Sesame and Lilies

John Ruskin

DEBORAH EPSTEIN NORD, *Editor*

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RETHINKING THE WESTERN TRADITION

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The volumes in this series seek to address the present debate over the Western tradition by reprinting key works of that tradition along with essays that evaluate each text from different perspectives.

EDITORIAL

COMMITTEE FOR

Rethinking the Western Tradition

Sesame and Lilies

JOHN RUSKIN

Edited and with an Introduction by
Deborah Epstein Nord
with essays by
Elizabeth Helsinger
Seth Koven
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For Our Students

Contents

Acknowledgments

I am delighted to introduce a text that I have taught for many years and have long wanted to see in print in a modern edition. When Jonathan Brent and Lara Heimert, editors at Yale University Press, asked if I had anything in mind for inclusion in Yale's series "Rethinking the Western Tradition," I thought immediately of John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*. I want to thank them both for their initial support of this project and Lara Heimert for seeing it through. It has been a particular pleasure to benefit from her advice and encouragement.

I also wish to thank Seth Koven, who shares my enthusiasm for *Sesame and Lilies* and has encouraged me over the years in this enterprise, and Kim Oldenburg, who helped with the Ruskin chronology, the suggestions for further reading, and the glossary. Readers will, I am certain, appreciate these aspects of the volume almost as much as I do.

Chronology of Ruskin's Life and Works

1819 Born in London to Scottish parents, John James and Margaret Cox Ruskin.

1836 Meets and falls in love with Adèle Domecq, the daughter of his father's business partner.

1837 Matriculates at Oxford and lives there with his mother until 1840. A series of articles which together comprise "The Poetry of Architecture" is published in *Architectural Magazine* (1837–38).

1839 Wins Oxford's Newdigate Prize for poetry with "Salsette and Elephanta." Meets Wordsworth.

1840 Meets Turner. Informed of Adèle Domecq's marriage. Embarks on a European tour with parents (1840–41).

1841 Writes *The King of the Golden River* for Euphemia Chalmers Gray.

1842 Earns A.B. at Oxford.

1843 Publishes first volume of *Modern Painters* anonymously as "A Graduate at Oxford."

1845 Embarks on first European tour without parents.

1846 Publishes second volume of *Modern Painters*.

1848 Marries Euphemia Chalmers Gray on April 10. Tours Normandy with wife and studies Gothic architecture.

1849 Publishes *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*.

1850 Publishes *Collected Poems* and *The King of the Golden River* (which is nonetheless dated 1851).

1851 Publishes first volume of *The Stones of Venice*, "Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds," and *Pre-Raphaelitism.* Writes a letter to the *Times* in defense of Hunt, Millais, and other Pre-Raphaelites. Meets Millais, Rossetti, and Hunt. Commences friendship with Carlyle. Turner dies.

1853 Publishes volumes two and three of *The Stones of Venice.*

1854 Marriage annulled on grounds of nonconsummation. Begins lecturing on art at the new Working Men's College. Publishes *Lectures on Architecture and Painting.*

1855 Meets Tennyson.

1856 Publishes volumes three and four of *Modern Painters*.

1857 Lectures on "The Political Economy of Art" at Manchester. Publishes *The Elements of Drawing.*

1858 Meets and falls in love with Rose La Touche, a girl thirty years his junior. Categorically rejects Protestantism in Turin.

1860 Completes *Modern Painters*. Publishes four essays in the *Cornhill Magazine* which incite such criticism that the series is terminated and the essays are not published again until two years later in *Unto This Last.*

1862 Publishes "Essays on Political Economy" in *Fraser's Magazine* (1862–63) and republishes them as *Munera Pulveris* in 1872.

1864 Father dies on March 2, leaving Ruskin wealthy. Delivers "Traffic," later reprinted in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens," which together became *Sesame and Lilies*.

1865 Publishes *Sesame and Lilies*.

1866 Proposes marriage to Rose La Touche and is rejected largely on the basis of religious difference. Publishes *The Crown of Wild Olive* and *The Ethics of the Dust*.

1867 Publishes *Time and Tide*.

1868 Lectures on "The Mystery of Life and Its Arts," which is appended to *Sesame and Lilies* in 1871.

1869 Publishes *The Queen of the Air*. Appointed first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford.

1871 Begins publication of *Fors Clavigera*, which is issued monthly until 1878 and then sporadically until 1884. Purchases Brantwood in Lancashire, where he lives for the rest of his life. Mother dies December 5.

1875 Rose La Touche dies insane.

1877 A suit for libel is issued against Ruskin for an attack on Whistler in *Fors Clavigera.*

1878 Suspends publication of *Fors Clavigera* after suffering an attack of madness, the first of seven such attacks over the course of the next decade. Unable to testify in *Whistler v. Ruskin* in November.

1879 Resigns Slade Professorship.

1880 Resumes *Fors Clavigera*. Publishes *Fiction, Fair and Foul in the Nineteenth Century* (1880–81). Publishes *A Joy for Ever*.
1883 Resumes Professorship at Oxford.
1884 Lectures on "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" at the London Institution and begins to publish *The Pleasures of England*. Publishes *The Art of England*.
1885 Publishes the first two volumes of *Praeterita* (1885–88), the final portion of which is published in 1889.
1889 Experiences his worst attack of madness, ceases writing altogether, and lives in relative seclusion at Brantwood.
1900 Dies on January 20 of influenza and is buried in Coniston churchyard.

Editor's Introduction

DEBORAH EPSTEIN NORD

The series in which this edition of John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* appears is predicated on the notion that certain texts persist and yet change over time and so merit revisiting from the perspective of a particular historical moment. I want to comment here on why Ruskin's 1865 volume qualifies as one such text and to suggest how the significance of this work has changed even in the course of the past fifty years. I also want to introduce this volume of *Sesame and Lilies* as a gesture of reunion and reclamation, bringing together in one modern edition the two parts of the text — "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens" — that have so often been considered as separate statements in the recent past. The essays by Elizabeth Helsinger, Jan Marsh, and Seth Koven that follow Ruskin's text here tell us much about what *Sesame and Lilies* meant to his Victorian audience while registering the numerous things it might mean to us now. A controversial, important, lasting, sometimes maddening text, *Sesame and Lilies* belongs in this series on "Rethinking the Western Tradition" both because its meanings have not yet been exhausted and because it continues to be a difficult and troubling work about questions that themselves are vexing and unresolved. What are the natures, if they can be discerned, of masculinity and femininity? How are they created? What is the relation of the family to the world outside? What are our duties to the common good in a grossly materialist age?

Ruskin himself remains a complicated and contradictory figure: a self-described "violent Tory of the old school" who was nonetheless claimed by late nineteenth-century socialists as a principal influence, a highly original critic of art and architecture who also wrote about economics, a lover of the Middle Ages who preached radical change.[1] Like the other Victorian Jeremiahs who have come to be known as "sages," he produced a voluminous body of work and relentlessly harangued his contemporaries about their greed, callousness to the poor, excesses of individualism, and im-

poverished aesthetic sensibility.[2] *Sesame and Lilies*, which consists of two lectures Ruskin delivered in Manchester in 1864, was probably his most popular work during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Ruskin's most recent biographer, Tim Hilton, refers to it as "a Victorian classic in permanent demand."[3] In Britain it became a best-seller, a common gift for girls, and a fixture in middle-class homes. The National Union List for pre-1956 imprints, which includes both British and American editions, lists 183 entries for this text, as against 82 for Ruskin's imposing *Stones of Venice* and 45 for his recently much-studied *Unto This Last*. When Ruskin began lecturing at Oxford in 1870 as the Slade Professor of Fine Arts, his first important biographer, R. H. Wilenski, tells us, intellectually adventurous young women in the audience "recalled that their last school prize had been a book called *Sesame and Lilies* in which they had been told they must braid their minds as well as their hair each morning before their mirrors."[4] But it also made its mark in France, where its second edition was translated and introduced at some length by Proust. His *Sesame et les Lys* was reprinted ten times before 1935. For Proust, as for Elizabeth Helsinger in her essay here, Ruskin's popular school prize seemed a meditation on the subject of reading, a work about "that fruitful miracle of a communication in the midst of solitude."[5]

Ruskin himself would not likely have found this striking popularity surprising; nor, I like to think, would he have questioned the inclusion of this particular work of his in this series. In his preface to the 1882 edition of *Sesame and Lilies* he declared that, "if read in connection with *Unto this Last*, it contains the chief truths I have endeavoured through all my past life to display."[6] This rather large claim on Ruskin's part for an admittedly slim and sometimes overlooked volume speaks to the centrality of its subject to his ongoing critique of society. The "chief truths" of *Unto This Last* (1860), which dwelt on the corrosive, soul-destroying effects of greed, competition, laissez-faire economics, and capitalist ethics, needed to be joined with the lessons of *Sesame and Lilies:* with a kind of moral instruction that credited the most private matters of the individual life — manhood and womanhood and the relations between them — with the power of social redemption. In *Sesame and Lilies* the aesthetic — and especially the literary — realm was brought to bear on the social; and the life of the family, and, indeed, love between men and women, was linked to questions of the public good. Ruskin made gender (as we now refer to the qualities attributed respectively to the two sexes) intrinsic to an attack on what the Victorians called mammonism. If we consider that Ruskin's master, Carlyle, mounted a similarly vatic assault on the materialist fever of his day without ever considering the

role of womanhood and man's relation to woman a matter of concern, we begin to understand just how striking and how important to Ruskin's oeuvre was *Sesame and Lilies*. And without reading the two parts as one, without seeing "Kings" and "Queens" together, as it were, we miss just this distinctiveness of Ruskin's social vision.

In the 1960s, the decade in which the trenchant and radical social criticism of the Victorians was rediscovered and reinvented in the image of the times, Ruskin came into his own once more, this time as a powerful figure for the late twentieth century. As brilliant student — perhaps inventor — of art and architectural history, champion of the countercultural Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and prophet of anticapitalism, Ruskin joined other hard-to-categorize Victorian sages as our near contemporary. Two anthologies of his writing appeared for the use of students: John D. Rosenberg's indispensable *The Genius of John Ruskin* (1963) and Kenneth Clark's only slightly less useful *Ruskin Today* (1964). Judging that readers needed help wading through the thirty-nine volume Library Edition of *The Works of John Ruskin*, edited by E. T. Cook and Thomas Wedderburn (1903–1912), Rosenberg and Clark selected excerpts from the works and grouped them topically. The bias of each was to recognize the genius of Ruskin's aesthetic criticism and the startling modernity of his social commentary. A glance at *The Genius of John Ruskin* gives us an indication of where *Sesame and Lilies* fit into the image of the 1960s John Ruskin. A deftly edited version of the entire sweep of "Of Kings' Treasuries" is included in a section entitled "Society." In the introduction to "Society" Rosenberg offers his readers the Ruskin whose writings helped convert Clement Atlee to socialism, the Ruskin whose *Unto This Last* was identified by twenty-nine independent Labourites returned to Parliament in 1906 as the book that had most deeply influenced their thinking, the Ruskin who was extolled and translated into Indic dialect by Gandhi.[7] Most vivid and compelling for Rosenberg was that passage from "Of Kings' Treasuries" that Ruskin insisted on having printed in red letters, the section in which he scolds his prosperous and callous audience for allowing blind workers to starve (§36). Rosenberg does not include any part of "Queens' Gardens." Were its sentiments simply irrelevant to his interests, or were they too dated, even embarrassing?

For Kate Millett, the author of *Sexual Politics* (1970), that ur-text of feminist literary criticism, the answer to this last query would surely have been that the Ruskinian vision of "Queens' Gardens" was an embarrassment to the mid-twentieth-century liberal spirit, and rightly so. In a section of *Sexual Politics* titled "Polemical," Millett explored the Ruskin that

Rosenberg, Clark, and others had elided and, in the process, framed our understanding of *Sesame and Lilies* as a classic antifeminist text.[8] Pairing it with John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869), Millett identified these two men as representatives of the opposite poles of Victorian thought on the role of women: Ruskin embodied the chivalric, patriarchal, and repressive point of view, Mill the realistic, progressive, and egalitarian. In more current language, Ruskin believed in an essentialist idea of femininity, Mill in a socially constructed one; Ruskin declared that he wanted men to worship women, whereas Mill exposed this kind of worship as a form of denigration; Ruskin reified the idea of "separate spheres" for men and women, relegating women to the sphere of home, whereas Mill invited women into public life, legal equality, even service to the state. Noting the similarities between "Of Queens' Gardens" and Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, Millett pointed out that Ruskin's critique of masculine greed and callousness was shored up by a sentimental and retrograde notion of the feminine. So powerful and, in some respects, so canny was Millett's reading that her *Sexual Politics* managed to establish these statements of Ruskin's and Mill's as fixtures of the canon not only of gender studies but of Victorian studies as well.

Kate Millett's revision of the importance of *Sesame and Lilies*, however, also truncated the text (she lopped off "Of Kings' Treasuries" while anthologists like Rosenberg had omitted "Of Queens' Gardens"), and she, too, spoke out of her own political sensibility and moment. She made Mill and Ruskin into her own contemporaries, comparing Ruskin to Erik Erikson, the psychologist who declared women to be "destined to a life of 'Inner Space,' " and Mill to the proponents of the contemporary women's liberation movement.[9] Millett's understandable enthusiasm for Mill may have obscured for her the ways in which he romanticized companionate relations between the sexes and celebrated the notion of sexual complementarity. In a passage bordering on an essentialist delineation of the differences between male and female cognition, Mill lauded women's attentiveness to individuals, their rootedness in present feelings, and their ability to give "reality" to the abstract and speculative tendencies of men's thought.[10] In the case of Ruskin, Millett failed to see that his views were not simply "normative," as she suggested, but rather constituted a protest against a decorative and trivial view of women that prevailed in a particularly insidious manner in the privileged classes. "You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments," he admonishes, "and then complain of their frivolity" (§80). She also missed what many historians have been able to establish, that Ruskin's views, as well as his personal tutelage,

propelled many young women out of the sphere of family and into the wider world and gave them a necessary rationale for extending their duties, however homely they were understood to be, beyond the home.

It is this contradictory quality of Ruskin's legacy that we see so clearly from our own vantage point, thirty years after *Sexual Politics*, and that recent Ruskin scholarship has underscored.[11] All three essayists represented in this volume emphasize the equivocal message of *Sesame and Lilies:* the undeniable condescension toward women on the one hand and the incitement to female seriousness and diligence on the other. One of the chief sources of this particular ambiguity in *Sesame and Lilies* is Ruskin's notion of the idea of "Home" and his tendency to use it as an abstraction. He pries it loose from the circumscribed realm of the domestic and from the cloistered dwelling place of the family, so that it is never quite congruent with the private sphere. For Ruskin "Home" is a place of peacefulness, a shelter from anxiety and privation, from "terror, doubt, and division." If either husband or wife allows the "anxieties of the outer life" to intrude, then their household is no longer a home and becomes "only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in" (§68). By the same token, home could extend beyond the threshold. Indeed, Ruskin exhorted his listeners and readers to expand the beneficence of home as a means of social reform. It was clear that this expansion depended upon women: "Wherever a true wife comes," he declares, "home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is" (§68). Ruskin burdened women with the duty of home-building, but this duty was understood, as well, as license to enter the arena of public life, not just as ladies bountiful or philanthropists but as teachers, nurses, artists, reformers, tenement managers, and slum workers.

Taken as a whole, *Sesame and Lilies* insists on the need for men and women to fulfill both private and public duties, however unlike these duties are ostensibly imagined to be. Indeed, although Ruskin repeatedly tries to define the distinct natures, talents, and obligations of the two sexes — "Now their separate characters are briefly these" (§68), "each completes the other," "they are in nothing alike" (§67) — the roles and even the attributes of men and women have a way of bleeding into each other in Ruskin's two essays. With our eye sharpened by current interest in masculinity as a vexed and fluid category, we see, as both Seth Koven and Jan Marsh have shown in this volume, that Ruskin also aims at refashioning manhood. At the very least, he sees his antimaterialist critique of men in "Of Kings' Treasuries" as parallel to his anti-ornamental critique of women

in "Of Queens' Gardens." But we might go even further by detecting in the language of Ruskin's text the proposition that men and women might profitably exchange those characteristics that are commonly associated with their own sex.

One of the chief benefits we derive from reading the two parts of *Sesame and Lilies* together is the ability to follow Ruskin's language as he shifts from the subject of men to the subject of women and weaves the two together. He does this, above all, by deploying two sets of metaphors, one natural or botanical, associated initially with femininity, and the other manufactural or artisanal, associated with masculinity. The titles of his two lectures signal this division quite conspicuously, of course, and the title he gave the published work — *Sesame and Lilies* — suggests that he sought to move men beyond hoards of precious metals to stores of life-giving and magical seed (§49). The most elaborate and most memorable use of these metaphors appears in "Of Queens' Gardens," when Ruskin advises parents to let their daughters read widely and in an unsupervised manner. "Turn her loose into the old library," he urges, "and let her alone." Parents need not fear that their daughters will choose unwisely:

> She will find what is good for her; you cannot: for there is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's — you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does, — she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life; but you cannot fetter her; she must take her own fair form and way. (§78)

Leaving aside, for the moment, the ominous possibilities of feminine decay and defilement, we notice above all in this passage that femininity for Ruskin is more natural than masculinity. Girls must simply be allowed to develop from that seed or bulb of feminine self that they possess at birth, whereas boys must be *made*, chiseled or hammered, forged out of difficult and recalcitrant materials. Girls are creatures of nature, boys of art, technology, and civilization. This nature/culture division should not surprise us (although there is something particularly vivid about Ruskin's imagery); more unexpected is Ruskin's urging at various points throughout *Sesame and Lilies* that men become more natural and, somewhat less insistently, that women can be manufactured.

In "Of Kings' Treasuries" Ruskin allies a number of artisanal images

with the acts of both writing and reading, thereby turning these ostensibly creative and cerebral activities into vigorous pursuits. A book, he claims early on, is the author's "inscription, or scripture," a text he or she might imprint upon the world as if to "engrave it on rock" (§9). The reader must mine meaning from books as he or she might search for gold: "often you will need sharpest, finest *chiselling*, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal" (§14; emphasis added). Art and aesthetic meaning require exertion and craft, just as the education of boys calls for hammering, molding, etching. Although Ruskin seems to feel that men need encouragement to engage in this muscular mental labor, he expresses little doubt about their ultimate ability to perform it. He betrays much more skepticism, however, about their talent for sympathy, for what he calls "passion" or "sensation" (§27). To achieve the level of sympathetic understanding needed to respond both to the "great teachers" — that is, the great writers — and to the "innocent poor" will require what amounts here to a feminine faculty: "the 'tact' or 'touch-faculty,' of body and soul: that tact which the Mimosa has in trees, which the pure woman has above all creatures; fineness and fulness of sensation, beyond reason; — the guide and sanctifier of reason itself" (§28). Without this faculty men are vulgar and materialistic, worshipful of money-making, and absorbed in selfish desire. Notice here how Ruskin marshals the botanical image — the mimosa — and links this sensitive plant, said to droop when touched, to women, especially virtuous ones. The "natural" power that men can learn from women, or at least that women can exemplify, trumps reason and makes possible not just charitable feeling but full intellectual experience.

When in need of an antidote to the "false business of money-making," a pointedly masculine weakness featured prominently in "Of Kings' Treasuries," Ruskin tends to turn to the botanical metaphors he associates with the feminine. Men, now having no "true business," he asserts, pour their "whole masculine energy" into the business of acquiring and hoarding. If the time comes when men are rightly and justly occupied, their pleasure will grow not out of gold (another metal) but out of their work, "as the colour-petals out of a fruitful flower" (§39). By "Of Queens' Gardens" Ruskin extends this opposition between the floral and the mineral, the natural and the crafted, from the individual to the nation. He asks his audience whether, if they could double or quadruple their incomes, they would be willing to turn their back gardens into coal mines, their "flower-beds into heaps of coke." This, he charges, is what England as a nation has done: "The whole country is but a little garden. . . . And this little garden you will turn into furnace ground" (§§82, 83). With this imagery Ruskin

links the masculine greed he excoriates in "Of Kings' Treasuries" to the defilement of the land through mining and industry. A different kind of mining and chiseling, the acts of reading and writing, will help to curtail the literal and metaphorical destruction of the country; so too will the powers of nature and the feminine talents with which they are allied prove to be restorative.

At the end of *Sesame and Lilies*, when Ruskin moves into a feverish and explicitly Christian rhetoric, the author calls on this metaphorical opposition one last time. Exhorting his "queens" to come, like Tennyson's Maud, into the garden, he hints that Christ will be waiting at the gate, waiting to take them down to "see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine has flourished, and the pomegranate budded" (§95). The gardens and lush valleys are contrasted, in the final line, with the cities, where the "Son of Man" — and presumably the homeless and urban poor — have only stones on which to lay their heads. Flowers themselves but also gardeners, like Christ, women are left with the challenge of transforming the "stones" of the manmade, crafted, and rough-hewn city into a garden, a place of peace and shelter for the needy. But virtuous women's duty is not simply to the downtrodden in general, not simply to those who have no soft pillows for their weary heads. Ruskin called them — and here Kate Millett understood precisely what he was about — to the mission of saving fallen women.[12]

The floral imagery Ruskin mobilizes to suggest woman's closeness to natural instinct, beauty, and gentleness serves also to conjure an always sexually vulnerable creature. Just before he reminds women that Christ awaits them at the garden gate, he encourages them to revive the flowers along their paths that have wilted and drooped: "these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken: will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them in their trembling, from the fierce wind?" (§94). As Elizabeth Helsinger points out, the fallen women evoked here remind us both of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Jenny" and of the narcissus who, though in no need of hammering or chiseling or shaping into maturity, might easily fall and defile her head in the dust. However vast their potential for sensitivity and virtue, women are always vulnerable to sin because of their sexuality. The flowers he chooses to exemplify femininity — narcissus and mimosa (for which the full Latin name is *Mimosa pudica*) — underscore woman's fundamentally sexual nature, be it dangerous or fragile. The fallen flowers of *Sesame and Lilies* constitute a code that, together with certain other brief and scattered references, expresses the author's anxiety about the havoc that women can wreak. Drawing on the chivalric tradition, he marvels at the

buckling of a knight's armor by his lady as "the type of an eternal truth" but is nonetheless quick to imagine that "only when she braces it loosely [does] the honour of manhood fail" (§65). Similarly, he describes the sacrosanct home that a husband protects and a wife rules as a place of complete safety, immune from danger and temptation "unless [woman] herself has sought it" (§68). The unbuckled brace, the temptation allowed to cross the threshold and enter the inner sanctum — these are women's fault, and they can lead to total undoing. If woman's sympathy is natural, so too is her treachery.

