture, towering high over the city, of which the houses (made on purpose smaller than they really are) are scattered about it like a flock of sheep. The cathedral is surrounded by a great light. The storm gives way at first in a subdued gleam over a distant parish church, then bursts down again, breaks away into full light about the cathedral, and passes over the city, in various sun and shade. In the foreground stands a shepherd leaning on his staff, watching his flock;—bareheaded: he has given his cloak to a group of children, who have covered themselves up with it, and are shrinking from the rain; his dog crouches under a bank; his sheep, for the most part, are resting quietly, some coming up the slope of the bank towards him.*

§ 20. The rain-clouds in this picture are wrought with a care which I have never seen equalled in any other sky of the same kind. It is the rain of blessing—abundant, but full of brightness; golden gleams are flying across the wet grass, and fall softly on the lines of willows in the valley—willows by the watercourses; the little brooks flash out here and there between them and the fields. Turn now to the Stonehenge. That, also, stands in great light; but it is the Gorgon light—the sword of Chrysaor is bared against it. The cloud of judgment hangs above. The rock

* You may see the arrangement of subject in the published engraving, but nothing more; it is among the worst engravings in the England Series.¹

¹ [It was engraved by W. Radclyffe.]

pillars seem to reel before its slope, pale beneath the lightning. And nearer, in the darkness, the shepherd lies dead, his flock scattered.

I alluded, in speaking before of this Stonehenge,¹ to Turner's use of the same symbol in the drawing of Pæstum for Rogers's *Italy*; but a more striking instance of its employment occurs in a Study of Pæstum, which he engraved himself before undertaking the *Liber Studiorum*, and another in his drawing of the Temple of Minerva, on Cape Colonna; and observe farther that he rarely introduces lightning, if the ruined building has not been devoted to religion. The wrath of man may destroy the fortress, but only the wrath of heaven can destroy the temple.

§ 21. Of these secret meanings of Turner's, we shall see enough in the course of the inquiry we have to undertake, lastly, respecting ideas of relation;² but one more instance of his opposed use of the lightning symbol, and of the rain of blessing, I name here, to confirm what has been noted above. For, in this last instance, he was questioned respecting his meaning, and explained it.³ I refer to the drawings of Sinai and Lebanon, made for Finden's Bible. The sketches from which Turner prepared that series were, I believe, careful and accurate; but the treatment of the

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 414, where there is an incidental reference to the Pæstum, but the symbol—the shepherd—is not mentioned. The "Study of Pæstum" is one of the eleven small unpublished Plates, engraved in pure mezzotint, which are sometimes called "Sequel to *Liber Studiorum*." The drawing of Cape Colonna was engraved in vol. i. of the 1825 edition of Byron's *Works*.]

² [See especially pp. 393, 402, 407, 435.]

³ [Ruskin had this information from his friend (and Turner's), the Rev. William Kingsley (for whom, see Vol. XIII. p. 162 *n.*). Mr. Kingsley (in a letter preserved at Brantwood) thus describes the conversation: "On one occasion I had with me the Bible drawings, and asked him if he would like to see them. He declined, and said he had seen too much of them. He then told me that the publishers thought he was mad, and required him to put nothing into the drawings beyond what might actually be there; that he had in his hand the sketch of Rachel's Tomb, and asked whether he might put wolves into it. He said to me, 'Perhaps you have found wolves in others.' He also said he had leave to do what he liked with the encampment in Sinai, and that he made it and the Lebanon to represent the Law and the Gospel." Turner's drawing of Lebanon (made from a sketch by C. Barry) was given by Ruskin to Oxford (see Vol. XIII. pp. 447, 560); that of Sinai was from a sketch by Gally Knight.]

subjects was left wholly to him. He took the Sinai and Lebanon to show the opposite influences of the Law and the Gospel. The rock of Moses is shown in the burning of the desert, among fallen stones, forked lightning cleaving the blue mist which veils the summit of Sinai. Armed Arabs pause at the foot of the rock. No human habitation is seen, nor any herb or tree, nor any brook, and the lightning strikes without rain.* Over the Mount Lebanon an intensely soft gray-blue sky is melting into dewy rain. Every ravine is filled, every promontory crowned, by tenderest foliage, golden in slanting sunshine.† The white convent nestles into the hollow of the rock; and a little brook runs under the shadow of the nearer trees, beside which two monks sit reading.

§ 22. It was a beautiful thought, yet an erring one, as all thoughts are which oppose the Law to the Gospel. When people read, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Christ,"¹ do they suppose it means that the law was ungracious and untrue? The law was given for a foundation; the grace (or mercy) and truth for fulfilment;—the whole forming one glorious Trinity of judgment, mercy, and truth.² And if people would but read the text of their Bibles with heartier purpose of understanding it, instead of superstitiously, they would see that throughout the parts, which they are intended to make most personally their own (the Psalms), it is always the Law which is spoken of with chief joy. The Psalms respecting mercy are often sorrowful, as in thought of what it cost; but those

* Hosea xiii. 5 and 15.

† Hosea xiv. 4, 5, 6. Compare Psalm lxxii. 6–16.

¹ [See John i. 17.]

² [The passage from here from "When people read" to the end of § 22 is § 76 in *Fronde Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

"A great deal of the presumption and narrowness caused by my having been bred in the Evangelical school, and which here fill me with shame and distress in re-reading *Modern Painters*, is, to my present mind, atoned for by the accurate thinking by which I broke my way through to the great truth expressed in this passage, which all my later writings, without exception, have been directed to maintain and illustrate."]

respecting the law are always full of delight. David cannot contain himself for joy in thinking of it,—he is never weary of its praise:—“How love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. They testimonies are my delight and my counsellors; sweeter, also, than honey and the honeycomb.”¹

§ 23. And I desire, especially, that the reader should note this, in now closing the work through which we have passed together in the investigation of the beauty of the visible world. For perhaps he expected more pleasure and freedom in that work; he thought that it would lead him at once into fields of fond imagination, and may have been surprised to find that the following of beauty brought him always under a sterner dominion of mysterious law; that brightness was continually based upon obedience, and all majesty only another form of submission. But this is indeed so. I have been perpetually hindered in this inquiry into the sources of beauty by fear of wearying the reader with their severities. It was always accuracy I had to ask of him, not sympathy; patience, not zeal; apprehension, not sensation. The thing to be shown him was not a pleasure to be snatched, but a law to be learned.

§ 24. It is in this character, however, that the beauty of the natural world completes its message. We saw long ago, how its various *powers* of appeal to the mind of men might be traced to some typical expression of Divine attributes.² We have seen since how its *modes* of appeal present constant types of human obedience to the Divine law, and constant proofs that this law, instead of being contrary to mercy, is the foundation of all delight, and the guide of all fair and fortunate existence.

§ 25. Which understanding, let us receive our last message from the Angel of the Sea.

Take up the 19th Psalm and look at it verse by verse. Perhaps to my younger readers, one word may be

¹ [Psalms cxix. 97; xix. 10.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. chs. v.-xi., “Of Typical Beauty” (Vol. IV. pp. 76-145).]

permitted respecting their Bible-reading in general.* The Bible is, indeed, a deep book, when depth is required, that is to say, for deep people. But it is not intended, particularly, for profound persons; on the contrary, much more for shallow and simple persons. And therefore the first, and generally the main and leading idea of the Bible, is on its surface, written in plainest possible Greek, Hebrew, or English, needing no penetration, nor amplification, needing nothing but what we all might give—attention.

But this, which is in every one's power, and is the only thing that God wants, is just the last thing any one will give Him. We are delighted to ramble away into day-dreams, to repeat pet verses from other places, suggested by chance words; to snap at an expression which suits our own particular views, or to dig up a meaning from under a verse, which we should be amiably grieved to think any human being had been so happy as to find before. But the plain, intended, immediate, fruitful meaning, which every one ought to find always, and especially that which depends on our seeing the relation of the verse to those near it, and getting the force of the whole passage, in due relation—this sort of significance we do not look for; it being, truly, not to be discovered, unless we really attend to what is said, instead of to our own feelings.

§ 26. It is unfortunate, also, but very certain, that in order to attend to what is said, we must go through the irksomeness of knowing the meaning of the words. And

* I believe few sermons are more false or dangerous than those in which the teacher proposes to impress his audience by showing "how much there is in a verse." If he examined his own heart closely before beginning, he would often find that his real desire was to show how much he, the expounder, could make out of the verse. But entirely honest and earnest men often fall into the same error. They have been taught that they should always look deep, and that Scripture is full of hidden meanings; and they easily yield to the flattering conviction that every chance idea which comes into their heads in looking at a word, is put there by Divine agency. Hence they wander away into what they believe to be an inspired meditation, but which is, in reality, a meaningless jumble of ideas; perhaps, very proper ideas, but with which the text in question has nothing whatever to do.

the first thing that children should be taught about their Bibles is, to distinguish clearly between words that they understand and words that they do not; and to put aside the words they do not understand, and verses connected with them, to be asked about, or for a future time; and never to think they are reading the Bible when they are merely repeating phrases of an unknown tongue.

§ 27. Let us try, by way of example, this 19th Psalm, and see what plain meaning is uppermost in it.

“The heavens declare the glory of God.”¹

What are the heavens?

The word occurring in the Lord’s Prayer, and the thing expressed being what a child may, with some advantage, be led to look at, it might be supposed among a school-master’s first duties to explain this word clearly.

Now there can be no question that in the minds of the sacred writers, it stood naturally for the entire system of cloud, and of space beyond it, conceived by them as a vault set with stars. But there can, also, be no question, as we saw in previous inquiry,² that the firmament, which is said to have been “called” heaven, at the creation, expresses, in all definite use of the word, the system of clouds, as spreading the power of the water over the earth; hence the constant expressions dew of heaven, rain of heaven, etc., where heaven is used in the singular; while “the heavens,” when used plurally, and especially when in distinction, as here, from the word “firmament,” remained expressive of the starry space beyond.

§ 28. A child might therefore be told (surely, with advantage), that our beautiful word Heaven may possibly have been formed from a Hebrew word, meaning “the high place”; that the great warrior Roman nation, camping much out at night, generally overtired and not in moods

¹ [Taken by Ruskin, as we have seen, as the title of his cloud-studies: *Cæli Enarrant.*]

² [The chapter (vi.) on “The Firmament” in the preceding volume (Vol. VI. pp. 106 *seq.*.)]

for thinking, are believed by many people to have seen in the stars only the likeness of the glittering studs of their armour, and to have called the sky “The bossed, or studded”; but that others think those Roman soldiers on their night-watches had rather been impressed by the great emptiness and void of night, and by the far-coming of sounds through its darkness, and had called the heaven, “The Hollow place.” Finally, I should tell the children, showing them first the setting of a star, how the great Greeks had found out the truest power of the heavens, and had called them, “The Rolling.”¹ But whatever different nations had called them, at least I would make it clear to the child’s mind that in this 19th Psalm, their whole power being intended, the two words are used which express it; the Heavens, for the great vault or void, with all its planets, and stars, and ceaseless march of orbs innumerable; and the Firmament, for the ordinance of the clouds.

These heavens, then, “declare the *glory* of God”; that is, the light of God, the eternal glory, stable and changeless. As their orbs fail not—but pursue their course for ever, to give light upon the earth—so God’s glory surrounds man for ever—changeless, in its fulness insupportable—infinite.

“And the firmament sheweth His *handywork*.”

§ 29. The clouds, prepared by the hands of God for the help of man, varied in their ministration—veiling the inner splendour—show, not His eternal glory, but His daily handiwork. So He dealt with Moses. I will cover thee “with my hand” as I pass by.² Compare Job xxxvi. 24: “Remember that thou magnify His work, which men behold.

¹ [Ruskin here refers not so much to the etymology of the word *ouranos* (which appears to be derived from the Sanskrit *varunas*, and to mean the *nightly* firmament), as to the Homeric conception of the heaven as always revolving (*e.g.*, *Iliad*, xviii. 485–489), and to the theory of the Greek philosophers that the universe was a system of revolving *spheres*. So, again, with “Heaven”: its ultimate etymological derivation is unknown; but as used in the Bible, it is the translation of Hebrew words meaning *hill* or *high place*. The alternative derivations of the Latin word for *sky*—as the hollow place (hence sometimes spelt *coelum* instead of *caelum*), or studded—are given by Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, v. 18.]

² [Exodus xxxiii. 22.]

Every man may see it.” Not so the glory—that only in part; the courses of these stars are to be seen imperfectly, and but by few. But this firmament, “every man may see it, man may behold it afar off.” “Behold, God is great, and we know Him not. For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.”

§ 30. “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. They have no speech nor language, yet without these their voice is heard. Their rule is gone out throughout the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

Note that. Their rule throughout the earth, whether inhabited or not—their law of light is thereon; but their words, spoken to human souls, to the end of the inhabited world.

“In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun,” etc. Literally, a tabernacle, or curtained tent, with its veil and its hangings; also of the colours of His desert tabernacle—blue, and purple, and scarlet.

Thus far the psalm describes the manner of this great heaven’s message.

Thenceforward it comes to the matter of it.

§ 31. Observe, you have the two divisions of the declaration. The heavens (compare Psalm viii.) declare the eternal glory of God before men, and the firmament the daily mercy of God towards men. And the eternal glory is in this—that the law of the Lord is perfect, and His testimony sure, and His statutes right.

And the daily mercy in this—that the commandment of the Lord is pure, and His fear is clean, and His judgments true and righteous.

There are three oppositions:—

Between law and commandment.

Between testimony and fear.

Between statute and judgment.

§ 32. I. Between law and commandment.

The law is fixed and everlasting; uttered once, abiding for ever, as the sun, it may not be moved. It is “perfect, converting the soul”: the whole question about the soul being, whether it has been turned from darkness to light, acknowledged this law or not,—whether it is godly or ungodly? But the commandment is given momentarily to each man, according to the need. It does not convert: it guides. It does not concern the entire purpose of the soul: but it enlightens the eyes, respecting a special act. The law is, “Do this always”; the commandment, “Do *thou* this *now*”: often mysterious enough, and through the cloud; chilling, and with strange rain of tears; yet always pure (the law converting, but the commandment cleansing): a rod not for guiding merely, but for strengthening, and tasting honey with. “Look how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.”¹

§ 33. II. Between testimony and fear.

The testimony is everlasting: the true promise of salvation. Bright as the sun beyond all the earth-cloud, it makes wise the simple; all wisdom being assured in perceiving it and trusting it; all wisdom brought to nothing which does not perceive it.

But the fear of God is taught through special encouragement and special withdrawal of it, according to each man’s need—by the earth-cloud—smile and frown alternately: it also, as the commandment, is clean, purging, and casting out all other fear, it only remaining for ever.

§ 34. III. Between statute and judgment.

The statutes are the appointments of the Eternal justice; fixed and bright, and constant as the stars; equal and balanced as their courses. They “are right, rejoicing the heart.” But the judgments are special judgments of given acts of men. “True,” that is to say, fulfilling the warning or promise given to each man; “righteous altogether,” that is, done or executed in truth and righteousness. The

¹ [1 Samuel xiv. 29.]

statute is right, in appointment. The judgment righteous altogether, in appointment and fulfilment;—yet not always rejoicing the heart.

Then, respecting all these, comes the expression of passionate desire, and of joy; that also divided with respect to each. The glory of God, eternal in the Heavens, is future, “to be *desired* more than gold, than much fine gold”—treasure in the heavens that faileth not. But the present guidance and teaching of God are on earth; they are now possessed, sweeter than all earthly food—“sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them” (the law and the testimony) “is Thy servant warned”—warned of the ways of death and life.

“And in keeping them” (the commandments and the judgments) “there is great reward”: pain now, and bitterness of tears, but reward unspeakable.

§ 35. Thus far the psalm has been descriptive and interpreting. It ends in prayer.

“Who can understand his errors?” (wanderings from the perfect law). “Cleanse Thou me from secret faults”; from all that I have done against Thy will, and far from Thy way, in the darkness. “Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins” (sins against the commandment) against Thy will when it is seen and direct, pleading with heart and conscience. “So shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great transgression”—the transgression that crucifies afresh.

“Let the words of my mouth (for I have set them to declare Thy law), and the meditation of my heart (for I have set it to keep Thy commandments), be acceptable in Thy sight,” whose glory is my strength, and whose work, my redemption; “my Strength, and my Redeemer.”

PART VIII

OF IDEAS OF RELATION:—FIRST, OF
INVENTION FORMAL

CHAPTER I

THE LAW OF HELP

§ 1. WE have now reached the last and the most important part of our subject. We have seen in the first division of this book, how far art may be, and has been, consistent with physical or material facts. In its second division, we examined how far it may be and has been obedient to the laws of physical beauty. In this last division we have to consider the relations of art to God and man: its work in the help of human beings, and service of their Creator.¹

We have to inquire into the various Powers, Conditions, and Aims of mind involved in the conception or creation of pictures; in the choice of subject, and the mode and order of its history;—the choice of forms, and the modes of their arrangement.

And these phases of mind being concerned, partly with choice and arrangement of incidents, partly with choice and arrangement of forms and colours, the whole subject will fall into two main divisions, namely, expressional or spiritual invention; and material or formal invention.

They are of course connected;—all good formal invention being expressional also; but as a matter of convenience it is best to say what may be ascertained of the nature of formal invention, before attempting to illustrate the faculty in its higher field.²

¹ [Here Ruskin reverts to the threefold division of his subject given in the first volume (Vol. III. p. 130).]

² [The Plate of the "Château de Blois" (first introduced here in the edition of 1888) is not referred to in this volume; but elsewhere in *Modern Painters* Ruskin notices its merits as a composition. See Vol. III. p. 313, where he instances the torches and white figures, and the roof of the chapel and monks' dresses, as examples of his statement that Turner was true to nature in making his highest lights and deepest darks in exceedingly small quantities; p. 336 *n.*, where it is cited as an instance of



Drawn by J.M.W. Turner.

Etched by J. Becken.

Engraved by T. Lupton.
Allen & Co. Sc.

85. Château de Blois .

§ 2. First, then, of INVENTION FORMAL, otherwise and most commonly called technical composition; that is to say, the arrangement of lines, forms, or colours, so as to produce the best possible effect.

I have often been accused of slighting this quality in pictures;¹ the fact being that I have avoided it only because I considered it too great and wonderful for me to deal with. The longer I thought, the more wonderful it always seemed: and it is, to myself personally, the quality, above all others, which gives me delight in pictures. Many others I admire, or respect; but this one I rejoice in. Expression, sentiment, truth to nature, are essential: but all these are not enough. I never care to look at a picture again, if it be ill composed; and if well composed I can hardly leave off looking at it.

“Well composed.” Does that mean according to rule?

No. Precisely the contrary. Composed as only the man who did it could have done it; composed as no other picture is, or was, or ever can be again. Every great work stands alone.

§ 3. Yet there are certain elementary laws of arrangement traceable a little way; a few of these only I shall note, not caring to pursue the subject far in this work, so intricate it becomes even in its first elements: nor could it be treated with any approach to completeness, unless I were to give many and elaborate outlines of large pictures. I have a vague hope of entering on such a task, some future day.² Meantime I shall only indicate the place which technical composition* should hold in our scheme.

* The word composition has been so much abused, and is in itself so inexpressive, that when I wrote the first part of this work I intended always

“the mystery of decided line”; p. 340 *n.*, as an instance of the confusion of detail during twilight; and p. 423, where it is catalogued among characteristic examples of effects of light. The drawing (engraved in *Rivers of France*) was in Ruskin’s collection, and presented by him to the University Galleries at Oxford (Vol. XIII. p. 560).]

¹ [See Vol. XII. p. 387.]

² [The task was not, however, undertaken; compare Vol. V. p. 9; Vol. VI. p. 4; and above, p. 8.]

And, first, let us understand what composition is, and how far it is required.

§ 4. Composition may be best defined as the help of everything in the picture by everything else.

I wish the reader to dwell a little on this word “Help.” It is a grave one.

In substance which we call “inanimate,” as of clouds, or stones, their atoms may cohere to each other, or consist with each other, but they do not help each other. The removal of one part does not injure the rest.

But in a plant, the taking away of any one part does injure the rest. Hurt or remove any portion of the sap, bark, or pith, the rest is injured. If any part enters into a state in which it no more assists the rest, and has thus become “helpless,” we call it also “dead.”

The power which causes the several portions of the plant to help each other, we call life. Much more is this so in an animal. We may take away the branch of a tree without much harm to it; but not the animal’s limb. Thus, intensity of life is also intensity of helpfulness—completeness of depending of each part on all the rest. The ceasing of this help is what we call corruption; and in proportion to the perfectness of the help, is the dreadfulness of the loss. The more intense the life has been, the more terrible is its corruption.

The decomposition of a crystal is not necessarily impure

to use, in this final section of it, the word “invention,” and to reserve the term “composition” for that false composition which can be taught on principles; as I have already so employed the term in the chapter on “Imagination Associative,” in the second volume.¹ But, in arranging this section, I find it is not conveniently possible to avoid the ordinary modes of parlance; I therefore only head the section as I intended (and as is, indeed, best), using in the text the ordinarily accepted term; only the reader must be careful to note that what I spoke of shortly as “composition” in the chapters on “Imagination,” I here always call, distinctly, “false composition”; using here, as I find most convenient, the words “invention” or “composition” indifferently, for the true faculty.

¹ [See in this edition, Vol. IV. p. 231.]

at all. The fermentation of a wholesome liquid begins to admit the idea slightly; the decay of leaves yet more; of flowers, more; of animals, with greater painfulness and terribleness in exact proportion to their original vitality; and the foulest of all corruption is that of the body of man; and, in his body, that which is occasioned by disease, more than that of natural death.

§ 5. I said just now, that though atoms of inanimate substance could not help each other, they could “consist” with each other. “Consistence” is their virtue. Thus the parts of a crystal are consistent, but of dust, inconsistent. Orderly adherence, the best help its atoms can give, constitutes the nobleness of such substance.

When matter is either consistent, or living, we call it pure, or clean; when inconsistent or corrupting (unhelpful), we call it impure, or unclean. The greatest uncleanliness being that which is essentially most opposite to life.

Life and consistency, then, both expressing one character (namely, helpfulness of a higher or lower order), the Maker of all creatures and things, “by whom all creatures live, and all things consist,”¹ is essentially and for ever the Helpful One, or in softer Saxon, the “Holy” One.²

The word has no other ultimate meaning: Helpful, harmless, undefiled: “living” or “Lord of life.”

The idea is clear and mighty in the cherubim’s cry: “Helpful, helpful, helpful, Lord God of Hosts”;³ *i.e.* of all the hosts, armies, and creatures of the earth.*

* “The cries of them which have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (of all the creatures of the earth).”⁴ You will find a wonderful clearness come into many texts by reading, habitually, “helpful” and “helpfulness” for “holy” and “holiness” or else “living,” as in Rom. xi. 16. The sense “dedicated” (the Latin *sanctus*), being, of course, inapplicable to the Supreme Being, is an entirely secondary and accidental one.

¹ [See Colossians i. 16, 17: compare below, p. 482.]

² [On this suggested connexion of “holy” and “helpful,” compare *Munera Pulveris* Appendix ii.]

³ [From the *Te Deum*, Ruskin translating “Sabaoth” into “Hosts”; see also Revelation iv. 8.]

⁴ [James v. 4.]

§ 6. A pure or holy state of anything, therefore, is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. They may or may not be homogeneous. The highest or organic purities are composed of many elements in an entirely helpful state. The highest and first law of the universe—and the other name of life is, therefore, “help.” The other name of death is “separation.” Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death.¹

§ 7. Perhaps the best, though the most familiar example we could take of the nature and power of consistence, will be that of the possible changes in the dust we tread on.

Exclusive of animal decay, we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp, over-trodden path, in the outskirts of a manufacturing town. I do not say mud of the road, because that is mixed with animal refuse; but take merely an ounce or two of the blackest slime of a beaten footpath on a rainy day, near a large manufacturing town.

§ 8. That slime we shall find in most cases composed of clay (or brickdust, which is burnt clay) mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other’s nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot;—sand squeezing out clay, and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together, like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.

§ 9. Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substance, it gradually becomes a white earth,² already very

¹ [In these sentences, said Ruskin (*Unto this Last*, § 54), “my principles of Political Economy were all summed.” See also *Ethics of the Dust*, § 120, where §§ 6–9 here are quoted, and Vol. XVI. p. 486.]

² [Ruskin in his copy for revision refers to a note on the white campanula in his diary for 1861–1863, where he describes how that flower “at first answers partly the purpose of its own calyx, showing itself just a little out of the calyx quite green,” till, “as it expands, it purifies itself to purer white slowly.”]

beautiful; and fit, with help of congealing fire, to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and be kept in kings' palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best. Leave it still quiet to follow its own instinct of unity, and it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear, but hard; nor only clear and hard, but so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call it then a sapphire.¹

Such being the consummation of the clay, we give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes, first, a white earth, then proceeds to grow clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine, parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any hard material whatsoever. We call it then an opal.²

In next order the soot sets to work; it cannot make itself white at first, but instead of being discouraged, tries harder and harder, and comes out clear at last, and the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness that it had, obtains in exchange the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond.

Last of all the water purifies or unites itself, contented enough if it only reach the form of a dew-drop;³ but if we insist on its proceeding to a more perfect consistence, it crystallizes into the shape of a star.

And for the ounce of slime which we had by political economy of competition, we have by political economy of co-operation, a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow.

§ 10. Now invention in art signifies an arrangement, in

¹ [Ruskin takes this illustration of natural beauty more than once: see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 12 (Vol. XII. p. 29), and *Ethics of the Dust*, § 45.]

² [For other references to the opal, see above, part vi. ch. x. § 1; *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 180); *Lectures on Art*, § 173; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 70.]

³ [On the dew-drop and the diamond, compare again *Lectures on Art*, § 173.]

which everything in the work is thus consistent with all things else, and helpful to all else.

It is the greatest and rarest of all the qualities of art. The power by which it is effected is absolutely inexplicable and incommunicable; but exercised with entire facility by those who possess it, in many cases even unconsciously.*

In work which is not composed, there may be many beautiful things, but they do not help each other. They at the best only stand beside, and more usually compete with and destroy, each other. They may be connected artificially in many ways, but the test of there being no invention is, that if one of them be taken away, the others are no worse than before. But in true composition, if one be taken away, all the rest are helpless and valueless. Generally, in falsely composed work, if anything be taken away, the rest will look better; because the attention is less distracted. Hence the pleasure of inferior artists in sketching, and their inability to finish: all that they add destroys.

§ 11. Also in true composition, everything not only helps everything else a *little*, but helps with its utmost power. Every atom is in full energy; and *all* that energy is kind. Not a line, nor spark of colour, but is doing its very best, and that best is aid. The extent to which this law is carried in truly right and noble work is wholly inconceivable to the ordinary observer, and no true account of it would be believed.

§ 12. True composition being entirely easy to the man

* By diligent study of good compositions, it is possible to put work together, so that the parts shall help each other a little, or at all events do no harm; and when some tact and taste are associated with this diligence, semblances of real invention are often produced, which, being the results of great labour, the artist is always proud of; and which, being capable of learned explanation and imitation, the spectator naturally takes interest in. The common precepts about composition all produce and teach this false kind, which, as true composition is the noblest, being the corruption of it, is the ignoblest condition of art.¹

¹ [On the principle of *Corruptio optimi pessima*, compare Vol. V. p. 47.]

who can compose, he is seldom proud of it, though he clearly recognizes it. Also, true composition is inexplicable. No one can explain how the notes of a Mozart melody, of the folds of a piece of Titian's drapery, produce their essential effects on each other.¹ If you do not feel it, no one can by reasoning make you feel it. And the highest composition is so subtle, that it is apt to become unpopular, and sometimes seem insipid.

§ 13. The reader may be surprised at my giving so high a place to invention. But if he ever come to know true invention from false, he will find that it is not only the highest quality of art, but is simply the most wonderful act or power of humanity. It is pre-eminently the deed of human creation; *poihsis*, otherwise, poetry.

If the reader will look back to my definition of poetry, he will find it is "the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for noble emotion" (Vol. III. p. 11),² amplified below (§ 14) into "assembling by help of the imagination" ; that is to say, imagination associative, described at length in Vol. II., in the chapter just referred to.³ The mystery of the power is sufficiently set forth in that place. Of its dignity I have a word or two to say here.

§ 14. Men in their several professed employments, looked at broadly, may be properly arranged under five classes:—

1. Persons who see. These in modern language are sometimes called sight-seers, that being an occupation coming more and more into vogue every day. Anciently they used to be called, simply, seers.

2. Persons who talk. These, in modern language, are usually called talkers, or speakers, as in the House of Commons, and elsewhere. They used to be called prophets.

3. Persons who make. These, in modern language, are usually called manufacturers. Anciently they were called poets.

4. Persons who think. There seems to be no very distinct

¹ [Compare *Elements of Drawing*, § 192 (Vol. XV. p. 163), and Vol. V. p. 119.]

² [Ruskin's reference is to the first edition: see here Vol. V. pp. 28, 29.]

³ [In § 3 n.]

modern title for this kind of person, anciently called philosophers, nevertheless we have a few of them among us.

5. Persons who do: in modern language, called practical persons; anciently, believers.

Of the first two classes I have only this to note—that we ought neither to say that a person sees, if he sees falsely, nor speaks, if he speaks falsely. For seeing falsely is worse than blindness, and speaking falsely, than silence. A man who is too dim-sighted to discern the road from the ditch, may feel which is which;—but if the ditch appears manifestly to him to be the road, and the road to be the ditch, what shall become of him? False seeing is unseeing, on the negative side of blindness; and false speaking, unspeaking,—on the negative side of silence.

To the persons who think, also, the same test applies very shrewdly. Theirs is a dangerous profession; and from the time of the Aristophanes thought-shop¹ to the great German establishment, or thought-manufactory, whose productions have, unhappily, taken in part the place of the older and more serviceable commodities of Nuremberg toys and Berlin wool, it has been often harmful enough to mankind. It should not be so, for a false thought is more distinctly and visibly no thought, than a false saying is no saying. But it is touching the two great productive classes of the doers and makers, that we have one or two important points to note here.

§ 15. Has the reader ever considered, carefully, what is the meaning of “doing” a thing?

Suppose a rock falls from a hill-side, crushes a group of cottages, and kills a number of people. The stone has produced a great effect in the world. If any one asks, respecting the broken roofs, “What did it?” you say the stone did it. Yet you don’t talk of the deed of the stone. If you enquire farther, and find that a goat had been feeding beside the rock, and had loosened it by gnawing the

¹ [So (frontisthron) Aristophanes calls the school of Socrates: *Clouds*, 94, 128. For other attacks by Ruskin on German schools of philosophy, see Vol. V. pp. 201–203, 203 n., 424.]

roots of the grasses beneath, you find the goat to be the active cause of the calamity, and you say the goat did it. Yet you don't call the goat the doer, nor talk of its evil deed. But if you find any one went up to the rock, in the night, and with deliberate purpose loosened it, that it might fall on the cottages, you say in quite a different sense, "It is his deed; he is the doer of it."

§ 16. It appears, then, that deliberate purpose and resolve are needed to constitute a deed or doing, in the true sense of the word; and that when, accidentally or mechanically, events take place without such purpose, we have indeed effects or results, and agents or causes, but neither deeds nor doers.

Now it so happens, as we all well know, that by far the largest part of things happening in practical life *are* brought about with no deliberate purpose. There are always a number of people who have the nature of stones; they fall on other persons and crush them. Some again have the nature of weeds, and twist about other people's feet and entangle them. More have the nature of logs, and lie in the way, so that every one falls over them. And most of all have the nature of thorns, and set themselves by waysides, so that every passer-by must be torn, and all good seed choked; or perhaps make wonderful crackling under various pots, even to the extent of practically boiling water and working pistons. All these people produce immense and sorrowful effect in the world. Yet none of them are doers; it is their nature to crush, impede, and prick; but deed is not in them.*

§ 17. And farther, observe, that even when some effect is finally intended, you cannot call it the person's deed, unless it is *what* he intended.

If an ignorant person, purposing evil, accidentally does good, (as if a thief's disturbing a family should lead them

* We may, perhaps, expediently recollect as much of our botany as to teach us that there may be sharp and rough persons, like spines, who yet have good in them, and are essentially branches, and can bud. But

to discover in time that their house was on fire); or, *vice versâ*, if an ignorant person intending good accidentally does evil (as if a child should give hemlock to his companions for celery), in neither case do you call them the doers of what may result. So that in order to a true deed, it is necessary that the effect of it should be foreseen. Which, ultimately, it cannot be, but by a person who knows, and in his deed obeys, the laws of the universe, and of its Maker. And this knowledge is in its highest form, respecting the will of the Ruling Spirit, called Trust. For it is not the knowledge that a thing is, but that, according to the promise and nature of the Ruling Spirit, a thing will be. Also obedience in its highest form is not obedience to a constant and compulsory law, but a persuaded or voluntarily yielded obedience to an issued command; and so far as it was a *persuaded* submission to command, it was anciently called, in a passive sense, “persuasion,” or *pistis*, and in so far as it alone assuredly did, and it alone *could* do, what it meant to do, and was therefore the root and essence of all human deed, it was called by the Latins the “doing,” or *fides*, which has passed into the French *foi* and the English *faith*.¹ And therefore because in His doing always certain, and in His speaking always true, His name who leads the armies of Heaven is “Faithful and true,”*² and all deeds which are done in

the true thorny person is no spine, only an excrescence; rootless evermore, leafless evermore. No crown made of such can ever meet glory of Angel’s hand. (*In Memoriam*, lxviii.3)

* “True,” means, etymologically, not “consistent with fact,” but “which may be trusted.” “This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptance,”⁴ etc., meaning a trusty saying,—a saying to be rested on, leant upon.

¹ [Compare below, p. 326; and for some remarks on these suggested etymologies, see above, Introduction, p. lxii.]

² [Revelation xix. 11: see *Munera Pulveris*, § 81 n.]

³ [Ruskin’s reference is to the fourth edition of *In Memoriam* (1851), in which edition one additional stanza (lix.) had been introduced. In the edition of 1872 another stanza (xxxix.) was added; so that the stanza here referred to is lxix. in the later editions.]

⁴ [1 Timothy i. 15.]

alliance with those armies, be they small or great, are essentially deeds of faith, which therefore, and in this one stern, eternal sense, subdues all kingdoms, and turns to flight the armies of the aliens, and is at once the source and the substance of all human deed, rightly so called.

§ 18. Thus far then of practical persons, once called believers, as set forth in the last word of the noblest group of words ever, so far as I know, uttered by simple man concerning his practice, being the final testimony of the leaders of a great practical nation, whose deed thenceforward became an example of deed to mankind:

W xein, aggellein lakedaimoniois, oti thde
keimeqa, tois keinwn rhmasi peiqomenoi.

“O stranger! (we pray thee), tell the Lacedæmonians that we are lying here, having *obeyed* their words.”¹

§ 19. What, let us ask next, is the ruling character of the person who produces—the creator or maker, anciently called the poet?

We have seen what a deed is. What then is a “creation”? Nay, it may be replied, to “create” cannot be said of man’s labour.

On the contrary, it not only can be said, but is and must be said continually. You certainly do not talk of creating a watch, or creating a shoe; nevertheless you *do* talk of creating a feeling. Why is this?

Look back to the greatest of all creations, that of the world. Suppose the trees had been ever so well or so ingeniously put together, stem and leaf, yet if they had not been able to grow, would they have been well created? Or suppose the fish had been cut and stitched finely out of skin and whalebone; yet, cast upon the waters, had not been able to swim? Or suppose Adam and Eve had been made in the softest clay, ever so neatly, and set at the foot of the tree of knowledge, fastened up to it, quite

¹ [See Vol. V. p. 412 for another reference to the epitaph, written by Simonides (*Anthology*, vii. 249), on the Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ (Herodotus, vii. 228).]

unable to fall, or do anything else, would they have been well created, or in any true sense created at all?

§ 20. It will, perhaps, appear to you, after a little farther thought, that to create anything in reality is to put life into it.

A poet, or creator, is therefore a person who puts things together, not as a watchmaker steel, or a shoemaker leather, but who puts life into them.

His work is essentially this: it is the gathering and arranging of material by imagination, so as to have in it at last the harmony or helpfulness of life, and the passion or emotion of life. Mere fitting and adjustment of material is nothing; that is watchmaking. But helpful and passionate harmony, essentially choral harmony, so called from the Greek word “rejoicing,”* is the harmony of Apollo and the Muses; the word Muse and Mother being derived from the same root,¹ meaning “passionate seeking,” or love, of which the issue is passionate finding, or sacred INVENTION. For which reason I could not bear to use any baser word than this of invention. And if the reader will think over all these things, and follow them out, as I think he may easily with this much of clue given him, he will not any more think it wrong in me to place invention so high among the powers of man.† Nor any more think it strange that

* *Corous te wnomakenai para ths Caras emfuton onoma.* (De leg. II. 1.²)

† This being, indeed, among the visiblest signs of the Divine or immortal life. We have got a base habit of opposing the word “mortal” or “deathful” merely to “im-mortal”; whereas it is essentially contrary to “divine” (to *qeiōV*, not to *aqanatoV*, *Phædo*, 28), that which is deathful being anarchic or disobedient, and that which is divine ruling and obedient; this being the true distinction between flesh and spirit.³

¹ [The Greek *mousa* is commonly derived, as Ruskin says, from a root signifying eager desire; but the connexion of *mthtr* with the same root can hardly be sustained.]

² [*Laws*, 654 A. Ruskin quotes the passage from which these words come, translates it, and comments further on Plato’s suggested etymology in *Munera Pulveris*, § 102 and *n.*]

³ [The passage in the *Phædo* (ch. xxviii., 80 A.) is: “Nature orders the soul to rule and govern, and the body to obey and serve. Now which of these two functions is akin to the divine (*tw qeiw*)? and which to the mortal (*tw qnhtw*)?” In Ruskin’s next note the reference is to ch. iv. (or 60 E.): “The same dream came to me

the last act of the life of Socrates* should have been to purify himself from the sin of having negligently listened to the voice within him, which, through all his past life, had bid him “labour, and make harmony.”

* pollakis moi foitwn to anto enupion en tw parelqonti biw, alloti en allh oyei fainomenon , ta anta de legon, W Swkrates, efh, mousikhn poiei kai ergazou. (Phaedo, 4.)

sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another, but always saying the same or nearly the same words: Make and cultivate music, said the dream” (Jowett’s version).]

CHAPTER II

THE TASK OF THE LEAST

§ 1. THE reader has probably been surprised at my assertions made often before now,¹ and reiterated here, that the *minutest* portion of a great composition is helpful to the whole. It certainly does not seem easily conceivable that this should be so. I will go farther, and say that it is inconceivable. But it is the fact.

We shall discern it to be so by taking one or two compositions to pieces, and examining the fragments. In doing which, we must remember that a great composition always has a leading emotional purpose, technically called its motive, to which all its lines and forms have some relation. Undulating lines, for instance, are expressive of action; and would be false in effect if the motive of the picture was one of repose. Horizontal and angular lines are expressive of rest and strength; and would destroy a design whose purpose was to express disquiet and feebleness. It is therefore necessary to ascertain the motive before descending to the detail.

§ 2. One of the simplest subjects, in the series of the Rivers of France, is “Rietz, near Saumur.”² The published Plate gives a better rendering than usual of its tone of light; and my rough etching, Plate 73, sufficiently shows the arrangement of its lines. What is their motive?

To get at it completely, we must know something of the Loire.

¹ [See, for instance, in *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV. p. 236, Vol. V. p. 121, Vol. VI. p. 334; and compare Vol. XII. p. 60.]

² [This drawing is among those given by Ruskin to the University of Oxford: see Vol. XIII. p. 559. For another reference to it, see *The Bible of Amiens*, ch. i. § 31. It was engraved for the *Rivers of France* by Brandard, whose work is elsewhere praised by Ruskin (see Vol. XIII. p. 495).]

The district through which it here flows is, for the most part, a low place, yet not altogether at the level of the stream, but cut into steep banks of chalk or gravel, thirty or forty feet high, running for miles at about an equal height above the water.

These banks are excavated by the peasantry, partly for houses, partly for cellars, so economizing vineyard space above; and thus a kind of continuous village runs along the river-side, composed half of caves, half of rude buildings, backed by the cliff, propped against it, therefore always leaning away from the river; mingled with overlappings of vineyard trellis from above, and little towers or summer-houses for outlook, when the grapes are ripe, or for gossip over the garden wall.

§ 3. It is an autumnal evening, then, by this Loire side. The day has been hot, and the air is heavy and misty still; the sunlight warm, but dim; the brown vine-leaves motionless: all else quiet. Not a sail in sight on the river,* its strong noiseless current lengthening the stream of low sunlight.

The motive of the picture, therefore, is the expression of rude but perfect peace, slightly mingled with an indolent languor and despondency; the space between intervals of enforced labour; happy, but listless, and having little care or hope about the future; cutting its home out of this gravel bank, and letting the vine and the river twine and undermine as they will; careless to mend or build, so long as the walls hold together, and the black fruit swells in the sunshine.

§ 4. To get this repose, together with rude stability, we have therefore horizontal lines and bold angles. The grand horizontal space and sweep of Turner's distant river show perhaps better in the etching than in the Plate; but depend wholly for value on the piece of near wall. It is the

* The sails in the engraving were put in to catch the public eye. There are none in the drawing.



J. M. W. Turner.

Goulet & Co.

J. Threlkeld.

73. Loire-side.

vertical line of its dark side which drives the eye up into the distance, right against the horizontal, and so makes it felt, while the flatness of the stone prepares the eye to understand the flatness of the river. Farther: hide with your finger the little ring on that stone, and you will find the river has stopped flowing. That ring is to repeat the curved lines of the river bank, which express its line of current, and to bring the feeling of them down near us. On the other side of the road the horizontal lines are taken up again by the dark pieces of wood, without which we should still lose half our space.

Next: The repose is to be not only perfect, but indolent: the repose of out-wearied people; not caring much what becomes of them.

You see the road is covered with litter. Even the crockery is left outside the cottage to dry in the sun, after being washed up. The steps of the cottage door have been too high for comfort originally, only it was less trouble to cut three large stones than four or five small. They are now all aslope and broken, not repaired for years. Their weighty forms increase the sense of languor throughout the scene, and of stability also, because we feel how difficult it would be to stir them. The crockery has its work to do also;—the arched door on the left being necessary to show the great thickness of walls and the strength they require to prevent falling in of the cliff above;—as the horizontal lines must be diffused on the right, so this arch must be diffused on the left; and the large round plate on one side of the steps, with the two small ones on the other, are to carry down the element of circular curvature. Hide them, and see the result.

As they carry the arched group of forms down, the arched window-shutter diffuses it upwards, where all the lines of the distant buildings suggest one and the same idea of disorderly and careless strength, mingling masonry with rock.

§ 5. So far of the horizontal and curved lines. How of

the radiating ones? What has the black vine trellis got to do?

Lay a pencil or ruler parallel with its lines. You will find that they point to the massive building in the distance. To which, as nearly as is possible without at once showing the artifice, every other radiating line points also; almost ludicrously when it is once pointed out; even the curved line of the top of the terrace runs into it, and the last sweep of the river evidently leads to its base. And so nearly is it in the exact centre of the picture, that one diagonal from corner to corner passes through it, and the other only misses the base by the twentieth of an inch.

If you are accustomed to France, you will know in a moment by its outline that this massive building is an old church.

Without it, the repose would not have been essentially the labourer's rest—rest as of the Sabbath. Among all the groups of lines that point to it, two are principal: the first, those of the vine trellis: the second, those of the handles of the saw left in the beam: the blessing of human life, and its labour.

Whenever Turner wishes to express profound repose, he puts in the foreground some instrument of labour cast aside. See, in Rogers's *Poems*, the last vignette, "Datur hora quieti," with the plough in the furrow: and in the first vignette of the same book, the scythe on the shoulder of the peasant going home. (There is nothing about the scythe in the passage of the poem which this vignette illustrates.¹)

§ 6. Observe, farther, the outline of the church itself. As our habitations are, so is our church, evidently a heap of old, but massive walls, patched, and repaired, and roofed in, and over and over, until its original shape is hardly

¹ [For the "Datur Hora Quietii," see Vol. III. p. 265; and *Elements of Drawing*, § 242 (Vol. XV. p. 206), where the symbol of the plough is further explained. The "first vignette" (not counting the frontispiece), at p. 6 of the *Poems*, is "Twilight." The drawing for it is No. 226 in the National Gallery: see Vol. XIII. p. 380.]

recognizable. I know the kind of church well—can tell even here, two miles off, that I shall find some Norman arches in the apse, and a flamboyant porch, rich and dark, with every statue broken out of it; and a rude wooden belfry above all; and a quantity of miserable shops built in among the buttresses; and that I may walk in and out as much as I please, but that how often soever, I shall always find some one praying at the Holy Sepulchre, in the darkest aisle, and my going in and out will not disturb them. For they *are* praying, which in many a handsomer and highlier—furbished edifice might, perhaps, not be so assuredly the case.

§ 7. Lastly: What kind of people have we on this winding road? Three indolent ones, leaning on the wall to look over into the gliding water; and a matron with her market panniers; by her figure, not a fast rider. The road, besides, is bad, and seems unsafe for trotting, and she has passed without disturbing the cat, who sits comfortably on the block of wood in the middle of it.

§ 8. Next to this piece of quietness, let us glance at a composition in which the motive is one of tumult: that of the Fall of Schaffhausen. It is engraved in the *Keepsake*.¹ I have etched in Plate 74, at the top, the chief lines of its composition,* in which the first great purpose is to give swing enough to the water. The line of fall is straight and monotonous in reality. Turner wants to get the great concave sweep and rush of the river well felt, in spite of the unbroken form. The column of spray, rocks, mills,

* These etchings of compositions are all reversed, for they are merely sketches on the steel, and I cannot sketch easily except straight from the drawing, and without reversing. The looking-glass plagues me with cross lights. As examples of composition, it does not the least matter which way they are turned; and the reader may see this Schaffhausen subject from the right side of the Rhine, by holding the book before a glass. The rude indications of the figures in the Loire subject are nearly facsimiles of Turner's.

¹ [In the volume for 1833: called "Falls of the Rhine"; engraved by J. B. Allen. The drawing, formerly in Ruskin's collection, is now in the Birmingham Art Gallery.]

and bank, all radiate like a plume, sweeping round together in grand curves to the left, where the group of figures, hurried about the ferry boat, rises like a dash of spray; they also radiating: so as to form one perfectly connected cluster, with the two *gens-d'armes* and the millstones; the millstones at the bottom being the root of it; the two soldiers laid right and left to sustain the branch of figures beyond, balanced just as a tree bough would be.

§ 9. One of the *gens-d'armes* is flirting with a young lady in a round cap and full sleeves, under pretence of wanting her to show him what she has in her bandbox. The motive of which flirtation is, so far as Turner is concerned in it, primarily the bandbox: this and the millstones below, give him a series of concave lines, which, concentrated by the recumbent soldiers, intensify the hollow sweep of the fall, precisely as the ring on the stone does the Loire eddies. These curves are carried out on the right by the small plate of eggs, laid to be washed at the spring; and, all these concave lines being a little too quiet and recumbent, the staggering casks are set on the left, and the ill-balanced milk-pail on the right, to give a general feeling of things being rolled over and over. The things which are to give this sense of rolling are dark, in order to hint at the way in which the cataract rolls boulders of rock; while the forms which are to give the sense of its sweeping force are white. The little spring, splashing out of its pinetrough, is to give contrast with the power of the fall,—while it carries out the general sense of splashing water.

§ 10. This spring exists on the spot, and so does everything else in the picture; but the combinations are wholly arbitrary; it being Turner's fixed principle to collect out of any scene, whatever was characteristic, and put it together just as he liked. The changes made in this instance are highly curious. The mills have no resemblance whatever to the real group as seen from this spot; for there is a vulgar and formal dwelling-house in front of them. But if you climb the rock behind them, you find they form



J. M. W. Turner

J. Hawkins
Allen & Co. Sc.

74. The Millstream.

on that side a towering cluster, which Turner has put with little modification into the drawing. What he has done to the mills, he has done with still greater audacity to the central rock. Seen from this spot, it shows, in reality, its greatest breadth, and is heavy and uninteresting; but on the Lauffen side, exposes its consumed base, worn away by the rush of water, which Turner resolving to show, serenely draws the rock as it appears from the other side of the Rhine, and brings that view of it over to this side. I have etched the bit with the rock a little larger below; and if the reader knows the spot, he will see that this piece of the drawing, reversed in the etching, is almost a bonâ fide unreversed study of the fall from the Lauffen side.*

Finally, the castle of Lauffen itself, being, when seen from this spot, too much foreshortened to show its extent, Turner walks a quarter of a mile lower down the river, draws the castle accurately there, brings it back with him, and puts it in all its extent, where he chooses to have it, beyond the rocks.

I tried to copy and engrave this piece of the drawing of its real size, merely to show the forms of the trees, drifted back by the breeze from the fall, and wet with its spray; but in the endeavour to facsimile the touches, great part of their grace and ease has been lost; still, Plate 75 may, if compared with the same piece in the *Keepsake* engraving, at least show that the original drawing has not yet been rendered with completeness.

§ 11. These two examples may sufficiently serve to show the mode in which minor details, both in form and spirit, are used by Turner to aid his main motives; of course I cannot, in the space of this volume, go on examining subjects at this length, even if I had time to etch them; but every design of Turner's would be equally instructive,

* With the exception of the jagged ledge rising out of the foam below, which comes from the north side, and is admirable in its expression of the position of the limestone-beds, which, rising from below the drift gravel of Constance, are the real cause of the fall of Schaffhausen.



Painted by J.M.W. Turner.

Drawn by J. Buskin.

Engraved by R.F. Cuff,
Allen & Co. St.

examined in a similar manner. Thus far, however, we have only seen the help of the parts to the whole; we must give yet a little attention to the mode of combining the smallest details.

I am always led away, in spite of myself, from my proper subject here, invention formal,¹ or the merely pleasant placing of lines and masses, into the emotional results of such arrangement. The chief reason of this is that the emotional power can be explained; but the perfection of formative arrangement, as I said, cannot be explained, any more than that of melody in music. An instance or two of it, however, may be given.

§ 12. Much fine formative arrangement depends on a more or less elliptical or pear-shaped balance of the group, obtained by arranging the principal members of it on two opposite curves, and either centralizing it by some powerful feature at the base, centre, or summit; or else clasping it together by some conspicuous point or knot. A very small object will often do this satisfactorily.

If you can get the complete series of Lefèvre's engravings from Titian and Veronese,² they will be quite enough to teach you, in their dumb way, everything that is teachable of composition; at all events, try to get the Madonna, with St. Peter and St. George under the two great pillars; the Madonna and Child, with mitred bishop on her left, and St. Andrew on her right; and Veronese's Triumph of Venice.³ The first of these Plates unites two formative

¹ [See above, p. 204.]

² [Valentin Lefèvre, a Flemish painter and engraver (1642–1700); born in Brussels; during a long residence in Venice (where he died) painted in the style of Paolo Veronese, and etched numerous Plates after that master, Titian, and Tintoretto. A collection of these was published in the following large folio volume: *Opera Selectiora quæ Titianus Vecellius Cadvbriensis et Paulus Calliari Veronensis, inventarunt ac pinxerunt quæ que Velentinus Le Febre, Bruxellensis, delineavit et sculpsit*, 1682. The subjects of the Plates were not given, but a little supplementary volume, containing the particulars, was published in the following year (*Notitia dove ritrovano Opera Selectiora*, etc., 1683). For another reference to Lefèvre's Plates, see above, Part vi. ch. viii. § 13 (p. 95).]

³ [The "Madonna, with St. Peter and St. George," by Titian, is the picture in the Pesaro Chapel at the Frari: see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 380 and *n.*): a reproduction of it may be seen at p. 92 of Claude Phillips' *Earlier Work of Titian*.

symmetries: that of the two pillars, clasped by the square altar-cloth below and cloud above, catches the eye first; but the main group is the fivefold one rising to the left, crowned by the Madonna. St. Francis and St. Peter form its two wings, and the kneeling portrait figures, its base. It is clasped at the bottom by the key of St. Peter, which points straight at the Madonna's head, and is laid on the steps solely for this purpose; the curved lines, which enclose the group, meet also in her face; and the straight line of light, on the cloak of the nearest senator, points at her also. If you have Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, turn to the Lauffenburg,¹ and compare the figure group there: a fivefold chain, one standing figure, central; two recumbent, for wings; two half-recumbent, for bases; and a cluster of weeds to clasp. Then turn to Lefèvre's *Europa* (there are two in the series—I mean the one with the two tree trunks over her head). It is a wonderful ninefold group. *Europa* central; two stooping figures, each surmounted by a standing one, for wings; a cupid on one side, and dog on the other, for bases: a cupid and trunk of tree, on each side, to terminate above; and a garland for clasp.

§ 13. Fig. 94, p. 226, will serve to show the mode in which similar arrangements are carried into the smallest detail. It is magnified four times from a cluster of leaves in the foreground of the "Isis" (*Liber Studiorum*).² Figs. 95

The "Madonna and Child, with Mitred Bishop," etc., is the reputed picture by Titian (though now generally acknowledged not to be by his own hand) over the altar in the chapel of the Vecelli family in the church of Pieve di Cadore. The picture shows the Virgin and Child between St. Andrew (supposed to represent Titian's brother, Francesco) and St. Tiziano (a Bishop of Oderzo); this, again, is said to be a portrait of Titian's nephew, Marco; behind the Bishop, in the guise of his servant, is a portrait of Titian himself. A woodcut of the picture is given at p. 98 of Josiah Gilbert's *Cadore; or, Titian's Country* (1869). The "Triumph of Venice" is painted on the ceiling of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Ducal Palace; a reproduction of it is given on p. 18 of *Paolo Veronese* (Newnes' Art Library). The "Rape of Europa," mentioned lower down (Plate 50 in Lefèvre's book) was in Lefèvre's time in the Casa Contarini at Venice; it is now in the Capitoline Museum at Rome.]

¹ [The original drawing for the Plate is No. 473 in the National Gallery. For incidental references to the Plate (not, however, to the figure group), see Vol. III. p. 236 and Vol. V. p. 399.]

² [The "Temple of Isis: Scene in Petworth Park." The drawing is No. 883 in the National Gallery: for another reference to it, see *Lectures on Art*, § 170.]

and 96, page 227, show the arrangement of the two groups composing it; the lower is purely symmetrical, with trefoiled centre and broad masses for wings; the uppermost is a sweeping continuous curve, symmetrical, but foreshortened. Both



Fig. 94

are clasped by arrow-shaped leaves. The two whole groups themselves are, in turn, members of another larger group, composing the entire foreground, and consisting of broad dock-leaves, with minor clusters on the right and left, of which these form the chief portion on the right side.

§ 14. Unless every leaf, and every visible point or object, however small, forms a part of some harmony of this kind (these symmetrical conditions being only the most simple and



Fig. 95



Fig. 96

obvious), it has no business in the picture. It is the necessary connection of all the forms and colours, down to the last touch, which constitutes great or inventive work, separated from all common work by an impassable gulf.

By diligently copying the etchings of the *Liber Studiorum*, the reader may, however, easily attain the perception of the existence of these relations, and be prepared to understand Turner's more elaborate composition. It would take many figures to disentangle and explain the arrangements merely of the leaf cluster, Fig. 78, p. 126; but that there *is* a system, and that every leaf has a fixed value and place in it, can hardly but be felt at a glance.

It is curious that, in spite of all the constant talking of "composition" which goes on among art students, true composition is just the last thing which appears to be perceived. One would have thought that in this group, at least the value of the central black leaf would have been seen, of which the principal function is to point towards, and continue, the line of bank above. See Plate 62. But a glance at the published Plate in the England series will show that no idea of the composition had occurred to the engraver's mind.¹ He thought any leaves would do, and supplied them from his own repertory of hack vegetation.

§ 15. I would willingly enlarge farther on this subject—it is a favourite one with me; but the figures required for any exhaustive treatment of it would form a separate volume. All that I can do is to indicate, as these examples do sufficiently, the vast field open to the student's analysis if he cares to pursue the subject; and to mark for the general reader these two strong conclusions:—that nothing in great work is ever either fortuitous or contentious.

It is not fortuitous; that is to say, not left to fortune. The "must do it by a kind of felicity" of Bacon² is true; it is true also that an accident is often suggestive to an inventor. Turner himself said, "I never lose an accident." But it is this not *losing* it, this taking things out of the hands of Fortune, and putting them into those of force and

¹ [Ruskin's Plate (engraved by J. C. Armytage) faces p. 128, above; the engraver of the Plate in "England and Wales" (No. 6) was J. T. Willmore.]

² ["Another precept of this knowledge is . . . that [they] . . . should make a show of perpetual felicity in all that they undertake" (*Advancement of Learning*, book ii.: xxiii. 34).]

foresight, which attest the master. Chance may sometimes help, and sometimes provoke, a success; but must never rule, and rarely allure.

And, lastly, nothing must be contentious. Art has many uses and many pleasantnesses; but of all its services, none are higher than its setting forth, by a visible and enduring image, the nature of all true authority and freedom;—Authority which defines and directs the action of benevolent law; and Freedom which consists in deep and soft consent of individual* helpfulness.

* “Individual,” that is to say, distinct and separate in character, though joined in purpose. I might have enlarged on this head, but that all I should care to say has been already said admirably by Mr. J. S. Mill in his essay on *Liberty*.¹

¹ [Compare, for what Ruskin here says of liberty, Vol. V. p. 379 and *n*. For other references to Mill’s book, see *Time and Tide*, § 157 and Appendix viii. (in this edition), where Ruskin refers to this passage, while from a different point of view criticising the essay severely; *Queen of the Air*, § 154 (where Ruskin says that the part of the essay which treats of freedom of thought contains “some important truths beautifully expressed,” though others, “quite vital, are omitted”); and *Val d’ Arno*, § 196 (where there is a passing allusion less sympathetically worded). Mill’s essay had just been published (1859); a copy of the first edition, annotated by Ruskin, was in Sir John Simon’s library.]

CHAPTER III

THE RULE OF THE GREATEST

§ 1. IN the entire range of art principles, none perhaps present a difficulty so great to the student, or require from the teacher expression so cautious, and yet so strong, as those which concern the nature and influence of magnitude.¹

In one sense, and that deep, there is no such thing as magnitude. The least thing is as the greatest, and one day as a thousand years,² in the eyes of the Maker of great and small things. In another sense, and that close to us and necessary, there exist both magnitude and value. Though not a sparrow falls to the ground unnoted, there are yet creatures who are of more value than many; and the same Spirit which weighs the dust of the earth in a balance, counts the isles as a little thing.

§ 2. The just temper of human mind in this matter may, nevertheless, be told shortly. Greatness can only be rightly estimated when minuteness is justly revered. Greatness is the aggregation of minuteness; nor can its sublimity be felt truthfully by any mind unaccustomed to the affectionate watching of what is least.

But if this affection for the least be unaccompanied by the powers of comparison and reflection; if it be intemperate in its thirst, restless in curiosity, and incapable of the patient and self-commandant pause which is wise to arrange, and submissive to refuse, it will close the paths of noble art to the student as effectually, and hopelessly, as even the blindness of pride, or impatience of ambition.

§ 3. I say the paths of noble art, not of useful art. All

¹ [On this subject, compare Appendix II. 3; below, p. 481.]

² [See Psalms xc. 4 and 2 Peter iii. 8; and for the following references, Matthew x. 29; Isaiah xl. 15.]

accurate investigation will have its reward; the morbid curiosity will at least slake the thirst of others, if not its own; and the diffused and petty affections will distribute, in serviceable measure, their minute delights and narrow discoveries. The opposite error, the desire of greatness as such, or rather of what appears great to indolence and vanity;—the instinct which I have described in the *Seven Lamps*,¹ noting it, among the Renaissance builders, to be an especial and unfailing sign of baseness of mind, is as fruitless as it is vile; no way profitable—every way harmful; the widest and most corrupting expression of vulgarity. The microscopic drawing of an insect may be precious; but nothing except disgrace and misguidance will ever be gathered from such work as that of Haydon or Barry.²

§ 4. The work I have mostly had to do, since this essay was begun, has been that of contention against such debased issues of swollen insolence and windy conceit; but I have noticed lately, that some lightly-budding philosophers have depreciated true greatness;³ confusing the relations of scale, as they bear upon human instinct and morality; reasoning as if a mountain were no nobler than a grain of sand, or as if many souls were not of mightier interest than one. To whom it must be shortly answered that the Lord of power and life knew which were His noblest works, when He bade His servant watch the play of the Leviathan,⁴ rather than dissect the spawn of the minnow; and that when it comes to practical question whether a single soul is to be jeopardized for many, and this Leonidas, or Curtius, or Winkelried⁵ shall abolish—so far as abolishable—his

¹ [See Vol. VIII. p. 9.]

² [For similar references to Haydon, see *Queen of the Air*, § 159, and Vol. XIV. p. 160; for Barry, Vol. III. p. 649.]

³ [The reference may possibly be to Emerson's *Essays*, a book which Ruskin was reading at this time (see below, p. 361 *n.*, where, however, as in many other places, he expresses his obligations to that author). To the first of the *Essays*, Emerson prefixed the following lines:—

“There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all.”]

⁴ [Psalms civ. 26.]

⁵ [For other references to Leonidas, see Vol. V. p. 224; Vol. XII. p. 138. And for references to Winkelried, see the letter to the *Scotsman* of July 20, 1859 (reprinted

own spirit, that he may save more numerous spirits, such question is to be solved by the simple human instinct respecting number and magnitude, not by reasoning on infinity:—

“Le navigateur, qui, la nuit, voit l’océan étinceler de lumière, danser en guirlande de feu, s’égaye d’abord de ce spectacle. Il fait dix lieues; la guirlande s’allonge indéfiniment, elle s’agite, se tord, se noue, aux mouvements de la lame; c’est un serpent monstrueux qui va toujours s’allongeant, jusqu’à trente lieues, quarante lieues. Et tout cela n’est qu’une danse d’animalcules imperceptibles. En quel nombre? À cette question l’imagination s’effraye; elle sent là une autre nature, de puissance immense, de richesse épouvantable. . . . Que sont ces petits des petits? Rien moins que les constructeurs du globe où nous sommes. De leurs corps, de leurs débris, ils ont préparé le sol qui est sous nos pas. . . . Et ce sont les plus petits qui ont fait les plus grandes choses. L’imperceptible rhizopode s’est bâti un monument bien autre que les Pyramides, pas moins que l’Italie centrale, une notable partie de la chaîne des Apennins. Mais c’était trop peu encore; les masses énormes du Chili, les prodigieuses Cordillères qui regardent le monde à leurs pieds, sont le monument funéraire où cet être insaisissable, et pour ainsi dire, invisible, a enseveli les débris de son espèce disparue.”—(Michelet: *L’Insecte*.)

§ 5. In these passages, and those connected with them in the chapter from which they are taken,¹ itself so vast in scope, and therefore so sublime, we may perhaps find the true relations of minuteness, multitude, and magnitude. We shall not feel that there is no such thing as littleness, or no such thing as magnitude. Nor shall we be disposed to confuse a Volvox with the Cordilleras; but we may learn that they both are bound together by links of eternal life and toil; we shall see the vastest thing noble, chiefly for what it includes; and the meanest for what it accomplishes. Thence we might gather—and the conclusion will be found in experience true—that the sense of largeness would be most grateful to minds capable of comprehending, balancing, and comparing; but capable also of great patience and expectation; while the sense of minute wonderfulness would be

in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. p. 6, and in a later volume of this edition); and *Poetry of Architecture*, § 43 (Vol. I. p. 38). Compare also Ruskin’s Preface (in this edition, § 19) to the *Economist* of Xenophon in *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, vol. i., where Curtius is mentioned.]

¹ [Book i. ch. iii., “Les Imperceptibles Constructeurs du Globe.” For other references to the book, see below, pp. 333 *n.*, 450 *n.* An English translation of it (by W. H. Davenport Adams), with 140 illustrations by Giacomelli, was published in 1875.]

attractive to minds acted upon by sharp, small, penetrative sympathies, and apt to be impatient, irregular, and partial. This fact is curiously shown in the relations between the temper of the great composers and the modern pathetic school. I was surprised at the first rise of that school, now some years ago, by observing how they restrained themselves to subjects which in other hands would have been wholly uninteresting (compare Vol. IV., p. 19):¹ and in their succeeding efforts, I saw with increasing wonder, that they were almost destitute of the power of feeling vastness, or enjoying the forms which expressed it. A mountain or great building only appeared to them as a piece of colour of a certain shape. The powers it represented, or included, were invisible to them. In general they avoided subjects expressing space or mass, and fastened on confined, broken, and sharp forms; liking furze, fern, reeds, straw, stubble, dead leaves, and such like, better than strong stones, broad-flowing leaves, or rounded hills; in all such greater things, when forced to paint them, they missed the main and mighty lines; and this no less in what they loved than in what they disliked; for though fond of foliage, their trees always had a tendency to congeal into little acicular thornhedges, and never tossed free. Which modes of choice proceed naturally from a petulant sympathy with local and immediately visible interests or sorrows, not regarding their large consequences, nor capable of understanding more massive view or more deeply deliberate mercifulness;—but peevish and horror-struck, and often incapable of self-control, though not of self-sacrifice. There are more people who can forget themselves than govern themselves.

This narrowly pungent and bitter virtue has, however, its beautiful uses, and is of special value in the present day, when surface-work, shallow generalization, and cold arithmetical estimates of things, are among the chief dangers and causes of misery, which men have to deal with.

§ 6. On the other hand, and in clear distinction from all

¹ [Ruskin's reference was to the first edition; see now Vol. VI. p. 30.]

such workers, it is to be remembered that the great composers, not less deep in feeling, are in the fixed habit of regarding as much the relations and positions, as the separate nature, of things; that they reap and thresh in the sheaf, never pluck ears to rub in the hand; fish with net, not line, and sweep their prey together within great cords of errorless curve;—that nothing ever bears to them a separate or isolated aspect, but leads or links a chain of aspects—that to them it is not merely the surface, nor the substance, of anything that is of import; but its circumference and contenance; that they are pre-eminently patient and reserved; observant, not curious;—comprehensive, not conjectural; calm exceedingly; unerring, constant, terrible in steadfastness of intent; unconquerable; incomprehensible; always suggesting, implying, including, more than can be told.

§ 7. And this may be seen down to their treatment of the smallest things.

For there is nothing so small but we may, as we choose, see it in the whole, or in part, and in subdued connection with other things, or in individual and petty prominence. The greatest treatment is always that which gives conception the widest range, and most harmonious guidance;—it being permitted us to employ a certain quantity of time, and certain number of touches of pencil—he who with these embraces the largest sphere of thought, and suggests within that sphere the most perfect order of thought, has wrought the most wisely, and therefore most nobly.

§ 8. I do not, however, purpose here to examine or illustrate the nature of great treatment—to do so effectually would need many examples from the figure composers; and it will be better (if I have time to work out the subject carefully) that I should do so in a form which may be easily accessible to young students.¹ Here I will only state

¹ [Here the MS. added: “A few notes on the systems of the great composers bearing on this question are placed in the Appendix.” The Appendix was not written, nor did Ruskin “work out the subject” elsewhere. An unpublished chapter, printed in the Appendix to the present volume, has, however, some bearing on the subject: see below, pp. 481 *seq.*]

in conclusion what it is chiefly important for all students to be convinced of, that all the technical qualities by which greatness of treatment is known, such as reserve in colour, tranquillity and largeness of line, and refusal of unnecessary objects of interest are, when they are real, the exponents of an habitually noble temper of mind, never the observances of a precept supposed to be useful. The refusal or reserve of a mighty painter cannot be imitated; it is only by reaching the same intellectual strength that you will be able to give an equal dignity to your self-denial. No one can tell you beforehand what to accept, or what to ignore; only remember always, in painting as in eloquence, the greater your strength, the quieter will be your manner, and the fewer your words; and in painting, as in all the arts and acts of life, the secret of high success will be found, not in a fretful and various excellence, but in a quiet singleness of justly chosen aim.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAW OF PERFECTNESS

§ 1. AMONG the several characteristics of great treatment which in the last chapter were alluded to without being enlarged upon, one will be found several times named;—reserve.

It is necessary for our present purpose that we should understand this quality more distinctly. I mean by it the power which a great painter exercises over himself in fixing certain limits, either of force, of colour, or of quantity of work;—limits which he will not transgress in any part of his picture, even though here and there a painful sense of incompleteness may exist, under the fixed conditions, and might tempt an inferior workman to infringe them. The nature of this reserve we must understand in order that we may also determine the nature of true completion or perfectness, which is the end of composition.

§ 2. For perfectness, properly so called, means harmony. The word signifies literally the doing our work *thoroughly*. It does not mean carrying it up to any constant and established degree of finish, but carrying the whole of it up to a degree determined upon.¹ In a chalk or pencil sketch by a great master, it will often be found that the deepest shades are feeble tints of pale gray; the outlines nearly invisible, and the forms brought out by a ghostly delicacy of touch, which, on looking close to the paper, will be indistinguishable from its general texture. A single line of ink, occurring anywhere in such a drawing, would of course destroy it;

¹ [On sketching and finish, see Vol. III. p. 120, and Vol. V. pp. 156 *seq.*]

placed in the darkness of a mouth or nostril, it would turn the expression into a caricature; on a cheek or brow it would be simply a blot. Yet let the blot remain, and let the master work up to it with lines of similar force; and the drawing which was before perfect, in terms of pencil, will become, under his hand, perfect in terms of ink; and what was before a scratch on the cheek will become a necessary and beautiful part of its gradation.

All great work is thus reduced under certain conditions, and its right to be called complete depends on its fulfilment of them, not on the nature of the conditions chosen. Habitually, indeed, we call a coloured work which is satisfactory to us, finished, and a chalk drawing unfinished; but in the mind of the master, all his work is, according to the sense in which you use the word, equally perfect or imperfect. Perfect, if you regard its purpose and limitation; imperfect, if you compare it with the natural standard. In what appears to you consummate, the master has assigned to himself terms of shortcoming, and marked with a sad severity the point up to which he will permit himself to contend with nature. Were it not for his acceptance of such restraint, he could neither quit his work, nor endure it. He could not quit it, for he would always perceive more that might be done; he could not endure it, because all doing ended only in more elaborate deficiency.

§ 3. But we are apt to forget in modern days, that the reserve of a man who is not putting forth half his strength is different in manner and dignity from the effort of one who can do no more. Charmed, and justly charmed, by the harmonious sketches of great painters, and by the grandeur of their acquiescence in the point of pause, we have put ourselves to produce sketches as an end instead of a means, and thought to imitate the painter's scornful restraint of his own power, by a scornful rejection of the things beyond ours. For many reasons, therefore, it becomes desirable to understand precisely and finally what a good painter means by completion.

§ 4. The sketches of true painters may be classed under the following heads:—

I. *Experimental*.—In which they are assisting an imperfect conception of a subject by trying the look of it on paper in different ways.

By the greatest men this kind of sketch is hardly ever made; they conceive their subjects distinctly at once, and their sketch is not to try them, but to fasten them down. Raphael's form the only important exception—and the numerous examples of experimental work by him are evidence of his composition being technical rather than imaginative. I have never seen a drawing of the kind by any great Venetian. Among the nineteen thousand sketches by Turner—which I arranged in the National Gallery—there was, to the best of my recollection, *not one*. In several instances the work, after being carried forward a certain length, had been abandoned and begun again with another view; sometimes also two or more modes of treatment had been set side by side with a view to choice. But there were always two distinct imaginations contending for realization—not experimental modifications of one.

§ 5. II. *Determinant*.—The fastening down of an idea in the simplest terms, in order that it may not be disturbed or confused by after work. Nearly all the great composers do this, methodically, before beginning a painting. Such sketches are usually in a high degree resolute and compressive; the best of them outlined or marked calmly with the pen, and deliberately washed with colour, indicating the places of the principal lights.

Fine drawings of this class never show any hurry or confusion. They are the expression of concluded operations of mind, are drawn slowly, and are not so much sketches, as maps.

§ 6. III. *Commemorative*.—Containing records of facts which the master required. These in their most elaborate form are “studies,” or drawings from Nature, of parts needed in the composition, often highly finished in the part

which is to be introduced. In this form, however, they never occur by the greatest imaginative masters. For by a truly great inventor everything is invented; no atom of the work is unmodified by his mind; and no study from Nature, however beautiful, could be introduced by him into his design without change; it would not fit with the rest. Finished studies for introduction are therefore chiefly by Leonardo and Raphael, both technical designers rather than imaginative ones.

Commemorative sketches by great masters are generally hasty, merely to put them in mind of motives of invention, or they are shorthand memoranda of things with which they do not care to trouble their memory; or, finally, accurate notes of things which they must *not* modify by invention, as local detail, costume, and such like. You may find perfectly accurate drawings of coats of arms, portions of dresses, pieces of architecture, and so on, by all the great men; but you will not find elaborate studies of bits of their pictures.

§ 7. When the sketch is made merely as a memorandum, it is impossible to say how little, or what kind of drawing, may be sufficient for the purpose. It is of course likely to be hasty from its very nature, and unless the exact purpose be understood, it may be as unintelligible as a piece of shorthand writing. For instance, in the corner of a sheet of sketches made at sea, among those of Turner, at the National Gallery, occurs this one, Fig. 97 (see next page).¹ I suppose most persons would not see much use in it. It nevertheless was probably one of the most important sketches made in Turner's life, fixing for ever in his mind certain facts respecting the sunrise from a clear sea-horizon. Having myself watched such sunrise occasionally, I perceive this sketch to mean as follows:

(Half circle at the top.) When the sun was only half

¹ [No. 438. Ruskin had already reproduced Turner's memoranda, with explanations similar to those here given, in one of his Catalogues of the Turner Sketches: see Vol. XIII. pp. 301–302. See *ibid.*, pp. 236–238, for a classification of Turner's sketches similar to the one here given.]

out of the sea, the horizon was sharply traced across its disk, and red streaks of vapour crossed the lower part of it.

(Horseshoe underneath.) When the sun had risen so far as to show three-quarters of its diameter, its light became

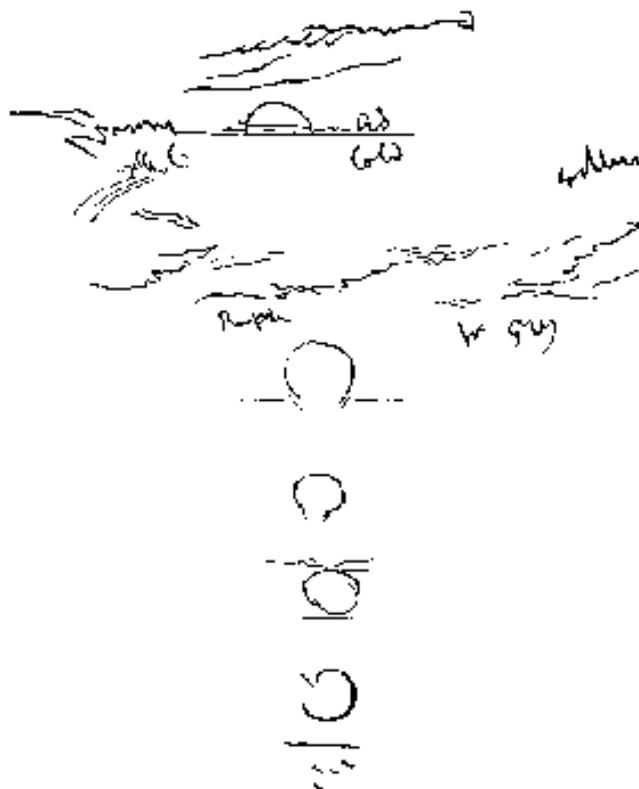


Fig. 97

so great as to conceal the sea-horizon, consuming it away in descending rays.

(Smaller horseshoe below.) When on the point of detaching itself from the horizon, the sun still consumed away the line of the sea, and looked as if pulled down by it.

(Broken oval.) Having risen about a fourth of its diameter above the horizon, the sea-line reappeared; but the risen orb was flattened by refraction into an oval.

(Broken circle.) Having risen a little farther above the sea-line, the sun, at last, got itself round, and all right, with sparkling reflection on the waves just below the sea-line.

This memorandum is for its purpose entirely perfect and efficient, though the sun is not drawn carefully round, but with a dash of the pencil; but there is no affected or desired slightness. Could it have been drawn round as instantaneously, it would have been. The purpose is throughout determined; there is no scrawling, as in vulgar sketching.*

§ 8. Again, Fig. 98 is a facsimile of one of Turner's "memoranda," of a complete subject, † Lausanne, from the road to Fribourg.¹

This example is entirely characteristic of his usual drawings from nature, which unite two characters, being *both* commemorative and determinant:—Commemorative, in so far as they note certain facts about the place: determinant, in that they record an impression received from the place there and then, together with the principal arrangement of the composition in which it was afterwards to be recorded. In this mode of sketching, Turner differs from all other men whose work I have studied. He never draws accurately on the spot, with the intention of modifying or composing afterwards from the materials; but instantly modifies as he draws, placing his memoranda where they are to be ultimately used, and taking exactly what he wants, not a fragment or line more.

* The word in the uppermost note, to the right of the sun, is "red"; the others, "yellow," "purple," "cold," "light grey." He always noted the colours of skies in this way.

† It is not so good a facsimile as those I have given from Dürer, for the original sketch is in light pencil; and the thickening and delicate emphasis of the lines, on which nearly all the beauty of the drawing depended, cannot be expressed in the woodcut, though marked by a double line as well as I could. But the figure will answer its purpose well enough in showing Turner's mode of sketching.

¹ [This sketch also is in the National Gallery: No. 439. See Vol. XIII. p. 302.]

§ 9. This sketch has been made in the afternoon. He had been impressed, as he walked up the hill, by the vanishing of the lake in the golden horizon, without end of waters, and by the opposition of the pinnacled castle and cathedral to its level breadth. That must be drawn! and from this spot, where all the buildings are set well together. But it lucklessly happens that, though the buildings come just where he wants them in situation, they don't in height. For the castle (the square mass on the right) is in reality higher than the cathedral, and would block out the end of the lake. Down it goes instantly a hundred feet, that we may see the lake over it; without the smallest regard for the military position of Lausanne.

§ 10. Next: The last low spire on the left is in truth concealed behind the nearer bank, the town running far down the hill (and climbing another hill) in that direction. But the group of spires, without it, would not be rich enough to give a proper impression of Lausanne, as a spiry place. Turner quietly sends to fetch the church from round the corner, places it where he likes, and indicates its distance only by aerial perspective (much greater in the pencil drawing than in the woodcut).

§ 11. But again: Not only the spire of the lower church, but the peak of the Rochers d'Enfer (that highest in the distance) would in reality be out of sight; it is much farther round to the left. This would never do either; for without it, we should have no idea that Lausanne was opposite the mountains, nor should we have a nice sloping line to lead us into the distance.

With the same unblushing tranquillity of mind in which he had ordered up the church, Turner sends also to fetch the Rochers d'Enfer; and puts *them* also where he chooses, to crown the slope of distant hill, which, as every traveller knows, in its decline to the west, is one of the most notable features of the view from Lausanne.

§ 12. These modifications, easily traceable in the large features of the design, are carried out with equal audacity



and precision in every part of it. Every one of those confused lines on the right indicates something that is really there, only everything is shifted and sorted into the exact places that Turner chose. The group of dark objects near us at the foot of the bank is a cluster of mills, which, when the picture was completed, were to be the blackest things in it, and to throw back the castle, and the golden horizon; while the rounded touches at the bottom, under the castle, indicate a row of trees, which follow a brook coming out of the ravine behind us; and were going to be made very round indeed in the picture (to oppose the spiky and angular masses of castle), and very consecutive, in order to form another conducting line into the distance.

§ 13. These motives, or motives like them, might perhaps be guessed on looking at the sketch. But no one without going to the spot would understand the meaning of the vertical lines in the left-hand lowest corner.

They are a “memorandum” of the artificial verticalness of a low sandstone cliff, which has been cut down there to give space for a bit of garden belonging to a public-house beneath, from which garden a path leads along the ravine to the Lausanne rifle-ground. The value of these vertical lines in repeating those of the cathedral, is very great; it would be greater still in the completed picture, increasing the sense of looking down from a height, and giving grasp of, and power over, the whole scene.

§ 14. Throughout the sketch, as in all that Turner made, the observing and combining intellect acts in the same manner. Not a line is lost, nor a moment of time; and though the pencil flies, and the whole thing is literally done as fast as a piece of shorthand writing, it is to the full as purposeful and compressed, so that while there are indeed dashes of the pencil which are unintentional, they are only unintentional as the form of a letter is, in fast writing, not from want of intention, but from the accident of haste.

§ 15. I know not if the reader can understand,—I myself cannot, though I see it to be demonstrable,—the

simultaneous occurrence of idea which produces such a drawing as this: the grasp of the whole, from the laying of the first line, which induces continual modifications of all that is done, out of respect to parts not done yet. No line is ever changed or effaced: no experiment made; but every touch is placed with reference to all that are to succeed, as to all that have gone before; every addition takes its part, as the stones in an arch of a bridge; the last touch locks the arch. Remove that keystone, or remove any other of the stones of the vault, and the whole will fall.

§ 16. I repeat—the power of mind which accomplishes this, is yet wholly inexplicable to me, as it was when first I defined it in the chapter on imagination associative, in the second volume.¹ But the grandeur of the power impresses me daily more and more; and, in quitting the subject of invention, let me assert finally, in clearest and strongest terms, that no painting is of any true imaginative perfectness at all, unless it has been thus conceived.

One sign of its being thus conceived may be always found in the straightforwardness of its work. There are continual disputes among artists as to the best way of doing things, which may nearly all be resolved into confessions of indetermination. If you know precisely what you want, you will not feel much hesitation in setting about it;² and a picture may be painted almost any way, so only that it be a straight way. Give a true painter a ground of black, white, scarlet, or green, and out of it he will bring what you choose. From the black, brightness; from the white, sadness; from the scarlet, coolness; from the green, glow; he will make anything out of anything, but in each case his method will be pure, direct, perfect, the shortest and simplest possible. You will find him, moreover, indifferent as to succession of process. Ask him to begin at the bottom of the picture instead of the top,—to finish two square inches of it without touching the rest, or to lay a separate ground

¹ [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 236.]

² [Compare Mulready's saying quoted in Vol. VIII. p. 19.]

for every part before finishing any;—it is all the same to him! What he will do, if left to himself, depends on mechanical convenience, and on the time at his disposal. If he has a large brush in his hand, and plenty of one colour ground, he may lay as much as is wanted of that colour, at once, in every part of the picture where it is to occur; and if any is left, perhaps walk to another canvas, and lay the rest of it where it will be wanted on that. If, on the contrary, he has a small brush in his hand, and is interested in a particular spot of the picture, he will, perhaps, not stir from it till that bit is finished. But the absolutely best, or centrally, and entirely *right* way of painting is as follows:—

§ 17. A light ground, white, red, yellow, or gray, not brown, or black. On that an entirely accurate, and firm black outline of the whole picture, in its principal masses. The outline to be exquisitely correct as far as it reaches, but not to include small details; the use of it being to limit the masses of first colour. The ground-colours then to be laid firmly, each on its own proper part of the picture, as inlaid work in a mosaic table, meeting each other truly at the edges:¹ as much of each being laid as will get itself into the state which the artist requires it to be in for his second painting, by the time he comes to it. On this first colour, the second colours and subordinate masses laid in due order, now, of course, necessarily without previous outline, and all small detail reserved to the last, the bracelet being not touched, nor indicated in the least, till the arm is finished.*

* Thus, in the Holy Family of Titian, lately purchased for the National Gallery,² the piece of St. Catherine's dress over her shoulders is painted on the under dress, after that was dry. All its value would have been lost, had the slightest tint or trace of it been given previously. This picture, I think, and certainly many of Tintoret's, are painted on dark grounds; but this is to save time, and with some loss to the future brightness of the colour.

¹ [Compare below, pp. 415 *n.*, 416 *n.*]

² [No. 635: one of the pictures in the Beaucousin Collection bought in 1860.]

§ 18. This is, as far as it can be expressed in a few words, the right, or Venetian way of painting; but it is incapable of absolute definition, for it depends on the scale, the material, and the nature of the object represented, *how much* a great painter will do with his first colour; or how many after processes he will use. Very often the first colour, richly blended and worked into, is also the last; sometimes it wants a glaze only to modify it; sometimes an entirely different colour above it. Turner's storm-blues, for instance, were produced by a black ground with opaque blue, mixed with white, struck over it.* The amount of detail given in the first colour will also depend on convenience. For instance, if a jewel *fastens* a fold of dress, a Venetian will lay probably a piece of the jewel colour in its place at the time he draws the fold; but if the jewel *falls upon* the dress, he will paint the folds only in the ground colour, and the jewel afterwards. For in the first case his hand must pause, at any rate, where the fold is fastened; so that he may as well mark the colour of the gem: but he would have to check his hand in the sweep with which he drew the drapery, if he painted a jewel that fell upon it with the first colour. So far, however, as he can possibly use the under colour, he will, in whatever he has to superimpose. There is a pretty little instance of such economical work in the painting of the pearls on the breast of the elder princess, in our best Paul Veronese (Family of Darius).¹ The lowest is about the size of a small hazel-nut, and falls on her rose-red dress. Any other but

* In cleaning the "Hero and Leander," now in the National collection, these upper glazes were taken off, and only the black ground left. I remember the picture when its distance was of the most exquisite blue. I have no doubt the "Fire at Sea" has had its distance destroyed in the same manner.²

¹ [No. 294. For other references to the picture, see Vol. XIII. p. 244 *n*. See also *Lectures on Landscape*, § 68, where Ruskin again noticed the picture as an example of "exquisite inlaying."]

² [The "Hero and Leander" is No. 521 (now removed to Glasgow); for other references to it, see Vol. I. p. 242 *n*. The "Fire at Sea" is No. 558.]

a Venetian would have put a complete piece of white paint over the dress, for the whole pearl, and painted into that the colours of the stone. But Veronese knows before-hand that all the dark side of the pearl will reflect the red of the dress. He will not put white over the red, only to put red over the white again. He leaves the actual dress for the dark side of the pearl, and with two small separate touches, one white, another brown, places its high light and shadow. This he does with perfect care and calm; but in two decisive seconds. There is no dash, nor display, nor hurry, nor error. The exactly right thing is done in the exactly right place, and not one atom of colour, nor moment of time spent vainly. Look close at the two touches,—you wonder what they mean. Retire six feet from the picture—the pearl is there!

§ 19. The degree in which the ground colours are extended over his picture, as he works, is to a great painter absolutely indifferent. It is all the same to him whether he grounds a head, and finishes it at once to the shoulders, leaving all round it white; or whether he grounds the whole picture. His harmony, paint as he will, never can be complete till the last touch is given; so long as it remains incomplete, he does not care how little of it is suggested, or how many notes are missing. All is wrong, till all is right; and he must be able to bear the all wrongness till his work is done, or he cannot paint at all. His mode of treatment will, therefore, depend on the nature of his subject, as is beautifully shown in the water-colour sketches by Turner in the National Gallery. His general system was to complete inch by inch; leaving the paper quite white all round, especially if the work was to be delicate. The most exquisite drawings left unfinished in the collection—those at Rome and Naples—are thus outlined accurately on pure white paper, begun in the middle of the sheet, and worked out to the side, finishing as he proceeds.¹ If, however,

¹ [Examples may be seen among the group numbered 326–337.]

any united effect of light or colour is to embrace a large part of the subject, he will lay it in with a broad wash over the whole paper at once; then paint into it, using it as a ground, and modifying it in the pure Venetian manner. His oil pictures were laid roughly with ground colours, and painted into with such rapid skill, that the artists who used to see him finishing at the Academy sometimes suspected him of having the picture finished underneath the colours he showed, and removing, instead of adding, as they watched.¹

§ 20. But, whatever the means used may be, the certainty and directness of them imply absolute grasp of the whole subject, and without this grasp there is no good painting. This, finally, let me declare, without qualification—that partial conception is no conception. The whole picture must be imagined, or none of it is. And this grasp of the whole implies very strange and sublime qualities of mind. It is not possible, unless the feelings are completely under control; the least excitement or passion will disturb the measured equity of power; a painter needs to be as cool as a general; and as little moved or subdued by his sense of pleasure, as a soldier by the sense of pain. Nothing good can be done without intense feeling; but it must be feeling so crushed, that the work is set about with mechanical steadiness, absolutely untroubled, as a surgeon—not without pity, but conquering it and putting it aside—begins an operation. Until the feelings can give strength enough to the will to enable it to conquer them, they are not strong enough. If you cannot leave your picture at any moment;—cannot turn from it, and go on with another, while the colour is drying;—cannot work at any part of it you choose with equal contentment—you have not firm enough grasp of it.

§ 21. It follows, also, that no vain or selfish person can possibly paint, in the noble sense of the word. Vanity and selfishness are troublous, eager, anxious, petulant:—painting

¹ [For recollections of Turner on varnishing days at the Academy, see R. C. Leslie in *Dilecta*, §§ 2, 4, 6.]

can only be done in calm of mind. Resolution is not enough to secure this; it must be secured by disposition as well. You may resolve to think of your picture only; but, if you have been fretted before beginning, no manly or clear grasp of it will be possible for you. No forced calm is calm enough. Only honest calm,—natural calm. You might as well try by external pressure to smooth a lake till it could reflect the sky, as by violence of effort to secure the peace through which only you can reach imagination. That peace must come in its own time; as the waters settle themselves into clearness as well as quietness; you can no more filter your mind into purity than you can compress it into calmness; you must keep it pure, if you would have it pure; and throw no stones into it, if you would have it quiet. Great courage and self-command may, to a certain extent, give power of painting without the true calmness underneath; but never of doing first-rate work. There is sufficient evidence of this, in even what we know of great men, though of the greatest, we nearly always know the least (and that necessarily; they being very silent, and not much given to setting themselves forth to questioners; apt to be contemptuously reserved, no less than unselfishly¹). But in such writings and sayings as we possess of theirs, we may trace a quite curious gentleness and serene courtesy. Rubens' letters are almost ludicrous in their unhurried politeness. Reynolds, swiftest of painters, was gentlest of companions; so also Velasquez, Titian, and Veronese.²

§ 22. It is gratuitous to add that no shallow or petty person can paint. Mere cleverness or special gift never made an artist. It is only perfectness of mind, unity, depth, decision,—the highest qualities, in fine, of the intellect, which will form the imagination.

§ 23. And, lastly, no false person can paint. A person false at heart may, when it suits his purposes, seize a stray

¹ [For notices of Turner in this respect, "silent as a granite crest," see Vol. VI. p. 275, and Vol. XIII. p. 109.]

² [Compare the biographical notes given in *Two Paths*, § 64 (Vol. XVI. p. 308).]

truth here or there; but the relations of truth,—its perfectness,—that which makes it wholesome truth, he can never perceive. As wholeness and wholesomeness go together, so also sight with sincerity; it is only the constant desire of and submissiveness to truth, which can measure its strange angles and mark its infinite aspects; and fit them and knit them into the strength of sacred invention.

Sacred, I call it deliberately; for it is thus, in the most accurate senses, humble as well as helpful; meek in its receiving, as magnificent in its disposing; the name it bears being rightly given even to invention formal, not because it forms, but because it finds. For you cannot find a lie; you must make it for yourself. False things may be imagined, and false things composed; but only truth can be invented.¹

¹ [So also of the imagination, “the base of whose authority and being is its perpetual thirst for truth”: see Vol. IV. pp. 284–285.]

PART IX
OF IDEAS OF RELATION:—SECOND,
OF INVENTION SPIRITUAL

CHAPTER I

THE DARK MIRROR

§ 1. IN the course of our inquiry into the moral of landscape (Vol. III., Chap. XVII.),¹ we promised at the close of our work to seek for some better, or at least clearer, conclusions than were then possible to us. We confined ourselves in that chapter to the vindication of the probable utility of the *love* of natural scenery. We made no assertion of the usefulness of *painting* such scenery. It might be well to delight in the real country, or admire the real flowers and true mountains. But it did not follow that it was advisable to paint them.

Far from it. Many reasons might be given why we should not paint them. All the purposes of good which we saw that the beauty of Nature could accomplish, may be better fulfilled by the meanest of her realities, than by the brightest of imitations. For prolonged entertainment, no picture can be compared with the wealth of interest which may be found in the herbage of the poorest field, or blossoms of the narrowest copse. As suggestive of supernatural power, the passing away of a fitful raincloud, or opening of dawn, are in their change and mystery more pregnant than any pictures. A child would, I suppose, receive a religious lesson from a flower more willingly than from a print of one; and might be taught to understand the nineteenth Psalm,² on a starry night, better than by diagrams of the constellations.

¹ [See in this edition, Vol. V. p. 384.]

² [See the commentary on this Psalm already given; above, Part vii. ch. iv. pp. 195 *seq.*]

Whence it might seem a waste of time to draw landscape at all.

I believe it is;—to draw landscape mere and solitary, however beautiful (unless it be for the sake of geographical or other science, or of historical record). But there *is* a kind of landscape which it is not inexpedient to draw. What kind, we may probably discover by considering that which mankind has hitherto contented itself with painting.

§ 2. We may arrange nearly all existing landscape under the following heads:—

I. HEROIC.—Representing an imaginary world, inhabited by men not perhaps perfectly civilized, but noble, and usually subjected to severe trials, and by spiritual powers of the highest order. It is frequently without architecture; never without figure-action, or emotion. Its principal master is Titian.

II. CLASSICAL.—Representing an imaginary world, inhabited by perfectly civilized men, and by spiritual powers of an inferior order.

It generally assumes this condition of things to have existed among the Greek and Roman nations. It contains usually architecture of an elevated character, and always incidents of figure-action, or emotion. Its principal master is Nicolo Poussin.

III. PASTORAL.—Representing peasant life and its daily work, or such scenery as may naturally be suggestive of it, consisting usually of simple landscape, in part subjected to agriculture, with figures, cattle, and domestic buildings. No supernatural being is ever visibly present. It does not in ordinary cases admit architecture of an elevated character nor exciting incident. Its principal master is Cuyp.

IV. CONTEMPLATIVE.—Directed principally to the observance of the powers of Nature, and record of the historical associations connected with landscape, illustrated by, or contrasted with, existing states of human life. No supernatural being is visibly present. It admits every variety of

subject, and requires, in general, figure incident, but not of an exciting character. It was not developed completely until recent times. Its principal master is Turner.*

§ 3. These are the four true orders of landscape, not of course distinctly separated from each other in all cases, but very distinctly in typical examples. Two spurious forms require separate note.

(A) PICTURESQUE.—This is indeed rather the degradation (or sometimes the undeveloped state) of the contemplative, than a distinct class; but it may be considered generally as including pictures meant to display the skill of the artist, and his powers of composition; or to give agreeable forms and colours, irrespective of sentiment. It will include much modern art, with the street views and church interiors of the Dutch, and the works of Canaletto, Guardi, Tempesta, and the like.

(B) HYBRID.—Landscape in which the painter endeavours to unite the irreconcilable sentiment of two or more of the above-named classes. Its principal masters are Berghem and Wouvermans.

§ 4. Passing for the present by these inferior schools, we find that all true landscape, whether simple or exalted, depends primarily for its interest on connection with humanity, or with spiritual powers. Banish your heroes and nymphs from the classical landscape—its laurel shades will move you no more. Show that the dark clefts of the most romantic mountain are uninhabited and untraversed; it will cease to be romantic. Fields without shepherds and without fairies will have no gaiety in their green, nor will the noblest masses of ground or colours of cloud arrest or raise

* I have been embarrassed in assigning the names to these orders of art, the term "Contemplative" belonging in justice nearly as much to the romantic and pastoral conception as to the modern landscape. I intended, originally, to call the four schools—Romantic, Classic, Georgic, and Theoretic—which would have been more accurate; and more consistent with the nomenclature of the second volume; but would not have been pleasant in sound, nor, to the general reader, very clear in sense.

your thoughts, if the earth has no life to sustain, and the heaven none to refresh.¹

§ 5. It might perhaps be thought that, since from scenes in which the figure was principal, and landscape symbolical and subordinate (as in the art of Egypt), the process of ages had led us to scenes in which landscape was principal and the figure subordinate,—a continuance in the same current of feeling might bring forth at last an art from which humanity and its interests should wholly vanish, leaving us to the passionless admiration of herbage and stone. But this will not, and cannot be.² For observe the parallel instance in the gradually increasing importance of dress. From the simplicity of Greek design, concentrating, I suppose, its skill chiefly on the naked form, the course of time developed conditions of Venetian imagination which found nearly as much interest, and expressed nearly as much dignity, in folds of dress and fancies of decoration as in the faces of the figures themselves: so that if from Veronese's *Marriage in Cana*³ we remove the architecture and the gay dresses, we shall not in the faces and hands remaining, find a satisfactory abstract of the picture. But try it the other way. Take out the faces; leave the draperies, and how then? Put the fine dresses and jewelled girdles into the best group you can; paint them with all Veronese's skill: will they satisfy you?

§ 6. Not so. As long as they are in their due service and subjection—while their folds are formed by the motion of men, and their lustre adorns the nobleness of men—so long the lustre and the folds are lovely. But cast them from the human limbs;—golden circlet and silken tissue are withered; the dead leaves of autumn are more precious than they.

This is just as true, but in a far deeper sense, of the

¹ [Compare the passage at the beginning of ch. vi. of *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 223).]

² [In his copy Ruskin here wrote in the margin: "It has been in photography and such art—no otherwise."]

³ [For this picture, see Vol. VI. p. 86; Vol. XI. p. 359; Vol. XII. pp. 451, 503.]

weaving of the natural robe of man's soul. Fragrant tissue of flowers, golden circlets of clouds, are only fair when they meet the fondness of human thoughts, and glorify human visions of heaven.

§ 7. It is the leaning on this truth which, more than any other, has been the distinctive character of all my own past work. And in closing a series of Art-studies, prolonged during so many years, it may be perhaps permitted me to point out this specialty—the rather that it has been, of all their characters, the one most denied. I constantly see that the same thing takes place in the estimation formed by the modern public of the work of almost any true person, living or dead. It is not needful to state here the causes of such error; but the fact is indeed so, that precisely the distinctive root and leading force of any true man's work and way are the things denied concerning him.¹

And in these books of mine, their distinctive character, as essays on art, is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Arising first not in any desire to explain the principles of art, but in the endeavour to defend an individual painter from injustice, they have been coloured throughout,—nay, continually altered in shape, and even warped and broken, by digressions respecting social questions, which had for me an interest tenfold greater than the work I had been forced into undertaking. Every principle of painting which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact; and in my works on architecture the preference accorded finally to one school over another, is founded on a comparison of their influences on the life of the workman—a question by all other writers on the subject of architecture wholly forgotten or despised.

¹ [The MS. here continues:—

“Thus in Turner, the distinctive mark which separated him from all other painters of his time, so far as method went, was his perpetual use to the end of his life of the Pencil point instead of the brush in drawing from nature, and his consequent power of Drawing more subtly than any contemporary painter. It was precisely *this* which the public mainly denied concerning him. He might do everything else well—but he could not Draw!”

For this point, see Vol. XIII. pp. 242 *seq.*]

§ 8. The essential connection of the power of landscape with human emotion is not less certain, because in many impressive pictures the link is slight or local. That the connection should exist at a single point is all that we need. The comparison with the dress of the body may be carried out into the extremest parallelism. It may often happen that no part of the figure wearing the dress is discernible, nevertheless, the perceivable fact that the drapery is worn by a figure makes all the difference. In one of the most sublime figures in the world this is actually so: one of the fainting Maries in Tintoret's Crucifixion¹ has cast her mantle over her head, and her face is lost in its shade, and her whole figure veiled in folds of gray. But what the difference is between that gray woof, that gathers round her as she falls, and the same folds cast in a heap upon the ground, that difference, and more, exists between the power of Nature through which humanity is seen, and her power in the desert. Desert—whether of leaf or sand—true desertness is not in the want of leaves, but of life. Where humanity is not, and was not, the best natural beauty is more than vain. It is even terrible; not as the dress cast aside from the body; but as an embroidered shroud hiding a skeleton.

§ 9. And on each side of a right feeling in this matter there lie, as usual, two opposite errors.

The first, that of caring for man only; and for the rest of the universe, little, or not at all, which, in a measure, was the error of the Greeks and Florentines; the other, that of caring for the universe only;—for man, not at all—which, in a measure, is the error of modern science, and of the Art connecting itself with such science.

The degree of power which any man may ultimately possess in landscape-painting will depend finally on his perception of this influence. If he has to paint the desert, its awfulness—if the garden, its gladsomeness—will arise

¹ [For other references to this picture, see below, p. 289; and Vol. IV. p. 270.]

simply and only from his sensibility to the story of life. Without this he is nothing but a scientific mechanist; this, though it cannot make him yet a painter, raises him to the sphere in which he may become one. Nay, the mere shadow and semblance of this have given dangerous power to works in all other respects unnoticeable; and the least degree of its true presence has given value to work in all other respects vain.

The true presence, observe, of sympathy with the spirit of man. Where this is not, sympathy with any higher spirit is impossible.

For the directest manifestation of Deity to man is in His own image, that is, in man.

§ 10. "In His own image. After His likeness." *Ad imaginem et Similitudinem Suam*.¹ I do not know what people in general understand by those words. I suppose they ought to be understood. The truth they contain seems to lie at the foundation of our knowledge both of God and man; yet do we not usually pass the sentence by, in dull reverence, attaching no definite sense to it at all? For all practical purpose, might it not as well be out of the text?

I have no time, nor much desire, to examine the vague expressions of belief with which the verse has been encumbered. Let us try to find its only possible plain significance.

§ 11. It cannot be supposed that the bodily shape of man resembles, or resembled, any bodily shape in Deity. The likeness must therefore be, or have been, in the soul. Had it wholly passed away, and the divine soul been altered into a soul brutal or diabolic, I suppose we should have been told of the change. But we are told nothing of the kind. The verse still stands as if for our use and trust. It was only death which was to be our punishment. Not *change*. So far as we live, the image is still there;

¹ [Genesis i. 26: the Vulgate.]

defiled, if you will; broken, if you will; all but effaced, if you will, by death and the shadow of it. But not changed. We are not made now in any other image than God's. There are, indeed, the two states of this image—the earthly and heavenly, but both Adamite, both human, both the same likeness; only one defiled, and one pure. So that the soul of man is still a mirror, wherein may be seen, darkly, the image of the mind of God.¹

These may seem daring words. I am sorry that they do; but I am helpless to soften them. Discover any other meaning of the text if you are able;—but be sure that it *is* a meaning—a meaning in your head and heart;—not a subtle gloss, nor a shifting of one verbal expression into another, both idealess. I repeat that, to me, the verse has, and can have, no other signification than this—that the soul of man is a mirror of the mind of God. A mirror, dark, distorted, broken, use what blameful words you please of its state; yet in the main, a true mirror, out of which alone, and by which alone, we can know anything of God at all.

“How?” the reader, perhaps, answers indignantly. “I know the nature of God by revelation, not by looking into myself.”

Revelation to what? To a nature incapable of receiving truth? That cannot be; for only to a nature capable of truth, desirous of it, distinguishing it, feeding upon it, revelation is possible. To a being undesirous of it, and hating it, revelation is impossible. There can be none to a brute, or fiend. In so far, therefore, as you love truth, and live therein, in so far revelation can exist for you;—and in so far, your mind is the image of God's.

§ 12. But consider, farther, not only *to* what, but *by* what, is the revelation. By sight? or word? If by sight, then to eyes which see justly. Otherwise, no sight would be revelation. So far, then, as your sight is just, it is the image of God's sight.

¹ [See 1 Corinthians xiii. 12.]

If by words,—how do you know their meanings? Here is a short piece of precious word revelation, for instance. “God is love.”¹

Love! yes. But what is *that*? The revelation does not tell you that, I think. Look into the mirror, and you will see. Out of your own heart, you may know what love is. In no other possible way,—by no other help or sign. All the words and sounds ever uttered, all the revelations of cloud, or flame, or crystal, are utterly powerless. They cannot tell you, in the smallest point, what love means. Only the broken mirror can.

§ 13. Here is more revelation. “God is just!”² Just! What is that? The revelation cannot help you to discover. You say it is dealing equitably or equally. But how do you discern the equality? Not by inequality of mind; not by a mind incapable of weighing, judging, or distributing. If the lengths seem unequal in the broken mirror, for you they are unequal; but if they seem equal, then the mirror is true. So far as you recognize equality, and your conscience tells you what is just, so far your mind is the image of God’s; and so far as you do *not* discern this nature of justice or equality, the words “God is just” bring no revelation to you.

§ 14. “But His thoughts are not as our thoughts.”³ No; the sea is not as the standing pool by the wayside. Yet when the breeze crisps the pool, you may see the image of the breakers, and a likeness of the foam. Nay, in some sort, the same foam. If the sea is for ever invisible to you, something you may learn of it from the pool. Nothing, assuredly, any otherwise.

“But this poor miserable Me! Is *this*, then, all the book I have got to read about God in?” Yes, truly so. No other book, nor fragment of book, than that, will you ever find; no velvet-bound missal, nor frankincensed

¹ [1 John iv. 16.]

² [See Deuteronomy xxxii. 4.]

³ [Isaiah lv. 8.]

manuscript;—nothing hieroglyphic nor cuneiform; papyrus and pyramid are alike silent on this matter;—nothing in the clouds above, nor in the earth beneath.¹ That flesh-bound volume is the only revelation that is, that was, or that can be. In that is the image of God painted; in that is the law of God written; in that is the promise of God revealed. Know thyself; for through thyself only thou canst know God.

§ 15. Through the glass, darkly.² But, except through the glass, in nowise.

A tremulous crystal, waved as water, poured out upon the ground;—you may defile it, despise it, pollute it, at your pleasure and at your peril; for on the peace of those weak waves must all the heaven you shall ever gain be first seen; and through such purity as you can win for those dark waves, must all the light of the risen Sun of Righteousness be bent down, by faint refraction. Cleanse them, and calm them, as you love your life.

Therefore it is that all the power of nature depends on subjection to the human soul.³ Man is the sun of the world; more than the real sun. The fire of his wonderful heart is the only light and heat worth gauge or measure. Where he is, are the tropics; where he is not, the ice-world.

¹ [See Exodus xx. 4.]

² [1 Corinthians xiii. 12.]

³ [With the conclusion reached in this chapter, compare *Lectures on Landscape*, § 1, and *Laws of Féssole*, ch. viii. § 16 (Vol. XV. p. 438).]

CHAPTER II

THE LANCE OF PALLAS

§ 1. It might be thought that the tenor of the preceding chapter was in some sort adverse to my repeated statement¹ that all great art is the expression of man's delight in God's work, not in *his own*. But observe, he is not himself his own work: he is himself precisely the most wonderful piece of God's workmanship extant. In this best piece not only he is bound to take delight, but cannot, in a right state of thought, take delight in anything else, otherwise than through himself. Through himself, however, as the sun of creation, not as *the* creation. In himself, as the light of the world.* Not as being the world. Let him stand in his due relation to other creatures, and to inanimate things—know them all and love them, as made for him, and he for them;—and he becomes himself the greatest and holiest of them. But let him cast off this relation, despise and forget the less creation round him, and instead of being the light of the world, he is a sun in space—a fiery ball, spotted with storm.

§ 2. All the diseases of mind leading to fatalest ruin consist primarily in this isolation. They are the concentration of man upon himself, whether his heavenly interests or his worldly interests, matters not; it is the being *his own* interests which makes the regard of them so mortal. Every form of asceticism on one side, of sensualism on the other, is an isolation of his soul or of his body; the fixing his

* Matt. v. 14.

¹ [See, for instance, *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 70); *Harbours of England*, § 19 (Vol. XIII. p. 29); *Two Paths*, § 48 (Vol. XVI. p. 290).]

thoughts upon them alone; while every healthy state of nations and of individual minds consists in the unselfish presence of the human spirit everywhere, energizing over all things; speaking and living through all things.

§ 3. Man being thus the crowning and ruling work of God, it will follow that all his best art must have something to tell about himself, as the soul of things, and ruler of creatures. It must also make this reference to himself under a true conception of his own nature. Therefore all art which involves no reference to man is inferior or nugatory. And all art which involves misconception of man, or base thought of him, is in that degree false and base.

Now the basest thought possible concerning him is, that he has no spiritual nature; and the foolishlest misunderstanding of him possible is, that he has or should have, no animal nature. For his nature is nobly animal, nobly spiritual—coherently and irrevocably so; neither part of it may, but at its peril, expel, despise, or defy the other. All great art confesses and worships both.

§ 4. The art which, since the writings of Rio and Lord Lindsay,¹ is specially known as “Christian,” erred by pride in its denial of the animal nature of man;—and, in connection with all monkish and fanatical forms of religion, by looking always to another world instead of this. It wasted its strength in visions, and was therefore swept away, notwithstanding all its good and glory, by the strong truth of the naturalist art of the sixteenth century. But that naturalist art erred on the other side; denied at last the spiritual nature of man, and perished in corruption.

A contemplative reaction is taking place in modern times, out of which it may be hoped a new spiritual art may be developed. The first school of landscape, named, in the foregoing chapter, the Heroic, is that of the noble naturalists. The second (Classical), and third (Pastoral), belong to the time of sensual decline. The fourth (Contemplative) is that of modern revival.

¹ [For Rio's book, see Vol. IV. p. xxiii.; and for Lord Lindsay's, Vol. XII. p. xxxix.]

§ 5. But why, the reader will ask, is no place given in this scheme to the “Christian” or spiritual art which preceded the naturalists? Because all landscape belonging to that art is subordinate, and in one essential principle false. It is subordinate, because intended only to exalt the conception of saintly or Divine presence:—rather therefore to be considered as a landscape decoration or type, than an effort to paint nature. If I included it in my list of schools, I should have to go still farther back, and include with it the conventional and illustrative landscape of the Greeks and Egyptians.

§ 6. But also it cannot constitute a real school, because its first assumption is false, namely, that the natural world can be represented without the element of death.

The real schools of landscape are primarily distinguished from the preceding unreal ones by their introduction of this element. They are not at first in any sort the worthier for it. But they are more true, and capable, therefore, in the issue, of becoming worthier.

It will be a hard piece of work for us to think this rightly out, but it must be done.

§ 7. Perhaps an accurate analysis of the schools of art of all time might show us that when the immortality of the soul was practically and completely believed, the elements of decay, danger, and grief in visible things were always disregarded. However this may be, it is assuredly so in the early Christian schools. The ideas of danger or decay seem not merely repugnant, but inconceivable to them; the expression of immortality and perpetuity is alone possible. I do not mean that they take no note of the absolute fact of corruption. This fact the early painters often compel themselves to look fuller in the front than any other men: as in the way they usually paint the Deluge (the raven feeding on the bodies), and in all the various triumphs and processions of the power of Death, which formed one great chapter of religious teaching and painting, from Orcagna's¹

¹ [For Orcagna's “Triumph of Death,” see Vol. XII. p. 224.]

time to the close of the Purist epoch. But I mean that this external fact of corruption is separated in their minds from the main conditions of their work; and its horror enters no more into their general treatment of landscape than the fear of murder or martyrdom, both of which they had nevertheless continually to represent. None of these things appeared to them as affecting the general dealings of the Deity with His world. Death, pain, and decay were simply momentary accidents in the course of immortality, which never ought to exercise any depressing influence over the hearts of men, or in the life of Nature. God, in intense life, peace, and helping power, was always and everywhere. Human bodies, at one time or another, had indeed to be made dust of, and raised from it; and this becoming dust was hurtful and humiliating, but not in the least melancholy, nor, in any very high degree, important; except to thoughtless persons who needed sometimes to be reminded of it, and whom, not at all fearing the things much himself, the painter accordingly did remind of it, somewhat sharply.

§ 8. A similar condition of mind seems to have been attained, not unfrequently, in modern times, by persons whom either narrowness of circumstance or education, or vigorous moral efforts, have guarded from the troubling of the world, so as to give them firm and childlike trust in the power and presence of God, together with peace of conscience, and a belief in the passing of all evil into some form of good. It is impossible that a person thus disciplined should feel, in any of its more acute phases, the sorrow for any of the phenomena of nature, or terror in any material danger which would occur to another. The absence of personal fear, the consciousness of security as great in the midst of pestilence and storm, as amidst beds of flowers on a summer's morning, and the certainty that whatever appeared evil, or was assuredly painful, must eventually issue in a far greater and enduring good—this general feeling and conviction, I say, would gradually lull, and at last put to

entire rest, the physical sensations of grief and fear; so that the man would look upon danger without dread,—expect pain without lamentation.

§ 9. It may perhaps be thought that this is a very high and right state of mind.

Unfortunately, it appears that the attainment of it is never possible without inducing some form of intellectual weakness.

No painter belonging to the purist¹ religious schools ever mastered his art. Perugino nearly did so; but it was because he was more rational—more a man of the world—than the rest. No literature exists of a high class produced by minds in the pure religious temper. On the contrary, a great deal of literature exists, produced by persons in that temper, which is markedly, and very far, below average literary work.

§ 10. The reason of this I believe to be, that the right faith of man is not intended to give him repose, but to enable him to do his work. It is not intended that he should look away from the place he lives in now, and cheer himself with thoughts of the place he is to live in next, but that he should look stoutly into this world, in faith that if he does his work thoroughly here, some good to others or himself, with which however he is not at present concerned, will come of it hereafter. And this kind of brave, but not very hopeful or cheerful faith, I perceive to be always rewarded by clear practical success and splendid intellectual power; while the faith which dwells on the future fades away into rosy mist, and emptiness of musical air. That result indeed follows naturally enough on its habit of assuming that things must be right, or must come right, when, probably, the fact is, that so far as we are concerned, they are entirely wrong; and going wrong: and also on its weak and false way of looking on what these religious persons call “the bright side of things,” that is to say, on

¹ [“Purest” in all previous editions; but the MS. has “purist,” which is doubtless the word Ruskin intended: see the “Purist Ideal” in *Modern Painters*, vol. iii.]

one side of them only, when God has given them two sides, and intended us to see both.

§ 11. I was reading but the other day, in a book by a zealous, useful, and able Scotch clergyman, one of these rhapsodies, in which he described a scene in the Highlands to show (he said) the goodness of God. In this Highland scene there was nothing but sunshine, and fresh breezes, and bleating lambs, and clean tartans, and all manner of pleasantness. Now a Highland scene is, beyond dispute, pleasant enough in its own way; but, looked close at, has its shadows.¹ Here, for instance, is the very fact of one, as pretty as I can remember—having seen many. It is a little valley of soft turf, enclosed in its narrow oval by jutting rocks and broad flakes of nodding fern. From one side of it to the other winds, serpentine, a clear brown stream, drooping into quicker ripple as it reaches the end of the oval field, and then, first islanding a purple and white rock with an amber pool, it dashes away into a narrow fall of foam under a thicket of mountain-ash and alder. The autumn sun, low but clear, shines on the scarlet ash-berries and on the golden birch-leaves, which, fallen here and there, when the breeze has not caught them, rest quiet in the crannies of the purple rock. Beside the rock, in the hollow under the thicket, the carcass of a ewe, drowned in the last flood, lies nearly bare to the bone, its white ribs protruding through the skin, raven-torn; and the rags of its wool still flickering from the branches that first stayed it as the stream swept it down. A little lower, the current plunges, roaring, into a circular chasm like a well, surrounded on three sides by a chimney-like hollowness of polished rock, down which the foam slips in detached

¹ [The passage “A Highland scene” down to “so sharp as they” is § 87 in *Fronde Agrestes*, where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote:—

“Passage written to be opposed to an exuberant description, by an amiable Scottish pastor, of everything flattering to Scotchmen in the Highlands. I have put next to it, a little study of the sadness of Italy.”

The “study of the sadness of Italy” (§ 88 in *Fronde*) is the description of the Campagna under evening light from the first volume of *Modern Painters*, preface to second edition, § 37 (Vol. III. p. 42).]

snow-flakes. Round the edges of the pool beneath, the water circles slowly, like black oil; a little butterfly lies on its back, its wings glued to one of the eddies, its limbs feebly quivering; a fish rises, and it is gone. Lower down the stream, I can just see over a knoll, the green and damp turf roofs of four or five hovels, built at the edge of a morass, which is trodden by the cattle into a black Slough of Despond at their doors, and traversed by a few ill-set stepping-stones, with here and there a flat slab on the tops, where they have sunk out of sight, and at the turn of the brook I see a man fishing, with a boy and a dog—a picturesque and pretty group enough certainly, if they had not been there all day starving. I know them, and I know the dog's ribs also, which are nearly as bare as the dead ewe's; and the child's wasted shoulders, cutting his old tartan jacket through, so sharp are they. We will go down and talk with the man.

§ 12. Or, that I may not piece pure truth with fancy, for I have none of his words set down, let us hear a word or two from another such, a Scotchman also, and as true-hearted, and in just as fair a scene. I write out the passage, in which I have kept his few sentences, word for word, as it stands in my private diary:—"22nd April (1851). Yesterday I had a long walk up the Via Gellia, at Matlock, coming down upon it from the hills above, all sown with anemones and violets, and murmuring with sweet springs. Above all the mills in the valley, the brook, in its first purity, forms a small shallow pool, with a sandy bottom covered with cresses and other water plants. A man was wading in it for cresses as I passed up the valley, and bade me good-day. I did not go much farther; he was there when I returned. I passed him again, about one hundred yards, when it struck me I might as well learn all I could about watercresses: so I turned back. I asked the man, among other questions, what he called the common weed, something like watercress, but with a serrated leaf, which grows at the edge of nearly all such pools. 'We calls that

brooklime, hereabouts,' said a voice behind me. I turned, and saw three men, miners or manufacturers—two evidently Derbyshire men, and respectable-looking in their way; the third, thin, poor, old, and harder-featured, and utterly in rags. 'Brooklime?' I said. 'What do you call it lime for?' The man said he did not know; it was called that. 'You'll find that in the British 'Erba,' said the weak, calm voice of the old man. I turned to him in much surprise; but he went on saying something drily (I hardly understood what) to the cress-gatherer; who contradicting him, the old man said he 'didn't know fresh water,' he 'knew enough of sa't.' 'Have you been a sailor?' I asked. 'I was a sailor for eleven years and ten months of my life,' he said, in the same strangely quiet manner. 'And what are you now?' 'I lived for ten years after my wife's death by picking up rags and bones; I hadn't much occasion afore.' 'And now how do you live?' 'Why, I lives hard and honest, and haven't got to live long,' or something to that effect. He then went on, in a kind of maundering way, about his wife. 'She had rheumatism and fever very bad; and her second rib growed over her hench-bone. A' was a clever woman, but a' grow'd to be a very little one' (this, with an expression of deep melancholy). 'Eighteen years after her first lad she was in the family-way again, and they had doctors up from Lunnon about it. They wanted to rip her open, and take the child out of her side. But I never would give my consent.' (Then, after a pause:) 'She died twenty-six hours and ten minutes after it. I never cared much what come of me since; but I know that I shall soon reach her; that's a knowledge I would na gie for the king's crown.' 'You are a Scotchman, are not you?' I asked. 'I'm from the Isle of Skye, sir; I'm a McGregor.' I said something about his religious faith. 'Ye'll know I was bred in the Church of Scotland, sir,' he said, 'and I love it as I love my own soul: but I think thae Wesleyan Methodists ha' got salvation among them too.' "

Truly, this Highland and English hill-scenery is fair

enough; but has its shadows; and deeper colouring, here and there, than that of heath and rose.

§ 13. Now, as far as I have watched the main powers of human mind, they have risen first from the resolution to see fearlessly, pitifully, and to its very worst, what these deep colours mean, wheresoever they fall; not by any means to pass on the other side, looking pleasantly up to the sky, but to stoop to the horror, and let the sky, for the present, take care of its own clouds. However this may be in moral matters, with which I have nothing here to do, in my own field of inquiry the fact is so; and all great and beautiful work has come of first gazing without shrinking into the darkness. If, having done so, the human spirit can, by its courage and faith, conquer the evil, it rises into conceptions of victorious and consummated beauty. It is then the spirit of the highest Greek and Venetian Art. If unable to conquer the evil, but remaining in strong though melancholy war with it, not rising into supreme beauty, it is the spirit of the best northern art, typically represented by that of Holbein and Dürer. If, itself conquered by the evil, infected by the dragon breath of it, and at last brought into captivity, so as to take delight in evil for ever, it becomes the spirit of the dark, but still powerful sensualistic art, represented typically by that of Salvator. We must trace this fact briefly through Greek, Venetian, and Düreresque art; we shall then see how the art of decline came of avoiding the evil, and seeking pleasure only; and thus obtain, at last, some power of judging whether the tendency of our own contemplative art be right or ignoble.

§ 14. The ruling purpose of Greek poetry is the assertion of victory, by heroism, over fate, sin, and death. The terror of these great enemies is dwelt upon chiefly by the tragedians. The victory over them, by Homer.

The adversary chiefly contemplated by the tragedians is Fate, or predestinate misfortune. And that under three principal forms.

(A) Blindness or ignorance; not in itself guilty, but

inducing acts which otherwise would have been guilty; and leading, no less than guilt, to destruction.*

(B) Visitation upon one person of the sin of another.

(C) Repression by brutal, or tyrannous strength, of a benevolent will.

§ 15. In all these cases sorrow is much more definitely connected with sin by the Greek tragedians than by Shakspeare. The "fate" of Shakspeare is, indeed, a form of blindness, but it issues in little more than haste or indiscretion. It is, in the literal sense, "fatal," but hardly criminal.

The "I am fortune's fool" of Romeo,¹ expresses Shakspeare's primary idea of tragic circumstance. Often his victims are entirely innocent, swept away by mere current of strong encompassing calamity (Ophelia, Cordelia, Arthur, Queen Katherine). This is rarely so with the Greeks. The victim may indeed be innocent, as Antigone, but is in some way resolutely entangled with crime, and destroyed by it, as if it struck by pollution, no less than participation.

The victory over sin and death is therefore also with the Greek tragedians more complete than with Shakspeare. As the enemy has more direct moral personality,—as it is sinfulness more than mischance, it is met by a higher moral resolve, a greater preparation of heart, a more solemn patience and purposed self-sacrifice. At the close of a Shakspeare tragedy, nothing remains but dead march and clothes of burial. At the close of a Greek tragedy there

* The speech of Achilles to Priam expresses this idea of fatality and submission clearly, there being two vessels—one full of sorrow, the other of great and noble gifts (a sense of disgrace mixing with that of sorrow, and of honour with that of joy), from which Jupiter pours forth the destinies of men;² the idea partly corresponding to the scriptural—"In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and He poureth out of the same." But the title of the gods, nevertheless, both with Homer and Hesiod, is given not from the cup of sorrow, but of good: "givers of good" (dwthreV eawn).—*Hes. Theog.* 664; *Odyss.* viii. 325.

¹ [*Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 1.]

² [*Iliad*, xxiv. 527 *seq.*; *Psalms* lxxv. 8.]

are far-off sounds of a divine triumph, and a glory as of resurrection.*

§ 16. The Homeric temper is wholly different. Far more tender, more practical, more cheerful; bent chiefly on present things and giving victory now, and here, rather than in hope, and hereafter. The enemies of mankind, in Homer's conception, are more distinctly conquerable; they are ungoverned passions, especially anger, and unreasonable impulse generally (*ath*). Hence the anger of Achilles, misdirected by pride, but rightly directed by friendship, is the subject of the *Iliad*. The anger of Ulysses (*Odusseu*V, "the angry"¹), misdirected at first into idle and irregular hostilities, directed at last to execution of sternest justice, is the subject of the *Odyssey*.

Though this is the central idea of the two poems, it is connected with general display of the evil of all unbridled passions, pride, sensuality, indolence, or curiosity. The pride of Atrides, the passion of Paris, the sluggishness of Elpenor, the curiosity of Ulysses himself about the Cyclops, the impatience of his sailors in untying the winds, and all other faults or follies down to that—(evidently no small one in Homer's mind)—of domestic disorderliness, are throughout shown in contrast with conditions of patient affection and household peace.

Also, the wild powers and mysteries of Nature are in the Homeric mind among the enemies of man;² so that

* The *Alcestis* is perhaps the central example of the *idea* of all Greek drama.

¹ [Ruskin, it will be seen, makes Odysseus the "man of wrath" actively, not passively (for the alternatives, see the passage from Ruskin's MS. given in the note on p. 274; and for the other interpretation, see *The Queen of the Air*, § 16); thus accepting the mythic derivation of the name (from *sdussomai*)—which Homer often makes Odysseus play upon—most plainly in *Odyssey*, xix. 407:—

polloisin gar egwge odussamenos tod ikanw
andraoin hde gunaixin ana Cqona pouluboteiran
tw d Oduseus onom estw epwnumon.]

² [In the first draft of the chapter Ruskin proposed to enter more fully into various points in the *Odyssey*. Thus he added here:—

" . . . enemies of man; so that all whirlpools, desolate islands, and enchanted shades among which Ulysses meets with misfortune or delay are directly contrasted with the trim gardens and orderly palace of Alcinous (Strength with Prudence), where he finds at last effective help."]

all the labours of Ulysses are an expression of the contest of manhood, not only with its own passions or with the folly of others, but with the merciless and mysterious powers of the natural world.¹

§ 17. This is perhaps the chief signification of the seven years' stay with Calypso, "the concealer." Not, as vulgarly thought, the concealer of Ulysses, but the great concealer—the hidden power of natural things. She is the daughter of Atlas and the Sea (Atlas, the sustainer of heaven, and the Sea, the disturber of the Earth). She dwells in the island of Ogygia ("the ancient or venerable"). (Whenever Athens, or any other Greek city, is spoken of with any peculiar reverence, it is called "Ogygian."²) Escaping from this goddess of secrets, and from other spirits, some of destructive natural force (Scylla), others signifying the enchantment of mere natural beauty (Circe, daughter of the Sun and Sea), he arrives at last at the Phæacian land, whose king is "strength with intellect," and whose queen "virtue."³ These restore him to his country.

§ 18. Now observe that in their dealing with all these subjects the Greeks never shrink from horror; down to its uttermost depth, to its most appalling physical detail, they strive to sound the secrets of sorrow. For them there is no passing by on the other side, no turning away the eyes to vanity from pain. Literally, they have not "lifted up

¹ [Here again the MS. adds:—

"It may be well briefly to glance at the course of Ulysses in this light. His name may mean either the Angry or the Much-enduring: it has probably always the double sense in Homer's mind. His passionateness is never lost sight of, nor his power of restraining it—a slight provocation enrages him, but he always governs his rage. Yet three times in the *Odyssey* he loses to my mind all heroic character by this passionateness; first, when Eurylochus disobeys him; again, when he is taunted by Euryalus at the court of Alcinous; and last and chiefly, in the scene with Euryclea. His calamities begin in consequence of the wanton attack on the Cicones."

For the references, see *Odyssey*, x. 266; viii. 166 *seq.*; and xix. 479 *seq.*; and ix. 40 *seq.*]

² [See, for instance, Æschylus, *Pers.* 37 and 974; and Sophocles, *Æd. Col.* 1770.]

³ [See *Odyssey*, book vii., for his reception by King Alcinous and Queen Arete. For another reference to the name of the Queen, and the significance of Phæacia generally, see *Munera Pulveris*, § 101. In the same book (§§ 93–94) is a fuller discussion of the meanings of Scylla and Circe.]

their souls unto vanity.”¹ Whether there be consolation for them or not, neither apathy nor blindness shall be their saviour; if, for them, thus knowing the facts of the grief of earth, any hope, relief, or triumph may hereafter seem possible,—well; but if not, still hopeless, reliefless, eternal, the sorrow shall be met face to face. This Hector, so righteous, so merciful, so brave, has, nevertheless, to look upon his dearest brother in miserabest death. His own soul passes away in hopeless sobs through the throat-wound of the Grecian spear. That is one aspect of things in this world, a fair world truly, but having, among its other aspects, this one, highly ambiguous.

§ 19. Meeting it boldly as they may, gazing right into the skeleton face of it, the ambiguity remains; nay, in some sort gains upon them. We trusted in the gods;—we thought that wisdom and courage would save us. Our wisdom and courage themselves deceive us to our death. Athena had the aspect of Deiphobus—terror of the enemy. She has not terrified him, but left us, in our mortal need.²

And beyond that mortality, what hope have we? Nothing is clear to us on that horizon, nor comforting. Funeral honours; perhaps also rest; perhaps a shadowy life—artless, joyless, loveless. No devices in that darkness of the grave,³ nor daring, nor delight. Neither marrying nor giving in marriage, nor casting of spears, nor rolling of chariots, nor voice of fame. Lapped in pale Elysian mist, chilling the forgetful heart and feeble frame, shall we waste on for ever? Can the dust of earth claim more of immortality than this? Or shall we have even so much as rest? May we, indeed, lie down again in the dust: or have not our sins hidden

¹ [Psalms xxiv. 4.]

² [See *Iliad*, xxii. 226 *seq.*, where Athena assumes the form of Hector’s brother, Deiphobus, in order to encourage him to turn and meet Achilles. They join in mortal combat, Achilles unaffrighted. The spear thrown in vain by Hector is taken up by Athena and given to Achilles. Hector calls in vain upon Deiphobus for help, but no Deiphobus is there. It is by the Lance of Pallas that Hector goes bravely to death. In the first draft the title of the chapter is “The Spear of Deiphobus.”]

³ [See Ecclesiastes ix. 10; and for the next references Mark xii. 25 and Luke xix. 42.]

from us even the things that belong to that peace? May not chance and the whirl of passion govern us there: when there shall be no thought, nor work, nor wisdom, nor breathing of the soul?*

Be it so. With no better reward, no brighter hope, we will be men while we may: men, just, and strong, and fearless, and up to our power, perfect. Athena herself, our wisdom and our strength, may betray us:—Phœbus, our sun, smite us with plague, or hide his face from us helpless;—Jove and all the powers of fate oppress us, or give us up to destruction. While we live, we will hold fast our integrity; no weak tears shall blind us, no untimely tremors abate our strength of arm nor swiftness of limb. The gods have given us at least this glorious body and this righteous conscience; these will we keep bright and pure to the end. So may we fall to misery, but not to baseness; so may we sink to sleep, but not to shame.

§ 20. And herein was conquest. So defied, the betraying and accusing shadows shrank back; the mysterious horror subdued itself to majestic sorrow. Death was swallowed up in victory.¹ Their blood, which seemed to be poured out upon the ground, rose into hyacinthine flowers.² All the beauty of earth opened to them; they had ploughed into its darkness, and they reaped its gold; the gods, in whom they had trusted through all semblance of oppression, came down to love them and be their helpmates. All nature round them became divine,—one harmony of power and peace. The sun hurt them not by day, nor the moon by night;³ the earth opened no more her jaws into the pit:

* tw kai teqnhwti noon pore llersefoneia,
oiw pepnusQai toi de skiai aissousin.

Od. x. 495.

¹ [1 Corinthians xv. 54.]

² [See *Queen of the Air*, § 83, where Ruskin refers to the hyacinth, fabled to have sprung from the blood of Hyacinthus, as connected with Greek thoughts of immortality.]

³ [See Psalms cxxi. 6.]

the sea whitened no more against them the teeth of his devouring waves. Sun, and moon, and earth, and sea,—all melted into grace and love; the fatal arrows rang not now at the shoulders of Apollo, the healer; lord of life, and of the three great spirits of life—Care, Memory, and Melody. Great Artemis guarded their flocks by night; Selene kissed in love the eyes of those who slept. And from all came the help of heaven to body and soul; a strange spirit lifting the lovely limbs; strange light glowing on the golden hair; and strangest comfort filling the trustful heart, so that they could put off their armour, and lie down to sleep,—their work well done, whether at the gates of their temples* or of their mountains; † accepting the death they once thought terrible, as the gift of Him who knew and granted what was best.¹

* ouketi anesthsan, all en telei toutw esconto. Herod. i. 31.

† o de apopempomenoV autoV men ouk apelipeto, ton de paida sustrateuomenon eonta oi mounogenea apepemye. Herod. vii. 221.²

¹ [The first draft of § 20 is here given, as an example of how carefully Ruskin revised his work:—

“And herein was victory. So defied, the betraying and accusing shadows sank back; the deathful horror subdued itself into majestic sorrow. The grisly death was swallowed up in victory. All the beauty of earth opened upon them; as they had ploughed into its darkness, they reaped its gold; the gods in whom they had trusted came down to be their companions.* All nature round them seemed divine and one harmony of power and peace. The sun could not hurt them by day, nor the moon by night; the earth opened no more her mouth into the pit; the sea shook no more against them the teeth of his gnawing waves. Sun, and moon, and earth, and sea—all melted into grace and love; the fatal arrows rang no more at the shoulders of Apollo, the healer; lord of life, leader of the three great muses—Care, Memory, and Melody. Artemis, the huntress, watched their flocks by night; Selene kissed the eyes of all who slept. And from all came the help of heaven to body and soul; a strange spirit lifting the earthly limbs; strange light floating from the fiery crest; and strangest comfort filling the trustful heart of those who put off their armour, and lay down to rest—their work well done, by gates of their temples or their mountains, in worship or war; accepting the gift of death they once thought terrible, as the gift of Him who knew what was happiest for them.”

At the point marked* the same draft has this footnote: “Remember always in order to mark the reality of Greek belief, how Pisistratus was restored to the tyranny of Athens”—the reference being to the device of obtaining a woman of noble form to personate Athena and accompany Pisistratus to Athens (Herod. i. 60).]

² [The first of these instances is again a reference to the story of Cleobis and Biton, victors in the games, of whom, moreover, the following tale is told: “It was

with the Argives a feast to Juno, and for all manner of cause it was needful that their mother should be carried to the temple by a yoke of oxen. But the oxen came not to them in time out of the field. Then the youths, pushed to extremity by the hour, stooping down under the yoke themselves, drew the chariot, and on the chariot their mother was carried by them. And traversing five-and-forty stadia, they reached the temple. And to them, having done this and been seen by all the solemn multitude, there came, thereupon, the noblest end of life, and the Goddess showed in this that it was better for man to die than to live. For the Argive men stood round and gave glory to the youths for their strength; and the Argive women gave glory to their mother for the children that she had received. But their mother, being full of great joy in the deed and in the fame, stood before the image, and prayed: 'To Cleobis and Bito, my sons, who have honoured thee greatly, do thou, oh Goddess, give what it is best should chance to men.' And after this her prayer, when the youths had sacrificed and feasted, they lay down to sleep in the temple itself, and rose no more but were held in that end. And the Argives made statues of them and gave them to the treasury at Delphi, as of noblest men." (Ruskin's translation, here copied from one of his notebooks; he refers to the story also in *A Joy for Ever*, §§ 109, 183, Vol. XVI. pp. 92, 167; and *Ethics of the Dust*, § 117.) The second reference is to Thermopylæ and the story of Megistias, the soothsayer, whom Leonidas endeavoured to dismiss that he might not perish with the rest; "but he would not himself depart, but sent away his son who was with him in the army, besides whom he had no other child."]

CHAPTER III

THE WINGS OF THE LION

§ 1. SUCH being the heroic spirit of Greek religion and art, we may now with ease trace the relations between it and that which animated the Italian, and chiefly the Venetian, schools.

Observe, all the nobleness, as well as the faults, of the Greek art were dependent on its making the most of this present life. It might do so in the Anacreontic temper—Ti Illeiadessi kamoi;¹ “What have I to do with the Pleiads?” or in the defiant or the trustful endurance of fate;—but its dominion was in this world.

Florentine art was essentially Christian, ascetic, expectant of a better world, and antagonistic, therefore, to the Greek temper. So that the Greek element, once forced upon it, destroyed it. There was absolute incompatibility between them.² Florentine art, also, could not produce landscape. It despised the rock, the tree, the vital air itself, aspiring to breathe empyreal air.

Venetian art began with the same aim and under the same restrictions. Both are healthy in the youth of art. Heavenly aim and severe law for boyhood; earthly work and fair freedom for manhood.

§ 2. The Venetians began, I repeat, with asceticism;

¹ [See Anacreon's Ode to a Silver Cup; the reading, now generally accepted, is:—
ti Illeiadwn melei moi
ti d' asteros Bowton;]

² [This was a view which Ruskin qualified when he came to study closely the work of Botticelli, of whom he said that he was pure “Greek in spirit” (*Ariadne Florentina*, § 159), and that he could “in a measure paint both Aphrodite and the Madonna” (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 22).]

always, however, delighting in more massive and deep colour than other religious painters. They are especially fond of saints who have been cardinals, because of their red hats, and they sunburn all their hermits into splendid russet brown.

They differed from the Pisans in having no Maremma between them and the sea; from the Romans in continually quarrelling with the Pope; and from the Florentines in having no gardens.

They had another kind of garden, deep furrowed, with blossom in white wreaths—fruitless. Perpetual May therein, and singing of wild, nestless birds. And they had no Maremma to separate them from this garden of theirs. The destiny of Pisa was changed, in all probability, by the ten miles of marsh-land and poisonous air between it and the beach. The Genoese energy was feverish; too much heat reflected from their torrid Apennine. But the Venetian had his free horizon, his salt breeze, and sandy Lido-shore; sloped far and flat,—ridged sometimes under the Tramontane winds with half a mile's breadth of rollers;—sea and sand shrivelled up together in one yellow careering field of fall and roar.

§ 3. They were, also, we said, always quarrelling with the Pope.¹ Their religious liberty came, like their bodily health, from that wave training; for it is one notable effect of a life passed on ship-board to destroy weak beliefs in appointed forms of religion. A sailor may be grossly superstitious, but his superstitions will be connected with amulets and omens, not cast in systems. He must accustom himself, if he prays at all, to pray anywhere and anyhow. Candlesticks and incense not being portable into the maintop, he perceives those decorations to be, on the whole, inessential to a maintop mass. Sails must be set and cables bent, be it never so strict a saint's day, and it is found that no harm comes of it. Absolution on a lee-shore must be had of the breakers,

¹ [For the influence of this fact on Venetian architecture, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. pp. 25–29); and compare Vol. XVI. p. 463.]

it appears, if at all, and they give it plenary and brief, without listening to confession.¹

Whereupon our religious opinions become vague, but our religious confidences strong; and the end of it all is that we perceive the Pope to be on the other side of the Apennines, and able, indeed, to sell indulgences, but not winds, for any money. Whereas, God and the sea are with us, and we must even trust them both, and take what they shall send.

§ 4. Then, farther. This ocean-work is wholly adverse to any morbid conditions of sentiment. Reverie, above all things, is forbidden by Scylla and Charybdis. By the dogs and the depths, no dreaming ! The first thing required of us is presence of mind. Neither love, nor poetry, nor piety, must ever so take up our thoughts as to make us slow or unready. In sweet Val d'Arno it is permissible enough to dream among the orange blossoms, and forget the day in twilight of ilex. But along the avenues of the Adrian waves there can be no careless walking. Vigilance, night and day, required of us, besides learning of many practical lessons in severe and humble dexterities. It is enough for the Florentine to know how to use his sword and to ride. We Venetians, also, must be able to use our swords, and on ground which is none of the steadiest; but, besides, we must be able to do nearly everything that hands can turn to—rudders, and yards, and cables, all needing workmanly handling and workmanly knowledge, from captain as well as from men. To drive a nail, lash a spar, reef a sail—rude work this for

¹ [The MS. adds a little Venetian picture:—

“For common sailors, it is true, there is a little chapel on the Riva, where, if we escape the sea, it will be right—as it has been ever since Horace’s time—to hang up a picture and light a taper; and we know that the wife is always there at sunset, and kneels long if there are high-heaped clouds in the west. Nevertheless our best devotion is not there nor in any other place in particular, but at oar or wheel, and under whatever stars are up at midnight or mid-morn—in no refined Latin utterance, but with a downright meaning, and full belief that we shall be heard.”