If I am right, and Ruskin uses his two lectures in Manchester to propose a renovation of femininity and masculinity through an exchange of attributes, a question remains about woman's susceptibility to artisanry, to manufacture. That Ruskin imports botanical metaphors to urge sympathy, sensitivity, and charitable sentiment on his male audience seems clear, but does he ever imply that women can be shaped, constructed, *chiseled*? If women are intractably natural, then how, outside of the botanist's hothouse (an image employed by John Stuart Mill, as it happens, to signal the *distorting* effects of culture on women's natural state), can they be influenced by education or reading or social opportunity? The answer to this, as to so much else about the gender prescriptions of *Sesame and Lilies*, points to ambiguity and contradiction. Ruskin can never wean himself from the idea that woman's character grows organically from a germ of personality, virtue, and vulnerability, and he seldom employs the language of masonry or engraving in referring to the crafting of her character and mind. But the fact remains that in this text Ruskin was proposing that a girl's education be made "as serious as a boy's" (§80). Although he hedged at times on the purpose of educating girls (was it just that they might "sympathise in [their] husband's pleasures"?), he left no doubt about the urgency of doing so (§74). "Give them the same advantages that you give their brothers," he demands, allying himself with those who wanted to reform women's education (see Jan Marsh's essay in this volume). His most passionate theme in "Of Kings' Treasuries" — reading — remains a keynote in "Of Queens' Gardens." The mining, sifting, and fusing of the reading process, which he recommends in "Of Kings' Treasuries," would seem to be a less laborious task for women. "Let her loose in the library," he urges parents, and do not follow your inclination to censor your daughters' reading: she will follow her instincts and find what she needs. Ruskin likened girls' browsing among books to grazing, thereby extending natural imagery to their reading as well. No hammering or etching for them. And yet, educating girls' imaginations was meant to serve the same end as educating their brothers:

the creation of sympathy, in all its meanings, and thereby an enlightened and humane nation.

There is a note at the end of "Kings' Treasuries" that serves as a bridge to Ruskin's second lecture and that betrays his sense that a woman can indeed be crafted, like a man. He muses about the propriety of employing a certain portion of the population at hard and mindless labor so that others can have all the "thinking and feeling" to themselves. Clearly Ruskin sees the dubious morality of this, and yet he cannot help but concede that a "highly-bred and trained . . . gentleman (much more a lady), is a great production" (note to §30). Though he gives women parenthetical status here, Ruskin would seem to have them specifically in mind as he continues and warms to the subject of his next lecture, "Of Queens' Gardens": "a better production than most statues; being beautifully coloured as well as shaped . . . and you cannot have it, any more than a pyramid or a church, but by sacrifice of much contributed life. And it is, perhaps, better to build a beautiful human creature than a beautiful dome or a steeple . . . ; only the beautiful human creature will have some duties to do in return — duties of living belfry and rampart — of which presently" (note to §30). The graceful, educated, cultivated woman is also a "production" of culture, likened to a monument or work of art. She requires the sweat and effort of many to construct her as a beautiful human creature, and about this Ruskin has misgivings. But he brings this labor full circle by declaring that such a creature — a "belfry or rampart" of flesh and blood — will have some duties to perform for society "*in return.*" The woman who can serve, who can carry the idea of home about her and bring it to those who dig and mine and sweat, must also be chiseled, educated, produced: she cannot simply be left to grow as a flower grows.

Readers of the twenty-first century will no doubt find new things in *Sesame and Lilies*, in its vivid prose, and in its relation to the history of feminism. This edition will, we hope, introduce them to this complex and often contradictory work, to Victorian debates on women and on education, and to Ruskin as a protean and polymath writer. *Sesame and Lilies* has been interpreted in various ways by different audiences, and its fascinating qualities derive, in part, from readers' ability to take from it what they wished. Victorian parents offered it to their daughters as a primer for virtuous and altruistic behavior, schools awarded it as a prize to encourage academic seriousness and success, women activists found in it the justification they needed to work outside the home, twentieth-century liberal academics took it as a screed against crass materialism and philistinism,

twentieth-century feminists derided it as a patently antifeminist work. Its popularity in the nineteenth century suggests, perhaps, that it registered as both a conservative and a subversive statement about the roles of men and women. *Sesame and Lilies*, containing the "chief truths" its author had tried throughout his career to convey, proposed, at the very least, that the question of gender — of the natures of femininity and masculinity — lay at the heart of social reform.

NOTES

1. I refer to the famous and quixotic first line of Ruskin's autobiography, *Praeterita:* "I am, and my father was before me, a violent Tory of the old school; — Walter Scott's school, that is to say, and Homer's." See *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1908), 35:13.

2. John Holloway proposed this term for a group of Victorian writers and "prophets" in *The Victorian Sage*, first published in 1953. Ruskin was not initially included in this group, but his determinedly critical stance and copious writings have since led to his customary inclusion in this category. The authoritative edition of his collected works, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903–12), runs to 39 volumes.

3. Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin*, *The Later Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 454.

4. R. H. Wilenski, *John Ruskin: An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1933), p. 102.

5. Marcel Proust, *On Reading Ruskin*, translated and edited by Jean Autret, William Burford, and Phillip J. Wolfe, with an introduction by Richard Macksey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 113.

6. John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, in *Works*, 18:52.

7. John D. Rosenberg, ed., *The Genius of John Ruskin: Selections from His Writings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), p. 220.

8. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 88–108. Millett's influential adaptation of these pages appeared as "The Debate over Women: Ruskin Versus Mill," *Victorian Studies* 14 (1970): 63–84.

9. Millett, "The Debate over Women," p. 139.

10. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 59.

11. See especially Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, *Ruskin's Mythic Queen:*

Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), and essays by Austin, Birch, Helsinger, Marsh, Nord, and Nunn included in the "Suggestions for Further Reading" section at the end of this volume.

12. See Millett, *Sexual Politics*, pp. 106–7. "Ruskin then launches into a peroration on flowers," Millett writes of this section, "whose subject, though he can never bring himself to say so in English, is prostitution, the cancer in chivalry's rose."

Note on the Text

The two lectures that make up *Sesame and Lilies*, "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens," were first delivered in Manchester in 1864 and published together in a volume in 1865. A second edition, with an added preface, appeared that same year, followed by third and fourth editions in 1866 and 1867. In 1871 the lectures were revised and published with a new preface and a third essay, "The Mystery of Life and Its Arts." In 1882 yet a third preface was added to an edition that contained only the two original essays.

This edition contains all three prefaces, "Of Kings' Treasuries," and "Of Queens' Gardens." It is taken from volume 18 (1905) of the thirty-nine-volume edition of Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903–12). Cook and Wedderburn's extensive and valuable notes have been edited for this volume, and interested readers are encouraged to consult them in their entirety in the original. For a more detailed account of the publishing history of Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, see the "Bibliographical Note" to Cook and Wedderburn, vol. 18, pp. 5–18.

A glossary of terms, names of people both fictional and real, quotations, historical references, and literary allusions follows the text of *Sesame and Lilies*. It supplements information that can be found in the notes. For example, the glossary explains that Anglesea is a county is northwest Wales that was supposed to have been inhabited by druids; that Thomas Chalmers was a leading Scottish Evangelical in the first half of the nineteenth century; that Jeanie Deans is a character in Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*; that "Her household motions . . . virgin liberty" comes from William Wordsworth's "Perfect Woman"; that "Austrian guns" refers to the Austrian occupation of Italy after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815; and that the *Daily Telegraph* was a liberal newspaper established in 1855.

All citations from the text are indicated parenthetically and refer to the paragraph or section numbers used in most editions of *Sesame and Lilies*, rather than to page numbers.

Sesame and Lilies

Original title page design for *Sesame and Lilies* by Edward Burne-Jones.
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Preface

[TO THE SECOND EDITION: 1865]

1. A passage in the eighty-fifth page of this book,[1] referring to Alpine travellers, will fall harshly on the reader's ear, since it has been sorrowfully enforced by the deaths on Mont Cervin. I leave it, nevertheless, as it stood, for I do not now write unadvisedly, and think it wrong to cancel what has once been thoughtfully said; but it must not so remain without a few added words.

No blame ought to attach to the Alpine tourist for incurring danger. There is usually sufficient cause, and real reward, for all difficult work; and even were it otherwise, some experience of distinct peril, and the acquirement of habits of quick and calm action in its presence, are necessary elements, at some period of life, in the formation of manly character. The blame of bribing guides into danger is a singular accusation, in behalf of a people who have made mercenary soldiers of themselves for centuries, without any one's thinking of giving their fidelity better employment: though, indeed, the piece of work they did at the gate of the Tuileries, however useless, was no unwise one; and their lion of flawed molasse at Lucerne, worthless in point of art though it be, is nevertheless a better reward than much pay; and a better ornament to the old town than the Schweizer Hof, or flat new quay, for the promenade of those travellers who

1. See § 35. The first edition was published in June 1865. On July 14 the first ascent of the Matterhorn was made by Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. D. Hadow, Mr. Charles Hudson, and Mr. Edward Whymper, accompanied by the guides Michel Croz, Peter Taugwalder *père,* and Peter Taugwalder *fils.* On the descent there was a slip, and the whole party except Mr. Whymper and the two Taugwalders perished. Mr. Whymper gave an account of the accident in the *Times,* August 8, 1865, and afterwards in chapter xx. of his *The Ascent of the Matterhorn* (1880).

do *not* take guides into danger. The British public are, however, at home, so innocent of ever buying their fellow-creatures' lives, that we may justly expect them to be punctilious abroad! They do not, perhaps, often calculate how many souls flit annually, choked in fire-damp and sea-sand, from economically watched shafts, and economically manned ships; nor see the fiery ghosts writhe up out of every scuttlefull of cheap coals: nor count how many threads of girlish life are cut off and woven annually by painted Fates, into breadths of ball-dresses; or soaked away, like rotten hemp-fibre, in the inlet of Cocytus which overflows the Grassmarket where flesh is as grass.[1] We need not, it seems to me, loudly blame any one for paying a guide to take a brave walk with him. Therefore, gentlemen of the Alpine Club, as much danger as you care to face, by all means; but, if it please you, not so much talk of it. The real ground for reprehension of Alpine climbing is that, with less cause, it excites more vanity than any other athletic skill. A good horseman knows what it has cost to make him one; everybody else knows it too, and knows that he is one; he need not ride at a fence merely to show his seat. But credit for practice in climbing can only be claimed after success, which, though perhaps accidental and unmerited, must yet be attained at all risks, or the shame of defeat borne with no evidence of the difficulties encountered. At this particular period, also, the distinction obtainable by first conquest of a peak is as tempting to a traveller as the discovery of a new element to a chemist, or of a new species to a naturalist. Vanity is never so keenly excited as by competitions which involve chance; the course of science is continually arrested, and its nomenclature fatally confused, by the eagerness of even wise and able men to establish their priority in an unimportant discovery, or obtain vested right to a syllable in a deformed word; and many an otherwise sensible person will risk his life for the sake of a line in future guide-books, to the effect that "the —— horn was first ascended by Mr. X. in "the year —— "; — never reflecting that of all the lines in the page, the one he has thus wrought for will be precisely the least interesting to the reader.

2. It is not therefore strange, however much to be regretted, that while no gentleman boasts in other cases of his sagacity or his courage — while no good soldier talks of the charge he led, nor any good sailor of the helm he held, — every man among the Alps seems to lose his senses and modesty with the fall of the barometer, and returns from his Nephelo-coccygia brandishing his ice-axe in everybody's face. Whatever the Alpine Club have

1. 1 Peter 1:24, quoting Isaiah 40:6.

done, or may yet accomplish, in a sincere thirst for mountain knowledge, and in happy sense of youthful strength and play of animal spirit, they have done, and will do, wisely and well; but whatever they are urged to by mere sting of competition and itch of praise, they will do, as all vain things must be done for ever, foolishly and ill. It is a strange proof of that absence of any real national love of science, of which I have had occasion to speak in the text,[1] that no entire survey of the Alps has yet been made by properly qualified men; and that, except of the chain of Chamouni, no accurate maps exist, nor any complete geological section even of that. But Mr. Reilly's survey of that central group, and the generally accurate information collected in the guide-book published by the Club, are honourable results of English adventure; and it is to be hoped that the continuance of such work will gradually put an end to the vulgar excitement which looked upon the granite of the Alps only as an unoccupied advertisement wall for chalking names upon.

3. Respecting the means of accomplishing such work with least risk, there was a sentence in the article of our leading public journal, which deserves, and requires expansion.

"Their" (the Alpine Club's) "ropes must not break."[2]

Certainly not! nor any one else's ropes, if they may be rendered unbreakable by honesty of make; seeing that more lives hang by them on moving than on motionless seas. The records of the last gale at the Cape may teach us that economy in the manufacture of cables is not always a matter for exultation; and, on the whole, it might even be well in an honest country, sending out, and up and down, various lines east and west, that *nothing* should break; banks, — words, — nor dredging tackle.

4. Granting, however, such praise and such sphere of exertion as we thus justly may, to the spirit of adventure, there is one consequence of it, coming directly under my own cognizance, of which I cannot but speak with utter regret, — the loss, namely, of all real understanding of the character and beauty of Switzerland, by the country's being now regarded as half watering-place, half gymnasium. It is indeed true that under the influence of the pride which gives poignancy to the sensations which others cannot share with us (and a not unjustifiable zest to the pleasure which we have worked for), an ordinary traveller will usually observe and enjoy more on a difficult excursion than on an easy one; and more in objects to which he is

1. See § 33.

2. See a leading article in the *Times* of July 27, 1865.

unaccustomed than in those with which he is familiar. He will notice with extreme interest that snow is white on the top of a hill in June, though he would have attached little importance to the same peculiarity in a wreath at the bottom of a hill in January. He will generally find more to admire in a cloud under his feet, than in one over his head; and, oppressed by the monotony of a sky which is prevalently blue, will derive extraordinary satisfaction from its approximation to black. Add to such grounds of delight the aid given to the effect of whatever is impressive in the scenery of the high Alps, by the absence of ludicrous or degrading concomitants; and it ceases to be surprising that Alpine excursionists should be greatly pleased, or that they should attribute their pleasure to some true and increased apprehension of the nobleness of natural scenery. But no impression can be more false. The real beauty of the Alps is to be seen, and seen only, where all may see it, the child, the cripple, and the man of grey hairs. There is more true loveliness in a single glade of pasture shadowed by pine, or gleam of rocky brook, or inlet of unsullied lake, among the lower Bernese and Savoyard hills, than in the entire field of jagged gneiss which crests the central ridge from the Schreckhorn to the Viso. The valley of Cluse, through which unhappy travellers consent now to be invoiced, packed in baskets like fish, so only that they may cheaply reach, in the feverous haste which has become the law of their being, the glen of Chamouni whose every lovely foreground rock has now been broken up to build hotels for them, contains more beauty in half a league of it, than the entire valley they have devastated, and turned into a casino, did in its uninjured pride; and that passage of the Jura by Olten (between Basle and Lucerne), which is by the modern tourist triumphantly effected through a tunnel in ten minutes, between two piggish trumpet grunts proclamatory of the ecstatic transit, used to show from every turn and sweep of its winding ascent, up which one sauntered, gathering wild-flowers, for half a happy day, diviner aspects of the distant Alps than ever were achieved by toil of limb, or won by risk of life.

5. There is indeed a healthy enjoyment both in engineers' work, and in schoolboys' play; the making and mending of roads has its true enthusiasms, and I have still pleasure enough in mere scrambling to wonder not a little at the supreme gravity with which apes exercise their superior powers in that kind, as if profitless to them. But neither macadamisation, nor tunnelling, nor rope ladders, will ever enable one human creature to understand the pleasure in natural scenery felt by Theocritus or Virgil; and I believe the athletic health of our schoolboys might be made perfectly consistent with a spirit of more courtesy and reverence, both for men and things, than is recognisable in the behaviour of modern youth. Some year or two back, I

was staying at the Montanvert to paint Alpine roses,[1] and went every day to watch the budding of a favourite bed, which was rounding into faultless bloom beneath a cirque of rock, high enough, as I hoped, and close enough, to guard it from rude eyes and plucking hands. But,

> Tra erto e piano er' un sentiere sghembo,
> Che ne condusse in fianco della lacca,

and on the day it reached the fulness of its rubied fire, I was standing near when it was discovered by a forager on the flanks of a travelling school of English and German lads. He shouted to his companions, and they swooped down upon it; threw themselves into it, rolled over and over in it, shrieked, hallooed, and fought in it, trampled it down, and tore it up by the roots: breathless at last with rapture of ravage, they fixed the brightest of the remnant blossoms of it in their caps, and went on their way rejoicing.

6. They left me much to think upon; partly respecting the essential power of the beauty which could so excite them, and partly respecting the character of the youth which could only be excited to destroy. But the incident was a perfect type of that irreverence for natural beauty with respect to which I said in the text,[2] at the place already indicated, "You make railroads of the aisles of the cathedrals of the earth, and eat off their altars." For indeed all true lovers of natural beauty hold it in reverence so deep, that they would as soon think of climbing the pillars of the choir of Beauvais[3] for a gymnastic exercise, as of making a playground of Alpine snow: and they would not risk one hour of their joy among the hill meadows on a May morning, for the fame or fortune of having stood on every pinnacle of the silver temple, and beheld the kingdoms of the world from it.[4] Love of excitement is so far from being love of beauty, that it ends always in a joy in its exact reverse; joy in destruction, — as of my poor roses, — or in actual details of death; until, in the literature of the day, "nothing is too dreadful, or too trivial, for the greed of the public."* And in politics, apathy, irreverence, and lust of luxury go hand in hand, until the best solemnization which can be conceived for the greatest event in modern European history, the crowning of Florence capital of Italy, is the accursed and ill-omened folly of casting down her old walls, and surrounding her with a "boule-

* *Pall Mall Gazette,* August 15th, article on the Forward murders.

1. Perhaps in 1860: see vol. XVII. p. xxiv.

2. § 35 and *n.*

3. Drawn by Ruskin for Plate 66 in *Modern Painters*.

4. Matthew 4:8.

vard"; and this at the very time when every stone of her ancient cities is more precious to her than the gems of a Urim breastplate, and when every nerve of her heart and brain should have been strained to redeem her guilt and fulfil her freedom. It is not by making roads round Florence, but through Calabria, that she should begin her Roman causeway work again; and her fate points her march, not on boulevards by Arno, but waist-deep in the lagoons at Venice. Not yet, indeed; but five years of patience and discipline of her youth would accomplish her power, and sweep the martello towers from the cliffs of Verona, and the ramparts from the marsh of Mestre. But she will not teach her youth that discipline on boulevards.

7. Strange, that while we both, French and English, can give lessons in war, we only corrupt other nations when they imitate either our pleasures or our industries. We English, had we loved Switzerland indeed, should have striven to elevate, but not to disturb, the simplicity of her people, by teaching them the sacredness of their fields and waters, the honour of their pastoral and burgher life, and the fellowship in glory of the grey turreted walls round their ancient cities, with the cottages in their fair groups by the forest and lake. Beautiful, indeed, upon the mountains, had been the feet[1] of any who had spoken peace to their children; — who had taught those princely peasants to remember their lineage, and their league with the rocks of the field; that so they might keep their mountain waters pure, and their mountain paths peaceful, and their traditions of domestic life holy. We have taught them (incapable by circumstances and position of ever becoming a great commercial nation), all the foulness of the modern lust of wealth, without its practical intelligences; and we have developed exactly the weakness of their temperament by which they are liable to meanest ruin. Of the ancient architecture and most expressive beauty of their country there is now little vestige left; and it is one of the few reasons which console me for the advance of life, that I am old enough to remember the time when the sweet waves of the Reuss and Limmat (now foul with refuse of manufacture) were as crystalline as the heaven above them; when her pictured bridges and embattled towers ran unbroken round Lucerne; when the Rhone flowed in deep-green, softly dividing currents round the wooden ramparts of Geneva; and when from the marble roof of the western vault of Milan, I could watch the Rose of Italy flush in the first morning light, before a human foot had sullied its summit, or the reddening dawn on its rocks taken shadow of sadness from the crimson which, long ago, stained the ripples of Otterburn.

1. Isaiah 52:7.

Preface

[1871]

1. Being now fifty-one years old, and little likely to change my mind hereafter on any important subject of thought (unless through weakness of age), I wish to publish a connected series of such parts of my works as now seem to me right, and likely to be of permanent use.[1] In doing so I shall omit much, but not attempt to mend what I think worth reprinting. A young man necessarily writes otherwise than an old one, and it would be worse than wasted time to try to recast the juvenile language: nor is it to be thought that I am ashamed even of what I cancel; for great part of my earlier work was rapidly written for temporary purposes, and is now unnecessary, though true, even to truism. What I wrote about religion, was, on the contrary, painstaking, and, I think, forcible, as compared with most religious writing; especially in its frankness and fearlessness: but it was wholly mistaken: for I had been educated in the doctrines of a narrow sect, and had read history as obliquely as sectarians necessarily must.

Mingled among these either unnecessary or erroneous statements, I find, indeed, some that might be still of value; but these, in my earlier books, disfigured by affected language, partly through the desire to be thought a fine writer, and partly, as in the second volume of *Modern Painters,* in the notion of returning as far as I could to what I thought the better style of old English literature, especially to that of my then favourite, in prose, Richard Hooker.

2. For these reasons, — though, as respects either art, policy, or morality, as distinct from religion, I not only still hold, but would even wish strongly to re-affirm the substance of what I said in my earliest books, — I shall

1. The first two paragraphs of this Preface refer to the projected series of Ruskin's Works, of which the 1871 edition of *Sesame and Lilies* formed the first volume.

reprint scarcely anything in this series out of the first and second volumes of *Modern Painters;* and shall omit much of the *Seven Lamps* and *Stones of Venice;* but all my books written within the last fifteen years will be republished without change, as new editions of them are called for, with here and there perhaps an additional note, and having their text divided, for convenient reference, into paragraphs, consecutive through each volume. I shall also throw together the shorter fragments that bear on each other, and fill in with such unprinted lectures or studies as seem to me worth preserving, so as to keep the volumes, on an average, composed of about a hundred leaves each.

3. The first book of which a new edition is required chances to be *Sesame and Lilies,* from which I now detach the whole preface, about the Alps, for use elsewhere; and to which I add a lecture given in Ireland on a subject closely connected with that of the book itself. I am glad that it should be the first of the complete series, for many reasons; though in now looking over these two lectures, I am painfully struck by the waste of good work in them. They cost me much thought, and much strong emotion; but it was foolish to suppose that I could rouse my audiences in a little while to any sympathy with the temper into which I had brought myself by years of thinking over subjects full of pain; while, if I missed my purpose at the time, it was little to be hoped I could attain it afterwards; since phrases written for oral delivery become ineffective when quietly read. Yet I should only take away what good is in them if I tried to translate them into the language of books; nor, indeed, could I at all have done so at the time of their delivery, my thoughts then habitually and impatiently putting themselves into forms fit only for emphatic speech; and thus I am startled, in my review of them, to find that, though there is much, (forgive me the impertinence) which seems to me accurately and energetically said, there is scarcely anything put in a form to be generally convincing, or even easily intelligible: and I can well imagine a reader laying down the book without being at all moved by it, still less guided, to any definite course of action.

I think, however, if I now say briefly and clearly what I meant my hearers to understand, and what I wanted, and still would fain have, them to do, there may afterwards be found some better service in the passionately written text.

4. The first lecture says, or tries to say, that, life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books; and that valuable books should, in a civilized country, be within the reach of every one, printed in excellent form, for a just price; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at

a vile price. For we none of us need many books, and those which we need ought to be clearly printed, on the best paper, and strongly bound. And though we are, indeed, now, a wretched and poverty-struck nation, and hardly able to keep soul and body together, still, as no person in decent circumstances would put on his table confessedly bad wine, or bad meat, without being ashamed, so he need not have on his shelves ill-printed or loosely and wretchedly-stitched books; for though few can be rich, yet every man who honestly exerts himself may, I think, still provide, for himself and his family, good shoes, good gloves, strong harness for his cart or carriage horses, and stout leather binding for his books. And I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily — however slowly — increasing, series of books for use through life; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece; every volume having its assigned place, like a little statue in its niche, and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own literary possessions lightly and deliberately, with no chance of tearing or dog's ears.

That is my notion of the founding of Kings' Treasuries; and the first lecture is intended to show somewhat the use and preciousness of their treasures: but the two following ones have wider scope, being written in the hope of awakening the youth of England, so far as my poor words might have any power with them, to take some thought of the purposes of the life into which they are entering, and the nature of the world they have to conquer.

5. These two lectures are fragmentary and ill-arranged, but not, I think, diffuse or much compressible. The entire gist and conclusion of them, however, is in the last six paragraphs, 135 to the end, of the third lecture, which I would beg the reader to look over not once nor twice, (rather than any other part of the book,) for they contain the best expression I have yet been able to put in words of what, so far as is within my power, I mean henceforward both to do myself, and to plead with all over whom I have any influence, to do also according to their means: the letters begun on the first day of this year, to the workmen of England, having the object of originating, if possible, this movement among them, in true alliance with whatever trustworthy element of help they can find in the higher classes. After these paragraphs, let me ask you to read, by the fiery light of recent events, the fable [in "On the Mystery of Life and Its Arts," §§ 117 and 129–131, *Works,* 18:163] at p. 163 (§ 117), and then §§ 129–131; and observe, my

statement respecting the famine at Orissa is not rhetorical, but certified by official documents as within the truth. Five hundred thousand persons, *at least,* died by starvation in our British dominions, wholly in consequence of carelessness and want of forethought. Keep that well in your memory; and note it as the best possible illustration of modern political economy in true practice, and of the relations it has accomplished between Supply and Demand. Then begin the second lecture, and all will read clear enough, I think, to the end; only, since that second lecture was written, questions have arisen respecting the education and claims of women which have greatly troubled simple minds and excited restless ones. I am sometimes asked my thoughts on this matter, and I suppose that some girl readers of the second lecture may at the end of it desire to be told summarily what I would have them do and desire in the present state of things. This, then, is what I would say to any girl who had confidence enough in me to believe what I told her, or to do what I asked her.

6. First, be quite sure of one thing, that, however much you may know, and whatever advantages you may possess, and however good you may be, you have not been singled out, by the God who made you, from all the other girls in the world, to be especially informed respecting His own nature and character. You have not been born in a luminous point upon the surface of the globe, where a perfect theology might be expounded to you from your youth up, and where everything you were taught would be true, and everything that was enforced upon you, right. Of all the insolent, all the foolish persuasions that by any chance could enter and hold your empty little heart, this is the proudest and foolishest, — that you have been so much the darling of the Heavens, and favourite of the Fates, as to be born in the very nick of time, and in the punctual place, when and where pure Divine truth had been sifted from the errors of the Nations; and that your papa had been providentially disposed to buy a house in the convenient neighbourhood of the steeple under which that Immaculate and final verity would be beautifully proclaimed. Do not think it, child; it is not so. This, on the contrary, is the fact, — unpleasant you may think it; pleasant, it seems to *me,* — that you, with all your pretty dresses, and dainty looks, and kindly thoughts, and saintly aspirations, are not one whit more thought of or loved by the great Maker and Master than any poor little red, black, or blue savage, running wild in the pestilent woods, or naked on the hot sands of the earth: and that, of the two, you probably know less about God than she does; the only difference being that she thinks little of Him that is right, and you much that is wrong.

That, then, is the first thing to make sure of; — that you are not yet

perfectly well informed on the most abstruse of all possible subjects, and that if you care to behave with modesty or propriety, you had better be silent about it.[1]

7. The second thing which you may make sure of is, that however good you may be, you have faults; that however dull you may be, you can find out what some of them are; and that however slight they may be, you had better make some — not too painful, but patient — effort to get quit of them. And so far as you have confidence in me at all, trust me for this, that how many soever you may find or fancy your faults to be, there are only two that are of real consequence, — Idleness and Cruelty. Perhaps you may be proud. Well, we can get much good out of pride, if only it be not religious. Perhaps you may be vain; it is highly probable; and very pleasant for the people who like to praise you. Perhaps you are a little envious: that is really very shocking; but then — so is everybody else. Perhaps, also, you are a little malicious, which I am truly concerned to hear, but should probably only the more, if I knew you, enjoy your conversation. But whatever else you may be, you must not be useless, and you must not be cruel. If there is any one point which, in six thousand years of thinking about right and wrong, wise and good men have agreed upon, or successively by experience discovered, it is that God dislikes idle and cruel people more than any others: — that His first order is, "Work while you have light;"[2] and His second, "Be merciful while you have mercy."

8. "Work while you have light," especially while you have the light of morning. There are few things more wonderful to me than that old people never tell young ones how precious their youth is. They sometimes sentimentally regret their own earlier days; sometimes prudently forget them; often foolishly rebuke the young, often more foolishly indulge, often most foolishly thwart and restrain; but scarcely ever warn or watch them. Remember, then, that I, at least, have warned *you,* that the happiness of your life, and its power, and its part and rank in earth or in heaven, depend on the way you pass your days now. They are not to be sad days: far from that, the first duty of young people is to be delighted and delightful; but they are to be in the deepest sense solemn days. There is no solemnity so deep, to a rightly-thinking creature, as that of dawn. But not only in that beautiful sense, but in all their character and method, they are to be solemn days. Take your Latin dictionary, and look out "solennis," and fix the sense of the

1. On women and theology, see below, § 73.

2. John 9:4. The second order is not an exact quotation; but see such passages as Matthew 5:7 and Luke 6:36.

word well in your mind,[1] and remember that every day of your early life is ordaining irrevocably, for good or evil, the custom and practice of your soul; ordaining either sacred customs of dear and lovely recurrence, or trenching deeper and deeper the furrows for seed of sorrow. Now, therefore, see that no day passes in which you do not make yourself a somewhat better creature: and in order to do that, find out, first, what you are now. Do not think vaguely about it; take pen and paper, and write down as accurate a description of yourself as you can, with the date to it. If you dare not do so, find out why you dare not, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face in mind as well as body. I do not doubt but that the mind is a less pleasant thing to look at than the face, and for that very reason it needs more looking at; so always have two mirrors on your toilet table, and see that with proper care you dress body and mind before them daily. After the dressing is once over for the day, think no more about it: as your hair will blow about your ears, so your temper and thoughts will get ruffled with the day's work, and may need, sometimes, twice dressing; but I don't want you to carry about a mental pocket-comb; only to be smooth braided always in the morning.

9. Write down then, frankly, what you are, or, at least, what you think yourself, not dwelling upon those inevitable faults which I have just told you are of little consequence, and which the action of a right life will shake or smooth away; but that you may determine to the best of your intelligence what you are good for and can be made into. You will find that the mere resolve not to be useless, and the honest desire to help other people, will, in the quickest and delicatest ways, improve yourself. Thus, from the beginning, consider all your accomplishments as means of assistance to others; read attentively, in this volume, paragraphs 74, 75, 19, and 79, and you will understand what I mean, with respect to languages and music. In music especially you will soon find what personal benefit there is in being serviceable: it is probable that, however limited your powers, you have voice and ear enough to sustain a note of moderate compass in a concerted piece; — that, then, is the first thing to make sure you can do. Get your voice disciplined and clear, and think only of accuracy; never of effect or expression: if you have any soul worth expressing, it will show itself in your singing; but most likely there are very few feelings in you, at present, needing any particular expression; and the one thing you have to do is to make a clear-

1. Derived from *sollus* (whole, unbroken); hence, "that which takes place every year"; in religious language, of annual "solemnities"; and hence, more generally, of what is established, appointed, accustomed.

voiced little instrument of yourself, which other people can entirely depend upon for the note wanted. So, in drawing, as soon as you can set down the right shape of anything, and thereby explain its character to another person, or make the look of it clear and interesting to a child, you will begin to enjoy the art vividly for its own sake, and all your habits of mind and powers of memory will gain precision: but if you only try to make showy drawings for praise, or pretty ones for amusement, your drawing will have little of real interest for you, and no educational power whatever.

10. Then, besides this more delicate work, resolve to do every day some that is useful in the vulgar sense. Learn first thoroughly the economy of the kitchen; the good and bad qualities of every common article of food, and the simplest and best modes of their preparation: when you have time, go and help in the cooking of poorer families, and show them how to make as much of everything as possible, and how to make little, nice; coaxing and tempting them into tidy and pretty ways, and pleading for well-folded table-cloths, however coarse, and for a flower or two out of the garden to strew on them. If you manage to get a clean table-cloth, bright plates on it, and a good dish in the middle, of your own cooking, you may ask leave to say a short grace; and let your religious ministries be confined to that much for the present.

11. Again, let a certain part of your day (as little as you choose, but not to be broken in upon) be set apart for making strong and pretty dresses for the poor. Learn the sound qualities of all useful stuffs, and make everything of the best you can get, whatever its price. I have many reasons for desiring you to do this, — too many to be told just now, — trust me, and be sure you get everything as good as can be: and if, in the villainous state of modern trade, you cannot get it good at any price, buy its raw material, and set some of the poor women about you to spin and weave, till you have got stuff that can be trusted:[1] and then, every day, make some little piece of useful clothing, sewn with your own fingers as strongly as it can be stitched; and embroider it or otherwise beautify it moderately with fine needlework, such as a girl may be proud of having done. And accumulate these things by you until you hear of some honest persons in need of clothing, which may often too sorrowfully be; and, even though you should be deceived, and give them to the dishonest, and hear of their being at once taken to the pawn-broker's, never mind that, for the pawnbroker must sell them to some one who has need of them. That is no business of yours; what concerns you is only that when you see a half-naked child, you should have good and fresh

1. Ruskin was presently to take some part in a revival of the hand-spinning industry.

clothes to give it, if its parents will let it be taught to wear them. If they will not, consider how they came to be of such a mind, which it will be wholesome for you beyond most subjects of inquiry to ascertain. But after you have gone on doing this a little while, you will begin to understand the meaning of at least one chapter of your Bible, Proverbs xxxi., without need of any laboured comment, sermon, or meditation.

In these, then (and of course in all minor ways besides, that you can discover in your own household), you must be to the best of your strength usefully employed during the greater part of the day, so that you may be able at the end of it to say, as proudly as any peasant, that you have not eaten the bread of idleness.

12. Then, secondly, I said, you are not to be cruel. Perhaps you think there is no chance of your being so; and indeed I hope it is not likely that you should be deliberately unkind to any creature; but unless you are deliberately kind to every creature, you will often be cruel to many. Cruel, partly through want of imagination, (a far rarer and weaker faculty in women than men,) and yet more, at the present day, through the subtle encouragement of your selfishness by the religious doctrine that all which we now suppose to be evil will be brought to a good end; doctrine practically issuing, not in less earnest efforts that the immediate unpleasantness may be averted from ourselves, but in our remaining satisfied in the contemplation of its ultimate objects, when it is inflicted on others.

13. It is not likely that the more accurate methods of recent mental education will now long permit young people to grow up in the persuasion that, in any danger or distress, they may expect to be themselves saved by the Providence of God, while those around them are lost by His improvidence: but they may be yet long restrained from rightly kind action, and long accustomed to endure both their own pain occasionally, and the pain of others always, with an unwise patience, by misconception of the eternal and incurable nature of real evil. Observe, therefore, carefully in this matter; there are degrees of pain, as degrees of faultfulness, which are altogether conquerable, and which seem to be merely forms of wholesome trial or discipline. Your fingers tingle when you go out on a frosty morning, and are all the warmer afterwards; your limbs are weary with wholesome work, and lie down in the pleasanter rest; you are tried for a little while by having to wait for some promised good, and it is all the sweeter when it comes. But you cannot carry the trial past a certain point. Let the cold fasten on your hand in an extreme degree, and your fingers will moulder from their sockets. Fatigue yourself, but once, to utter exhaustion, and to the end of life you shall not recover the former vigour of your frame. Let heart-

sickness pass beyond a certain bitter point, and the heart loses its life for ever.

14. Now, the very definition of evil is in this irremediableness. It means sorrow, or sin, which ends in death; and assuredly, as far as we know, or can conceive, there are many conditions both of pain and sin which cannot but so end. Of course we are ignorant and blind creatures, and we cannot know what seeds of good may be in present suffering, or present crime; but with what we cannot know we are not concerned. It is conceivable that murderers and liars may in some distant world be exalted into a higher humanity than they could have reached without homicide or falsehood; but the contingency is not one by which our actions should be guided. There is, indeed, a better hope that the beggar, who lies at our gates in misery, may, within gates of pearl,[1] be comforted; but the Master, whose words are our only authority for thinking so, never Himself inflicted disease as a blessing, nor sent away the hungry unfed, or the wounded unhealed.

15. Believe me then, the only right principle of action here is to consider good and evil as defined by our natural sense of both; and to strive to promote the one, and to conquer the other, with as hearty endeavour as if there were, indeed, no other world than this. Above all, get quit of the absurd idea that Heaven will interfere to correct great errors, while allowing its laws to take their course in punishing small ones. If you prepare a dish of food carelessly, you do not expect Providence to make it palatable; neither if, through years of folly, you misguide your own life, need you expect Divine interference to bring round everything at last for the best. I tell you, positively, the world is not so constituted: the consequences of great mistakes are just as sure as those of small ones, and the happiness of your whole life, and of all the lives over which you have power, depend as literally on your own common sense and discretion as the excellence and order of the feast of a day.

16. Think carefully and bravely over these things, and you will find them true: having found them so, think also carefully over your own position in life. I assume that you belong to the middle or upper classes, and that you would shrink from descending into a lower sphere. You may fancy you would not: nay, if you are very good, strong-hearted, and romantic, perhaps you really would not; but it is not wrong that you should. You have, then, I suppose, good food, pretty rooms to live in, pretty dresses to wear, power of obtaining every rational and wholesome pleasure; you are, moreover, probably gentle and grateful, and in the habit of every day thanking God for

1. See Revelation 21:21.

these things. But why do you thank Him? Is it because, in these matters, as well as in your religious knowledge, you think He has made a favourite of you? Is the essential meaning of your thanksgiving, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other girls are,[1] not in that I fast twice in the week while they feast, but in that I feast seven times a week while they fast," and are you quite sure this is a pleasing form of thanksgiving to your Heavenly Father? Suppose you saw one of your own true earthly sisters, Lucy or Emily, cast out of your mortal father's house, starving, helpless, heartbroken; and that every morning when you went into your father's room, you said to him, "How good you are, father, to give me what you don't give Lucy," are you sure that, whatever anger your parent might have just cause for, against your sister, he would be pleased by that thanksgiving, or flattered by that praise? Nay, are you even sure that you *are* so much the favourite? — suppose that, all this while, he loves poor Lucy just as well as you, and is only trying you through her pain, and perhaps not angry with her in anywise, but deeply angry with you, and all the more for your thanksgivings? Would it not be well that you should think, and earnestly too, over this standing of yours; and all the more if you wish to believe that text, which clergymen so much dislike preaching on, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God"?[2] You do not believe it now, or you would be less complacent in your state; and you cannot believe it at all, until you know that the Kingdom of God means, — "not meat and drink, but justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[3] nor until you know also that such joy is not by any means, necessarily, in going to church, or in singing hymns; but may be joy in a dance, or joy in a jest, or joy in anything you have deserved to possess, or that you are willing to give; but joy in nothing that separates you, as by any strange favour, from your fellow-creatures, that exalts you through their degradation — exempts you from their toil — or indulges you in time of their distress.

17. Think, then, and some day, I believe, you will feel also, — no morbid passion of pity such as would turn you into a black Sister of Charity, but the steady fire of perpetual kindness which will make you a bright one. I speak in no disparagement of them; I know well how good the Sisters of Charity are, and how much we owe to them; but all these professional pieties (except so far as distinction or association may be necessary for effectiveness of work) are in their spirit wrong, and in practice merely plaster the

1. See Luke 18:11, 12.

2. Mark 10:23.

3. Romans 14:17.

sores of disease that ought never to have been permitted to exist; encouraging at the same time the herd of less excellent women in frivolity, by leading them to think that they must either be good up to the black standard, or cannot be good for anything. Wear a costume, by all means, if you like; but let it be a cheerful and becoming one; and be in your heart a Sister of Charity always, without either veiled or voluble declaration of it.

18. As I pause, before ending my preface — thinking of one or two more points that are difficult to write of — I find a letter in the *Times,*[1] from a French lady, which says all I want so beautifully, that I will print it just as it stands: —

> Sir, — It is often said that one example is worth many sermons. Shall I be judged presumptuous if I point out one, which seems to me so striking just now, that, however painful, I cannot help dwelling upon it?
>
> It is the share, the sad and large share, that French society and its recent habits of luxury, of expenses, of dress, of indulgence in every kind of extravagant dissipation, has to lay to its own door in its actual crisis of ruin, misery, and humiliation. If our *ménagères* can be cited as an example to English housewives, so, alas! can other classes of our society be set up as an example — *not* to be followed.
>
> Bitter must be the feelings of many a French woman whose days of luxury and expensive habits are at an end, and whose bills of bygone splendour lie with a heavy weight on her conscience, if not on her purse!
>
> With us the evil has spread high and low. Everywhere have the examples given by the highest ladies in the land been followed but too successfully.
>
> Every year did dress become more extravagant, entertainments more costly, expenses of every kind more considerable. Lower and lower became the tone of society, its good breeding, its delicacy. More and more were *monde* and *demi-monde* associated in newspaper accounts of fashionable doings, in scandalous gossip, on racecourses, in *premières représentations,* in imitation of each other's costumes, *mobiliers* and slang.
>
> Living beyond one's means became habitual — almost necessary — for every one to keep up with, if not to go beyond, every one else.
>
> What the result of all this has been we now see in the wreck of our prosperity, in the downfall of all that seemed brightest and highest.

1. *Times,* December 30, 1870: published under the title "A New Year's Wish to English Women."

Deeply and fearfully impressed by what my own country has incurred and is suffering, I cannot help feeling sorrowful when I see in England signs of our besetting sins appearing also. Paint and chignons, slang and vaudevilles, knowing "Anonymas" by name, and reading doubtfully moral novels, are in themselves small offences, although not many years ago they would have appeared very heinous ones, yet they are quick and tempting conveyances on a very dangerous high-road.

I would that all Englishwomen knew how they are looked up to from abroad — what a high opinion, what honour and reverence we foreigners have for their principles, their truthfulness, the fresh and pure innocence of their daughters, the healthy youthfulness of their lovely children.

May I illustrate this by a short example which happened very near me? During the days of the *émeutes* of 1848, all the houses in Paris were being searched for firearms by the mob. The one I was living in contained none, as the master of the house repeatedly assured the furious and incredulous Republicans. They were going to lay violent hands on him when his wife, an English lady, hearing the loud discussion, came bravely forward and assured them that no arms were concealed. "Vous êtes anglaise, nous vous croyons; les anglaises disent toujours la vérité," was the immediate answer, and the rioters quietly left.

Now, Sir, shall I be accused of unjustified criticism if, loving and admiring your country, as these lines will prove, certain new features strike me as painful discrepancies in English life?

Far be it from me to preach the contempt of all that can make life lovable and wholesomely pleasant. I love nothing better than to see a woman nice, neat, elegant, looking her best in the prettiest dress that her taste and purse can afford, or your bright, fresh young girls fearlessly and perfectly sitting their horses, or adorning their houses as pretty [*sic;* it is not quite grammar, but it is better than if it were;] as care, trouble, and refinement can make them.

It is the degree *beyond* that which to us has proved so fatal, and that I would our example could warn you from as a small repayment for your hospitality and friendliness to us in our days of trouble.

May Englishwomen accept this in a kindly spirit as a New-year's wish from A French Lady.

Dec. 29.

19. That, then, is the substance of what I would fain say convincingly, if it might be, to my girl friends; at all events with certainty in my own mind that I was thus far a safe guide to them.