For the reference to Horace, see *Odes*, i. 5, 13. The “little chapel on the Riva” may be the Church of S. Biagio, which contains the tombs of many sailors; or perhaps Ruskin referred rather to the little chapel of Our Lady which the gondoliers maintain at each *traghetto*.]

noble hands; but to be done sometimes, and done well on pain of death. All which not only takes mean pride out of us, and puts nobler pride of power in its stead; but it tends partly to soothe, partly to chasten, partly to employ and direct, the hot Italian temper, and make us every way greater, calmer, and happier.

§ 5. Moreover, it tends to induce in us great respect for the whole human body; for its limbs, as much as for its tongue or its wit. Policy and eloquence are well; and, indeed, we Venetians can be politic enough, and can speak melodiously when we choose; but to put the helm up at the right moment is the beginning of all cunning—and for that we need arm and eye;—not tongue. And with this respect for the body as such, comes also the sailor's preference of massive beauty in bodily form. The landsmen, among their roses and orange-blossoms, and chequered shadows of twisted vine, may well please themselves with pale faces, and finely drawn eyebrows, and fantastic braiding of hair. But from the sweeping glory of the sea we learn to love another kind of beauty; broad-breasted, level-browed, like the horizon;—thighed and shouldered like the billows; footed like their stealing foam;—bathed in cloud of golden hair like their sunsets.

§ 6. Such were the physical influences constantly in operation on the Venetians; their painters, however, were partly prepared for their work by others in their infancy. Associations connected with early life among mountains softened and deepened the teaching of the sea; and the wildness of form of the Tyrolese Alps gave greater strength and grotesqueness to their imaginations than the Greek painters could have found among the cliffs of the Ægean. Thus far, however, the influences on both are nearly similar. The Greek Sea was indeed less bleak, and the Greek hills were less grand; but the difference was in degree rather than in the nature of their power. The moral influences at work on the two races were far more sharply opposed.

§ 7. Evil, as we saw, had been fronted by the Greek, and thrust out of his path. Once conquered, if he thought of it more, it was involuntarily, as we remember a painful dream, yet with a secret dread that the dream might return and continue for ever. But the teaching of the Church in the Middle Ages had made the contemplation of evil one of the duties of men. As sin, it was to be duly thought upon, that it might be confessed. As suffering, endured joyfully, in hope of future reward. Hence conditions of bodily distemper which an Athenian would have looked upon with the severest contempt and aversion, were in the Christian Church regarded always with pity, and often with respect: while the partial practice of celibacy by the clergy, and by those over whom they had influence,—together with the whole system of conventual penance and pathetic ritual (with the vicious reactionary tendencies necessarily following), introduced calamitous conditions both of body and soul, which added largely to the pagan's simple list of elements of evil, and introduced the most complicated states of mental suffering and decrepitude.

§ 8. Therefore the Christian painters differed from the Greek in two main points. They had been taught a faith which put an end to restless questioning and discouragement. All was at last to be well—and their best genius might be peacefully given to imagining the glories of heaven and the happiness of its redeemed. But on the other hand, though suffering was to cease in heaven, it was to be not only endured, but honoured upon earth. And from the Crucifixion, down to a beggar's lameness, all the tortures and maladies of men were to be made, at least in part, the subjects of art. The Venetian was, therefore, in his inner mind, less serious than the Greek: in his superficial temper, sadder. In his heart there was none of the deep horror which vexed the soul of Æschylus or Homer. His Pallas-shield was the shield of Faith, not the shield of the Gorgon. All was at last to issue happily; in sweetest harpings and seven-fold circles of light. But

for the present he had to dwell with the maimed and the blind, and to revere Lazarus more than Achilles.

§ 9. This reference to a future world has a morbid influence on all their conclusions. For the earth and all its natural elements are despised. They are to pass away like a scroll.¹ Man, the immortal, is alone revered; his work and presence are all that can be noble or desirable. Men, and fair architecture, temples and courts such as may be in a celestial city, or the clouds and angels of Paradise; these are what we must paint when we want beautiful things. But the sea, the mountains, the forests, are all adverse to us,—a desolation. The ground that was cursed for our sake;²—the sea that executed judgment on all our race, and rages against us still, though bridled; stormdemons churning it into foam in nightly glare on Lido, and hissing from it against our palaces. Nature is but a terror, or a temptation. She is for hermits, martyrs, murderers,—for St. Jerome, and St. Mary of Egypt, and the Magdalen in the desert, and monk Peter, falling before the sword.³

§ 10. But the worst point we have to note respecting the spirit of Venetian landscape is its pride.

It was observed in the course of the third volume⁴ how the mediæval temper had rejected agricultural pursuits, and whatever pleasures could come of them.

At Venice this negation had reached its extreme. Though the Florentines and Romans had no delight in farming, they had in gardening. The Venetian possessed, and cared for, neither fields nor pastures. Being delivered, to his loss, from all the wholesome labours of tillage, he was also shut out from the sweet wonders and charities of

¹ [Revelation vi. 14.]

² [See Genesis iii. 17.]

³ [To a picture by Bellini of this latter subject (now in the National Gallery, No. 812) Ruskin often refers: see, for instance, *Aratra Pentelici*, § 221. For the landscape in Titian's "St. Jerome," see Vol. III. pp. 181–182; Vol. IV. pp. 244, 246; Vol. VI. p. 432. For landscapes by Tintoret, called "St. Mary of Egypt" and "The Magdalen," see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. pp. 408–409).]

⁴ [See Vol. V. pp. 248. *seq.*]

the earth, and from the pleasant natural history of the year. Birds and beasts, and times and seasons, all unknown to him. No swallow chattered at his window,* nor, nested under his golden roofs, claimed the sacredness of his mercy; † no Pythagorean fowl taught him the blessings of the poor,‡ nor did the grave spirit of poverty rise at his side to set forth the delicate grace and honour of lowly life.§ No humble thoughts of grasshopper sire had he, like the Athenian; no gratitude for gifts of olive; no childish care for figs, any more than thistles. The rich Venetian feast had no need of the figtree spoon.¶ Dramas about birds, and wasps and frogs, would have passed unheeded by his proud fancy; carol or murmur of them had fallen unrecognized on ears accustomed only to grave syllables of war-tried men, and wash of songless wave.

§ 11. No simple joy was possible to him. Only stateliness and power; high intercourse with kingly and beautiful humanity, proud thoughts, or splendid pleasures; throned

* Anacreon, Ode 12th.

† Herod. i. 159.¹

‡ Lucian (Micyllus).

§ Aristophanes, *Plutus*.

¶ *Hippias Major*, 290 D.

¹ ["Aristodicus went all round the temple destroying the nests of the sparrows and of all the other kinds of birds which had been hatched on the temple; and while he was doing this, it is said that a voice came from the inner shrine to Aristodicus and spake thus: 'Thou most impious of men, why dost thou dare to do this? Dost thou carry away by force from my temple the suppliants for my protection?' " Micyllus (a cobbler) is the hero of Lucian's dialogue "The Dream or The Cock"—or, as it is sometimes called in English versions, "The Cock and the Cobbler"—and is instructed by his philosophic feathered friend to entertain a contempt for plutocrats. (For another reference to the dialogue, see below, p. 401.) For Ruskin's reading of the *Plutus*, see above, Introduction, p. lxii. In his analysis of the play, there mentioned, Ruskin describes how "Penia finely describes herself as the Goddess of Poverty, as Bacchus of drunkenness," and how excellent are her arguments. For the Athenian's "thoughts of grasshopper sire," see Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 984, and Thucydides, i. 6: "Quite recently the old-fashioned refinement of dress still lingered among the elder men of their richer class, who wore under-garments of linen, and bound back their hair in a knot with golden clasps in the form of grasshoppers; and the same customs long survived among the elders of Ionia, having been derived from their Athenian ancestors." Ruskin discusses in the *Queen of the Air*, § 38, the symbolism of the olive in the myth of its gift to Athens by Athena. The Athenian "care for figs" is familiar from the old explanation of the word *rnkofanthV* (a common informer), as one who informed against persons exporting figs, or plundering sacred fig-trees (see Hume's essay on the Balance of Trade). In the *Hippias Major* (290 D.) Socrates asks whether for a dish full of porridge a fig-tree spoon is not more appropriate than one of gold.]

sensualities, and ennobled appetites. But of innocent, childish, helpful, holy pleasures, he had none. As in the classical landscape, nearly all rural labour is banished from the Titianesque: there is one bold etching of a landscape, with grand ploughing in the foreground,¹ but this is only a caprice; the customary Venetian background is without sign of laborious rural life. We find, indeed, often a shepherd with his flock, sometimes a woman spinning, but no division of fields, no growing crops, nor nestling villages. In the numerous drawings and woodcuts variously connected with or representative of Venetian work, a watermill is a frequent object, a river constant, generally the sea. But the prevailing idea in all the great pictures I have seen is that of mountainous land with wild but graceful forest, and rolling or horizontal clouds. The mountains are dark blue; the clouds glowing or soft gray, always massive; the light, deep, clear, melancholy; the foliage, neither intricate nor graceful, but compact and sweeping (with undulated trunks), dividing much into horizontal flakes, like the clouds; the ground rocky and broken somewhat monotonously, but richly green with wild herbage; here and there a flower, by preference white or blue, rarely yellow, still more rarely red.

§ 12. It was stated² that this heroic landscape of theirs was peopled by spiritual beings of the highest order. And in this rested the dominion of the Venetians over all later schools. They were the *last believing* school of Italy. Although, as I said above, always quarrelling with the Pope, there is all the more evidence of an earnest faith in their religion. People who trusted the Madonna less, flattered the Pope more. But down to Tintoret's time, the Roman Catholic religion was still real and sincere at Venice; and though faith in it was compatible with much

¹ [Ruskin had a print of this subject (now in Mr. Allen's possession); it is engraved by Dominique Vivant Denon (1747–1825), a distinguished amateur engraver and director of the Imperial Galleries under Napoleon I. Some other Plates of farm-scenes are given in Lefèvre's book of etchings; and see p. 60 in J. Gilbert's *Cadore, or Titian's Country*.]

² [See above, p. 254.]

which to us appears criminal or absurd, the religion itself was entirely sincere.

§ 13. Perhaps when you see one of Titian's splendidly passionate subjects, or find Veronese making the Marriage in Cana one blaze of worldly pomp, you imagine that Titian must have been a sensualist, and Veronese an unbeliever.

Put the idea from you at once, and be assured of this for ever; it will guide you through many a labyrinth of life, as well as of painting,—that of an evil tree, men never gather good fruit¹—good of any sort or kind; even good sensualism.²

Let us look to this calmly. We have seen what physical advantage the Venetian had, in his sea and sky: also what moral disadvantage he had, in scorn of the poor; now finally, let us see with what power he was invested, which men since his time have never recovered more.

§ 14. "Neither of a bramble bush gather they grapes."³

The great saying has twofold help for us. Be assured, first, that if it were bramble from which you gathered them, these are not grapes in your hand, though they look like grapes. Or if these are indeed grapes, it was no bramble you gathered them from, though it looked like one.

It is difficult for persons, accustomed to receive, without questioning, the modern English idea of religion, to understand the temper of the Venetian Catholics. I do not enter into examination of our own feelings; but I have to note this one significant point of difference between us.

§ 15. An English gentleman, desiring his portrait, gives probably to the painter a choice of several actions, in any of which he is willing to be represented. As for instance, riding his best horse, shooting with his favourite pointer,

¹ [See Matthew vii. 18.]

² [In the MS. Ruskin had added here:—

"And this being a great and wonderful fact, and the one which of all that I have had to show in this work, is principal, we will pause here and approach it seriously. We have seen what physical . . ."

The passage is of interest, for seventeen years later, in his Oxford course entitled "Readings in *Modern Painters*" (see a later volume), Ruskin spoke of his "main subject" in that book being "that all art depended on nobleness of life."]

³ [Luke vi. 44.]

manifesting himself in his robes of state on some great public occasion, meditating in his study, playing with his children, or visiting his tenants; in any of these or other such circumstances, he will give the artist free leave to paint him. But in one important action he would shrink even from the suggestion of being drawn. He will assuredly not let himself be painted praying.

Strangely, this is the action which, of all others, a Venetian desires to be painted in. If they want a noble and complete portrait, they nearly all choose to be painted on their knees.¹

§ 16. "Hypocrisy," you say; and "that they might be seen of men."² If we examine ourselves, or any one else, who will give trustworthy answer on this point, so as to ascertain, to the best of our judgment, what the feeling *is*, which would make a modern English person dislike to be painted praying, we shall not find it, I believe, to be excess of sincerity. Whatever we find it to be, the opposite Venetian feeling is certainly not hypocrisy. It is often conventionalism, implying as little devotion in the person represented, as regular attendance at church does with us. But that it is not hypocrisy, you may ascertain by one simple consideration (supposing you not to have enough knowledge of the expression of sincere persons to judge by the portraits themselves). The Venetians, when they desired to deceive, were much too subtle to attempt it clumsily. If they assumed the mask of religion, the mask must have been of some use. The persons whom it deceived must, therefore, have been religious, and, being so, have believed in the Venetians' sincerity. If, therefore, among other contemporary nations with whom they had intercourse, we can find any, more religious than they, who were duped, or even influenced, by their external religiousness, we might have some ground for suspecting that religiousness to be assumed. But if we can find no one likely to have been

¹ [With this passage compare the one from the MS. of the second volume cited at Vol. IV. p. 189 *n.*]

² [Matthew vi. 1.]

deceived, we must believe the Venetian to have been, in reality, what there was no advantage in seeming.

§ 17. I leave the matter to your examination, forewarning you, confidently, that you will discover by severest evidence, that the Venetian religion was true. Not only true, but one of the main motives of their lives. In the field of investigation to which we are here limited, I will collect some of the evidence of this.

For one profane picture by great Venetians, you will find ten of sacred subjects; and those, also, including their grandest, most laboured, and most beloved works. Tintoret's power culminates in two great religious pictures: the Crucifixion, and the Paradise. Titian's in the Assumption, the Peter Martyr, and Presentation of the Virgin. Veronese's in the Marriage in Cana. John Bellini and Basaiti never, so far as I remember, painted any other than sacred subjects.¹ By the Palmas, Vincenzo Catena, and Bonifazio, I remember no profane subject of importance.

§ 18. There is, moreover, one distinction of the very highest import between the treatment of sacred subjects by Venetian painters and by all others.

Throughout the rest of Italy, piety had become abstract, and opposed theoretically to worldly life; hence the Florentine and Umbrian painters generally separated their saints from living men. They delighted in imagining scenes of spiritual perfectness;—Paradises, and companies of the redeemed at the judgment;—glorified meetings of martyrs;—madonnas surrounded by circles of angels. If, which was rare, definite portraiture of living men were introduced,

¹ [For Tintoret's "Crucifixion," see above, p. 258; and for the "Paradise," below, p. 298, and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 372). For Titian's "Assumption," see below, p. 298, and Vol. XI. p. 361; but Ruskin's opinion of the picture changed in later years (see *Guide to the Venetian Academy*); for the (now destroyed) "Peter Martyr," see Vol. III. p. 28; and for the "Presentation," see *Guide to the Venetian Academy*. For Veronese's "Marriage in Cana," see above, p. 287, and General Index. Ruskin of course excludes portraits from his purview here, but he forgets Bellini's "Bacchanal" at Alnwick; for the same painter's series of classical allegories at Venice, see again *Guide to the Venetian Academy*. For other references to Basaiti, see Vol. III. p. 179; Vol. XI. p. 361. For Bonifazio, Vol. V. p. 401; Vol. XI. pp. xxviii., 179, 387, 390, 399; Vol. XIII. p. 35. For Catena, Vol. XI. p. 392.]

these real characters formed a kind of chorus or attendant company, taking no part in the action. At Venice all this was reversed, and so boldly as at first to shock, with its seeming irreverence, a spectator accustomed to the formalities and abstractions of the so-called sacred schools. The madonnas are no more seated apart on their thrones, the saints no more breathe celestial air. They are on our own plain ground—nay, here in our houses with us. All kind of worldly business going on in their presence, fearlessly; our own friends and respected acquaintances, with all their mortal faults, and in their mortal flesh, looking at them face to face unalarmed: nay, our dearest children playing with their pet dogs at Christ's very feet.

I once myself thought this irreverent. How foolishly! As if children whom He loved *could* play anywhere else.

§ 19. The picture most illustrative of this feeling is perhaps that at Dresden, of Veronese's family, painted by himself.¹

He wishes to represent them as happy and honoured. The best happiness and highest honour he can imagine for them is that they should be presented to the Madonna, to whom, therefore, they are being brought by the three virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The Virgin stands in a recess behind two marble shafts, such as may be seen in any house belonging to an old family in Venice. She places the boy Christ on the edge of a balustrade before her. At her side are St. John the Baptist, and St. Jerome. This group occupies the left side of the picture. The pillars, seen sideways, divide it from

¹ [This picture is now more commonly described as the "Madonna and Child, with the Cuccina Family." This family, which came originally from Bergamo, was in the sixteenth century one of the richest in Venice. In 1645, Francis I., Duke of Modena, purchased the picture from the Cuccina family; Anton Maria Cuccina, with whom the negotiations were contained, mentions in a letter that he especially valued the picture on account of the portraits of his ancestors which it contained. In the Modena Inventory of 1743 the picture appears, however, as the "Family of P. Veronese," and as such it came to the Dresden Gallery. Its former title has, however, now been restored to it. For other references to it, see below, p. 330; and Vol. XVI. p. 470. The Plate here given is reproduced from Ruskin's copy of a portion of the picture (see above, p. 1.); a reproduction of the whole picture may be seen in *Paolo Veronese* ("Newnes' Art Library").]



J. Bucklin after Paolo Veronese

Allen & Co. Sc.

A Family Group

From the picture in the Dresden Gallery

the group formed by the Virtues, with the wife and children of Veronese. He himself stands a little behind, his hands clasped in prayer.

§ 20. His wife kneels full in front, a strong Venetian woman, well advanced in years. She has brought up her children in fear of God, and is not afraid to meet the Virgin's eyes. She gazes steadfastly on them; her proud head and gentle, self-possessed face are relieved in one broad mass of shadow against a space of light, formed by the white robes of Faith, who stands beside her—guardian, and companion. Perhaps a somewhat disappointing Faith at the first sight, for her face is not in any special way exalted or refined. Veronese knew that Faith had to companion simple and slow-hearted people, perhaps oftener than able or refined people—does not therefore insist on her being severely intellectual, or looking as if she were always in the best company. So she is only distinguished by her pure white (not bright white) dress, her delicate hand, her golden hair drifted in light ripples across her breast, from which the white robes fall nearly in the shape of a shield—the shield of Faith. A little behind her stands Hope; she also, at first, not to most people a recognizable Hope. We usually paint Hope as young, and joyous. Veronese knows better. The young hope is vain hope—passing away in rain of tears; but the Hope of Veronese is aged, assured, remaining when all else has been taken away. “For tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope”; and *that* hope maketh not ashamed.¹

She has a black veil on her head.

Then again, in the front, is Charity, red-robed; stout in the arms,—a servant of all work, she; but small-headed, not being specially given to thinking; soft-eyed, her hair braided brightly; her lips rich red, sweet-blossoming. She has got some work to do even now, for a nephew of Veronese's is doubtful about coming forward, and looks very humbly and penitently towards the Virgin—his life

¹ [Romans v. 3, 5.]

perhaps not having been quite so exemplary as might at present be wished. Faith reaches her small white hand lightly back to him, lays the tips of her fingers on his; but Charity takes firm hold of him by the wrist from behind, and will push him on presently, if he still hangs back.

§ 21. In front of the mother kneel her two eldest children, a girl of about sixteen, and a boy a year or two younger. They are both rapt in adoration—the boy's being the deepest. Nearer us, at their left side, is a younger boy, about nine years old—a black-eyed fellow, full of life—and evidently his father's darling (for Veronese has put him full in light in the front; and given him a beautiful white silken jacket, barred with black, that nobody may ever miss seeing him to the end of time). He is a little shy about being presented to the Madonna, and for the present has got behind the pillar, blushing, but opening his black eyes wide; he is just summoning courage to peep round and see if she looks kind. A still younger child, about six years old, is really frightened, and has run back to his mother, catching hold of her dress at the waist. She throws her right arm round him and over him, with exquisite instinctive action, not moving her eyes from the Madonna's face. Last of all, the youngest child, perhaps about three years old, is neither frightened nor interested, but finds the ceremony tedious, and is trying to coax the dog to play with him; but the dog, which is one of the little curly, short-nosed, fringypawed things, which all Venetian ladies petted, will not now be coaxed. For the dog is the last link in the chain of lowering feeling, and takes his doggish views of the matter. He cannot understand, first, how the Madonna got into the house; nor, secondly, why she is allowed to stay, disturbing the family, and taking all their attention from his dogship. And he is walking away, much offended.

§ 22. The dog is thus constantly introduced by the Venetians in order to give the fullest contrast to the highest tones of human thought and feeling. I shall examine this point presently farther, in speaking of pastoral landscape

and animal painting;¹ but at present we will merely compare the use of the same mode of expression in Veronese's Presentation of the Queen of Sheba.²

§ 23. This picture is at Turin, and is of quite inestimable value. It is hung high; and the really principal figure the Solomon, being in the shade, can hardly be seen, but is painted with Veronese's utmost tenderness, in the bloom of perfect youth, his hair golden, short, crisply curled. He is seated high on his lion throne: two elders on each side beneath him, the whole group forming a tower of solemn shade. I have alluded, elsewhere, to the principle on which all the best composers act, of supporting these lofty groups by some vigorous mass of foundation.³ This column of noble shade is curiously sustained. A falconer leans forward from the left-hand side, bearing on his wrist a snow-white falcon, its wings spread, and brilliantly relieved against the purple robe of one of the elders. It touches with its wings one of the golden lions of the throne, on which the light also flashes strongly; thus forming, together with it, the lion and eagle symbol, which is the type of Christ throughout mediæval work. In order to show the meaning of this symbol, and that Solomon is typically invested with the Christian royalty, one of the elders, by a bold anachronism, holds a jewel in his hand in the shape of a cross, with which he (by accident of gesture) points to Solomon; his other hand is laid on an open book.⁴

§ 24. The group opposite, of which the Queen forms the centre, is also painted with Veronese's highest skill; but contains no point of interest bearing on our present subject, except its connection by a chain of descending emotion. The Queen is wholly oppressed and subdued; kneeling, and

¹ [See below, pp. 334 *seq.*; and compare Ruskin's remarks on a picture by Carpaccio of "Venetian ladies and their pets," in *St. Mark's Rest*, § 202.]

² [This picture is reproduced as Plate III. in Vol. XVI.: see pp. xxxvii. *seq.*, 185 there for other descriptions of it.]

³ [See *Elements of Drawing*, § 220 (Vol. XV. p. 190); and compare Vol. XIII. pp. 423-424.]

⁴ [For this "anachronism," see again Vol. XVI. p. xxxix.]

nearly fainting, she looks up to Solomon with tears in her eyes; he, startled by fear for her, stoops forward from the throne, opening his right hand, as if to support her, so as almost to drop the sceptre. At her side her first maid of honour is kneeling also, but does not care about Solomon; and is gathering up her dress that it may not be crushed; and looking back to encourage a negro-girl, who, carrying two toy-birds, made of enamel and jewels, for presentation to the King, is frightened at seeing her Queen fainting, and does not know what she ought to do; while, lastly, the Queen's dog, another of the little fringypaws, is wholly unabashed by Solomon's presence, or anybody else's; and stands with his forelegs well apart, right in front of his mistress, thinking everybody has lost their wits; and barking violently at one of the attendants, who has set down a golden vase disrespectfully near him.

§ 25. Throughout these designs I want the reader to notice the purpose of representing things as they were likely to have occurred, down to trivial, or even ludicrous detail—the nobleness of all that was intended to be noble being so great that nothing could detract from it. A farther instance, however, and a prettier one, of this familiar realization, occurs in a Holy Family, by Veronese, at Brussels.¹ The Madonna has laid the infant Christ on a projecting base of pillar, and stands behind, looking down on Him. St. Catherine, having knelt down in front, the child turns round to receive her—so suddenly, and so far, that any other child must have fallen over the edge of the stone. St. Catherine, terrified, thinking He is really going to fall, stretches out her arms to catch Him. But the Madonna, looking down, only smiles, “He will not fall.”

§ 26. A more touching instance of this realization occurs, however, in the treatment of the Saint Veronica (in the Ascent to Calvary), at Dresden.² Most painters merely

¹ [In the Palais des Beaux Arts.]

² [There is a reproduction of this picture at p. 54 of *Paolo Veronese* (in “Newnes Art Library”).]

represent her as one of the gentle, weeping, attendant women; and show her giving the handkerchief as though these women had been allowed to approach Christ without any difficulty. But in Veronese's conception, she has to break through the executioners to Him. She is not weeping; and the expression of pity, though intense, is overborne by that of resolution. She is determined to reach Christ; has set her teeth close, and thrusts aside one of the executioners, who strikes fiercely at her with a heavy doubled cord.

§ 27. These instances are enough to explain the general character of the mind of Veronese, capable of tragic power to the utmost, if he chooses to exert it in that direction, but, by habitual preference, exquisitely graceful and playful; religious, without severity, and winningly noble; delighting in slight, sweet, every-day incident, but hiding deep meanings underneath it; rarely painting a gloomy subject, and never a base one.

§ 28. I have, in other places, entered enough into the examination of the great religious mind of Tintoret;¹ supposing then, that he was distinguished from Titian chiefly by this character. But in this I was mistaken;—the religion of Titian is like that of Shakspeare—occult behind his magnificent equity. It is not possible, however, within the limits of this work, to give any just account of the mind of Titian:² nor shall I attempt it; but will only explain some of those more strange and apparently inconsistent attributes of it, which might otherwise prevent the reader from getting clue to its real tone. The first of these is its occasional coarseness in choice of type of feature.

§ 29. In the second volume I had to speak of Titian's Magdalen, in the Pitti Palace, as treated basely, and that in strong terms, "the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti."³

Truly she is so, as compared with the received types

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 270 *seq.*), and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. pp. 403 *seq.*.)]

² [Compare what Ruskin says in the Preface, above, p. 6.]

³ [In this edition, see Vol. IV. p. 195; and compare below, p. 440 *n.*]

of the Magdalen. A stout, red-faced woman, dull, and coarse of feature, with much of the animal in even her expression of repentance—her eyes strained, and inflamed with weeping. I ought, however, to have remembered another picture of the Magdalen by Titian (Mr. Roger's, now in the National Gallery¹), in which she is just as refined, as in the Pitti Palace she is gross; and had I done so, I should have seen Titian's meaning. It had been the fashion before his time to make the Magdalen always young and beautiful; her, if no one else, even the rudest painters flattered; her repentance was not thought perfect unless she had lustrous hair and lovely lips. Titian first dared to doubt the romantic fable, and reject the narrowness of sentimental faith. He was that it was possible for plain women to love no less vividly than beautiful ones; and for stout persons to repent, as well as those more delicately made. It seemed to him that the Magdalen would have received her pardon not the less quickly because her wit was none of the readiest; and would not have been regarded with less compassion by her Master because her eyes were swollen, or her dress disordered. It is just because he has set himself sternly to enforce this lesson that the picture is so painful: the only instance, so far as I remember, of Titian's painting a woman markedly and entirely belonging to the lowest class.

§ 30. It may perhaps appear more difficult to account for the alternation of Titian's great religious pictures with others devoted wholly to the expression of sensual qualities, or to exulting and bright representation of heathen deities.

The Venetian mind, we have said, and Titian's especially, as the central type of it, was wholly realist, universal, and manly.

In this breadth and realism, the painter saw that sensual passion in man was, not only a fact, but a Divine fact; the human creature, though the highest of the animals, was,

¹ [No. 270. For another reference to the picture, see *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 124).]

nevertheless, a perfect animal, and his happiness, health, and nobleness, depended on the due power of every animal passion, as well as the cultivation of every spiritual tendency.

He thought that every feeling of the mind and heart, as well as every form of the body, deserved painting. Also to a painter's true and highly trained instinct, the human body is the loveliest of all objects. I do not stay to trace the reasons why, at Venice, the female body could be found in more perfect beauty than the male; but so it was, and it becomes the principal subject, therefore, both with Giorgione and Titian. They painted it fearlessly, with all right and natural qualities; never, however, representing it as exercising any overpowering attractive influence on man; but only on the Faun or Satyr.

Yet they did this so majestically that I am perfectly certain no untouched Venetian picture ever yet excited one base thought (otherwise than in base persons anything may do so);¹ while in the greatest studies of the female body by the Venetians, all other characters are overborne by majesty, and the form becomes as pure as that of a Greek statue.²

§ 31. There is no need, I should think, to point out how this contemplation of the entire personal nature was reconcilable with the severest conceptions of religious duty and faith.

But the fond introduction of heathen gods may appear less explicable.

On examination, however, it will be found, that these

¹ [The MS. adds:—

“There is more real power for harm in many a modern drawing-room print than in Titian's Faun and Nymph in the Dresden Gallery, or his recumbent Nymph with the Satyr unveiling her, of the Louvre.”

The former picture is presumably the “Venus and Adonis”; the latter is the “Jupiter and Antiope,” known as “The Venus del Pardo.”]

² [The MS. adds here:—

“In the engravings by Zanetti of the remnants of fresco by the great Venetian masters then existing (1760), Giorgione's treatment of the upright female figure in the niche (the third plate), allowing for the deficiency of engraving, may be considered I think as characteristically Venetian.”

This is the figure engraved as Plate 79 opposite p. 409, below; for a note on Zanetti's work, see p. 439 *n.*]

deities are never painted with any heart-reverence or affection. They are introduced for the most part symbolically (Bacchus and Venus oftenest, as incarnations of the spirit of revelry and beauty), of course always conceived with deep imaginative truth, much resembling the mode of Keats's conception; but never so as to withdraw any of the deep devotion rendered to the objects of Christian faith.

In all its roots of power, and modes of work;—in its belief, its breadth, and its judgment, I find the Venetian mind perfect.

How, then, did its art so swiftly pass away? How become, what it became unquestionably, one of the chief causes of the corruption of the mind of Italy, and of her subsequent decline in moral and political power?

§ 32. By reason of one great, one fatal fault;—recklessness in aim. Wholly noble in its sources, it was wholly unworthy in its purposes.

Separate and strong, like Samson, chosen from its youth,¹ and with the spirit of God visibly resting on it,—like him, it warred in careless strength, and wantoned in untimely pleasure. No Venetian painter ever worked with any aim beyond that of delighting the eye, or expressing fancies agreeable to himself or flattering to his nation. They could not be either, unless they were religious. But he did not desire the religion. He desired the delight.

The Assumption² is a noble picture, because Titian believed in the Madonna. But he did not paint it to make any one else believe in her. He painted it, because he enjoyed rich masses of red and blue, and faces flushed with sunlight.

Tintoret's Paradise is a noble picture, because he believed in Paradise. But he did not paint it to make any one think of heaven; but to from a beautiful termination for the hall of the Greater Council.

¹ [Judges xiii.; Numbers xi. 25, 26.]

² [For the "Assumption" of Titian and the "Paradise" of Tintoret, see above, p. 289 n.]

Other men used their effete faiths and mean faculties with a high moral purpose. The Venetian gave the most earnest faith, and the lordliest faculty, to gild the shadows of an antechamber, or heighten the splendours of a holiday.

§ 33. Strange and lamentable as this carelessness may appear, I find it to be almost the law with the great workers. Weak and vain men have acute consciences, and labour under a profound sense of responsibility. The strong men, sternly disdainful of themselves, do what they can, too often merely as it pleases them at the moment, reckless what comes of it.

I know not how far in humility, or how far in bitter and hopeless levity, the great Venetians gave their art to be blasted by the sea-winds or wasted by the worm. I know not whether in sorrowful obedience, or in wanton compliance, they fostered the folly, and enriched the luxury of their age. This only I know, that in proportion to the greatness of their power was the shame of its desecration and the suddenness of its fall. The enchanter's spell, woven by centuries of toil, was broken in the weakness of a moment; and swiftly, and utterly, as a rainbow vanishes, the radiance and the strength faded from the wings of the Lion.

CHAPTER IV
DÜRER AND SALVATOR
“EMIGRAVIT”¹

§ 1. BY referring to the first analysis of our subject,² it will be seen we have next to examine the art which cannot conquer the evil, but remains at war with, or in captivity to it.

Up to the time of the Reformation, it was possible for men even of the highest powers of intellect, to obtain a tranquillity of faith, in the highest degree favourable to the pursuit of any particular art. Possible, at least, we see it to have been; there is no need—nor, so far as I see, any ground for argument about it. I am myself unable to understand how it was so, but the fact is unquestionable. It is not that I wonder at men’s trust in the Pope’s infallibility, or in his virtue; nor at their surrendering their private judgment; nor at their being easily cheated by imitations of miracles; nor at their thinking indulgences could be purchased with money. But I wonder at this one thing only; the acceptance of the doctrine of eternal punishment as dependent on accident of birth, or momentary excitement of devotional feeling. I marvel at the acceptance of the system (as stated in its fulness by Dante³)

¹ [From the inscription on Dürer’s tomb in the Churchyard of St. John at Nuremberg—“Quicquid Alberti Düreri mortale fuit, sub hoc conditur tumulo. Emigravit viii. idus Aprilis, MDXXVIII”; the sentiment is thus versified by Long-fellow:—

“*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not, but departed,—for the artist never dies.”

(“Nuremberg” in *The Belfry of Bruges and other Poems* (1845).]

² [See above, ch. ii. § 13, p. 271.]

³ [No doubt Ruskin had in mind the passage at beginning of *Purg.* vii., where Virgil says: “For no other fault have I lost heaven than for not having had faith” (vv. 7–8); and again: “My place is in Limbo, with those who clothed themselves not

which condemned guiltless persons to the loss of heaven because they had lived before Christ, and which made the obtaining of Paradise turn frequently on a passing thought or a momentary invocation.¹ How this came to pass, it is no part of our work here to determine. That in this faith, it was possible to attain entire peace of mind, to live calmly, and die hopefully, is indisputable.

§ 2. But this possibility ceased at the Reformation. Thenceforward human life became a school of debate, troubled and fearful. Fifteen hundred years of spiritual teaching were called into fearful question, whether indeed it had been teaching by angels or devils? Whatever it had been, there was no longer any way of trusting it peacefully.

A dark time for all men. We cannot now conceive it. The great horror of it lay in this:—that, as in the trial-hour of the Greek,² the heavens themselves seemed to have deceived those who had trusted in them.

“We had prayed with tears; we had loved with our hearts. There was no choice of way open to us. No guidance, from God or man, other than this, and behold, it was a lie. ‘When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth.’³ And he has guided us into *no* truth. There can be no such Spirit. There is no Advocate, no Comforter. Has there been no Resurrection?”

§ 3. Then came the Resurrection of Death. Never since man first saw him face to face, had his terror been so great. “Swallowed up in victory”:⁴ alas! no; but

in the three holy virtues [faith, hope, and charity], and yet, without sin, knew and practised all the others” (vv. 34–36). Cf. what Virgil says of Limbo to Dante in *Inf.* iv.: “The spirits here did not sin; and if they have merit, this suffices not, inasmuch as they received not baptism . . . and if they lived before Christianity they did not worship God aright . . . for such defect, not for any sin beside, are we lost” (vv. 34–41).]

¹ [The most typical instances are those of Buonconte da Montefeltro (*Purg.* v. 100–107) and Manfred (*Purg.* iii. 118–123).]

² [See above, ch. iii. § 19.]

³ [John xvi. 13.]

⁴ [1 Corinthians xv. 54.]

king over all the earth. All faith, hope, and fond belief were betrayed. Nothing of futurity was now sure but the grave.

For the Pan-Athenaic Triumph, and the Feast of Jubilee, there came up, through fields of spring, the Dance of Death.

The brood of weak men fled from the face of him. A new Bacchus and his crew this, with worm for snake and gall for wine. They recoiled to such pleasure as yet remained possible to them—feeble infidelities, and luxurious sciences, and so went their way.

§ 4. At least, of the men with whom we are concerned—the artists—this was almost the universal fate. They gave themselves to the following of pleasure only; and, as a religious school, after a few pale rays of fading sanctity from Guido, and brown gleams of gipsy Madonnahood from Murillo, came utterly to an end.

Three men only stood firm, facing the new Dionysiac revel, to see what would come of it.

Two in the north, Holbein and Dürer; and, later, one in the south, Salvator.

But the ground on which they stood differed strangely; Dürer and Holbein, amidst the formal delights, the tender religious, and practical science, of domestic life and honest commerce. Salvator, amidst the pride of lascivious wealth, and the outlawed distress of impious poverty.

§ 5. It would be impossible to imagine any two phases of scenery or society more contrary in character, more opposite in teaching, than those surrounding Nuremberg and Naples, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What they were then, both districts still to all general intents remain. The cities have in each case lost their splendour and power, but not their character. The surrounding scenery remains wholly unchanged. It is still in our power, from the actual aspect of the places, to conceive their effect on the youth of the two painters.

§ 6. Nuremberg is gathered at the base of a sandstone

rock, rising in the midst of a dry but fertile plain. The rock forms a prolonged and curved ridge, of which the concave side, at the highest point, is precipitous; the other slopes gradually to the plain. Fortified with wall and tower along its whole crest, and crowned with a stately castle, it defends the city—not with its precipitous side—but with its slope. The precipice is turned to the town. It wears no aspect of hostility towards the surrounding fields; the roads lead down into them by gentle descents from the gates. To the south and east the walls are on the level of the plain; within them, the city itself stands on two swells of hill, divided by a winding river. Its architecture has, however, been much overrated.¹ The effect of the streets, so delightful to the eye of the passing traveller, depends chiefly on one appendage of the roof, namely, its warehouse windows. Every house, almost without exception, has at least one boldly opening dormer window, the roof of which sustains a pulley for raising goods; and the under part of this strong overhanging roof is always carved with a rich pattern, not of refined design, but effective.* Among these comparatively modern structures are mingled, however, not unfrequently, others, turreted at the angles, which are true Gothic of the fifteenth, some of the fourteenth, century; and the principal churches remain nearly as in Dürer's time. Their Gothic is none of it good, nor even rich (though the façades have their ornament so distributed as to give them a sufficiently elaborate effect at a distance); their size is diminutive; their interiors mean, rude, and ill-proportioned, wholly dependent for their interest on ingenious stone-cutting in corners, and finely-twisted

* To obtain room for the goods, the roofs slope steeply, and their other dormer windows are richly carved—but all are of wood; and, for the most part, I think, some hundred years later than Dürer's time. A large number of the oriel and bow windows on the façades are wooden also, and of recent date.

¹ [For other references to the architecture of Nuremberg, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 2); *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Vol. XIV. p. 433; and *Val d' Arno*, § 36.]

ironwork; of these the mason's exercises are in the worst possible taste, possessing not even the merit of delicate execution; but the designs in metal are usually meritorious, and Fischer's shrine of St. Sebald¹ is good, and may rank with Italian work.*

§ 7. Though, however, not comparable for an instant to any great Italian or French city, Nuremberg possesses one character peculiar to itself, that of a self-restrained, contented, quaint domesticity. It would have been vain to expect any first-rate painting, sculpture, or poetry, from the well-regulated community of merchants of small ware. But it is evident they were affectionate and trustworthy—that they had playful fancy and honourable pride. There is no exalted grandeur in their city, not any deep beauty; but an imaginative homeliness, mingled with some elements of melancholy and power, and a few even of grace.

This homeliness, among many other causes, arises out of one in chief. The richness of the houses depends, as I just said, on the dormer windows; but their deeper character on the pitch and space of roofs. I had to notice long ago how much our English cottage depended for expression on its

* His piece in the cathedral of Magdeburg is strangely inferior, wanting both the grace of composition and bold handling of the St. Sebald's. The bronze fountains at Nuremberg (three, of fame, in as many squares) are highly wrought, and have considerable merit; the ordinary ironwork of the houses, with less pretension, is, perhaps, more truly artistic. In Plate 52 (p. 40), the right-hand figure is a characteristic example of the bell-handle at the door of a private house, composed of a wreath of flowers and leafage twisted in a spiral round an upright rod, the spiral terminating below in a delicate tendril; the whole of wrought-iron. It is longer than represented, some of the leaf links of the chain being omitted in the dotted spaces, as well as the handle, which though often itself of leafage, is always convenient for the hand.

¹ [In bronze: in the choir of St. Sebald's Church; the masterpiece of Peter Vischer (1455–1529), who worked at it for twelve years (1508–1519), assisted by his five sons. His piece in the Cathedral of Magdeburg—the Monument of Archbishop Ernest, in the Lady Chapel—is an earlier work (completed in 1495). Among the famous bronze fountains of Nuremberg are (1) the Tugendbrunnen, in the square of St. Lorenz (by Wurzelbauer, 1589); (2) the "Gänsemännchen," in the Goose Market (by Pancraz Labenwolf, 1557); and (3) the fountain, by the same artist (1556), in the courtyard of the Rathhaus.]

steep roofs.¹ The German house does so in far greater degree. Plate 76 is engraved* from a slight pen-and-ink sketch of mine on the ramparts of Nuremberg, showing a piece of its moat and wall, and a little corner of the city beneath the castle; of which the tower on the extreme right rises just in front of Dürer's house. The character of this scene approaches more nearly that which Dürer would see in his daily walks, than most of the modernized inner streets. In Dürer's own engraving, "The Cannon," the distance (of which the most important passage is facsimiled in my *Elements of Drawing*, § 98²) is an actual portrait of part of the landscape seen from those castle ramparts, looking towards Franconian Switzerland.

§ 8. If the reader will be at the pains to turn to it, he will see at a glance the elements of the Nuremberg country, as they still exist. Wooden cottages, thickly grouped, enormously high in the roofs; the sharp church spire, small and slightly grotesque, surmounting them; beyond, a richly cultivated, healthy plain, bounded by woody hills. By a strange coincidence the very plant which constitutes the staple produce of those fields, is in almost ludicrous harmony with the grotesqueness and neatness of the architecture around; and one may almost fancy that the builders of the little knotted spires and turrets of the town, and workers of its dark iron flowers, are in spiritual presence, watching and guiding the produce of the field,—when one finds the footpaths bordered, everywhere, by the bossy spires and lustrous jetty flowers of the black hollyhock.

§ 9. Lastly, when Dürer penetrated among those hills of Franconia he would find himself in a pastoral country, much resembling the Gruyère districts of Switzerland, but less thickly inhabited, and giving in its steep, though not

* By Mr. Le Keux, very admirably.

¹ [The reference seems to be to *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. ch. xiii. (Vol. IX. p. 187), where, however, the point is made not specially of English cottages, but of "the steep roof throughout the North."]

² [See Fig. 13 in Vol. XV. p. 86.]



J. Ruskin.

J. H. Le Wren.

76. The Moat of Nuremberg.

lofty, rocks,—its scattered pines,—and its fortresses and chapels, the motives of all the wilder landscape introduced by the painter in such pieces as his St. Jerome, or St. Hubert.¹ His continual and forced introduction of sea in almost every scene, much as it seems to me to be regretted, is possibly owing to his happy recollections of the sea-city where he received the rarest of all rewards granted to a good workman; and, for once in his life, was understood.²

§ 10. Among this pastoral simplicity and formal sweetness of domestic peace, Dürer had to work out his question concerning the grave. It haunted him long; he learnt to engrave death's-heads well before he had done with it; looked deeper than any other man into those strange rings, their jewels lost; and gave answer at last conclusively in his great Knight and Death—of which more presently. But while the Nuremberg landscape is still fresh in our minds, we had better turn south quickly, and compare the elements of education which formed, and of creation which companioned, Salvator.³

§ 11. Born with a wild and coarse nature (how coarse I will show you soon), but nevertheless an honest one, he set himself in youth hotly to the war, and cast himself carelessly on the current, of life. No rectitude of ledgerlines stood in his way; no tender precision of household customs; no calm successions of rural labour. But past his half-starved lips rolled profusion of pitiless wealth; before him glared and swept the troops of shameless pleasure. Above him muttered Vesuvius; beneath his feet shook the Solfatara.

In heart disdainful, in temper adventurous; conscious of power, impatient of labour, and yet more of the pride

¹ [For another reference to Dürer's "St. Jerome" and "St. Hubert," see *Eagle's Nest*, Preface; and for the latter see also above, Part vi. ch. x. § 19 (p. 126); *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 58); and *Lectures on Art*, § 47.]

² [For an extract from Dürer's diary describing the appreciation of him shown by Giovanni Bellini, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i., Appendix 11 (Vol. IX. p. 436).]

³ [For particulars of the painter's career, see *The Life and Times of Salvator Rosa*, by Lady Morgan (new edition, 1855).]

of the patrons of his youth, he fled to the Calabrian hills, seeking, not knowledge, but freedom. If he was to be surrounded by cruelty and deceit, let them at least be those of brave men or savage beasts, not of the timorous and the contemptible. Better the wrath of the robber, than enmity of the priest; and the cunning of the wolf than of the hypocrite.

§ 12. We are accustomed to hear the south of Italy spoken of as a beautiful country. Its mountain forms are graceful above others, its sea bays exquisite in outline and hue; but it is only beautiful in superficial aspect. In closer detail it is wild and melancholy.¹ Its forests are sombreleaved, labyrinth-stemmed; the carubbe, the olive, laurel, and ilex, are alike in that strange feverish twisting of their branches, as if in spasms of half human pain:—Avernus forests; one fears to break their boughs, lest they should cry to us from the rents; the rocks they shade are of ashes, or thrice-molten lava; iron sponge whose every pore has been filled with fire. Silent villages, earthquake shaken, without commerce, without industry, without knowledge, without hope, gleam in white ruin from hillside to hillside; far-winding wrecks of immemorial walls surround the dust of cities long forsaken: the mountain streams moan through the cold arches of their foundations, green with weed, and rage over the heaps of their fallen towers. Far above, in thunder-blue serration, stand the eternal edges of the angry Apennine, dark with rolling impudence of volcanic cloud.

§ 13. Yet even among such scenes as these, Salvator might have been calmed and exalted, had he been, indeed, capable of exaltation. But he was not of high temper enough to perceive beauty. He had not the sacred sense—the sense of colour;² all the loveliest hues of the Calabrian air were invisible to him; the sorrowful desolation of the

¹ [For Ruskin's first impressions of Southern Italy in this sense, see *Præterita*, ii. ch. iii. §§ 49–51.]

² [For another reference to Salvator in this sense, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 173–174).]

Calabrian villages unfelt. He saw only what was gross and terrible,—the jagged peak, the splintered tree, the flowerless bank of grass, and wandering weed, prickly and pale. His temper confirmed itself in evil, and became more and more fierce and morose; though not, I believe, cruel, ungenerous, or lascivious. I should not suspect Salvator of wantonly inflicting pain. His constantly painting it does not prove he delighted in it; he felt the horror of it, and in that horror, fascination. Also, he desired fame, and saw that here was an untried field rich enough in morbid excitement to catch the humour of his indolent patrons. But the gloom gained upon him, and grasped him. He could jest, indeed, as men jest in prison-yards (he became afterwards a renowned mime in Florence); his satires are full of good mocking, but his own doom to sadness is never repealed.

§ 14. Of all men whose work I have ever studied, he gives me most distinctly the idea of a lost spirit. Michelet¹ calls him, “Ce damné Salvator,” perhaps in a sense merely harsh and violent; the epithet to me seems true in a more literal, more merciful sense,—“That condemned Salvator.” I see in him, notwithstanding all his baseness, the last traces of spiritual life in the art of Europe. He was the last man to whom the thought of a spiritual existence presented itself as a conceivable reality. All succeeding men, however powerful—Rembrandt, Rubens, Vandyck, Reynolds—would have mocked at the idea of a spirit. They were men of the world; they are never in earnest, and they are never appalled. But Salvator was capable of pensiveness, of faith, and of fear. The misery of the earth is a marvel to him; he cannot leave off gazing at it. The religion of the earth is a horror to him. He gnashes his teeth at it, rages at it, mocks and gibes at it. He would have acknowledged religion, had he seen any that was true. Anything rather than that baseness which he

¹ [*Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille*. Paris: 1845, p. 47. The passage is again referred to in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 201 n.)]

did see. "If there is no other religion than this of pope and cardinals, let us to the robber's ambush and the dragon's den." He was capable of fear also. The gray spectre, horse-headed, striding across the sky—in the Pitti Palace—its bat wings spread, green bars of the twilight seen between its bones; it was no play to him—the painting of it.¹ Helpless Salvator! A little early sympathy, a word of true guidance, perhaps, had saved him. What says he of himself? "Despiser of wealth and of death."² Two grand scorns; but, oh, condemned Salvator! the question is not for man what he can scorn, but what he can love.³

§ 15. I do not care to trace the various hold which Hades takes on this fallen soul. It is no part of my work here to analyze his art, nor even that of Dürer; all that we need to note is the opposite answer they gave to the question about death.

To Salvator it came in narrow terms. Desolation, without hope, throughout the fields of nature he had to explore; hypocrisy and sensuality, triumphant and shameless, in the

¹ [The picture is the "Temptation of St. Anthony." Ruskin, in his Florentine diary (1845), thus describes it:—

"A fine thought in its way, showing more mind than any other Salvator in the Pitti. The colossal skeleton figure is very ghastly, the black clouds and green lighted sky equally so; and though we might complain of the beggar man put for St. Anthony, yet he is useful because he throws the spectre more into the shade by the full light upon him. It is remarkable how much the horror and power of the whole depend on the green lights of the gaps in the sky, how much they would diminish were the background altogether gloom."

For other references to the picture, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 86 n., 319 n.).]

² [The reference is to Salvator's etching known as the "Genius of Salvator Rosa." The scene represents a wooded spot, with a fragment of architectural ruin, shaded by cypress trees, before which stands the figure of a Roman philosopher, holding a balance in his hand. Near him stands a satyr, holding a roll of paper which he points to the balance. At the feet of both reclines a man who carelessly rejects the treasures which Wealth pours from her cornucopia; a dead dove lies on his bosom, and his eyes are turned to Liberty, who presents her cap. Painting appears in the background, leaning on an entablature; and underneath Salvator has engraved the following distich:—

"Ingenuus, liber, Pictor, succensor et æquus,
Spretor opum, et mortis, hic meus est genius."

³ [Compare Ruskin's use of Wordsworth's line, "We live by admiration, hope, and love" (Vol. V. p. 28, and a note in the author's index to *Fors Clavigera*); see also *Eagle's Nest*, § 169.]

cities from which he derived his support. His life, so far as any nobility remained in it, could only pass in horror, disdain, or despair. It is difficult to say which of the three prevails most in his common work; but his answer to the great question was of despair only. He represents “Umana Fragilita”¹ by the type of a skeleton with plummy wings, leaning over a woman and child; the earth covered with ruin round them—a thistle, casting its seed, the only fruit of it. “Thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.”² The same tone of thought marks all Salvator’s more earnest work.

§ 16. On the contrary, in the sight of Dürer, things were for the most part as they ought to be. Men did their work in his city and in the fields round it. The clergy were sincere. Great social questions unagitated; great social evils either non-existent, or seemingly a part of the nature of things, and inevitable. His answer was that of patient hope; and twofold, consisting of one design in praise of Fortitude, and another in praise of Labour. The Fortitude, commonly known as the “Knight and Death,”³ represents a knight riding through a dark valley overhung by leafless trees, and with a great castle on a hill beyond. Beside him, but a little in advance, rides Death on a pale horse. Death is gray-haired and crowned;—serpents wreathed about his crown; (the sting of Death involved in the kingly power). He holds up the hour-glass, and looks earnestly into the knight’s face. Behind him follows Sin; but Sin powerless; he has been conquered and passed by, but follows yet, watching if any way of assault remains. On his forehead

¹ [This was a famous picture which, with a companion piece, “Fortuna,” painted in Rome, caused Salvator to be threatened by the Inquisition; for a fuller description of it, see Lady Morgan’s book, p. 167.]

² [Genesis iii. 18.]

³ [Ruskin placed a copy of this engraving in his Drawing School at Oxford; see his Catalogue of the “Standard Series” (No. 9), where he interprets the allegory somewhat differently—not as “the victory of human patience over death and sin,” but as Nemesis, “the patience and victory being meant to be Death’s and the Fiend’s, not the rider’s”: see note on that passage. For other references to the sentiment of the Plate, see Vol. XI. p. 172, *Time and Tide*, § 51 (where the interpretation given here is accepted); and to its technique, Vol. V. p. 137.]



Albert Dürer

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Knight and Death

are two horns—I think of sea-shell—to indicate his insatiableness and instability. He has also the twisted horns of the ram, for stubbornness, the ears of an ass, the snout of a swine, the hoofs of a goat. Torn wings hang useless from his shoulders, and he carries a spear with two hooks, for catching as well as wounding. The knight does not heed him, nor even Death, though he is conscious of the presence of the last.

He rides quietly, his bridle firm in his hand, and his lips set close in a slight sorrowful smile, for he hears what Death is saying; and hears it as the word of a messenger who brings pleasant tidings, thinking to bring evil ones. A little branch of delicate heath is twisted round his helmet. His horse trots proudly and straight; its head high, and with a cluster of oak on the brow where on the fiend's brow is the sea-shell horn. But the horse of Death stoops its head; and its rein catches the little bell which hangs from the knight's horse-bridle, making it toll as a passing-bell.*

* This was first pointed out to me by a friend—Mr. Robin Allen.¹ It is a beautiful thought: yet, possibly, an after-thought. I have some suspicion that there is an alteration in the plate at that place, and that the rope to which the bell hangs was originally the line of the chest of the

¹ [Mr. Robin Allen was Secretary to the Trinity House. He had approached Ruskin for help in the study of art. From some letters (communicated to the editors by his daughter, Miss Allen, of Girton College, Cambridge) it appears that Ruskin lent him various Plates by Turner and Dürer to copy. In sending the "Knight and Death" Ruskin wrote (January 12, 1855):—

"You will in it see the finest possible work of the human hand and thought, as far as they can be put or expressed in black lines. It is impossible to copy these Albert engravings except with the steel point on copper, but with a fine steel pen you can try one or two little bits—just to make you feel them more—the hair on the forehead of Death's horse, for instance, or the chin of the Dog, or the branches of the trees.

"When you have done so, gather a twig from any bush, and stick it before you against a sheet of white paper, and draw it from nature in Albert Dürer's manner, with a steel pen as well as you can—not too much, a mere twig to begin with. Always as smooth paper as you can get, thick white post very good; and ink not fresh, but that has been about the house some time and is black and thickish. Outline the twig carefully in pencil first, shutting one eye and not moving the other, or you will get puzzled. Let the twig be small, so that you can draw it real size—with all its knots and oddnesses."]

§ 17. Dürer's second answer is the plate of "Melancholia," which is the history of the sorrowful toil of the earth, as the "Knight and Death" is of its sorrowful patience under temptation.

Salvator's answer, remember, is in both respects that of despair. Death, as he reads, lord of temptation, is victor over the spirit of man; and lord of ruin, is victor over the work of man. Dürer declares the sad but unsullied conquest over Death the tempter; and the sad but enduring conquest over Death the destroyer.

§ 18. Though the general intent of the Melancholia is clear, and to be felt at a glance, I am in some doubt respecting its special symbolism.¹ I do not know how far Dürer intended to show that labour, in many of its most

nearer horse, as the grass blades about the lifted hind leg conceal the lines which could not, in Dürer's way of work, be effaced, indicating its first intended position. What a proof of his general decision of handling is involved in this "repentir!"

¹ [In the first draft the doubt about the interpretation is thus further explained:—

"I am still in some doubt respecting the symbolism of the Melancholia, Dürer's second answer. I do not know whether the word on the scroll indeed refers to the principal figure, and Dürer therefore meant to express the sadness (wild and dark or melancholic sadness) of the Northern mind, leading it to cruel but noble toil; or whether he intended the figure for the spirit of Toil itself; and the Melancholia (written on the wings) refers to the departing fiend and setting of the comet as the rainbow appears. I believe the first is the true meaning, but in either case the general purpose of the design is the history of human labour."

This Plate, again, was placed by Ruskin in his "Standard Series" (No. 4): see his Catalogue, where he refers to the present chapter, and explains the Melancholia as "the best type of the spirit of labour in which the greater number of strong men at the present day have to work;" though at the same time warning his pupils "against overrating the depth of the feeling in which the grave or terrible designs of the masters of the sixteenth century were executed." For other references to the sentiment of the Plate, see Vol. V. p. 134; to its technique, Vol. VI. p. 64 *n*. The "Knight and Death" was executed in 1513; the "Melancholia" in 1514, and in the same year appeared the "St. Jerome in his Study" (see above, p. 306). Dürer dwells so much in his writings upon the dominating influence of the Four Temperaments in life, that many commentators suppose the three Plates to have been part of a series intended to represent the Sanguine ("Knight and Death"), Melancholic, Phlegmatic ("St. Jerome"), and Choleric Temperaments. The magic square, bell, and hour-glass in the background of the Melancholia are interpreted as referring to the death of the artist's mother (May 17, 1514): see Anton Springer's *Albert Dürer*, ch. x. (Berlin, 1892); Lionel Cust's *Albert Dürer's Engravings* ("Portfolio Monograph," 1894), pp. 63–64; and Sir Martin Conway's *Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer* (Cambridge, 1889), p. 153.]



Albrecht Dürer

Allen & Co. So.

Melencolia

earnest forms, is closely connected with the morbid sadness or “dark anger,” of the northern nations. Truly some of the best work ever done for man, has been in that dark anger;* but I have not yet been able to determine for myself how far this is necessary, or how far great work may also be done with cheerfulness. If I knew what the truth was, I should be able to interpret Dürer better; meantime the design seems to me his answer to the complaint, “Yet is his strength labour and sorrow.”¹

“Yes,” he replies, “but labour and sorrow are his strength.”

§ 19. The labour indicated is in the daily work of men. Not the inspired or gifted labour of the few (it is labour connected with the sciences, not with the arts), shown in its four chief functions: thoughtful, faithful, calculating, and executing.

Thoughtful, first; all true power coming of that resolved, resistless calm of melancholy thought. This is the first and last message of the whole design. Faithful, the right arm of the spirit resting on the book. Calculating (chiefly in the sense of self-command), the compasses in her right hand. Executive—roughest instruments of labour at her feet: a crucible, and geometrical solids, indicating her work in the sciences. Over her head the hour-glass and the bell, for their continual words, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.”² Beside her, childish labour (lesson-learning?) sitting on an old millstone, with a tablet on its

* “Yet withal, you see that the Monarch is a great, valiant, cautious, melancholy, commanding man.”—*Friends in Council*, last volume, 3 p. 269; Milverton giving an account of Titian’s picture of Charles the Fifth. (Compare Ellesmere’s description of Milverton himself, p. 140.) Read carefully also what is said at p. 269 respecting Titian’s freedom, and fearless with-holding of flattery; comparing it with the note on Giorgione and Titian, here, pp. 439–440.

¹ [Psalms xc. 10.]

² [Ecclesiastes ix. 10.]

³ [*Friends in Council: a Series of Readings and Discourse Thereon*. A New Series. 2 vols. 1859. Ruskin refers to vol. ii. For previous references to the earlier series, see Vol. XI. p. 153.]

knees. I do not know what instrument it has in its hand. At her knees a wolf-hound asleep. In the distance a comet (the disorder and threatening of the universe) setting, the rainbow dominant over it. Her strong body is close girded for work; at her waist hang the keys of wealth; but the coin is cast aside contemptuously under her feet. She has eagle's wings, and is crowned with fair leafage of spring.

Yes, Albert of Nuremberg, it was a noble answer, yet an imperfect one. This is indeed the labour which is crowned with laurel and has the wings of the eagle. It was reserved for another country to prove, for another hand to portray, the labour which is crowned with fire, and has the wings of the bat.¹

¹ [See above, § 14, p. 308; and below, ch. x. § 25, p. 408.]

CHAPTER V

CLAUDE AND POUSSIN

§ 1. It was stated in the last chapter that Salvator was the last painter of Italy on whom any fading trace of the old faithful spirit rested. Carrying some of its passion far into the seventeenth century, he deserved to be remembered together with the painters whom the questioning of the Reformation had exercised eighty years before. Not so his contemporaries. The whole body of painters around him, but chiefly those of landscape, had cast aside all regard for the faith of their fathers, or for any other; and founded a school of art properly called "classical,"* of which the following are the chief characteristics.

§ 2. The belief in a supreme benevolent Being having ceased, and the sense of spiritual destitution fastening on the mind, together with the hopeless perception of ruin and decay in the existing world, the imagination sought to quit itself from the oppression of these ideas by realizing a perfect worldly felicity, in which the inevitable ruin should at least be lovely, and the necessarily short life entirely happy and refined. Labour must be banished, since it was to be unrewarded. Humiliation and degradation of body must be prevented, since there could be no compensation for them by preparation of the soul for another world. Let us eat and drink (refinedly), for to-morrow we die,¹ and attain the highest possible dignity as men in this world, since we shall have none as spirits in the next.

* The word "classical" is carelessly used in the preceding volumes, to signify the characters of the Greek or Roman nations. Henceforward, it is used in a limited and accurate sense, as defined in the text.

¹ [Quoted also in Vol. XIV. p. 341.]

§ 3. Observe, this is neither the Greek nor the Roman spirit. Neither Claude nor Poussin, nor any other painter or writer, properly termed “classical,” ever could enter into the Greek or Roman heart, which was as full, in many cases fuller, of the hope of immortality than our own.

On the absence of belief in a good supreme Being, follows, necessarily, the habit of looking to ourselves for supreme judgment in all matters, and for supreme government. Hence, first, the irreverent habit of judgment instead of admiration. It is generally expressed under the justly degrading term “good taste.”

§ 4. Hence, in the second place, the habit of restraint or self-government (instead of impulsive and limitless obedience), based upon pride, and involving, for the most part, scorn of the helpless and weak, and respect only for the orders of men who have been trained to this habit of self-government. Whence the title classical, from the Latin *classicus*.

§ 5. The school is, therefore, generally to be characterized as that of taste and restraint. As the school of taste, everything is, in its estimation, beneath it, so as to be tasted or tested; not above it, to be thankfully received. Nothing was to be fed upon as bread; but only palated as a dainty. This spirit has destroyed art since the close of the sixteenth century, and nearly destroyed French literature, our English literature being at the same time severely depressed, and our education (except in bodily strength) rendered nearly nugatory by it, so far as it affects commonplace minds. It is not possible that the classical spirit should ever take possession of a mind of the highest order. Pope is, as far as I know, the greatest man who ever fell strongly under its influence; and though it spoiled half his work, he broke through it continually into true enthusiasm and tender thought.* Again, as the school of reserve,

* Cold-hearted, I have called him.¹ He was so in writing the Pastorals,

¹ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 216); for a note on Ruskin's estimate of Pope generally, see Vol. XVI. p. 446.]

it refuses to allow itself in any violent or “spasmodic” passion; the schools of literature which have been in modern times called “spasmodic” being reactionary against it. The word, though an ugly one, is quite accurate, the most spasmodic books in the world being Solomon’s Song, Job, and Isaiah.

§ 6. The classical landscape, properly so called, is therefore the representative of perfectly trained and civilized human life, associated with perfect natural scenery and with decorative spiritual powers.

I will expand this definition a little.

(1.) Perfectly civilized human life; that is, life freed from the necessity of humiliating labour, from passions inducing bodily disease, and from abasing misfortune. The personages of the classical landscape, therefore, must be virtuous and amiable; if employed in labour, endowed with strength, such as may make it not oppressive. (Considered as a practical ideal, the classical life necessarily implies slavery, and the command, therefore, of a higher order of men over a lower, occupied in servile work.) Pastoral occupation is allowable as a contrast with city life. War, if undertaken by classical persons, must be a contest for honour, more than for life, not at all for wealth,* and free from all fearful or debasing passion. Classical persons must be trained in all the polite arts, and, because their health is to be perfect, chiefly in the open air. Hence, the architecture around them must be of the most finished kind, the rough country and ground being subdued by frequent and happy humanity.

§ 7. (2.) Such personages and buildings must be associated with natural scenery, uninjured by storms or inclemency of climate (such injury implying interruption of the open-air life); and it must be scenery conducing to pleasure,

of which I then spoke; but in after life his errors were those of his time, his wisdom was his own; it would be well if we also made it ours.

* Because the pursuit of wealth is inconsistent at once with the peace and dignity of perfect life.

not to material service; all cornfields, orchards, olive-yards, and such like, being under the management of slaves,* and the superior beings having nothing to do with them; but passing their lives under avenues of scented and otherwise delightful trees,—under picturesque rocks, and by clear fountains.

§ 8. (3.) The spiritual powers in classical scenery must be decorative; ornamental gods, not governing gods; otherwise they could not be subjected to the principles of taste, but would demand reverence. In order, therefore, as far as possible, without taking away their supernatural power, to destroy their dignity, they are made more criminal and capricious than men, and, for the most part, those only are introduced who are the lords of lascivious pleasures. For the appearance of any great god would at once destroy the whole theory of the classical life; therefore, Pan, Bacchus, and the Satyrs, with Venus and the Nymphs, are the principal spiritual powers of the classical landscape. Apollo with the Muses appear as the patrons of the liberal arts. Minerva rarely presents herself (except to be insulted by judgment of Paris); Juno seldom, except for some purpose of tyranny; Jupiter seldom, but for purpose of amour.

§ 9. Such being the general ideal of the classical landscape, it can hardly be necessary to show the reader how such charm as it possesses must in general be strong only over weak or second-rate orders of mind. It has, however, been often experimentally or playfully aimed at by great men; but I shall only take note of its two leading masters.

§ 10. Claude. (I.) As I shall have no farther occasion to refer to this painter, I will resume, shortly, what has been said of him throughout the work. He had a fine feeling for beauty of form, and considerable tenderness of perception.

* It is curious, as marking the peculiarity of the classical spirit in its resolute degradation of the lower orders, that a sailing vessel is hardly admissible in a classical landscape, because its management implies too much elevation of the inferior life. But a gallery, with oars, is admissible, because the rowers may be conceived as absolute slaves.

(Vol. I., p. 75; Vol. III., p. 325.¹) His aerial effects are unequalled. (Vol. III., p. 326.) Their character appears to me to arise rather from a delicacy of bodily constitution in Claude, than from any mental sensibility: such as they are, they give a kind of feminine charm to his work, which partly accounts for its wide influence. To whatever the character may be traced, it renders him incapable of enjoying or painting anything energetic or terrible. Hence the weakness of his conceptions of rough sea. (Vol. I., p. 76.)

(II.) He had sincerity of purpose. (Vol. III., p. 325.) But in common with other landscape painters of his day, neither earnestness, humility, nor love, such as would ever cause him to forget himself. (Vol. I., p. 76.)

That is to say, so far as he felt the truth, he tried to be true; but he never felt it enough to sacrifice supposed propriety or habitual method to it. Very few of his sketches, and none of his pictures, show evidence of interest in other natural phenomena than the quiet afternoon sunshine which would fall methodically into a composition. One would suppose he had never seen scarlet in a morning cloud, nor a storm burst on the Apennines. But he enjoys a quiet misty afternoon in a ruminant sort of way (Vol. III., p. 329), yet truly; and strives for the likeness of it, therein differing from Salvator, who never attempts to be truthful, but only to be impressive.

§ 11. (III.) His seas are the most beautiful in old art. (Vol. I., p. 340.) For he studied tame waves, as he did tame skies, with great sincerity, and some affection; and modelled them with more care not only than any other landscape painter of his day, but even than any of the great men; for they, seeing the perfect painting of sea to

¹ [These and the following references in the text are to the original editions of *Modern Painters*. They may be thus summarised with reference to this edition: Vol. III. (*Modern Painters*, vol. i.), pp. 41–42, 167, 168, 517; Vol. IV. p. 231; Vol. V. pp. 400, 401–405. For other earlier references to Claude in *Modern Painters* and elsewhere, see the General Index. Ruskin returned to him for a moment in the lectures in *The Art of England* (1884), § 9, when he spoke of his sunshine as “colourless,—only the golden haze of a quiet afternoon.”]

be impossible, gave up the attempt, and treated it conventionally. But Claude took so much pains about this, feeling it was one of his *fortes*, that I suppose no one can model a small wave better than he.

IV. He first set the pictorial sun in the pictorial heaven. (Vol. III., p. 325.) We will give him the credit of this, with no drawbacks.

V. He had hardly any knowledge of physical science (Vol. I., p. 75), and shows a peculiar incapacity of understanding the main point of a matter. (Vol. III., p. 329.) Connected with which incapacity is his want of harmony in expression. (Vol. II., p. 144.) (Compare, for illustration of this, the account of the picture of the Mill in the preface to Vol. I.)

§ 12. Such were the principal qualities of the leading painter of classical landscape, his effeminate softness causing him to dislike all evidences of toil, or distress, or terror, and to delight in the calm formalities which mark the school.

Although he often introduces romantic incidents and mediæval as well as Greek or Roman personages, his landscape is always in the true sense classic—everything being “elegantly” (selectingly or tastefully), not passionately, treated. The absence of indications of rural labour, of hedges, ditches, haystacks, ploughed fields, and the like; the frequent occurrence of ruins of temples, or masses of unruined palaces; and the graceful wildness of growth in his trees, are the principal sources of the “elevated” character which so many persons feel in his scenery.

There is no other sentiment traceable in his work than this weak dislike to entertain the conception of toil or suffering. Ideas of relation, in the true sense, he has none; nor ever makes an effort to conceive an event in its probable circumstances, but fills his foregrounds with decorative figures, using commonest conventionalism to indicate the subject he intends. We may take two examples, merely to show the general character of such designs of his.

§ 13. (1.) St. George and the Dragon.¹

The scene is a beautiful opening in woods by a river side, a pleasant fountain springs on the right, and the usual rich vegetation covers the foreground. The dragon is about the size of ten bramble leaves, and is being killed by the remains of a lance, barely the thickness of a walking-stick,² in his throat, curling his tail in a highly offensive and threatening manner. St. George, notwithstanding, on a prancing horse, brandishes his sword, at about thirty yards' distance from the offensive animal.

A semicircular shelf of rocks encircles the foreground, by which the theatre of action is divided into pit and boxes. Some women and children having descended unadvisedly into the pit, are helping each other out of it again, with marked precipitation. A prudent person of rank has taken a front seat in the boxes,—crosses his legs, leans his head on his hand, and contemplates the proceedings with the air of a connoisseur. Two attendants stand in graceful attitudes behind him, and two more walk away under the trees, conversing on general subjects.

§ 14. (2.) Worship of the Golden Calf.³

The scene is nearly the same as that of the St. George; but in order better to express the desert of Sinai, the river is much larger, and the trees and vegetation softer. Two people, uninterested in the idolatrous ceremonies, are rowing in a pleasure boat on the river. The calf is about sixteen inches long (perhaps, we ought to give Claude credit for remembering that it was made of ear-rings, though he might as well have inquired how large Egyptian ear-rings were). Aaron has put it on a handsome pillar, under which five people are dancing, and twenty-eight, with several children, worshipping. Refreshments for the dancers are provided in four large vases under a tree on the left, presided over by

¹ [No. 73 in *Liber Veritatis*.]

² [For another illustration of the absurdity of Claude's weapons, see Vol. XII. p. 495 (Fig. 29), and Vol. V. p. 404.]

³ [For another reference to this work (No. 129 in *Liber Veritatis*), see Vol. V. p. 157.]

a dignified person holding a dog in a leash. Under the distant group of trees appears Moses, conducted by some younger personage (Nadab or Abihu). This younger personage holds up his hands, and Moses, in the way usually expected of him, breaks the tables of the law, which are as large as an ordinary octavo volume.

§ 15. I need not proceed farther, for any reader of sense or ordinary powers of thought can thus examine the subjects of Claude, one by one, for himself. We may quit him with these few final statements concerning him.

The admiration of his works was legitimate, so far as it regarded their sunlight effects and their graceful details. It was base, in so far as it involved irreverence both for the deeper powers of nature, and carelessness as to conception of subject. Large admiration of Claude is wholly impossible in any period of national vigour in art. He may by such tenderness as he possesses, and by the very fact of his banishing painfulness, exercise considerable influence over certain classes of minds; but this influence is almost exclusively hurtful to them.

§ 16. Nevertheless, on account of such small sterling qualities as they possess, and of their general pleasantness, as well as their importance in the history of art, genuine Claudes must always possess a considerable value, either as drawing-room ornaments or museum relics. They may be ranked with fine pieces of china manufacture, and other agreeable curiosities, of which the price depends on the rarity rather than the merit, yet always on a merit of a certain low kind.

§ 17. The other characteristic master of classical landscape is Nicolo Poussin.

I named Claude first, because the forms of scenery he has represented are richer and more general than Poussin's; but Poussin has a far greater power, and his landscapes, though more limited in material, are incomparably nobler than Claude's. It would take considerable time to enter into accurate analysis of Poussin's strong but degraded

mind; and bring us no reward, because whatever he has done has been done better by Titian. His peculiarities are, without exception, weaknesses, induced in a highly intellectual and inventive mind by being fed on medals, books, and bassi-relievi instead of nature, and by the want of any deep sensibility. His best works are his Bacchanalian revels, always brightly wanton and wild, full of frisk and fire; but they are coarser than Titian's, and infinitely less beautiful. In all minglings of the human and brutal character he leans on the bestial, yet with a sternly Greek severity of treatment. This restraint, peculiarly classical, is much too manifest in him; for, owing to his habit of never letting himself be free, he does nothing as well as it ought to be done, rarely even as well as he can himself do it; and his best beauty is poor, incomplete, and characterless, though refined. The Nymph pressing the honey in the "Nursing of Jupiter," and the Muse leaning against the tree, in the "Inspiration of Poet" (both in the Dulwich Gallery), appear to me examples of about his highest reach in this sphere.¹

§ 18. His want of sensibility permits him to paint frightful subjects, without feeling any true horror: his pictures of the Plague, the Death of Polydectes, etc., are thus ghastly in incident, sometimes disgusting, but never impressive. The prominence of the bleeding head in the Triumph of David marks the same temper. His battle-pieces are cold and feeble; his religious subjects wholly nugatory, they do not excite him enough to develop even his ordinary powers of invention. Neither does he put much power into his landscape when it becomes principal;

¹ [For the "Nursing of Jupiter" (No. 234 in the Dulwich Gallery), see Vol. III. p. 30; and for the "Inspiration of a Poet" (No. 229), *ibid.*, p. 323 *n.* The "Plague at Ashdod" is the subject of a picture in the National Gallery (No. 165); also of one in the Louvre (No. 710), for which see Vol. XII. p. 454. By the "Death of Polydectes" Ruskin perhaps refers to Poussin's picture of another incident in the legend of Perseus—namely, "Phineus and his followers turned into stone at the sight of the Gorgon's head"; the picture (formerly in the National Gallery, No. 83) is now in the National Gallery of Dublin. The "Triumph of David" is in the Dulwich Gallery (No. 236). For the "Deluge," in the Louvre (No. 739), see Vol. III. p. 518; Vol. IV. p. 200; Vol. VI. p. 297.]

the best pieces of it occur in fragments behind his figures. Beautiful vegetation, more or less ornamental in character, occurs in nearly all his mythological subjects, but his pure landscape is notable only for its dignified reserve; the great squareness and horizontality of its masses, with lowness of tone, giving it a deeply meditative character. His Deluge might be much depreciated, under this head of ideas of relation, but it is so uncharacteristic of him that I pass it by. Whatever power this lowness of tone, light in the distance, etc., give to his landscape, or to Gaspar's (compare Vol. II., Chapter on Infinity, § 12),¹ is in both conventional and artificial.

I have nothing, therefore, to add farther, here, to what was said of him in Vol. I.;² and, as no other older masters

¹ [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 86.]

² [In this edition, Vol. III. p. 185. In his "Notes on the Gallery of Turin" (see above, p. xxxix. *n.*) Ruskin wrote this general characterisation of Poussin under the head of his "St. Margaret and the Dragon" in the Turin Gallery:—

"Poussin is really a great man, but wickedly, or rather brutally, minded, and therefore approaches a sacred subject with utter distaste and incapacity for it. I call him brutally rather than wickedly minded, because he has none of the love of crime and pain for their own sake which Salvator and Caravaggio have.

"Poussin is a sort of amiable beast, liking to see other beasts happy, and having, in his own way, a perception of beauty, and delight in it, such as a horse or fawn might have.

"Nobody ever drew Centaurs like Poussin—he seems a perfect Centaur himself. His female Centaurs especially seem quite the types of his own mind: high-bred creatures they are, exquisitely limbed, fine and fierce in all their senses; gay and bright, full of splendid animal spirit, graceful in neck, quick in eye, lustful, capricious, proud, petulant, all in the extreme. Besides all this, however, as he has a perfect right to his well-known title 'learned' both in the rules of his own art and in classical fable, there results a curious heathen severity mixed with and subduing the sensuality, such as no other painter ever exhibited. Hence he is only seen in perfection in such subjects as the triumph of Flora in the Louvre, or the nursing of Jupiter in the Dulwich Gallery, where his classical taste is shown in the figure of the nymph, and his animal character in the child sucking the goat; or the Bacchanal in the National Gallery, where the satyr is pursuing the female Centaur. In a religious subject like this, which he feels too much the proprieties of art to treat as Guido would have treated it (making St. Margaret merely a pretty lady), and trying, as he thinks he ought to try, to produce something religious and grand and chaste, while his own soul is entirely made up of Bacchanalian passion, it is impossible to fail more utterly: never was such an ugly, dull, hard, ineffective, melancholy, log of a femal saint since women *were* saints.

"It is curious also that the classical temper seems as adverse to the true grotesque as it is to the saintly: for the dragon fails us entirely as

of the classical landscape are worth any special note, we will pass on at once to a school of humbler but more vital power.

the saint; and considering how much Poussin knew of animal form, this failure is quite a phenomenon to me. I cannot understand his want of invention in such an easy thing—easy, that is to say, up to a certain point. I must think over this.” For “learned” Poussin, see Vol. III. p. 18 *n.*; for “Flora” in the Louvre, see Vol. V. p. 406, and Vol. XII. p. 470; the Bacchanal is No. 42 in the National Gallery.]

CHAPTER VI

RUBENS AND CUYP

§ 1. THE examination of the causes which led to the final departure of the religious spirit from the hearts of painters, would involve discussion of the whole scope of the Reformation on the minds of persons unconcerned directly in its progress. This is of course impossible.

One or two broad facts only can be stated, which the reader may verify, if he pleases, by his own labour. I do not give them rashly.

§ 2. The strength of the Reformation lay entirely in its being a movement towards purity of practice.

The Catholic priesthood was hostile to it in proportion to the degree in which they had been false to their own principles of moral action, and had become corrupt or worldly in heart.

The Reformers indeed cast out many absurdities, and demonstrated many fallacies, in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. But they themselves introduced errors, which rent the ranks, and finally arrested the march of the Reformation, and which paralyze the Protestant Church to this day. Errors of which the fatality was increased by the controversial bent which lost accuracy of meaning in force of declamation, and turned expressions, which ought to be used only in retired depth of thought, into phrases of custom, or watchwords of attack. Owing to which habits of hot, ingenious, and unguarded controversy, the Reformed Churches themselves soon forgot the meaning of the word which, of all words, was oftenest in their mouths. They forgot that *pistiV* is a derivative of *peiqomai*, not of *pisteuw*, and that “fides,” closely connected with “fio” on one side,

and with “confido” on the other, is but distantly related to “credo.”*

§ 3. By whatever means, however, the reader may himself be disposed to admit, the Reformation *was* arrested; and got itself shut up into chancels of cathedrals in England (even those, generally too large for it), and into conventicles everywhere else. Then rising between the infancy of Reformation, and the palsy of Catholicism;—between a new shell of half-built religion on one side, daubed with untempered mortar, and a falling ruin of out-worn religion on the other, lizard-crannied, and ivy-grown;—rose, on its independent foundation, the faithless and materialized mind of modern Europe—ending in the rationalism of Germany, the polite formalism of England, the careless blasphemy of France, and the helpless sensualities of Italy; in the midst of which, steadily advancing science, and the charities of more and more widely extended peace, are preparing the way for a Christian Church, which shall depend neither on ignorance for its continuance, nor on controversy for its progress, but shall reign at once in light and love.

§ 4. The whole body of painters (such of them as were left,) necessarily fell into the rationalistic chasm. The Evangelicals despised the arts, while the Roman Catholics were effete or insincere, and could not retain influence over men of strong reasoning power.

The painters could only associate frankly with men of

* None of our present forms of opinion are more curious than those which have developed themselves from this verbal carelessness. It never seems to strike any of our religious teachers, that if a child has a father living, it either *knows* it has a father, or does not: it does not “believe” it has a father. We should be surprised to see an intelligent child standing at its garden gate, crying out to the passers-by: “I believe in my father, because he built this house;” as logical people proclaim that they believe in God, because He must have made the world.¹

¹ [In place of this note the MS. reads:—

“It would be hard to say by which of its derivatives that unhappy word ‘credo’ has done more mischief to mankind,—by its religious one of ‘creed,’ or its commercial one of ‘credit.’”

On these etymologies, see further *Munera Pulveris*, § 81 *n.*, and Appendix *v. n.*; and in this volume, compare p. 213.]

the world, and themselves became men of the world. Men, I mean, having no belief in spiritual existences, no interests or affections beyond the grave.

§ 5. Not but that they still painted scriptural subjects. Altar-pieces were wanted occasionally, and pious patrons sometimes commissioned a cabinet Madonna. But there is just this difference between the men of this modern period, and the Florentines or Venetians—that whereas the latter never exert themselves fully except on a sacred subject, the Flemish and Dutch masters are always languid unless they are profane. Leonardo is only to be seen in the *Cena*; Titian only in the *Assumption*; but Rubens only in the *Battle of the Amazons*, and Vandyck only at court.¹

§ 6. Altar-pieces, when wanted, of course either of them will supply as readily as anything else. Virgins in blue,* or St. Johns in red,† as many as you please. Martyrdoms also, by all means: Rubens especially delights in these. St. Peter, head downwards,‡ is interesting anatomically; writhings of impenitent thieves, and bishops having their tongues pulled out, display our powers to advantage, also.§ Theological instruction, if required: “Christ armed with thunder, to destroy the world, spares it at the intercession of St. Francis.” || Last Judgments even, quite Michael-Angelesque, rich in twistings of limbs, with spiteful biting, and scratching; and fine aerial effects in smoke of the pit.¶

§ 7. In all this, however, there is not a vestige of religious feeling or reverence. We have even some visible difficulty in meeting our patron’s pious wishes. Daniel in the lion’s den is indeed an available subject, but duller than

* Düsseldorf.	† Antwerp.	‡ Cologne,
§ Brussels.	Brussels.	¶ Munich. ²

¹ [For Leonardo’s “Cenacolo” at Milan, see Vol. IV. p. 313; Vol. X. p. 306; for Titian’s “Assumption,” above, p. 289; Rubens’s “Battle of the Amazons” is at Munich (though Ruskin’s reference here is perhaps rather of a general character); on Vandyck as a court painter, see *Love’s Meinie*, § 1.]

² [The “Virgin in blue” is the “Assumption” by Rubens in the Academy of Art at Düsseldorf. Ruskin in his diary says of it, “A barbarous Assumption, by Rubens—frightfully vulgar.” The “St. John in red” is in the Museum at Antwerp

a lion hunt; and Mary of Nazareth must be painted if an order come for her; but (says polite Sir Peter), Mary of Medicis, or Catherine, her bodice being fuller, and better embroidered, would, if we might offer a suggestion, probably give greater satisfaction.¹

§ 8. No phenomenon in human mind is more extra-ordinary than the junction of this cold and worldly temper with great rectitude of principle, and tranquil kindness of heart. Rubens was an honourable and entirely well-intentioned man, earnestly industrious, simple and temperate in habits of life, high-bred, learned and discreet. His affection for his mother was great; his generosity to contemporary artists unfailing. He is a healthy, worthy, kind-hearted, courtly-phrased—Animal—without any clearly perceptible traces of a soul, except when he paints his children. Few descriptions of pictures could be more ludicrous in their pure animalism than those which he gives of his own. “It is a subject,” he writes to Sir D. Carleton, “neither sacred nor profane, although taken from Holy Writ, namely, Sarah in the act of scolding Hagar, who, pregnant, is leaving the house in a feminine and graceful manner, assisted by the Patriarch Abram.” (What a graceful apology, by

(No. 303). The pictures next mentioned, by Rubens, are described in Ruskin’s diary, being Nos. 4, 2, 3 of the following list:—

“1. Christ falling under cross: St. Veronica holding handkerchief.

“2. Martyrdom of St. Lieven (the executioner having torn his tongue out with pincers is giving it to a dog).

“3. Christ armed with thunder to destroy the world.

“4. St. Peter crucified.

“1, 2, 3 at Brussels (Museum) and 4 here [Cologne, Church of St. Peter], the most brutal and beastly pictures I ever saw in my life. Worse even than Salvator, because involving the abuse of a greater power. In 3, Christ stands like a dancing master, only with coarse bandy legs, St. Francis hugs the globe, cowering over it in a panic, and the Virgin points to her fat breast and stretches clumsily across to catch hold of Christ with the other arm. The detestableness of all that is most detestable in Romanist doctrine and its results is concentrated in this picture. All the four are equally bad in colour and touch, virtueless and vile, the distortion of limbs and line all swept about in this kind of way [sketch], and then legs and feet like this [sketch].”

For an earlier reference to the “St. Peter,” see Vol. II. p. 352. The “Last Judgment” by Rubens is in the Gallery at Munich.]

¹ [There are “Lion Hunts” by Rubens both at Dresden and at Munich; for his Medici series of pictures, see Vol. V. p. 135 and *n.*]

the way, instantly follows, for not having finished the picture himself.) "I have engaged, as is my custom, a very skilful man in his pursuit to finish the landscapes, solely to augment the enjoyment of Y. E.!"*

Again, in priced catalogue,—

"50 florins each.—The Twelve Apostles, with a Christ. Done by my scholars, from originals by my own hand, each having to be retouched by my hand throughout.

"600 florins.—A picture of Achilles clothed as a woman; done by the best of my scholars, and the whole retouched by my hand: a most brilliant picture, and full of many beautiful young girls."¹

§ 9. Observe, however, Rubens is always entirely honourable in his statements of what is done by himself and what not. He is religious too, after his manner; hears mass every morning, and perpetually uses the phrase "by the grace of God," or some other such, in writing of any business he takes in hand; but the tone of his religion may be determined by one fact.

We saw how Veronese painted himself, and his family, as worshipping the Madonna.

Rubens has also painted himself and his family in an equally elaborate piece. But they are not *worshipping* the Madonna. They are *performing* the Madonna, and her saintly entourage. His favourite wife "en Madonna"; his youngest boy "as Christ"; his father-in-law (or father, it matters not which) "as Simeon"; another elderly relation, with a beard, "as St. Jerome"; and he himself "as St. George."²

* Original Papers relating to Rubens; edited by W. Sainsbury. London, 1859: page 39. Y. E. is the person who commissioned the picture.

¹ [This is from a "List of Pictures which are in my house" enclosed in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, April 18, 1618 (*ibid.*, p. 30).]

² [For the picture by Veronese, see above, p. 290. The Rubens is the altar-piece in the private chapel of the Rubens family in the Church of St. Jacques at Antwerp. It is said that his two wives are introduced as Martha and Mary Magdalen, and his father as St. Jerome. For another comparison between the two pictures, see Vol. XVI. p. 470.]

§ 10. Rembrandt has also painted (it is, on the whole, his greatest picture, so far as I have seen) himself and his wife in a state of ideal happiness. He sits at supper with his wife on his knee, flourishing a glass of champagne, with a roast peacock on the table.¹

The Rubens is in the Church of St. James at Antwerp; the Rembrandt at Dresden—marvellous pictures, both. No more precious works by either painter exist. Their hearts, such as they have, are entirely in them; and the two pictures, not inaptly, represent the Faith and Hope of the seventeenth century. We have to stoop somewhat lower, in order to comprehend the pastoral and rustic scenery of Cuyp and Teniers, which must yet be held as forming one group with the historical art of Rubens, being connected with it by Rubens' pastoral landscape. To these, I say, we must stoop lower; for they are destitute, not of spiritual character only, but of spiritual thought.

Rubens often gives instructive and magnificent allegory; Rembrandt, pathetic or powerful fancies, founded on real scripture reading, and on his interest in the picturesque character of the Jew. And Vandyck, a graceful dramatic rendering of received scriptural legends.

But in the pastoral landscape we lose, not only all faith in religion, but all remembrance of it. Absolutely now at last we find ourselves without sight of God in all the world.

§ 11. So far as I can hear or read, this is an entirely new and wonderful state of things achieved by the Hollanders. The human being never got wholly quit of the terror of spiritual being before. Persian, Egyptian, Assyrian, Hindoo, Chinese, all kept some dim, appalling record of what they called "gods." Farthest savages had—and still have—their Great Spirit, or, in extremity, their feather-idols, large-eyed; but here in Holland we have at last got utterly done with it all. Our only idol glitters dimly,

¹ [The portrait is of his first wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh. For other references to it, see *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 54, and *Ariadne Florentina*, § 157.]

in tangible shape of a pint pot, and all the incense offered thereto, comes out of a small censer or bowl at the end of a pipe. "Of deities or virtues, angels, principalities, or powers,¹ in the name of our ditches, no more. Let us have cattle and market vegetables."

This is the first and essential character of the Holland landscape art. Its second is a worthier one; respect for rural life.²

§ 12. I should attach greater importance to this rural feeling, if there were any true humanity in it, or any feeling for beauty. But there is neither. No incidents of this lower life are painted for the sake of the incidents, but only for the effects of light. You will find that the best Dutch painters do not care about the people, but about the lustres on them. Paul Potter, their best herd

¹ [Ephesians iii. 10, quoted in Vol. X. p. 86, and *Munera Pulveris*, § 105.]

² [This chapter was much revised and rewritten. In the first draft the passage on Cuyp was different, and some further illustrations were introduced from the works of Ruysdael:—

"Cuyp's and all other Dutch work is essentially of surface. That looking for the glance of things is almost typical of their temper. It is never the fall of the dress, but its lustre; never the glow of the metal, but its flash; never the colour of the flower, but its smoothness. The Art of vacuity and varnish.

"It has one character of some merit however, a fixed business-like system of light and shade, which gives it an appearance of grandeur. The Dutch painters were well disciplined to their trade, dextrous in common methods of composition. Simple in plan of harmony, certain of touch, successful always up to their intended point. I imagine the Dutchmen to have been well satisfied with all their work, enjoying their tiny dexterities of finishing touch as a heartless speaker enjoys his own accurate pronunciation. Their work once finished, they looked on it complacently, as better than nature. Nature is not shiny, nor dotty, nor properly founded on grey, and has no principal lights. But our picture is Perfection. Nevertheless the appearance of dignity, and the really grammatical truth, attained in these low or sparkling tones by the practised hands of masters who never dared anything that could involve a chance of failure on their own parts, or any surprise or difficulty on that of the spectator, render many of their pictures impressive to persons who bring to them a fresh imagination, and who do not stay long enough to discover their emptiness. Every man of any power of mind is certain to be sometimes strongly impressed by the commonest aspects of nature: a painter who habitually chooses their commonest aspects is sure of catching his sympathies by some of them; and if the spectator has also authority for believing that the picture has merit, he will be more moved by its commonplaceness than he would have been by a work which appealed to new emotions, and demanded an unwonted mental exertion.

"There is a sea-piece of Ruysdael's in the Louvre, creditably painted in a dark grey tone, representing a shallow sea breaking on a reedy shore

and cattle painter, does not care even for sheep, but only for wool; regards not cows, but cowhide.¹ He attains great dexterity in drawing tufts and locks, lingers in the little parallel ravines and furrows of fleece that open across sheep's backs as they turn; is unsurpassed in twisting a horn or pointing a nose; but he cannot paint eyes, nor perceive any condition of an animal's mind, except its desire of grazing. Cuyp can, indeed, paint sunlight, the best that Holland's sun can show;² he is a man of large natural gift, and sees broadly, nay, even seriously; finds out—a wonderful thing for men to find out in those days—that there are reflections in water, and that boats require often to be painted upside down. A brewer by trade, he feels the quiet of a summer afternoon, and his work will make you marvellously drowsy. It is good for nothing else

under a rather uncomfortable north-east wind. It possesses about as much sublimity as Chelsea reach on the Nine Elms side on a March day with a smoky sky over the gasometers at Lambeth. Perhaps any one who had seen an inundation in Holland might be impressed by it, as being the kind of scene and weather likely to end in such extended calamity; but to any one acquainted with deep water and its work, it is not a sea-piece at all, but merely a gloomy study of the edge of a salt marsh. Yet the picture so impressed Michelet as to give rise to this striking passage in his sketch of the life of Swammerdam. . . . There is a little winter subject of Ruysdael at Dresden which I can imagine in like manner becoming very impressive to any person who had seen much suffering from cold; but in every case in which a Dutch picture thus appears sublime, the effect is merely due to the use of a minor key of colour, the absence of beautiful forms, and an accidental association. Had the snow, the sea, or the reeds been better painted, their beauty would have broken the dulness of the work; it is only by decrepitude and deficiency, not by pensiveness, that the Dutch depress us."

The Ruysdael in the Louvre is No. 2558; for other references to it, see Vol. III. p. 516, and Vol. XII. p. 454. The reference to Michelet's "sketch of the life of Swammerdam" is in book ii. ch. i. of his *L'Insecte* (already cited; above, p. 232); the reference to Ruysdael's picture is at p. 137 of the English edition.]

¹ [Compare a somewhat similar criticism on Rosa Bonheur in *Academy Notes*, 1858 (Vol. XIV. p. 174).]

² [For Cuyp's painting of sunlight, see Vol. III. pp. 268, 271, 272, 350; Vol. XIII. p. 545; Vol. XIV. p. 225; for his water and reflections, Vol. III. pp. 520, 525; for his clouds and skies, Vol. III. pp. 356, 368; for his foregrounds, Vol. III. p. 484; for his leaf-drawing, above, pt. vi. ch. v. §§ 3, 7 (pp. 52, 55). In all these passages the general tenour of the criticism is that Cuyp's study of nature was sincere so far as it went, but was limited in scope and not searching in accuracy. Hence, though he is included among the masters whom Ruskin depreciated (Vol. III. p. 85), yet his merits are not denied (Vol. III. pp. 167, 188). Turner imitated him and to good effect (Vol. V. p. 407; Vol. XII. p. 125); he is one of the "more skilful masters of the Dutch school" (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 56).]

that I know of; strong; but unhelpful and unthoughtful. Nothing happens in his pictures, except some indifferent person's asking the way of somebody else, who, by his cast of countenance, seems not likely to know it. For farther entertainment perhaps a red cow and a white one; or puppies at play, not playfully; the man's heart not going even with the puppies. Essentially he sees nothing but the shine on the flaps of their ears.

§ 13. Observe always, the fault lies not in the thing's being little, or the incident being slight. Titian could have put issues of life and death into the face of a man asking the way; nay, into the back of him, if he had so chosen. He has put a whole scheme of dogmatic theology into a row of bishops' backs at the Louvre.¹ And for dogs, Velasquez has made some of them nearly as grand as his surly kings.

Into the causes of which grandeur we must look a little, with respect not only to these puppies, and gray horses, and cattle of Cuyt, but to the hunting pieces of Rubens and Snyders. For closely connected with the Dutch rejection of motives of spiritual interest, is the increasing importance attached by them to animals, seen either in the chase or in agriculture; and to judge justly of the value of this animal painting, it will be necessary for us to glance at that of earlier times.

§ 14. And first of the animals which have had more influence over the human soul, in its modern life, than ever Apis or the crocodile had over Egyptian—the dog and horse. I stated, in speaking of Venetian religion, that the Venetians always introduced the dog as a contrast to the high aspects of humanity.² They do this, not because they consider him the basest of animals, but the highest—the connecting link between men and animals; in whom the lower forms of really human feeling may be best exemplified,

¹ [The reference is to No. 1586, "The Council of Trent," a picture now often ascribed to Andrea Schiavone.]

² [See above, ch. iii. § 22 (p. 292).]

such as conceit, gluttony, indolence, petulance. But they saw the noble qualities of the dog, too;—all his patience, love, and faithfulness; therefore Veronese, hard as he is often on lap-dogs, has painted one great heroic poem on the dog.

§ 15. Two mighty brindled mastiffs, and beyond them, darkness.¹ You scarcely see them at first, against the gloomy green. No other sky for them—poor things. They are gray themselves, spotted with black all over; their multitudinous doggish vices may not be washed out of them,—are in grain of nature. Strong thewed and sinewed, however,—no blame on them as far as bodily strength may reach; their heads coal-black, with drooping ears and fierce eyes, bloodshot a little. Wildest of beasts perhaps they would have been, by nature. But between them stands the spirit of their human love, dove-winged and beautiful, the resistless Greek boy, golden quivered; his glowing breast and limbs the only light upon the sky,—purple and pure. He has cast his chain about the dogs' necks, and holds it in his strong right hand, leaning proudly a little back from them. They will never break loose.

§ 16. This is Veronese's highest, or spiritual view of the dog's nature. He can only give this when looking at the creature alone. When he sees it in company with men, he subdues it, like an inferior light in presence of the sky; and generally then gives it a merely brutal nature, not insisting even on its affection. It is thus used in the *Marriage in Cana* to symbolize gluttony. That great picture I have not yet had time to examine in all its bearings of thought;² but the chief purpose of it is, I believe, to express the pomp and pleasure of the world, pursued without thought of the presence of Christ; therefore the Fool with the bells is put in the centre, immediately underneath the Christ; and in front are the couple of dogs in leash, one

¹ [This picture is in the Munich Gallery: "The Winged Cupid with Dogs."]

² [For Ruskin's study of this picture in 1849 and 1854, see "Notes on the Louvre" (Vol. XII. pp. 451, 452, 456, and 473 (on which latter page the incident of the cat is noticed).]

gnawing a bone. A cat lying on her back scratches at one of the vases which hold the wine of the miracle.

§ 17. In the picture of Susannah,¹ her little pet dog is merely doing his duty, barking at the Elders. But in that of the Magdalen (at Turin)² a noble piece of bye-meaning is brought out by a dog's help. On one side is the principal figure, the Mary washing Christ's feet; on the other, a dog has just come out from beneath the table (the dog under the table eating of the crumbs), and in doing so, has touched the robe of one of the Pharisees, thus making it unclean. The Pharisee gathers up his robe in a passion, and shows the hem of it to a bystander, pointing to the dog at the same time.

§ 18. In the Supper at Emmaus,³ the dog's affection is, however, fully dwelt upon. Veronese's own two little daughters are playing, on the hither side of the table, with a great wolf-hound, larger than either of them. One with her head down, nearly touching his nose, is talking to him—asking him questions it seems, nearly pushing him over at the same time:—the other raising her eyes, half archly, half dreamily,—some far-away thought coming over her,—leans against him on the other side, propping him with her little hand, laid slightly on his neck. He, all passive, and glad at heart, yielding himself to the pushing or sustaining hand, looks earnestly into the face of the child close to his; would answer her with the gravity of a senator, if so it might be:—can only look at her, and love her.

§ 19. To Velasquez and Titian dogs seem less interesting than to Veronese; they paint them simply as noble brown beasts, but without any special character; perhaps Velasquez' dogs are sterner and more threatening than the Venetian's, as are also his kings and admirals. This fierceness in the animal increases, as the spiritual power of the artist declines;

¹ [In the Louvre: see Vol. XII. pp. 455, 460.]

² [One of the three large Veroneses referred to above: see Introduction, p. xxxviii.]

³ [Again in the Louvre: see Vol. XII. p. 451, where the two little girls and the dog are also noted.]

and, with the fierceness, another character. One great and infallible sign of the absence of spiritual power is the presence of the slightest taint of obscenity. Dante marked this strongly in all his representations of demons,¹ and as we pass from the Venetians and Florentines to the Dutch, the passing away of the soul-power is indicated by every animal becoming savage or foul. The dog is used by Teniers, and many other Hollanders, merely to obtain unclean jest; while by the more powerful men, Rubens, Snyders, Rembrandt,² it is painted only in savage chase, or butchered agony. I know no pictures more shameful to humanity than the boar and lion hunts of Rubens and Snyders, signs of disgrace all the deeper, because the powers desecrated are so great. The painter of the village ale-house sign may, not dishonourably, paint the fox-hunt for the village squire; but the occupation of magnificent art-power in giving semblance of perpetuity to those bodily pangs which Nature has mercifully ordained to be transient, and in forcing us, by the fascination of its stormy skill, to dwell on that from which eyes of merciful men should instinctively turn away, and eyes of high-minded men scornfully, is dishonourable, alike in the power which it degrades, and the joy to which it betrays.

§ 20. In our modern treatment of the dog, of which the prevailing tendency is marked by Landseer, the interest taken in him is disproportionate to that taken in man, and leads to a somewhat trivial mingling of sentiment, or warping by caricature; giving up the true nature of the animal for the sake of a pretty thought or pleasant jest. Neither Titian nor Velasquez ever jests; and though Veronese jests gracefully and tenderly, he never for an instant oversteps the absolute facts of nature.³ But the English painter looks for sentiment or jest primarily, and reaches

¹ [This statement is perhaps too sweeping. Hints of obscenity on the part of devils or the damned occur, however, in *Inferno*, xxi. 140, and xxv. 1-3.]

² [On Rembrandt's wild beasts, compare the *Review of Lord Lindsay*, § 55 (Vol. XII. p. 226); and compare (for Rubens and Snyders also) *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 27 (Vol. XII. p. 363).]

³ [On this subject, compare the discussion of the Grotesque in the preceding volume (Vol. VI. p. 470).]

both by a feebly romantic taint of fallacy, except in one or two simple and touching pictures, such as the Shepherd's Chief Mourner.¹

I was pleased by a little unpretending modern German picture at Düsseldorf, by E. Bosch,² representing a boy carving a model of his sheep-dog in wood; the dog sitting on its haunches in front of him, watches the progress of the sculpture with a grave interest and curiosity, not in the least caricatured, but highly humorous. Another small picture, by the same artist, of a forester's boy being taught to shoot by his father,—the dog critically and eagerly watching the raising of the gun,—shows equally true sympathy.

§ 21. I wish I were able to trace any of the leading circumstances in the ancient treatment of the horse, but I have no sufficient data. Its function in the art of the Greeks is connected with all their beautiful fable philosophy; but I have not a tithe of the knowledge necessary to pursue the subject in this direction. It branches into questions relating to sacred animals, and Egyptian and Eastern mythology. I believe the Greek interest in *pure* animal character corresponded closely to our own, except that it is less sentimental, and either distinctly true or distinctly fabulous; not hesitating between truth and falsehood. Achilles' horses, like Anacreon's dove, and Aristophanes' frogs and birds, speak clearly out, if at all. They do not become feebly human by fallacies and exaggerations, but frankly and wholly.

Zeuxis' picture of the Centaur indicates, however, a more distinctly sentimental conception;³ and I suppose the Greek

¹ [For a description of this picture, see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 88–89). A summary of Ruskin's references to Landseer is given at Vol. IV. p. 334.]

² [Ernest Bosch, born at Crefeld, 1834; moved to Düsseldorf, 1851 (see A. Seubert's *Allgemeines Künstlerlexicon*, 1878, vol. i. p. 155). The former of the two pictures here described is again mentioned in *Eagle's Nest*, § 88. For other references to the *genre* of the Düsseldorf School, see *Academy Notes*, 1858, 1875 (Vol. XIV. pp. 252, 279).]

³ [In the first draft § 21 was shorter, thus:—

“The Greeks, doing everything rightly which they desired to do at all, treated their sculpture of horses with care proportioned to the need

artists always to have fully appreciated the horse's fineness of temper and nervous constitution.* They seem, by the way, hardly to have done justice to the dog. My pleasure in the entire *Odyssey* is diminished because Ulysses gives not a word of kindness or of regret to Argus.¹

§ 22. I am still less able to speak of Roman treatment of the horse. It is very strange that in the chivalric ages he is despised; their greatest painters drawing him with ludicrous neglect.² The Venetians, as was natural,³ painted him little and ill; but he becomes important in the equestrian statues of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,⁴ chiefly, I suppose, under the influence of Leonardo.

* "A single harsh word will raise a nervous horse's pulse ten beats a minute."—Mr. Rarey.⁵

of it, for the better display of human power or beauty. The account of the picture of the Centaur family indicates a tendency on the part of their painters to a sentimental interest in animals, while closely correspondent in conception to Veronese's poem on the dog, though much more daring. We have, moreover, the beautiful fable of the prophecy of his horse to Achilles, but I have not knowledge enough to pursue the inquiry . . . Eastern mythology."

In his later studies of Greek art, Ruskin gave some notes on the treatment of the horse in sculpture: see *Aratra Pentelici*, § 179. For passing notes on the Greek treatment of the horse, on the coins of Tarentum, see also *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 42; and as a type of a crested, sea-wave, *Queen of the Air*, § 13.

The picture of the Centaur by Zeuxis is described by Lucian (*Zeuxis*, 3). The subject was a "Female Centaur nursing two young Centaurs." She was represented lying on the grass, with one foot raised; she was holding up to her human breast one of the two young Centaurs to suckle it, while the other was sucking, like a foal at a mare. In the upper part of the picture was the male Centaur, smiling on the group below, and holding up a lion cub to frighten his progeny. Lucian highly praises the vividness with which Zeuxis thus portrayed the double nature of Centaurs. For Ruskin's rationalisation of the Centaur myths, see *Aratra*, § 76; and compare *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 9, where also he refers to "the prophecy of his horse to Achilles" (*Iliad*, xix. 404–417). For "Anacreon's dove," see *Anacreontea*, 9.]

¹ [For the recognition of his master after long years by Argus, see *Odyssey*, xix. 300 *seq.*]

² [In his first draft Ruskin had here made the memorandum, "Examine the picture by Paul Ucello in our own gallery" (for which see above, p. 18, and below, p. 368).]

³ [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. viii. § 97 (Vol. X. p. 408).]

⁴ [See, for instance, Ruskin's account of the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleone, Vol. XI. p. 19. Leonardo's studies of horses were numerous (see the reproductions in the work upon him by Eugène Müntz), and his famous cartoon for the "Battle of Anghiari" was full of horsemen.]

⁵ [*The Modern Art of Taming Wild Horses*. By J. S. Rarey (reprinted from the American edition), 1858, p. 55. This is the book referred to by Ruskin in the letter quoted at Vol. XIV. p. 174 *n.*]

I am not qualified to judge of the merit of the equestrian statues; but, in painting, I find that no real interest is taken in the horse until Vandyck's time, he and Rubens doing more for it than all previous painters put together. Rubens was a good rider, and rode nearly every day,¹ as I doubt not, Vandyck also. Some notice of an interesting equestrian picture of Vandyck's will be found in the next chapter.² The horse has never, I think, been painted worthily again, since he died.* Of the influence of its unworthy painting, and unworthy use, I do not at present care to speak, noticing only that it brought about in England the last degradations of feeling and of art. The Dutch, indeed, banished all Deity from the earth;³ but I think only in England has death-bed consolation been sought in a fox's tail.†

I wish, however, the reader distinctly to understand that the expressions of reprobation of field-sports which he will find scattered through these volumes,—and which, in concluding them, I wish I had time to collect⁵ and farther enforce,—refer only to the chase and the turf; that is to

* John Lewis has made grand sketches of the horse, but has never, so far as I know, completed any of them. Respecting his wonderful engravings of wild animals, see my pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism.⁴

† See "The Fox-hunter's Death-bed," a popular sporting print.

¹ ["Rubens rose early; in summer at four o'clock, and immediately afterwards heard mass. He then went to work, and while painting habitually employed a person to read to him from one of the classical authors. . . . An hour before dinner was devoted to recreation. . . . After working again till evening, he usually, if not prevented by business, mounted a spirited Andalusian horse, and rode for an hour or two. This was his favourite exercise; he was extremely fond of horses, and his stables generally contained some of remarkable beauty" (*Original Unpublished Papers Illustrative of the Life of Rubens*, p. 7).]

² [See below, p. 359 n.]

³ [See above, p. 331.]

⁴ [See Vol. XII. p. 363; in which volume, opposite p. 364, one of Lewis's sketches of horses' heads is reproduced.]

⁵ [See Vol. IV. p. 149, where "those accursed sports" are spoken of as gathering "into one continuance of cruelty all the devices that brutes use sparingly;" Vol. V. p. 382, where "the delights of horse-racing and hunting" are cited among the vulgarities of the modern world (see also Vol. VI. p. 416); and in the present volume, p. 14 (where the "slaying of bird and beast" is contrasted with man's work "to dress the earth and to keep it"). In later books Ruskin often reverted to the subject. Thus in the *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 26, he traces the "deadly" consequences

say, to hunting, shooting, and horse-racing, but not to athletic exercises. I have just as deep a respect for boxing, wrestling, cricketing, and rowing, as contempt of all the various modes of wasting wealth, time, land, and energy of soul, which have been invented by the pride and selfishness of men, in order to enable them to be healthy in uselessness, and get quit of the burdens of their own lives, without condescending to make them serviceable to others.

§ 23. Lastly, of cattle.

The period when the interest of men began to be transferred from the ploughman to his oxen is very distinctly marked by Bassano.¹ In him the descent is even greater, being, accurately, from the Madonna to the Manger—one

of the chace and the turf; on the curse of betting he speaks in *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 127; and in *Love's Meinie*, §§ 131 *seq.*, he quotes the passage from Vol. IV., and reaffirms his "knowledge of the bitterness of the curse which the habits of hunting and 'la chasse' have brought upon the so-called upper classes of England." In *Love's Meinie*, § 139, he admits the pursuit of big game "for discipline and trial of courage," but pleads for the preservation of all defenceless animals as in "one vast unwall'd park"; and in the *Eagle's Nest*, § 178, he deplores the English aristocracy's idea of caste as being that "its life should be spent in shooting"; with which passage compare *Love's Meinie*, §§ 2, 113. It was characteristic that in his first lecture at Oxford, Ruskin should confess "one of my fondest dreams, that I may succeed in making some of you English youths like better to look at a bird than to shoot it; and even desire to make wild creatures tame, instead of tame creatures wild" (*Lectures on Art*, § 23). In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* of January 15, 1870 (reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. p. 184, and in a later volume of this edition), he joined in a discussion on the morality of field sports, reprobating them not so much on the ground of cruelty, as on that of their tendency to "waste the time, misapply the energy, debase the taste, and abate the honour of the upper classes" (with which passage compare Vol. VIII. pp. 264–265); see also *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 37, 46, and 51 (Notes and Correspondence). Ruskin notes that he himself was never educated in out-door sports (*Præterita*, ii. § 54), and that his one experience in accompanying a friend on a day's shooting did not incline him to such "fashionable amusement" (*ibid.*, § 196). For Ruskin's tolerance, and even encouragement, of other out-door sports, see *A Joy for Ever*, § 128 (Vol. XVI. p. 111), where he mentions riding, rowing, and cricket as "the most useful things which boys learn at public schools"; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 23 (on cricket as "play" or "work"); and see also a letter to Mr. Alfred Lyttelton (given in a later volume of this edition). Ruskin's interest in skilful rowing is shown in *Eagle's Nest*, § 12, and in boating generally, in *Præterita*, ii. § 197; in wrestling and fencing, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 82 (Notes and Correspondence), and "An Oxford Lecture," § 18. But he felt that much time was wasted even in legitimate sports (see, for instance, *Ariadne Florentina*, § 48), and it was partly in order to encourage a more useful form of exercise that he started the Hincksey diggings at Oxford (see Vol. X. p. 201 n., and the Introduction to a later volume). See also *Munera Pulveris*, § 149.]

¹ [For other references to this painter, see Vol. IV. p. 301, and below, p. 414 n.]

of perhaps his best pictures (now, I believe, somewhere in the north of England),¹ representing an adoration of shepherds with nothing to adore, they and their herds forming the subject, and the Christ “being supposed” at the side. From that time cattle-pieces become frequent, and gradually form a staple art commodity. Cuyp’s are the best; nevertheless, neither by him nor any one else have I ever seen an entirely well-painted cow. All the men who have skill enough to paint cattle nobly, disdain them. The real influence of these Dutch cattle-pieces, in subsequent art, is difficult to trace, and is not worth tracing. They contain a certain healthy appreciation of simple pleasure which I cannot look upon wholly without respect. On the other hand, their cheap tricks of composition degraded the entire technical system of landscape; and their clownish and blunt vulgarities too long blinded us, and continue, so far as in them lies, to blind us yet, to all the true refinement and passion of rural life. There have always been truth and depth of pastoral feeling in the works of great poets and novelists; but never, I think, in painting, until lately. The designs of J. C. Hook² are, perhaps, the only works of the kind in existence which deserve to be mentioned in connection with the pastorals of Wordsworth and Tennyson.

We must not, however, yet pass to the modern school, having still to examine the last phase of Dutch design, in which the vulgarities which might be forgiven to the truth of Cuyp, and forgotten in the power of Rubens, became unpardonable and dominant in the works of men who were at once affected and feeble. But before doing this, we must pause to settle a preliminary question, which is an important and difficult one, and will need a separate chapter;—namely, What is vulgarity itself?

¹ [The Adoration of the Shepherds is the subject of a large number of pictures by the painter.]

² [For a summary of Ruskin’s references to Hook, see Vol. XIV. p. 9 *n.*]

CHAPTER VII

OF VULGARITY¹

§ 1. TWO great errors, colouring, or rather discolouring, severally, the minds of the higher and lower classes, have sown wide dissension, and wider misfortune, through the society of modern days. These errors are in our modes of interpreting the word “gentleman.”²

Its primal, literal, and perpetual meaning is “a man of pure race”; well bred, in the sense that a horse or dog is well bred.

The so-called higher classes, being generally of purer race than the lower, have retained the true idea, and the convictions associated with it; but are afraid to speak it out, and equivocate about it in public; this equivocation mainly proceeding from their desire to connect another meaning with it, and a false one;—that of “a man living in idleness on other people’s labour”;—with which idea the term has nothing whatever to do.

The lower classes, denying vigorously, and with reason, the notion that a gentleman means an idler, and rightly feeling that the more any one works, the more of a gentleman

¹ [For other discussions of Vulgarly, see Vol. V. pp. 117–118, where Ruskin says that it “is only in concealment of truth, or in affectation”; Vol. XIV. p. 243, where it is defined as “the habit of mind and act resulting from the prolonged combination of insensibility with insincerity”; and Vol. XV. p. 205, where the present discussion is promised. See also *Sesame and Lilies*, § 28 (“want of sensation”); and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 25, where Ruskin refers to the present chapter.]

² [Ruskin discusses the word and its meaning in many other places. See *A Joy for Ever*, § 114 (Vol. XVI. p. 98), where he combats the distinction between “gentleman” and “tradesman” (compare *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 2, Vol. XII. p. 342). *Sesame and Lilies*, § 30, where he gives as one of the marks of gentlemen that “their feelings are constant and just” (compare *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, §§ 17, 44, and *Præterita*, iii. §§ 77–78); *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 108, where he again connects “gentle” and “of pure race”; “Sir Joshua and Holbein,” § 6 n., where he refers to the present passage; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 41, where Ruskin enumerates some of the characteristics which distinguish “a gentleman” from “a churl.”]

he becomes, and is likely to become,—have nevertheless got little of the good they otherwise might, from the truth, because, with it, they wanted to hold a falsehood,—namely, that race was of no consequence. It being precisely of as much consequence in man as it is in any other animal.

§ 2. The nation cannot truly prosper till both these errors are finally got quit of. Gentlemen have to learn that it is no part of their duty or privilege to live on other people's toil. They have to learn that there is no degradation in the hardest manual, or the humblest servile, labour, when it is honest. But that there *is* degradation, and that deep, in extravagance, in bribery, in indolence, in pride, in taking places they are not fit for, or in coining places for which there is no need. It does not disgrace a gentleman to become an errand boy, or a day labourer; but it disgraces him much to become a knave, or a thief. And knavery is not the less knavery because it involves large interests, nor theft the less theft because it is countenanced by usage, or accompanied by failure in undertaken duty. It is an incomparably less guilty form of robbery to cut a purse out of a man's pocket, than to take it out of his hand on the understanding that you are to steer his ship up channel, when you do not know the soundings.

§ 3. On the other hand, the lower orders, and all orders, have to learn that every vicious habit and chronic disease communicates itself by descent; and that by purity of birth the entire system of the human body and soul may be gradually elevated, or, by recklessness of birth, degraded; until there shall be as much difference between the well-bred and ill-bred human creature (whatever pains be taken with their education) as between a wolf-hound and the vilest mongrel cur. And the knowledge of this great fact ought to regulate the education of our youth, and the entire conduct of the nation.*

* We ought always in pure English to use the term "good breeding" literally; and to say "good nurture" for what we usually mean by good breeding. Given the race and make of the animal, you may turn it to good

§ 4. Gentlemanliness, however, in ordinary parlance, must be taken to signify those qualities which are usually the evidence of high breeding, and which, so far as they can be acquired, it should be every man's effort to acquire; or, if he has them by nature, to preserve and exalt. Vulgarity, on the other hand, will signify qualities usually characteristic of ill-breeding, which, according to his power, it becomes every person's duty to subdue. We have briefly to note what these are.

§ 5. A gentleman's first characteristic is that fineness of structure in the body, which renders it capable of the most delicate sensation; and of structure in the mind which renders it capable of the most delicate sympathies—one may say, simply, "fineness of nature." This is, of course, compatible with heroic bodily strength and mental firmness; in fact, heroic strength is not conceivable without such delicacy.

or bad account; you may spoil your good dog or colt, and make him as vicious as you choose, or break his back at once by ill-usage; and you may, on the other hand, make something serviceable and respectable out of your poor cur and colt if you educate them carefully; but ill-bred they will both of them be to their lives' end; and the best you will ever be able to say of them is, that they are useful, and decently behaved, ill-bred creatures.¹ An error, which is associated with the truth, and which makes it always look weak and disputable, is the confusion of race with name; and the supposition that the blood of a family must still be good, if its genealogy be unbroken and its name not lost, though sire and son have been indulging age after age in habits involving perpetual degeneracy of race. Of course it is equally an error to suppose that, because a man's name is common, his blood must be base; since his family may have been ennobling it by pureness of moral habit for many generations, and yet may not have got any title, or other sign of nobleness, attached to their names. Nevertheless, the probability is always in favour of the race which has had acknowledged supremacy, and in which every motive leads to the endeavour to preserve its true nobility.

¹ [The MS. here inserts: "The old English rough proverb is irrevocably true,—you can make no silk purse of a sow's ear." And at the end of the note continues:—

"And this great truth also holds—though it is a disagreeable one to look full in the face—that, named or nameless, no man can make himself a gentleman who was not born one. If he lives a right life, and cultivates all the powers, and yet more all the sensibilities, he is born with, and chooses his wife well, his own son will be more a gentleman than he is, and he may see yet better blood than his son's in his grandchild's cheeks, but he must be content to remain a clown himself—if he was born a clown."]

Elephantine strength may drive its way through a forest and feel no touch of the boughs; but the white skin of Homer's Atrides¹ would have felt a bent rose-leaf, yet subdue its feeling in glow of battle, and behave itself like iron. I do not mean to call an elephant a vulgar animal; but if you think about him carefully, you will find that his non-vulgarity consists in such gentleness as is possible to elephantine nature; not in his insensitive hide, nor in his clumsy foot; but in the way he will lift his foot if a child lies in his way; and in his sensitive trunk, and still more sensitive mind, and capability of pique on points of honour.

§ 6. And, though rightness of moral conduct is ultimately the great purifier of race, the sign of nobleness is not in this rightness of moral conduct, but in sensitiveness. When the make of the creature is fine, its temptations are strong, as well as its perceptions; it is liable to all kinds of impressions from without in their most violent form; liable therefore to be abused and hurt by all kinds of rough things which would do a coarser creature little harm, and thus to fall into frightful wrong if its fate will have it so. Thus David, coming of gentlest as well as royalest race, of Ruth as well as of Judah, is sensitiveness through all flesh and spirit; not that his compassion will restrain him from murder when his terror urges him to it; nay, he is driven to the murder all the more by his sensitiveness to the shame which otherwise threatens him. But when his own story is told under a disguise, though only a lamb is now concerned, his passion about it leaves him no time for thought. "The man shall die"—note the reason—"because he had no pity."² He is so eager and indignant that it never occurs to him as strange that Nathan hides the name. This is true gentleman. A vulgar man would assuredly have been cautious, and asked who it was.

§ 7. Hence it will follow that one of the probable signs

¹ [For this reference to Menelaus (*Iliad*, iv. 141 *seq.*), compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 198).]

² [2 Samuel xii. 5, 6.]

of high-breeding in men generally, will be their kindness and mercifulness; these always indicating more or less fineness of make in the mind; and miserliness and cruelty the contrary; hence that of Isaiah: "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful."¹ But a thousand things may prevent this kindness from displaying or continuing itself; the mind of the man may be warped so as to bear mainly on his own interests, and then all his sensibilities will take the form of pride, or fastidiousness, or revengefulness; and other wicked, but not ungentlemanly tempers; or, farther, they may run into utter sensuality and covetousness, if he is bent on pleasure, accompanied with quite infinite cruelty when the pride is wounded or the passions are thwarted;—until your gentleman man becomes Ezzelin, and your lady, the deadly Lucrece;² yet still gentleman and lady, quite incapable of making anything else of themselves, being so born.

§ 8. A truer sign of breeding than mere kindness is therefore sympathy;—a vulgar man may often be kind in a hard way, on principle, and because he thinks he ought to be; whereas, a highly-bred man, even when cruel, will be cruel in a softer way, understanding and feeling what he inflicts, and pitying his victim.³ Only we must carefully remember that the quantity of sympathy a gentleman feels can never be judged of by its outward expression, for another of his chief characteristics is apparent reserve. I say "apparent" reserve; for the sympathy is real, but the reserve not: a perfect gentleman is never reserved, but sweetly and entirely open, so far as it is good for others, or possible, that he should be. In a great many respects it is impossible that he should be open except to men of his own kind. To them, he can open himself, by a word or

¹ [Isaiah xxxii. 5.]

² [For Ezzelin, see Vol. XII. p. 137 *n.* For Lucrezia Borgia, *Two Paths*, § 187 (Vol. XVI, p. 404).]

³ [Here the MS. adds:—

"Methinks one would love Bayard better in being wounded by him even to the death than one would love any other man, though he held us to ransom."]

syllable, or a glance; but to men not of his kind he cannot open himself, though he tried it through an eternity of clear grammatical speech. By the very acuteness of his sympathy he knows how much of himself he can give to anybody; and he gives that much frankly;—would always be glad to give more if he could, but is obliged, nevertheless, in his general intercourse with the world, to be a somewhat silent person; silence is to most people, he finds, less reserve than speech. Whatever he said, a vulgar man would misinterpret: no words that he could use would bear the same sense to the vulgar man that they do to him; if he used any, the vulgar man would go away saying, “He had said so and so, and meant so and so” (something assuredly he never meant): but he keeps silence, and the vulgar man goes away saying, “He didn’t know what to make of him.” Which is precisely the fact, and the only fact which he is anyway able to announce to the vulgar man concerning himself.

§ 9. There is yet another quite as efficient cause of the apparent reserve of a gentleman. His sensibility being constant and intelligent, it will be seldom that a feeling touches him, however acutely, but it has touched him in the same way often before, and in some sort is touching him always. It is not that he feels little, but that he feels habitually; a vulgar man having some heart at the bottom of him, if you can by talk or by sight fairly force the pathos of anything down to his heart, will be excited about it and demonstrative; the sensation of pity being strange to him and wonderful. But your gentleman has walked in pity all day long; the tears have never been out of his eyes; you thought the eyes were bright only; but they were wet. You tell him a sorrowful story, and his countenance does not change; the eyes can but be wet still: he does not speak neither, there being, in fact, nothing to be said, only something to be done; some vulgar person, beside you both, goes away saying, “How hard he is !” Next day he hears that the hard person has put good end to the sorrow he said nothing

about;—and then he changes his wonder, and exclaims, “How reserved he is!”

§ 10. Self-command is often thought a characteristic of high-breeding; and to a certain extent it is so, at least it is one of the means of forming and strengthening character; but it is rather a way of imitating a gentleman than a characteristic of him; a true gentleman has no need of self-command; he simply feels rightly on all occasions; and desiring to express only so much of his feeling as it is right to express, does not need to command himself. Hence perfect ease is indeed characteristic of him; but perfect ease is inconsistent with self-restraint. Nevertheless gentlemen, so far as they fail of their own ideal, need to command themselves, and do so; while, on the contrary, to feel unwisely, and to be unable to restrain the expression of the unwise feeling, is vulgarity; and yet even then, the vulgarity, at its root, is not in the mistimed expression, but in the unseemly feeling; and when we find fault with a vulgar person for “exposing himself,” it is not his openness, but clumsiness; and yet more the want of sensibility to his own failure, which we blame; so that still the vulgarity resolves itself into want of sensibility. Also, it is to be noted that great powers of self-restraint may be attained by very vulgar persons when it suits their purposes.

§ 11. Closely, but strangely, connected with this openness is that form of truthfulness which is opposed to cunning, yet not opposed to falsity absolute. And herein is a distinction of great importance.

Cunning signifies especially a habit or gift of over-reaching, accompanied with enjoyment and a sense of superiority. It is associated with small and dull conceit, and with an absolute want of sympathy or affection. Its essential connection with vulgarity may be at once exemplified by the expression of the butcher’s dog in Landseer’s “Low Life.”¹ Cruikshank’s “Noah Claypole,” in the illustrations to *Oliver*

¹ [“High Life and Low Life” is No. 410 in the Tate Gallery.]

Twist, in the interview with the Jew,¹ is, however, still more characteristic. It is the intensest rendering of vulgarity absolute and utter with which I am acquainted.*

The truthfulness which is opposed to cunning ought, perhaps, rather to be called the desire of truthfulness; it consists more in unwillingness to deceive than in not deceiving,—an unwillingness implying sympathy with and respect for the person deceived; and a fond observance of truth up to the possible point, as in a good soldier's mode of retaining his honour through a *ruse-de-guerre*. A cunning person seeks for opportunities to deceive; a gentleman shuns them. A cunning person triumphs in deceiving; a gentleman is humiliated by his success, or at least by so much of the success as is dependent merely on the falsehood, and not on his intellectual superiority.

§ 12. The absolute disdain of all lying belongs rather to Christian chivalry than to mere high-breeding; as connected merely with this latter, and with general refinement and courage, the exact relations of truthfulness may be best studied in the well-trained Greek mind. The Greeks believed that mercy and truth were co-relative virtues—cruelty and falsehood, co-relative vices. But they did not call necessary severity, cruelty; nor necessary deception, falsehood. It was needful sometimes to slay men, and sometimes to deceive them. When this had to be done, it should be done well and thoroughly; so that to direct a spear well to its mark, or a lie well to its end, was

* Among the reckless losses of the right service of intellectual power with which this century must be charged, very few are, to my mind, more to be regretted than that which is involved in its having turned to no higher purpose than the illustration of the career of Jack Sheppard, and of the Irish Rebellion, the great, grave (I use the words deliberately and with large meaning), and singular genius of Cruikshank.²

¹ [The illustration to ch. xlii., called "The Jew and Morris Bolter begin to understand each other" (compare *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 29).]

² [Instead of this note the MS. has:—
"The characters of the Dodger in *Oliver Twist* and of Mrs. Gamp are equally valuable illustrations in their way."
For Ruskin's estimate of Cruikshank, compare Vol. VI. p. 471 *n.*; Vol. XIII. p. 504 *n.*]

equally the accomplishment of a perfect gentleman. Hence, in the pretty diamond-cut-diamond scene between Pallas and Ulysses, when she receives him on the coast of Ithaca, the goddess laughs delightedly at her hero's good lying, and gives him her hand upon it;—showing herself then in her woman's form, as just a little more than his match. "Subtle would he be, and stealthy, who should go beyond thee in deceit, even were he a god, thou many-witted! What! here in thine own land, too, wilt thou not cease from cheating? Knowest thou not me, Pallas Athena, maid of Jove, who am with thee in all thy labours, and gave thee favour with the Phæacians, and keep thee, and have come now to weave cunning with thee?"¹ But how completely this kind of cunning was looked upon as a part of a man's power, and not as a diminution of faithfulness, is perhaps best shown by the single line of praise in which the high qualities of his servant are summed up by Chremulus in the *Plutus*—"Of all my house servants, I hold you to be the faithfullest, and the greatest cheat (or thief)."²

§ 13. Thus, the primal difference between honourable and base lying in the Greek mind lay in honourable purpose. A man who used his strength wantonly to hurt others was a monster; so, also, a man who used his cunning wantonly to hurt others. Strength and cunning were to be used only in self-defence, or to save the weak, and then were alike admirable. This was their first idea. Then the second, and perhaps the more essential, difference between noble and ignoble lying in the Greek mind, was that the honourable lie—or, if we may use the strange, yet just, expression, the true lie—knew and confessed itself for such—was ready to take the full responsibility of what it did. As the sword answered for its blow, so the lie for its snare. But

¹ [*Odyssey*, xiii. 291–303.]

² [Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 26, 27. In his own copy Ruskin notes at the side of this passage, "Conf. *Theognis*, 712." The author of the *Maxims* there says that "to the multitude of men there is no virtue except to be rich; of the rest there is no use . . . not even though you should be as wise as Rhadamanthus . . . nor if you could make falsehoods like to truths, having the skilful tongue of the god-like Nestor."]

what the Greeks hated with all their heart was the false lie;—the lie that did not know itself, feared to confess itself, which slunk to its aim under a cloak of truth, and sought to do liars' work, and yet not take liars' pay, excusing itself to the conscience by quibble and quirk. Hence the great expression of Jesuit principle by Euripides, "The tongue has sworn, but not the heart," was a subject of execration throughout Greece, and the satirists exhausted their arrows on it—no audience was ever tired of hearing (to Enripideion ekeino) "that Euripidean thing" brought to shame.¹

§ 14. And this is especially to be insisted on in the early education of young people. It should be pointed out to them with continual earnestness that the essence of lying is in deception, not in words: a lie may be told by silence, by equivocation, by the accent on a syllable, by a glance of the eye attaching a peculiar significance to a sentence; and all these kinds of lies are worse and baser by many degrees than a lie plainly worded; so that no form of blinded conscience is so far sunk as that which comforts itself for having deceived, because the deception was by gesture or silence, instead of utterance; and, finally, according to Tennyson's deep and trenchant line, "A lie which is half a truth is ever the worst of lies."²

§ 15. Although, however, ungenerous cunning is usually so distinct an outward manifestation of vulgarity, that I name it separately from insensibility, it is in truth only an effect of insensibility, producing want of affection to others,

¹ [The original line (quite innocent in its context)—*h glwss omw moc, h de frhn anwmatoV*—is in the *Hippolytus* (612). It is referred to as to Enripideion ekeino by Lucian (*Sale of Lives*, ch. 9), and is parodied by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*, 101 and 1471, and *Thesmophoriazusæ*, 275. It is also quoted by Plato (*Theæt.* 154 D, and *Symp.* 199 A), and by other authors.]

² [*The Grandmother*. Compare what Ruskin says in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76, about "all the worst of falsehoods" having "one little kernel of distorted truth in the heart" of them. For other passages in which the ethics of lying are discussed, see *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 55), on "the guilt and harm of amiable and well-meant lying"; *ibid.*, p. 242 n. ("parody—the most loathsome manner of falsehood"); *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 137), "all falsehood a blot as well as a sin" (compare *ibid.*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 474); *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 186 ("there are lies and lies"—a reference, again, to the *Odyssey*).]

and blindness to the beauty of truth. The degree in which political subtlety in men such as Richelieu, Machiavel, or Metternich, will efface the gentleman, depends on the selfishness of political purpose to which the cunning is directed, and on the base delight taken in its use. The command, "Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves,"¹ is the ultimate expression of this principle, misunderstood usually because the word "wise" is referred to the intellectual power instead of the subtlety of the serpent. The serpent has very little intellectual power, but according to that which it has, it is yet, as of old, the subtlest of the beasts of the field.²

§ 16. Another great sign of vulgarity is also, when traced to its root, another phase of insensibility, namely, the undue regard to appearances and manners, as in the households of vulgar persons, of all stations, and the assumption of behaviour, language, or dress unsuited to them, by persons in inferior stations of life. I say "undue" regard to appearances, because in the undueness consists, of course, the vulgarity. It is due and wise in some sort to care for appearances, in another sort undue and unwise. Wherein lies the difference?

At first one is apt to answer quickly: the vulgarity is simply in pretending to be what you are not. But that answer will not stand. A queen may dress like a waiting-maid,—perhaps succeed, if she chooses, in passing for one; but she will not, therefore, be vulgar; nay, a waiting-maid may dress like a queen, and pretend to be one, and yet need not be vulgar, unless there is inherent vulgarity in her. In Scribe's very absurd but very amusing *Reine d'un jour*, a milliner's girl sustains the part of a queen for a day. She several times amazes and disgusts her courtiers by her straightforwardness; and once or twice very nearly betrays herself to her maids of honour by an unqueenly knowledge of sewing; but she is not in the least vulgar, *\mjcont

¹ [Matthew x. 16.]

² [Genesis iii. 1.]

for she is sensitive, simple, and generous, and a queen could be no more.

§ 17. Is the vulgarity, then, only in trying to play a part you cannot play, so as to be continually detected? No; a bad amateur actor may be continually detected in his part, but yet continually detected to be a gentleman: a vulgar regard to appearances has nothing in it necessarily of hypocrisy. You shall know a man not to be a gentleman by the perfect and neat pronunciation of his words: but he does not pretend to pronounce accurately; he *does* pronounce accurately, the vulgarity is in the real (not assumed) scrupulousness.

§ 18. It will be found on farther thought, that a vulgar regard for appearances is, primarily, a selfish one, resulting not out of a wish to give pleasure (as a wife's wish to make herself beautiful for her husband), but out of an endeavour to mortify others, or attract for pride's sake;—the common “keeping up appearances” of society, being a mere selfish struggle of the vain with the vain.¹ But the deepest stain of the vulgarity depends on this being done, not selfishly only, but stupidly, without understanding the impression which is really produced, nor the relations of importance between oneself and others, so as to suppose that their attention is fixed upon us, when we are in reality ciphers in their eyes—all which comes of insensibility. Hence pride simple is not vulgar (the looking down on others because of their true inferiority to us), nor vanity simple (the desire of praise), but conceit simple (the attribution to ourselves of qualities we have not) is always so. In cases of over-studied pronunciation, etc., there is insensibility, first, in the person's thinking more of himself than of what he is saying; and, secondly, in his not having musical fineness of ear enough to feel that his talking is uneasy and strained.

§ 19. Finally, vulgarity is indicated by coarseness of

¹ [Compare *Sesame and Lilies*, §§ 2–5.]

language or manners, only so far as this coarseness has been contracted under circumstances not necessarily producing it. The illiterateness of a Spanish or Calabrian peasant is not vulgar, because they had never an opportunity of acquiring letters; but the illiterateness of an English school-boy is. So again, provincial dialect is not vulgar; but cockney dialect, the corruption, by blunted sense, of a finer language continually heard, is so in a deep degree; and again, of this corrupted dialect, that is the worst which consists, not in the direct or expressive alteration of the form of a word, but in an unmusical destruction of it by dead utterance and bad or swollen formation of lip. There is no vulgarity in—

“Blythe, blythe, blythe was she,
Blythe was she, but and ben,
And weel she liked a Hawick gill,
And leugh to see a tappit hen;”¹

but much in Mrs. Gamp’s inarticulate “bottle on the chimley-piece, and let me put my lips to it when I am so disposed.”²

§ 20. So also of personal defects, those only are vulgar which imply insensibility or dissipation.

There is no vulgarity in the emaciation of Don Quixote, the deformity of the Black Dwarf, or the corpulence of Falstaff; but much in the same personal characters, as they are seen in Uriah Heep, Quilp, and Chadband.

§ 21. One of the most curious minor questions in this matter is respecting the vulgarity of excessive neatness, complicating itself with inquiries into the distinction between base neatness, and the perfectness of good execution in the fine arts. It will be found on final thought

¹ [“The Song of Andro and his Cutty Gun;” given in Joseph Ritson’s *Scottish Songs*, 1794, vol. i. p. 268. “But and ben,” in either room of the house. “Tappit hen” means, first, a hen sitting on her eggs; see “The Laird of Cockpen,” *ad fin.* For its meaning as a vessel containing three quarts of claret, see Scott’s note (“H.”) to *Guy Mannering* (where he quotes the lines in the text): “It was,” he says, “a pewter measure, the claret being in ancient days served from the tap, and had the figure of a hen upon the lid.”]

² [*Martin Chuzzlewit*, ch. xix.]

that precision and exquisiteness of arrangement are always noble; but become vulgar only when they arise from an equality (insensibility) of temperament, which is incapable of fine passion, and is set ignobly, and with a dullard mechanism, on accuracy in vile things. In the finest Greek coins, the letters of the inscriptions are purposely coarse and rude, while the reliefs are wrought with inestimable care.¹ But in an English coin, the letters are the best done, and the whole is unredeemably vulgar. In a picture of Titian's, an inserted inscription will be complete in the lettering, as all the rest is; because it costs Titian very little more trouble to draw rightly than wrongly, and in him, therefore, impatience with the letters would be vulgar, as in the Greek sculptor of the coin, patience would have been. For the engraving of a letter accurately* is difficult work, and his time must have been unworthily thrown away.

* There is this farther reason also: "Letters are always ugly things"—(Seven Lamps, chap. iv. s. 9).² Titian often wanted a certain quantity of ugliness to oppose his beauty with, as a certain quantity of black to oppose his colour. He could regulate the size and quantity of inscription as he liked; and, therefore, made it as neat—that is, as effectively ugly—as possible. But the Greek sculpture could not regulate either size or quantity of inscription. Legible it must be, to common eyes, and contain an assigned group of words. He had more ugliness than he wanted, or could endure. There was nothing for it but to make the letters themselves rugged and picturesque; to give them, that is, a certain quantity of organic variety.

I do not wonder at people sometimes thinking I contradict myself when they come suddenly on any of the scattered passages, in which I am forced to insist on the opposite practical applications of subtle principles of this kind.³ It may amuse the reader, and be finally serviceable to him in showing him how necessary it is to the right handling of any subject, that these contrary statements should be made, if I assemble here the

¹ [See, for a fuller discussion of the comparative rudeness of such inscriptions, *Queen of the Air*, § 170; the passage forms part of an address, there reprinted, on "The Hercules of Camarina"—one of several notices of Greek coins which occur in Ruskin's later writings (see especially *Aratra Pentelici*, *passim*).]

² [See in this edition, Vol. VIII. p. 147 and *n.*]

³ [On this subject, see Vol. V. pp. liii.-liv., where a passage is quoted from one of Ruskin's diaries on the many-sidedness of truth. See also the passage quoted in Vol. XI. pp. xvii.-xxi., where he describes at length the apparent contradictions into which the combating of opposite errors may lead. For references to passages in which he remarks upon his own self-contradictions, see Vol. V. p. liv. *n.*]

§ 22. All the different impressions connected with negligence or foulness depend, in like manner, on the degree of insensibility implied. Disorder in a drawing-room is vulgar, in an antiquary's study, not; the black battle-stain on a soldier's face is not vulgar, but the dirty face of a housemaid is.

principal ones I remember having brought forward, bearing on this difficult point of precision in execution.