For other and older readers it is needful I should write a few words more, respecting what opportunity I have had to judge, or right I have to speak, of such things; for, indeed, too much of what I have said about women has been said in faith only. A wise and lovely English lady[1] told me, when *Sesame and Lilies* first appeared, that she was sure the *Sesame* would be useful, but that in the *Lilies* I had been writing of what I knew nothing about. Which was in a measure too true, and also that it is more partial than my writings are usually: for as Ellesmere spoke his speech on the —— intervention, not, indeed, otherwise than he felt, but yet altogether for the sake of Gretchen,[2] so I wrote the *Lilies* to please one girl;[3] and were it not for what I remember of her, and of few besides, should now perhaps recast some of the sentences in the *Lilies* in a very different tone: for as years have gone by, it has chanced to me, untowardly in some respects, fortunately in others (because it enables me to read history more clearly), to see the utmost evil that is in women, while I have had but to believe the utmost good. The best women are indeed necessarily the most difficult to know; they are recognized chiefly in the happiness of their husbands and the nobleness of their children; they are only to be divined, not discerned, by the stranger; and, sometimes, seem almost helpless except in their homes; yet without the help of one of them,* to whom this book is dedicated, the day would probably have come before now, when I should have written and thought no more.

20. On the other hand, the fashion of the time renders whatever is forward, coarse, or senseless, in feminine nature, too palpable to all men; — the weak picturesqueness of my earlier writings brought me acquainted with much of their emptiest enthusiasm; and the chances of later life gave me opportunities of watching women in states of degradation and vindictiveness which opened to me the gloomiest secrets of Greek and Syrian

* φίλη.

1. Probably Mrs. Cowper, afterwards Lady Mount-Temple: the φίλη of Ruskin's note below.

2. Ellesmere, in Helps's *Companions of My Solitude* (ch. vii. p. 132, ed. 1857): "I busied myself more in politics than I had done; and I believe I must own that my speech on the —— intervention, which had its merits and cost me great labour, was spoken for Gretchen."

3. In a letter written just before the publication of the first two lectures Ruskin says that he wrote them "for a couple of schoolgirls"; the one to whom he here refers was no doubt the "Rosie" of *Præterita* (iii. ch. 3), for whom also the last lecture, delivered subsequently in Dublin and near her home, was given.

tragedy. I have seen them betray their household charities to lust, their pledged love to devotion; I have seen mothers dutiful to their children, as Medea; and children dutiful to their parents, as the daughter of Herodias:[1] but my trust is still unmoved in the preciousness of the natures that are so fatal in their error, and I leave the words of the *Lilies* unchanged; believing, yet, that no man ever lived a right life who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion.

21. What I might myself have been, so helped, I rarely indulge in the idleness of thinking; but what I am, since I take on me the function of a teacher, it is well that the reader should know, as far as I can tell him.

Not an unjust person; not an unkind one; not a false one; a lover of order, labour, and peace. That, it seems to me, is enough to give me right to say all I care to say on ethical subjects; more, I could only tell definitely through details of autobiography such as none but prosperous and (in the simple sense of the word) faultless lives could justify; — and mine has been neither. Yet, if any one, skilled in reading the torn manuscripts of the human soul, cares for more intimate knowledge of me, he may have it by knowing with what persons in past history I have most sympathy.

I will name three.

In all that is strongest and deepest in me, — that fits me for my work, and gives light or shadow to my being, I have sympathy with Guido Guinicelli.

In my constant natural temper, and thoughts of things and of people, with Marmontel.

In my enforced and accidental temper, and thoughts of things and of people, with Dean Swift.

Any one who can understand the natures of those three men, can understand mine; and having said so much, I am content to leave both life and work to be remembered or forgotten, as their uses may deserve.

Denmark Hill,
1*st January,* 1871.

1. Matthew 14:1–12.

Preface

TO THE SMALL EDITION OF 1882

The present edition of *Sesame and Lilies,* issued at the request of an aged friend,[1] is reprinted without change of a word from the first small edition of the book, withdrawing only the irrelevant preface respecting tours in the Alps, which however if the reader care to see, he will find placed with more propriety in the second volume of *Deucalion.* The third lecture, added in the first volume of the large edition of my works, and the gossiping introduction prefixed to that edition, are withdrawn also, not as irrelevant, but as following the subject too far, and disturbing the simplicity in which the two original lectures dwell on their several themes, — the majesty of the influence of good books, and of good women, if we know how to read them, and how to honour.

I might just as well have said, the influence of good men, and good women, since the best strength of a man is shown in his intellectual work, as that of a woman in her daily deed and character; and I am somewhat tempted to involve myself in the debate which might be imagined in illustrating these relations of their several powers, because only the other day one of my friends put me in no small pet by saying that he thought my own influence was much more in being amiable and obliging than in writing books. Admitting, for the argument's sake, the amiableness and obligingness, I begged him, with some warmth, to observe that there were myriads of at least equally good-natured people in the world who had merely become its slaves, if not its victims, but that the influence of my books was distinctly on the increase, and I hoped — etc., etc. — it is no matter what more I said, or intimated; but it much matters that the young reader of the

1. [No doubt Miss Susan Beever, the compiler of *Frondes Agrestes,* and the friend to whom the letters in *Hortus Inclusus* were addressed.]

following essays should be confirmed in the assurance on which all their pleading depends, that there *is* such a thing as essential good, and as essential evil, in books, in art, and in character; — that this essential goodness and badness are independent of epochs, fashions, opinions, or revolutions; and that the present extremely active and ingenious generation of young people, in thanking Providence for the advantages it has granted them in the possession of steam whistles and bicycles, need not hope materially to add to the laws of beauty in sound or grace in motion, which were acknowledged in the days of Orpheus, and of Camilla.

But I am brought to more serious pause than I had anticipated in putting final accent on the main sentences in this — already, as men now count time, old — book of mine, because, since it was written, not only these untried instruments of action, but many equally novel methods of education and systems of morality have come into vogue, not without a certain measure of prospective good in them; — college education for women,[1] — out-of-college education for men: positivism with its religion of humanity, and negativism with its religion of Chaos, — and the like, from the entanglement of which no young people can now escape, if they would; together with a mass of realistic, or materialistic, literature and art, founded mainly on the theory of nobody's having any will, or needing any master; much of it extremely clever, irresistibly amusing, and enticingly pathetic; but which is all nevertheless the mere whirr and dust-cloud of a dissolutely reforming and vulgarly manufacturing age, which when its dissolutions are appeased, and its manufactures purified, must return in due time to the understanding of the things that have been, and are, and shall be hereafter, though for the present concerned seriously with nothing beyond its dinner and its bed.

I must therefore, for honesty's sake, no less than intelligibility's, warn the reader of *Sesame and Lilies,* that the book is wholly of the old school; that it ignores, without contention or regret, the ferment of surrounding elements, and assumes for perennial some old-fashioned conditions and existences which the philosophy of today imagines to be extinct with the Mammoth and the Dodo.

Thus the second lecture, in its very title, "Queens' Gardens," takes for granted the persistency of Queenship, and therefore of Kingship, and therefore of Courtliness or Courtesy, and therefore of Uncourtliness or Rusticity. It assumes, with the ideas of higher and lower rank, those of serene author-

1. As in Cambridge at Girton (1869) and Newnham (1871), and in Oxford at Somerville and St. Margaret's — all of them comparatively a new departure in 1882. So also was the admission of "unattached students."

ity and happy submission; of Riches and Poverty without dispute for their rights, and of Virtue and Vice without confusion of their natures.

And farther, it must be premised that the book is chiefly written for young people belonging to the upper, or undistressed middle, classes; who may be supposed to have choice of the objects and command of the industries of their life. It assumes that many of them will be called to occupy responsible positions in the world, and that they have leisure, in preparation for these, to play tennis, or to read Plato.

Therefore also — that they have Plato to read if they choose, with lawns on which they may run, and woods in which they may muse. It supposes their father's library to be open to them, and to contain all that is necessary for their intellectual progress, without the smallest dependence on monthly parcels from town.

These presupposed conditions are not extravagant in a country which boasts of its wealth, and which, without boasting, still presents, in the greater number of its landed households, the most perfect types of grace and peace which can be found in Europe.

I have only to add farther, respecting the book, that it was written while my energies were still unbroken and my temper unfretted; and that, if read in connection with *Unto this Last,* it contains the chief truths I have endeavoured through all my past life to display, and which, under the warnings I have received[1] to prepare for its close, I am chiefly thankful to have learnt and taught.

Avallon,
August 24th, 1882.

1. His serious illnesses in 1871 at Matlock and in 1878.

SESAME AND LILIES

Lecture I.—Sesame Of Kings' Treasuries

You shall each have a cake of sesame,—and ten pound.

LUCIAN: *The Fisherman.*[1]

1. My first duty this evening is to ask your pardon for the ambiguity of title under which the subject of lecture has been announced: for indeed I am not going to talk of kings, known as regnant, nor of treasuries, understood to contain wealth; but of quite another order of royalty, and another material of riches, than those usually acknowledged. I had even intended to ask your attention for a little while on trust, and (as sometimes one contrives, in taking a friend to see a favourite piece of scenery) to hide what I wanted most to show, with such imperfect cunning as I might, until we unexpectedly reached the best point of view by winding paths. But—and as also I have heard it said, by men practised in public address, that hearers are never so much fatigued as by the endeavour to follow a speaker who gives them no clue to his purpose,—I will take the slight mask off at once, and tell you plainly that I want to speak to you about the treasures hidden in books; and about the way we find them, and the way we lose them. A grave subject, you will say; and a wide one! Yes; so wide that I shall make no effort to touch the compass of it. I will try only to bring before you a few simple thoughts

1. In eds. 1–4, instead of this motto from Lucian, was the following from the Septuagint: "ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐξελεύσεται ἄρτος . . . καὶ χῶμα χρυσίον," with a footnote giving the reference to "Job xxviii. 5, 6": "As for the earth, *out of it cometh bread;* and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires: *and* it hath *dust of gold.*"

about reading, which press themselves upon me every day more deeply, as I watch the course of the public mind with respect to our daily enlarging means of education; and the answeringly wider spreading on the levels, of the irrigation of literature.

2. It happens that I have practically some connection with schools for different classes of youth;[1] and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a "position in life" takes above all other thoughts in the parents' — more especially in the mothers' — minds. "The education befitting such and such a *station in life*" — this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself; even the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But, an education "which shall keep a good coat on my son's back; — which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors' bell at double-belled doors; which shall result ultimately in establishment of a double-belled door to his own house; — in a word, which shall lead to advancement in life; — *this* we pray for on bent knees — and this is *all* we pray for." It never seems to occur to the parents that there may be an education which, in itself, *is* advancement in Life; — that any other than that may perhaps be advancement in Death; and that this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way; while it is for no price, and by no favour, to be got, if they set about it in the wrong.

3. Indeed, among the ideas most prevalent and effective in the mind of this busiest of countries, I suppose the first — at least that which is confessed with the greatest frankness, and put forward as the fittest stimulus to youthful exertion — is this of "Advancement in life." May I ask you to consider with me, what this idea practically includes, and what it should include?

Practically, then, at present, "advancement in life" means, becoming conspicuous in life; obtaining a position which shall be acknowledged by others to be respectable or honourable. We do not understand by this advancement, in general, the mere making of money, but the being known to have made it; not the accomplishment of any great aim, but the being seen to have accomplished it. In a word, we mean the gratification of our thirst for applause. That thirst, if the last infirmity of noble minds,[2] is also the first

1. As a Governor of Christ's Hospital, for instance, and as a patron of Miss Bell's school for girls at Winnington, perhaps also as an Examiner in the Oxford Examinations of Middle Class Schools.

2. *Lycidas,* 71.

infirmity of weak ones; and, on the whole, the strongest impulsive influence of average humanity: the greatest efforts of the race have always been traceable to the love of praise, as its greatest catastrophes to the love of pleasure.

4. I am not about to attack or defend this impulse. I want you only to feel how it lies at the root of effort; especially of all modern effort. It is the gratification of vanity which is, with us, the stimulus of toil and balm of repose; so closely does it touch the very springs of life that the wounding of our vanity is always spoken of (and truly) as in its measure *mortal;* we call it "mortification," using the same expression which we should apply to a gangrenous and incurable bodily hurt. And although a few of us may be physicians enough to recognise the various effect of this passion upon health and energy, I believe most honest men know, and would at once acknowledge, its leading power with them as a motive. The seaman does not commonly desire to be made captain only because he knows he can manage the ship better than any other sailor on board. He wants to be made captain that he may be *called* captain. The clergyman does not usually want to be made a bishop only because he believes that no other hand can, as firmly as his, direct the diocese through its difficulties. He wants to be made bishop primarily that he may be called "My Lord." And a prince does not usually desire to enlarge, or a subject to gain, a kingdom, because he believes no one else can as well serve the State, upon its throne; but, briefly, because he wishes to be addressed as "Your Majesty," by as many lips as may be brought to such utterance.

5. This, then, being the main idea of "advancement in life," the force of it applies, for all of us, according to our station, particularly to that secondary result of such advancement which we call "getting into good society." We want to get into good society, not that we may have it, but that we may be seen in it; and our notion of its goodness depends primarily on its conspicuousness.

Will you pardon me if I pause for a moment to put what I fear you may think an impertinent question? I never can go on with an address unless I feel, or know, that my audience are either with me or against me: I do not much care which, in beginning; but I must know where they are; and I would fain find out, at this instant, whether you think I am putting the motives of popular action too low. I am resolved, to-night, to state them low enough to be admitted as probable; for whenever, in my writings on Political Economy, I assume that a little honesty, or generosity, — or what used to be called "virtue," — may be calculated upon as a human motive of action, people always answer me, saying, "You must not calculate on that: that is

not in human nature: you must not assume anything to be common to men but acquisitiveness and jealousy; no other feeling ever has influence on them, except accidentally, and in matters out of the way of business." I begin, accordingly, to-night low in the scale of motives; but I must know if you think me right in doing so. Therefore, let me ask those who admit the love of praise to be usually the strongest motive in men's minds in seeking advancement, and the honest desire of doing any kind of duty to be an entirely secondary one, to hold up their hands. (*About a dozen hands held up — the audience, partly, not being sure the lecturer is serious, and, partly, shy of expressing opinion.*)[1] I am quite serious — I really do want to know what you think; however, I can judge by putting the reverse question. Will those who think that duty is generally the first, and love of praise the second, motive, hold up their hands? (*One hand reported to have been held up behind the lecturer.*) Very good: I see you are with me, and that you think I have not begun too near the ground. Now, without teasing you by putting farther question, I venture to assume that you will admit duty as at least a secondary or tertiary motive. You think that the desire of doing something useful, or obtaining some real good, is indeed an existent collateral idea, though a secondary one, in most men's desire of advancement. You will grant that moderately honest men desire place and office, at least in some measure for the sake of beneficent power; and would wish to associate rather with sensible and well-informed persons than with fools and ignorant persons, whether they are seen in the company of the sensible ones or not. And finally, without being troubled by repetition of any common truisms about the preciousness of friends, and the influence of companions, you will admit, doubtless, that according to the sincerity of our desire that our friends may be true, and our companions wise, — and in proportion to the earnestness and discretion with which we choose both, — will be the general chances of our happiness and usefulness.

6. But, granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are,

1. The report in the *Manchester Examiner* says: "Probably not a single hand out of all the hundreds was lifted up, though a very few, here and there, were for a moment raised, amid much laughter, and as quickly lowered, whether from diffidence or in hasty retreat from some mistake."

to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humouredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a princess, or arresting the kind glance of a queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers, in pursuit of little more than these; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation; — talk to us in the best words they can choose, and of the things nearest their hearts. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, and can be kept waiting round us all day long, — kings and statesmen lingering patiently, not to grant audience, but to gain it! — in those plainly furnished and narrow ante-rooms, our bookcase shelves, — we make no account of that company, — perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long!

7. You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them; and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this, — that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces; — suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men; — this station of audience, and honourable privy council, you despise!

8. But perhaps you will say that it is because the living people talk of things that are passing, and are of immediate interest to you, that you desire to hear them. Nay; that cannot be so, for the living people will themselves tell you about passing matters much better in their writings than in their careless talk. Yet I admit that this motive does influence you, so far as you prefer those rapid and ephemeral writings to slow and enduring writings — books, properly so called. For all books are divisible into two classes, the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction — it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the

good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time; bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go farther.

9. The good book of the hour, then, — I do not speak of the bad ones, — is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history; — all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age: we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, to-day: whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather, last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talking thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would — the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him; — this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was

as the vapour,[1] and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing"; it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a "Book."

10. Perhaps you think no books were ever so written?

But, again, I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness, or do you think there is never any honesty or benevolence in wise people? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man's work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book or his piece of art. It is mixed always with evil fragments — ill-done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those *are* the book.

11. Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men: — by great leaders, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; and Life is short. You have heard as much before; — yet have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that — that what you lose today you cannot gain tomorrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourself that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect, that you jostle with the hungry and common crowd for *entrée* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society, wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

12. "The place you desire," and the place you *fit yourself for,* I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this: — it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portières of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief

1. James 4:14.

question: — "Do you deserve to enter? Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms? — no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerate pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognise our presence."

13. This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways.

(1) First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

(2) Very ready we are to say of a book, "How good this is — that's exactly what I think!" But the right feeling is, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. And be sure, also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once; — nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too; but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, *will* not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyse that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

14. And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a

good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

15. And, therefore, first of all, I tell you earnestly and authoritatively (I *know* I am right in this), you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable — nay, letter by letter. For though it is only by reason of the opposition of letters in the function of signs, to sounds in the function of signs, that the study of books is called "literature," and that a man versed in it is called, by the consent of nations, a man of letters instead of a man of books, or of words, you may yet connect with that accidental nomenclature this real fact: — that you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly "illiterate," uneducated person; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter, — that is to say, with real accuracy, — you are for evermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it), consists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages, — may not be able to speak any but his own, — may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille; remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national noblesse of words at any time, and in any country. But an uneducated person may know, by memory, many languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any, — not a word even of his own. An ordinarily clever and sensible seaman will be able to make his way ashore at most ports; yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person: so also the accent, or turn of expression of a single sentence, will at once mark a scholar. And this is so so strongly felt, so conclusively admitted, by educated persons, that a false accent or a mis-

taken syllable is enough, in the parliament of any civilized nation, to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing for ever.

16. And this is right; but it is a pity that the accuracy insisted on is not greater, and required to a serious purpose. It is right that a false Latin quantity should excite a smile in the House of Commons; but it is wrong that a false English *meaning* should *not* excite a frown there. Let the accent of words be watched; and closely: let their meaning be watched more closely still, and fewer will do the work. A few words well chosen, and distinguished, will do work that a thousand cannot, when every one is acting, equivocally, in the function of another. Yes; and words, if they are not watched, will do deadly work sometimes. There are masked words droning and skulking about us in Europe just now, — (there never were so many, owing to the spread of a shallow, blotching, blundering, infectious "information," or rather deformation, everywhere, and to the teaching of catechisms and phrases at school instead of human meanings) — there are masked words abroad, I say, which nobody understands, but which everybody uses, and most people will also fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they mean this or that, or the other, of things dear to them: for such words wear chameleon cloaks — "ground-lion"[1] cloaks, of the colour of the ground of any man's fancy: on that ground they lie in wait, and rend them with a spring from it. There never were creatures of prey so mischievous, never diplomatists so cunning, never poisoners so deadly, as these masked words; they are the unjust stewards of all men's ideas: whatever fancy or favourite instinct a man most cherishes, he gives to his favourite masked word to take care of for him; the word at last comes to have an infinite power over him, — you cannot get at him but by its ministry.

17. And in languages so mongrel in breed as the English, there is a fatal power of equivocation put into men's hands, almost whether they will or no, in being able to use Greek or Latin words for an idea when they want it to be awful; and Saxon or otherwise common words when they want it to be vulgar. What a singular and salutary effect, for instance, would be produced on the minds of people who are in the habit of taking the Form of the "Word" they live by, for the Power of which that Word tells them, if we always either retained, or refused, the Greek form "biblos," or "biblion," as the right expression for "book" — instead of employing it only in the one instance in which we wish to give dignity to the idea, and translating it into English everywhere else. How wholesome it would be for many simple persons if, in such places (for instance) as Acts xix. 19, we retained the

1. A translation of chameleon.

Greek expression, instead of translating it, and they had to read — "Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their bibles together, and burnt them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver"! Or if, on the other hand, we translated where we retain it, and always spoke of "The Holy Book," instead of "Holy Bible," it might come into more heads than it does at present, that the Word of God, by which the heavens were, of old, and by which they are now kept in store,* cannot be made a present of to anybody in morocco binding; nor sown on any wayside by help either of steam plough or steam press; but is nevertheless being offered to us daily, and by us with contumely refused; and sown in us daily, and by us, as instantly as may be, choked.[1]

18. So, again, consider what effect has been produced on the English vulgar mind by the use of the sonorous Latin form "damno," in translating the Greek κατακρίνω, when people charitably wish to make it forcible; and the substitution of the temperate "condemn" for it, when they choose to keep it gentle; and what notable sermons have been preached by illiterate clergymen on — "He that believeth not shall be damned";[2] though they would shrink with horror from translating Heb. xi. 7, "The saving of his house, by which he damned the world," or John viii. 10–11, "Woman, hath no man damned thee? She saith, No man, Lord. Jesus answered her, Neither do I damn thee: go and sin no more." And divisions in the mind of Europe, which have cost seas of blood, and in the defence of which the noblest souls of men have been cast away in frantic desolation, countless as forest-leaves — though, in the heart of them, founded on deeper causes — have nevertheless been rendered practically possible, mainly, by the European adoption of the Greek word for a public meeting, "ecclesia," to give peculiar respectability to such meetings, when held for religious purposes; and other collateral equivocations, such as the vulgar English one of using the word "priest" as a contraction for "presbyter."

19. Now, in order to deal with words rightly, this is the habit you must form. Nearly every word in your language has been first a word of some other language — of Saxon, German, French, Latin, or Greek; (not to speak of eastern and primitive dialects). And many words have been all these — that is to say, have been Greek first, Latin next, French or German next, and English last: undergoing a certain change of sense and use on the lips of each nation; but retaining a deep vital meaning, which all good scholars feel

* 2 Peter 3:5–7.