It would be well if you would first glance over the chapter on Finish in the third volume; and if, coming to the fourth paragraph, about gentlemen's carriages, you have time to turn to Sydney Smith's *Memoirs* and read his account of the construction of the "Immortal," it will furnish you with an interesting illustration.

The general conclusion reached in that chapter being that finish, for the sake of added truth, or utility, or beauty, is noble; but finish, for the sake of workmanship, neatness, or polish, ignoble,—turn to the fourth chapter of the *Seven Lamps*, where you will find the Campanile of Giotto given as the model and mirror of perfect architecture, just on account of its exquisite completion.² Also, in the next chapter, I expressly limit the delightfulness of rough and imperfect work to developing and unformed schools (pp. 142–143, 1st edition); then turn to the 170th page of the *Stones of Venice*, Vol. II., and you will find this directly contrary statement:—

"No good work whatever can be perfect, and the demand for perfection is always a sign of a misunderstanding of the ends of art." . . . "The first cause of the fall of the arts in Europe was a relentless requirement of perfection" (p. 172). By reading the intermediate text, you will be put in possession of many good reasons for this opinion; and, comparing it with that just cited about the Campanile of Giotto, will be brought, I hope, into a wholesome state of not knowing what to think.

Then turn to p. 167, where the great law of finish is again maintained as strongly as ever: "Delicate finish (finish—that is to say, up to the point possible) is always desirable from the greatest masters, and is always given by them."—(Vol. II. chap. vi. § 19.)

And lastly, if you look to § 19 of the chapter on the Early Renaissance,

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 152, where it is said that it is not an ignoble disposition "which would induce a country gentleman to put up with certain deficiencies in the appearance of his country-made carriage." Sydney Smith's account of his home-made chariot, which he christened the *Immortal*, is at vol. i. p. 161 of his *Memoirs*. In the MS. Ruskin added a footnote to the footnote, as follows:—

"There is no man of our modern time—not even Wordsworth (for Wordsworth has no humour)—to whose character, principles, and written opinions I pay respect so entire and unhesitating as I do to Sydney Smith's, so far as I can read or hear of them."

With this tribute to Sydney Smith, compare the letter from Ruskin given in S. J. Reid's *Life and Times of Sydney Smith*, p. 374, and reprinted in a later volume of this edition; see also *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 113; "My First Editor," § 15; *Præterita*, i. § 131; ii. §§ 54, 165–166; iii. § 62.]

² [In this edition, Vol. VIII. p. 189. The following references are in this edition to Vol. VIII. p. 198; Vol. X. pp. 202, 204, 199; Vol. XI. pp. 17, 32.]

And lastly, courage, so far as it is a sign of race, is peculiarly the mark of a gentleman or a lady: but it becomes vulgar if rude or insensitive, while timidity is not vulgar, if it be a characteristic of race or fineness of make. A fawn is not vulgar in being timid, nor a crocodile “gentle” because courageous.

§ 23. Without following the inquiry into farther detail,*

Vol. III., you will find the profoundest respect paid to completion; and, at the close of that chapter, § 38, the principle is resumed very strongly. “As *ideals of executive perfection*, these palaces are most notable among the architecture of Europe, and the Rio facade of the Ducal palace, as an example of finished masonry in a vast building, is one of the finest things, not only in Venice, but in the world.”

Now all these passages are perfectly true; and, as in much more serious matters, the essential thing for the reader is to receive their truth, however little he may be able to see their consistency. If truths of apparently contrary character are candidly and rightly received, they will fit themselves together in the mind without any trouble. But no truth maliciously received will nourish you, or fit with others. The clue of connection may in this case, however, be given in a word. Absolute finish is always right; finish, inconsistent with prudence and passion, wrong. The imperative demand for finish is ruinous, because it refuses better things than finish. The stopping short of the finish, which is honourably possible to human energy, is destructive on the other side, and not in less degree. Err, or the two, on the side of completion.

* In general illustration of the subject, the following extract from my private diary possesses some interest.¹ It refers to two portraits which happened to be placed opposite to each other in the arrangement of a gallery; one, modern, of a (foreign) general on horseback at a review; the other,

¹ [Ruskin’s diary of 1858 was written (see above, Introduction, p. xxvii.) in the form of letters to his father. This extract is from a letter dated Turin, July 28, 1858, which adds:—

“There are two pictures hung opposite to each other in the farthest or innermost room at this Gallery, which have been set there, it seems, with definite purpose of illustrating what is noble and what is vulgar in the most striking way. One is a Vandyck, the Prince Thomas of Savoia-Carignano on horseback; the other a Horace Vernet, the late King of Sardinia, Charles Albert, at a review.”

Almost all the rest of the letter is given (with some slight alterations) in the passage here; the original letter having been used as “copy” for the book (among the MS. of which it still remains). Ruskin had friends among the Turinese, and was thus anxious not to connect his type of vulgarity with Vernet’s picture of Charles Albert; hence his mystification in the text of describing the subject of Vandyck’s portrait as “an ancestor of his family,” and that of Vernet’s as simply “a general.” “General” is substituted throughout for “the King” or “the King of Sardinia,” and “the Knight” for “the Prince of Carignano”; “the modern painter” for “Vernet,” and so forth. The two pictures are no longer hung together.]

we may conclude that vulgarity consists in a deadness of the heart and body, resulting from prolonged, and especially from inherited conditions of “degeneracy,” or literally “unracing”;—gentlemanliness, being another word for an intense humanity. And vulgarity shows itself primarily in dullness of heart, not in rage or cruelty, but in inability to feel or conceive noble character or emotion. This is its essential,

by Vandyck, also an equestrian portrait, of an ancestor of his family, whom I shall here simply call “the knight”:

“I have seldom seen so noble a Vandyck, chiefly because it is painted with less flightiness and flimsiness than usual, with a grand quietness and reserve—almost like Titian. The other is, on the contrary, as vulgar and base a picture as I have ever seen, and it becomes a matter of extreme interest to trace the cause of the difference.

“In the first place, everything the general and his horse wear is evidently just made. It has not only been cleaned that morning, but has been sent home from the tailor’s in a hurry last night. Horse bridle, saddle housings, blue coat, stars and lace thereupon, cocked hat, and sword hilt—all look as if they had just been taken from a shopboard in Pall Mall; the irresistible sense of the coat having been brushed to perfection is the first sentiment which the picture summons. The horse has also been rubbed down all the morning, and shines from head to tail.

“The knight rides in a suit of rusty armour. It has evidently been polished also carefully, and gleams brightly here and there; but all the polishing in the world will never take the battle-dints and battle-darkness out of it. His horse is gray, not lustrous, but a dark, lurid gray. Its mane is deep and soft; part of it shaken in front over its forehead—the rest, in enormous masses of waving gold, six feet long, falls streaming on its neck, and rises in currents of softest light, rippled by the wind over the rider’s armour. The saddle cloth is of a dim red, fading into leathern brown, gleaming with sparkles of obscure gold. When, after looking a little while at the soft mane of the Vandyck horse, we turn back to the general’s, we are shocked by the evident coarseness of its hair, which hangs, indeed, in long locks over the bridle, but is stiff, crude, sharp pointed, coarsely coloured (a kind of buff); no fine drawing of nostril or neck can give any look of nobleness to the animal which carries such hair; it looks like a hobby horse with tow glued to it, which riotous children have half pulled or scratched out. The next point of difference is the isolation of Vandyck’s figure, compared with the modern painter’s endeavour to ennoble his by subduing others. The knight seems to be just going out of his castle gates; his horse rears as he passes their pillars; there is nothing behind, but the sky. But the general is reviewing a regiment; the ensign lowers his colours to him; he takes off his hat in return. All which reviewing and bowing is in its very nature ignoble, wholly unfit to be painted: a gentleman might as well be painted leaving his card on somebody. And, in the next place, the modern painter has thought to enhance hance his officer by putting the regiment some distance back and in the shade,

pure, and most fatal form. Dulness of bodily sense and general stupidity, with such forms of crime as peculiarly issue from stupidity, are its material manifestation.

§ 24. Two years ago, when I was first beginning to work out the subject, and chatting with one of my keenest-minded friends¹ (Mr. Brett, the painter of the Val d'Aosta in the Exhibition of 1859), I casually asked him, "What is vulgarity?" merely to see what he would say, not supposing

so that the men look only about five feet high, being besides very ill painted to keep them in better subordination. One does not know whether most to despise the feebleness of the painter who must have recourse to such an artifice, or his vulgarity in being satisfied with it.² I ought by the way, before leaving the point of dress, to have noted that the vulgarity of the painter is considerably assisted by the vulgarity of the costume itself. Not only is it base in being new, but base in that it cannot last to be old. If one wanted a lesson on the ugliness of modern costume, it could not be more sharply received than by turning from one to the other horseman. The knight wears steel plate armour, chased here and there with gold; the delicate, rich, pointed lace collar falling on the embossed breastplate; his dark hair flowing over his shoulders; a crimson silk scarf fastened round his waist, and floating behind him; buff boots, deep folded at the instep, set in silver stirrup. The general wears his hair cropped short; blue coat, padded and buttoned; blue trowsers and red stripe; black shiny boots; common saddler's stirrups; cocked hat in hand, suggestive of absurd completion, when assumed.

"Another thing noticeable as giving nobleness to the Vandyck is its feminineness; the rich, light silken scarf, the flowing hair, the delicate, sharp, though sunburnt features, and the lace collar, do not in the least diminish the manliness, but *add* feminineness. One sees that the knight is indeed a soldier, but not a soldier only; that he is accomplished in all ways, and tender in all thoughts: while the general is represented as nothing but a soldier—and it is very doubtful if he is even that—one is sure, at a glance, that if he can do anything but put his hat off and on, and give words of command, the anything must, at all events, have something to do with the barracks; that there is no grace, nor music, nor softness, nor learnedness, in the man's soul; that he is made up of forms and accoutrements.

"Lastly, the modern picture is as bad painting as it is wretched conceiving; and one is struck, in looking from it to Vandyck's, peculiarly by the fact that good work is always *enjoyed* work.³ There is not a touch of

¹ [This must have been when Ruskin was with Brett in Turin in 1858: see Vol. XIV. p. xxiii.; and for the "Val d'Aosta" (reproduced as frontispiece to that volume), *ibid.*, p. 238 *n.*]

² [Here the letter adds:—

"It is such a miserable footman's compliment: 'Back all of you. Here's the great man—Mr. Charles Albert, if you please.' "]

³ [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 102 (Vol. XVI. p. 87).]



ALB. & CO. SO.

Portrait of Prince Tommaso di Savoia-Carignano

From the picture by Vandyck in the Royal Gallery at Turin

it possible to get a sudden answer. He thought for about a minute, then answered quietly, "It is merely one of the forms of Death." I did not see the meaning of the reply at the time; but on testing it, found that it met every phase of the difficulties connected with the inquiry, and summed the true conclusion. Yet, in order to be complete, it ought to be made a distinctive as well as conclusive definition; showing *what* form of death vulgarity is;

Vandyck's pencil but he seems to have revelled in—not grossly, but delicately—tasting the colour in every touch as an epicure would wine. While the other goes on daub, daub, daub, like a bricklayer spreading mortar—nay, with far less lightness of hand or lightness of spirit than a good bricklayer's—covering his canvas heavily and conceitedly at once, caring only but to catch the public eye with his coarse, presumptuous, ponderous, illiterate work."

Thus far my diary. In case it should be discovered by any one where these pictures are, it should be noted that the vulgarity of the modern one is wholly the painter's fault. It implies none in the general (except bad taste in pictures). The same painter would have made an equally vulgar portrait of Bayard. And as for taste in pictures, the general's was not singular. I used to spend much time before the Vandyck; and among all the tourist visitors to the gallery, who were numerous, I never saw one look at it twice, but all paused in respectful admiration before the padded surtout. The reader will find, farther, many interesting and most valuable notes on the subject of nobleness and vulgarity in Emerson's *Essays*,¹ and every phase of nobleness illustrated in Sir Kenelm Digby's *Broad Stone of Honour*. The best help I have ever had—so far as help depended on the sympathy or praise of others in work which, year after year, it was necessary to pursue through the abuse of the brutal and the base—was given me, when this author, from whom I had first learned to love nobleness, introduced frequent reference to my own writings in his *Children's Bower*.²

¹ [See especially the essay entitled "Manners." Ruskin read Emerson with much sympathy: see Vol. V. p. 427 and *n.*]

² ["Sir" Kenelm Digby in the text is a slip, the reference being, of course, not to the author, naval commander, and diplomatist of the seventeenth century, but to Kenelm Henry Digby (1800–1880), whose *Broad Stone of Honour* appeared in 1822. *The Children's Bower; or, What You Like* appeared in 1858 (2 vols.); quotations from Ruskin (referred to as "a great writer," or "a great contemporary") were given at vol. i. pp. 9, 29, 51, 53, 67, 77, 106, 112, 114, 119, 131, 142, 233; vol. ii. p. 185. Ruskin's father on reading the book reported it to his son, who replied:—

"I should think," he wrote from Lauffenbourg (May 27, 1858), "you would rather enjoy the mentions of me in that *Children's Bower*, considering how much we used to enjoy the *Broad Stone*; and I shall be much interested in them myself." "I'm very happy," he writes again (June 6), "about those quotations by the author of the *Broad Stone of Honour*: no man, after Helps, whom I would so much wish to please. Yes, the responsibility is great, but one mustn't work much under the feeling of it, else one would write timidly and ill."]

for death itself is not vulgar, but only death mingled with life. I cannot, however, construct a short-worded definition which will include all the minor conditions of bodily degeneracy; but the term "deathful selfishness" will embrace all the most fatal and essential forms of mental vulgarity.

CHAPTER VIII

WOUVERMANS AND ANGELICO¹

§ 1. HAVING determined the general nature of vulgarity, we are now able to close our view of the character of the Dutch school.

It is a strangely mingled one, which I have the more difficulty in investigating, because I have no power of sympathy with it. However inferior in capacity, I can enter measuredly into the feelings of Correggio or of Titian; what they like, I like; what they disdain, I disdain.² Going lower down, I can still follow Salvator's passion, or Albano's prettiness; and lower still, I can measure modern German heroics, or French sensualities. I see what the people mean,—know where they are, and what they are. But no effort of fancy will enable me to lay hold of the temper of Teniers, or Wouvermans, any more than I can enter into the feelings of one of the lower animals. I cannot see why they painted,—what they are aiming at,—what they liked or disliked. All their life and work is the same sort of mystery to me as the mind of my dog when he rolls on carrion. He is a well enough conducted dog in other respects, and many of these Dutchmen were doubtless very well-conducted persons: certainly they learned their business well; both Teniers and Wouvermans touch with a work-manly hand, such as we cannot see rivalled now; and they

¹ [The title of this chapter perhaps suggested itself to Ruskin in the Turin Gallery: see above, Introduction, p. xxxix. *n.*]

² [For Titian, Ruskin's admiration was at this time almost unqualified (see especially *Two Paths*, § 57, Vol. XVI. p. 298). For Correggio, it was severely measured (see Vol. IV. p. 197 *n.*). For Salvator, see above, ch. iv. For Albano, Vol. XVI. p. 192. For "German heroics," Vol. V. pp. 100, 430; and compare the Introduction, above, p. liii. For "French sensualities," Vol. IV. p. 63 *n.*; and for the Dutch painters, see General Index.]

seem never to have painted indolently, but gave the purchaser his thorough money's worth of mechanism, while the burgesses who bargained for their cattle and card parties were probably more respectable men than the princes who gave orders to Titian for nymphs, and to Raphael for nativities. But whatever patient merit or commercial value may be in Dutch labour, this at least is clear, that it is wholly insensitive.

The very mastery these men have of their business proceeds from their never really seeing the whole of anything, but only that part of it which they know how to do. Out of all nature they felt their function was to extract the grayness and shininess. Give them a golden sunset, a rosy dawn, a green waterfall, a scarlet autumn on the hills, and they merely look curiously into it to see if there is anything gray and glittering which can be painted on their common principles.

§ 2. If this, however, were their only fault, it would not prove absolute insensibility, any more than it could be declared of the makers of Florentine tables,¹ that they were blind or vulgar, because they took out of nature only what could be represented in agate. A Dutch picture is, in fact, merely a Florentine table more finely touched; it has its regular ground of slate, and its mother-of-pearl and tinsel put in with equal precision; and perhaps the fairest view one can take of a Dutch painter, is that he is a respectable tradesman furnishing well-made articles in oil paint; but when we begin to examine the designs of these articles, we may see immediately that it is his inbred vulgarity, and not the chance of fortune, which has made him a tradesman, and kept him one;—which essential character of Dutch work, as distinguished from all other, may be best seen in that hybrid landscape, introduced by Wouvermans and Berghem. Of this landscape Wouvermans' is the most characteristic. It will be remembered that I called it "hybrid,"

¹ [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 34 (Vol. XVI. p. 38).]

because it strove to unite the attractiveness of every other school.¹ We will examine the motives of one of the most elaborate Wouvermans existing—landscape with a hunting party, No. 208 in the Pinacothek of Munich.²

§ 3. A large lake in the distance narrows into a river in the foreground; but the river has no current, nor has the lake either reflections or waves. It is a piece of gray slate table, painted with horizontal touches, and only explained to be water by boats upon it. Some of the figures in these are fishing (the corks of a net are drawn in bad perspective); others are bathing, one man pulling his shirt over his ears, others are swimming. On the farther side of the river are some curious buildings, half villa, half ruin; or rather ruin dressed. There are gardens at the top of them, with beautiful and graceful trellised architecture and wandering tendrils of vine. A gentleman is coming down from a door in the ruins to get into his pleasure-boat. His servant catches his dog.

§ 4. On the nearer side of the river, a bank of broken ground rises from the water's edge up to a group of very graceful and carefully studied trees, with a French-antique statue on a pedestal in the midst of them, at the foot of which are three musicians, and a well-dressed couple dancing; their coach is in waiting behind. In the foreground are hunters. A richly and highly dressed woman with falcon on fist, the principal figure in the picture, is wrought with Wouvermans' best skill. A stouter lady rides into the water after a stag and hind, who gallop across the middle of the river without sinking. Two horsemen attend the two Amazons, of whom one pursues the game cautiously, but the other is thrown headforemost into the river, with a splash which shows it to be deep at the edge, though the hart and hind find bottom in the middle. Running footmen, with other dogs, are coming up, and children are

¹ [See above, p. 255.]

² ["A Stag Hunt," No. 496 in a subsequent renumbering. See Ruskin's note upon the picture which is given below, p. 493; and compare the Introduction, pp. liii.–liv.]

sailing a toy-boat in the immediate foreground. The tone of the whole is dark and gray, throwing out the figures in spots of light, on Wouvermans' usual system. The sky is cloudy, and very cold.

§ 5. You observe that in this picture the painter has assembled all the elements which he supposes pleasurable. We have music, dancing, hunting, boating, fishing, bathing, and child-play, all at once. Water, wide and narrow; architecture, rustic and classical; trees also of the finest; clouds, not ill-shaped. Nothing wanting to our Paradise: not even practical jest; for to keep us always laughing, somebody shall be for ever falling with a splash into the Pison. Things proceed, nevertheless, with an oppressive quietude. The dancers are uninterested in the hunters, the hunters in the dancers; the hirer of the pleasure-boat perceives neither hart nor hind; the children are unconcerned at the hunter's fall; the bathers regard not the draught of fishes; the fishers fish among the bathers, without apparently anticipating any diminution in their haul.

§ 6. Let the reader ask himself, would it have been possible for the painter in any clearer way to show an absolute, clay-cold, ice-cold incapacity of understanding what a pleasure meant? Had he had as much heart as a minnow, he would have given some interest to the fishing; with the soul of a grasshopper, some spring to the dancing; had he half the will of a dog, he would have made some one turn to look at the hunt, or given a little fire to the dash down to the water's edge. If he had been capable of pensiveness, he would not have put the pleasure-boat under the ruin;—capable of cheerfulness, he would not have put the ruin above the pleasure-boat. Paralyzed in heart and brain, he delivers his inventoried articles of pleasure one by one to his ravenous customers; palateless; gluttonous. "We cannot taste it. Hunting is not enough; let us have dancing. That's dull; now give us a jest, or what is life! The river is too narrow, let us have a lake; and, for mercy's sake, a pleasure-boat, or how can we spend another minute of this

languid day! But what pleasure can be in a boat? let us swim; we see people always drest, let us see them naked.”

§ 7. Such is the unredeemed, carnal appetite for mere sensual pleasure. I am aware of no other painter who consults it so exclusively, without one gleam of higher hope, thought, beauty, or passion.

As the pleasure of Wouvermans, so also is his war. That, however, is not hybrid, it is of one character only.

The best example I know is the great battle-piece with the bridge, in the gallery of Turin. It is said that when this picture, which had been taken to Paris, was sent back, the French offered twelve thousand pounds (300,000 francs) for permission to keep it. The report, true or not, shows the estimation in which the picture is held at Turin.¹

§ 8. There are some twenty figures in the *mêlée* whose faces can be seen (about sixty in the picture altogether), and of these twenty, there is not one whose face indicates courage or power; or anything but animal rage and cowardice; the latter prevailing always. Every one is fighting for his life, with the expression of a burglar defending himself at extremity against a party of policemen. There is the same terror, fury, and pain which a low thief would show on receiving a pistol-shot through his arm. Most of them appear to be fighting only to get away; the standard-bearer *is* retreating, but whether with the enemy's flag or his own I do not see; he slinks away with it, with reverted eye, as if he were stealing a pocket-handkerchief. The swordsmen cut at each other with clenched teeth and terrified eyes; they are too busy to curse each other; but one sees that the feelings they have could be expressed no otherwise than by low oaths. Far away, to the smallest

¹ [In the description of the picture sent by Ruskin to his father among the “Notes on the Turin Gallery” (see above, p. xxxix.), he mentions this story as one current among the Italian painters. The description here given follows the “Notes” with some corrections, which add:—

“As a moral lesson against war it would be very valuable if it were properly engraved; only failing from its giving nothing but the base side of battle. I don't believe that there was ever a battle, even in Holland, where nobody but cowards fought.”]

figures in the smoke, and to one drowning under the distant arch of the bridge, all are wrought with a consummate skill in vulgar touch; there is no good painting, properly so called, anywhere, but of clever, dotty, sparkling, telling execution, as much as the canvas will hold, and much delicate gray and blue colour in the smoke and sky.

§ 9. Now, in order fully to feel the difference between this view of war, and a gentleman's, go, if possible, into our National Gallery, and look at the young Malatesta riding into the battle of Sant' Egidio (as he is painted by Paul Uccello).¹ His uncle Carlo, the leader of the army, a grave man of about sixty, has just given orders for the knights to close: two have pushed forward with lowered lances, and the *mêlée* has begun only a few yards in front; but the young knight, riding at his uncle's side, has not yet put his helmet on, nor intends doing so yet. Erect he sits, and quiet, waiting for his captain's order to charge; calm as if he were at a hawking party, only more grave; his golden hair wreathed about his proud white brow, as about a statue's.

§ 10. "Yes," the thoughtful reader replies, "this may be pictorially very beautiful; but those Dutchmen were good fighters, and generally won the day; whereas, this very battle of Sant' Egidio, so calmly and bravely begun, was lost."

Indeed, it is very singular that unmitigated expressions of cowardice in battle should be given by the painters of so brave a nation as the Dutch. Not but that it is possible enough for a coward to be stubborn, and a brave man weak; the one may win his battle by a blind persistence, and the other lose it by a thoughtful vacillation. Nevertheless, the want of all expression of resoluteness in Dutch battle-pieces remains, for the present, a mystery to me. In those of Wouvermans, it is only a natural development of his perfect vulgarity in all respects.

§ 11. I do not think it necessary to trace farther the

¹ [See above, pp. 18, 339 *n.*]

evidences of insensitive conception in the Dutch school. I have associated the name of Teniers with that of Wouvermans in the beginning of this chapter, because Teniers is essentially the painter of the pleasures of the ale-house and card-table, as Wouvermans of those of the chase; and the two are leading masters of the peculiar Dutch trick of white touch on gray or brown ground; but Teniers is higher in reach and more honest in manner. Berghem is the real associate of Wouvermans in the hybrid school of landscape. But all three are alike insensitive; that is to say, unspiritual or deathful, and that to the uttermost, in every thought,—producing, therefore, the lowest phase of possible art of a skilful kind.¹ There are deeper elements in De Hooghe and Gerard Terburg; sometimes expressed with superb quiet painting by the former;² but the whole school is inherently mortal to all its admirers; having by its influence in England destroyed our perception of all purposes of painting, and throughout the north of the Continent effaced the sense of colour among artists of every rank.

We have, last, to consider what recovery has taken place from the paralysis to which the influence of this Dutch art had reduced us in England seventy years ago. But, in closing my review of older art, I will endeavour to illustrate, by four simple examples, the main directions of its spiritual power, and the cause of its decline.

§ 12. The frontispiece of this volume is engraved from an old sketch of mine, a pencil outline of the little Madonna by Angelico, in the Annunciation preserved in the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella.³ This Madonna has not, so far as I know, been engraved before, and it is one of the most

¹ [The MS. adds here:—

“Feeble gleams of truer feeling, but with much inferior painting, occur in the works of Hobbima, Ruysdael, Both, etc., of any of whom, however, with respect to ideas of relation we need take no further notice.”]

² [For other references to De Hooghe, see Vol. V. p. 407, and Vol. XII. p. 455. For notes on pictures by Terburg at Munich, see below, Appendix IV., p. 494.]

³ [Sketched by Ruskin in 1845: see the description of the picture in Vol. IV. p. 263 *n*. For other references to the Plate, see *Love's Meinie*, § 148, and *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 6.]

characteristic of the Purist school. I believe through all my late work I have sufficiently guarded my readers from overestimating this school;¹ but it is well to turn back to it now, from the wholly carnal work of Wouvermans, in order to feel its purity: so that, if we err, it may be on this side. The opposition is the most accurate which I can set before the student, for the technical disposition of Wouvermans, in his search after delicate form and minute grace, much resembles that of Angelico. But the thoughts of Wouvermans are wholly of this world. For him there is no heroism, awe, or mercy, hope, or faith. Eating and drinking, and slaying; rage and lust; the pleasures and distresses of the debased body—from these, his thoughts, if so we may call them, never for an instant rise or range.

§ 13. The soul of Angelico is in all ways the precise reverse of this; habitually as incognizant of any earthly pleasure as Wouvermans of any heavenly one. Both are exclusive with absolute exclusiveness;—neither desiring nor conceiving anything beyond their respective spheres. Wouvermans lives under gray clouds, his lights come out as spots. Angelico lives in an unclouded light: his shadows themselves are colour; his lights are not the spots, but his darks. Wouvermans lives in perpetual tumult—tramp of horse—clash of cup—ring of pistol-shot. Angelico in perpetual peace. Not seclusion from the world. No shutting out of the world is needful for him. There is nothing to shut out. Envy, lust, contention, discourtesy, are to him as though they were not; and the cloister walk of Fiesole no penitential solitude, barred from the stir and joy of life, but a possessed land of tender blessing, guarded from the entrance of all but holiest sorrow. The little cell was as one of the houses of heaven prepared for him by his Master.

¹ [In his earlier work Ruskin had estimated the school more highly, citing Angelico at the end of the second volume of *Modern Painters* in a climax of admiration (Vol. IV. p. 332). Then, in later volumes, he dwelt rather on the element of weakness in the Purist school: see, for instance, *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (p. 226), and *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 104–105). At a later period Ruskin reverted in some measure to his earlier view: see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76, and Vol. XIII. p. 525, and compare the Introduction, above, pp. xl., xli.]

What need had it to be elsewhere? Was not the Val d'Arno, with its olive woods in white blossom, paradise enough for a poor monk? or could Christ be indeed in heaven more than here? Was He not always with him? Could he breathe or see, but that Christ breathed beside him, and looked into his eyes? Under every cypress avenue the angels walked; he had seen their white robes, whiter than the dawn, at his bed-side, as he awoke in early summer. They had sung with him, one on each side, when his voice failed for joy at sweet vesper and matin time; his eyes were blinded by their wings in the sunset, when it sank behind the hills of Luni.

There may be weakness in this, but there is no baseness; and while I rejoice in all recovery from monasticism which leads to practical and healthy action in the world, I must, in closing this work, severely guard my pupils from the thought that sacred rest may be honourably exchanged for selfish and mindless activity.

§ 14. In order to mark the temper of Angelico, by a contrast of another kind, I give in Fig. 99 a facsimile of one of the heads in Salvator's etching of the Academy of Plato.¹ It is accurately characteristic of Salvator, showing, by quite a central type, his indignant, desolate, and degraded power. I could have taken unspeakably baser examples from others of his etchings, but they would have polluted my book, and been in some sort unjust, representing only the worst part of his work. This head, which is as elevated a type as he ever reaches, is assuredly debased enough; and a sufficient image of the mind of the painter of *Catiline* and the *Witch of Endor*.

§ 15. Then, in Fig. 100 (overleaf), you have also a



Fig. 99

¹ [For another reference to this Plate, see above, p. 89 and Fig. 58. The picture of "Catiline" is in the Pitti Palace, Florence; the "Witch of Endor," in the Louvre; for another reference to it, see Vol. X. p. 126.]

central type of the mind of Dürer.¹ Complete, yet quaint; severely rational and practical, yet capable of the highest imaginative religious feeling, and as gentle as a child's, it seemed to be well represented by this figure of the old bishop, with all the infirmities, and all the victory, of his life, written on his calm, kind, and worldly face. He has been no dreamer, nor persecutor, but a helpful and undeceivable man; and by careful comparison of this conception with the common kinds of episcopal ideal in modern religious art, you will gradually feel how the force of Dürer is joined with an unapproachable refinement, so that he can give the most practical view of whatever he treats, without the slightest taint or shadow of vulgarity. Lastly, the fresco of Giorgione, Plate 79,² which is as fair a type as I am able to give in any single figure, of the central Venetian art, will complete for us a series, sufficiently symbolical of the several ranks of art, from lowest to highest.* In Wouvermans (of whose work I suppose no example is needed, it being so generally known), we have the entirely

* As I was correcting these pages, there was put into my hand a little work by a very dear friend—*Travels and Study in Italy*, by Charles Eliot Norton;—I have not yet been able to do more than glance at it; but my impression is, that by carefully reading it, together with the essay by the same writer on the Vita Nuova of Dante, a more just estimate may be formed of the religious art of Italy, than by the study of any other books yet existing. At least, I have seen none in which the tone of thought was at once so tender and so just.³

I had hoped, before concluding this book, to have given it higher value by extracts from the works which have chiefly helped or guided me, especially from the writings of Helps, Lowell, and the Rev. A. J. Scott.⁴ But if I were to begin making such extracts, I find that I should not know, either in justice or affection, how to end.

¹ [St. Arnolph, Bishop of Metz.]

² [For the particulars of this Plate, see below, p. 439 *n.*]

³ [For Ruskin's meeting with Professor Norton in Switzerland in 1856 and their subsequent friendship, see above, Introduction, p. xxii. Mr. Norton's *Notes of Travel and Study in Italy* was published at Boston in 1860; the "New Life" of Dante, an essay, with translations, at Cambridge (U.S.A.) in 1859. Ruskin refers to the latter in one of his letters to Norton (Boston, 1904, vol. i. pp. 97, 170) reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]

⁴ [For Ruskin's indebtedness to Helps, see Vol. V. pp. 153, 334, 427, and Vol. XI. p. 153; see also above, p. 313 *n.* For Lowell, see above, Introduction, p. xxii.; and below, p. 451. See also *Elements of Drawing*, § 258 (Vol. XV. p. 227); *Time and*



carnal mind,—wholly versed in the material world, and incapable of conceiving any goodness or greatness whatsoever.

In Angelico, you have the entirely spiritual mind, wholly versed in the heavenly world, and incapable of conceiving any wickedness or vileness whatsoever.

In Salvator, you have an awakened conscience, and some spiritual power, contending with evil, but conquered by it, and brought into captivity to it.

In Dürer, you have a far purer conscience and higher spiritual power, yet, with some defect still in intellect, contending with evil, and nobly prevailing over it; yet retaining the marks of the contest, and never so entirely victorious as to conquer sadness.

In Giorgione, you have the same high spiritual power and practical sense; but now, with entirely perfect intellect, contending with evil; conquering it utterly, casting it away for ever, and rising beyond it into magnificence of rest.

Tide, § 140; *Val d'Arno*, § 170; and *Præterita*, iii. § 47. The Rev. Alexander John Scott (1805–1866) was an assistant in London to Edward Irving, and afterwards minister of a congregation at Woolwich; Professor of English Literature at University College, London, and first Principal of the Owens College, Manchester. He was the author of many devotional books. He was a relation of F. J. Shields, the artist, to whom Ruskin wrote: "In Mr. Scott you have a quite infallible guide in intellectual matters."]

CHAPTER IX

THE TWO BOYHOODS

§ 1. BORN half-way between the mountains and the sea—that young George of Castelfranco—of the Brave Castle:—Stout George they called him, George of Georges, so goodly a boy he was—Giorgione.¹

Have you ever thought what a world his eyes opened on—fair, searching eyes of youth? What a world of mighty life, from those mountain roots to the shore;—of loveliest life, when he went down, yet so young, to the marble city—and became himself as a fiery heart to it?

A city of marble, did I say? nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold, or bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. Deep-hearted, majestic, terrible as the sea,—the men of Venice moved in sway of power and war; pure as her pillars of alabaster, stood her mothers and maidens; from foot to brow, all noble, walked her knights; the low bronzed gleaming of sea-rusted armour shot angrily under their blood-red mantle-folds. Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable,—every word a fate—sate her senate. In hope and honour, lulled by flowing of wave around their isles of sacred sand, each with his name written and the cross graved at his side, lay her dead. A wonderful piece of world. Rather, itself a world. It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than a bar of sunset that

¹ [For a rhymed version of a portion of this chapter, see above, Introduction, p. lxvi.]

Born half way between the mountains and the sea.
That young George of Castelfranco. of the Bear Castle.

- ~~George~~ ^{Herbert} George, they called him - George of Georges.
So ^{goodly} fair a boy he was - Giorgio.

How you thought what a world it was - which
his eyes opened on - ~~finest~~ ^{searching} ~~brave~~ fearless
eyes of youth - ~~there in the fifteenth century~~

What a world of mighty life - From those
mountain roots to the shore; of loveliest
life, when he went down - yet so young into the

~~heart of a~~ ^{mouth} - City of ~~marble~~; and became himself
as ^{a friend} ~~to~~ heart: ^{in it} lighting such

- A city of ~~of~~ marble did I say: Nay rather
^{golden} city of ~~gold~~ paved with emerald: ^{in kind} Every
pinnacle and turret ^{glowed} ~~glowed~~ with ~~glow~~ ^{glowed}, or ~~glowed~~
overlaid with gold - or ^{Beneath} ~~bordered~~ with ^{jasper} ~~purple~~:

~~deep~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~unsullied~~ sea drew in deep
breathing to and fro its ~~green~~ ^{green} eddies of ~~wave~~.

Deep ^{beated} ~~beated~~ majestic - terrible as the sea:
the ~~men~~ ^{men} of Venice moved ⁱⁿ ~~through~~ ⁱⁿ ~~power~~ ^{power} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~city~~

~~White~~ ^{Pure} ~~and~~ ~~fair~~ as her pillars of alabaster - ~~down~~ ^{down} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~them~~
~~stood~~ ~~stood~~ her mothers and maidens: ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~there~~
~~was~~ ~~ignoble~~ ~~nothing~~ ~~unlovely~~: From foot to brow

~~all~~ ~~beautiful~~, ~~strong~~ as the sea birds, white ~~from~~
~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~tip~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~bill~~

~~the~~ ~~low~~ ~~housed~~ ~~gleaming~~ of sea-rusted armour that ~~angel~~
walked her knights; - ~~their~~ ~~black~~ ~~armor~~ ~~shone~~ ~~with~~
~~gleaming~~ ~~armor~~ ~~under~~ ~~their~~ ~~mantle~~ ~~fold~~ - ~~First~~ ~~of~~

~~patient~~ ^{patient} - ~~impenetrable~~ - ~~patient~~ ^{patient} ~~implacable~~ - every
~~word~~ ~~a~~ ~~fate~~ - ~~save~~ ~~her~~ ~~seal~~: In hope, & honour,

~~deep~~ ~~be~~ ~~pulled~~ ~~by~~ ~~flouring~~ ~~of~~ ~~wave~~ ~~around~~
the ~~isles~~ of sacred sand, ~~each~~ ~~with~~ ~~his~~ ~~name~~.
~~signed~~ ^{signed}

could not pass away; but for its power, it must have seemed to them as if they were sailing in the expanse of heaven, and this a great planet, whose orient edge widened through ether. A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were banished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness, nor tumult, in those tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon; but rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence. No weak walls could rise above them; no low-roofed cottage, nor straw-built shed. Only the strength as of rock, and the finished setting of stones most precious. And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft moving of stainless waters, proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps, dreamlike, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west. Above, free winds and fiery clouds ranging at their will;—brightness out of the north, and balm from the south, and the stars of the evening and morning clear in the limitless light of arched heaven and circling sea.¹

Such was Giorgione's school—such Titian's home.

§ 2. Near the south-west corner of Covent Garden, a square brick pit or well is formed by a close-set block of houses, to the back windows of which it admits a few rays of light. Access to the bottom of it is obtained out of Maiden Lane, through a low archway and an iron gate; and if you stand long enough under the archway to accustom your eyes to the darkness you may see on the left hand a narrow door, which formerly gave quiet access to a respectable barber's shop, of which the front window, looking into Maiden Lane, is still extant, filled, in this year (1860), with

¹ [§ 1, down to this point, was quoted by Ruskin as the conclusion of his Epilogue (1881), entitled "Castelfranco," to *The Stones of Venice* ("Travellers' Edition"): see Vol. XI. p. 244. The last seven lines were also quoted in the Appendix to *The Art of England* (§ 199) as expressing "the beautiful and healthy states of natural cloud and light to which the plague-cloud and plague-wind of the succeeding aera were to be opposed."]

a row of bottles, connected, in some defunct manner, with a brewer's business.¹ A more fashionable neighbourhood, it is said, eighty years ago than now—never certainly a cheerful one—wherein a boy being born on St. George's day, 1775, began soon after to take interest in the world of Covent Garden, and put to service such spectacles of life as it afforded.

§ 3. No knights to be seen there, nor, I imagine, many beautiful ladies; their costume at least disadvantageous, depending much on incumbency of hat and feather, and short waists; the majesty of men founded similarly on shoebuckles and wigs;—impressive enough when Reynolds will do his best for it; but not suggestive of much ideal delight to a boy.

“Bello ovile dov' io dormii agnello”;² of things beautiful, besides men and women, dusty sunbeams up or down the street on summer mornings; deep furrowed cabbage-leaves at the greengrocer's; magnificence of oranges in wheel-barrows round the corner; and Thames' shore within three minutes' race.

§ 4. None of these things very glorious; the best, however, that England, it seems, was then able to provide for a boy of gift: who, such as they are, loves them—never, indeed, forgets them. The short waists modify to the last his visions of Greek ideal. His foregrounds had always a succulent cluster or two of greengrocery at the corners. Enchanted oranges gleam in Covent Gardens of the Hesperides; and great ships go to pieces in order to scatter chests of them on the waves.³ That mist of early sunbeams in the London dawn crosses, many and many a time, the clearness of Italian air; and by Thames' shore, with its

¹ [The region described by Ruskin has been cleared and rebuilt since he wrote. Turner's house (No. 26) was on the north side of the lane (now rebuilt). Woodcuts showing the old house are given in Thornbury's *Life* (facing p. 1), and in Cosmo Monkhouse's *Turner*, p. 11. A few of the older houses still (1905) stand on the south side of the street.]

² [Dante's allusion to Florence: *Paradiso*, xx. 5.]

³ [See “The Garden of the Hesperides,” No. 477 in the National Gallery; and “The Meuse: Orange-Merchantman going to pieces on the Bar,” No. 501.]

stranded barges and glidings of red sail, dearer to us than Lucerne lake or Venetian lagoon,—by Thames' shore we will die.¹

§ 5. With such circumstance round him in youth, let us note what necessary effects followed upon the boy. I assume him to have had Giorgione's sensibility (and more than Giorgione's, if that be possible) to colour and form. I tell you farther, and this fact you may receive trustfully, that his sensibility to human affection and distress was no less keen than even his sense for natural beauty—heart-sight sight deep as eyesight.

Consequently, he attaches himself with the faithfulest child-love to everything that bears an image of the place he was born in. No matter how ugly it is,—has it anything about it like Maiden Lane, or like Thames' shore? If so, it shall be painted for their sake. Hence, to the very close of life, Turner could endure ugliness which no one else, of the same sensibility, would have borne with for an instant. Dead brick walls, blank square windows, old clothes, market-womanly types of humanity—anything fishy and muddy, like Billingsgate or Hungerford Market, had great attraction for him; black barges, patched sails, and every possible condition of fog.

§ 6. You will find these tolerations and affections guiding or sustaining him to the last hour of his life; the notablest of all such endurance being that of dirt. No Venetian ever draws anything foul; but Turner devoted picture after picture to the illustration of effects of dinginess, smoke, soot, dust, and dusty texture; old sides of boats, weedy roadside vegetation, dung-hills, straw-yards, and all the soilings and stains of every common labour.²

And more than this, he not only could endure, but enjoyed and looked for *litter*, like Covent Garden wreck after the market. His pictures are often full of it, from

¹ [For Turner's death at Chelsea, see Vol. XII. p. 133.]

² [Compare the summary of Turner's subjects in this kind in *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 34 (Vol. XII. p. 369).]

side to side; their foregrounds differ from all others in the natural way that things have of lying about in them. Even his richest vegetation, in ideal work, is confused; and he delights in shingle, débris, and heaps of fallen stones. The last words he ever spoke to me about a picture were in gentle exultation about his St. Gothard: “that *litter* of stones which I endeavoured to represent.”¹

§ 7. The second great result of this Covent Garden training was, understanding of and regard for the poor, whom the Venetians, we saw, despised; whom, contrarily, Turner loved, and more than loved—understood. He got no romantic sight of them, but an infallible one, as he prowled about the end of his lane, watching night effects in the wintry streets; nor sight of the poor alone, but of the poor in direct relations with the rich. He knew, in good and evil, what both classes thought of, and how they dealt with, each other.

Reynolds and Gainsborough, bred in country villages, learned there the country boy’s reverential theory of “the squire,” and kept it. They painted the squire and the squire’s lady as centres of the movements of the universe, to the end of their lives.² But Turner perceived the younger squire in other aspects about his lane, occurring prominently in its night scenery, as a dark figure, or one of two, against the moonlight. He saw also the working of city commerce, from endless warehouse, towering over Thames, to the back shop in the lane, with its stale herrings—highly interesting these last; one of his father’s best friends, whom he often afterwards visited affectionately at Bristol, being a fishmonger and glue-boiler;³ which gives us a friendly turn of mind towards herring-fishing, whaling, Calais poissardes, and many other of our choicest subjects in after-life; all this being connected with that mysterious

¹ [Said of the drawing of “The Pass of Faido”: see Vol. V. p. 122 (and compare Vol. XII. p. 500).]

² [Compare “Sir Joshua and Holbein,” §§ 4, 5 (Vol. XIX.); *Ariadne Florentina*, § 48; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 45.]

³ [Mr. Narraway, for whom see Vol. XIII. p. 473 *n.*]

forest below London Bridge on one side; and, on the other, with these masses of human power and national wealth which weigh upon us, at Covent Garden here, with strange compression, and crush us into narrow Hand Court.

§ 8. “That mysterious forest below London Bridge”¹—better for the boy than wood of pine, or grove of myrtle. How he must have tormented the watermen, beseeching them to let him crouch anywhere in the bows, quiet as a log, so only that he might get floated down there among the ships, and round and round the ships, and with the ships, and by the ships, and under the ships, staring, and clambering;—these the only quite beautiful things he can see in all the world, except the sky; but these, when the sun is on their sails, filling or falling, endlessly disordered by sway of tide and stress of anchorage, beautiful unspeakably; which ships also are inhabited by glorious creatures—red-faced sailors, with pipes, appearing over the gunwales, true knights, over their castle parapets—the most angelic beings in the whole compass of London world. And Trafalgar happening long before we can draw ships, we, nevertheless, coax all current stories out of the wounded sailors, do our best at present to show Nelson’s funeral streaming up the Thames;² and vow that Trafalgar shall have its tribute of memory some day. Which, accordingly, is accomplished—once, with all our might, for its death; twice, with all our might, for its victory; thrice, in pensive farewell to the old *Téméraire*, and with it, to that order of things.³

§ 9. Now this fond accompanying with sailors must have

¹ [See *Harbours of England*, § 18 (Vol. XIII. p. 28).]

² [“Turner most likely was at Margate on the 22nd of December (1805), when the *Victory* arrived there with the body of Nelson” (Thornbury’s *Life of Turner*, p. 428).]

³ [The pictures referred to are: (1) “The Battle of Trafalgar, as seen from the mizen starboard shrouds of the *Victory*,” exhibited in 1808, and usually called “The Death of Nelson,” No. 480 in the National Gallery (see Vol. XIII. p. 170); (2) “The Battle of Trafalgar,” painted for George IV., and by him presented to Greenwich Hospital in 1829 (see Vol. XIII. pp. 33, 170); (3) the “*Téméraire*,” exhibited in 1839, No. 524 in the National Gallery (see Vol. XIII. pp. 167–172).]

divided his time, it appears to me, pretty equally between Covent Garden and Wapping (allowing for incidental excursions to Chelsea on one side, and Greenwich on the other), which time he would spend pleasantly, but not magnificently, being limited in pocket-money, and leading a kind of "Poor Jack" life on the river.

In some respects, no life could be better for a lad. But it was not calculated to make his ear fine to the niceties of language, nor form his moralities on an entirely regular standard. Picking up his first scraps of vigorous English chiefly at Deptford and in the markets, and his first ideas of female tenderness and beauty among nymphs of the barge and the barrow,—another boy might, perhaps, have become what people usually term "vulgar." But the original make and frame of Turner's mind being not vulgar, but as nearly as possible a combination of the minds of Keats and Dante, joining capricious waywardness, and intense openness to every fine pleasure of sense, and hot defiance of formal precedent, with a quite infinite tenderness, generosity, and desire of justice and truth—this kind of mind did not become vulgar, but very tolerant of vulgarity, even fond of it in some forms; and on the outside, visibly infected by it, deeply enough; the curious result, in its combination of elements, being to most people wholly incomprehensible. It was as if a cable had been woven of blood-crimson silk, and then tarred on the outside. People handled it, and the tar came off on their hands; red gleams were seen through the black underneath, at the places where it had been strained. Was it ochre?—said the world—or red lead?

§ 10. Schooled thus in manners, literature, and general moral principles at Chelsea and Wapping, we have finally to inquire concerning the most important point of all. We have seen the principal differences between this boy and Giorgione, as respects sight of the beautiful, understanding of poverty, of commerce, and of order of battle; then follows another cause of difference in our training—not slight,—the aspect of religion, namely, in the neighbourhood of

Covent Garden. I say the aspect; for that was all the lad could judge by. Disposed, for the most part, to learn chiefly by his eyes, in this special matter he finds there is really no other way of learning. His father had taught him “to lay one penny upon another.”¹ Of mother’s teaching, we hear of none; of parish pastoral teaching, the reader may guess how much.

§ 11. I chose Giorgione rather than Veronese to help me in carrying out this parallel; because I do not find in Giorgione’s work any of the early Venetian monarchist element. He seems to me to have belonged more to an abstract contemplative school. I may be wrong in this; it is no matter;—suppose it were so, and that he came down to Venice somewhat recusant or insentient, concerning the usual priestly doctrines of his day, how would the Venetian religion, from an outer intellectual standing-point, have *looked* to him?

§ 12. He would have seen it to be a religion indisputably powerful in human affairs; often very harmfully so; sometimes devouring widows’ houses,² and consuming the strongest and fairest from among the young: freezing into merciless bigotry the policy of the old: also, on the other hand, animating national courage, and raising souls, otherwise sordid, into heroism: on the whole, always a real and great power; served with daily sacrifice of gold, time, and thought; putting forth its claims, if hypocritically, at least in bold hypocrisy, not waiving any atom of them in doubt or fear; and, assuredly, in large measure, sincere, believing in itself, and believed: a goodly system, moreover, in aspect; gorgeous, harmonious, mysterious;—a thing which had either to be obeyed or combated, but could not be scorned. A religion towering over all the city—many-buttressed—luminous in marble stateliness, as the dome of our Lady of Safety shines over the sea; many-voiced, also, giving, over all the eastern

¹ [“His ‘Dad,’ Turner used to say, never praised him for anything but saving a halfpenny” (Cosmo Monkhouse’s *Turner*, p. 10).]

² [Matthew xxiii. 14.]

seas, to the sentinel his watchword, to the soldier his warcry; and, on the lips of all who died for Venice, shaping the whisper of death.¹

§ 13. I suppose the boy Turner to have regarded the religion of his city also from an external intellectual standing-point.

What did he see in Maiden Lane?

Let not the reader be offended with me: I am willing to let him describe, at his own pleasure, what Turner saw there; but to me, it seems to have been this. A religion maintained occasionally, even the whole length of the lane, at point of constable's staff; but, at other times, placed under the custody of the beadle, within certain black and unstately iron railings of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. Among the wheelbarrows and over the vegetables, no perceptible dominance of religion; in the narrow, disquieted streets, none; in the tongues, deeds, daily ways of Maiden Lane, little. Some honesty, indeed, and English industry, and kindness of heart, and general idea of justice; but faith, of any national kind, shut up from one Sunday to the next, not artistically beautiful even in those Sabbatical exhibitions; its paraphernalia being chiefly of high pews, heavy elocution, and cold grimness of behaviour.

What chiaroscuro belongs to it—(dependent mostly on candlelight),—we will, however, draw, considerately; no goodness of escutcheon, nor other respectability being omitted, and the best of their results confessed, a meek old woman and a child being let into a pew, for whom the reading by candlelight will be beneficial.*

§ 14. For the rest, this religion seems to him discreditable—discredited—not believing in itself: putting forth its

* *Liber Studiorum*. "Interior of a church." It is worthy of remark that Giorgione and Titian are always delighted to have an opportunity of drawing priests. The English Church may, perhaps, accept it as matter of congratulation that this is the only instance in which Turner drew a clergyman.

¹ [With this sketch of Venetian religion, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. pp. 23 *seq.*.)]

authority in a cowardly way, watching how far it might be tolerated, continually shrinking, disclaiming, fencing, finessing; divided against itself, not by stormy rents, but by thin fissures, and splittings of plaster from the walls. Not to be either obeyed, or combated, by an ignorant, yet clearsighted youth! only to be scorned. And scorned not one whit the less, though also the dome dedicated to *it* looms high over distant winding of the Thames; as St. Mark's campanile rose, for goodly landmark, over mirage of lagoon. For St. Mark ruled over life; the Saint of London over death; St. Mark over St. Mark's Place, but St. Paul over St. Paul's Churchyard.

§ 15. Under these influences pass away the first reflective hours of life, with such conclusion as they can reach. In consequence of a fit of illness, he was taken—I cannot ascertain in what year¹—to live with an aunt, at Brentford; and here, I believe, received some schooling, which he seems to have snatched vigorously; getting knowledge, at least by translation, of the more picturesque classical authors, which he turned presently to use, as we shall see. Hence also, walks about Putney and Twickenham in the summer time acquainted him with the look of English meadow-ground in its restricted states of paddock and park; and with some round-headed appearances of trees, and stately entrances to houses of mark: the avenue at Bushey, and the iron gates and carved pillars of Hampton, impressing him apparently with great awe and admiration; so that in after-life his little country house is,—of all places in the world,—at Twickenham!² Of swans and reedy shores he now learns the soft motion and the green mystery, in a way not to be forgotten.

§ 16. And at last fortune wills that the lad's true life shall begin; and one summer's evening, after various wonderful stage-coach experiences on the north road, which

¹ [It was in 1785, when he was ten years old: see Thornbury's *Life of Turner*, p. 11 (ed. of 1877).]

² [At Sandycombe Lodge: see Vol. XIII. p. 468.]

gave him a love of stage-coaches ever after, he finds himself sitting alone among the Yorkshire hills.* For the first time, the silence of Nature round him, her freedom sealed to him, her glory opened to him. Peace at last; no roll of cart-wheel, nor mutter of sullen voices in the back shop; but curlew-cry in space of heaven, and welling of belltoned streamlet by its shadowy rock. Freedom at last. Dead-wall, dark railing, fenced field, gated garden, all passed away like the dream of a prisoner; and behold, far as foot or eye can race or range, the moor, and cloud. Loveliness at last. It is here then, among these deserted vales! Not among men. Those pale, poverty-struck, or cruel faces;—that multitudinous, marred humanity—are not the only things that God has made. Here is something He has made which no one has marred. Pride of purple rocks, and river pools of blue, and tender wilderness of glittering trees, and misty lights of evening on immeasurable hills.

§ 17. Beauty, and freedom, and peace; and yet another teacher, graver than these. Sound preaching at last here, in Kirkstall crypt, concerning fate and life. Here, where the dark pool reflects the chancel pillars, and the cattle lie in unhindered rest, the soft sunshine on their dappled bodies, instead of priests' vestments; their white furry hair ruffled a little, fitfully, by the evening wind deep-scented from the meadow thyme.¹

§ 18. Consider deeply the import to him of this, his first sight of ruin, and compare it with the effect of the

* I do not mean that this is his first acquaintance with the country, but the first impressive and touching one, after his mind was formed. The earliest sketches I found in the National collection are at Clifton and Bristol; the next, at Oxford.²

¹ [The early sketch of this subject, on which the Plate in *Liber Studiorum* (published in 1812) was founded, is No. 403 in the National Gallery: see Vol. XIII. p. 254. Ruskin there gives the date as "about 1795," but it is doubtful if Turner went as far North until 1797. The drawing for the *Liber* Plate is No. 484.]

² [On the importance of this first visit to Yorkshire (in 1797) compare Vol. III. pp. 233, 234; Turner had (as his dated pictures show) travelled far and wide in England and Wales already. For the "earliest sketches" at Clifton and Bristol, in the National Gallery, see Vol. XIII. pp. 250–253. An early sketch near Oxford is No. 852 in the same collection (*ibid.*, p. 643).]

architecture that was around Giorgione. There were indeed aged buildings, at Venice, in his time, but none in decay. All ruin was removed, and its place filled as quickly as in our London; but filled always by architecture loftier and more wonderful than that whose place it took, the boy himself happy to work upon the walls of it;¹ so that the idea of the passing away of the strength of men and beauty of their works never could occur to him sternly. Brighter and brighter the cities of Italy had been rising and broadening on hill and plain, for three hundred years. He saw only strength and immortality, could not but paint both; conceived the form of man as deathless, calm with power, and fiery with life.

§ 19. Turner saw the exact reverse of this. In the present work of men, meanness, aimlessness, unsightliness: thinwalled, lath-divided, narrow-garreted houses of clay; booths of a darksome Vanity Fair, busily base.

But on Whitby Hill, and by Bolton Brook,² remained traces of other handiwork. Men who could build had been there; and who also had wrought, not merely for their own days. But to what purpose? Strong faith, and steady hands, and patient souls—can this, then, be all you have left? this the sum of your doing on the earth;—a nest whence the night-owl may whimper to the brook, and a ribbed skeleton of consumed arches, looming above the bleak banks of mist, from its cliff to the sea?

As the strength of men to Giorgione, to Turner their weakness and vileness, were alone visible. They themselves, unworthy or ephemeral; their work, despicable, or decayed. In the Venetian's eyes, all beauty depended on man's presence and pride; in Turner's, on the solitude he had left, and the humiliation he had suffered.

§ 20. And thus the fate and issue of all his work were determined at once. He must be a painter of the strength

¹ [See Vol. III. p. 212; and below, p. 439.]

² [Of Bolton, again, there is an early sketch in the National Gallery, No. 525: see Vol. XIII. p. 254.]

of nature, there was no beauty elsewhere than in that; he must paint also the labour and sorrow and passing away of men: this was the great human truth visible to him.

Their labour, their sorrow, and their death. Mark the three. Labour; by sea and land, in field and city, at forge and furnace, helm and plough. No pastoral indolence nor classic pride shall stand between him and the troubling of the world; still less between him and the toil of his country,—blind, tormented, unwearied, marvellous England.

§ 21. Also their Sorrow; Ruin of all their glorious work, passing away of their thoughts and their honour, mirage of pleasure, FALLACY OF HOPE;¹ gathering of weed on temple step; gaining of wave on deserted strand; weeping of the mother for the children, desolate by her breathless first-born in the streets of the city,* desolate by her last sons slain, among the beasts of the field.†

§ 22. And their Death. That old Greek question again;²—yet unanswered. The unconquerable spectre still flitting among the forest trees at twilight; rising ribbed out of the sea-sand;—white, a strange Aphrodite,—out of the sea-foam; stretching its gray, cloven wings among the clouds; turning the light of their sunsets into blood. This has to be looked upon, and in a more terrible shape than ever Salvator or Dürer saw it. The wreck of one guilty country does not infer the ruin of all countries, and need not cause general terror respecting the laws of the universe. Neither did the orderly and narrow succession of domestic joy and sorrow in a small German community bring the question in its breadth, or in any unresolvable shape, before the mind of Dürer. But the English death—the European death of the nineteenth century—was of another range and power; more terrible a thousand-fold in its merely physical grasp

* “The Tenth Plague of Egypt.”

† “Rizpah, the Daughter of Aiah.”

¹ [The title of Turner's MS. poems, from which he quoted many lines for mottoes to his pictures: see Vol. XIII. p. 125 *n.*]

² [See above, part ix. ch. ii. § 19 *seq.* (pp. 275 *seq.*)]

and grief; more terrible, incalculably, in its mystery and shame. What were the robber's casual pang, or the range of the flying skirmish, compared to the work of the axe, and the sword, and the famine, which was done during this man's youth on all the hills and plains of the Christian earth, from Moscow to Gibraltar? He was eighteen years old when Napoleon came down on Arcola. Look on the map of Europe and count the blood-stains on it, between Arcola and Waterloo.

§ 23. Not alone those blood-stains on the Alpine snow, and the blue of the Lombard plain. The English death was before his eyes also. No decent, calculable, consoled dying; no passing to rest like that of the aged burghers of Nuremberg town. No gentle processions to churchyards among the fields, the bronze crests bossed deep on the memorial tablets, and the skylark singing above them from among the corn. But the life trampled out in the slime of the street, crushed to dust amidst the roaring of the wheel, tossed countlessly away into howling winter wind along five hundred leagues of rock-fanged shore. Or, worst of all, rotted down to forgotten graves through years of ignorant patience, and vain seeking for help from man, for hope in God—infirm, imperfect yearning, as of motherless infants starving at the dawn; oppressed royalties of captive thought, vague ague-fits of bleak, amazed despair.

§ 24. A goodly landscape this, for the lad to paint, and under a goodly light. Wide enough the light was, and clear; no more Salvator's lurid chasm on jagged horizon,¹ nor Dürer's spotted rest of sunny gleam on hedgerow and field; but light over all the world. Full shone now its awful globe, one pallid charnel-house,—a ball strewn bright with human ashes, glaring in poised sway beneath the sun, all blinding-white with death from pole to pole,²—death, not of myriads of poor bodies only, but of will, and mercy, and conscience; death, not once inflicted on the flesh, but daily

¹ [See above, p. 308.]

² [The words "a ball . . . pole to pole" occur also in a piece of MS. which has been given in Vol. IV. p. 376.]

fastening on the spirit; death, not silent or patient, waiting his appointed hour, but voiceful, venomous; death with the taunting word, and burning grasp, and infixed sting.

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.”¹ The word is spoken in our ears continually to other reapers than the angels,—to the busy skeletons that never tire for stooping. When the measure of iniquity is full, and it seems that another day might bring repentance and redemption,—“Put ye in the sickle.” When the young life has been wasted all away, and the eyes are just opening upon the tracks of ruin, and faint resolution rising in the heart for nobler things,—“Put ye in the sickle.” When the roughest blows of fortune have been borne long and bravely, and the hand is just stretched to grasp its goal,—“Put ye in the sickle.” And when there are but a few in the midst of a nation, to save it, or to teach, or to cherish; and all its life is bound up in those few golden ears,—“Put ye in the sickle, pale reapers, and pour hemlock for your feast of harvest home.”

This was the sight which opened on the young eyes, this the watchword sounding within the heart of Turner in his youth.

So taught, and prepared for his life’s labour, sate the boy at last alone among his fair English hills; and began to paint, with cautious toil, the rocks, and fields, and trickling brooks, and soft white clouds of heaven.

¹ [Joel iii. 13. The following reference is to Revelation xiv. 14–20; and the use of “hemlock,” lower down, is suggested by Hosea x. 4.]

CHAPTER X

THE NEREID'S GUARD

§ 1. THE work of Turner, in its first period, is said in my account of his drawings at the National Gallery to be distinguished by “boldness of handling, generally gloomy tendency of mind, subdued colour, and perpetual reference to precedent in composition.” I must refer the reader to those two catalogues* for a more special account of his early modes of technical study. Here we are concerned only with the expression of that gloomy tendency of mind, whose causes we are now better able to understand.

§ 2. It was prevented from overpowering him by his labour. This, continual, and as tranquil in its course as a ploughman's in the field, by demanding an admirable humility and patience, averted the tragic passion of youth. Full of stern sorrow and fixed purpose, the boy set himself to his labour silently and meekly, like a workman's child on its first day at the cotton-mill. Without haste, but without relaxation,—accepting all modes and means of progress, however painful or humiliating, he took the burden on his shoulder and began his march. There was nothing so little, but he noticed it; nothing so great, but he began preparations to cope with it. For some time his work is, apparently, feelingless, so patient and mechanical are the first essays. It gains gradually in power and grasp; there is no perceptible *aim* at freedom, or at fineness, but the

* “Notes on the Turner Collection at Marlborough House.” 1857. “Catalogue of the Sketches of J. M. W. Turner exhibited at Marlborough House.” 1858.1

¹ [Vol. XIII. pp. 89–181, 227–316. The particular passage here cited is at p. 251.]

force insensibly becomes swifter, and the touch finer. The colour is always dark or subdued.

§ 3. Of the first forty subjects which he exhibited at the Royal Academy, thirty-one are architectural, and of these, twenty-one are of elaborate Gothic architecture (Peterborough Cathedral, Lincoln Cathedral, Malmesbury Abbey, Tintern Abbey, etc.). I look upon the discipline given to his hand by these formal drawings as of the highest importance. His mind was also gradually led by them into a calmer pensiveness.* Education amidst country possessing architectural remains of some noble kind, I believe to be wholly essential to the progress of a landscape artist. The first verses he ever attached to a picture were in 1798. They are from *Paradise Lost*, and refer to a picture of Morning, on the Coniston Fells:—

“Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paints your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world’s great Author rise.”¹

By glancing over the verses, which in following years † he quotes from Milton, Thomson, and Mallet, it may be seen at once how his mind was set, so far as natural scenes were concerned, on rendering atmospheric effect;—and so

* The regret I expressed in the third volume² at Turner’s not having been educated under the influence of Gothic art was, therefore, mistaken; I had not then had access to his earliest studies. He *was* educated under the influence of Gothic architecture; but, in more advanced life, his mind was warped and weakened by classical architecture. Why he left the one for the other, or how far good influences were mingled with evil in the result of the change, I have not yet been able to determine.

† They may be referred to with ease in Boone’s Catalogue of Turner’s Pictures. 1857.³

¹ [See Vol. XIII. p. 406 and *n.*, and compare *ibid.*, pp. 126, 316.]

² [See Vol. V. p. 392, and compare Vol. XIII. pp. 158–159.]

³ [Or, now more accessibly, in the Appendix to Thornbury’s *Life*, where the Catalogue is repeated. In his first draft Ruskin referred more particularly to the picture of Dunstanborough (exhibited in 1798, now in the City Art Gallery, Melbourne), with the quotation from Thomson’s *Seasons*:—

“The desert joys,
Wildly thro’ all his melancholy bounds,
Rude ruins glitter.”]

far as emotion was to be expressed, how consistently it was melancholy.¹

He paints, first of heroic or meditative subjects, the Fifth Plague of Egypt; next, the Tenth Plague of Egypt. His first tribute to the Memory of Nelson is the "Battle of the Nile," 1799.² I presume an unimportant picture, as the power was not then availably developed. His first classical subject is Narcissus and Echo, in 1805:—

"So melts the youth, and languishes away,
His beauty withers, and his limbs decay."³

¹ [Thus in 1799 Turner exhibited "Harlech Castle," with the lines from Milton (*Paradise Lost*, book iv.):—

"Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad."

And in the same year, "Caernarvon Castle," with a quotation from Mallet (1705–1765):—

"Now rose
Sweet evening, solemn hour; the sun declined," etc.

Also "Warkworth Castle," with a quotation from Thomson's *Seasons*:—

"Behold, slow settling o'er the lurid grove, Unusual darkness broods; and
growing, grains The full possession of the sky; and on yon baleful cloud A
redd'ning gloom, a magazine of fate, Ferment."

² [The "Fifth Plague of Egypt" (with Exodus ix. 23 as its motto) was exhibited at the Academy in 1800, and is now in the collection of Sir Francis Cook. The "Tenth Plague" (with Exodus ix. 29, 30 as its motto) was exhibited at the Academy in 1802, and is No. 470 in the National Gallery. The "Battle of the Nile," exhibited at the Academy in 1799, was shown by the Nineteenth Century Art Society, July, 1886. "Narcissus and Echo" is at Petworth: "1805" is a slip of the pen for "1804" (the date of its exhibition at the Academy). The "Hesperides," exhibited at the British Institution in 1806, is No. 477 in the National Gallery. Turner's title was "The Goddess of Discord choosing the apple of contention in the Garden of the Hesperides"; and the following is the explanatory note in the official catalogue:—

"The three daughters of Hesperus, Aegle, Hespera, and Erytheis, dwelt in this western garden, and had charge of the tree of the golden apples, the gift of Earth to Juno on her wedding day; the Hesperides and the garden were protected by the dragon Ladon. The Goddess of Discord, not having been invited to the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis, threw one of these apples into the midst of the assembled gods, to be taken by the most beautiful. It was claimed by Juno, Minerva, and by Venus, and Jupiter ordered the contest to be decided by Paris, the son of Priam, who awarded the apple to Venus. This judgment of Paris was not only the cause of the destruction of Troy, but of countless misfortunes also to the Greeks. The Goddess of Discord is on the right in the act of receiving the golden apple (or orange) from one of the Hesperides. The dragon is seen lying along the summit of a lofty rock, in the middle distance."

³ [The first two lines of a longer passage cited by Turner in the catalogue; it is from a version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, iii. 489–501.]

The year following he summons his whole strength, and paints what we might suppose would be a happier subject, the Garden of the Hesperides. This being the most important picture of the first period, I will analyse it completely.¹

§ 4. The fable of the Hesperides had, it seems to me, in the Greek mind two distinct meanings; the first referring to natural phenomena, and the second to moral. The natural meaning of it I believe to have been this:—

The Garden of the Hesperides was supposed to exist in the westernmost part of the Cyrenaica; it was generally the expression for the beauty and luxuriant vegetation of the coast of Africa in that district. The centre of the Cyrenaica “is occupied by a moderately elevated table-land, whose edge runs parallel to the coast, to which it sinks down in a succession of terraces, clothed with verdure, intersected by mountain-streams running through ravines filled with the richest vegetation; well watered by frequent rains, exposed to the cool sea-breeze from the north, and sheltered by the mass of the mountain from the sands and hot winds of the Sahara.”*

The Greek colony of Cyrene itself was founded ten miles from the sea-shore, “in a spot backed by the mountains on the south, and thus sheltered from the fiery blasts of the desert; while at the height of about 1,800 feet an inexhaustible spring bursts forth amidst luxuriant vegetation, and pours its waters down to the Mediterranean through a most beautiful ravine.”

The nymphs of the west, or Hesperides, are, therefore, I believe, as natural types, the representatives of the soft western winds and sunshine, which were in this district most favourable to vegetation. In this sense they are called daughters of Atlas and Hesperis, the western winds being

* Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*. Art. “Cyrenaica.”

¹ [For other discussions of the picture, see *Notes on the Turner Collection*, Vol. XIII. pp. 113–119, and *Lectures on Landscape*, §§ 69–71.]

cooled by the snow of Atlas.¹ The dragon, on the contrary, is the representative of the Sahara wind, or Simoom, which blew over the garden from above the hills on the south, and forbade all advance of cultivation beyond their ridge. Whether this was the physical meaning of the tradition in the Greek mind or not, there can be no doubt of its being Turner's first interpretation of it. A glance at the picture may determine this: a clear fountain being made the principal object in the foreground,—a bright and strong torrent in the distance,—while the dragon, wrapped in flame and whirlwind, watches from the top of the cliff.

§ 5. But, both in the Greek mind and in Turner's, this natural meaning of the legend was a completely subordinate one. The moral significance of it lay far deeper. In the second, but principal sense, the Hesperides were not daughters of Atlas, nor connected with the winds of the west, but with its splendour. They are properly the nymphs of the sunset, and are the daughters of night, having many brothers and sisters, of whom I shall take Hesiod's account.²

§ 6. "And the Night begat Doom, and short-withering Fate, and Death.

"And begat Sleep, and the company of Dreams, and Censure, and Sorrow.

"And the Hesperides, who keep the golden fruit beyond the mighty Sea.