1. See Matthew 13:4, 7.

2. Mark 16:16.

in employing them, even at this day. If you do not know the Greek alphabet, learn it; young or old — girl or boy[1] — whoever you may be, if you think of reading seriously (which, of course, implies that you have some leisure at command), learn your Greek alphabet; then get good dictionaries of all these languages, and whenever you are in doubt about a word, hunt it down patiently. Read Max Müller's lectures[2] thoroughly, to begin with; and, after that, never let a word escape you that looks suspicious. It is severe work; but you will find it, even at first, interesting, and at last endlessly amusing. And the general gain to your character, in power and precision, will be quite incalculable.

Mind, this does not imply knowing, or trying to know, Greek or Latin, or French. It takes a whole life to learn any language perfectly. But you can easily ascertain the meanings through which the English word has passed; and those which in a good writer's work it must still bear.

20. And now, merely for example's sake, I will, with your permission, read a few lines of a true book with you, carefully; and see what will come out of them. I will take a book perfectly known to you all. No English words are more familiar to us, yet few perhaps have been read with less sincerity. I will take these few following lines of *Lycidas:* —

> Last came, and last did go,
> The pilot of the Galilean lake.
> Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
> (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain,)
> He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake,
> "How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,

1. Ruskin carried his theory on this matter into practice, and insisted on a little girl, in whose education he was interested, learning Greek verbs. The following letter to his father is a reply to objections: — "BONNEVILLE, *October* 12, 1861. — I think you (mama and you) are both wrong in thinking she shouldn't learn Greek. She shouldn't over-work at anything; but if she learns any language at all, it should be that; — on whatever ground you take it. If she is to be a Christian, she can only read her Bible with complete understanding in the Septuagint and Greek Testament. If she is to be a heathen, Greek is the greatest language of mankind, the chief utterance of the Nations. I have warned her against 'smatterings' either of that or anything else; a 'smattering' means an inaccurate knowledge, not a little knowledge. To have learned *one* Greek verb accurately will make a difference in her habit of thought for ever after."

2. *Lectures on the Science of Language,* Series 1 and 2, 1861 and 1864; new edition, 2 vols., 1885.

> Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
> Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
> Of other care they little reckoning make,
> Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
> And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
> Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
> A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else, the least
> That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
> What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
> And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
> Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
> The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
> But, swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
> Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
> Daily devours apace, and nothing said."

Let us think over this passage, and examine its words.

First, is it not singular to find Milton assigning to St. Peter, not only his full episcopal function, but the very types of it which Protestants usually refuse most passionately? His "mitred" locks! Milton was no Bishop-lover; how comes St. Peter to be "mitred"? "Two massy keys he bore." Is this, then, the power of the keys claimed by the Bishops of Rome? and is it acknowledged here by Milton only in a poetical licence, for the sake of its picturesqueness, that he may get the gleam of the golden keys to help his effect?

Do not think it. Great men do not play stage tricks with the doctrines of life and death: only little men do that. Milton means what he says; and means it with his might too — is going to put the whole strength of his spirit presently into the saying of it. For though not a lover of false bishops, he *was* a lover of true ones; and the Lake-pilot is here, in his thoughts, the type and head of true episcopal power. For Milton reads that text, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,"[1] quite honestly. Puritan though he be, he would not blot it out of the book because there have been bad bishops; nay, in order to understand *him,* we must understand that verse first; it will not do to eye it askance, or whisper it under our breath, as if it were a weapon of an adverse sect. It is a solemn, universal assertion, deeply to be kept in mind by all sects. But perhaps we shall be better able to reason

1. Matthew 16:19.

on it if we go on a little farther, and come back to it. For clearly this marked insistence on the power of the true episcopate is to make us feel more weightily what is to be charged against the false claimants of episcopate; or generally, against false claimants of power and rank in the body of the clergy; they who, "for their bellies' sake, creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold."

21. Never think Milton uses those three words to fill up his verse, as a loose writer would. He needs all the three; — especially those three, and no more than those — "creep," and "intrude," and "climb"; no other words would or could serve the turn, and no more could be added. For they exhaustively comprehend the three classes, correspondent to the three characters, of men who dishonestly seek ecclesiastical power. First, those who "*creep*" into the fold; who do not care for office, nor name, but for secret influence, and do all things occultly and cunningly, consenting to any servility of office or conduct, so only that they may intimately discern, and unawares direct, the minds of men. Then those who "intrude" (thrust, that is) themselves into the fold, who by natural insolence of heart, and stout eloquence of tongue, and fearlessly perseverant self-assertion, obtain hearing and authority with the common crowd. Lastly, those who "climb," who, by labour and learning, both stout and sound, but selfishly exerted in the cause of their own ambition, gain high dignities and authorities, and become "lords over the heritage," though not "ensamples to the flock."

22. Now go on: —

> Of other care they little reckoning make,
> Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast.
> *Blind mouths* —

I pause again, for this is a strange expression; a broken metaphor, one might think, careless and unscholarly.

Not so: its very audacity and pithiness are intended to make us look close at the phrase and remember it. Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character, in the two great offices of the Church — those of bishop and pastor.

A "Bishop" means "a person who sees."

A "Pastor" means "a person who feeds."

The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind.

The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed, — to be a Mouth.

Take the two reverses together, and you have "blind mouths." We may advisably follow out this idea a little. Nearly all the evils in the Church have

arisen from bishops desiring *power* more than *light.* They want authority, not outlook. Whereas their real office is not to rule; though it may be vigorously to exhort and rebuke: it is the king's office to rule; the bishop's office is to *oversee* the flock; to number it, sheep by sheep; to be ready always to give full account of it. Now it is clear he cannot give account of the souls, if he has not so much as numbered the bodies, of his flock. The first thing, therefore, that a bishop has to do is at least to put himself in a position in which, at any moment, he can obtain the history, from childhood, of every living soul in his diocese, and of its present state. Down in that back street, Bill and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out! — Does the bishop know all about it? Has he his eye upon them? Has he *had* his eye upon them? Can he circumstantially explain to us how Bill got into the habit of beating Nancy about the head? If he cannot, he is no bishop, though he had a mitre as high as Salisbury steeple; he is no bishop, — he has sought to be at the helm instead of the masthead; he has no sight of things. "Nay," you say, "it is not his duty to look after Bill in the back street." What! the fat sheep that have full fleeces — you think it is only those he should look after while (go back to your Milton) "the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, besides what the grim wolf, with privy paw" (bishops knowing nothing about it), "daily devours apace, and nothing said"?

"But that's not our idea of a bishop."* Perhaps not; but it was St. Paul's;[1] and it was Milton's. They may be right, or we may be; but we must not think we are reading either one or the other by putting our meaning into their words.

23. I go on.

> But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw.

This is to meet the vulgar answer that "if the poor are not looked after in their bodies, they are in their souls; they have spiritual food."

And Milton says, "They have no such thing as spiritual food; they are only swollen with wind." At first you may think that is a coarse type, and an obscure one. But again, it is a quite literally accurate one. Take up your Latin and Greek dictionaries, and find out the meaning of "Spirit." It is only a contraction of the Latin word "breath," and an indistinct translation of the Greek word for "wind." The same word is used in writing, "The wind bloweth where it listeth"; and in writing, "So is every one that is born of the

* Compare the 13th Letter in *Time and Tide.*

1. See Acts 20:28.

Spirit";[1] born of the *breath,* that is; for it means the breath of God, in soul and body. We have the true sense of it in our words "inspiration" and "expire." Now, there are two kinds of breath with which the flock may be filled, — God's breath, and man's. The breath of God is health, and life, and peace to them, as the air of heaven is to the flocks on the hills; but man's breath — the word which *he* calls spiritual — is disease and contagion to them, as the fog of the fen. They rot inwardly with it; they are puffed up by it, as a dead body by the vapours of its own decomposition. This is literally true of all false religious teaching; the first and last, and fatalest sign of it, is that "puffling up."[2] Your converted children, who teach their parents; your converted convicts, who teach honest men; your converted dunces, who, having lived in cretinous stupefaction half their lives, suddenly awaking to the fact of there being a God, fancy themselves therefore His peculiar people and messengers; your sectarians of every species, small and great, Catholic or Protestant, of high church or low, in so far as they think themselves exclusively in the right and others wrong; and, pre-eminently, in every sect, those who hold that men can be saved by thinking rightly instead of doing rightly, by word instead of act, and wish instead of work; — these are the true fog children — clouds, these, without water;[3] bodies, these, of putrescent vapour and skin, without blood or flesh: blown bagpipes for the fiends to pipe with — corrupt, and corrupting, — "Swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw."

24. Lastly, let us return to the lines respecting the power of the keys, for now we can understand them. Note the difference between Milton and Dante in their interpretation of this power:[4] for once, the latter is weaker in thought;[5] he supposes *both* the keys to be of the gate of heaven; one is of gold, the other of silver: they are given by St. Peter to the sentinel angel; and it is not easy to determine the meaning either of the substances of the three steps of the gate, or of the two keys. But Milton makes one, of gold, the key of heaven; the other, of iron, the key of the prison in which the wicked teachers are to be bound who "have taken away the key of knowledge, yet entered not in themselves."[6]

We have seen that the duties of bishop and pastor are to see, and feed;

1. John 3:8.

2. 2 Corinthians 8:1, etc.

3. Jude 12.

4. See *Purgatorio,* 9:117 *seq.*

5. See below, § 25, where Ruskin speaks of Dante as wider and deeper than Milton.

6. Luke 11:52.

and of all who do so it is said, "He that watereth, shall be watered also himself."[1] But the reverse is truth also. He that watereth not, shall be *withered* himself; and he that seeth not, shall himself be shut out of sight — shut into the perpetual prison-house. And that prison opens here, as well as hereafter: he who is to be bound in heaven must first be bound on earth. That command to the strong angels, of which the rock-apostle is the image, "Take him, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him out,"[2] issues, in its measure, against the teacher, for every help withheld, and for every truth refused, and for every falsehood enforced; so that he is more strictly fettered the more he fetters, and farther outcast as he more and more misleads, till at last the bars of the iron cage close upon him, and as "the golden opes, the iron shuts amain."

25. We have got something out of the lines, I think, and much more is yet to be found in them; but we have done enough by way of example of the kind of word-by-word examination of your author which is rightly called "reading"; watching every accent and expression, and putting ourselves always in the author's place, annihilating our own personality, and seeking to enter into his, so as to be able assuredly to say, "Thus Milton thought," not "Thus *I* thought, in mis-reading Milton." And by this process you will gradually come to attach less weight to your own "Thus I thought" at other times. You will begin to perceive that what *you* thought was a matter of no serious importance; — that your thoughts on any subject are not perhaps the clearest and wisest that could be arrived at thereupon: — in fact, that unless you are a very singular person, you cannot be said to have any "thoughts" at all; that you have no materials for them, in any serious matters;* — no right to "think," but only to try to learn more of the facts. Nay, most probably all your life (unless, as I said, you are a singular person) you will have no legitimate right to an "opinion" on any business, except that instantly under your hand. What must of necessity be done, you can always find out, beyond question, how to do. Have you a house to keep in order, a commodity to sell, a field to plough, a ditch to cleanse? There need be no two opinions about these proceedings; it is at your peril if you have not much more than an "opinion" on the way to manage such matters. And also, outside of your own business, there are one or two subjects on which you are bound to have but one opinion. That roguery and lying are objec-

* Modern "Education" for the most part signifies giving people the faculty of thinking wrong on every conceivable subject of importance to them.

1. Proverbs 11:25.

2. Matthew 22:13.

tionable, and are instantly to be flogged out of the way whenever discovered; — that covetousness and love of quarrelling are dangerous dispositions even in children, and deadly dispositions in men and nations; — that, in the end, the God of heaven and earth loves active, modest, and kind people, and hates idle, proud, greedy, and cruel ones; — on these general facts you are bound to have but one, and that a very strong, opinion. For the rest, respecting religions, governments, sciences, arts, you will find that, on the whole, you can know NOTHING, — judge nothing; that the best you can do, even though you may be a well-educated person, is to be silent, and strive to be wiser every day, and to understand a little more of the thoughts of others, which so soon as you try to do honestly, you will discover that the thoughts even of the wisest are very little more than pertinent questions. To put the difficulty into a clear shape, and exhibit to you the grounds for *in*decision, that is all they can generally do for you! — and well for them and for us, if indeed they are able "to mix the music with our thoughts, and sadden us with heavenly doubts."[1] This writer, from whom I have been reading to you, is not among the first or wisest: he sees shrewdly as far as he sees, and therefore it is easy to find out its full meaning; but with the greater men, you cannot fathom their meaning; they do not even wholly measure it themselves, — it is so wide. Suppose I had asked you, for instance, to seek for Shakespeare's opinion, instead of Milton's, on this matter of Church authority? — or for Dante's? Have any of you, at this instant, the least idea what either thought about it? Have you ever balanced the scene with the bishops in *Richard III.* against the character of Cranmer?[2] the description of St. Francis and St. Dominic against that of him who made Virgil wonder to gaze upon him,[3] — "disteso, tanto vilmente, nell' eterno esilio:" or of him whom Dante stood beside, "come 'l frate che confessa lo perfido assassin"?* Shakespeare and Alighieri knew men better than most of us, I

* *Inf.* xxiii. 125, 126; xix. 49, 50.

1. From Emerson's lines "To Rhea": — "He mixes music with her thoughts, / And saddens her with heavenly doubts."

2. That is, hypocrisy and mock humility (*Richard III,* 3. 7) against honesty and true humility (*Henry VIII,* 5. 1 and 2).

3. For the description of St. Francis and St. Dominic, see *Paradiso,* cantos xi. and xii. He "who made Virgil wonder" is the Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas, punished among hypocrites ("thus abjectly extended on the cross in banishment eternal"); and he "whom Dante stood beside" ("like the friar that doth shrive a wretch for murder doom'd") is Pope Nicholas III, among those punished for simony.

presume! They were both in the midst of the main struggle between the temporal and spiritual powers. They had an opinion, we may guess. But where is it? Bring it into court! Put Shakespeare's or Dante's creed into articles, and send *it* up for trial by the Ecclesiastical Courts![1]

26. You will not be able, I tell you again, for many and many a day, to come at the real purposes and teaching of these great men; but a very little honest study of them will enable you to perceive that what you took for your own "judgment" was mere chance prejudice, and drifted, helpless, entangled weed of castaway thought; nay, you will see that most men's minds are indeed little better than rough heath wilderness, neglected and stubborn, partly barren, partly overgrown with pestilent brakes, and venomous, windsown herbage of evil surmise; that the first thing you have to do for them, and yourself, is eagerly and scornfully to set fire to *this;* burn all the jungle into wholesome ash-heaps, and then plough and sow. All the true literary work before you, for life, must begin with obedience to that order, "Break up your fallow ground, and *sow not among thorns.*"[2]

27. (II.*) Having then faithfully listened to the great teachers, that you may enter into their Thoughts, you have yet this higher advance to make; — you have to enter into their Hearts. As you go to them first for clear sight, so you must stay with them, that you may share at last their just and mighty Passion. Passion, or "sensation." I am not afraid of the word; still less of the thing. You have heard many outcries against sensation lately;[3] but, I can tell you, it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another, — between one animal and another, — is precisely in this, that one feels more than another. If we were sponges, perhaps sensation might not be easily got for us; if we were earthworms, liable at every instant to be cut in two by the spade, perhaps too much sensation might not be good for us. But being human creatures, it *is* good

* Compare §13 above.

1. A reference to the cases arising out of *Essays and Reviews,* the decision of which by the Privy Council (reversing the judgment in the Arches Court) had excited much controversy in 1864.

2. Jeremiah 4:3.

3. In the original lecture Ruskin here introduced a passage referring to the outcry in question. The *Manchester Courier* thus reports it: — "Mr. Ruskin referred *en passant* to the recent speech of the Archbishop of York on sensational novels, remarking that many of these would live — for example, works such as the *Mysteries of Paris* — whilst works of higher moral culture would become unknown."

for us; nay, we are only human in so far as we are sensitive, and our honour is precisely in proportion to our passion.

28. You know I said of that great and pure society of the Dead, that it would allow "no vain or vulgar person to enter there." What do you think I meant by a "vulgar" person? What do you yourselves mean by "vulgarity"? You will find it a fruitful subject of thought; but, briefly, the essence of all vulgarity lies in want of sensation. Simple and innocent vulgarity is merely an untrained and undeveloped bluntness of body and mind; but in true inbred vulgarity, there is a dreadful callousness, which, in extremity, becomes capable of every sort of bestial habit and crime, without fear, without pleasure, without horror, and without pity. It is in the blunt hand and the dead heart, in the diseased habit, in the hardened conscience, that men become vulgar; they are for ever vulgar, precisely in proportion as they are incapable of sympathy, — of quick understanding, — of all that, in deep insistence on the common, but most accurate term, may be called the "tact" or "touch-faculty," of body and soul: that tact which the Mimosa has in trees, which the pure woman has above all creatures; fineness and fulness of sensation, beyond reason; — the guide and sanctifier of reason itself. Reason can but determine what is true: — it is the God-given passion of humanity which alone can recognise what God has made good.

29. We come then to that great concourse of the Dead, not merely to know from them what is True, but chiefly to feel with them what is just. Now, to feel with them, we must be like them; and none of us can become that without pains. As the true knowledge is disciplined and tested knowledge, — not the first thought that comes, so the true passion is disciplined and tested passion, — not the first passion that comes. The first that come are the vain, the false, the treacherous; if you yield to them they will lead you wildly and far, in vain pursuit, in hollow enthusiasm, till you have no true purpose and no true passion left. Not that any feeling possible to humanity is in itself wrong, but only wrong when undisciplined. Its nobility is in its force and justice; it is wrong when it is weak, and felt for paltry cause. There is a mean wonder, as of a child who sees a juggler tossing golden balls; and this is base, if you will. But do you think that the wonder is ignoble, or the sensation less, with which every human soul is called to watch the golden balls of heaven tossed through the night by the Hand that made them? There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or a servant prying into her master's business; — and a noble curiosity, questioning, in the front of danger, the source of the great river beyond the sand, — the place of the great continents beyond the sea; — a nobler curiosity still, which questions of the source of the River of Life, and of the space of the

Continent of Heaven, — things which "the angels desire to look into."[1] So the anxiety is ignoble, with which you linger over the course and catastrophe of an idle tale; but do you think the anxiety is less, or greater, with which you watch, or *ought* to watch, the dealings of fate and destiny with the life of an agonized nation? Alas! it is the narrowness, selfishness, minuteness, of your sensation that you have to deplore in England at this day; — sensation which spends itself in bouquets and speeches: in revellings and junketings; in sham fights and gay puppet shows, while you can look on and see noble nations murdered, man by man, without an effort or a tear.[2]

30. I said "minuteness" and "selfishness" of sensation, but it would have been enough to have said "injustice" or "unrighteousness" of sensation. For as in nothing is a gentleman better to be discerned from a vulgar person, so in nothing is a gentle nation (such nations have been) better to be discerned from a mob, than in this, — that their feelings are constant and just, results of due contemplation, and of equal thought. You can talk a mob into anything; its feelings may be — usually are — on the whole, generous and right; but it has no foundation for them, no hold of them; you may tease or tickle it into any, at your pleasure; it thinks by infection, for the most part, catching an opinion like a cold, and there is nothing so little that it will not roar itself wild about, when the fit is on; — nothing so great but it will forget in an hour, when the fit is past. But a gentleman's, or a gentle nation's, passions are just, measured, and continuous. A great nation, for instance, does not spend its entire national wits for a couple of months in weighing evidence of a single ruffian's having done a single murder;[3] and for a couple of years see its own children murder each other by their thousands or tens of thousands a day, considering only what the effect is likely to be on the price of cotton, and caring no wise to determine which side of battle is in the wrong.[4] Neither does a great nation send its poor little boys to jail for stealing six walnuts; and allow its bankrupts to steal their hundreds of

1. 1 Peter 1:12.

2. The reference is to the suppression by Russia of the Polish revolt in the year in which this lecture was delivered (1864).

3. The reference is to the popular interest, to which the newspapers of October and November 1864 bear testimony, manifested in the murder of Mr. Briggs by Müller on the North London Railway. Matthew Arnold makes fun of "the demoralisation of our class caused by the Bow tragedy" in his Preface of 1865 to *Essays in Criticism.*

4. The reference is to the American Civil War, and to the interruption in the cotton supply caused by the blockade of the Southern ports.

thousands with a bow, and its bankers, rich with poor men's savings, to close their doors "under circumstances over which they have no control," with a "by your leave"; and large landed estates to be bought by men who have made their money by going with armed steamers up and down the China Seas, selling opium at the cannon's mouth,[1] and altering, for the benefit of the foreign nation, the common highwayman's demand of "your money *or* your life," into that of "your money *and* your life." Neither does a great nation allow the lives of its innocent poor to be parched out of them by fog fever, and rotted out of them by dunghill plague, for the sake of sixpence a life extra per week to its landlords;* and then debate, with drivelling tears, and diabolical sympathies, whether it ought not piously to save, and nursingly cherish, the lives of its murderers.[2] Also, a great nation having made up its mind that hanging is quite the wholesomest process for its homicides in general, can yet with mercy distinguish between the degrees of guilt in homicides; and does not yelp like a pack of frost-pinched wolf-cubs on the blood-track of an unhappy crazed boy, or grey-haired clodpate Othello, "perplexed i' the extreme," at the very moment that it is sending a Minister of the Crown to make polite speeches to a man who is bayoneting young girls in their fathers' sight, and killing noble youths in cool blood, faster than a country butcher kills lambs in spring.[3] And, lastly, a great nation does not mock Heaven and its Powers, by pretending belief in a revelation which asserts the love of money to be the root of *all* evil,[4] and declaring, at the same time, that it is actuated, and intends to be actuated, in all chief national deeds and measures, by no other love.

31. My friends, I do not know why any of us should talk about reading. We want some sharper discipline than that of reading; but, at all events, be assured, we cannot read. No reading is possible for a people with its mind in

* See note at end of lecture. I have put it in large type, because the course of matters since it was written has made it perhaps better worth attention.