"And the Destinies, and the Spirits of merciless punishment.

"And Jealousy, and Deceit, and Wanton Love; and Old Age, that fades away; and Strife, whose will endures."

§ 7. We have not, I think, hitherto quite understood the Greek feeling about those nymphs and their golden apples, coming as a light in the midst of a cloud;—between Censure, and Sorrow,—and the Destinies. We must look

¹ [See Diodorus Siculus, iv. 27.]

² [*Theogony*, 211 *seq.*]

to the precise meaning of Hesiod's words, in order to get the force of the passage.

"The night begat Doom"; that is to say, the doom of unforeseen accident—doom essentially of darkness.

"And short-withering Fate." Ill translated. I cannot do it better.¹ It means especially the sudden fate which brings untimely end to all purpose, and cuts off youth and its promise: called, therefore (the epithet hardly ever leaving it), "black Fate."

"And Death." This is the universal, inevitable death, opposed to the interfering, untimely death. These three are named as the elder children. Hesiod pauses, and repeats the word "begat" before going on to number the others.

"And begat Sleep, and the Company of Dreams."

"And *Censure*." "Momus," the Spirit of Blame—the spirit which desires to blame rather than to praise;—false, base, unhelpful, unholy judgment;—ignorant and blind, child of the Night.

"And Sorrow." Accurately, sorrow of mourning; the sorrow of the night when no man can work: of the night that falls when what was the light of the eyes is taken from us; lamenting, sightless sorrow, without hope,—child of Night.

"And the Hesperides." We will come back to these.

"And the Destinies, and the Spirits of Merciless Punishment." These are the great Fates which have rule over conduct; the first fate spoken of (short-withering) is that which has rule over occurrence. These great Fates are Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos. Their three powers are,—Clotho's over the clue, the thread, or connecting energy,—that is, the conduct of life; Lachesis' over the lot—that is to say, the chance which warps, entangles, or bends the course of life. Atropos, inflexible, cuts the thread for ever.²

¹ [Hesiod's words are:—

Nux d eteke stugeron te Moron kai Khra melainan
kai qanaton, teke d jnon, etikte de fulon Oneirwn.]

² [A Fate whose power Ruskin was often to feel and recognise: see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 59, 60, etc. For a translation of a passage from Lucian in which Clotho is introduced, see "The Tortoise of Ægina," § 10.]

“And Jealousy,” especially the jealousy of Fortune, in balancing all good by evil. The Greeks had a peculiar dread of this form of fate.

“And Deceit, and sensual Love. And Old Age that fades, and Strife that endures”; that is to say, old age, which, growing not in wisdom, is marked only by its failing power—by the gradual gaining of darkness on the faculties, and helplessness on the frame. Such age is the forerunner of true death—the child of Night. “And Strife,” the last and the mightiest, the nearest to man of the Night-children—blind leader of the blind.¹

§ 8. Understanding thus whose sisters they are, let us consider of the Hesperides themselves—spoken of commonly as the “Singing Nymphs.”² They are four.³

Their names are, Æglé,—Brightness; Erytheia,—Blushing; Hestia,—the (spirit of the) Hearth; Arethusa,—the Ministering.

O English reader! hast thou ever heard of these fair and true daughters of Sunset, beyond the mighty sea?

And was it not well to trust to such keepers the guarding of the golden fruit which the earth gave to Juno at her marriage? Not fruit only: fruit on the tree, given by the earth, the great mother, to Juno (female power), at her marriage with Jupiter, or *ruling* manly power (distinguished from the tried and *agonizing* strength of Hercules). I call Juno, briefly, female power. She is, especially, the goddess presiding over marriage, regarding the woman as the mistress of a household. Vesta (the goddess of the hearth*), with

* Her name is also that of the Hesperid nymph; but I give the Hesperid her Greek form of name, to distinguish her from the goddess. The Hesperid Arethusa has the same subordinate relation to Ceres; and Erytheia, to Venus. Æglé signifies especially the spirit of brightness or cheerfulness; including even the subordinate idea of household neatness or cleanliness.

¹ [Matthew xv. 14.]

² [So in Euripides, *Hercules Furens*, 394: umnwdouV te koraV hluqen esperian eV aolan (see below, § 12).]

³ [Their names are given by Apollodorus, ii. 5, 11. The ordinary mythology, however, speaks of only three—Æglé, Erytheia, and Hesperethusa; so in Milton (*Comus*, 981):—

“All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three.”]

Ceres, and Venus, are variously dominant over marriage, as the fulfilment of love; but Juno is pre-eminently the housewives' goddess. She therefore represents, in her character, whatever good or evil may result from female ambition, or desire of power: and, as to a housewife, the earth presents its golden fruit to her, which she gives to two kinds of guardians. The wealth of the earth, as the source of household peace and plenty, is watched by the singing nymphs—the Hesperides. But, as the source of household sorrow and desolation, it is watched by the Dragon.

We must, therefore, see who the Dragon was, and what kind of dragon.

§ 9. The reader will, perhaps, remember that we traced in an earlier chapter,¹ the birth of the Gorgons, through Phorcys and Ceto, from Nereus. The youngest child of Phorcys and Ceto is the Dragon of the Hesperides;² but this latest descent is not, as in Northern traditions,³ a sign of fortunateness: on the contrary, the children of Nereus receive gradually more and more terror and power, as they are later born, till this last of the Nereids unites horror and power at their utmost. Observe the gradual change. Nereus himself is said to have been perfectly *true*, and *gentle*.

This is Hesiod's account of him:—

“And Pontus begat Nereus, simple and true, the oldest of children; but they call him the aged man, in that he is errorless and kind; neither forgets he what is right; but knows all just and gentle counsel.”⁴

§ 10. Now the children of Nereus, like the Hesperides themselves, bear a twofold typical character; one physical, the other moral. In his physical symbolism, Nereus himself is the calm and gentle sea, from which rise, in gradual

¹ [See above, p. 182.]

² [Hesiod, *Theogony*, 334, 335: “And Ceto mingling in love with Phorcys brought forth, as youngest born, a terrible serpent which in the secret places of dark earth guards the all-golden apples,” etc. (see Ruskin's translation in § 12).]

³ [See, for example, Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, often based on Scandinavian and North German legends, in which the youngest son succeeds, where his elder brothers have failed.]

⁴ [*Theogony*, 233–236.]

increase of terror, the clouds and storms. In his moral character, Nereus is the type of the deep, pure, rightly-tempered human mind, from which, in gradual degeneracy, spring the troubling passions.

Keeping this double meaning in view, observe the whole line of descent to the Hesperides' Dragon. Nereus, by the Earth, begets (1) Thaumas (the wonderful), physically, the father of the Rainbow; morally, the type of the enchantments and dangers of imagination. His grandchildren, besides the Rainbow, are the Harpies. (2) Phorcys (Orcus?), physically, the treachery or devouring spirit of the sea; morally, covetousness or malignity of heart. (3) Ceto, physically, the deep places of the sea; morally, secretness of heart, called "fair-cheeked," because tranquil in outward aspect. (4) Eurybia (wide strength), physically, the flowing, especially the tidal power of the sea (she, by one of the sons of Heaven, becomes the mother of three great Titans,¹ one of whom, Astræus, and the Dawn, are the parents of the four Winds); morally, the healthy passion of the heart. Thus far the children of Nereus.

§ 11. Next, Phorcys and Ceto, in their physical characters (the grasping or devouring of the sea, reaching out over the land, and its depth), beget the Clouds and Storms—namely, first, the Graiæ, or soft rain-clouds; then the Gorgons, or storm-clouds; and youngest and last, the Hesperides' Dragon,—Volcanic or earth-storm, associated, in conception, with the Simoom and fiery African winds.

But, in its moral significance, the descent is this. Covetousness, or malignity (Phorcys), and Secretness (Ceto), beget, first, the darkening passions, whose hair is always gray; then the stormy and merciless passions, brazen-winged (the Gorgons), of whom the dominant, Medusa, is ice-cold, turning all who look on her to stone. And, lastly, the consuming (poisonous and volcanic) passions—the "flame-backed dragon,"² uniting the powers of poison, and instant

¹ [Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375, 378.]

² [drakonta pursonwton: Euripides, *Hercules Furens*, 398.]

destruction. Now the reader may have heard, perhaps, in other books of Genesis than Hesiod's, of a dragon being busy about a tree which bore apples, and of crushing the head of that dragon; but seeing how, in the Greek mind, this serpent was descended from the sea, he may, perhaps, be surprised to remember another verse, bearing also on the matter:—"Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters";¹ and yet more surprised, going on with the Septuagint version, to find where he is being led: "Thou brakest the head of the dragon, and gavest him to be meat to the Ethiopian people. Thou didst tear asunder the strong fountains and the storm-torrents; thou didst dry up the rivers of Etham," *phgaV kai ceimarrouV*, the Pegasus fountains—"Etham on the edge of the wilderness."

§ 12. Returning then to Hesiod, we find he tells us of the Dragon himself:—"He, in the secret places of the desert land, kept the all-golden apples in his great knots" (coils of rope, or extremities of anything).² With which compare Euripides' report of him:—"And Hercules came to the Hesperian dome, to the singing maidens, plucking the apple-fruit from the golden petals; slaying the flame-backed dragon, who, twined round and round, kept guard in unapproachable spires"³ (spirals or whirls, as of a whirl-wind-vortex).

Farther, we hear from other scattered syllables of tradition, that this dragon was sleepless, and that he was able to take various tones of human voice.⁴

And we find a later tradition than Hesiod's calling him

¹ [Psalm lxxiv. 13, 14, 15. In the second of these verses the Septuagint has, however, *taV kefalaV tou drakontoV*—"the heads of the dragon"; for "Etham *in* the wilderness," see Exodus xiii. 20.]

² [*Theogony*, 334, 335:—

*oV eremnhV keuqesi gaihV
peirasin en megaloiV pagcrusea mhla fulassei.*

If it were possible thus to interpret *peirasin en megaloiV*—making *peirasin* mean coils, and not ends—Ruskin's version would be an improvement on the ordinary translation, which is "in the vast boundaries of the earth," *i.e.*, in the illimitable realms "beyond the mighty sea."]

³ [*Hercules Furens*, 394–400.]

⁴ [Apollodorus, ii. 5, 11: *efulasse de auta (mhla) drakwn aqanatoV, TufwnoV kai EcidnhV, kefalaV ecwn ekaton ecrhto de fwnaiV pantoiaiV kai poikilaiV.*]

a child of Typhon and Echidna. Now Typhon is volcanic storm, generally the evil spirit of tumult.

Echidna (the adder) is a descendant of Medusa.¹ She is a daughter of Chrysaor (the lightning), by Callirhoë (the fair flowing), a daughter of Ocean;—that is to say, she joins the intense fatality of the lightning with perfect gentleness. In form she is half-maiden, half-serpent; therefore she is the spirit of all the fatallest evil, veiled in gentleness: or, in one word, treachery;—having dominion over many gentle things;—and chiefly over a kiss, given, indeed, in another garden than that of the Hesperides, yet in relation to keeping of treasure also.²

§ 13. Having got this farther clue, let us look who it is whom Dante makes the typical Spirit of Treachery. The eighth or lowest pit of hell is given to its keeping; at the edge of which pit, Virgil casts a *rope* down for a signal; instantly there rises, as from the sea, “as one returns who hath been down to loose some anchor,” “the fell monster with the deadly sting, who passes mountains, breaks through fenced walls, and firm embattled spears; and with his filth taints all the world.”³

Think for an instant of another place:—“Sharp stones are under him, he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.”⁴ We must yet keep to Dante, however. Echidna, remember, is half-maiden, half-serpent;—hear what Dante's Fraud is like:—

“Forthwith that image vile of Fraud appear'd,
His head and upper part exposed on land,
But laid not on the shore his bestial train.
His face the semblance of a just man's wore,
So kind and gracious was its outward cheer;
The rest was serpent all: two shaggy claws

¹ [Here we revert to Hesiod, who makes Chrysaor spring from Medusa, and Chrysaor, by union with Callirhoë, bear Echidna (*Theogony*, 281, 287, 295).]

² [The MS. has: “. . . and chiefly over a kiss in another garden than that of the Hesperides, yet in relation with keeping of gold, or at least of silver” (Matthew xxvi. 49; xxvii. 3).]

³ [*Inferno*, xvi. 133; xvii. 1–3 (Cary's translation, which also is followed in the next passage, *ibid.*, 7–27).]

⁴ [Job xli. 29.]

Reach'd to the armpits; and the back and breast,
 And either side, were painted o'er with nodes
 And orbits. Colours variegated more
 Nor Turks nor Tartars e'er on cloth of state
 With interchangeable embroidery wove,
 Nor spread Arachne o'er her curious loom.
 As oft-times a light skiff moor'd to the shore,
 Stands part in water, part upon the land;
 Or, as where dwells the greedy German boor,
 The beaver settles, watching for his prey;
 So on the rim, that fenced the sand with rock,
 Sat perch'd the fiend of evil. In the void
 Glancing, his tail upturn'd, its venomous fork
 With sting like scorpion's arm'd."

§ 14. You observe throughout this description the leaning on the character of the *Sea Dragon*; a little farther on, his way of flying is told us:—

"As a small vessel, backening out from land,
 Her station quits; so thence the monster loos'd,
 And, when he felt himself at large, turn'd round
 There, where the breast had been, his forked tail.
 Thus, like an eel, outstretch'd, at length he steer'd,
 Gathering the air up with retractile claws."¹

And, lastly, his name is told us: Geryon.² Whereupon, looking back to Hesiod, we find that Geryon is Echidna's brother.³ Man-serpent, therefore, in Dante, as Echidna is woman-serpent.

We find next that Geryon lived in the island of Erytheia (blushing), only another kind of blushing than that of the Hesperid Erytheia. But it is on, also, a western island, and Geryon kept red oxen in it (said to be near the red setting sun); and Hercules kills him, as he does the Hesperian dragon: but in order to be able to reach him, a golden boat is given to Hercules by the Sun, to cross the sea in.

§ 15. We will return to this part of the legend presently, having enough of it now collected to get at the complete idea of the Hesperian dragon, who is, in fine, the "Pluto

¹ [*Inferno*, xvii. 100–105 (again Cary's translation).]

² [*Ibid.*, 133.]

³ [*Theogony*, 287 *seq.*]

il gran nemico" of Dante;¹ the demon of all evil passions connected with covetousness; that is to say, essentially of fraud, rage, and gloom. Regarded as the demon of Fraud, he is said to be descended from the viper Echidna, full of deadly cunning, in whirl on whirl; as the demon of consuming Rage from Phorcys; as the demon of Gloom, from Ceto;—in his watching and melancholy, he is sleepless (compare the Micyllus dialogue of Lucian²); breathing whirlwind and fire, he is the destroyer, descended from Typhon as well as Phorcys; having, moreover, with all these, the irresistible strength of his ancestral sea.

§ 16. Now, look at him, as Turner has drawn him (p.402).³ I cannot reduce the creature to this scale without losing half his power; his length, especially, seems to diminish more than it should in proportion to his bulk. In the picture he is far in the distance, cresting the mountain; and may be, perhaps, three-quarters of a mile long. The actual length on the canvas is a foot and eight inches; so that it may be judged how much he loses by the reduction, not to speak of my imperfect etching,* and of the loss which, however well he might have been engraved, he would still have sustained, in the impossibility of expressing the lurid colour of his armour, alternate bronze and blue.

§ 17. Still, the main points of him are discernible enough: and among all the wonderful things that Turner did in his day, I think this nearly the most wonderful. How far he had really found out for himself the collateral bearings of

* It is merely a sketch on the steel, like the illustrations before given of composition; but it marks the points needing note. Perhaps some day I may be able to engrave it of the full size.⁴

¹ [*Inferno*, vi., last line: "Quivi trovammo Pluto il gran nemico." Quoted again by Ruskin in *Munera Pulveris*, § 90, and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 90.]

² [Where the eternal disquietude of Wealth and High Estate are contrasted with the easy sleep of poverty. For another reference to the dialogue, see above, p. 285.]

³ [The title of the Plate—"Quivi trovammo"—is from Dante (see above): "There we found"—the dragon here represented. The Plate from the original editions was also published in *Lectures on Landscape*, opposite p. 69; in this edition the Plate has had to be reduced by about one-fourth.]

⁴ [For this scheme, see above, p. 8 n.]

the Hesperid tradition I know not; but that he had got the main clue of it, and knew who the Dragon was, there can be no doubt; the strange thing is, that his conception of it throughout, down to the minutest detail, fits every one of the circumstances of the Greek traditions. There is, first, the Dragon's descent from Medusa and Typhon, indicated in the serpent-clouds floating from his head (compare my sketch of the Medusa-cloud, Plate 71); then note the grovelling and ponderous body, ending in a serpent, of which we do not see the end. He drags the weight of it forward by his claws, not being able to lift himself from the ground ("Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell"¹); then the grip of the claws themselves as if they would clutch (rather than tear) the rock itself into pieces; but chiefly, the designing of the body. Remember, one of the essential characters of the creature, as descended from Medusa, is its coldness and petrifying power; this, in the demon of covetousness, must exist to the utmost; breathing fire, he is yet himself of ice. Now, if I were merely to draw this dragon as white, instead of dark, and take his claws away, his body would become a representation of a great glacier, so nearly perfect, that I know no published engraving of glacier breaking over a rocky brow so like the truth as this dragon's shoulders² would be, if they were thrown out in light; there being only this difference, that they have the form, but not the fragility of the ice; they are at once ice and iron. "His bones are like solid pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron; by his neesings a light doth shine."³

¹ [*Paradise Lost*, i. 679: quoted again in Vol. XVI. p. 439.]

² [In the first draft the passage reads:—

“. . . so nearly perfect, that I know no published engraving of the upper part of the Glacier des Bois, when it first breaks over the rock towards the Source of the Arveron, so like it as this dragon's shoulders . . .”

The resemblance of the glacier to a serpent was seized also by Shelley in his lines on "Mont Blanc," written in the Vale of Chamouni:—

“The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on.”]

³ [Job xli. 18.]



J. H. W. Turner

J. Russell
Allen & Co. Sc.

78 . Quivi Trovammo .

§ 18. The strange unity of vertebrated action, and of a true bony contour, infinitely varied in every vertebra, with this glacial outline;—together with the adoption of the head of the Ganges crocodile, the fish-eater, to show his sea descent (and this in the year 1806, when hardly a single fossil saurian skeleton existed within Turner's reach),¹ renders the whole conception one of the most curious exertions of the imaginative intellect with which I am acquainted in the arts.

§ 19. Thus far then, of the dragon; next, we have to examine the conception of the Goddess of Discord. We must return, for a moment, to the tradition about Geryon. I cannot yet decipher the meaning of his oxen, said to be fed together with those of Hades; nor of the journey of Hercules, in which, after slaying Geryon, he returns through Europe like a border forager, driving these herds, and led into farther battle in protection or recovery of them.² But it seems to me the main drift of the legend cannot be mistaken; viz., that Geryon is the evil spirit of wealth, as arising from commerce; hence, placed as a guardian of isles in the most distant sea, and reached in a golden boat; while the Hesperian dragon is the evil spirit of wealth, as possessed in households; and associated, therefore, with the true household guardians, or singing nymphs. Hercules (manly labour), slaying both Geryon and Ladon, presents oxen and apples to Juno who is their proper mistress; but the Goddess of Discord, contriving that one portion of this household wealth shall be ill bestowed by Paris, he, according to Coleridge's interpretation,³ choosing pleasure instead of wisdom or power;—there issue from this evil choice the catastrophe of the Trojan war, and the wanderings of Ulysses, which are essentially, both in the *Iliad* and

¹ [Compare the account of the picture in Vol. XIII. p. 118.]

² [See Apollodorus, ii. 106 *seq.*, for these legends.]

³ [The editors do not find this reference in Coleridge, though he discusses the choice of Hercules (in *The Friend*, introduction to the Second Section). Probably Ruskin, recollecting that, wrote "Coleridge" by a slip for "Bacon"; the interpretation is given in *The Advancement of Learning* (i. 8, 7).]

Odyssey, the troubling of household peace;¹ terminating with the restoration of this peace by repentance and patience; Helen and Penelope seen at last sitting upon their household thrones, in the Hesperian light of age.

§ 20. We have, therefore, to regard Discord, in the Hesperides garden, eminently as the disturber of households, assuming a different aspect from Homer's wild and fierce discord of war. They are, nevertheless, one and the same power; for she changes her aspect at will. I cannot get at the root of her name, Eris.² It seems to me as if it ought to have one in common with Erinnys (Fury); but it means always contention, emulation, or competition, either in mind or in words;—the final work of Eris is essentially “division,” and she is herself always double-minded; shouts two ways at once (in *Iliad*, xi. 6), and wears a mantle rent in half (*Æneid*, viii. 702). Homer makes her loud-voiced,³ and insatiably covetous. This last attribute is, with him, the source of her usual title. She is little when she first is seen, then rises till her head touches heaven.⁴ By Virgil she is called mad; and her hair is of serpents, bound with bloody garlands.⁵

§ 21. This is the conception first adopted by Turner, but combined with another which he found in Spenser; only note that there is some confusion in the minds of English poets between Eris (Discord) and Até (Error), who is a daughter of Discord, according to Hesiod.⁶ She is properly—mischievous error, tender-footed;⁷ for she does not walk on the earth, but on heads of men (*Iliad*, xix. 92); *i.e.*, not on the solid ground, but on human vain thoughts; therefore, her hair is glittering⁸ (*Iliad*, xix. 126).

¹ [Compare what Ruskin says above, p. 273.]

² [According to some, akin to *irasci*: the angry one.]

³ [See *Iliad*, xi. 10: *enq̄a stas huse q̄ea mega te deinon te orqi*. She is “insatiably covetous” (*amoton memauia*) in *Iliad*, iv. 440, and so again in v. 518. Her usual title is *qumoboroV*, eating the heart.]

⁴ [See *Iliad*, iv. 442, 443.]

⁵ [*Æneid*, vi. 280: “Discordia demens Vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.”]

⁶ [*Theogony*, 230.]

⁷ [th men q̄ apaloi podeV : *Iliad*, xix. 92.]

⁸ [kefalhV liparoplokamoio.]

I think she is mainly the confusion of mind coming of pride, as Eris comes of covetousness; therefore, Homer makes her a daughter of Jove.¹ Spenser, under the name of Até, describes Eris. I referred to his account of her in my notice of the Discord on the Ducal Palace of Venice (remember the inscription there, *Discordia sum, discordans*). (*Stones of Venice*, II. viii. 71.²) But the stanzas from which Turner derived his conception of her are these—

“Als, as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchless eares deformed and distort,
Fild with false rumors and seditious trouble,
Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort,
That still are led with every light report:
And as her eares, so eke her feet were odde,
And much unlike; th’ one long, the other short,
And both misplast; that, when th’ one forward yode,
The other backe retired and contrárie trode.

“Likewise unequall were her handës twaine;
That one did reach, the other pusht away;
That one did make, the other mard againe,
And sought to bring all things unto decay;
Whereby great riches, gathered manie a day,
She in short space did often bring to nought,
And their possessours often did dismay:
For all her studie was, and all her thought,
How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought.

“So much her malice did her might surpas,
That even th’ Almightye selfe she did maligne,
Because to man so merciful He was,
And unto all His creatures so benigne,
Sith she herself was of His grace indigne:
For all this worlds faire workmanship she tride
Unto his last confusion to bring,
And that great golden chaine quite to divide,
With which it blessed Concord hath together tide.”

All these circumstances of decrepitude and distortion Turner has followed, through hand and limb, with patient care: he has added one final touch of his own. The nymph

¹ [*Iliad*, xix. 91.]

² [In this edition, Vol. X. p. 390. The following stanzas are from the *Faerie Queene*, book iv. canto i. 27–29.]

who brings the apples to the goddess, offers her one in each hand; and Eris, of the divided mind, cannot choose.

§ 22. One farther circumstance must be noted, in order to complete our understanding of the picture,¹—the gloom extending, not to the dragon only, but also to the fountain and the tree of golden fruit. The reason of this gloom may be found in two other passages of the authors from which Turner had taken his conception of Eris—Virgil and Spenser. For though the Hesperides in their own character, as the nymphs of domestic joy, are entirely bright (and the garden always bright around them), yet seen or remembered in sorrow, or in the presence of discord, they deepen distress. Their entirely happy character is given by Euripides:—“The fruit-planted shore of the Hesperides,—songstresses,—where the ruler of the purple lake allows not any more to the sailor his way, assigning the boundary of Heaven which Atlas holds; where the ambrosial fountains flow, and the fruitful and divine land increases the happiness of the gods.”²

But to the thoughts of Dido, in her despair, they recur under another aspect; she remembers their priestess as a great enchantress; who *feeds the dragon* and preserves the boughs of the trees; sprinkling moist honey and drowsy poppy; who also has power over ghosts; “and the earth shakes and the forests stoop from the hills at her bidding.”³

§ 23. This passage Turner must have known well, from his continual interest in Carthage: but his diminution of the splendour of the old Greek garden was certainly caused

¹ [The MS. reads:—

“ . . . our understanding of the picture,—its sadness of colour. It has been much spoiled by cleaning; nevertheless, when I knew it in Turner’s Gallery, it was distinctly more solemn in colour than his other works. At first I thought he meant the gardens to be darkened merely by the presence of Eris, but I found afterwards the reason of this gloom in two other passages. . . .”

For Ruskin’s earlier description of the picture, referred to in this passage, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Vol. XIII. pp. 113–119.]

² [*Hippolytus*, 741 seq.]

³ [*Æneid*, iv. 484–486.]

chiefly by Spenser's describing the Hesperides fruit as growing first in the garden of Mammon:—

“There mournfull cypresse grew in greatest store
 And trees of bitter gall; and heben sad;
 Dead sleeping poppy; and black hellebore;
 Cold coloquintida; and tetra mad;
 Mortal samnitis; and cicuta bad,
 With which th' unjust Atheniens made to dy
 Wise Socrates, who, thereof quaffing glad,
 Poured out his life and last philosophy.

* * * * *

“The gardin of Prosérpina this hight:
 And in the midst thereof a silver seat,
 With a thick arber goodly over-dight,
 In which she often usd from open heat
 Herselfe to shroud, and pleasures to entreat:
 Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree,
 With branches broad dispredd and body great,
 Clothed with leaves, that none the wood mote see,
 And loaden all with fruit as thick as it might bee.

“Their fruit were golden apples glistring bright,
 That goodly was their glory to behold;
 On earth like never grew, ne living wight
 Like ever saw, but they from hence were sold;
 For those, which Hercules with conquest bold
 Got from great Atlas daughters, hence began.

* * * * *

“Here eke that famous golden apple grew,
 The which emongst the gods false Até threw.”¹

There are two collateral evidences in the pictures of Turner's mind having been partly influenced by this passage. The excessive darkness of the stream,—though one of the Cyrene fountains—to remind us of Cocytus; and the breaking of the bough of the tree by the weight of its apples—not healthily, but as a diseased tree would break.

§ 24. Such then is our English painter's first great religious picture; and exponent of our English faith. A sad-coloured work, not executed in Angelico's white and gold; nor in Perugino's crimson and azure; but in a sulphurous

¹ [*Faerie Queene*, book ii. canto vii. 52, 53, 54, 55.]

hue, as relating to a paradise of smoke. That power, it appears, on the hill-top, is our British Madonna: whom, reverently, the English devotional painter must paint, thus enthroned, with nimbus about the gracious head. Our Madonna,—or our Jupiter on Olympus,—or, perhaps, more accurately still, our unknown god, sea-born, with the cliffs, not of Cyrene, but of England, for his altar; and no chance of any Mars' Hill proclamation concerning him, "whom therefore ye ignorantly worship."¹

§ 25. This is no irony. The fact is verily so. The greatest man of our England, in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the strength and hope of his youth, perceives this to be the thing he has to tell us of utmost moment, connected with the spiritual world. In each city and country of past time, the master-minds had to declare the chief worship which lay at the nation's heart; to define it; adorn it; show the range and authority of it. Thus in Athens, we have the triumph of Pallas; and in Venice the Assumption of the Virgin; here, in England, is our great spiritual fact for ever interpreted to us—the Assumption of the Dragon. No St. George any more to be heard of; no more dragon-slaying possible: this child, born on St. George's Day, can only make manifest the dragon, not slay him, seaserpent as he is; whom the English Andromeda, not fearing, takes for her lord. The fairy English Queen once thought to command the waves, but it is the sea-dragon now who commands her valleys; of old the Angel of the Sea ministered to them, but now the Serpent of the Sea; where once flowed their clear springs now spreads the black Cocytus pool; and the fair blooming of the Hesperid meadows fades into ashes beneath the Nereid's Guard.

Yes, Albert of Nuremberg; the time has at last come. Another nation has arisen in the strength of its Black anger; and another hand has pourtrayed the spirit of its toil. Crowned with fire, and with the wings of the bat.²

¹ [Acts xvii. 23.]

² [See the end of chapter iv.; above, p. 314.]

CHAPTER XI

THE HESPERID ÆGLÉ

§ 1. FIVE years after the Hesperides were painted, another great mythological subject appeared by Turner's hand. Another dragon—this time not triumphant, but in death-pang, the Python slain by Apollo.¹

Not in a garden, this slaying, but in a hollow, among wildest rocks, beside a stagnant pool. Yet, instead of the sombre colouring of the Hesperid hills, strange gleams of blue and gold flit around the mountain peaks, and colour the clouds above them.

The picture is at once the type, and the first expression of a great change which was passing in Turner's mind. A change, which was not clearly manifested in all its results until much later in his life; but in the colouring of this picture are the first signs of it; and in the subject of this picture, its symbol.

§ 2. Had Turner died early, the reputation he would

¹ ["Apollo and the Python" (No. 488 in the National Gallery) was exhibited in 1811, with the following lines in the catalogue:—

"Envenom'd by thy darts, the monster coil'd,
Portentous, horrible, and vast, his snake-like form:
Rent the huge portal of the rocky den,
And in the throes of death, he tore
His many wounds in one, while earth
Absorbing, blacken'd with his gore.

—*Hymn of Callimachus.*"

So Turner wrote in the catalogue, but there is little doubt that the lines were of his own composition. They are not from Callimachus, but are a combination of the descriptions of two of Ovid's dragons—the Python (*Metamorphoses*, book i.) and the dragon destroyed by Cadmus (book iii.). Something very like a javelin, Cadmus's weapon, is sticking in the dragon, and has reappeared after being painted out, so that it is possible that Turner meant the hero of the picture, in the first instance, to be Cadmus and not Apollo (see Cosmo Monkhouse's *Turner*, pp. 68, 72). For Ruskin's earlier account of the picture, see Vol. XIII. p. 122.]



Painted by Gaspard.

Engraved by W. Holl,
Allen & Co. Sc.

79. The Hesperid *Aegle*.

have left, though great and enduring, would have been strangely different from that which ultimately must now attach to his name. He would have been remembered as one of the severest of painters; his iron touch and positive forms would have been continually opposed to the delicacy of Claude and richness of Titian; he would have been spoken of, popularly, as a man who had no eye for colour. Perhaps here and there a watchful critic might have shown this popular idea to be false; but no conception could have been formed by any one of the man's real disposition or capacity.

It was only after the year 1820 that these were determinable, and his peculiar work discerned.

§ 3. He had begun by faithful declaration of the sorrow there was in the world. It is now permitted him to see also its beauty. He becomes, separately and without rival, the painter of the loveliness and light of the creation.

Of its loveliness: that which may be beloved in it, the tenderest, kindest, most feminine of its aspects. Of its light: light not merely diffused, but interpreted; light seen preeminently in colour.

Claude and Cuyp had painted the *sunshine*, Turner alone, the sun *colour*.¹

Observe this accurately. Those easily understood effects of afternoon light, gracious and sweet so far as they reach, are produced by the softly warm or yellow rays of the sun falling through mist. They are low in tone, even in nature, and disguise the colours of objects. They are imitable even by persons who have little or no gift of colour, if the tones of the picture are kept low and in true harmony, and the reflected lights warm. But they never could be painted by great colourists. The fact of blue and crimson being effaced by yellow and gray, puts such effect at once out of the notice or thought of a colourist, unless he has some special interest in the motive of it. You might as well ask a musician to compose with only three notes, as Titian to

¹ [For Cuyp's sunshine, see above, p. 333; for Claude's, p. 320.]

paint without crimson and blue. Accordingly the colourists in general, feeling that no other than this yellow sunshine was imitable, refused it, and painted in twilight, when the colour was full. Therefore, from the imperfect colourists,—from Cuyp, Claude, Both, Wilson, we get deceptive effect of sunshine; never from the Venetians, from Rubens, Reynolds, or Velasquez. From these we get only conventional substitutions for it, Rubens being especially daring* in frankness of symbol.

§ 4. Turner, however, as a landscape painter, had to represent sunshine of one kind or another. He went steadily through the subdued golden chord, and painted Cuyp's favourite effect, "sun rising through vapour,"¹ for many a weary year. But this was not enough for him. He must paint the sun in his strength, the sun rising *not* through vapour. If you glance at that Apollo slaying the Python, you will see there is rose colour and blue on the clouds, as well as gold; and if then you turn to the Apollo in the Ulysses and Polyphemus—his horses are rising beyond the horizon,²—you see he is not "rising through vapour," but above it;—gaining somewhat of a victory over vapour, it appears.

The old Dutch brewer, with his yellow mist, was a great man and a good guide, but he was not Apollo. He and his dray-horses led the way through the flats, cheerily, for a little time; we have other horses now flaming out "beyond the mighty sea."³

A victory over vapour of many kinds; Python-slaying in general. Look how the Python's jaws smoke as he falls

* There is a very wonderful, and almost deceptive imitation, of sunlight by Rubens at Berlin. It falls through broken clouds upon angels, the flesh being chequered with sunlight and shade.⁴

¹ [The title of Turner's picture exhibited in 1807, No. 479 in the National Gallery; one of the two which he bequeathed on condition that they should hang beside two by Claude.]

² [For Ruskin's notes on this picture, see Vol. XIII. p. 137.]

³ [See the passage from Hesiod translated above, §§ 6 and 8, pp. 393–396.]

⁴ [The reference is to the picture of "The Infant Christ, with St. John and angels."]

back between the rocks:—a vaporous serpent! We will see who he was presently.

The public remonstrated loudly in the cause of Python:¹ “He had been so yellow, quiet, and pleasant a creature; what meant these azure-shafted arrows, this sudden glare into darkness, this Iris message;—Thaumantian;—miracle-working; scattering our slumber down in Cocytus?” It meant much, but that was not what they should have first asked about it. They should have asked simply was it a true message? Were these Thaumantian things so in the real universe?

It might have been known easily they were. One fair dawn or sunset, obediently beheld, would have set them right; and shown that Turner was indeed the only true speaker concerning such things that ever yet had appeared in the world. They would neither look nor hear;—only shouted continuously, “Perish Apollo. Bring us back Python.”

§ 5. We must understand the real meaning of this cry, for herein rests not merely the question of the great right or wrong in Turner’s life, but the question of the right or wrong of all painting. Nay, on this issue hangs the nobleness of painting as an art altogether, for it is distinctively the art of colouring, not of shaping or relating. Sculptors and poets can do these, the painter’s own work is colour.²

Thus, then, for the last time, rises the question, what is the true dignity of colour? We left that doubt a little while ago among the clouds, wondering what they had been made so scarlet for.³ Now Turner brings the doubt back to us, unescapable any more. No man, hitherto, had painted the clouds scarlet. Hesperid Æglé, and Erytheia,

¹ [Here Ruskin reverts to what, in the original scheme of his book, was its primary purpose—namely, the defence of Turner against the hostile criticisms which his later and more brilliantly-coloured pictures provoked: see Vol. III. pp. xxxiii., 635 *seq.* For specimens of the kind of criticisms which he here satirises, see *ibid.*, p. xxiv.]

² [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 52–54), and vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 72).]

³ [See above, pp. 158, 161.]

throned there in the west, fade into the twilights of four thousand years, unconfessed. Here is at last one who confesses them, but is it well? Men say these Hesperides are sensual goddesses,—traitresses,—that the Graiæ are the only true ones. Nature made the western and the eastern clouds splendid in fallacy. Crimson is impure and vile; let us paint in black if we would be virtuous.

§ 6. Note, with respect to this matter, that the peculiar innovation of Turner was the perfection of the colour chord by means of *scarlet*. Other painters had rendered the golden tones, and the blue tones, of sky; Titian especially the last, in perfectness. But none had dared to paint, none seem to have seen, the scarlet and purple.

Nor was it only in seeing this colour in vividness when it occurred in full light, that Turner differed from preceding painters. His most distinctive innovation as a colourist was his discovery of the scarlet *shadow*. “True, there is a sunshine whose light is golden, and its shadow gray; but there is another sunshine, and that the purest, whose light is white, and its shadow scarlet.” This was the essentially offensive, inconceivable thing, which he could not be believed in. There was some ground for the incredulity, because no colour is vivid enough to express the pitch of light of pure white sunshine, so that the colour given without the true intensity of light *looks* false.¹ Nevertheless, Turner could not but report of the colour truly. “I must indeed be lower in the key, but that is no reason why I should be false in the note. Here is sunshine which glows even when subdued; it has not cool shade, but fiery shade.”* This is the glory of sunshine.

* Not, accurately speaking, shadow, but dark side. All shadow proper is negative in colour, but, generally, reflected light is warmer than direct light; and when the direct light is warm, pure, and of the highest intensity, its reflection is scarlet. Turner habitually, in his later sketches, used vermilion for his pen outline in effects of sun.²

¹ [On this subject, compare Vol. VI. pp. 48 *seq.*]

² [This may be seen in many of the sketches exhibited in the National Gallery.]

§ 7. Now, this scarlet colour,—or pure red, intensified by expression of light,—is, of all the three primitive colours, that which is most distinctive. Yellow is of the nature of simple light; blue connected with simple shade; but red is an entirely abstract colour. It is red to which the colour-blind are blind, as if to show us that it was not necessary merely for the service or comfort of man, but that there was a special gift or teaching in this colour. Observe, farther, that it is this colour which the sunbeams take in passing through the *earth's atmosphere*. The rose of dawn and sunset is the hue of the rays passing close over the earth. It is also concentrated in the blood of man.

§ 8. Unforeseen requirements have compelled me to disperse through various works, undertaken between the first and last portions of this essay, the examination of many points respecting colour, which I had intended to reserve for this place. I can now only refer the reader to these several passages,* and sum their import; which is briefly, that colour generally, but chiefly the scarlet, used with the

* The following collected system of the various statements made respecting colour in different parts of my works may be useful to the student:—¹

1st. Abstract colour is of far less importance than abstract form (Vol. I. Chap. v.)²; that is to say, if it could rest in our choice whether we would carve like Phidias (supposing Phidias had never used colour), or arrange the colours of a shawl like Indians,³ there is no question as to which power we ought to choose. The difference of rank is vast: there is no way of estimating or measuring it.

So, again, if it rest in our choice whether it will be great in invention of form, to be expressed only by light and shade, as Dürer, or great in invention and application of colour, caring only for ungainly form, as Bassano,⁴ there is still no question. Try to be Dürer, of the two. So again, if we have to give an account or description of anything—if it be an object of high interest—its form will be always what we should first tell. Neither leopard spots nor partridge's signify primarily in describing either beast or bird. But teeth and feathers do.

¹ [For a complete collation, see General Index. Here a few only of the principal passages are referred to.]

² [Chapter v. of Part ii. sec. i.; in this edition, Vol. III. pp. 158 *seq.*]

³ [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 173, and *Two Paths*, § 4 (Vol. XVI. pp. 158, 262).]

⁴ [Compare above, p. 341.]

hyssop, in the Levitical law, is the great sanctifying element of visible beauty, inseparably connected with purity and life.

I must not enter here into the solemn and far-reaching fields of thought which it would be necessary to traverse,

2. Secondly. Though colour is of less importance than form, if you introduce it at all, it must be right.¹

People often speak of the Roman school as if it were greater than the Venetian, because its colour is "subordinate."

Its colour is not subordinate. It is BAD.

If you paint coloured objects, you must either paint them rightly or wrongly. There is no other choice. You may introduce as little colour as you choose—a mere tint of rose in a chalk drawing, for instance; or pale hues generally—as Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel. All such work implies feebleness or imperfection, but not necessarily error. But if you paint with full colour, as Raphael and Leonardo, you must either be true or false. If true, you will paint like a Venetian. If false, your form, supremely beautiful, may draw the attention of the spectator from the false colour, or induce him to pardon it—and, if ill-taught, even to like it; but your picture is none the greater for that. Had Leonardo and Raphael coloured like Giorgione, their work would have been greater, not less, than it is now.

3. To colour perfectly is the rarest and most precious (technical) power an artist can possess.² There have been only seven supreme colourists among the true painters whose works exist (namely, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoret, Correggio, Reynolds, and Turner); but the names of great designers, including sculptors, architects, and metal-workers, are multitudinous. Also, if you can colour perfectly, you are sure to be able to do everything else if you like. There never yet was colourist who could not draw; but faculty of perceiving form may exist alone. I believe, however, it will be found ultimately that the *perfect* gifts of colour and form always go together. Titian's form is nobler than Dürer's, and more subtle; nor have I any doubt but that Phidias could have painted as nobly as he carved. But when the powers are not supreme, the wisest men usually neglect the colour-gift, and develop that of form.

I have not thought it worth while at present to enter into any examination of the construction of Turner's colour system, because the public is at present so unconscious of the meaning and nature of colour that they would not know what I was talking of. The more than ludicrous folly of the system of modern water-colour painting, in which it is assumed that every hue in the drawing may be beneficially washed into every other,³ must prevent, as long as it influences the popular mind, even incipient inquiry

¹ [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 172–173); Vol. XII. p. 301; and Vol. XIV. p. 13.]

² [See Vol. VI. p. 71; Vol. X. p. 106 *n.*; Vol. XII. pp. 482, 499; and compare *Ariadne Florentina*, § 21.]

³ [For other criticisms of this method, see Vol. XIII. p. 246, and Vol. XIV. p. 247.]

in order to detect the mystical connection between life and love, set forth in that Hebrew system of sacrificial religion to which we may trace most of the received ideas respecting sanctity, consecration, and purification. This only I must hint to the reader—for his own following out—that if

respecting colour-art. But for help of any solitary and painstaking student, it may be noted that Turner's colour is founded more on Correggio and Bassano than on the central Venetians; it involves a more tender and constant reference to light and shade than that of Veronese; and a more sparkling and gem-like lustre than that of Titian. I dislike using a technical word which has been disgraced by affectation, but there is no other word to signify what I mean in saying that Turner's colour has, to the full, Correggio's "morbidezza," including also, in due place, conditions of mosaic effect, like that of the colours in an Indian design, unaccomplished by any previous master in painting; and a fantasy of inventive arrangement corresponding to that of Beethoven in music.¹ In its concurrence with and expression of texture or construction of surfaces (as their bloom lustre, or intricacy) it stands unrivalled—no still-life painting by any other master can stand for an instant beside Turner's, when his work is of life-size, as in his numerous studies of birds and their plumage.² This "morbidezza" of colour is associated, precisely as it was in Correggio, with an exquisite sensibility to fineness and intricacy of curvature: curvature, as already noticed in the second volume,³ being to lines what gradation is to colours. This subject, also, is too difficult and too little regarded by the public to be entered upon here, but it must be observed that this quality of Turner's design, the one which of all is best expressible by engraving, has of all been least expressed, owing to the constant reduction or change of proportion in the plates. Publishers, of course, require generally their plates to be of one size (the plates in this book form an appalling exception to received practice in this respect⁴); Turner always made his drawings longer or shorter by half an inch, or more, according to the subject; the engravers contracted or expanded them to fit the books, with utter destruction of the nature of every curve in the design. Mere reduction necessarily involves such loss to some extent; but the degree in which it probably involves it has been curiously exemplified by the 61st Plate in this volume, reduced from a pen-drawing of mine, 18 inches long. Fig. 101 is a facsimile of the hook and piece of drapery, in the foreground, in my drawing, which is very nearly true to the Turner curves; compare them with the curves either in Plate 61, or in the published engraving in the England Series.

¹ [Compare Vol. X. p. 215; and for other musical analogies, see Vol. XIV. p. 26. For the soft mystery of Correggio, see Vol. IV. p. 197; Vol. VI. p. 81; and *Art of England*, § 76.]

² [As, for instance, in the drawings described in Vol. XIII. pp. 274, 370.]

³ [See Vol. IV. p. 89.]

⁴ [For the reductions of some of the Plates in this edition, necessitated by the size of the page, see above, p. xviii. *n.* Plates 61 and 80 have had to be reduced by about one-fourth.]

he earnestly examines the original sources from which our heedless popular language respecting the washing away of sins has been borrowed, he will find that the fountain, in which sins are indeed to be washed away, is that of love, not of agony.

§ 9. But, without approaching the presence of this deeper

Plate 80 is a portion of the foreground of the drawing of the Llanberis (England Series), also of its real size;¹ and interesting as showing the grace of Turner's curvature even when he was drawing fastest. It is a hasty drawing throughout, and after finishing the rocks and water, being apparently a little tired, he has struck out the broken fence of the watering-place for the cattle with a few impetuous dashes of the hand. Yet the curvature and grouping of line are still perfectly tender. How far the passage loses by reduction, may be seen by a glance at the published engraving.

4. Colour, as stated in the text, is the purifying or sanctifying element of material beauty.²

If so, how less important than form? Because, on form depends existence; on colour, only purity. Under the Levitical law, neither scarlet nor hyssop could purify the deformed.³ So, under all natural law, there must be rightly shaped members first; then sanctifying colour and fire in them.

Nevertheless, there are several great difficulties and oppositions of aspect in this matter, which I must try to reconcile now clearly and finally. As colour is the type of Love, it resembles it in all its modes of operation; and in practical work of human hands, it sustains changes of worthiness precisely like those of human sexual love. That love, when true, faithful, well-fixed, is eminently the sanctifying element of human life: without it, the soul cannot reach its fullest height or holiness. But if shallow, faithless, misdirected, it is also one of the strongest corrupting and degrading elements of life.

Between these base and lofty states of Love are the loveless states; some cold and horrible; others chaste, childish, or ascetic, bearing to careless thinkers the semblance of purity higher than that of Love.

So it is with the type of Love—colour. Followed rashly, coarsely, untruly, for the mere pleasure of it, with no reverence, it becomes a temptation, and leads to corruption. Followed faithfully, with intense but reverent passion, it is the holiest of all aspects of material things.

Between these two modes of pursuing it, come two modes of refusing



Fig. 101

¹ [For other references to this drawing, see Vol. III. p. 410; Vol. XII. p. 376; and *Præterita*, ii. § 12. It was in the collection of Mr. Windus.]

² [Compare Vol. V. p. 321; Vol. VI. pp. 68, 69; and Vol. X. p. 172 *n.*]

³ [See Leviticus xxi. 16 *seq.*]

meaning of the sign, the reader may rest satisfied with the connection given him directly in written words, between the cloud and its bow.¹ The cloud, or firmament, as we have seen,² signifies the ministration of the heavens to man. That ministration may be in judgment or mercy—in the lightning, or the dew. But the bow, or colour of the cloud, signifies always mercy, the sparing of life; such ministry of the heaven as shall feed and prolong life. And as the sunlight, undivided, is the type of the wisdom and righteousness of God, so divided, and softened into colour by means of the firmamental ministry, fitted to every need of man, as to every delight, and becoming one chief source of human beauty, by being made part of the flesh of man;—thus divided, the sunlight is the type of the wisdom of God, becoming sanctification and redemption. Various in work—various in beauty—various in power.

it—one, dark and sensual; the other, statuesque and grave, having great aspect of nobleness.

Thus we have, first, the coarse love of colour, as a vulgar person's choice of gaudy hues in dress.

Then, again, we have the base disdain of colour, of which I have spoken at length elsewhere.³ Thus we have the lofty disdain of colour, as in Dürer's and Raphael's drawing: finally, the severest and passionate following of it, in Giorgione and Titian.

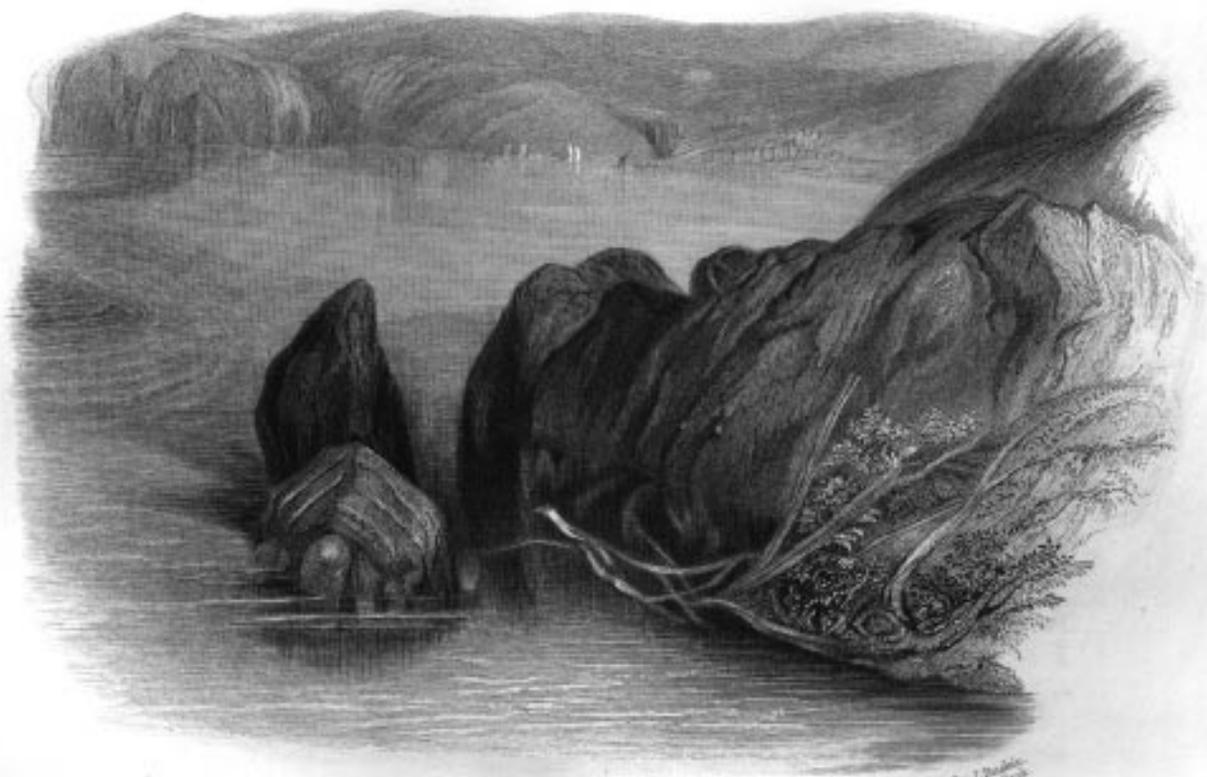
5. Colour is, more than all elements of art, the reward of veracity of purpose. This point respecting it I have not noticed before, and it is highly curious. We have just seen that in giving an account of anything for its own sake, the most important points are those of form. Nevertheless, the form of the object is its own attribute; special, not shared with other things. An error in giving an account of it does not necessarily involve wider error.

But its colour is partly its own, partly shared with other things round it. The hue and power of all broad sunlight is involved in the colour it has cast upon this single thing; to falsify that colour, is to misrepresent and break the harmony of the day: also, by what colour it bears, this single object is altering hues all round it; reflecting its own into them, displaying them by opposition, softening them by repetition; one

¹ [Genesis ix. 13.]

² [See ch. vi. of *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 106 *seq.*.)]

³ [See Vol. V. pp. 53–55; Vol. VI. pp. 67–69; and *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 109–110).]



Painted by J.M.W. Turner

Drawn by J. Phillips
Engraved by E. Cook

80. Rocks at Rest.



Painted by J.M.W. Turner.

Drawn by J. Ruskin.

Engraved by J. C. Arisprage
Allen & Co. So.

81. Rocks in Unrest.

Colour is, therefore, in brief terms, the type of love. Hence it is especially connected with the blossoming of the earth; and again, with its fruits; also, with the spring and fall of the leaf, and with the morning and evening of the day, in order to show the waiting of love about the birth and death of man.

§ 10. And now, I think, we may understand, even far away in the Greek mind, the meaning of that Contest of Apollo with the Python. It was a far greater contest than that of Hercules with Ladon. Fraud and avarice might be overcome by frankness and force; but this Python was a darker enemy, and could not be subdued but by a greater god. Nor was the conquest slightly esteemed by the victor deity. He took his great name from it thenceforth—his prophetic and sacred name—the Pythian.

falsehood in colour in one place, implies a thousand in the neighbourhood. Hence, there are peculiar penalties attached to falsehood in colour, and peculiar rewards granted to veracity in it. Form may be attained in perfectness by painters who, in their course of study, are continually altering or idealizing it; but only the sternest fidelity will reach colouring. Idealize or alter in that, and you are lost. Whether you alter by abasing or exaggerating,—by glare, or by decline, one fate is for you—ruin. Violate truth wilfully in the slightest particular, or, at least, get into the habit of violating it, and all kinds of failure and error will surround and hunt you to your fall.

Therefore, also, as long as you are working with form only, you may amuse yourself with fancies; but colour is sacred—in that you must keep to facts. Hence the apparent anomaly that the only schools of colour are the schools of Realism. The men who care for form only, may drift about in dreams of Spiritualism; but a colourist must keep to substance. The greater his power in colour enchantment, the more stern and constant will be his common sense. Fuseli may wander wildly among gray spectra,¹ but Reynolds and Gainsborough must stay in broad daylight, with pure humanity. Velasquez, the greatest colourist, is the most accurate portrait painter of Spain;² Holbein, the most accurate portrait painter, is the only colourist of Germany; and even Tintoret had to sacrifice some of the highest qualities of his colour before he could give way to the flights of wayward though mighty imagination, in which his mind rises or declines from the royal calm of Titian.

¹ [Compare Vol. V. p. 108 (“poor fumigatory Fuseli”).]

² [Compare *Lectures on Art*, § 177. For Holbein as a colourist, see *Lectures on Landscape*, § 65.]

It could, therefore, be no merely devouring dragon—no mere wild beast with scales and claws. It must possess some more terrible character to make conquest over it so glorious. Consider the meaning of its name, “THE CORRUPTER.” That Hesperid dragon was a treasure-guardian. This is the treasure-destroyer,—where moth and rust doth corrupt¹—the worm of eternal decay.

Apollo’s contest with him is the strife of purity with pollution; of life with forgetfulness; of love, with the grave.

§ 11. I believe this great battle stood, in the Greek mind, for the type of the struggle of youth and manhood with deadly sin—venomous, infectious, irrecoverable sin. In virtue of his victory over this corruption, Apollo becomes thenceforward the guide; the witness; the purifying and helpful God. The other gods help waywardly, whom they choose. But Apollo helps always: he is by name, not only Pythian, the conqueror of death; but Pæan—the healer of the people.²

Well did Turner know the meaning of that battle: he has told its tale with fearful distinctness. The Mammon dragon was armed with adamant; but this dragon of decay is a mere colossal worm: wounded, he bursts asunder in the midst,* and melts to pieces, rather than dies, vomiting smoke—a smaller serpent-worm rising out of his blood.

§ 12. Alas, for Turner! This smaller serpent-worm, it seemed, he could not conceive to be slain. In the midst of all the power and beauty of nature, he still saw this death-worm writhing among the weeds. A little thing now, yet

* Compare the deaths of Jehoram, Herod, and Judas.³

¹ [Matthew vi. 20.]

² [On the signification of Apollo as “the Pythian”—so named “from his chief enemy, the Python, slain”—see *Queen of the Air*, § 53, and compare *Time and Tide*, § 61; the Python itself being called “the corrupter,” from πυρω (to rot); the name “Pythian” being given to Apollo, who slew the corrupter. On the title Παιαν (Pæan, the physician of the gods), the name being given to Apollo in virtue of his healing office, see *Ethics of the Dust*, § 114.]

³ [2 Kings ix. 24–26; Acts xii. 21–23; Acts i. 18.]

enough: you may see it in the foreground of the Bay of Baiæ, which has also in it the story of Apollo and the Sibyl; Apollo giving love; but not youth, nor immortality: you may see it again in the foreground of the Lake Avernus—the Hades lake—which Turner surrounds with delicatest beauty, the Fates dancing in circle; but in front, is the serpent beneath the thistle and the wild thorn. The same Sibyl, Deiphobe, holding the golden bough.¹ I cannot get at the meaning of this legend of the bough; but it was, assuredly, still connected, in Turner's mind, with that help from Apollo. He indicated the strength of his feeling at the time when he painted the Python contest, by the drawing exhibited the same year, of the Prayer of Chryses.² There the priest is on the beach alone, the sun setting. He prays to it as it descends; flakes of its sheeted light are borne to him by the melancholy waves, and cast away with sighs upon the sand.

How this sadness came to be persistent over Turner, and to conquer him, we shall see in a little while. It is enough for us to know at present that our most wise and Christian England, with all her appurtenances of school-porch and church-spire, had so disposed her teaching as to leave this somewhat notable child of hers without even cruel Pandora's gift.

He was without hope.

True daughter of Night, Hesperid Æglé was to him; coming between Censure, and Sorrow,—and the Destinies.³

§ 13. What, for us, his work yet may be, I know not. But let not the real nature of it be misunderstood any more.

He is distinctively, as he rises into his own peculiar strength, separating himself from all men who had painted

¹ [For the "Bay of Baiæ" (No. 505 in the National Gallery), see Vol. XIII. pp. 131–135; and for the "Golden Bough," the view overlooking Lake Avernus (now at Dublin), *ibid.*, p. 133. The picture is given as a frontispiece to J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (2nd ed., 3 vols., 1900)—a treatise on the meaning and history of the legend.]

² [For this drawing (exhibited in 1811), see Vol. XIII. p. 446.]

³ [See above, p. 394.]

forms of the physical world before,—the painter of the loveliness of nature, with the worm at its root: Rose and cankerworm,—both with his utmost strength; the one *never* separate from the other.

In which his work was the true image of his own mind.

I would fain have looked last at the rose; but that is not the way Atropos will have it, and there is no pleading with her.

So, therefore, first of the rose.

§ 14. That is to say, of this vision of the loveliness and kindness of Nature, as distinguished from all visions of her ever received by other men. By the Greek she had been distrusted. She was to him Calypso, the Concealer, Circe, the Sorceress. By the Venetian, she had been dreaded. Her wildernesses were desolate; her shadows stern. By the Fleming, she had been despised; what mattered the heavenly colours to him? But at last, the time comes for her loveliness and kindness to be declared to men. Had they helped Turner, listened to him, believed in him, he had done it wholly for them. But they cried out for Python, and Python came; came literally as well as spiritually; all the perfectest beauty and conquest which Turner wrought is already withered. The cankerworm stood at his right hand, and of all his richest, most precious work, there remains only the shadow. Yet that shadow is more than other men's sunlight; it is the scarlet shade, shade of the Rose. Wrecked, and faded, and defiled, his work still, in what remains of it, or may remain, is the loveliest ever yet done by man, in imagery of the physical world. Whatsoever is there of fairest, you will find recorded by Turner, and by him alone.

§ 15. I say *you* will find, not knowing to how few I speak; for in order to find what is fairest, you must delight in what is fair; and I know not how few or how many there may be who take such delight. Once I could speak joyfully about beautiful things, thinking to be understood;—now I cannot any more; for it seems to me that

no one regards them. Wherever I look or travel in England or abroad, I see that men, wherever they can reach, destroy all beauty. They seem to have no other desire or hope but to have large houses and to be able to move fast. Every perfect and lovely spot which they can touch, they defile.*

§ 16. Nevertheless, though not joyfully, or with any hope of being at present heard, I would have tried to enter here into some examination of the right and worthy effect of beauty in Art upon human mind, if I had been myself able to come to demonstrable conclusions. But the question is so complicated with that of the enervating influence of all luxury,¹ that I cannot get it put into any tractable compass. Nay, I have many inquiries to make, many difficult passages of history to examine, before I can determine the just limits of the hope in which I may permit myself to continue to labour in any cause of Art.²

Nor is the subject connected with the purpose of this book. I have written it to show that Turner is the greatest landscape painter who ever lived; and this it has sufficiently accomplished. What the final use may be to men, of landscape painting, or of any painting, or of natural beauty, I do not yet know. Thus far, however, I *do* know.³

* Thus, the railroad bridge over the Fall of Schaffhausen, and that round the Clarens shore of the lake of Geneva, have destroyed the power of two pieces of scenery of which nothing can ever supply the place, in appeal to the higher ranks of European mind.⁴

¹ [Compare Vol. III. p. 21; Vol. XI. p. 5; Vol. VIII. p. 98; and Vol. XVI. p. 125.]

² [On this passage, compare the Introduction, above, p. lvi.]

³ [Here Ruskin resumes the discussion promised in Vol. V. p. 384.]

⁴ [Compare *Art of England*, § 208. The railroad from Bâle to the Lake of Constance, crossing the Rhine at Schaffhausen, had just been constructed at the time Ruskin wrote; for the building of the line on the Lake of Geneva, see Vol. VI. p. 455, and compare *Sesame and Lilies*, § 35, and *Art of England*. The footnote as it stands was compressed from a larger passage in the first draft, which formed part of the main text, and read:—

“The Alps seem to me beautiful to behold; men consider that it will be on the whole pleasanter to pass under them in a tunnel. The Rhine, as I once supposed, was beautiful among its Schaffhausen rocks; but it was found cheaper to build a railroad bridge among the foam than in the deep water. The bridge is built and the pleased world passes over it—content with a sight of a film of spray on right or left hand for the space of five seconds of time.”]

§ 17. Three principal forms of asceticism have existed in this weak world. Religious asceticism, being the refusal of pleasure and knowledge for the sake (as supposed) of religion; seen chiefly in the Middle Ages. Military asceticism, being the refusal of pleasure and knowledge for the sake of power; seen chiefly in the early days of Sparta and Rome. And monetary asceticism, consisting in the refusal of pleasure and knowledge for the sake of money; seen in the present days of London and Manchester.

“We do not come here to look at the mountains,” said the Carthusian to me at the Grande Chartreuse.¹ “We do not come here to look at the mountains,” the Austrian generals would say, encamping by the shores of Garda. “We do not come here to look at the mountains,” so the thriving manufacturers tell me, between Rochdale and Halifax.

§ 18. All these asceticisms have their bright and their dark sides. I myself like the military asceticism best, because it is not so necessarily a refusal of general knowledge as the two others, but leads to acute and marvellous use of mind, and perfect use of body. Nevertheless, none of the three are a healthy or central state of man. There is much to be respected in each, but they are not what we should wish large numbers of men to become. A monk of La Trappe, a French soldier of the Imperial Guard, and a thriving mill-owner, supposing each a type, and no more than a type, of his class, are all interesting specimens of humanity, but narrow ones,—so narrow that even all the three together would not make up a perfect man. Nor does it appear in any way desirable that either of the three classes should extend itself so as to include a majority of the persons in the world, and turn large cities into mere groups of monastery, barracks, or factory. I do not say that it may not be desirable that one city, or one country, sacrificed for the good of the rest, should become a mass

¹ [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 223).]

of barracks or factories. Perhaps, it may be well that this England should become the furnace of the world;¹ so that the smoke of the island, rising out of the sea, should be seen from a hundred leagues away, as if it were a field of fierce volcanoes; and every kind of sordid, foul, or venomous work which, in other countries, men dreaded or disdained, it should become England's duty to do,—becoming thus the offscourer of the earth, and taking the hyena instead of the lion upon her shield. I do not, for a moment, deny this; but, looking broadly, not at the destiny of England,² nor of any country in particular, but of the world, this is certain—that men exclusively occupied either in spiritual reverie, mechanical destruction, or mechanical productiveness,³ fall below the proper standard of their race, and enter into a lower form of being; and that the true perfection of the race, and, therefore, its power and happiness, are only to be attained by a life which is neither speculative nor productive;⁴ but essentially contemplative and protective, which (A) does not lose itself in the monk's vision or hope, but delights in seeing present and real things as they truly are; which (B) does not mortify itself for the sake of obtaining powers of destruction, but seeks the more easily attainable powers of affection, observance, and protection; which (C), finally, does not mortify itself with a view to productive accumulation, but delights itself in peace, with its appointed portion. So that the things to be desired for man in a healthy state, are that he should not see dreams, but realities; that he should not destroy

¹ [This possibility of "the destiny of England" was often stated by Ruskin; see, for instance, *Unto this Last*, § 81; *Time and Tide*, § 10; *Sesame and Lilies*, § 83; *Lectures on Art*, § 123; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 35; and compare below, p. 458.]

² [From this point, down to the end of the chapter, was reprinted by Ruskin, with some alterations and rearrangement, in his *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (see Vol. XIII. p. 497). Variations of substance are given here in footnotes; while minor alterations will be found noted in the Bibliographical Note at p. lxxv.]

³ [For Ruskin's views on this subject, see Vol. XII. p. 68 n.; *Munera Pulveris*, § 109 n.; *Time and Tide*, § 103; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 2; and *Lectures on Art*, § 123.]

⁴ [In the reprint of this passage in the *Turner Notes* (1878) Ruskin here added a footnote:—

“‘Mechanically,’ always to be understood; the ‘produce’ of the earth for daily bread being always gleaned and stored to its last grain.”]

life, but save it; and that he should be not rich, but content.

§ 19. Towards which last state of contentment, I do not see that the world is at present approximating. There are, indeed, two forms of discontent: one laborious, the other indolent and complaining. We respect the man of laborious desire, but let us not suppose that his restlessness is peace, or his ambition meekness. It is because of the special connection of meekness with contentment that it is promised that the meek shall “inherit the earth.”¹ Neither covetous men, nor the Grave, can *inherit*² anything;* they can but consume. Only contentment can possess.

§ 20. The most helpful and sacred work, therefore, which can at present be done for humanity, is to teach people (chiefly by example, as all best teaching must be done) not how “to better themselves,” but how to “satisfy themselves.” It is the curse of every evil nation and evil creature to eat, and *not* be satisfied.³ The words of blessing are, that they shall eat and be satisfied. And as there is only one kind of water which quenches all thirst, so there is only one kind of bread which satisfies all hunger—the bread of justice, or righteousness; which hungering after, men shall always be filled, that being the bread of heaven; but hungering after the bread, or wages, of unrighteousness, shall not be filled, that being the bread of Sodom.

* “There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: the grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire, that saith not, It is enough!” [Proverbs xxx. 15, 16.]

¹ [Matthew v. 5.]

² [In the reprint in the *Turner Notes* (1878) Ruskin here added a footnote:—

“These italics and those henceforward found, are put in this reprint to mark what I now wish especially to be noticed. I would not use them in my first text, which I intended to be read as a whole, with equal attention. But the then supplementary notes are now of so much more importance to the general public than the text, that I print them in the same type.”

The italics of 1878 are here indicated below the text, as they were not adopted in the edition of 1888; in accordance with which the type of the notes remains that of the original editions.]

³ [Deuteronomy xiv. 29, and Psalms xxii. 26. For the following references, see John iv. 14 and vi. 35.]

§ 21. And, in order to teach men how to be satisfied, it is necessary fully to understand the art and joy of humble life,—this, at present, of all arts or sciences being the one most needing study. Humble life,—that is to say, proposing to itself no future exaltation, but only a sweet continuance;¹ not excluding the idea of foresight, but wholly of fore-sorrow, and taking no troublous thought for coming days;² so, also, not excluding the idea of providence, or provision,* but wholly of accumulation;—the life of domestic affection and domestic peace, full of sensitiveness to all elements of costless and kind pleasure;—therefore, chiefly to the loveliness of the natural world.

§ 22. What length and severity of labour may be ultimately found necessary for the procuring of the due comforts of life, I do not know; neither what degree of refinement it is possible to unite with the so-called servile occupations of life:³ but this I know, that right economy of labour will, as it is understood, assign to each man as much as it will be healthy for him, and no more; and that no refinements are desirable which cannot be connected with toil.

I say, first, that due economy of labour will assign to each man the share which is right. Let no technical labour be wasted on things useless or unpleasurable;† and let all

* A bad word, being only “foresight” again in Latin; but we have no other good English word for the sense into which it has been warped.

† I cannot repeat too often (for it seems almost impossible to arouse the public mind in the least to a sense of the fact) that the root of all benevolent and helpful action towards the lower classes consists in the wise direction of purchase;⁴ that is to say, in spending money, as far as possible, only for products of healthful and natural labour. All work with fire is more or less harmful and degrading; so also mine, or machine labour. They at present develop more intelligence than rural labour, but this is only because no education, properly so called, being given to the lower classes, those occupations are best for them which compel them to attain some accurate knowledge, discipline them in presence of mind, and bring

¹ [Among other passages in which Ruskin enforces this rule of life, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 382, 383), and *Sesame and Lilies*, §§ 3–4, 42.]

² [See *Matthew* vi. 34.]

³ [On this subject, compare *Munera Pulveris*, § 109, and *Time and Tide*, § 109.]

⁴ [For an earlier enforcement of this principle, see *A Joy for Ever*, § 119 (Vol. XVI. p. 102).]

physical exertion, so far as possible, be utilised, and it will be found no man need ever work more than is good for him. I believe an immense gain in the bodily health and happiness of the upper classes would follow on their steadily endeavouring, however clumsily, to make the physical exertion they now necessarily take in amusements, definitely

them within spheres in which they may raise themselves to positions of command. Properly taught, a ploughman ought to be more intelligent, as well as more healthy, than a miner.

Every nation which desires to ennoble itself should endeavour to maintain as large a number of persons as possible by rural and maritime labour, including fishing. I cannot in this place enter into consideration of the relative advantages of different channels of industry. Any one who sincerely desires to act upon such knowledge will find no difficulty in obtaining it.