1. Here Ruskin refers to the wars of 1840 and 1856, caused by Chinese opposition to the Opium Trade.

2. The particular reference is to a resolution passed by the House of Commons on May 3, 1864: "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She will be graciously pleased to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the provisions and operation of the Laws under which the Punishment of Death is now inflicted in the United Kingdom," etc.

3. A reference again to the Russian régime in Poland; and to the appointment of a new Ambassador (Sir Andrew Buchanan) to Russia (September 16, 1864).

4. Timothy 6:10.

this state. No sentence of any great writer is intelligible to them. It is simply and sternly impossible for the English public, at this moment, to understand any thoughtful writing, — so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice. Happily, our disease is, as yet, little worse than this incapacity of thought; it is not corruption of the inner nature; we ring true still, when anything strikes home to us; and though the idea that everything should "pay" has infected our every purpose so deeply, that even when we would play the good Samaritan, we never take out our two pence and give them to the host, without saying, "When I come again, thou shalt give me fourpence,"[1] there is a capacity of noble passion left in our hearts' core. We show it in our work — in our war, — even in those unjust domestic affections which make us furious at a small private wrong, while we are polite to a boundless public one: we are still industrious to the last hour of the day, though we add the gambler's fury to the labourer's patience; we are still brave to the death, though incapable of discerning true cause for battle; and are still true in affection to our own flesh, to the death, as the sea-monsters are, and the rock-eagles. And there is hope for a nation while this can be still said of it. As long as it holds its life in its hand, ready to give it for its honour (though a foolish honour), for its love (though a selfish love), and for its business (though a base business), there is hope for it. But hope only; for this instinctive, reckless virtue cannot last. No nation can last, which has made a mob of itself, however generous at heart. It must discipline its passions, and direct them, or they will discipline *it,* one day, with scorpion whips.[2] Above all, a nation cannot last as a money-making mob: it cannot with impunity, — it cannot with existence, — go on despising literature, despising science, despising art, despising nature, despising compassion, and concentrating its soul on Pence. Do you think these are harsh or wild words? Have patience with me but a little longer. I will prove their truth to you, clause by clause.

32. (I.) I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses? If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad — a bibliomaniac. But you never call any one a horsemaniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruining themselves by their books. Or, to go lower still, how much do you think the contents of the book-shelves of the United Kingdom, public and private, would fetch,

1. See Luke 10:35.

2. See 1 Kings 12:11, 14.

as compared with the contents of its wine-cellars? What position would its expenditure on literature take, as compared with its expenditure on luxurious eating? We talk of food for the mind, as of food for the body: now a good book contains such food inexhaustibly; it is a provision for life, and for the best part of us; yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it? Though there have been men who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy a book, whose libraries were cheaper to them, I think, in the end, than most men's dinners are. We are few of us put to such trial, and more the pity; for, indeed, a precious thing is all the more precious to us if it has been won by work or economy; and if public libraries were half so costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling: whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth *much;* nor is it serviceable, until it has been read, and re-read, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want in it, as a soldier can seize the weapon he needs in an armoury, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store. Bread of flour is good; but there is bread, sweet as honey, if we would eat it, in a good book; and the family must be poor indeed, which, once in their lives, cannot, for such multipliable barley-loaves,[1] pay their baker's bill. We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries!

33. (II.) I say we have despised science. "What!" you exclaim, "are we not foremost in all discovery,[*] and is not the whole world giddy by reason, or unreason, of our inventions?" Yes; but do you suppose that is national work? That work is all done *in spite of* the nation; by private people's zeal and money. We are glad enough, indeed, to make our profit of science; we

* Since this was written, the answer has become definitely — No; we having surrendered the field of Arctic discovery to the Continental nations, as being ourselves too poor to pay for ships.[2]

1. See John 6:9.

2. Ruskin refers to the extinction of public zeal in [England] for Arctic discovery which followed the expedition under Sir Edward Belcher in 1852–1854. There were in subsequent years Swedish, Norwegian, and German expeditions. Four years after Ruskin wrote the note above, another British expedition, under Sir George Nares, was despatched (1875–1876).

snap up anything in the way of a scientific bone that has meat on it, eagerly enough; but if the scientific man comes for a bone or a crust to *us,* that is another story. What have we publicly done for science? We are obliged to know what o'clock it is, for the safety of our ships, and therefore we pay for an observatory; and we allow ourselves, in the person of our Parliament, to be annually tormented into doing something, in a slovenly way, for the British Museum; sullenly apprehending that to be a place for keeping stuffed birds in, to amuse our children. If anybody will pay for their own telescope, and resolve another nebula, we cackle over the discernment as if it were our own; if one in ten thousand of our hunting squires suddenly perceives that the earth was indeed made to be something else than a portion for foxes,[1] and burrows in it himself, and tells us where the gold is, and where the coals, we understand that there is some use in that; and very properly knight him: but is the accident of his having found out how to employ himself usefully any credit to *us?* (The negation of such discovery among his brother squires may perhaps be some *dis*credit to us, if we would consider of it.) But if you doubt these generalities, here is one fact for us all to meditate upon, illustrative of our love of science. Two years ago there was a collection of the fossils of Solenhofen to be sold in Bavaria; the best in existence, containing many specimens unique for perfectness, and one unique as an example of a species (a whole kingdom of unknown living creatures being announced by that fossil).[2] This collection, of which the mere market worth, among private buyers, would probably have been some thousand or twelve hundred pounds, was offered to the English nation for seven hundred: but we would not give seven hundred, and the whole series would have been in the Munich Museum at this moment, if Professor Owen* had not, with loss of his own time, and patient tormenting of the British public in person of its representatives, got leave to give four hundred pounds at once, and himself become answerable for the other three! which the said public will doubtless pay him eventually, but sulkily, and caring nothing about the matter all the while; only always ready to cackle if any

* I state this fact without Professor Owen's permission; which of course he could not with propriety have granted, had I asked it; but I consider it so important that the public should be aware of the fact, that I do what seems to me right, though rude.

1. Psalms 63:10.

2. The Archæopteryx, the first fossil bird, discovered in 1861 by Andreas Wagner in the lithographic slate of Solenhofen; the slab containing the fossil may be seen in the National History Museum. It is described by Owen in the *Philosophical Transactions,* 1863, p. 33.

credit comes of it. Consider, I beg of you, arithmetically, what this fact means. Your annual expenditure for public purposes, (a third of it for military apparatus,) is at least 50 millions. Now £700 is to £50,000,000 roughly, as seven pence to two thousand pounds. Suppose, then, a gentleman of unknown income, but whose wealth was to be conjectured from the fact that he spent two thousand a year on his park-walls and footmen only, professes himself fond of science; and that one of his servants comes eagerly to tell him that an unique collection of fossils, giving clue to a new era of creation, is to be had for the sum of seven pence sterling; and that the gentleman who is fond of science, and spends two thousand a year on his park, answers, after keeping his servant waiting several months, "Well! I'll give you fourpence for them, if you will be answerable for the extra threepence yourself, till next year!"

34. (III). I say you have despised Art! "What!" you again answer, "have we not Art exhibitions, miles long? and do we not pay thousands of pounds for single pictures? and have we not Art schools and institutions, more than ever nation had before?" Yes, truly, but all that is for the sake of the shop. You would fain sell canvas as well as coats, and crockery as well as iron; you would take every other nation's bread out of its mouth if you could;* not being able to do that, your ideal of life is to stand in the thoroughfares of the world, like Ludgate apprentices, screaming to every passer-by, "What d'ye lack?"[1] You know nothing of your own faculties or circumstances; you fancy that, among your damp, flat, fat fields of clay, you can have as quick art-fancy as the Frenchman among his bronzed vines, or the Italian under his volcanic cliffs; — that Art may be learned, as book-keeping is, and when learned, will give you more books to keep. You care for pictures, absolutely, no more than you do for the bills pasted on your dead walls. There is always room on the walls for the bills to be read, — never for the pictures to be seen. You do not know what pictures you have (by repute) in the country, nor whether they are false or true, nor whether they are taken care of or not; in foreign countries, you calmly see the noblest existing pictures in the world rotting in abandoned wreck — (in Venice you saw the Austrian guns deliberately pointed at the palaces containing them), and if you heard that all the

* That was our real idea of "Free Trade" — "All the trade to myself." You find now that by "competition" other people can manage to sell something as well as you — and now we call for Protection again. Wretches![2]

1. See the opening of *The Fortunes of Nigel* (ch. i.) with its account of David Ramsay's apprentices, though his shop was in Fleet Street.

2. Note added in 1871.

fine pictures in Europe were made into sand-bags to-morrow on the Austrian forts, it would not trouble you so much as the chance of a brace or two of game less in your own bags, in a day's shooting. That is your national love of Art.

35. (IV.) You have despised Nature; that is to say, all the deep and sacred sensations of natural scenery. The French revolutionists made stables of the cathedrals of France; you have made race-courses of the cathedrals of the earth. Your *one* conception of pleasure is to drive in railroad carriages round their aisles, and eat off their altars.* You have put a railroad-bridge over the falls of Schaffhausen. You have tunnelled the cliffs of Lucerne by Tell's chapel; you have destroyed the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva; there is not a quiet valley in England that you have not filled with bellowing fire; there is no particle left of English land which you have not trampled coal ashes into† — nor any foreign city in which the spread of your presence is not marked among its fair old streets and happy gardens by a consuming white leprosy of new hotels and perfumers' shops: the Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again, with "shrieks of delight." When you are past shrieking, having no human articulate voice to say you are glad with, you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccough of self-satisfaction. I think nearly the two sorrowfullest spectacles I have ever seen in humanity, taking the deep inner significance of them, are the English mobs in the valley of Chamouni, amusing themselves with firing rusty howitzers; and the Swiss vintagers of Zurich expressing their Christian thanks for the gift of the vine, by assembling in knots in the "towers of the vineyards,"[1] and slowly loading and firing horse-pistols from morning till evening. It is pitiful, to have dim conceptions of duty; more pitiful, it seems to me, to have conceptions like these, of mirth.

* I meant that the beautiful places of the world — Switzerland, Italy, South Germany, and so on — are, indeed, the truest cathedrals — places to be reverent in, and to worship in; and that we only care to drive through them: and to eat and drink at their most sacred places.[2]

† I was singularly struck, some years ago, by finding all the river shore at Richmond, in Yorkshire, black in its earth, from the mere drift of soot-laden air from places many miles away.

1. See Isaiah 5:2.

2. See the Preface of 1865 § 6, where Ruskin explains the passage in the text.

36. Lastly. You despise compassion. There is no need of words of mine for proof of this. I will merely print one of the newspaper paragraphs which I am in the habit of cutting out and throwing into my store-drawer; here is one from a *Daily Telegraph* of an early date this year (1867);[1] (date which, though by me carelessly left unmarked, is easily discoverable; for on the back of the slip there is the announcement that "yesterday the seventh of the special services of this year was performed by the Bishop of Ripon in St. Paul's";) it relates only one of such facts as happen now daily; this by chance having taken a form in which it came before the coroner. I will print the paragraph in red. Be sure, the facts themselves are written in that colour, in a book which we shall all of us, literate or illiterate, have to read our page of, some day.

An inquiry was held on Friday by Mr. Richards, deputy coroner, at the White Horse Tavern, Christ Church, Spitalfields, respecting the death of Michael Collins, aged 58 years. Mary Collins, a miserable-looking woman, said that she lived with the deceased and his son in a room at 2, Cobb's Court, Christ Church. Deceased was a "translator" of boots. Witness went out and bought old boots; deceased and his son made them into good ones, and then witness sold them for what she could get at the shops, which was very little indeed. Deceased and his son used to work night and day to try and get a little bread and tea, and pay for the room (2s. a week), so as to keep the home together. On Friday-night-week deceased got up from his bench and began to shiver. He threw down the boots, saying, "Somebody else must finish them when I am gone, for I can do no more." There was no fire, and he said, "I would be better if I was warm." Witness therefore took two pairs of translated boots* to sell at the shop, but she could only get 14d. for the two pairs, for the people at the shop said, "We must have our profit." Witness got 14 lb. of coal, and a little tea and bread. Her son sat up the whole night to make the "translations," to get money, but deceased died on Saturday morning. The family never had enough to eat. — Coroner: "It seems to me deplorable that you did not go into the workhouse." Witness: "We wanted the comforts of our little home." A juror asked what the

* One of the things which we must very resolutely enforce, for the good of all classes, in our future arrangements, must be that they wear no "translated" articles of dress. See the Preface.

1. The year "(1867)" was inserted in the edition of 1871 and has remained in all subsequent issues; it is, of course, an error, for the lecture was published in 1865. The reference to the *Daily Telegraph* is also wrong; the cutting is from the *Morning Post* of February 13, 1865.

comforts were, for he only saw a little straw in the corner of the room, the windows of which were broken. The witness began to cry, and said that they had a quilt and other little things. The deceased said he never would go into the workhouse. In summer, when the season was good, they sometimes made as much as 10s. profit in the week. They then always saved towards the next week, which was generally a bad one. In winter they made not half so much. For three years they had been getting from bad to worse. — Cornelius Collins said that he had assisted his father since 1847. They used to work so far into the night that both nearly lost their eyesight. Witness now had a film over his eyes. Five years ago deceased applied to the parish for aid. The relieving officer gave him a 4 lb. loaf, and told him if he came again he should "get the stones."* That disgusted deceased, and he would have nothing to do with them since. They got worse and worse until last Friday week, when they had not even a halfpenny to buy a candle. Deceased then lay down on the straw, and said he could not live till morning. — A

* This abbreviation of the penalty of useless labour is curiously coincident in verbal form with a certain passage which some of us may remember.[1] It may perhaps be well to preserve beside this paragraph another cutting out of my store-drawer, from the *Morning Post,* of about a parallel date, Friday, March 10th, 1865: — "The *salons* of Mme. C —— who did the honours with clever imitative grace and elegance, were crowded with princes, dukes, marquises, and counts — in fact, with the same *male* company as one meets at the parties of the Princess Metternich and Madame Drouyn de Lhuys. Some English peers and members of Parliament were present, and appeared to enjoy the animated and dazzlingly improper scene. On the second floor the supper tables were loaded with every delicacy of the season. That your readers may form some idea of the dainty fare of the Parisian demi-monde, I copy the menu of the supper, which was served to all the guests (about 200) seated at four o'clock. Choice Yquem, Johannisberg, Laffitte, Tokay, and champagne of the finest vintages were served most lavishly throughout the morning. After supper dancing was resumed with increased animation, and the ball terminated with a *chaîne diabolique* and a *cancan d'enfer* at seven in the morning. (Morning service — 'Ere the fresh lawns appeared, under the opening eyelids of the Morn. — ')[2] Here is the menu: — 'Consommé de volaille à la Bagration: 16 hors-d'œuvres variés. Bouchées à la Talleyrand. Saumons froids, sauce Ravigote. Filets de bœuf en Bellevue, timbales milanaises, chaudfroid de gibier. Dindes truffées. Pâtés de foies gras, buissons d'écrevisses, salades vénétiennes, gelées blanches aux fruits, gâteaux mancini, parisiens et parisiennes. Fromages glacés. Ananas. Dessert.' "

1. Matthew 7:9: "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone?"

2. *Lycidas,* 25, 26; Milton, however, wrote "high," not "fresh."

juror: "You are dying of starvation yourself, and you ought to go into the house until the summer." — Witness: "If we went in we should die. When we come out in the summer we should be like people dropped from the sky. No one would know us, and we would not have even a room. I could work now if I had food, for my sight would get better." Dr. G. P. Walker said deceased died from syncope, from exhaustion from want of food. The deceased had had no bedclothes. For four months he had had nothing but bread to eat. There was not a particle of fat in the body. There was no disease, but, if there had been medical attendance, he might have survived the syncope or fainting. The Coroner having remarked upon the painful nature of the case, the jury returned the following verdict: "That deceased died from exhaustion from want of food and the common necessaries of life; also through want of medical aid."

37. "Why would witness not go into the workhouse?" you ask. Well, the poor seem to have a prejudice against the workhouse which the rich have not; for of course everyone who takes a pension from Government goes into the workhouse on a grand scale:* only the workhouses for the rich do not involve the idea of work, and should be called play-houses. But the poor like to die independently, it appears; perhaps if we made the play-houses for them pretty and pleasant enough, or gave them their pensions at home, and allowed them a little introductory peculation with the public money, their minds might be reconciled to the conditions. Meantime, here are the facts: we make our relief either so insulting to them, or so painful, that they rather die than take it at our hands; or, for third alternative, we leave them so untaught and foolish that they starve like brute creatures, wild and dumb, not knowing what to do, or what to ask. I say, you despise compassion; if you did not, such a newspaper paragraph would be as impossible in a Christian country as a deliberate assassination permitted in its public streets.† "Christian," did I say? Alas! if we were but wholesomely *un-*

* Please observe this statement, and think of it, and consider how it happens that a poor old woman will be ashamed to take a shilling a week from the country — but no one is ashamed to take a pension of a thousand a year.

† I am heartily glad to see such a paper as the *Pall Mall Gazette* established; for the power of the press in the hands of highly educated men, in independent position, and of honest purpose, may indeed become all that it has been hitherto vainly vaunted to be. Its editor will therefore, I doubt not, pardon me, in that, by very reason of my respect for the journal, I do not let pass unnoticed an article in its third number, page 5, which was wrong in every word of it, with the intense wrongness which only an honest man can achieve

Christian, it would be impossible: it is our imaginary Christianity that helps us to commit these crimes, for we revel and luxuriate in our faith, for the lewd sensation of it; dressing *it* up, like everything else, in fiction. The dramatic Christianity of the organ and aisle, of dawn-service and twilight-revival — the Christianity, which we do not fear to mix the mockery of, pictorially, with our play about the devil, in our Satanellas, — Roberts, — Fausts, chanting hymns through traceried windows for background effect, and artistically modulating the "Dio" through variation on variation of

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who has taken a false turn of thought in the outset, and is following it, regardless of consequences. It contained at the end this notable passage: —

"The bread of affliction, and the water of affliction, — aye, and the bedsteads and blankets of affliction, are the very utmost that the law ought to give to *outcasts merely as outcasts.*" I merely put beside this expression of the gentlemanly mind of England in 1865, a part of the message which Isaiah was ordered to "lift up his voice like a trumpet"[1] in declaring to the gentlemen of his day: "Ye fast for strife, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor *that are cast out* (margin, 'afflicted') to *thy* house?" The falsehood on which the writer had mentally founded himself, as previously stated by him, was this: "To confound the functions of the dispensers of the poor-rates with those of the disepensers of a charitable institution is a great and pernicious error." This sentence is so accurately and exquisitely wrong, that its substance must be thus reversed in our minds before we can deal with any existing problem of national distress. "To understand that the dispensers of the poor-rates are the almoners of the nation, and should distribute its alms with a gentleness and freedom of hand as much greater and franker than that possible to individual charity, as the collective national wisdom and power may be supposed greater than those of any single person, is the foundation of all law respecting pauperism." (Since this was written the *Pall Mall Gazette* has become a mere party paper — like the rest; but it writes well, and does more good than mischief on the whole.)[2]

1. Isaiah 63:1, 4, 7.

2. The words in brackets were added in 1871. The *Pall Mall Gazette* had been started by Mr. George Smith (Ruskin's publisher) on February 7, 1865; the editor was Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who continued to occupy that post till 1880. The paper was announced as independent in politics, and it was to be largely devoted to original articles on "public affairs, literature, the arts, and all the influences which strengthen or dissipate society." Ruskin showed his interest in the new paper by contributing many letters in 1865. In 1871 the paper was inclining toward the Conservative party, and in succeeding years it became a strong supporter of Disraeli; as at a later stage (under a new editor) of Gladstone.

mimicked prayer: (while we distribute tracts, next day, for the benefit of uncultivated swearers, upon what we suppose to be the signification of the Third Commandment; —) this gas-lighted, and gas-inspired Christianity, we are triumphant in, and draw back the hem of our robes from the touch of the heretics who dispute it. But to do a piece of common Christian righteousness in a plain English word or deed; to make Christian law any rule of life, and found one National act or hope thereon, — we know too well what our faith comes to for that! You might sooner get lightning out of incense smoke than true action or passion out of your modern English religion. You had better get rid of the smoke, and the organ pipes, both: leave them, and the Gothic windows, and the painted glass, to the property man; give up your carburetted hydrogen ghost[1] in one healthy expiration, and look after Lazarus at the doorstep.[2] For there is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only holy or Mother Church which ever was, or ever shall be.

38. All these pleasures then, and all these virtues, I repeat, you nationally despise. You have, indeed, men among you who do not; by whose work, by whose strength, by whose life, by whose death, you live, and never thank them. Your wealth, your amusement, your pride, would all be alike impossible, but for those whom you scorn or forget. The policeman, who is walking up and down the black lane all night to watch the guilt you have created there; and may have his brains beaten out, and be maimed for life, at any moment, and never be thanked; the sailor wrestling with the sea's rage; the quiet student poring over his book or his vial; the common worker, without praise, and nearly without bread, fulfilling his task as your horses drag your carts, hopeless, and spurned of all: these are the men by whom England lives; but they are not the nation; they are only the body and nervous force of it, acting still from old habit in a convulsive perseverance, while the mind is gone. Our National wish and purpose are only to be amused; our National religion is the performance of church ceremonies, and preaching of soporific truths (or untruths) to keep the mob quietly at work, while we amuse ourselves; and the necessity for this amusement is fastening on us, as a feverous disease of parched throat and wandering eyes — senseless, dissolute, merciless. How literally that word *Dis*-Ease, the Negation and im-

1. Ruskin plays on the word, with reference to "Pepper's Ghost" — an illusion caused by reflection from a mirror by the aid of some strong illuminating agent, such as carburetted hydrogen gas — which was attracting the public at the Polytechnic in 1864.

2. Luke 16:20.

possibility of Ease, expresses the entire moral state of our English Industry and its Amusements!

39. When men are rightly occupied, their amusement grows out of their work, as the colour-petals out of a fruitful flower; — when they are faithfully helpful and compassionate, all their emotions become steady, deep, perpetual, and vivifying to the soul as the natural pulse to the body. But now, having no true business, we pour our whole masculine energy into the false business of money-making; and having no true emotion, we must have false emotions dressed up for us to play with, not innocently, as children with dolls, but guiltily and darkly, as the idolatrous Jews with their pictures on cavern walls, which men had to dig to detect.[1] The justice we do not execute, we mimic in the novel and on the stage; for the beauty we destroy in nature, we substitute the metamorphosis of the pantomime, and (the human nature of us imperatively requiring awe and sorrow of *some* kind) for the noble grief we should have borne with our fellows, and the pure tears we should have wept with them, we gloat over the pathos of the police court, and gather the night-dew of the grave.

40. It is difficult to estimate the true significance of these things; the facts are frightful enough; — the measure of national fault involved in them is perhaps not as great as it would at first seem. We permit, or cause, thousands of deaths daily, but we mean no harm; we set fire to houses, and ravage peasants' fields, yet we should be sorry to find we had injured anybody. We are still kind at heart; still capable of virtue, but only as children are. Chalmers, at the end of his long life, having had much power with the public, being plagued in some serious matter by a reference to "public opinion," uttered the impatient exclamation, "The public is just a great baby!" And the reason that I have allowed all these graver subjects of thought to mix themselves up with an inquiry into methods of reading, is that, the more I see of our national faults or miseries, the more they resolve themselves into conditions of childish illiterateness and want of education in the most ordinary habits of thought. It is, I repeat, not vice, not selfishness, but dulness of brain, which we have to lament; but an unreachable schoolboy's recklessness, only differing from the true schoolboy's in its incapacity of being helped, because it acknowledges no master.

41. There is a curious type of us given in one of the lovely, neglected works of the last of our great painters. It is a drawing of Kirkby Lonsdale churchyard, and of its brook, and valley, and hills, and folded morning sky

1. Ezekiel 8:7–12.

beyond. And unmindful alike of these, and of the dead who have left these for other valleys and for other skies, a group of schoolboys have piled their little books upon a grave, to strike them off with stones. So, also, we play with the words of the dead that would teach us, and strike them far from us with our bitter, reckless will; little thinking that those leaves which the wind scatters had been piled, not only upon a gravestone, but upon the seal of an enchanted vault — nay, the gate of a great city of sleeping kings, who would awake for us and walk with us, if we knew but how to call them by their names. How often, even if we lift the marble entrance gate, do we but wander among those old kings in their repose, and finger the robes they lie in, and stir the crowns on their foreheads; and still they are silent to us, and seem but a dusty imagery, because we know not the incantation of the heart that would wake them; — which, if they once heard, they would start up to meet us in their power of long ago, narrowly to look upon us, and consider us; and, as the fallen kings of Hades meet the newly fallen, saying, "Art thou also become weak as we — art thou also become one of us?"[1] so would these kings, with their undimmed, unshaken diadems, meet us, saying, "Art thou also become pure and mighty of heart as we — art thou also become one of us?"

42. Mighty of heart, mighty of mind — "magnanimous" — to be this, is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly, is, indeed, to "advance in life," — in life itself — not in the trappings of it. My friends, do you remember that old Scythian custom, when the head of a house died?[2] How he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friends' houses; and each of them placed him at his table's head, and all feasted in his presence? Suppose it were offered to you in plain words, as it *is* offered to you in dire facts, that you should gain this Scythian honour, gradually, while you yet thought yourself alive. Suppose the offer were this: You shall die slowly; your blood shall daily grow cold, your flesh petrify, your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves. Your life shall fade from you, and sink through the earth into the ice of Caina;[3] but, day by day, your body shall be dressed more gaily, and set in higher chariots, and have more orders on its breast — crowns on its head, if you will. Men shall bow before it, stare and shout round it, crowd after it up and down the streets; build palaces for it, feast with it at their tables' heads all the night

1. Isaiah 14:10.

2. Herodotus, iv. 73.

3. *Inferno,* xxxii. The first and outermost ring of the frozen circle, which holds those who have done violence to their own kindred, is called Caina, from the first murderer.

long; your soul shall stay enough within it to know what they do, and feel the weight of the golden dress on its shoulders, and the furrow of the crown-edge on the skull; — no more. Would you take the offer, verbally made by the death-angel? Would the meanest among us take it, think you? Yet practically and verily we grasp at it, every one of us, in a measure; many of us grasp at it in its fulness of horror. Every man accepts it, who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, and more footmen, and more fortune, and more public honour, and — *not* more personal soul. He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living* peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth — they, and they only. All other kingships, so far as they are true, are only the practical issue and expression of theirs; if less than this, they are either dramatic royalties, — costly shows, set off, indeed, with real jewels, instead of tinsel — but still only the toys of nations; or else they are no royalties at all, but tyrannies, or the mere active and practical issue of national folly; for which reason I have said of them elsewhere, "Visible governments are the toys of some nations the diseases, of others, the harness of some, the burdens of more."[1]

43. But I have no words for the wonder with which I hear Kinghood still spoken of, even among thoughtful men, as if governed nations were a personal property, and might be bought and sold, or otherwise acquired, as sheep, of whose flesh their king was to feed, and whose fleece he was to gather; as if Achilles' indignant epithet of base kings, "people-eating,"[2] were the constant and proper title of all monarchs; and the enlargement of a king's dominion meant the same thing as the increase of a private man's estate! Kings who think so, however powerful, can no more be the true kings of the nation than gadflies are the kings of a horse; they suck it, and may drive it wild, but do not guide it. They, and their courts, and their armies are, if one could see clearly, only a large species of marsh mosquito, with bayonet proboscis and melodious, band-mastered trumpeting, in the summer air; the twilight being, perhaps, sometimes fairer, but hardly more wholesome, for its glittering mists of midge companies. The true kings, meanwhile, rule quietly, if at all, and hate ruling;[3] too many of them make

* "τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη."[4]

1. *Munera Pulveris;* § 122.

2. δημοβόρος: *Iliad,* i. 231.

3. See Plato, *Republic,* i. 347.

4. Romans 8:6: "To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

"il gran rifiuto"; and if they do not, the mob, as soon as they are likely to become useful to it, is pretty sure to make *its* "gran rifiuto" of *them.*

44. Yet the visible king may also be a true one, some day, if ever day comes when he will estimate his dominion by the *force* of it, — not the geographical boundaries. It matters very little whether Trent cuts you a cantel out here,[1] or Rhine rounds you a castle less there. But it does matter to you, king of men, whether you can verily say to this man, "Go," and he goeth; and to another, "Come," and he cometh.[2] Whether you can turn your people, as you can Trent — and where it is that you bid them come, and where go. It matters to you, king of men, whether your people hate you, and die by you, or love you, and live by you. You may measure your dominion by multitudes, better than by miles; and count degrees of love-latitude, not from, but to, a wonderfully warm and infinite equator.

45. Measure! — nay, you cannot measure. Who shall measure the difference between the power of those who "do and teach,"[3] and who are greatest in the kingdoms of earth, as of heaven — and the power of those who undo, and consume — whose power, at the fullest, is only the power of the moth and the rust? Strange! to think how the Moth-kings lay up treasures for the moth; and the Rust-kings, who are to their peoples' strength as rust to armour, lay up treasures for the rust; and the Robber-kings, treasures for the robber; but how few kings have ever laid up treasures that needed no guarding — treasures of which, the more thieves there were, the better! Broidered robe, only to be rent; helm and sword, only to be dimmed; jewel and gold, only to be scattered; — there have been three kinds of kings who have gathered these. Suppose there ever should arise a Fourth order of kings, who had read, in some obscure writing of long ago, that there was a Fourth kind of treasure,[4] which the jewel and gold could not equal, neither should it be valued with pure gold. A web made fair in the weaving, by Athena's shuttle; an armour, forged in divine fire by Vulcanian force; a gold to be mined in the very sun's red heart, where he sets over the Delphian cliffs; — deep-pictured tissue; — impenetrable armour; — potable gold![5] —

1. The reference is to *1 Henry IV,* 3. 1, 101, where Hotspur complains that in the division of the kingdom, the course of the Trent unfairly diminishes his share: — "See how this river comes me cranking in, / And cuts me from the best of all my land / A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantel out."

2. Matthew 8:9.

3. Matthew 5:19. For the Bible references which follow, see Matthew 6:19, 20.

4. See Job 28:12–19: "But where shall wisdom be found," etc.

5. The term used in alchemy for gold dissolved in nitro-hydrochloric acid, supposed to contain the elixir of life.

the three great Angels of Conduct, Toil, and Thought,[1] still calling to us, and waiting at the posts of our doors, to lead us, with their winged power, and guide us, with their unerring eyes, by the path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye has not seen![2] Suppose kings should ever arise, who heard and believed this word, and at last gathered and brought forth treasures of — Wisdom — for their people?

46. Think what an amazing business *that* would be! How inconceivable, in the state of our present national wisdom! That we should bring up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise! — organise, drill, maintain with pay, and good generalship, armies of thinkers, instead of armies of stabbers! — find national amusement in reading-rooms as well as rifle-grounds; give prizes for a fair shot at a fact, as well as for a leaden splash on a target. What an absurd idea it seems, put fairly in words, that the wealth of the capitalists of civilised nations should ever come to support literature instead of war!

47. Have yet patience with me, while I read you a single sentence out of the only book, properly to be called a book, that I have yet written myself, the one that will stand (if anything stand), surest and longest of all work of mine.[3]

> It is one very awful form of the operation of wealth in Europe that it is entirely capitalists' wealth which supports unjust wars. Just wars do not need so much money to support them; for most of the men who wage such, wage them gratis; but for an unjust war, men's bodies and souls have both to be bought; and the best tools of war for them besides, which make such war costly to the maximum; not to speak of the cost of base fear, and angry suspicion, between nations which have not grace nor honesty enough in all their multitudes to buy an hour's peace of mind with; as, at present, France and England, purchasing of each other ten millions sterling worth of consternation, annually (a remarkably light crop, half thorns and half aspen leaves, sown, reaped, and granaried by the "science" of the modern political economist, teaching covetousness instead of truth). And, all unjust war being supportable, if not by pillage of the enemy, only by loans from capitalists, these loans are repaid by

1. For Athena, "the Spirit of Wisdom in Conduct,"; Vulcan, "the Spirit of Wisdom in Adaptation, or of serviceable labour"; and Apollo, "the Spirit of Light and a mountain Spirit, because the sun seems first to rise and set upon the hills," see *Cestus of Aglaia,* § 12.

2. Job 28:7.

3. *Unto this Last,* § 76 *n.*

subsequent taxation of the people, who appear to have no will in the matter, the capitalists' will being the primary root of the war; but its real root is the covetousness of the whole nation, rendering it incapable of faith, frankness, or justice, and bringing about, therefore, in due time, his own separate loss and punishment to each person.

48. France and England literally, observe, buy *panic* of each other; they pay, each of them, for ten thousand-thousand-pounds'-worth of terror, a year. Now suppose, instead of buying these ten millions' worth of panic annually, they made up their minds to be at peace with each other, and buy ten millions' worth of knowledge annually; and that each nation spent its ten thousand thousand pounds a year in founding royal libraries, royal art galleries, royal museums, royal gardens, and places of rest. Might it not be better somewhat for both French and English?

49. It will be long, yet, before that comes to pass.[1] Nevertheless, I hope it will not be long before royal or national libraries will be founded in every considerable city, with a royal series of books in them;[2] the same series in every one of them, chosen books, the best in every kind, prepared for that national series in the most perfect way possible; their text printed all on leaves of equal size, broad of margin, and divided into pleasant volumes, light in the hand, beautiful, and strong, and thorough as examples of binders' work; and that these great libraries will be accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening; strict law being enforced for this cleanliness and quietness.

50. I could shape for you other plans, for art-galleries, and for natural history galleries, and for many precious — many, it seems to me, needful — things; but this book plan is the easiest and needfullest, and would prove a considerable tonic to what we call our British constitution, which has fallen dropsical of late, and has an evil thirst, and evil hunger, and wants healthier feeding. You have got its corn laws repealed for it; try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread; — bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame, which opens doors; — doors not of robbers', but of Kings', Treasuries.[3]

1. The first Act, authorizing municipalities to provide Free Libraries out of the rates, was passed in 1850, but progress under it had been very slow. In 1860 there were only 23 such libraries in England and Wales, and in 1870 only 35. There are now (1905) about 350.

2. Ruskin's "Shepherds' Library" (*Bibliotheca Pastorum*) was an attempt in this direction: see his Preface, §1, to *The Economist of Xenophon.*

3. Eds. 1–4 had an additional paragraph: — "Friends, the treasuries of true kings

Note to §30[1]

Respecting the increase of rent by the deaths of the poor, for evidence of which see the preface to the Medical Officer's report to the Privy Council, just published, there are suggestions in its preface which will make some stir among us,[2] I fancy, respecting which let me note these points following: —

There are two theories on the subject of land now abroad, and in contention; both false.

The first is that, by Heavenly law, there have always existed, and must continue to exist, a certain number of hereditarily sacred persons to whom the earth, air, and water of the world belong, as personal property; of which earth, air, and water, these persons may, at their pleasure, permit, or forbid, the rest of the human race to eat, to breathe, or to drink. This theory is not for many years longer tenable. The adverse theory is that a division of the land of the world among the mob of the world would immediately elevate the said mob into sacred personages; that houses would then build themselves, and corn grow of itself; and that everybody would be able to live, without doing any work for his living. This theory would also be found highly untenable in practice.

It will, however, require some rough experiments and rougher catastrophes, before the generality of persons will be convinced that no law concerning anything — least of all concerning land, for either holding or di-

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are the streets of their cities; and the gold they gather, which for others is as the mire of the streets, changes itself, for them and their people, into a crystalline pavement for evermore."

1. In eds. 1–4 this note appeared as a footnote to §30. It there began, "See the evidence in the . . ."

2. See *The Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council,* 1864. The Medical Officer was Ruskin's friend, John Simon. The report contained an exhaustive inquiry into the house-accommodation of the agricultural and other labourers in rural districts. In his prefatory remarks the Medical Officer emphasized the evils disclosed by this inquiry; the accommodation, he found, was sometimes "swinish"; landlords, in order to reduce their liability to the poor rate, declined to build cottages; and "in the open village cottage-speculators buy scraps of land which they throng as densely as they can with the cheapest of hovels." Simon denounced the state of things as "a reproach to the civilisation of England," and a serious danger to the public health. "The ulterior question," he said, "which will I think have to be considered is this — whether all land which requires labour ought not to be held liable to the obligation of containing a certain proportion of suitable labourers' dwellings."

viding it, or renting it high, or renting it low — would be of the smallest ultimate use to the people, so long as the general contest for life, and for the means of life, remains one of mere brutal competition. That contest, in an unprincipled nation, will take one deadly form or another, whatever laws you make against it. For instance, it would be an entirely wholesome law for England, if it could be carried, that maximum limits should be assigned to incomes according to classes; and that every nobleman's income should be paid to him as a fixed salary or pension by the nation; and not squeezed by him in variable sums, at discretion, out of the tenants of his land. But if you could get such a law passed to-morrow, and if, which would be farther necessary, you could fix the value of the assigned incomes by making a given weight of pure bread legal tender for a given sum, a twelvemonth would not pass before another currency would have been tacitly established, and the power of accumulated wealth would have re-asserted itself in some other article, or some other imaginary sign. There is only one cure for public distress — and that is public education, directed to make men thoughtful, merciful, and just. There are, indeed, many laws conceivable which would gradually better and strengthen the national temper; but, for the most part, they are such as the national temper must be much bettered before it would bear. A nation in its youth may be helped by laws, as a weak child by backboards, but when it is old it cannot that way strengthen its crooked spine.

And besides; the problem of land, at its worst, is a bye one; distribute the earth as you will, the principal question remains inexorable, — Who is to dig it? Which of us, in brief word, is to do the hard and dirty work for the rest, and for what pay? Who is to do the pleasant and clean work, and for what pay? Who is to do no work, and for what pay? And there are curious moral and religious questions connected with these. How far is it lawful to suck a portion of the soul out of a great many persons, in order to put the abstracted psychical quantities together and make one very beautiful or ideal soul? If we had to deal with mere blood instead of spirit, (and the thing might literally be done — as it has been done with infants before now) — so that it were possible, by taking a certain quantity of blood from the arms of a given number of the mob, and putting it all into one person, to make a more azure-blooded gentleman of him, the thing would of course be managed; but secretly, I should conceive. But now, because it is brain and soul that we abstract, not visible blood, it can be done quite openly, and we live, we gentlemen, on delicatest prey, after the manner of weasels; that is to say, we keep a certain number of clowns digging and ditching, and generally stupefied, in order that we, being fed gratis, may have all the thinking and

feeling to ourselves. Yet there is a great deal to be said for this. A highly-bred and trained English, French, Austrian, or Italian gentleman (much more a lady), is a great production, — a better production than most statues; being beautifully coloured as well as shaped, and plus all the brains; a glorious thing to look at, a wonderful thing to talk to; and you cannot have it, any more than a pyramid or a church, but by sacrifice of much contributed life. And it is, perhaps, better to build a beautiful human creature than a beautiful dome or steeple — and more delightful to look up reverently to a creature far above us, than to a wall; only the beautiful human creature will have some duties to do in return — duties of living belfry and rampart — of which presently.[1]

1. This passage was originally (as explained above) a footnote to §30; and the reference in "presently" is to §§42 *seq.*

Lecture II.—Lilies Of Queens' Gardens

> Be thou glad, oh thirsting Desert; let the desert be made cheerful, and bloom as the lily; and the barren places of Jordan shall run wild with wood.
>
> —Isaiah 35:1 (Septuagint)[1]

51. It will, perhaps, be well, as this Lecture is the sequel of one previously given, that I should shortly state to you my general intention in both. The questions specially proposed to you in the first, namely, How and What to Read, rose out of a far deeper one, which it was my endeavour to make you propose earnestly to yourselves, namely, *Why* to Read. I want you to feel, with me, that whatever advantages we possess in the present day in the diffusion of education and of literature, can only be rightly used by any of us when we have apprehended clearly what education is to lead to, and literature to teach. I wish you to see that both well-directed moral training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense, *kingly;* conferring indeed the purest kingship that can exist among men: too many other kingships (however distinguished by visible insignia or material power) being either spectral, or tyrannous;—spectral—that is

1. In eds. 1–4 the motto was different:—with a footnote referring to "Canticles ii. 2." "*As the lily among thorns, so is my love* among the daughters." In his own copy of the first edition, Ruskin had substituted for the Greek, "Et breve Lilium"—from one of his favourite lines in Horace (*Odes,* i. 36, 16). "What a glorious line of Horace that is," he wrote to his father (Mornex, September 16, 1863), "of the flowers laid on his table when his friend returns—" '*Neu vivax apium, neu breve Lilium*'—the life of the green plant, and fading of the blossom, in two words; but I can't give you the sweet metre of it; you ought to hear it sung, as it was meant to be; and the expiring of the last short low syllables."

to say, aspects and shadows only of royalty, hollow as death, and which only the "likeness of a kingly crown have on:"[1] or else — tyrannous — that is to say, substituting their own will for the law of justice and love by which all true kings rule.

52. There is, then, I repeat — and as I want to leave this idea with you, I begin with it, and shall end with it — only one pure kind of kingship; an inevitable and eternal kind, crowned or not; the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state, and a truer thoughtful state, than that of others; enabling you, therefore, to guide, or to raise them. Observe that word "State"; we have got into a loose way of using it. It means literally the standing and stability of a thing; and you have the full force of it in the derived word "statue" — "the immovable thing." A king's majesty or "state," then, and the right of his kingdom to be called a state, depends on the movelessness of both: — without tremor, without quiver of balance; established and enthroned upon a foundation of eternal law which nothing can alter, nor overthrow.

53. Believing that all literature and all education are only useful so far as they tend to confirm this calm, beneficent, and *therefore* kingly, power — first, over ourselves, and, through ourselves, over all around us, — I am now going to ask you to consider with me farther, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power, — not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned, as "Queens' Gardens."

54. And here, in the very outset, we are met by a far deeper question, which — strange though this may seem — remains among many of us yet quite undecided in spite of its infinite importance.

We cannot determine what the queenly power of women should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. We cannot consider how education may fit them for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty. And there never was a time when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question — quite vital to all social happiness. The relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet estimated with entire consent. We hear of the

1. *Paradise Lost,* ii. 673.

"mission" and of the "rights" of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man — as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong — perhaps even more foolishly wrong (for I will anticipate thus far what I hope to prove) — is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.

This, I say, is the most foolish of all errors respecting her who was made to be the helpmate of man. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily by a slave!

55. Let us try, then, whether we cannot get at some clear and harmonious idea (it must be harmonious if it is true) of what womanly mind and virtue are in power and office, with respect to man's; and how their relations, rightly accepted, aid and increase the vigour and honour and authority of both.

And now I must repeat one thing I said in the last lecture: namely, that the first use of education was to enable us to consult with the wisest and the greatest men on all points of earnest difficulty. That to use books rightly, was to go to them for help: to appeal to them, when our own knowledge and power of thought failed: to be led by them into wider sight, — purer conception, — than our own, and receive from them the united sentence of the judges and councils of all time, against our solitary and unstable opinion.

Let us do this now. Let us see whether the greatest, the wisest, the purest-hearted of all ages are agreed in any wise on this point: let us hear the testimony they have left respecting what they held to be the true dignity of woman and her mode of help to man.

56. And first let us take Shakespeare.

Note broadly in the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes; — he has only heroines. There is not one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage; and the still slighter Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* In his laboured and perfect plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one, if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him the prey of every base practice round him; but he is the only example even approximating to the heroic type. Coriolanus — Cæsar — Antony stand in flawed strength, and fall by their vanities; — Hamlet is indolent, and drowsily speculative; Romeo an impatient boy; the Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse fortune; Kent, in *King Lear,* is entirely noble at heart, but too rough and unpolished to be of true use at the critical time, and he sinks into the

office of a servant only. Orlando, no less noble, is yet the despairing toy of chance, followed, comforted, saved by Rosalind. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope, and errorless purpose: Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Catherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.

57. Then observe, secondly,

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and, failing that, there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of Othello I need not trace the tale; — nor the one weakness of his so mighty love; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error: —

> Oh, murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
> Do with so good a wife?