I have also several series of experiments and inquiries to undertake before I shall be able to speak with security on certain points connected with education; but I have no doubt that every child in a civilized country should be taught the first principles of natural history, physiology, and medicine; also to sing perfectly, so far as it has capacity, and to draw¹ any definite form accurately, to any scale.²

These things it should be taught by requiring its attendance at school not more than three hours a day, and less if possible (the best part of children's education being in helping their parents and families). The other elements of its instruction ought to have respect to the trade by which it is to live.

Modern systems of improvement are too apt to confuse the recreation of the workman with his education. He should be educated for his work before he is allowed to undertake it; and refreshed and relieved while he practises it.

Every effort should be made to induce the adoption of a national costume.³ Cleanliness and neatness in dress ought always to be rewarded by some gratification of personal pride; and it is the peculiar virtue of a national costume that it fosters and gratifies the wish to look well, without inducing the desire to look better than one's neighbours—or the hope, peculiarly English, of being mistaken for a person in a higher position of life.⁴ A costume may indeed become coquettish, but rarely indecent or vulgar; and though a French *bonne* or Swiss farm-girl may dress so as sufficiently to mortify her equals, neither of them ever desires or expects to be mistaken for her mistress.

¹ [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 155 (Vol. XVI. pp. 144–145).]

² [In the reprint in the *Turner Notes* (1878) this and the preceding paragraph were printed in italics.]

³ [On the importance of “nobleness of dress” in art, compare Vol. XVI. p. 52; on the moral value of a national costume, see *Lectures on Art*, § 79; and *Art of England*, § 23.]

⁴ [Compare *Two Paths*, § 96 (Vol. XVI. p. 343), and Ruskin's evidence to the Public Institutions Committee, Questions 103, 118 (*ibid.*, pp. 484, 486).]

serviceable. It would be far better, for instance, that a gentleman should mow his own fields, than ride over other people's.¹

§ 23. Again, respecting degrees of possible refinement, I cannot yet speak positively, because no effort has yet been made to teach refined habits to persons of simple life.

The idea of such refinement has been made to appear absurd, partly by the foolish ambition of vulgar persons in low life, but more by the worse than foolish assumption, acted on so often by modern advocates of improvement, that "education" means teaching Latin, or algebra, or music, or drawing, instead of developing or "drawing out" the human soul.²

It may not be the least necessary that a peasant should know algebra, or Greek, or drawing. But it may, perhaps, be both possible and expedient that he should be able to arrange his thoughts clearly, to speak his own language intelligibly, to discern between right and wrong, to govern his passions, and to receive such pleasures of ear or sight as his life may render accessible to him. I would not have him taught the science of music; but most assuredly I would have him taught to sing. I would not teach him the science of drawing; but certainly I would teach him to see; without learning a single term of botany, he should know accurately the habits and uses of every leaf and flower in his fields; and unencumbered by any theories of moral or political philosophy, he should help his neighbour, and disdain a bribe.

§ 24. Many most valuable conclusions respecting the degree of nobleness and refinement which may be attained in servile or in rural life may be arrived at by careful study of the noble writings of Blitzius (Jeremias Gotthelf), which contain a record of Swiss character not less valuable in its

¹ [Compare the note on p. 341, above.]

² [That education should be mainly an ethical process, and not a machinery for the acquisition of knowledge, was a constant theme with Ruskin: compare Vol. XI. p. 204, and *Munera Pulveris*, § 106.]

fine truth than that which Scott has left of the Scottish. I know no ideal characters of women, whatever their station, more majestic than that of Freneli, in *Ulric le Valet de Ferme*, and *Ulric le Fermier*; or of Elise, in the *Tour de Jacob*; nor any more exquisitely tender and refined than that of Aenneli in the *Fromagerie*, and Aenneli in the *Miroir des Paysans*.*

§ 25. How far this simple and useful pride, this delicate innocence, might be adorned, or how far destroyed, by higher intellectual education in letters or the arts, cannot be known without other experience than the charity of men has hitherto enabled us to acquire.

All effort in social improvement is paralyzed, because no one has been bold or clear-sighted enough to put and press home this radical question: "What is indeed the noblest tone and reach of life for men; and how can the possibility of it be extended to the greatest numbers?" It is answered, broadly and rashly, that wealth is good; that knowledge is good; that art is good; that luxury is good. Whereas none of them are good in the abstract, but good only if rightly received. Nor have any steps whatever been yet securely taken,—nor, otherwise than in the resultless rhapsody of moralists,—to ascertain what luxuries and what learning it is either kind to bestow, or wise to desire. This, however, at least we know, shown clearly by the history of all time, that the arts and sciences, ministering to the pride of nations, have invariably hastened their ruin;¹ and this, also, without venturing to say that I know, I nevertheless firmly believe, that the same arts and sciences will

* This last book should be read carefully by all persons interested in social questions. It is sufficiently dull as a tale, but is characterised throughout by a restrained tragic power of the highest order; and it would be worth reading, were it only for the story of Aenneli, and for the last half page of its close.²

¹ [See on this point Vol. XVI. pp. 197, 263.]

² [For a note on Gotthelf, see Vol. VI. p. 172. The *Mirror of Peasants* is specially referred to in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 30; and the character of Freneli in Letters 91 and 94.]

tend as distinctly to exalt the strength and quicken the soul of every nation which employs them to increase the comfort of lowly life, and grace with happy intelligence the unambitious courses of honourable toil.

Thus far, then, of the Rose.

§ 26. Last, of the Worm.

I said that Turner painted the labour of men, their sorrow, and their death. This he did nearly in the same tones of mind which prompted Byron's poem of *Childe Harold*, and the loveliest result of his art, in the central period of it, was an effort to express on a single canvas the meaning of that poem.¹ It may be now seen, by strange coincidence, associated with two others—Caligula's Bridge and the Apollo and Sibyl; the one illustrative of the vanity of human labour, the other of the vanity of human life.* He painted these, as I said, in the same tone of mind which formed the *Childe Harold* poem, but with different capacity: Turner's sense of beauty was perfect; deeper, therefore, far than Byron's; only that of Keats and Tennyson being comparable with it. And Turner's love of truth was as stern and patient as Dante's; so that when over these great capacities come the shadows of despair, the wreck is infinitely sterner and more sorrowful. With no sweet home for his childhood—friendless in youth, loveless in manhood,—and hopeless in death, Turner was what Dante might have been, without the "bello ovile," without

* "The Cumæan Sibyl, Deiphobe, was, in her youth, beloved by Apollo; who promising to grant her whatever she would ask, she took up a handful of earth, and asked that she might live as many years as there were grains of dust in her hand. She obtained her petition. Apollo would have granted her perpetual youth in return for her love, but she denied him, and wasted into the long ages—known, at last, only by her voice."—(See my *Notes on the Turner Gallery*.)

¹ ["*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*," exhibited in 1832, No. 516 in the National Gallery; see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Vol. XIII. pp. 140–145. "Caligula's Palace and Bridge," exhibited in 1831, is No. 512 in the National Gallery; the "Bay of Baiæ, with Apollo and the Sibyl," exhibited in 1823, is No. 505; it is fully described in the *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Vol. XIII. pp. 131–135.]

Casella,¹ without Beatrice, and without Him who gave them all, and took them all away.

§ 27. I will trace this state of his mind farther, in a little while. Meantime, I want you to note only the result upon his work;—how, through all the remainder of his life, wherever he looked, he saw ruin.

Ruin, and twilight. What was the distinctive effect of light which he introduced, such as no man had painted before? Brightness, indeed, he gave, as we have seen, because it was true and right; but in this he only perfected what others had attempted. His own favourite light is not *Æglé*, but Hesperid *Æglé*. Fading of the last rays of sunset. Faint breathing of the sorrow of night.

§ 28. And fading of sunset, note also, on ruin. I cannot but wonder that this difference between Turner's work and previous art-conception has not been more observed. None of the great early painters draw ruins, except compulsorily. The shattered buildings introduced by them are shattered artificially, like models. There is no real sense of decay; whereas Turner only momentarily dwells on anything else than ruin. Take up the *Liber Studiorum*, and observe how this feeling of decay and humiliation gives solemnity to all its simplest subjects; even to his view of daily labour. I have marked its tendency in examining the design of the Mill and Lock,² but observe its continuance through the book. There is no exultation in thriving city, or mart, or in happy rural toil, or harvest gathering. Only the grinding at the mill, and patient striving with hard conditions of life. Observe the two disordered and poor farm-yards,³ cart, and ploughshare,

¹ [For the "bello ovile," see above, p. 376; and for Casella, Vol. XV. p. 205.]

² [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 16 *seq.* and Plate 19).]

³ [The "two farm-yards" are the Plates called "A Farm-Yard" and "The Rick-Yard" (the drawing for the former is No. 507 in the National Gallery). The "pastoral by the brook side" is the "Rustic Bridge" (No. 504 in the National Gallery). The drawing for "Hedging and Ditching" is No. 508; that for "The Water-Mill" is No. 505 (the Plate is reproduced in *Lectures on Landscape*); that for "Peat Bog, Scotland," No. 498; and that for "Mill near the Grand Chartreuse, Dauphiny," No. 866 (the Plate also reproduced in *Lectures on Landscape*). For other references to these Plates, see General Index, *s.* "Turner, *Liber Studiorum*."]]

and harrow rotting away: note the pastoral by the brook side, with its neglected stream and haggard trees, and bridge with the broken rail, and decrepit children—fever-struck—one sitting stupidly by the stagnant stream, the other in rags, and with an old man's hat on, and lame, leaning on a stick. Then the "Hedging and Ditching," with its bleak sky and blighted trees—hacked, and bitten, and starved by the clay soil into something between trees and firewood; its meanly-faced, sickly labourers—pollard labourers, like the willow trunk they hew; and the slatternly peasant-woman, with worn cloak and battered bonnet—an English Dryad. Then the water-mill, beyond the fallen steps, overgrown with the thistle: itself a ruin, mud-built at first, now propped on both sides;—the planks torn from its cattle-shed; a feeble beam, splintered at the end, set against the dwelling-house from the ruined pier of the water-course; the old mill-stone—useless for many a day—half-buried in slime, at the bottom of the wall; the listless children, listless dog, and the poor gleaner bringing her single sheaf to be ground. Then the "Peat Bog," with its cold, dark rain, and dangerous labour. And last and chief, the mill in the valley of the Chartreuse. Another than Turner would have painted the convent; but he had no sympathy with the hope, no mercy for the indolence of the monk. He painted the mill in the valley. Precipice overhanging it, and wildness of dark forest round; blind rage and strength of mountain torrent rolled beneath it,—calm sunset above, but fading from the glen, leaving it to its roar of passionate waters and sighing of pine-branches in the night.

§ 29. Such is his view of human labour. Of human pride, see what records.¹ Morpeth tower, roofless and black;

¹ [The drawing for "Morpeth" is No. 482 in the National Gallery. The "gate of old Winchelsea wall" is "East Gate, Winchelsea" (No. 488). The drawing for "Rievaulx Abbey" is No. 483; that for "Kirkstall Crypt," No. 484; "Dunstan-borough," No. 485; "Chepstow," No. 494. "Lindisfarne" is "Holy Island Cathedral" (No. 481); the drawing for "Raglan" is No. 865 (see Vol. XIII. p. 644 for a note on the title). The drawing for "Cephalus and Procris" is No. 465 in

gate of old Winchelsea wall, the flock of sheep driven *round* it, not through it; and Rievaulx choir, and Kirkstall crypt; and Dunstanborough, wan above the sea; and Chepstow, with arrowy light through traceried windows; and Lindisfarne, with failing height of wasted shaft and wall; and last and sweetest, Raglan, in utter solitude, amidst the wild wood of its own pleasure; the towers rounded with ivy, and the forest roots choked with undergrowth, and the brook languid amidst lilies and sedges. Legends of gray knights and enchanted ladies keeping the woodman's children away at the sunset.

These are his types of human pride. Of human love: Procris, dying by the arrow; Hesperie, by the viper's fang; and Rizpah, more than dead, beside her children.

§ 30. Such are the lessons of the *Liber Studiorum*. Silent always with a bitter silence, disdainful to tell his meaning, when he saw there was no ear to receive it, Turner only indicated this purpose by slight words of contemptuous anger, when he heard of any one's trying to obtain this or the other separate subject as more beautiful than the rest. "What is the use of them," he said, "but together?"* The meaning of the entire book was

* Turner appears never to have desired, from any one, care in favour of his separate works. The only thing he would say sometimes was, "Keep them together."¹ He seemed not to mind how much they were injured, if only the record of the thought were left in them, and they were kept in the series which would give the key to their meaning. I never saw him, at my father's house, look for an instant at any of his own

the National Gallery; the Plate is reproduced in *Lectures on Landscape*; as also is "Æsacus and Hesperie." The drawing for "Rizpah" is No. 864 in the National Gallery. Here, again, for other references to the several plates, see General Index; and for "the lessons of the *Liber Studiorum*" compare Ruskin's letter to Professor Norton, Vol. XV. p. xxiv.]

¹ [Mr. W. G. Rawlinson records a similar remark. "Mr. Halsted tells me that Turner, once coming to his shop in Bond Street, found fault with him for breaking up sets of the *Liber*; and when he heard that some Plates sold habitually much better than others, he grunted out, 'A pack of geese! a pack of geese! Don't they know what *Liber Studiorum* means?' " (*Catalogue of the Liber Studiorum*, p. xlv.). For another reference to Turner's "earnest desire to arrange his works in connected groups," see preface to *The Harbours of England*, Vol. XIII. p. 9. So also with regard to some of the "Rivers of England" series, see *ibid.*, p. 382.]

symbolized in the frontispiece, which he engraved with his own hand:¹ Tyre at sunset, with the Rape of Europa, indicating the symbolism of the decay of Europe by that of Tyre, its beauty passing away into terror and judgment (Europa being the mother of Minos and Rhadamanthus).*

drawings: I have watched him sitting at dinner nearly opposite one of his chief pictures²—his eyes never turned to it.

But the want of appreciation, nevertheless, touched him sorely; chiefly the not understanding his meaning. He tried hard one day for a quarter of an hour to make me guess what he was doing in the picture of Napoleon, before it had been exhibited, giving me hint after hint in a rough way; but I could not guess, and he would not tell me.³

* I limit myself in this book to mere indication of the tones of his mind, illustration of them at any length being as yet impossible. It will be found on examining the series of drawings made by Turner during the late years of his life, in possession of the nation, that they are nearly all made for the sake of some record of human power,⁴ partly victorious, partly conquered. There is hardly a single example of landscape painted for its own abstract beauty. Power and desolation, or soft pensiveness, are the elements sought chiefly in landscape; hence the later sketches are nearly all among mountain scenery, and chiefly of fortresses, villages or bridges and roads among the wildest Alps. The pass of the St. Gothard, especially, from his earliest days, had kept possession of his mind, not as a piece of mountain scenery, but as a marvellous road;⁵ and the great drawing which I have tried to illustrate with some care in this book, the last he made of the Alps with unflinching energy,⁶ was wholly made to show the surviving of this tormented path through avalanche and storm, from the day when he first drew its two bridges, in the *Liber Studiorum*.⁷ Plate 81, which is the piece of the torrent bed on the left, of the real size,⁸ where the stones of it appear just on the point of being swept away, and the ground we stand upon with them, completes the series of illustrations of this

¹ [Turner's drawing in ink and bistre over a completed etching of the frontispiece (evidently the guide for the engraver of the mezzotint work), is now, by the Vaughan Bequest, in the National Gallery, No. 863.]

² ["The Slave Ship": see Vol. III. p. 572.]

³ [For Ruskin's notes on the "Napoleon," see Vol. XIII. p. 160 and the other passages there noted. For other references to Turner's susceptibility to criticisms founded on want of understanding his purpose, see Ruskin's anecdote of the "Snowstorm," Vol. XIII. p. 161; and compare below, p. 453.]

⁴ [In the reprint in the *Turner Notes* (1878) the words "that they are nearly . . . human power" were put in italics.]

⁵ [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. xxvi., 33–40, 269–275, and Plates 20, 21, 37).]

⁶ [Compare Vol. V. p. 296.]

⁷ [See Vol. VI. p. 40, where a piece of the etching done for *Liber Studiorum* (an unpublished Plate) is given. The Plate of the "Little Devil's Bridge" was published; the drawing is No. 476 in the National Gallery.]

⁸ [Here reduced by about one-fourth. The reprint had here "Drawing No. 66 in the Exhibition"; see Vol. XIII. p. 456.]

§ 31. I need not trace the dark clue farther, the reader may follow it unbroken through all his work and life, this

subject, for the present, sufficiently; and, if compared with Plate 80,¹ will be serviceable, also, in showing how various in its grasp and its delight was this strange human mind, capable of all patience and all energy, and perfect in its sympathy, whether with wrath or quietness. Though lingering always with chief affection about the St. Gothard pass, he seems to have gleaned the whole of Switzerland for every record he could find of grand human effort of any kind; I do not believe there is one baronial tower, one shattered arch of Alpine bridge, one gleaming tower of decayed village or deserted monastery, which he has not drawn; in many cases, round and round, again and again, on every side. Now that I have done this work, I purpose, if life and strength are spared to me, to trace him through these last journeys, and take such record of his best-beloved places as may fully interpret the designs he left.² I have given in the three following plates an example of the kind of work which needs doing, and which, as stated in the preface, I have partly already begun.³ Plate 82 represents roughly two of Turner's memoranda of a bridge over the Rhine. They are quite imperfectly represented, because I do not choose to take any trouble about them on this scale. If I can engrave them at all, it must be of their own size; but they are enough to give an idea of the way he used to walk round a place, taking sketch after sketch of its aspects, from every point or half-point of the compass. There are three other sketches of this bridge, far more detailed than these, in the National Gallery.

A scratched word on the back of one of them, "Rheinfels," which I knew could not apply to the Rheinfels near Bingen, gave me the clue to the place;—an old Swiss town, seventeen miles above Basle, celebrated in Swiss history as the main fortress defending the frontier toward the Black Forest. I went there the moment I had got Turner's sketches arranged in 1858, and drew it with the pen (or point of brush, more difficult to manage, but a better instrument) on every side on which Turner had drawn it, giving every detail with servile accuracy, so as to show the exact modifications he made as he composed his subjects. Mr. Le Keux has beautifully copied two of these studies, Plates 83 and 84; the first of these is the bridge drawn from the spot whence Turner made his upper memorandum; afterwards, he went down close to the fishing house, and took the second; in which he unhesitatingly divides the Rhine by a strong pyramidal rock, in order to get a group of firm lines pointing to his main subject, the tower (compare § 12, p. 224, above); and throws a foaming mass of water away to the left, in order to give a better idea of the river's force; the modifications of form in the tower itself are all skilful and majestic in the highest degree. The throwing the whole of it higher than the bridge,

¹ [For the subject, see above, § 8 *n.*]

² [An intention which was not to be fulfilled: see above, Introduction, p. lvi.]

³ [See above, p. 6; and compare the Introduction, pp. xxix., xxx., where Ruskin's studies at Rheinfelden are further described. The two sketches reproduced in Plate 82 are Nos. 87 and 89 in the National Gallery (see Vol. XIII. p. 222 for Ruskin's notes on them in 1857 when he had not yet identified the subject); the other three sketches of Rheinfelden, also showing the bridge, are Nos. 86, 88, and 90. In the lower sketch on Plate 82 the engraver has added the sky.]



J. M. W. Turner

J. H. La Hire



J. Zinslein.

J. H. Koenig
Allen & Co. So.

83. The Bridge of Rheinfelden.



J. H. Le Kern.

J. H. Le Kern.
Allen & Co. So.

84 . Peace .

thread of Atropos.* I will only point, in conclusion, to the intensity with which his imagination dwelt always on the three great cities of Carthage, Rome, and Venice—Carthage in connection especially with the thoughts and study which led to the painting of the Hesperides' Garden, showing the death which attends the vain pursuit of wealth; Rome showing the death which attends the vain pursuit of power; Venice, the death which attends the vain pursuit of beauty.

taking off the peak from its gable on the left, and adding the little roof-window in the centre, make it a perfectly noble mass instead of a broken and common one. I have added the other subject, Plate 84,—though I could not give the Turner drawing which it illustrates,¹—merely to show the kind of scene which modern ambition and folly are destroying, throughout Switzerland. In Plate 83, a small dark tower is seen in the distance, just on the left of the tower of the bridge. Getting round nearly to the foot of it, on the outside of the town, and then turning back so as to put the town walls on your right, you may, I hope, still see the subject of the third plate; the old bridge over the moat, and older wall and towers; the stork's nest on the top of the nearest one; the moat itself, now nearly filled with softest grass and flowers; a little mountain brook rippling down through the midst of them, and the first wooded promontory of the Jura beyond. Had Rheinfelden been a place of the least mark, instead of an early ruinous village, it is just this spot of ground which, costing little or nothing, would have been made its railroad station, and its refreshment-room would have been built out of the stones of the towers.

* I have not followed out, as I ought to have done, had the task been less painful, my assertion that Turner had to paint not only the labour and the sorrow of men, but their death. There is no form of violent death which he has not painted. Pre-eminent in many things, he is pre-eminent also, bitterly, in this. Dürer and Holbein drew the skeleton in its questioning; but Turner, like Salvator, as under some strange fascination or captivity, drew it at its work. Flood, and fire, and wreck, and battle, and pestilence, and solitary death, more fearful still. The noblest of all the plates of the *Liber Studiorum*, except the *Via Mala*, is one² engraved with his own hand, of a single sailor, yet living, dashed in the night against a granite coast,—his body and outstretched hands just seen in the trough of a mountain wave, between it and the overhanging wall of rock, hollow, polished, and pale with dreadful cloud and grasping foam.

And remember also, that the very sign in heaven itself which, truly

¹ [The Turner drawing has not been identified. The subject of Ruskin's drawing can no longer be seen. Rheinfelden has become the centre of salt works and breweries, and has outgrown its old boundaries. The old bridge, however, still stands (in company with a new iron one). The tower shown in the Plate also survives, but the town walls have for the most part been demolished, and the moat is filled up.]

² [The reprint had here "No. 72 in the Exhibition": see Vol. XIII. pp. 43, 461.]

How strangely significant, thus understood, those last Venetian dreams of his become, themselves so beautiful and so frail; wrecks of all that they were once—twilights of twilight!

§ 32. Vain beauty; yet not all in vain. Unlike in birth, how like in their labour, and their power over the future, these masters of England and Venice—Turner and Giorgione. But ten years ago, I saw the last traces of

understood, is the type of love, was to Turner the type of death. The scarlet of the clouds was his symbol of destruction. In his mind it was the colour of blood. So he used it in the *Fall of Carthage*. Note his own written words—

“While o’er the western wave the *ensanguined* sun,
In gathering huge a stormy signal spread,
And set portentous.”¹

So he used it in the *Slaver*, in the *Ulysses*, in the *Napoleon*, in the *Goldau*;² again and again in slighter hints and momentary dreams, of which one of the saddest and most tender is a little sketch of dawn, made in his last years. It is a small space of level sea shore; beyond it a fair, soft light in the east; the last storm-clouds melting away, oblique into the morning air; some little vessel—a collier, probably—has gone down in the night, all hands lost; a single dog has come ashore. Utterly exhausted, its limbs failing under it, and sinking into the sand, it stands howling and shivering. The dawn clouds have the first scarlet upon them, a feeble tinge only, reflected with the same feeble blood-stain on the sand. (Plate 86.³)

The morning light is used with a loftier significance in a drawing made as a companion to the *Goldau*, engraved in the fourth volume. The *Lake of Zug*,⁴ which ripples beneath the sunset in the *Goldau*, is lulled in the level azure of early cloud; and the spire of *Arth*, which is there a dark point at the edge of the golden lake, is, in the opening light, seen pale against purple mountains. The sketches for these two subjects were, I doubt not, made from the actual effects of a stormy evening, and the next following daybreak; but both with earnest meaning.⁵ The crimson sunset lights the valley of rock tombs, cast upon it by the fallen *Rossberg*; but the sunrise gilds with its level rays the two peaks which protect the village that

¹ [For this picture, see Vol. XIII. p. 125.]

² [The reprint had here “No. 65 in the Exhibition”: see Vol. XIII. p. 455. The “*Goldau*” is Plate 50 in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 379).]

³ [This Plate (though prepared, but too late, for the original edition) was first introduced in that of 1888 (see above, p. lxix.). It is from a drawing in the possession of the Rev. W. Kingsley, known as “*Dawn after the Wreck*.”]

⁴ [The reprint had here “*Drawing No. 64 in the Exhibition*”: see Vol. XIII. p. 455.]

⁵ [For the sketches (in the National Gallery, Nos. 97, 98), see Vol. XIII. p. 202.]

86. Dawn after the Wreck.

[f.pl.439,r]

438

87. The Lake of Zug.

[f.p.439,v]

438



Drawn by J.M.W. Turner

Engraved by J. Baskin

Engrossed by T. Clayton,
Allen & Co. Bc.

86. Dawn after the Wreck.



Drawn by J.M.W. Turner.

Etched by J. Puskas.

Engraved by T. Lupton.

Allen & Co. So.

87. The Lake of Zug.

the greatest works of Giorgione yet glowing¹ like a scarlet cloud, on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi.* And though that scarlet cloud (sanguigna e fiammeggiante, per cui le pitture cominciarono con dolce violenza a rapire il cuore delle genti²) may, indeed, melt away into paleness of night, and Venice herself waste from her islands as a wreath of wind-driven foam fades from their weedy beach;—that which she won of faithful light and truth shall never pass away. Deiphobe

gives name to Switzerland; and the orb itself breaks first through the darkness on the very point of the pass to the high lake of Egeri, where the liberties of the cantons were won by the battle-charge of Morgarten. (Plate 87.³)

* I have engraved, at the beginning of this chapter, one of the fragments of these frescoes, preserved, all imperfectly indeed, yet with some feeling of their nobleness, by Zanetti,⁴ whose words respecting them I have quoted in the text. The one I saw was the first figure given in his book; the one engraven in my Plate, the third, had wholly perished; but even this record of it by Zanetti is precious. What imperfections of form exist in it, too visibly, are certainly less Giorgione's than the translator's; nevertheless, for these very faults, as well as for its beauty, I have chosen it, as the best type I could give of the strength of Venetian art; which was derived, be it remembered always, from the acceptance of natural truth, by men who loved beauty too well to think she was to be won by falsehood.

The words of Zanetti himself respecting Giorgione's figure of Diligence are of great value, as they mark the first article of Venetian faith: "Giorgione per tale o per altra che si fosse, contrassegnolla con quella spezie di mannaja, che tiene in mano; per altro tanto ci cercava le sole bellezze della natura, che poco pensando al costume, ritrasse qui una di quelle donne Friulane, che vengono per servire in Venezia; non alterandone nemmeno l' abito, e facendola alquanto attempata, quale forse ei la vedea;

¹ [In 1845 and again in 1850–1851: see *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 212 and n.).]

² [The words are quoted from p. iv. of Zanetti's book: "Ella è pure la dura condizione il non poter far vedere su queste carte quella tinta sanguigna e fiammeggiante, che dà tanto sapore alle opere di questo pittore eccellente, primo inventore fra' nostri di quell' egregio stile, per cui . . . gente."]

³ [This Plate also was first introduced in the edition of 1888.]

⁴ [*Varie Pitture a Fresco de' Principali Maestri Veneziani Ora la prima volta con le stampe pubblicate*, by Anton. Maria Zanetti (Venice, 1760). The first Plate in the book is the figure of a man, seated. The first four are by Giorgione; three are by Titian; seven by Tintoret; five by Zelotti; five by Veronese. The engravings are followed by "Notizie intorno alla presente raccolta." The passage quoted by Ruskin in his footnote is at pp. vi.–vii. The first three frescoes by Giorgione were on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi. The fourth ("Diligence")—the standing figure of a stalwart woman with a halberd on the watch—was painted at the entrance of Palazzo Grimani-Calergi (now Vendramin). The frescoes on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi were executed in 1507–1508, and are described by Vasari (vol. ii. p. 399, Bohn's translation).]

of the sea,—the Sun God measures her immortality to her by its sand. Flushed, above the Avernus of the Adrian lake, her spirit is still seen holding the golden bough; from the lips of the Sea Sibyl men shall learn for ages yet to come what is most noble and most fair; and, far away, as the whisper in the coils of the shell, withdrawn through the deep hearts of nations, shall sound for ever the enchanted voice of Venice.

senza voler sapere che per rappresentare le Virtù, si suole da' pittori belle è fresche giovani immaginare."

Compare this with what I have said of Titian's Magdalen. I ought in that place¹ to have dwelt upon the firm endurance of all terribleness which is marked in Titian's "Notomie" and in Veronese's "Marsyas."² In order to understand the Venetian mind entirely, the student should place a plate from that series of the *Notomie* always beside the best engraving he can obtain of Titian's "Flora."³

My impression is that the ground of the flesh in these Giorgione frescoes had been pure vermilion; little else was left in the figure I saw. Therefore, not knowing what power the painter intended to personify by the figure at the commencement of this chapter, I have called her, from her glowing colour, Hesperid *Æglé*.

¹ [Above, p. 296; and *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 195 and *n.*.)]

² [This is a folio volume of seventeen anatomical figures (skeletons in various attitudes) drawn by Titian, and engraved and edited by Dominico Bonavera, by whom (on the title-page) the book is dedicated—under the title *Notomie di Titiano*—to Signor Francesco Ghisilieri, Senator of Bologna. The volume is believed to have been published at Venice, 1680. It is not clear to what work of Veronese Ruskin refers as "Marsyas"; perhaps, to his drawing of Satyrs flayed by nymphs in the Dresden collection (see the reproduction of it at p. 38 of F. H. Meissner's *Veronese*, 1897).]

³ [In the Uffizi at Florence.]

CHAPTER XII

PEACE

§ 1. LOOKING back over what I have written, I find that I have only now the power of ending this work,—it being time that it should end, but not of “concluding” it; for it has led me into fields of infinite inquiry, where it is only possible to break off with such imperfect result as may, at any given moment, have been attained.

Full of far deeper reverence for Turner’s art than I felt when this task of his defence was undertaken (which may, perhaps, be evidenced by my having associated no other names with his—but of the dead—in my speaking of him throughout this volume*), I am more in doubt respecting the real use to mankind of that, or any other transcendent art; incomprehensible as it must always be to the mass of men. Full of far deeper love for what I remember of Turner himself, as I become better capable of understanding it, I find myself more and more helpless to explain his errors and his sins.

§ 2. His errors, I might say, simply. Perhaps, some day, people will again begin to remember the force of the old Greek word for sin; and to learn that all sin is in essence—“Missing the mark”; losing sight or consciousness*\mjcont

* It is proper, however, for the reader to know, that the title which I myself originally intended for this book was “*Turner and the Ancients*”;¹ nor did I purpose to refer in it to any other modern painters than Turner. The title was changed; and the notes on other living painters inserted in the first volume, in deference to the advice of friends, probably wise; for unless the change had been made, the book might never have been read at all. But, as far as I am concerned, I regretted the change then, and regret it still.

¹ [See on this subject, Vol. III. pp. xxxi., 668.]



J. Hunslett.

G. Cook.

Monte Rosa . Sunset.

of heaven; and that this loss may be various in its guilt; it cannot be judged by us. It is this of which the words are spoken so sternly, "Judge not"; which words people always quote, I observe, when they are called upon to "do judgment and justice."¹ For it is truly a pleasant thing to condemn men for their wanderings; but it is a bitter thing to acknowledge a truth, or to take any bold share in working out an equity. So that the habitual modern practical application of the precept "Judge not," is to avoid the trouble of pronouncing verdict by taking, of any matter, the pleasantest malicious view which first comes to hand, and to obtain licence for our own convenient iniquities, by being indulgent to those of others.

These two methods of obedience being just the two which are most directly opposite to the law of mercy and truth.

§ 3. "Bind them about thy neck."² I said, but now, that of an evil tree men never gathered good fruit.³ And the lesson we have finally to learn from Turner's life is broadly this, that all the power of it came of its mercy and sincerity; all the failure of it, from its want of faith. It has been asked of me, by several of his friends, that I should endeavour to do some justice to his character, mistaken wholly by the world. If my life is spared, I will.⁴ But that character is still, in many respects, inexplicable to me; the materials within my reach are imperfect; and my experience in the world not yet large enough to enable me to use them justly. His life is to be written by a biographer, who will, I believe, spare no pains in collecting the few scattered records which exist of a career so uneventful

¹ [Matthew vii. 1; Ezekiel xviii. 5.]

² [Proverbs iii. 3.]

³ [See above, p. 287.]

⁴ [Ruskin, however, never wrote Turner's Life, though he collected much material: see Vol. XIII. p. lvi. His references to Turner's life and character are scattered through his works; for a complete collation of them, see General Index. Some of the principal passages are: *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 102 *seq.* (Vol. XII. pp. 129 *seq.*); *Pre-Raphaelitism*, §§ 30 *seq.* (*ibid.*, pp. 365 *seq.*); *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, Vol. XIII. pp. 475 *seq.*; and *Dilecta, passim*. For other references to Thornbury's book, then in preparation, see *ibid.*, pp. 554, 555.]

and secluded. I will not anticipate the conclusions of this writer; but if they appear to me just, will endeavour afterwards, so far as may be in my power, to confirm and illustrate them; and, if unjust, to show in what degree.

§ 4. Which, lest death or illness should forbid me, this only I declare now of what I know respecting Turner's character. Much of his mind and heart I do not know;—perhaps never shall know. But this much I do: and if there is anything in the previous course of this work to warrant trust in me of any kind, let me be trusted when I tell you that Turner had a heart as intensely kind, and as nobly true, as ever God gave to one of His creatures.¹ I offer, as yet, no evidence in this matter. When I *do* give it, it shall be sifted and clear. Only this one fact I now record joyfully and solemnly, that, having known Turner for ten years, and that during the period of his life when the brightest qualities of his mind were, in many respects, diminished, and when he was suffering most from the evil-speaking of the world, I never heard him say one depreciating word of living man, or man's work;² I never saw him look an unkind or blameful look; I never knew him let pass, without some sorrowful remonstrance, or endeavour at mitigation, a blameful word spoken by another.

Of no man but Turner, whom I have ever known, could I say this. And of this kindness and truth* came, I repeat,

* It may, perhaps, be necessary to explain one or two singular points of Turner's character, not in defence of this statement, but to show its meaning. In speaking of his truth, I use the word in a double sense;—truth to himself, and to others.

Truth to himself, that is to say, the resolution to do his duty by his

¹ [On a loose sheet of MS. is a note on Turner's character perhaps intended for this place:—

“His exquisite tenderness in sight and touch are merely the exponents of his kindness of heart. They are so in all men. The body and mind are always at unity in this; mechanical fineness of execution you may get from a base or hard mind; but tenderness never.”]

² [Among Ruskin's MS. jottings about Turner is the following anecdote contributed by the Rev. W. Kingsley: “On one occasion I made a severe remark on a sunrise by Danby. Turner caught hold of my arm and said, ‘Don't say that; you don't know how such things hurt. You only look at the truth of the landscape; Mr. Danby is a poetical painter.’”]

all his highest power. And all his failure and error, deep and strange, came of his faithlessness.

Faithlessness, or despair, the despair which has been shown already (Vol. III., Chap. XVI. § 31¹) to be characteristic of this present century, and most sorrowfully manifested in its greatest men; but existing in an infinitely

art, and carry all work out as well as it could be done. Other painters, for the most part, modify their work by some reference to public taste, or measure out a certain quantity of it for a certain price, or alter facts to show their power. Turner never did any of these things. The thing the public asked of him he would do, but whatever it was, only as *he* thought it ought to be done. People did not buy his large pictures; he, with avowed discontent, painted small ones; but instead of taking advantage of the smaller size to give, proportionally, less labour, he instantly changed his execution so as to be able to put nearly as much work into his small drawings as into his large ones, though he gave them for half the price. But his aim was always to make the drawing as good as he could, or as the subject deserved, irrespective of price. If he disliked his theme, he painted it slightly, utterly disdainful of the purchaser's complaint. "The purchaser must take his chance." If he liked his theme, he would give three hundred guineas' worth of work for a hundred, and ask no thanks. It is true, exceptionally, that he altered the engravings from his designs, so as to meet the popular taste, but this was because he knew the public could not be got otherwise to look at his art at all. His own drawings the entire body of the nation repudiated and despised: "the engravers could make something of them," they said. Turner scornfully took them at their word. If that is what you like, take it. I will not alter my own noble work one jot for you, but these things you shall have to your minds;—try to use them and get beyond them. Sometimes, when an engraver came with a plate to be touched, he would take a piece of white chalk in his right hand and of black in his left: "Which will you have it done with?" The engraver chose black or white as he thought his plate weak or heavy. Turner threw the other piece of chalk away, and would reconstruct the plate, with the added lights or darks, in ten minutes. Nevertheless, even this concession to false principle, so far as it had influence, was injurious to him: he had better not have scorned the engravings, but either done nothing with them, or done his best. His best, in a certain way, he did, never sparing pains, if he thought the plate worth it; some of his touched proofs are elaborate drawings.

Of his earnestness in his main work, enough, I should think, has been already related in this book; but the following anecdote, which I repeat here from my notes on the Turner Gallery,² that there may be less chance of its being lost, gives, in a few words, and those his own, the spirit of his labour, as it possessed him throughout his life. The anecdote was

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 336.]

² [See Vol. XIII. pp. 161–162.]

more fatal form in the lower and general mind, reacting upon those who ought to be its teachers.

§ 5. The form which the infidelity of England, especially, has taken, is one hitherto unheard of in human history. No nation ever before declared boldly, by print and word of mouth, that its religion was good for show, but

communicated to me in a letter by Mr. Kingsley, late of Sidney College, Cambridge; whose words I give:—"I had taken my mother and a cousin to see Turner's pictures; and, as my mother knows nothing about art, I was taking her down the gallery to look at the large Richmond Park, but as we were passing the Snow-storm, she stopped before it, and I could hardly get her to look at any other picture; and she told me a great deal more about it than I had any notion of, though I have seen many sea-storms. She had been in such a scene on the coast of Holland during the war. When, some time afterwards, I thanked Turner for his permission for her to see the pictures, I told him that he would not guess which had caught my mother's fancy, and then named the picture; and he then said, 'I did not paint it to be understood, but I wished to show what such a scene was like: I got the sailors to lash me to the mast to observe it; I was lashed for four hours, and I did not expect to escape, but I felt bound to record it if I did. But no one had any business to like the picture.' 'But,' said I, 'my mother once went through just such a scene, and it brought it all back to her.' 'Is your mother a painter?' 'No.' 'Then she ought to have been thinking of something else.' These were nearly his words; I observed at the time, he used 'record' and 'painting,' as the title 'author' had struck me before."

He was true to others. No accusation has ever been brought forward against Turner by his most envious enemies, of his breaking a promise, or failing in an undertaken trust. His sense of justice was strangely acute; it was like his sense of balance in colour, and shown continually in little crotchets of arrangement of price, or other advantages, among the buyers of his pictures. For instance, one of my friends had long desired to possess a picture which Turner would not sell. It had been painted with a companion; which was sold, but this reserved. After a considerable number of years had passed, Turner consented to part with it. The price of canvases of its size having, in the meantime, doubled, question arose as to what was then to be its price. "Well," said Turner, "Mr.—had the companion for so much. You must be on the same footing." This was in no desire to do my friend a favour; but in mere instinct of equity. Had the prices of his pictures fallen instead of risen in the meantime, Turner would have said, "Mr.—paid so much; and so must you."¹

But the best proof to which I can refer of this character of his mind

¹ [A more precise version of this incident (or of another like it) supplies a somewhat different, but a touching motive: "Mr. Daniell asked Turner to paint a picture for him, and named 200 guineas as the price which he could afford to give. The commission was accepted and the work was admirably executed, but in

“would not work.” Over and over again it has happened that nations have denied their gods, but they denied them bravely. The Greeks in their decline jested at their religion, and frittered it away in flatteries and fine arts; the French refused theirs fiercely, tore down their altars and brake their

is in the wonderful series of diagrams executed by him for his lectures on perspective at the Royal Academy.¹ I had heard it said that these lectures were inefficient. Barely intelligible in expression they might be, but the zealous care with which Turner endeavoured to do his duty, is proved by a series of large drawings, exquisitely tinted, and often completely coloured, all by his own hand, of the most difficult perspective subjects; illustrating not only directions of line, but effects of light, with a care and completion which would put the work of any ordinary teacher to utter shame. In teaching generally, he would neither waste his time nor spare it; he would look over a student's drawing, at the Academy,—point to a defective part, make a scratch on the paper at the side, saying nothing; if the student saw what was wanted, and did it, Turner was delighted, and would go on with him, giving hint after hint; but if the student could not follow, Turner left him. Such experience as I have had in teaching, leads me more and more to perceive that he was right. Explanations are wasted time. A man who can see, understands a touch; a man who cannot, misunderstands an oration.

One of the points in Turner which increased the general falseness of impression respecting him was a curious dislike he had to *appear* kind. Drawing, with one of his best friends,² at the bridge of St. Martin's, the friend got into great difficulty over a coloured sketch. Turner looked over him a little while, then said, in a grumbling way—“I haven't got any paper I like; let me try yours.” Receiving a block book, he disappeared for an hour and a half. Returning, he threw the book down, with a growl, saying—“I can't make anything of your paper.” There were three sketches on it, in three distinct states of progress, showing the process of colouring from beginning to end, and clearing up every difficulty which his friend had got into. When he gave advice, it was also apt to

the meantime Mr. Daniell had died in the East. For a long time Turner refused all offers for the picture, although they mounted far beyond even twice the sum for which it had been bespoken. No, he said; that was Daniell's picture. I won't part with it. At last, however, he yielded to the urgency of a friend who already possessed a picture of the same size by him; but Turner insisted that the price should be only 200 guineas, because ‘that was Daniell's price’ ” (*Quarterly Review*, April 1862, vol. iii. p. 480.)

¹ [On this subject, see Vol. XIII. pp. 307–308 and 307 *n.*]

² [Munro, of Novar, with whom Turner made a foreign tour in 1836. Munro (who, like Ruskin, had been appointed one of Turner's executors) gave Ruskin, in writing, various particulars of his intercourse with the painter, and of this tour in particular. They went by Dijon to Geneva, Sallenches, Chamouni, and Courmayeur, and thence down the Val d' Aosta to Ivrea and Turin.]

carven images. The question about God with both these nations was still, even in their decline, fairly put, though falsely answered.¹ “Either there is or is not a Supreme Ruler; we consider of it, declare there is not, and proceed accordingly.” But we English have put the matter in an

come in the form of a keen question, or a quotation of some one else’s opinion, rarely a statement of his own. To the same person producing a sketch, which had no special character: “What are you in *search* of?” Note this expression. Turner knew that passionate seeking only leads to passionate finding. Sometimes, however, the advice would come with a startling distinctness. A church spire having been left out in a sketch of a town—“Why did you not put that in?” “I hadn’t time.” “Then you should take a subject more suited to your capacity.”

Many people would have gone away considering this an insult, whereas it was only a sudden flash from Turner’s earnest requirement of wholeness or perfectness of conception. “Whatever you do, large or small, do it wholly; take a slight subject if you will, but don’t leave things out.” But the principal reason for Turner’s having got the reputation of always refusing advice was, that artists came to him in a state of mind in which he knew they could not receive it. Virtually, the entire conviction of the artists of his time respecting him was, that he had got a secret, which he could tell if he liked, that would make them all Turners. They came to him with this general formula of request clearly in their hearts, if not definitely on their lips: “You know, Mr. Turner, we are all of us quite as clever as you are, and could do all that very well, and we should really like to do a little of it occasionally, only we haven’t quite your trick; there’s something in it, of course, which you only found out by accident, and it is very ill-natured and unkind of you not to tell us how the thing is done;—what do you rub your colours over with, and where ought we to put in the black patches?” This was the practical meaning of the artistical questioning of his day, to which Turner very resolutely made no answer. On the contrary, he took great care that any tricks of execution he actually did use should not be known.

His *practical* answer to their questioning being as follows:—“You are indeed, many of you, as clever as I am; but this, which you think a secret, is only the result of sincerity and toil. If you have not sense enough to see this without asking me, you have not sense enough to believe me, if I tell you. True, I know some odd methods of colouring. I have found them out for myself, and they suit me. They would not suit you. They would do you no real good; and it would do me much harm to have you mimicking my ways of work, without knowledge of their meaning. If you want methods fit for you, find them out for yourselves. If you cannot discover them, neither could you use them.”

¹ [Compare the author’s introduction to *Crown of Wild Olive*.]

entirely new light: "There *is* a Supreme Ruler, no question of it, only He cannot rule. His orders won't work. He will be quite satisfied with euphonious and respectful repetition of them. Execution would be too dangerous under existing circumstances, which He certainly never contemplated."

I had no conception of the absolute darkness which has covered the national mind in this respect, until I began to come into collision with persons engaged in the study of economical and political questions. The entire naïveté and undisturbed imbecility with which I found them declare that the laws of the Devil were the only practicable ones, and that the laws of God were merely a form of poetical language, passed all that I had ever before heard or read of mortal infidelity. I knew the fool had often said in his heart, there was *no* God;¹ but to hear him say clearly out with his lips, "There is a foolish God," was something which my art studies had not prepared me for. The French had indeed, for a considerable time, hinted much of the meaning in the delicate and compassionate blasphemy of their phrase "*le bon Dieu*," but had never ventured to put it into more precise terms.

§ 6. Now this form of unbelief in God is connected with, and necessarily productive of, a precisely equal unbelief in man.

Co-relative with the assertion, "There is a foolish God," is the assertion, "There is a brutish man." "As no laws but those of the Devil are practicable in the world, so no impulses but those of the brute" (says the modern political economist) "are appealable to in the world. Faith, generosity, honesty, zeal, and self-sacrifice are poetical phrases. None of these things can, in reality, be counted upon; there is no truth in man which can be used as a moving or productive power. All motive force in him is essentially brutish, covetous, or contentious. His power is only power

¹ [Psalms xiv. 1, often quoted by Ruskin: see, for instance, Vol. X. pp. 67, 379; Vol. XI. p. 120.]

of prey: otherwise than the spider, he cannot design; otherwise than the tiger, he cannot feed.” This is the modern interpretation of that embarrassing article of the Creed “the communion of saints.”

§ 7. It has always seemed very strange to me, not indeed that this creed should have been adopted, it being the entirely necessary consequence of the previous fundamental article;—but that no one should ever seem to have any misgivings about it;—that, practically, no one had *seen* how strong work *was* done by man; how either for hire, or for hatred, it never had been done; and that no amount of pay had ever made a good soldier, a good teacher, a good artist, or a good workman.¹ You pay your soldiers and sailors so many pence a day, at which rated sum, one will do good fighting for you; another, bad fighting. Pay as you will, the entire goodness of the fighting depends, always, on its being done for nothing; or rather, less than nothing, in the expectation of no pay but death.² Examine the work of your spiritual teachers, and you will find the statistical law respecting them is, “The less pay, the better work.” Examine also your writers and artists: for ten pounds you shall have a *Paradise Lost*,³ and for a plate of figs, a Dürer drawing;⁴ but for a million of money sterling, neither. Examine your men of science: paid by starvation, Kepler⁵ will discover the laws of the orbs of heaven for you;—and,

¹ [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 98 (Vol. XVI. p. 83).]

² [Compare *Unto this Last*, §§ 17, 21.]

³ [“Fair day’s-wages for fair day’s work! exclaims a sarcastic man. Alas, in what corner of this Planet, since Adam first awoke on it, was that ever realised? The day’s-wages of John Milton’s day’s-work, named *Paradise Lost* and *Milton’s Works*, were Ten Pounds paid by instalments, and a rather close escape from death on the gallows” (Carlyle: *Past and Present*, book i. ch. iii.).]

⁴ [Compare *Queen of the Air*, § 135, where Ruskin says of Dürer that he “would sometimes estimate a piece of his unconquerable work at only the worth of a plate of fruit, or a flask of wine—would have taken even one ‘fig for it,’ kindly offered.” The reference is to Dürer’s diary (mentioned by Ruskin in Vol. XII. p. 247 *n.*), of his journey in the Netherlands, in which the artist records many gifts of his works in exchange for kindness or hospitality shown to him; sometimes for a dinner or a present of wine.]

⁵ [For the instance of Kepler, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 4, where Ruskin quotes from Carlyle’s *Friedrich*.]

driven out to die in the street, Swammerdam¹ shall discover the laws of life for you:—such hard terms do they make with you, these brutish men, who can only be had for hire.

§ 8. Neither is good work ever done for hatred, any more than hire;—but for love only. For love of their country, or their leader, or their duty, men fight steadily; but for massacre and plunder, feebly. Your signal, “England expects every man to do his duty,” they will answer; your signal of Black flag and death’s-head, they will not answer. And verily they will answer it no more in commerce than in battle. The cross-bones will not make a good shop-sign, you will find ultimately, any more than a good battle-standard. Not the cross-bones, but the cross.

§ 9. Now the practical result of this infidelity in man is the utter ignorance of all the ways of getting his right work out of him. From a given quantity of human power and intellect, to produce the least possible result, is a problem solved, nearly with mathematical precision, by the present methods of the nation’s economical procedure. The power and intellect are enormous. With the best soldiers, at present existing, we survive in battle, and but survive, because, by help of Providence, a man whom we have kept all his life in command of a company forces his way at the age of seventy so far up as to obtain permission to save us, and die, unthanked.² With the shrewdest thinkers in the world, we have not yet succeeded in arriving at any national conviction respecting the uses of life. And with the best artistical material in the world, we spend millions of money in raising a building for our Houses of Talk,³ of the delightfulness and utility of which (perhaps roughly classing the Talk and its tabernacle together,) posterity will,

¹ [See Michelet’s *L’Insecte*, book ii. ch. i., “Swammerdam”—a book already referred to above, pp. 232, 333 *n.*]

² [Ruskin writes here in the margin of his copy “General Havelock.”]

³ [For Ruskin’s dislike of the Houses of Parliament, see Vol. IV. p. 307 *n.*; Vol. VIII. p. 147 *n.*; and Vol. XII. p. 478. In the first draft of this passage, he wrote here:—

“ . . . a building for our Houses of Talk, which will so long as it stands be the most perfect type of a vain and dull foolishness existing in architecture.”]

I believe, form no very grateful estimate;—while for sheer want of bread, we brought the question to the balance of a hair, whether the most earnest of our young painters should give up his art altogether, and go to Australia,—or fight his way through all neglect and obloquy to the painting of the Christ in the Temple.¹

§ 10. The marketing was indeed done in this case, as in all others, on the usual terms. For the millions of money, we got a mouldering toy: for the starvation, five years' work of the prime of a noble life. Yet neither that picture, great as it is, nor any other of Hunt's, are the best he could have done. They are the least he could have done. By no expedient could we have repressed him more than he has been repressed; by no abnegation received from him less than, we have received.

My dear friend and teacher, Lowell, right as he is in almost everything, is for once wrong in these lines, though with a noble wrongness:—

“Disappointment's dry and bitter root,
Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool
Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk
To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind.”²

They are *not* so; love and trust are the only mother-milk of any man's soul. So far as he is hated and mistrusted, his powers are destroyed. Do not think that with impunity you can follow the eyeless fool, and shout with

¹ [It was in 1851 that Holman Hunt, almost at the end of his resources, “announced to Millais my intention to give up art altogether, and to go for a twelve-month to a good yeoman uncle for instruction as a farmer, and at the end of the time to emigrate to Canada or to the Antipodes to take my place as a settler.” Millais made him a loan, and he was thus enabled to paint “The Light of the World.” Then came his journey to the East, and at Jerusalem Hunt commenced his “Finding of the Saviour in the Temple.” “For four years after my return to England,” he says, “I had to keep it, often with its face to the wall, while I was working at potboilers, to get the means to advance it at all” (“The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: a Fight for Art,” *Contemporary Review*, May and June 1886, pp. 748, 831). The picture was completed and exhibited in the year in which Ruskin was here writing (1860).]

² [From the poem entitled “Columbus.” For another expression of Ruskin's indebtedness to Lowell, see above, p. 372 *n.*]

the shouting charlatan; and that the men you thrust aside with gibe and blow, are thus sneered and crushed into the best service they can do you. I have told you they *will* not serve you for pay. They *cannot* serve you for scorn. Even from Balaam, money-lover though he be, no useful prophecy is to be had for silver or gold.¹ From Elisha, saviour of life though he be, no saving of life—even of children's, who "know no better,"—is to be got by the cry, Go up, thou bald-head. No man can serve you either for purse or curse; neither kind of pay will answer. No *pay* is, indeed, receivable by any true man; but *power* is receivable by him, in the love and faith you give him. So far only as you give him these can he serve you; that is the meaning of the question which his Master asks always, "Believest thou that I am able?" And from every one of his servants—to the end of time—if you give them the Capernaum measure of faith, you shall have from them Capernaum measure of works, and no more.

Do you think that I am irreverently comparing great and small things? The system of the world is entirely one; small things and great are alike part of one mighty whole. As the flower is gnawed by frost, so every human heart is gnawed by faithlessness. And as surely,—as irrevocably,—as the fruit-bud falls before the east wind, so fails the power of the kindest human heart, if you meet it with poison.²

§ 11. Now the condition of mind in which Turner did all his great work was simply this: "What I do must be done rightly; but I know also that no man now living in Europe cares to understand it; and the better I do it, the less he will see the meaning of it." There never was yet, so far as I can hear or read, isolation of a great spirit so utterly desolate. Columbus had succeeded in making other

¹ [On "the avarice of Balaam" (who was "hired," Deuteronomy xxiii. 4), see Vol. IV. p. 214. For the other Biblical references in § 10, see 2 Kings ii. 23; Matthew ix. 28; viii. 5, 10, 13.]

² [Compare *A Joy for Ever*, § 23 (Vol. XVI. p. 31).]

hearts share his hope, before he was put to hardest trial; and knew that, by help of Heaven, he could finally show that he was right. Kepler and Galileo could demonstrate their conclusions up to a certain point; so far as they felt they were right, they were sure that after death their work would be acknowledged. But Turner could demonstrate nothing of what he had done;—saw no security that after death he would be understood more than he had been in life. Only another Turner could apprehend Turner. Such praise as he received was poor and superficial: he regarded it far less than censure. My own admiration of him was wild in enthusiasm, but it gave him no ray of pleasure; he could not make me at that time understand his main meanings;¹ he loved me, but cared nothing for what I said, and was always trying to hinder me from writing, because it gave pain to his fellow-artists. To the praise of other persons he gave not even the acknowledgment of this sad affection; it passed by him as murmur of the wind: and most justly, for not one of his own special powers was ever perceived by the world. I have said in another place that all great modern artists will own their obligation to him as a guide.² They will; but they are in error in this gratitude, as I was, when I quoted it as a sign of their respect. Close analysis of the portions of modern art founded on Turner has since shown me that in every case his imitators misunderstood him:—that they caught merely at superficial brilliancies, and never saw the real character of his mind or of his work.³

¹ [See above, p. 435 *n.*; and with the following passage here, compare Turner's tacit disapproval of the publication of Ruskin's answer to *Blackwood* in his defence, Vol. I. p. xviii.]

² [See *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 99 (Vol. XII. p. 127); and for later statements to the same effect, *Queen of the Air*, § 177, and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 20.]

³ [In the MS. the following footnote is here appended:—

“Turner can only be comprehended in any way by persons who have drawn for years in pure light and shade without colour; and with the pencil or pen point—not the brush. Without this discipline—prolonged and stern—no touch of Turner's can ever be perceived in its true power.”

On such discipline, see Vol. XIII. pp. 239 *seq.*]

And at this day, while I write, the catalogue allowed to be sold at the gates of the National Gallery, for the instruction of the common people, describes Callcott and Claude as the greater artists.¹

§ 12. To censure, on the other hand, Turner was acutely sensitive, owing to his own natural kindness; he felt it, for himself, or for others, not as criticism, but as cruelty. He knew that however little his higher power could be seen, he had at least done as much as ought to have saved him from wanton insult; and the attacks upon him in his later years were to him not merely contemptible in their ignorance, but amazing in their ingratitude. "A man may be weak in his age," he said to me once, at the time when he felt he was dying; "but you should not tell him so."²

§ 13. What Turner might have done for us, had he received help and love, instead of disdain, I can hardly trust myself to imagine. Increasing calmly in power and loveliness, his work would have formed one mighty series of poems, each great as that which I have interpreted,—the

¹ [This is the unofficial catalogue referred to in Vol. XIII. p. 102 *n*. In the MS. of the chapter Ruskin says, "I bought it at the door of the Gallery on the day I began this chapter, in order to see how far general public instruction on the subject of Turner's art had advanced," and he gives the extract in question:—

"479. The Sun rising in a Mist, fishing-boats arriving and unloading, fishermen cleaning and selling fish; guardship in the distance; tide low
Turner.

"This is not a favourable specimen of Turner's talent, taste, or genius. The smoky atmosphere over sky and water is heavy and dull with a dirty brown general tone unsuited to the silvery haze of morning: it is neither still nor fresh, but heavy. The ships and boats are perhaps the best of the picture, but even they are deficient in cool reflections, and partake of the rusty, general tone. The group of fishermen and women is tolerably interesting, but the flat fish lying about are like *large dabs* or spots of white without arrangement or meaning. How differently did Callcott paint these scenes of Morning mist on coast or fisherman's hut! How superior are some of Claude's quiet, aerial, evanescent representations of early morn!"

For Ruskin's references to Callcott, see, amongst other passages in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. pp. 191, 266, 324, 598.]

² [This was probably said in reference to the ridicule cast upon his picture (1842) of Napoleon ("The Exile and the Rock Limpet": see Vol. XIII. p. 161 and *n*.)]

Hesperides; but becoming brighter and kinder as he advanced to happy age. Soft as Correggio's, solemn as Titian's, the enchanted colour would have glowed, imperishable and pure; and the subtle thoughts risen into loftiest teaching, helpful for centuries to come.

What we have asked from him, instead of this, and what received, we know. But few of us yet know how true an image those darkening wrecks of radiance give to the shadow which gained sway at last over his once pure and noble soul.

§ 14. Not unresisted, nor touching the heart's core, nor any of the old kindness and truth: yet festering work of the worm—inexplicable and terrible, such as England, by her goodly gardening, leaves to infect her earth-flowers.

So far as in it lay, this century has caused every one of its great men, whose hearts were kindest, and whose spirits most perceptive of the work of God, to die without hope:—Scott, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Turner. Great England, of the Iron-heart now, not of the Lion-heart; for these souls of her children an account may perhaps be one day required of her.¹

§ 15. She has not yet read often enough that old story of the Samaritan's mercy.² He whom he saved was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho—to the accursed city³ (so the old Church used to understand it). He should not have left Jerusalem; it was his own fault that he went out into the desert, and fell among the thieves, and was left for dead. Every one of these English children, in their day, took the desert by-path as he did, and fell among fiends—took to making bread out of stones at their bidding, and then died, torn and famished; careful England, in her pure, priestly dress, passing by on the other side. So far as

¹ [See Luke xi. 49, 50: "I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets . . . may be required of this generation."]

² [Luke x. 30–37.]

³ [See Joshua vi. 26.]

we are concerned, that is the account *we* have to give of them.*

§ 16. So far as *they* are concerned, I do not fear for them;—there being one Priest Who never passes by. The longer I live, the more clearly I see how all souls are in His hand—the mean and the great. Fallen on the earth in their baseness, or fading as the mist of morning in their goodness;—still in the hand of the potter as the clay, and in the temple of their master as the cloud. It was not the mere bodily death that He conquered—that death had no sting. It was this spiritual death which He conquered, so that at last it should be swallowed up—mark the word—not in life; but in victory. As the dead body shall be raised to life, so also the defeated soul to victory, if only it has been fighting on its Master's side, has made no covenant with death; nor itself bowed its forehead for his seal. Blind from the prison-house, maimed from the battle, or mad from the tombs, their souls shall surely yet sit, astonished, at His feet Who giveth peace.¹

§ 17. Who *giveth* peace? Many a peace we have made and named for ourselves, but the falsest is in that marvellous thought that we, of all generations of the earth, only know the right; and that to us at last,—to us alone,—all the scheme of God, about the salvation of men, has been shown. “This is the light in which *we* are walking. Those

* It is strange that the last words Turner ever attached to a picture should have been these:—

“The priest held the poisoned cup.”

Compare the words of 1798 with these of 1850.²

¹ [For the Biblical references in § 16, see Hebrews vii. (Jesus as Priest); Jeremiah xviii. 6 (“as the clay is in the potter's hand”) and Romans ix. 21; 1 Corinthians xv. 55, 54; John xiv. 27.]

² [The reference is to “The Departure of the (Trojan) Fleet,” exhibited in 1850, with these lines in the catalogue:—

“The Orient moon shone on the departed fleet,
Nemesis invoked, the priest held the poisoned cup.”

—*MS. Fallacies of Hope.*

The picture (No. 554 in the National Gallery Collection) has been removed to Manchester. For “the words of 1798,” see above, p. 390.]

vain Greeks are gone down to their Persephone for ever—Egypt and Assyria, Elam and her multitude,—uncircumcised, their graves are round about them—Pathros and careless Ethiopia—filled with the slain. Rome, with her thirsty sword, and poison wine, how did she walk in her darkness! We only have no idolatries—ours are the seeing eyes; in our pure hands at last, the seven-sealed book is laid; to our true tongues entrusted the preaching of a perfect gospel. Who shall come after us? Is it not Peace? The poor Jew, Zimri, who slew his master, there is no peace for him:¹ but, for us? tiara on head, may we not look out of the windows of heaven?”

§ 18. Another kind of peace I look for than this, though I hear it said of me that I am hopeless.

I am not hopeless, though my hope may be as Veronese's: the dark-veiled.²

Veiled, not because sorrowful, but because blind. I do not know what my England desires, or how long she will choose to do as she is doing now;—with her right hand casting away the souls of men, and with her left the gifts of God.

In the prayers which she dictates to her children, she tells them to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.³ Some day, perhaps, it may also occur to her as desirable to tell those children what she means by this. What is the world which they are to “fight with,” and how does it differ from the world which they are to “get on in”? The explanation seems to me the more needful, because I do not, in the book we profess to live by, find anything very distinct about fighting with the world. I find something about fighting with the rulers of its darkness, and something also about overcoming it; but it does not follow that this

¹ [2 Kings ix. 31. For the other Biblical references in § 17, see Acts ii. 9, etc. (Elamites); Isaiah xi. 11 (“the remnant” of the Lord’s people “from Pathros and from Elam”; Isaiah xx. 3, etc. (Ethiopia); Isaiah ix. 2 (“walked in darkness”); Revelation v. 1, 2; Genesis vii. 11.]

² [See above, p. 291.]

³ [See the Collect for the 18th Sunday after Trinity.]

conquest is to be by hostility, since evil may be overcome with good. But I find it written very distinctly that God loved the world, and that Christ is the light of it.¹

§ 19. What the much-used words, therefore, mean, I cannot tell.² But this, I believe, they *should* mean. That there is, indeed, one world which is full of care, and desire, and hatred: a world of war, of which Christ is not the light, which indeed is without light, and has never heard the great "Let there be."³ Which is, therefore, in truth, as yet no world; but chaos, on the face of which, moving, the Spirit of God yet causes men to hope that a world will come. The better one, they call it: perhaps they might, more wisely, call it the real one. Also, I hear them speak continually of going to it, rather than of its coming to them;⁴ which, again, is strange, for in that prayer which they had straight from the lips of the Light of the world, and which He apparently thought sufficient prayer for them, there is not anything about going to another world; only something of another government coming into this; or rather, not another, but the only government,—that government which will constitute it a world indeed. New heavens and new earth. Earth, no more without form and void, but sown with fruit of righteousness. Firmament, no more of passing cloud, but of cloud risen out of the crystal sea—cloud in which, as He was once received up, so He shall again come with power, and every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

Kindreds of the earth, or tribes of it!* the "earth⁵—begotten," the Chaos children—children of this present

* Compare Matt. xxiv. 30.

¹ [John iii. 16; viii. 12.]

² [For a later discussion of the meaning of the words "Light of the World," see *Eagle's Nest*, §§ 115, 116.]

³ [Genesis i. 3. For the other Biblical references in § 19, see Genesis i. 2; Matthew vi. 10; Revelation xxi. 1 and 2 Peter iii. 13; Genesis i. 2; James iii. 18; Revelation iv. 6; Mark xvi. 19 and Acts i. 9; Revelation i. 7; Jude 12.]

⁴ [Compare *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 40.]

⁵ [A description (*camaigenh*, or *ghenhs*) commonly applied by the Greeks to the generations of men.]

form and void; but ^{blind} ~~born~~ with rightness - ^{Cloud} ~~the~~ firmament of ~~the~~ ^{Cloud} ~~Crystal Sea~~, in which
as He was once received up out of their sight
- so He shall again come with power and great
glory - and Every eye shall see him. -

: They also which pierced him; and all kindreds of
the Earth shall wail because of him -

Kindreds of the Earth? ^{who are they?} ~~who are they?~~ ~~He will~~
~~be well to know~~ The Chaos children - children
of this present world - with its desolate seas
and its Medusa Clouds. ^{The} Dragon children - that
tare each other in their slime; Merciless children

~~they who~~ ~~who dealt~~ ~~as~~ ~~clouds~~ ~~without~~ ~~water~~ ~~a~~ ~~serpent~~ ~~and~~
They who dealt ^{as} clouds without water; ^{before}
by which ^{the} eight men were turned into stone

This Kingdom come; in an bid to ask this; ^{then}

But how shall it come: With power and great
glory; ^{it is written} and yet ^{it is also written} not with observation - ~~strange~~

Kingdom?

Yet ^{not} ~~that~~ ^{strangeness} is ^{shown} ~~shown~~ us with every Dawn.

when the time comes for us to wake out of the
World sleep - ^{why should it be otherwise than} or out of the dream of the night.

^{not} ~~Singing~~ of birds first - broken and low - ~~and~~
as the carment slowly grows a glimmering square.

And then the Gray - and then the Rose of Dawn
and last the light ^{which} going forth is to
the Ends of Heaven ^{with healing in his wings} ~~and there is nothing~~
~~hid from the heat thereof.~~

This Kingdom ^{it is not in our power to} ~~we cannot~~ ~~deed~~ being; but it
is, to receive. Nay, it is come already, in part;
but not received because men love ~~the darkness~~
~~and the~~ chaos best: and the Night, with her
daughters. That is still the only question for us

world, with its desolate seas and its Medusa clouds: the Dragon children, merciless: they who dealt as clouds without water: serpent clouds, by whose sight men were turned into stone;—the time must surely come for their wailing.

§ 20. “Thy kingdom come,” we are bid to ask then! But how shall it come? With power and great glory, it is written; and yet not with observation, it is also written.¹ Strange kingdom! Yet its strangeness is renewed to us with every dawn.

When the time comes for us to wake out of the world’s sleep, why should it be otherwise than out of the dreams of the night? Singing of birds, first, broken and low, as, not to dying eyes, but eyes that wake to life, “the casement slowly grows a glimmering square”;² and then the gray, and then the rose of dawn; and last the light, whose going forth is to the ends of heaven.

This kingdom it is not in our power to bring; but it is, to receive. Nay, it is come already, in part; but not received, because men love chaos best; and the Night, with her daughters. That is still the only question for us, as in the old Elias days, “If ye will receive it.” With pains it may be shut out still from many a dark place of cruelty; by sloth it may be still unseen for many a glorious hour. But the pain of shutting it out must grow greater and greater:—harder, every day, that struggle of man with man in the abyss, and shorter wages for the fiend’s work. But it is still at our choice; the simoom-dragon may still be served if we will, in the fiery desert, or else God walking in the garden, at cool of day. Coolness now, not of Hesperus over Atlas, stooped endurer of toil; but of Heosphorus³

¹ [Matthew xxiv. 30 and Luke xvii. 20. For the other Biblical references in § 20, see Psalms xix. 6; Matthew xi. 14; Genesis iii. § 8; Matthew iv. 8; Matthew xviii. 1–4; xix. 30; 1 Corinthians xv. 26; Job xvii. 14; Revelation ii. 28; Matthew xii. 50.]

² [Tennyson: *The Princess*, iv.]

³ [Not of the Evening Star over Atlas, sustaining the heavens on his shoulder, in the fiery desert (pt. ix. ch. x. § 4), but of the Morning Star over “the joy of the whole earth, Mount Zion.” For ‘Ewsforos, see *Iliad*, xxiii. 226.]

over Sion, the joy of the earth.* The choice is no vague nor doubtful one. High on the desert mountain, full desecrated, sits throned the tempter, with his old promise—the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. He still calls you to your labour, as Christ to your rest;—labour and sorrow, base desire, and cruel hope. So far as you desire to possess, rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command, instead of to bless; so far as your own prosperity seems to you to issue out of contest or rivalry, of any kind, with other men, or other nations; so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; and your desire is to be greatest, instead of least;—first, instead of last;—so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last, and least;—the last enemy that shall be destroyed—Death; and you shall have death's crown, with the worm coiled in it; and death's wages, with the worm feeding on them; kindred of the earth shall you yourself become; saying to the grave, "Thou art my father"; and to the worm, "Thou art my mother, and my sister."

I leave you to judge, and to choose, between this labour, and the bequeathed peace; these wages, and the gift of the Morning Star; this obedience, and the doing of the will which shall enable you to claim another kindred than of the earth, and to hear another voice than that of the grave, saying, "My brother, and sister, and mother."

* Ps. xlviii. 2.—This joy it is to receive and to give, because its officers (governors of its acts) are to be Peace, and its exactors (governors of its dealings), Righteousness (Is. lx. 17).

EPILOGUE

(1888)

THE republication of this book may seem to break faith with persons who have bought the old editions at advanced prices, trusting my announced resolution that no other should be issued during my lifetime.¹ Had I remained in active health, none could have been; for I should have employed the engravers otherwise (especially Mr. Allen himself); but I have permitted the re-issue of this early work, to be of what use it may, finding that my plans of better things in the same direction must be abandoned. For the rest, I never encourage the purchase, at advanced prices, of books which their authors wish to withdraw from circulation; and finally, I believe the early editions will never lose their value in the book-market, the original impressions of the plates by Mr. Armytage and Mr. Cousen being entirely beyond imitation by restored plates. Mr. Allen's advertisements are trustworthy as to the cost and pains which have been given to bring the steels up to their first standard, and the adequacy of the impressions obtained to answer the general purposes of the first engraving.² But no retouched plate is ever really worth the original one.

¹ [On this subject, see the Introduction to the first volume of *Modern Painters* (Vol. III. pp. xlvii., 1.), and the author's Preface to the edition of 1873 (*ibid.*, p. 54).]

² [Mr. Allen's circular, announcing "A New and Complete Edition of Mr. Ruskin's 'Modern Painters'" was issued in January 1888. With regard to the Plates it stated: "In five volumes, with all the 87 illustrations, besides three hitherto unpublished ('The Lake of Zug,' 'Dawn after the Wreck,' and 'Château de Blois'), etched by Mr. Ruskin and mezzotinted by the late Thomas Lupton, previously intended for the fifth volume. Three of the nine Plates that were destroyed have been carefully reproduced from early proofs of those originally etched by the author's own hand, and the others re-engraved by the best engravers. Of the remainder, all are in good state, and the results obtained by careful printing are such as to justify the publisher's expectations as to the success of the work from an artistic point of view; the larger margins of this edition also making the Plates more effective."]

Although, as I have said, the book would not have been reprinted if I had been able to write a better to the same effect, I am glad, as matters stand, that the chapters in which I first eagerly and passionately said what throughout life I have been trying more earnestly and resolutely to say, should be put within the reach of readers who care to refer to them.

For the divisions of religious tenet and school to which I attached mistaken importance in my youth, do not in the least affect the vital teaching and purpose of this book: the claim, namely, of the Personal relation of God to man as the source of all human, as distinguished from brutal, virtue and art. The assertion of this Personal character of God must be carefully and clearly distinguished by every reader who wishes to understand either *Modern Painters* or any of my more cautiously written subsequent books, from the statement of any Christian doctrine, as commonly accepted. I am always under the necessity of numbering with exactness, and frequently I can explain with sympathy, the articles of the Christian creed as it has been held by the various painters or writers of whose work I have to speak. But the religious faith on which my own art teaching is based never has been farther defined, nor have I wished to define it farther, than in the sentence beginning the theoretical part of *Modern Painters*:¹—

“Man’s use and purpose—and let the reader who will not grant me this, follow me no farther, for this I purpose always to assume—is to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.”

Nothing is here said of any tradition of Fall, or of any scheme of Redemption; nothing of Eternal Punishment, nothing of Immortal Life. It is assumed only that man can love and obey a living Spirit; and can be happy in the presence and guidance of a Personal Deity, otherwise than a mollusc, a beetle, or a baboon.

¹ [In the second volume: see in this edition Vol. IV. p. 28.]

But I will ask the reflective reader to note besides, that it is said to be the use of man to advance God's glory "by his obedience and happiness,"—not by lectures on the Divine wisdom, meant only to show his own. By his obedience, "reasonable," in submission to the Greater Being because He *is* the greater; not because we are as wise as He, and vouchsafe to approve His methods of creation. By our happiness, following on that obedience; not by any happiness snatched or filched out of disobedience; lighting our lives with lightning instead of sunshine—or blackening them with smoke in the day, instead of receiving God's night in its holiness.

Then, lastly, after the crowning of obedience, and fulfilment of joy, comes the joy of praise,—the "I will magnify Thee, O God my *King*" of the hundred and forty-fifth Psalm;¹—the "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my *Saviour*," of the Magnificat;—the "Bless ye the Lord" of the three Holy Children;—the "We praise thee, O Lord" of the Archangels with all the Host of Heaven;—and in the hearts of all, the deepest joy still in the Madonna's thought, For He hath regarded—the lowliness—of His handmaiden,—of His Archangel, or of His first-praying child;—and perfected praise on the lips of the Babe, as on the harp of David.

He hath regarded their *lowliness*. But not—their *vileness*! The horror and shame of the false Evangelical Religion is in its recommending its souls to God, not for their humility, but their sin! Not because they cast their crowns before God's throne, but because they strew His earth with their ashes.

All that is involved in these passionate utterances of my youth was first expanded and then concentrated into the aphorism given twenty years afterwards in my inaugural Oxford lectures, "All great Art is Praise";² and on that

¹ [For the references here, see Luke ii. 46; the *Benedicite* (or "The Song of the Three Holy Children"); and Revelation iv. 10.]

² [Not in his inaugural *Lectures on Art* (1870), but in the heading and opening words of *The Laws of Fésole* (Vol. XV. p. 351). The following quotation is from the *Lectures on Art*, § 95.]

aphorism, the yet bolder saying founded, "So far from Art's being immoral, in the ultimate power of it, nothing but Art is moral: Life without Industry is sin, and Industry without Art, brutality" (I forget the words, but that is their purport): and now, in writing beneath the cloudless peace of the snows of Chamouni, what must be the really final words of the book which their beauty inspired and their strength guided, I am able, with yet happier and calmer heart than ever heretofore, to enforce its simplest assurance of Faith, that the knowledge of what is beautiful leads on, and is the first step, to the knowledge of the things which are lovely and of good report; and that the laws, the life, and the joy of beauty in the material world of God, are as eternal and sacred parts of His creation as, in the world of spirits, virtue; and in the world of angels, praise.

CHAMOUNI,

Sunday, September 16th, 1888.

APPENDIX

(Added in this Edition)

I. REPORT OF A LECTURE ON TREE TWIGS (APRIL 19, 1861)

ABSTRACT OF THE SAME LECTURE BY RUSKIN

II. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MS. OF "MODERN
PAINTERS," VOL. V.

III. THE AUTHOR'S PROPOSED REARRANGEMENT OF A PORTION
OF THE VOLUME

IV. NOTES ON GERMAN GALLERIES (1859)

I

A LECTURE ON “TREE TWIGS”¹

(Delivered at the Royal Institution, April 19, 1861)

1. THE lecturers that usually appeared in the place he occupied that evening were the greatest philosophers of the age, and the deepest truths and the latest discoveries of science were the engrossing topics on which they dwelt. But no such high interest attached to what he had to say on this occasion. All he should endeavour to do would be to point out the connection between the laws of nature and those of art, the aspects of nature and the aspects of art. He had only elementary truths to tell—he could hardly say to teach, as they were already known, although perhaps sometimes forgotten.

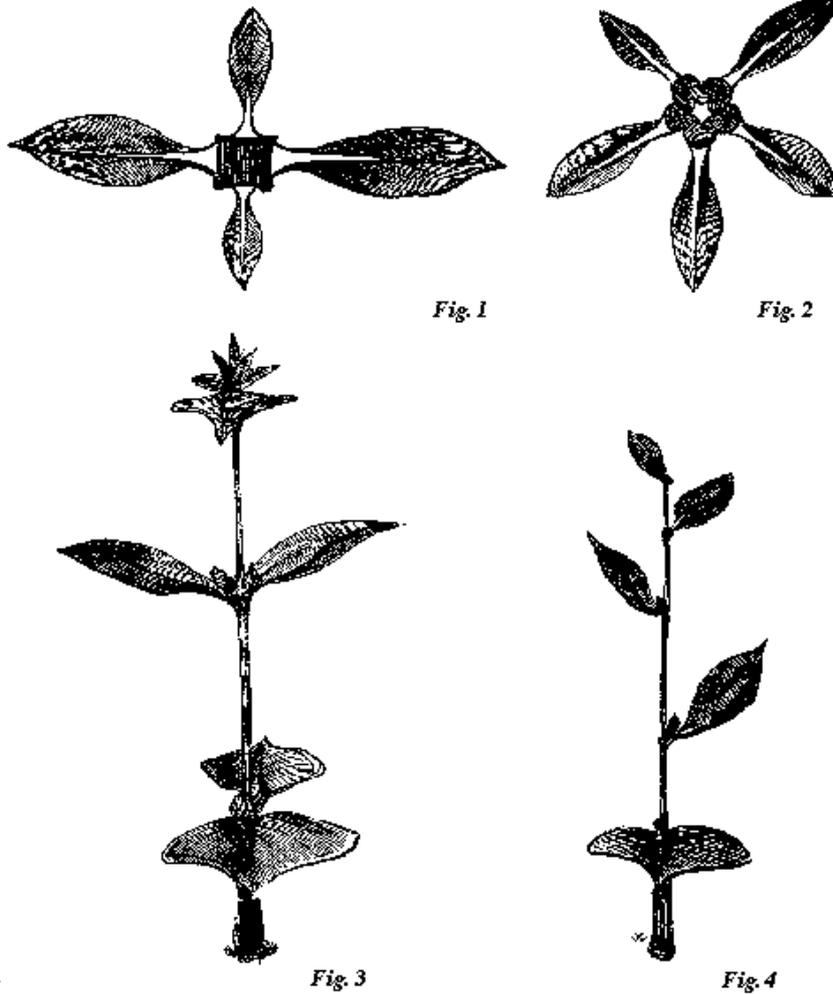
By little twigs the most important fabric on the face of the earth was woven. Of iron and many other substances so useful to our race, so abundant in nature, we see nothing of the elaborations; but of trees, timber, wood, we see the workmanship daily carried on before us. The flowers of the field neither toil nor spin, but the leaves of the forest are ceaseless toilers; all their existence long they are spinners, and weavers, and miners; and the timber of our largest trees displays the warp and woof of the multiple threads which the ever-working leaves have elaborated.

2. There are three modes of aggregation: (1) simple, like the shingle on our seashores; (2) tree-growth, in which one layer of material is laid over the other, with a bond of union between the two; and (3) perfect growth, as in animals, in which the organ has always the same form, but increases

¹ [For some remarks on this lecture, see above, Introduction, p. lix. The following report, with woodcuts illustrating it, first appeared in the *London Review*, April 27, 1861. It was reprinted in *Igdrasil*, December 1891, vol. iii. pp. 172–176, but without the illustrations, a few consequential alterations being made in the text, and thence was similarly reprinted in the privately-issued *Ruskiniana*, Part ii., 1892, pp. 193–196. The illustrations 1–4 and 7–15 were given, roughly, in the *London Review*; they have been recut for this edition from the large illustrations which Ruskin prepared for his lecture, and which are preserved at Brantwood. The paragraphs are here numbered for convenience of reference. The report commenced with the following introductory sentences: “The eminence of Mr. Ruskin as an artcritic, and the excellence and popularity of his published works, of course secured for him, at the Royal Institution, a most brilliant audience. His subject was apparently a simple one, *Tree Twigs*, but the numerous artistic diagrams with which it was illustrated at once showed how fertile of art-lessons it would prove.”]

in size—as, for example, the hand, which, although it grows larger, is nevertheless always a hand.

The growth of a tree commences with a short stem, to which another stem is vertically added, and so on a third; but the rod which this vertical



elongation would ultimately make would be too slender, too weak, for any covering of leaves. Against this result nature provides by sending down constantly two roots for every shoot sent up, so that every branch and trunk is thus encased and strengthened.

3. The next inquiry which naturally arises is as to the structure of these shoots.

In the dicotyledonous trees, which are the most interesting to us as being of native growth, these twigs are divided into two classes—namely, those of a square form (Fig. 1), and those which are pentagonal (Fig. 2), or have many sides. In the former, the shoots are alternately placed at right angles to each other (Fig. 3); in the latter, they form by their positions a spiral round the stem (Fig. 4). The position of the leaves is not, however, strictly geometrical, each leaf trying, as it were, to get the most room and air for itself in seeking the most open space. There is something like instinct or volition in this; and one can but consider this power of choosing the best condition to be dependent on the vital energy. The five upper leaves of the oak exhibit this beautiful spiral arrangement. The horse-chestnut exhibits even more beautifully than any other tree this arrangement; for the alternate leaves, although crowded, grow with the most perfect grace and freedom [Figs. 5 and 6].

4. Of one school of art it was scornfully said that its artists followed out the minutiae of their pictures with microscopic exactness; but before the microscope was known, and in all ages, there had been a class of painters who had given the utmost attention to the perfection of details. It was to be remarked, that, whenever leafage had been carefully studied and finished, that school, whether in painting or architecture, had always flourished; whenever the leaves were neglected, that school had failed.¹ The Venetian pictures held the first place in art; and how wonderful was their finish in this respect! The portrait of Ariosto, by Titian,² in the National Gallery, was referred to for its foliage background. The events transpiring in Italy might give the chance to our nation of obtaining some of the best examples, and nothing advanced the art student so much as seeing and studying the work of a really great painter. What has advanced sculpture in our land so much as the fine examples of Greek art, and especially the Elgin marbles? One good Venetian picture in our national collection would be a school of art established for ever.

5. Figure 7 is given as a type of the work of the leaf left, after it falls, in a polygonal tree—namely, the oak. That left in a rectangular tree would present a similar appearance, except only that the buds would be in pairs instead of single. Each of these types is connected with those of monocotyledonous trees by intermediate conditions, such as those of the *arbor vitæ* and pine. Figures 8 and 9 represent the outer spray of the *arbor vitæ*, which is broad in one direction, narrow in another, and forms gradually a branch, which is flat in its foliage, though the stem is rounded by the gradual accretion of the decaying leaves. This tree may be considered as forming the link between the rectangular dicotyledons and the monocotyledons; while the pine, in which the leaves, arranged in a spiral order, leave, when they fall a spray, such as Fig. 10, is the link between the alternate dicotyledon and the monocotyledon. Such being the general

¹ [Compare pt. vi. ch. v. § 4 (p. 53).]

² [The reference is to No. 636, formerly so ascribed; for many years called "Portrait of a Poet, by Palma Vecchio," but now (1905) re-attributed to Titian. The picture had been acquired in 1860. Ruskin's political reference is to the disturbed state of the new Italian kingdom.]

structure of the sprays, we have next to consider the mode of ramification. Each healthy shoot every year adds at least four others to its extremity, two and two (Fig. 11), in opposite vertical planes if the character of the

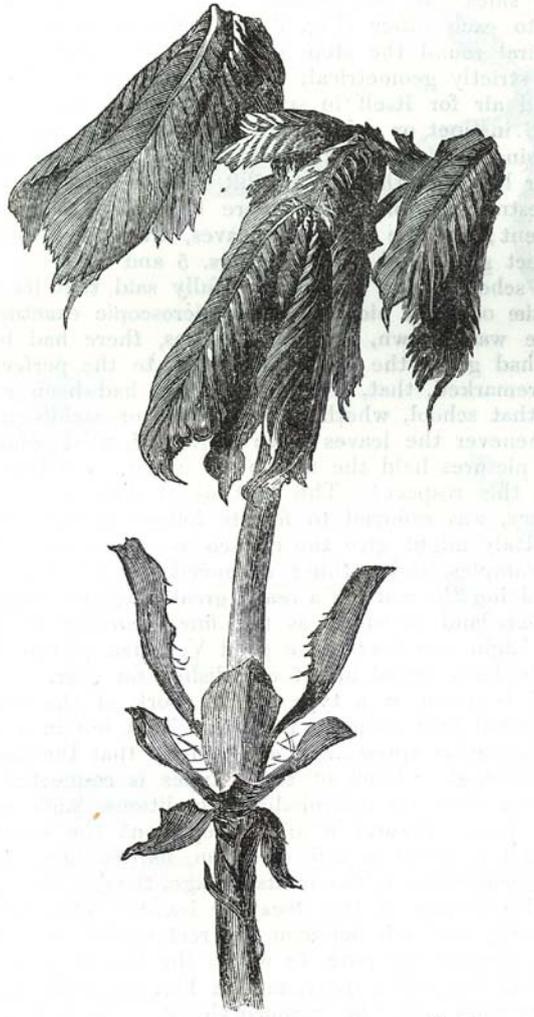


Fig. 5

stem be square; three, in separate divergent directions (Fig. 12), if it be polygonal. Thus, the minimum increase can be stated at three shoots for each extremity of every stem. Each of these twigs again, at the next season of growth, produces three others (Fig. 13), and so on at every ensuing

increase. These twigs are thus constantly massing themselves towards the outer circumference of the tree (Fig. 14), while the stouter branches which support them are comparatively inert and lifeless.

6. Careless painters were apt to represent them by a series of irregular offshoots, and as dying away in their energy towards their tips (Fig. 15). Such might be true of the twig, in which the vital energy was most forcibly

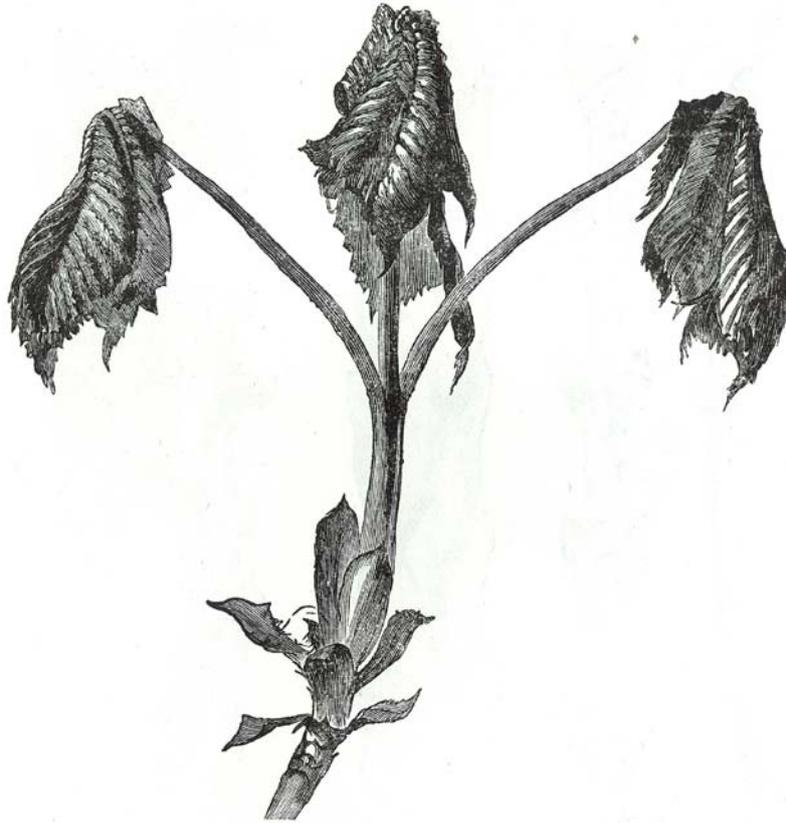


Fig. 6

put forward in its first sprouting; but it was not so in the bough, at the extremity of which the numerous new subdivisions or twigs formed themselves into a globular interlacing mass, in which the fullest vitality of the tree was exhibited.

That, observe, is considering the bough only as a flat ramification; but actually, as the shoots in a rectangular tree spring into the form of a cross, and in a polygonal tree in a spiral order, the ramification being on all sides

with equal force, the resulting structure takes a cup shape, so that every tree may be considered as a mass terminated by a spherical or round surface, composed of a series of cup-shaped masses of foliage, emerging one from within the other.

7. There is a general tendency in the boughs of some trees to curve



with a concave outwards; in other trees the concave is inwards. If the concave is outwards, the aspect of the tree is like that of a fountain, throwing its branches out from the central stem; if the concave is inwards, it more resembles a fir-cone, the successive cups closing round each other towards the top of the tree. Every branch, in carrying on the formation of the mass of its leaves, to occupy in successive years the place which

they are required to fill in the typical form of the tree, exercises an instinct like that of an animal. It is commonly said that light and heat operate on vegetable tissue under fixed mechanical laws; but there is a vital law which modifies the action of the light and heat, which accepts that action willingly if it draws the bough where the bough wants to go, which refuses and painfully submits to the same action if it drives or attracts the bough where it does not want to go.

8. Hence there is a continual exhibition of vital power and of instinctive choice of place and of direction, contending with adverse mechanical influences, or flourishing under favourable ones; and the curvatures of a bough are therefore sometimes free, sometimes cramped, sometimes suddenly

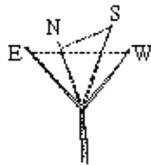


Fig. 11

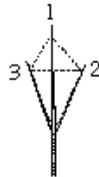


Fig. 12



Fig. 15

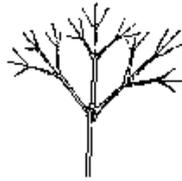


Fig. 13



Fig. 14

changed, sometimes resolutely consistent in purpose. These characters give at once grace, fantasy, and yet the look of imperfect organic life which distinguished the beauty of a branch from that of any other flexible form. In the convolutions of a serpent, for instance, the whole body is animated at once by a harmonious force; in the undulations of a wave, governed by a force communicated under constant laws. The line of a branch, interrupted in vitality and subjected to various accidents, stiffly graceful and fitfully consistent, is recognisable at a glance from all other conditions of consecutive lines presented in the natural world.

9. In bringing out these results, it will be seen that the action of the leaf differs wholly from that of the flower. The flower perishes quickly, leaving behind it the seed which is to be developed into its successor. The leaf not only leaves behind it the bud which is to be developed into a similar shoot, but works all its life long in order to establish the succeeding shoot under different circumstances from all that had preceded it. It

not only leaves the bud, but places it and provides for it by the actual substance of the stem from which it is to advance to greater height and wider range. The main function of the flower, therefore, is accomplished only in its death; that of the leaf depends on prolonged work during its life.

10. This difference in the operation of the flower and leaf has attracted the attention of all great nations, as a type of the various conditions of the life of man. Chaucer's poem of "The Flower and the Leaf," in which the



Fig. 16

strongest knights and noblest ladies worship the goddess of the leaf in preference to the goddess of the flower, is perhaps the clearest expression of the feeling of the Middle Ages in this respect. That of the Greeks is set forth by the fable of the Rape of Proserpine. The Greeks had no goddess Flora correspondent to the Flora of the Romans. The Greek Flora is Persephone, the "bringer of death," because they saw that the force and use of the flower was only in its death. For a few hours Proserpine plays in the Sicilian fields; but, snatched away by Pluto, her destiny is accomplished in the Shades, and she is crowned in the grave.¹ The Greek

¹ [Compare *Queen of the Air*, § 11.]

feeling respecting the leaf is set forth by the fable of Apollo and Daphne.¹ Daphne is the daughter of one of the great mountain rivers of Arcadia and of the Earth; that is to say, she is the mist of the dashing river filling the mountain valley. The sun chasing the mist from chasm to chasm is Apollo pursuing Daphne. Where the mist is sheltered by the rocks from the heat of the sun, the laurel and other richest vegetation spring in profusion; and thus the laurel-leaf becomes the type of the animating power of the rivers and of the sunshine, and therefore the reward and crown of all vigorous human work nourished at once by the dew of earth and the light of heaven.

11. This interpretation of the fable of Apollo and Daphne might at first be doubted, but will not be so when it is compared with the original eastern tradition as preserved in the book of Genesis. In the garden of Paradise we are not told that there were flowers. We may conjecture that the term “herb of the field” includes them, but we are told positively that there grew every tree—literally every timber—good for food and pleasant to the eyes. And it is said that these trees were not watered by rain, for rain had not been caused upon the earth. The brightness of the sky was not to be concealed by rain-clouds, but a mist rose from the ground to water the garden.² Sunshine and mist together forming the nourishment of its vitality, as in Arcadia, the Eden of the Greeks, the same power is attributed to Apollo and Daphne.

12. In applying these principles to art, the same feeling appeared to animate the best workmen of the great times. The noblest architectural decorations had been found in the leaf rather than in the flower: in the Acanthus by the Greeks, and in nearly every form of Spring vegetation by the Gothic workmen.³ The merit of the work might be almost always judged of by the simplicity of line and by the artist’s dwelling on the spring and growth of individual leaves rather than on the shadows produced by their entanglement. The intricate shadows of complex foliage or flowers formed the decorations of declining architecture; but in the best times the designs consisted of few lines, like those of the example here given (Fig. 16), from the Ducal Palace of Venice, in which there was no palpable dexterity of cutting, but an exquisite attention to and enjoyment of the spring of the stem and the undulation of the foil. All good work was, then, grave, intense, and attentive, not necessarily minute. It might be thought that the details into which the lecturer had entered descended into too accurate particulars, but the distinction between accuracy and minuteness was just that on which depended the distinction between true and false art. It was quite possible to be accurate without being small; small without being accurate. The scale on which work is done depends upon place and convenience, but no work was ever done well which was not founded on the loving and attentive examination of every natural fact which came within its range.

¹ [Compare Ruskin’s note on Turner’s picture of “Apollo and Daphne,” Vol. XIII. p. 149.]

² [Genesis ii. 5, 6.]

³ [Here compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i., on the acanthus as the root of all leaf ornament (Vol. IX. p. 279); and vol. ii. and vol. iii., on the superiority of the simple to the more florid style (Vol. X. p. 432, Vol. XI. p. 9).]

ABSTRACT OF THE SAME LECTURE BY RUSKIN¹

THE speaker's purpose was to exhibit the development of the common forms of branch, in dicotyledonous trees, from the fixed type of the annual shoot. Three principal modes of increase and growth might be distinguished in all accumulative change, namely:—

1. Simple aggregation, having no periodical or otherwise defined limit, and subject only to laws of cohesion and crystallisation, as in inorganic matter.
2. Addition of similar parts to each other, under some law fixing their limits and securing their unity.
3. Enlargement, or systematic change in arrangement, of a typical form, as in the growth of the members of an animal.

The growth of trees came under the second of these heads. A tree did not increase in stem or boughs as the wrist and hand of a child increased to the wrist and hand of a man; but it was built up by additions of similar parts, as a city is increased by the building of new rows of houses.

Any annual shoot was most conveniently to be considered as a single rod, which would always grow vertically if possible.

Every such rod or pillar was, in common timber trees, typically either polygonal in section, or rectangular.

If polygonal, the leaves were arranged on it in a spiral order, as in the elm or oak.

If rectangular, the leaves were arranged on it in pairs, set alternately at right angles to each other.

Intermediate forms connected each of these types with those of monocotyledonous trees. The structure of the *arbor vitæ* might be considered as typically representing the link between the rectangular structure and that of monocotyledons; and that of the pine between the polygonal structure and that of monocotyledons.

Every leaf during its vitality secreting carbon from the atmosphere, with the elements of water, formed a certain quantity of woody tissue, which extended down the outside of the tree to the ground, and farther to the extremities of the roots. The mode in which this descending masonry was added appeared to depend on the peculiar functions of cambium, and (the speaker believed) was as yet unexplained by botanists.

Every leaf, besides forming this masonry all down the tree, protected a bud at the base of its own stalk. From this bud, unless rendered abortive, a new shoot would spring next year. Now, supposing that out of the leaf-buds on each shoot of a pentagonal tree, only five at its extremity or on its

¹ [This is the abstract drawn up by Ruskin. It was issued as a leaflet at the time of the lecture, and reprinted in the *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, vol. iii. pp. 358–360, where the abstract is headed thus: “Weekly Evening Meeting, Friday, April 19, 1861. Sir Roderick I. Murchison, D.C.L., F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair. John Ruskin, Esq., *On Tree Twigs*.” The abstract was reprinted in *On the Old Road*, 1885, vol. i. pp. 717–720 (§§ 575–580), and again in the second edition of that work, vol. ii. pp. 354–358 (§§ 284–289).]

side were permitted to develop themselves, even under this limitation the number of shoots developed from a single one in the seventh year would be 78, 125. The external form of a healthily grown tree at any period of its development was therefore composed of a mass of sprays, whose vitality was approximately distributed over the *surface* of the tree to an equal depth. The branches beneath at once supported, and were fed by, this orbicular field, or animated external garment of vegetation, from every several leaf of which, as from an innumerable multitude of small green fountains, the streams of woody fibre descended, met, and united as rivers do, and gathered their full flood into the strength of the stem.

The principal errors which had been committed by artists in drawing trees had arisen from their regarding the bough as ramifying irregularly, and somewhat losing in energy towards the extremity; whereas the real boughs threw their whole energy, and multiplied their substance, towards the extremities, ranking themselves in more or less cup-shaped tiers round the trunk, and forming a compact united surface at the exterior of the tree.

In the course of arrival at this form, the bough, throughout its whole length, showed itself to be influenced by a force like that of an animal's instinct. Its minor curves and angles were all subjected to one strong ruling tendency and law of advance, dependent partly on the aim of every shoot to raise itself upright, partly on the necessity which each was under to yield due place to the neighbouring leaves, and obtain for itself as much light and air as possible. It had indeed been ascertained that vegetable tissue was liable to contractions and expansion (under fixed mechanical conditions) by light, heat, moisture, etc. But vegetable tissue in the living branch did not contract nor expand under external influence alone. The principle of life manifested itself either by contention with, or felicitous recognition of, external force. It accepted with a visible, active, and apparently joyful concurrence, the influences which led the bough towards its due place in the economy of the tree; and it obeyed reluctantly, partially, and with distorted curvatures, those which forced it to violate the typical organic form. The attention of painters of foliage had seldom been drawn with sufficient accuracy to the lines either of branch curvature, or leaf contour, as expressing these subtle laws of incipient volition; but the relative merit of the great schools of figure design might, in absence of all other evidence, be determined, almost without error, by observing the precision of their treatment of leaf curvature. The leaf-painting round the head of Ariosto by Titian, in the National Gallery, might be instanced.

The leaf thus differed from the flower in forming and protecting behind it, not only the bud in which was the form of a new shoot like itself, but a piece of permanent work, and produced substance, by which every following shoot could be placed under different circumstances from its predecessor. Every leaf laboured to solidify this substance during its own life; but the seed left by the flower matured only as the flower perished.

This difference in the action and endurance of the flower and leaf had been applied by nearly all great nations as a type of the variously active and productive states of life among individuals or commonwealths. Chaucer's poem of the "Flower and Leaf" is the most definite expression of the mediæval feeling in this respect, while the fables of the rape of Proserpine

and of Apollo and Daphne embody that of the Greeks. There is no Greek goddess corresponding to the Flora of the Romans. Their Flora is Persephone, "the bringer of death." She plays for a little while in the Sicilian fields, gathering flowers, then snatched away by Pluto, receives her chief power as she vanishes from our sight, and is crowned in the grave. Daphne, on the other hand, is the daughter of one of the great Arcadian river gods, and of the earth; she is the type of the river mist filling the rocky vales of Arcadia; the sun, pursuing this mist from dell to dell, is Apollo pursuing Daphne; where the mist is protected from his rays by the rock shadows, the laurel and other richest vegetation spring by the river-sides, so that the laurel-leaf becomes the type, in the Greek mind, of the beneficent ministry and vitality of the rivers and the earth, under the beams of sunshine; and therefore it is chosen to form the signet-crown of highest honour for gods or men, honour for work born of the strength and dew of the earth and informed by the central light of heaven; work living, perennial, and beneficent.

J. R.

II

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MS. OF “MODERN PAINTERS,” VOL. V.

1. CHARACTER IN TREES

[AMONG the loose sheets in the Pierpont Morgan MSS. (see above, p. lxiii.) there is a fragment headed “Vegetation,” which deals, in a very suggestive way, with an aspect of the matter not touched upon in the text—namely, the character which may be given by an inventive painter to his trees, so as to enhance the harmony of a composition:—]

“This is not so with all the other accessories of a picture even by the greatest masters; very often a piece of architecture, or furniture, or drapery is introduced merely for the sake of its lines (the *impannata* and the *sediola* are of no dramatic value whatever to the two *madonnas* to which they give names), but a good painter never introduces a passionless tree.

“Look back to Plate 11 (vol. iii.).¹ The foliage there is in entire sympathy with the quiet ecclesiastical landscape—everything walled, spired, peaceful, and precise, but full of light. The trees grow in untroubled straightness as they need no strength of bough, the *madonna’s* presence rendering storms impossible; with lispings leaves they express their timid reverence for her; sweet original trees, their leaves not yet expanded, nay, they will never expand them, lest they should cast anything like shadow on the sunny fields.

“Take up and compare directly with this Plate Turner’s ‘*Hedging and Ditching*’² of the *Liber Studiorum*—the expression of steady commonplace-character in a bitter world. Some capacities of grace about the poor things once, had they been left to themselves or pruned wisely; some remnants of it even yet, where they rise against the sky at the bend of open road, for the most part hacked and blighted and cropped or withered away, hardly knowing whether they still are trees or only firewood. There is no tragedy allowed them neither, no pity to be had from anybody; they never can have had polite people to look at them. Advisable agricultural operations going

¹ [In this edition, Vol. V. p. 394.]

² [For another reference to this Plate, see above, p. 433.]

on, bleak wind, angry clouds and vulgar people, penned, uncomfortable sheep—such life must they still bud and blossom for as best may be.

“Next take up the Château of the Belle Gabrielle¹ in order to see what courtly and sweet creatures trees may be when they have fair ladies to be companions to them. Not by any means straight of growth nor ecclesiastical in order now, in no wise saintly trees nor precise, but infinitely graceful and softly wayward, taking their pleasure in the tender air—sharp-leaved, if need be, across the light—as wit gives brightness to passion: may the autumn be long in coming, the river still pass by with stormless stream.

“Now the Raglan²—Liber Studiorum—wild wood of old baronial park, it and its towers gone to ruin together; the old walls rounded with ivy, the wood roots choked with undergrowth and the brook with its sedges, but noble yet in reverential neglect and in honoured solitude; no axe lifted up on stone or stem; dim legends of fairy ladies and grey-bearded knights keeping the cotters’ children away at the sunset; the water-lilies gleaming ungathered; the wild-fowl has heard our feet though we trod quietly, and it flutters, startled, across the stream with a wake of light.

“Now the Procris and Cephalus³—divine trees of dark and pensive power, their leaves closed together in a cloud of night; beneath them, avenues where the nymphs and wood-gods wander.”

[Here the fragment ends.]

2. COMPOSITION

[It has been remarked above, in the Introduction (p. lxiii.), that the section in this volume on “Invention Formal,” or pictorial composition, is on a less elaborate scale than that of other sections in the work. One reason for this is stated at the beginning of the author’s first draft of Part viii. ch. i.:—]

“I do not propose to enter in this work at any length on the examination of technical composition. The most interesting examples of it are to be found among the great figure painters.”

[But to enter upon an analysis of such examples would have been to travel somewhat far from the main scope of the work, which was mainly concerned with Landscape Painting. The author remarks, however, elsewhere in the draft MS., that he would “be able to illustrate all known laws of composition even from the few works of Turner engraved in this book.” The reason why he did not enter upon such a detailed examination is probably, as suggested above (p. lxiii.), that he had already gone over much of the ground in *The Elements of Drawing*. But he seems at one

¹ [Compare Vol. III. p. 239.]

² [See above, p. 434.]

³ [See again, p. 434.]

time to have intended to bring the analysis of composition in that work into relation with the general argument of *Modern Painters*. For elsewhere in the draft we read:—]

“I have already stated that this technical composition is in the type of the providential government of the world: as it is universally delightful to the human mind, and essential as a part of a great picture.”

[Ruskin did not, however, continue this passage; but on the back of a sheet of the MS. there is this conspectus of the subject:—]

Infinity	Curvature.
	Continuity.
Unity	Principality.
	Radiation
Symmetry	Contrast.
	Interchange
Purity	Consistency.
	Harmony
Repose	Repetition.

[In the first column Ruskin enumerates, it will be seen, the Ideas of Typical Beauty, which he had analysed in the second volume of *Modern Painters* (part iii. sec. i. chapters v.-ix.). In the second, he enumerates the Laws of Composition, which he had analysed in *The Elements of Drawing* (§§ 188-239, Vol. XV. pp. 161-205).]

3. “IDEAS OF RELATION: MAGNITUDE, OR NUMBER”

[The following fragment is contained in a small blue copy-book, written by some amanuensis, and is described by Ruskin (in his later handwriting) on the cover as “Part of unpublished old *Modern Painters*—very valuable.”]

“Chiefly impressive when showing us our own weakness or littleness. Mountains wonderful chiefly so long as we cannot climb or understand them.

“Of these, then, the first, or most palpable, is the right expression of the power of gravitation; or rather of the submission of things to that power in the degree expressive of their nature. Of course, if a painter draws one kind of line rightly, he will draw all kinds rightly; but of the various orders of line I believe those resulting from gravitation are peculiarly impressive to great men, and are perhaps dwelt upon with greater awe and affection than any others. So that one of the best mechanical tests one can apply in a rough way to an artist’s

work, to know the stamp of the man, is to look whether the gravitating curves are true and frequent. And it appears to me natural that the perception of lines of gravitation should indicate the mind of a good painter, since, well considered, this gravitation is indeed the most awful of all material laws; and, in so far as it seems universal, affecting all kinds of matter alike* it is the most visibly supernatural of all forces, because it does not attach itself to the nature of the things. The properties which make one substance explosive, another soluble, another tenacious, belong to them like a part of their nature; but gravity is a strange, invisible, external force, applied to them all equally.

"In some trains of thought we might be led to consider this force as typical of the general tendency to decline or destruction in all things resisted by their vital energies—the idea of ascent being to us usually connected with life and power; of descent, with death and feebleness. The lines expressing gravitation may thus become awful to us, because they are the signs of a fate, or fatal power, which nothing can for an instance elude, and which can be resisted only by the force either of inner life or of some external aid, failing which, everything is equally subjected to it, and at any instant it falls 'come corpo morto cade.'¹

"I imagine that, so far as our daily and common sensations are concerned, this is the real root of the nobleness of lines of gravitation; but a more extended view of this great force, removing the notions of high and low, or of fall and ascent, must show it us as a force, not of destruction, but of assemblage—the force by which literally 'all things consist,'² and opposing itself in accurate balance to the great separating force of radiation, by which all things distribute their atoms or operations to each other. Thus the sun is kept in his place and course by gravitation, and enlightens the earth by radiation. Both forces are beneficent, and the lines which express them are therefore noble; but those of radiation, which express life, excite in us chiefly the sensation of beauty; those of gravitation, which express stability or death, excite in us chiefly the sensation of the sublime.

"The just drawing of the lines of gravitation extends its influence to almost every object, just as the force itself does; and the power of drawing them rightly is seen in its greatest perfection when the gravitation is combined with many other forces, and influences complicated structures. One of the principal sources of Vandyck's great power in drawing hands is his always giving with exquisite precision the amount of curve produced by dead weight in the fingers and arm. Lay your arm at this moment on the edge of the table, or on the back of your chair, and let your hand hang down without the slightest effort. Turning it loosely up and down several times, letting it always fall back into its place so as to be sure you are not using any muscular effort to sustain it, you will find that, according to the position of your arm, form of the table's edge, etc., the hand takes a certain degree of drooping

* Note on imponderability—heat is not matter.

¹ [*Inferno*, v. 142.]

² [See above, p. 206.]

inclination, which is quite fixed for each position of the arm and fingers. The precise observation and drawing of this true droop give grace and sublimity to the painting of the hand; but the slightest slope less or more than its gravity requires will destroy both, and only the greatest painters can catch the true line.

“The same law of curve holds good not for hands only but for every part of the human body. Whatever action it may be in, whatever form of support may be supposed for it, whether it is poised on wings, springing by its own muscular strength, or laid at rest, supported on any given group of points or extent of surfaces, still its own gravity has a definite influence on every part of it; and the points of support and mode of action being once determined, the lines which rightly express the weight of the body must be determined also. On the seizing them accurately depends the expression of buoyancy in flying, of strength and grace in leaping or dancing, of repose in resting; no mathematical laws are full enough to determine the true lines, nor are any mathematical tests subtle enough to detect violations of the true lines. But the errors are not indefinite, though they are undemonstrable; rightness and wrongness are just as absolute as in drawing a common form in perspective, or out of it, only we can briefly demonstrate the error in one case, and the demonstration is too long and too complicated to be possible in the other. But the great painters recognise the lines by pure instinct, and invariably seize them; and mean painters just as assuredly lose them, and that not only in drawing from nature, but even in copying. The first thing a bad copyist does invariably, is to lose the balance and sway of all his figures, no matter how carefully he may have drawn them to scale; no scales nor measurements will save him; every one of his lines will go wrong in spite of them; his flying figures will look as if they were falling; his falling figures as if they were falling; whatever he tries to make firm, will immediately totter; and whatever his wish that anything should be tremulous, will instantly make it rigid. It is, however, necessary in treating this subject to consider separately the taste which chooses positions of repose for the figures, and the power of representing the repose so chosen. For not only does Vandyck differ from a common portrait painter in being able to draw the true line of a recumbent hand, but in choosing the position of recumbence rather than one of rigid extension or quick movement. Nevertheless, though these two merits must be separate in our thinking of them, they are never separate in the painter. Every painter who can see and draw the lines of repose accurately, delights also in positions of repose, so that to say a painter draws truly, will always imply also that his figures are full of quietness or quietnesses.

“No matter how energetic their action, there will be strange rests and reserves mingled with it, while the bad painter will make it all spatter and explosion. And therefore, as I stated truly in the chapter on repose, in the second volume, this look of quietness is a sure test of good work; whenever people can draw rightly, they draw quietly, and draw quiet things, and the quiet is in proportion to the rightness. The flying figures of Tintoret or Veronese look as if they could pause in the

air like eagles; but the flying figures of inferior painters fly like tomtits—all flutter. The sleeping figures of Tintoret or Veronese sleep as if the earth stood still underneath them, and the air softened itself to lull them; but the sleeping figures of bad painters look as if they had shut their eyes to cheat us, and were hearing all that was going on. The leaping figures of Tintoret or Veronese leap like panthers, so that you shall not hear them touch the ground; but the leaping figures of inferior painters leap like grasshoppers—all rustle and jerk.”

4. WATER BEAUTY

[It has been explained above (p. lviii.) that Ruskin omitted one intended section of this volume—namely, on Beauty of Water. No material for this section has been found either in the MS. drafts of the volume or among the author’s loose MSS. But in his diary of 1856 there is the following conspectus of the subject, as he meant to treat it:—]

“1st. *Calm Water*.—Typical character of the law of reflection, giving a kind of symmetry to everything: the modes of change between real and reflected images most beautiful. Kingsley’s cows.¹ Lago Maggiore: the reflection of *under* side of awning is the principal mass, and that of the boat is full dark green, a small bar of clear transparent green appearing at the prow as the thrust of the oar raises a wave there. This is where the boat is coming to you—strait foreshortened. Beauty of its mystified and blended colours—Highland lochs where colour very lovely.

“Cuyp, brown only; Claude, nothing; Salvator, nothing; Poussin, nothing.

“Mirage. Mystery of water, still less. Turner’s lake in Daphne² especially.

“Surface and curves. Floating and poise of boats—Lione, etc. Examine curves of Turner’s bays: perhaps give Plate. Winding rivers. Mystery of shore form in my Loire, etc.³ Get some Salvator shores to oppose.

“2nd. *Rough Water*.—Sea. My Land’s End bit.⁴ Turner’s curves as opposed Vandevelde’s. Sea power never expressed before. Insist on sublime divinity. His wrecks.⁵

¹ [A drawing of cows by Turner in the possession of Ruskin’s friend, the Rev. W. Kingsley, for whom see Vol. XIII. p. 162 *n*. It is not clear to what drawing Ruskin refers as “Lago Maggiore.”]

² [For this picture (No. 520 in the National Gallery), see Vol. XIII. p. 148.]

³ [The series of drawings of the Loire given by Ruskin to Oxford.]

⁴ [The passage in *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 566).]

⁵ [The following is an entry from the same diary:—

“DOVER, *September* 26.—Heavy storm all day: doing nothing but walk about beach before and after lunch. Ascertained Turner’s singular veracity in the way the waves threw up the pieces of timber they had torn away from the Admiralty Pier—beams twelve feet long and two feet thick thrown

“3rd. *Running Water*.—Never attempted at all before him. Bolton.¹
Fountain, water in vignette.

“All I have to say of boats must be done with ‘Of the Calm Water’; and
all of wrecks with ‘The Sea.’ ”

continually *vertical* at the edge of the breakers, tossed up like straws, and pieces
of wood flung about like hail. A piece three feet long and half a foot thick *said*
to have been thrown right over the Lord Warden Hotel.”]

¹ [The drawing, often referred to in *Modern Painters* and partly engraved as “The
Shores of Wharfe” (see Plate 12 in Vol. V. and Plate 12A in Vol. VI.). The “Fountain,
water in vignette” refers presumably to the frontispiece to Rogers’s *Poems*, known as
“The Garden”; the drawing for it is No. 220 in the National Gallery; for another
reference to it see Vol. III. pp. 306–307.]

III

THE AUTHOR'S PROPOSED RE-ARRANGEMENT OF A PORTION OF THE VOLUME

[RUSKIN, as he says in a letter of 1874,¹ had at one time an intention of recasting the artistic criticisms of *Modern Painters*, omitting some of the religious discussions on which he had come to take a different standpoint. In a copy of the book, which he afterwards presented to Arthur Burgess (now in the possession of Mr. Hugh Allen), he has made excisions and rearrangements which seem to belong to a proposed revision of parts viii. and ix. ("Of Ideas of Relation"). This rearrangement would have more emphasised "Ideas of Power," a side of the matter which, as he said at Oxford,² he had not sufficiently emphasised. It will be observed, in the text as it stands, that Ideas of Power are involved in the discussion of Ideas of Relation; for he defines the latter as an inquiry "into the various Powers, Conditions, and Aims of mind involved in the conception or creation of pictures" (pt. viii. ch. i. § 1, p. 203).

In recasting this portion of his work Ruskin strikes out lines 7 and 8 of the existing text, thus keeping part viii. more strictly to technical matters. He then notes "Bring in first Ch. ii. of Vol. IV."

It thus appears that chapter i., after a brief exposition of the remaining scope of the work (pt. viii. ch. i. § 1), would have consisted of that chapter in the fourth volume ("Of Turnerian Topography"), which certainly belongs more properly to the now proposed place, its subject-matter being the question "how far the artist should permit himself to alter, or, in the usual art language, improve nature" (Vol. VI. p. 27).

Then chapter ii. would have been the present chapter i. of part viii. ("The Law of Help"). Here, again, in his proposed rearrangement Ruskin made excisions with a view of keeping more closely to the matter immediately in hand. Thus he strikes out from § 5 the passage "Life and consistency . . . creatures of the earth" (p. 206); he breaks off in § 13 at "poihsiV,

¹ [Vol. III. p. xlix.]

² [*Lectures on Art*, §§ 74, 100.]

otherwise, poetry," omitting all that follows down to line 2 of § 20, the passage thus reading:—

"Invention is pre-eminently the deed of human creation; poihsiv, otherwise, poetry. For a poet, or creator, is a person who puts things together . . ." (p. 215).

Chapter iii. in the rearrangement is the present chapter ii. ("The task of the Least"), down to the end of the first paragraphs in § 14 ("separated from all common work by an impassable gulf"). At that point, in the text as it stands, Ruskin notes in his copy, "Now to p. 245 *Elements of Drawing*" (*i.e.*, to the page beginning the discussion of Composition in that work), "adding p. 184 here" (*i.e.*, p. 236 in this edition).

The Principles of Composition, enumerated and discussed in *The Elements of Drawing*, would presumably have formed a separate chapter in the proposed rearrangement, followed, as part of it, by the present chapter iv. ("The Law of Perfectness," or of Reserve); this, as the markings in his copy show, Ruskin intended to shorten. (Here, compare Appendix II. 2, above, p. 481.)

Next, in another chapter would have come the present chapter iii. To this, in his copy, Ruskin wrote the following introductory remarks:—

"There is, however, another and a nobler phase of the ideas of power, dependent on the actual vastness of subject and command taken of it by the painter. Of this I have not said enough, but the following passages bear upon it."

Part viii. "Of Invention Formal" (or Composition) would thus have been arranged as follows:—

Chapter i. "Of Turnerian Topography"; or, of the permissible limits of the alteration of nature (now chapter ii. of vol. iv.).

Chapter ii. "The Law of Help"; or, the first principle of Composition, *viz.* the help of everything in the picture by everything else (now chapter i. of part viii.).

Chapter iii. "The Task of the Least"; or, the methods by which every minutest part may thus be made helpful, the "Law of Perfectness" being added to the other laws analysed in *Elements of Drawing* (now chapter ii. of part viii.; *Elements of Drawing*, §§ 188–239; and §§ 1–6 of chapter iv. here).

Chapter iv. "The Rule of the Greatest"; or, the command taken by an inventive painter of a vast subject.

Ruskin continued, in the same copy of the volume, to revise part ix. ("Of Invention Spiritual"). Here there was no rearrangement, but some cutting down. Thus in chapter i. he struck out §§ 10–15 (except the last paragraph), and in chapter ii. the first eight lines of § 1; but the revision of this part did not proceed far enough (it stops altogether after chapter iv.) to give any complete idea of Ruskin's scheme.]

IV

NOTES ON GERMAN GALLERIES

(1859)

[RUSKIN'S illustrative references to pictures in the present volume were largely taken from the German Galleries which he studied in 1859 (see the Introduction, above, pp. l.–liv.). The following are notes from his diary:—]

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

ALFRED RETHEL'S *Frescoes in Hôtel de Ville*, full of power but wholly valueless, as well as Cornelius's windows, from trying to be fine. All strained in treatment and ghastly—not, which is curious, very energetic in action. Charlemagne seizing a standard, quite feeble.¹

COLOGNE²

OVERBECK'S *Virgin in the chapel of Cathedral*,³ with Abraham and David below, execrable beyond all contempt. The lower part feebly and basely borrowed from Titian's Apotheosis of Philip IV.⁴ Abraham holding up his knife as Noah holds up the ark, and David holding down his harp in the same way as Titian's David; the plagiarism of course being cunningly concealed by alterations, as real base plagiarism is always;—spoiling whatever it touches; while noble plagiarism is as open and frank as the day, and ennobles whatever it touches.⁵ The white, goggle-eyed, paste-faced Virgin, monstrous and ridiculous beyond description.

BENDEMANN'S *By the Waters of Babylon*, the engraved picture, vile, distorted, dead, despicable stuff—one base mass of affectation, ignorance, and want of feeling. Grey, or buff, wretched heavy paint

¹ [For Rethel, see Vol. XII. p. 489. The stained-glass windows by Cornelius (1783–1867) are in the choir of the Cathedral; for other references to Overbeck, see Vol. XV. p. 157.]

² [For notes from this same diary on pictures by Rubens at Brussels and Cologne, see above, p. 329.]

³ [Over the altar in the Chapel of the Virgin.]

⁴ [So in the diary; but "Apotheosis of Philip IV." must be a mistake. For Titian's "David," in the Salute at Venice, see Vol. XI. p. 429 *n.*]

⁵ [On the subject of plagiarism, see Vol. V. p. 427.]

—inconceivably clumsy and coarse in drawing—a violet-coloured distance of streaky impossible architecture—no words are strong enough to speak its impotent baseness in its endeavour to be fine.¹

This last picture is in the miserable old Museum—catalogue-less, a squeaking old woman, yet well-mannered and good-natured, telling the names of pictures.²

William of Cologne, and Stephen of Cologne, have some good qualities; the other religious painters are powerless.

A picture of the fourteenth century in tempera—consisting of many compartments under gilded niches, but nearly destroyed by the candles of the altar, and cracking all away in unnoticed neglect, on the left of the chapel to the extreme east of the cathedral choir—contains the only truly and lovely work I have seen in the town. An Annunciation, a Salutation, a Flight into Egypt, and a Virgin and St. Joseph washing the little Christ in a tub of water, out of which he lifts his hands in an appealing manner, are all exquisite.³

In Cornelius's fresco⁴ Achilles is going up a step with a stride at full length of legs, frowning like a boy of fifteen acting Hamlet, drawing his sword; Minerva on the wing catches his hair; the degradation and wooden beastliness of the whole is unspeakable.

BERLIN⁵

RAUCH'S *Frederick the Great*.⁶ Far too high to be seen even by my keen eyes. One sees nothing but soles of boots, cross handle of stick swinging from his wrist, and irregular ragged cloak which destroys the conception of his figure, as it really must have been, wholly. His Apotheosis—he sitting as on a sofa, on the back of an eagle, between its wings, the eagle holding its claws in a pitiful contracted way, like a dog begging, with a painful expression of beak. He holds a palm in one hand! some stars sprinkled about. Not the smallest strength or power of flight in the bird, or understanding of the way an eagle flies—Frederick the Great turned into an ornament for a French drawing-room in ormolu! The whole is set, with exquisite ludicrousness of chance, at the back of the monument, so that if you look the least above the Apotheosis, you have a full view of the horse's posteriors, and if it were alive, there is no saying what might

¹ [Edward Bendemann, born at Berlin 1811, died at Düsseldorf 1889.]

² [A catalogue was compiled a few years after Ruskin's visit.]

³ [These are the paintings on the wings of the Altar of St. Clara, in the Chapel of St. John; ascribed to William of Cologne (died 1378).]

⁴ [At Munich, in the Glyptothek.]

⁵ [Other pictures in the Berlin Gallery noticed by Ruskin are Titian's "Lavinia" (see above, p. 117), and a landscape by Rubens (above, p. 411 *n.*). For a general remark on the Gallery (which has been greatly developed since 1859), see above, Introduction, p. lii.]

⁶ [At the east end of the Linden; a work in bronze erected in 1851. The full height of the statue is, inclusive of the pedestal, somewhat over forty-two feet from the ground. One of the bas-relief tablets which flank the pedestal represents the Apotheosis of the monarch. Ruskin referred to this work, as also to the monument of Queen Louise, in a letter to the *Scotsman* of June 15, 1859; reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. ii. pp. 17, 18, and in a later volume of this edition.]

not happen at any moment to Frederick the Great in Apotheosis. The four equestrian figures of the angles, each horse lifting one of its forelegs, symmetrically at each course, are among the most pitifully uninventive and vulgar pieces of work I have ever seen. Kant has a very disagreeable face. He is talking to Lessing, as if trying to prove something—his hand up. Lessing has his hands folded, and listens apparently in an attentive contempt. In a bit of basrelief behind, a laurel or palm—or some such thing, I forget what—touches Lessing's head—I should think to mark his superiority.

*The Monument to the Queen Louisa*¹ (Charlottenburg) could not, to be tolerably good work, be less pathetic. She has her limbs crossed not gracefully; too little drapery altogether, like a sheet sticking to a person who has rolled about restlessly all night. The head thoroughly German; and a German head, with its thickish end of nose, and its eyes shut, is not beautiful.

There is not one ray of genius nor any peculiar or striking degree of even superficial gift in Rauch. It is entirely commonplace work, and second-rate commonplace.

Queen Louisa's monument, seen by blue light, like scene in *Robert le Diable*, Doric pillars outside, APW all the inscription—but much German inside—of tolerably well-chosen texts. Avenue of pines leading up to it is good.

HOLBEIN.—*Portrait of George Gyzen*. Black overcoat, white shirt seen at throat, red undercoat showing itself at sleeves. Woodwork behind of vivid green. A ball of golden and blue enamel suspended in the upper corner, absolutely definite in drawing of pattern, as firm in outline as his ink drawing, yet by pure gradation and tremulousness of exquisite painting made to look as round and tender and lovely as if it were Titian's work. The pinks in glass, the glass itself, and the paper on table quite ineffable in perspective. The face I think not quite so fine. The hair also is too much drawn hair by hair, but a wonderful piece of work. Note that his seal ring, lying on the table, has the arms on it in colour. They are too mysteriously and exquisitely painted to be made out; three yellow flowers of this shape—size [sketch]—in vase with pinks; they come on the red sleeve; the red pinks on the black.²

DRESDEN

BACKGROUNDS OF TITIAN.—1. RED LADY.³ All grey. An octagonal table, with carved foot *dimly* painted, for her hand to rest on. Darks of dress and hair all dark on ground.

¹ [Louisa, Queen of Prussia, born 1776 (daughter of Duke Charles of Mecklenburg-Strelitz); married, 1793, the Crown Prince, afterwards King Frederick William III. of Prussia; died 1810. The monument is by Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857).]

² [This famous portrait is described by Ruskin in his paper on "Sir Joshua and Holbein," reprinted in a later volume of this edition.]

³ [No. 1. "Red Lady" is the "Portrait of a Lady in a Red Dress" (No. 176 in the present numbering of the Gallery): see above, Preface, § 4, p. 6. Elsewhere

2. WHITE FAN. All brown, very dark, *no object*. A dim light cast conventionally relieves the dark of hair and line of neck dark against it down to the shoulder knot, where all again is light on the ground.
 3. LAVINIA. Dark grey on left, so dark as to throw out the lights of the dark green dress in strong light relief. A grey wall behind on the right is lighter; it has no object, but the name Lavinia and something more on it. It throws out the line of the neck, the hair, and waist in dark upon it, while Lavinia's own shadow cast on it throws her sleeve again into light.
 4. A dark woman in black, of which I have engraving; all brown.
 5. Woman with vase, cleaned to pieces, greenish-grey, no object, some trick of light as in white fan.
- VERONESE.—The four great ones,¹ and three smaller ones—namely, (1) Supper at Emmaus; (2) Finding of Moses; (3) Centurion beseeching for his Servant.
1. First idea of that in the Louvre, the same child, a vine arcade on the left in plain brown, wonderfully laid in. Expression much better in figures than in larger picture.
 2. Superb, but unsatisfactory. Thin tall figures—awkward action of soldiers. Fine grotesque dwarf and dogs. But figures only about four feet high; a bad size. In this picture is a sunrise with rays and clouds. Total failure. Rays hard edged so [sketch]. Compare with Turner's hard ray in Lucerne.
 3. Remarkable for expression of intense humility in Centurion, while his dress, face, and retinue are purposely made splendid in the extreme. Veronese expresses the astonishment of the humiliation better than any one I ever heard speak of the thing.
- CORREGGIO.—1. "LA NOTTE."² The infant is lighted from above, the back of its head being brown. But there is no light above to account for this, and the child lights everything else, angel

in the diary Ruskin says, "Note the absolutely green or olive-grey background without the slightest break in my Red Lady. Also, two portraits of Giovanni and Gentile Bellini (by John Bellini?) in Berlin Gallery, quite magnificent and entirely dark in background." These portraits are now ascribed to the school of Bellini, but they do not represent the artist and his brother. There is a similar double portrait in the Louvre (see Vol. XII. p. 453).

No. 2 is "Titian's daughter Lavinia as a Bride" (No. 170): see above, Preface, § 4, p. 6.

No. 3 is "Lavinia as a Married Woman" (No. 171): see above, Preface, § 4, and p. 117. Elsewhere in the diary Ruskin notes, "Richness of mouth very peculiar."

No. 4 is the "Portrait of a Lady in Mourning" (No. 174).

No. 5 is the "Portrait of a Lady with a Vase" (No. 173).]

¹ [Ruskin probably meant by the four (1) "The Cuccina Family" (No. 224): formerly called "His own Family"; for this see above, pp. 290, 330. (2) "Christ bearing His Cross" (No. 227): not now attributed to the master himself; for this see above, p. 294. (3) "The Rape of Europa" (No. 243): also not now attributed to the master himself; for this see above, p. 117. (4) The "Adoration of the Magi" (No. 225), or the "Marriage in Cana" (No. 226), a smaller version of the picture in the Louvre.

For the "Supper at Emmaus" (No. 233), see above, p. 336; the "Finding of Moses" is No. 229; the "Centurion," No. 228.]

² ["The Nativity" (No. 152), commonly called "La Notte."]

and all. The light is *white*. It would be easy to give mystical reasons for this; perhaps Correggio meant it. The Shepherd with lamb on shoulder in his majestic dulness (a man capable of greatness stupefied by shepherd life) is fine. The other figures, intentionally vulgar, fine also, but detestably like Murillo.¹ Yet a mighty picture. The sprawling angel at top is the worst fault in it.

Compare the diagonals of stick in this picture with trunk in *Æsacus* and *Hesperie*.²

2. ST. SEBASTIAN.³ Madonna above has crude yellow light behind her. Straddling angel of cloud. Twisting St. Sebastian on left.

3. ST. JOHN BAPTIST. A dark Madonna against whitish light. Head of (St. Francis?) on left, execrably drawn. Dark St. John Baptist on right.

Vegetation marvellous on left of this picture.

4. ST. GEORGE. Coxcomb angel—ditto St. George—and petite maitresse Madonna. Lemons and oranges above Dragon's head on ground, with streaks of blood running from it, not large, yet at once making one think of an ox head at a butcher's.

The vegetation is almost the only thing left pure and of high value in the Correggios.⁴ It is superb in all—miraculously composed in the *Notte*. Their vulgar graces are very repulsive to me, as much as of old at Parma nearly, but I see the enormous power and lusciousness more.

Correggio's ideal of drapery is very curious. So square and angular and false, and yet so fine. No gravity in it.

Note lemons and oranges painted very thoroughly in the great garland above the picture of the St. George.

VINCENZO CATENA.—Most exquisite saint's head in retouched wreck of picture.⁵

PALMA VECCHIO.—Recumbent Venus: head superb. Two Holy Families most beautiful.

VANDYCK.—*Queen Henrietta*. White, grey, and gold. Ineffably beautiful in conception, though far lower than Titian in mode of work. It is almost exactly half way between Titian and Leslie. The lady-like, drawing-room grace is just on a level with the painting.

A *Madonna* of Vandyck's pretty, but she and the Christ both intensely vulgar.

TITIAN.—*Holy Family with Magdalen*; not satisfactory. Query, an imperfect picture, if so highly interesting.⁶

¹ [For Ruskin on Murillo, see Vol. III. p. 670.]

² [For this drawing by Turner, see the Plate in *Lectures on Landscape*.]

³ ["The Virgin Enthroned, with St. Sebastian and other Saints" (No. 151). "St. John Baptist" is "The Virgin Enthroned, with St. John Baptist, St. Francis, and other Saints" (No. 150); for the "St. George" (No. 159), now attributed to "School of Correggio," see above, p. 118.]

⁴ [See pt. vi. ch. x. § 5 (p. 117).]

⁵ [A "Holy Family" (No. 65).]

⁶ [The attribution to Titian of this picture (which has been much restored) has been doubted, but it is now generally accepted as an early work of the master.]

TITIAN.—*Tribute money*; poor, except in hand. Perhaps overcleaned.

REMBRANDT.—His wife on his knee, champagne in hand, and peacock in pie on table. The finest Rembrandt I ever saw. Compare the moral of it with Veronese Family: he himself, observe, has his hands in attitude of prayer, and is in the background of all.¹

REMBRANDT'S *Ahasuerus and Esther* is as great a piece of painting as I have seen of his after the Peacock Pie. It is wholly false in chiaroscuro. The light falls brilliantly on the Esther alone, though it enters far on the left at *a* [sketch]. It is graduated up to her past the dark figures; at first one thinks there must be a torch or light in the dish in centre of table. But no such thing; perhaps Rembrandt first intended it; but assuredly he intended finally to efface it, painting a white sleeve over it. For all the left cheeks of the figures on Esther's right hand are dark. They would have been light had there been a candle in the dish. The garnish of small wall ferns and other herbage in this dish is wonderfully painted for look of fact.

MUNICH²

WOUVERMANS.—Large landscape in Gallery here.³ Note confusion of ideas. It is neither a river nor a lake; much too large for a river, it yet has no reflections nor any other character of wide water—a slate table merely. On it boats; some fishing—a net with corks in bad perspective; others bathing, a man pulling his shirt over his ears; others swimming about. On the left a mixture of villa and ruin—square castellated tower; gardens at the top, some trellis and creepers give a fantastic, unlikely look to the rest. A gentleman coming downstairs here to get into a boat, a servant catches his dog. The foreground is a ragged, dark, comfortless bit of Dutch broken ground, with, however, some graceful trees and a statue on a pedestal. Under which are three musicians, one fluting, two fiddling, and two people dancing—a well-dressed couple—a coach in waiting behind. A beautifully, or at least richly and highly dressed woman on horseback, with a falcon, is the principal figure in picture . . .⁴ and touched up in his usual way, and really graceful. In the centre a fatter woman is riding her horse into the water after a stag and hind, who are galloping as on dry ground in the middle of the water, which is to be presumed a ford. One horseman pursues cautiously, another is thrown headforemost into the river, which is deep at the edges, though shallow in the middle. The dogs swim, some running footmen, and other dogs are coming up, and children are sailing a toy boat in the close foreground. The colour of all is dark and grey to bring out the lights, spotty as usual; the sky cloudy and cold.

¹ [For this picture, see above, p. 331.]

² [For notices of other pictures in the Munich Gallery, see above, Preface, p. 6 (Titian's Admiral) and p. 328 (Rubens' Last Judgment).]

³ [Now No. 496: "A Stag Hunt"; see above, p. 365.]

⁴ [Word indecipherable.]

PAUL POTTER.—Paul Potter's wonderful one: "Une femme à côté de son mari apprend à marcher à un petit enfant." Small cattle piece with sheep, an old woman, stooping, holding a child at play with another.¹ Paul Potter had found out the delight of drawing wrinkles, knots, and clusters of hair, and dwells on these exclusively, loving all high character everywhere for the sake of mere sinuosities. The fleece and bark of tree are, however, in this picture marvellously wrought. He differs from all other Dutch painters in having a true idea of the grass of trees, and in refusing black trickery to set off his light, which is pale and beautifully diffused Cuyp.

De Hooghe, Paul Potter, Teniers, are the chief Dutch painters of any true merit.

[1133.²] TITIAN.—*Jupiter and Antiöpe*. Very sensual. Flesh has been fine—much injured. Gold and grey. Rich in texture. Two heads only. Would make one think Titian most base in aim, if one was nothing else.

[572.] ZACHTLEVEN.³—Minute, blue, and grey; toy-like view of Rhine. No sense of sublimity or power or freshness, but some of quantity and delicacy and space. Very odd, and to be thought over. Ruins all neat. 574, same kind. 573, same, on Rhine; painted on copper, the others on wood.

[549.] RUYSDAEL.—"Paysage d'Hiver." Black sky, entirely gloomy and desolate, no one beauty or virtue felt; nothing but cold and darkness unconsolated. Commonplace painting, but genuine.

[470.⁴] TERBURG.—A messenger giving a letter to a lady dressed in red. Very fine indeed of its kind. Exquisite ornament and costume drawing in the messenger; rich and *enjoyed* intensely, but not exaggerated.

[437.⁴] A boy cleaning his dog; much broader and grander and really fine.

[546.] RUYSDAEL.—Fine dark landscape with grey swollen brook; not a vestige of colour or reflection in it. Oaks on hill behind.

[830.] *Pieta* of VANDYCK.—Base form of picturesque; miserably false. The body casting a black shadow on white cloth, and no light reflected from the cloth. The whole forced, false, and without one atom of true feeling, but very captivating; the commonplace of sentiment much stronger than it would be in a great man; the Madonna looking up in an agonising appeal to heaven: "Why has this been permitted?" But it is all principle of pyramid. Balance of lights, white scroll on cross, used as a beautiful carving, light, etc. Yet all this might and would be done by Titian or Tintoret, and yet it would be noble because true.

[1304.] MURILLO.—Two beggar boys, one a melon on knee, cut; he has his own slice in hand with two great bites out of it, his cheek stuffed full; his companion has a slice with two smaller bites off the

¹ [No. 472. For remarks suggested by this note, see above, p. 333.]

² [This picture, formerly ascribed to Titian, is now catalogued under Paolo Veronese.]

³ [Herman Zachtleven (or Saftleven), of Rotterdam, 1609–1685.]

⁴ [Now Nos. 388 and 389. For Ruskin's admiration of Terburg's workmanship see above, p. 369.]

end; he hangs a bunch of grapes into his mouth, and is ostentatiously sucking the end of it in. Two flies on the inside of the melon, admirable in their way, and the whole firmly and simply painted, no humbug or slurring; the grapes very fine, the whole of best possible Murillo quality.

[495.¹] PAUL VERONESE.—*Flight into Egypt*. St. Joseph has taken out a clasp-knife to cut something for dinner, the Virgin giving the child suck; his little shirt laid out, sleeves downwards, on a palmleaf to dry; two angels, swinging at another palm, gathering the dates; and two putting up the donkey in a nice little temporary stall in the shade: one of the angels is, I think, going to rub him down.²

[In some briefer jottings Ruskin notes the portraits by Hans Holbein, the younger, of Derich Born (212) and "Sir Bryan Tuke" (213), and notes of the latter that it gives "the origin of much in the Knight and Death" (of Dürer).

He notices the series of pictures, ascribed to the elder Holbein (Nos. 193–211), as "all of immense interest and finish," at that time "hung out of sight." He marks with special notes of admiration the St. Barbara (210) and the St. Elizabeth (211). These he described in *Ariadne Florentina* (§§ 164, 167, 256); and see also "Sir Joshua and Holbein," § 17.

Among other "abuses in the Gallery" in the matter of hanging, he notices that Titian's "Charles V." and "Grimani" were hung too high.³ Among pictures which he marks for special note are Moroni's "fine portrait" (1124); Veronese's "magnificent portrait" of a Venetian Lady (1135); Titian's portrait of Aretino ("fine," 1111); and a "fine portrait" by Paris Bordone—of a woman in red velveteen (1122). "My little girl" of Vandyck's is also noted; that is, the girl who holds her mother's arm in the portrait of the wife of Colyn de Nole, the sculptor (No. 844). Ruskin made a copy of the girl, which is preserved at Herne Hill.]

¹ [In the old catalogue of the Gallery; the picture is not included in the new catalogue.]

² [Passages in the MS. of pt. ix. ch. vi. ("Rubens and Cuyp"), at the place where Ruskin is discussing the treatment of animals by the old masters (pp. 332 *seq.*), show that he intended at one time to notice this picture there. "Angel and donkey picture" he calls it, and the following description occurs:—

"Two angels are putting up the donkey; other two have set to work to gather dates, and are enjoying it immensely—swinging about in the palmtree like monkeys, shaking and fluttering and sending down ever so many more than are wanted; one can hear them laughing to each other like school-boys."

³ [Compare *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 4.]



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