In *Romeo and Juliet,* the wise and brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In *Winter's Tale,* and in *Cymbeline,* the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In *Measure for Measure,* the foul injustice of the judge, and the foul cowardice of the brother, are opposed to the victorious truth and adamantine purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus,* the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin; her prayer, at last granted, saves him — not, indeed, from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of Julia, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child? — of Helena, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth? — of the patience of Hero, the passion of Beatrice, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the "unlessoned girl,"[1] who appears among

1. Portia's description of herself: *Merchant of Venice,* 3. 2. 159.

the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, bringing courage and safety by her presence, and defeating the worst malignities of crime by what women are fancied most to fail in, — precision and accuracy of thought?

58. Observe, further, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman — Ophelia; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures — Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril — they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also, in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such, in broad light, is Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors, — incorruptibly just and pure examples — strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.

59. Not as in any wise comparable in knowledge of the nature of man, — still less in his understanding of the causes and courses of fate, — but only as the writer who has given us the broadest view of the conditions and modes of ordinary thought in modern society, I ask you next to receive the witness of Walter Scott.

I put aside his merely romantic prose writings as of no value, and though the early romantic poetry is very beautiful, its testimony is of no weight, other than that of a boy's ideal. But his true works, studied from Scottish life, bear a true witness; and in the whole range of these, there are but three men who reach the heroic type* — Dandie Dinmont, Rob Roy, and Claverhouse; of these, one is a border farmer; another a freebooter; the third a soldier in a bad cause. And these touch the ideal of heroism only in their courage and faith, together with a strong, but uncultivated, or mistakenly applied, intellectual power; while his younger men are the gentlemanly playthings of fantastic fortune, and only by aid (or accident) of that fortune, survive, not vanquish, the trials they involuntarily sustain. Of any disci-

* I ought, in order to make this assertion fully understood, to have noted the various weaknesses which lower the ideal of other great characters of men in the Waverley novels — the selfishness and narrowness of thought in Redgauntlet, the weak religious enthusiasm in Edward Glendinning, and the like; and I ought to have noticed that there are several quite perfect characters sketched sometimes in the backgrounds; three — let us accept joyously this courtesy to England and her soldiers — are English officers: Colonel Gardiner, Colonel Talbot, and Colonel Mannering.

plined, or consistent character, earnest in a purpose wisely conceived, or dealing with forms of hostile evil, definitely challenged and resolutely subdued, there is no trace in his conceptions of young men. Whereas in his imaginations of women, — in the characters of Ellen Douglas, of Flora MacIvor, Rose Bradwardine, Catherine Seyton, Diana Vernon, Lilias Redgauntlet, Alice Bridgenorth, Alice Lee, and Jeanie Deans, — with endless varieties of grace, tenderness, and intellectual power, we find in all a quite infallible sense of dignity and justice; a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice, to even the appearance of duty, much more to its real claims; and, finally, a patient wisdom of deeply-restrained affection, which does infinitely more than protect its objects from a momentary error; it gradually forms, animates, and exalts the characters of the unworthy lovers, until, at the close of the tale, we are just able, and no more, to take patience in hearing of their unmerited success.

So that, in all cases, with Scott as with Shakespeare, it is the woman who watches over, teaches, and guides the youth; it is never, by any chance, the youth who watches over, or educates, his mistress.

60. Next take, though more briefly, graver testimony — that of the great Italians and Greeks. You know well the plan of Dante's great poem — that it is a love-poem to his dead lady; a song of praise for her watch over his soul. Stooping only to pity, never to love, she yet saves him from destruction — saves him from hell. He is going eternally astray in despair; she comes down from heaven to his help, and throughout the ascents of Paradise is his teacher, interpreting for him the most difficult truths, divine and human; and leading him, with rebuke upon rebuke, from star to star.

I do not insist upon Dante's conception; if I began I could not cease: besides, you might think this a wild imagination of one poet's heart. So I will rather read to you a few verses of the deliberate writing of a knight of Pisa to his living lady, wholly characteristic of the feeling of all the noblest men of the thirteenth, or early fourteenth, century, preserved among many other such records of knightly honour and love, which Dante Rossetti has gathered for us from among the early Italian poets.

> For lo! thy law is passed
> That this my love should manifestly be
> To serve and honour thee:
> And so I do; and my delight is full,
> Accepted for the servant of thy rule.
>
> Without almost, I am all rapturous,
> Since thus my will was set

To serve, thou flower of joy, thine excellence:
Nor ever seems it anything could rouse
  A pain or a regret.
But on thee dwells my every thought and sense;
Considering that from thee all virtues spread
  As from a fountain head, —
That in thy gift is wisdom's best avail,
  And honour without fail,
With whom each sovereign good dwells separate,
Fulfilling the perfection of thy state.

  Lady, since I conceived
Thy pleasurable aspect in my heart,
  My life has been apart
In shining brightness and the place of truth;
  Which till that time, good sooth,
Groped among shadows in a darken'd place,
  Where many hours and days
It hardly ever had remember'd good.
  But now my servitude
Is thine, and I am full of joy and rest.
  A man from a wild beast
Thou madest me, since for thy love I lived.

61. You may think perhaps a Greek knight would have had a lower estimate of women than this Christian lover. His spiritual subjection to them was indeed not so absolute; but as regards their own personal character, it was only because you could not have followed me so easily, that I did not take the Greek women instead of Shakespeare's; and instance, for chief ideal types of human beauty and faith, the simple mother's and wife's heart of Andromache; the divine, yet rejected wisdom of Cassandra; the playful kindness and simple princess-life of happy Nausicaa; the housewifely calm of that of Penelope, with its watch upon the sea; the ever patient, fearless, hopelessly devoted piety of the sister, and daughter, in Antigone; the bowing down of Iphigenia, lamb-like and silent; and finally, the expectation of the resurrection, made clear to the soul of the Greeks in the return from her grave of that Alcestis, who, to save her husband, had passed calmly through the bitterness of death.

62. Now I could multiply witness upon witness of this kind upon you if I had time. I would take Chaucer, and show you why he wrote a Legend of Good Women; but no Legend of Good Men. I would take Spenser, and

show you how all his fairy knights are sometimes deceived and sometimes vanquished; but the soul of Una is never darkened, and the spear of Britomart is never broken. Nay, I could go back into the mythical teaching of the most ancient times, and show you how the great people, — by one of whose princesses it was appointed that the Lawgiver of all the earth should be educated[1] rather than by his own kindred; — how that great Egyptian people, wisest then of nations, gave to the Spirit of Wisdom the form of a Woman; and into her hand, for a symbol, the weaver's shuttle; and how the name and the form of that spirit, adopted, believed, and obeyed by the Greeks, became that Athena of the olive-helm, and cloudy shield, to faith in whom you owe, down to this date, whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue.

63. But I will not wander into this distant and mythical element; I will only ask you to give its legitimate value to the testimony of these great poets and men of the world, — consistent, as you see it is, on this head. I will ask you whether it can be supposed that these men, in the main work of their lives, are amusing themselves with a fictitious and idle view of the relations between man and woman; — nay, worse than fictitious or idle; for a thing may be imaginary, yet desirable, if it were possible: but this, their ideal of woman, is, according to our common idea of the marriage relation, wholly undesirable. The woman, we say, is not to guide, nor even to think for herself. The man is always to be the wiser; he is to be the thinker, the ruler, the superior in knowledge and discretion, as in power.

64. Is it not somewhat important to make up our minds on this matter? Are all these great men mistaken, or are we? Are Shakespeare and Æschylus, Dante and Homer, merely dressing dolls for us; or, worse than dolls, unnatural visions, the realization of which, were it possible, would bring anarchy into all households and ruin into all affections? Nay, if you can suppose this, take lastly the evidence of facts, given by the human heart itself. In all Christian ages which have been remarkable for their purity or progress, there has been absolute yielding of obedient devotion, by the lover, to his mistress. I say *obedient;* — not merely enthusiastic and worshipping in imagination, but entirely subject, receiving from the beloved woman, however young, not only the encouragement, the praise, and the reward of all toil, but, so far as any choice is open, or any question difficult of decision, the *direction* of all toil. That chivalry, to the abuse and dishonour of which are attributable primarily whatever is cruel in war, unjust in peace, or corrupt and ignoble in domestic relations; and to the original

1. See Exodus 2:10.

purity and power of which we owe the defence alike of faith, of law, and love; that chivalry, I say, in its very first conception of honourable life, assumes the subjection of the young knight to the command — should it even be the command in caprice — of his lady. It assumes this, because its masters knew that the first and necessary impulse of every truly taught and knightly heart is this of blind service to its lady: that where that true faith and captivity are not, all wayward and wicked passion must be; and that in this rapturous obedience to the single love of his youth, is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes. And this, not because such obedience would be safe, or honourable, were it ever rendered to the unworthy; but because it ought to be impossible for every noble youth — it *is* impossible for every one rightly trained — to love any one whose gentle counsel he cannot trust, or whose prayerful command he can hesitate to obey.

65. I do not insist by any farther argument on this, for I think it should commend itself at once to your knowledge of what has been and to your feeling of what should be. You cannot think that the buckling on of the knight's armour by his lady's hand was a mere caprice of romantic fashion. It is the type of an eternal truth — that the soul's armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails. Know you not those lovely lines — I would they were learned by all youthful ladies of England: —

> Ah, wasteful woman, she who may
> On her sweet self set her own price,
> Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
> How has she cheapen'd Paradise;
> How given for nought her priceless gift,
> How spoiled the bread and spill'd the wine,
> Which, spent with due, respective thrift,
> Had made brutes men, and men divine![*]

66. Thus much, then, respecting the relations of lovers I believe you will accept. But what we too often doubt is the fitness of the continuance of such a relation throughout the whole of human life. We think it right in the lover and mistress, not in the husband and wife. That is to say, we think that a

*Coventry Patmore. You cannot read him too often or too carefully; as far as I know he is the only living poet who always strengthens and purifies; the others sometimes darken, and nearly always depress and discourage, the imagination they deeply seize.

reverent and tender duty is due to one whose affection we still doubt, and whose character we as yet do but partially and distantly discern; and that this reverence and duty are to be withdrawn when the affection has become wholly and limitlessly our own, and the character has been so sifted and tried that we fear not to entrust it with the happiness of our lives. Do you not see how ignoble this is, as well as how unreasonable? Do you not feel that marriage, — when it is marriage at all, — is only the seal which marks the vowed transition of temporary into untiring service, and of fitful into eternal love?

67. But how, you will ask, is the idea of this guiding function of the woman reconcilable with a true wifely subjection? Simply in that it is a *guiding,* not a determining, function. Let me try to show you briefly how these powers seem to be rightly distinguishable.

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

68. Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial; — to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and *always* hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home — it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world

which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love, — so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light, — shade as of the rock in a weary land,[1] and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea; — so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of Home.

And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion,[2] shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless.

69. This, then, I believe to be, — will you not admit it to be? — the woman's true place and power. But do not you see that, to fulfill this, she must — as far as one can use such terms of a human creature — be incapable of error? So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise — wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service — the true changefulness of woman. In that great sense — "La donna è mobile," not "Qual piúm' al vento"; no, nor yet "Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made"; but variable as the *light,* manifold in fair and serene division, that it may take the colour of all that it falls upon, and exalt it.

70. (II.) I have been trying, thus far, to show you what should be the place, and what the power of woman. Now, secondly, we ask, What kind of education is to fit her for these?

And if you indeed think this a true conception of her office and dignity, it will not be difficult to trace the course of education which would fit her for the one, and raise her to the other.

The first of our duties to her — no thoughtful persons now doubt this, — is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect her beauty; the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendour of activity and of delicate strength. To perfect her beauty, I say, and increase its power; it cannot be too powerful, nor

1. Isaiah 32:2.

2. Jeremiah 22:14.

shed its sacred light too far: only remember that all physical freedom is vain to produce beauty without a corresponding freedom of heart. There are two passages of that poet who is distinguished, it seems to me, from all others — not by power, but by exquisite *rightness* — which point you to the source, and describe to you, in a few syllables, the completion of womanly beauty. I will read the introductory stanzas, but the last is the one I wish you specially to notice: —

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
  On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
  A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
  The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
  To kindle, or restrain.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend;
  Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
  By silent sympathy.

"And *vital feelings of delight*
Shall rear her form to stately height, —
  Her virgin bosom swell.
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give,
While she and I together live,
  Here in this happy dell."*

"*Vital* feelings of delight," observe. There are deadly feelings of delight; but the natural ones are vital, necessary to very life.

And they must be feelings of delight, if they are to be vital. Do not think you can make a girl lovely, if you do not make her happy. There is not one

* Observe, it is "Nature" who is speaking throughout, and who says, "while she and I together live."

restraint you put on a good girl's nature — there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort — which will not be indelibly written on her features, with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue.

71. This for the means: now note the end. Take from the same poet, in two lines, a perfect description of womanly beauty —

> A countenance in which did meet
> Sweet records, promises as sweet.

The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace, which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years, — full of sweet records; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise; — opening always — modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won, and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise.

72. Thus, then, you have first to mould her physical frame, and then, as the strength she gains will permit you, to fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love.

All such knowledge should be given her as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men: and yet it should be given, not as knowledge, — not as if it were, or could be, for her an object to know; but only to feel, and to judge. It is of no moment, as a matter of pride or perfectness in herself, whether she knows many languages or one; but it is of the utmost, that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger, and to understand the sweetness of a stranger's tongue. It is of no moment to her own worth or dignity that she should be acquainted with this science or that; but it is of the highest that she should be trained in habits of accurate thought; that she should understand the meaning, the inevitableness, and the loveliness of natural laws; and follow at least some one path of scientific attainment, as far as to the threshold of that bitter Valley of Humiliation, into which only the wisest and bravest of men can descend, owning themselves for ever children, gathering pebbles on a boundless shore.[1] It is of

1. "As children gathering pebbles on the shore": *Paradise Regained,* iv. 330. Hence Sir Isaac Newton's saying about himself that he was but as a child playing on the seashore, and amusing himself with pebble after pebble, and shell after shell, while the great ocean of truth stretched unfathomable away from him.

little consequence how many positions of cities she knows, or how many dates of events, or names of celebrated persons — it is not the object of education to turn the woman into a dictionary; but it is deeply necessary that she should be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination; to apprehend, with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too often only eclipses by his reasoning, and disconnects by his arrangement: it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch sight, through the darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with retribution. But, chiefly of all, she is to be taught to extend the limits of her sympathy with respect to that history which is being for ever determined as the moments pass in which she draws her peaceful breath; and to the contemporary calamity, which, were it but rightly mourned by her, would recur no more hereafter. She is to exercise herself in imagining what would be the effects upon her mind and conduct, if she were daily brought into the presence of the suffering which is not the less real because shut from her sight. She is to be taught somewhat to understand the nothingness of the proportion which that little world in which she lives and loves, bears to the world in which God lives and loves;[1] — and solemnly she is to be taught to strive that her thoughts of piety may not be feeble in proportion to the number they embrace, nor her prayer more languid than it is for the momentary relief from pain of her husband or her child, when it is uttered for the multitudes of those who have none to love them, — and is "for all who are desolate and oppressed."

73. Thus far, I think, I have had your concurrence; perhaps you will not be with me in what I believe is most needful for me to say. There *is* one dangerous science for women — one which they must indeed beware how they profanely touch — that of theology. Strange, and miserably strange, that while they are modest enough to doubt their powers, and pause at the threshold of sciences where every step is demonstrable and sure, they will plunge headlong, and without one thought of incompetency, into that science in which the greatest men have trembled, and the wisest erred. Strange, that they will complacently and pridefully bind up whatever vice or folly there is in them, whatever arrogance, petulance, or blind incomprehensiveness, into one bitter bundle of consecrated myrrh. Strange, in creatures born to be Love visible, that where they can know least, they will

1. See the last stanza of *In Memoriam:* — "That God, which ever lives and loves, / One God, one law, one element, / And one far-off divine event, / To which the whole creation moves."

condemn first, and think to recommend themselves to their Master, by crawling up the steps of His judgment-throne to divide it with Him. Strangest of all that they should think they were led by the Spirit of the Comforter into habits of mind which have become in them the unmixed elements of home discomfort; and that they dare to turn the Household Gods of Christianity into ugly idols of their own; — spiritual dolls, for them to dress according to their caprice; and from which their husbands must turn away in grieved contempt, lest they should be shrieked at for breaking them.

74. I believe, then, with this exception, that a girl's education should be nearly, in its course and material of study, the same as a boy's; but quite differently directed. A woman, in any rank of life, ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know, but to know it in a different way. His command of it should be foundational and progressive; hers, general and accomplished for daily and helpful use. Not but that it would often be wiser in men to learn things in a womanly sort of way, for present use, and to seek for the discipline and training of their mental powers in such branches of study as will be afterwards fittest for social service; but, speaking broadly, a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly — while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends.

75. Yet, observe, with exquisite accuracy as far as she reaches. There is a wide difference between elementary knowledge and superficial knowledge — between a firm beginning, and an infirm attempt at compassing. A woman may always help her husband by what she knows, however little; by what she half-knows, or mis-knows, she will only tease him.

And indeed, if there were to be any difference between a girl's education and a boy's, I should say that of the two the girl should be earlier led, as her intellect ripens faster, into deep and serious subjects: and that her range of literature should be, not more, but less frivolous; calculated to add the qualities of patience and seriousness to her natural poignancy of thought and quickness of wit; and also to keep her in a lofty and pure element of thought. I enter not now into any question of choice of books; only let us be sure that her books are not heaped up in her lap as they fall out of the package of the circulating library, wet with the last and lightest spray of the fountain of folly.

76. Or even of the fountain of wit; for with respect to the sore temptation of novel reading, it is not the badness of a novel that we should dread, so much as its over-wrought interest. The weakest romance is not so stupefying as the lower forms of religious exciting literature, and the worst ro-

mance is not so corrupting as false history, false philosophy, or false political essays. But the best romance becomes dangerous, if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act.

77. I speak therefore of good novels only; and our modern literature is particularly rich in types of such. Well read, indeed, these books have serious use, being nothing less than treatises on moral anatomy and chemistry; studies of human nature in the elements of it. But I attach little weight to this function: they are hardly ever read with earnestness enough to permit them to fulfil it. The utmost they usually do is to enlarge somewhat the charity of a kind reader, or the bitterness of a malicious one; for each will gather, from the novel, food for her own disposition. Those who are naturally proud and envious will learn from Thackeray to despise humanity; those who are naturally gentle, to pity it; those who are naturally shallow, to laugh at it. So, also, there might be a serviceable power in novels to bring before us, in vividness, a human truth which we had before dimly conceived; but the temptation to picturesqueness of statement is so great, that often the best writers of fiction cannot resist it; and our views are rendered so violent and one-sided, that their vitality is rather a harm than good.

78. Without, however, venturing here on any attempt at decision how much novel reading should be allowed, let me at least clearly assert this, — that whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for their freedom from evil, but for their possession of good. The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt, or hide itself in, a powerful book, never does any harm to a noble girl; but the emptiness of an author oppresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her. And if she can have access to a good library of old and classical books, there need be no choosing at all. Keep the modern magazine and novel out of your girl's way: turn her loose into the old library every wet day, and let her alone. She will find what is good for her; you cannot: for there is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's — you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does, — she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life; but you cannot fetter her; she must take her own fair form and way, if she take any, and in mind as in body, must have always

> Her household motions light and free
> And steps of virgin liberty.

Let her loose in the library, I say, as you do a fawn in a field. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you; and the good ones too, and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest thought would have been so.

79. Then, in art, keep the finest models before her, and let her practice in all accomplishments be accurate and thorough, so as to enable her to understand more than she accomplishes. I say the finest models — that is to say, the truest, simplest, usefullest. Note those epithets: they will range through all the arts. Try them in music, where you might think them the least applicable. I say the truest, that in which the notes most closely and faithfully express the meaning of the words, or the character of intended emotion; again, the simplest, that in which the meaning and melody are attained with the fewest and most significant notes possible; and, finally, the usefullest, that music which makes the best words most beautiful, which enchants them in our memories each with its own glory of sound, and which applies them closest to the heart at the moment we need them.

80. And not only in the material and in the course, but yet more earnestly in the spirit of it, let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments, and then complain of their frivolity. Give them the same advantages that you give their brothers — appeal to the same grand instincts of virtue in them; teach *them,* also, that courage and truth are the pillars of their being: — do you think that they would not answer that appeal, brave and true as they are even now, when you know that there is hardly a girls' school in this Christian kingdom where the children's courage or sincerity would be thought of half so much importance as their way of coming in at a door; and when the whole system of society, as respects the mode of establishing them in life, is one rotten plague of cowardice and imposture — cowardice, in not daring to let them live, or love, except as their neighbours choose; and imposture, in bringing, for the purposes of our own pride, the full glow of the world's worst vanity upon a girl's eyes, at the very period when the whole happiness of her future existence depends upon her remaining undazzled?

81. And give them, lastly, not only noble teachings, but noble teachers. You consider somewhat before you send your boy to school, what kind of a man the master is; — whatsoever kind of a man he is, you at least give him full authority over your son, and show some respect to him yourself; — if he comes to dine with you, you do not put him at a side table: you know also

that, at college, your child's immediate tutor will be under the direction of some still higher tutor, for whom you have absolute reverence. You do not treat the Dean of Christ Church or the Master of Trinity as your inferiors.

But what teachers do you give your girls, and what reverence do you show to the teachers you have chosen? Is a girl likely to think her own conduct, or her own intellect, of much importance, when you trust the entire formation of her character, moral and intellectual, to a person whom you let your servants treat with less respect than they do your housekeeper (as if the soul of your child were a less charge than jams and groceries), and whom you yourself think you confer an honour upon by letting her sometimes sit in the drawing-room in the evening?

82. Thus, then, of literature as her help, and thus of art. There is one more help which she cannot do without — one which, alone, has sometimes done more than all other influences besides, — the help of wild and fair nature. Hear this of the education of Joan of Arc: —

> The education of this poor girl was mean, according to the present standard; was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. * * *
>
> Next after her spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in decent bounds. * * *
>
> But the forests of Domrémy — those were the glories of the land; for in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. "Abbeys there were, and abbey windows," — "like Moorish temples of the Hindoos," that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness.*

Now, you cannot, indeed, have here in England, woods eighteen miles deep to the centre; but you can, perhaps, keep a fairy or two for your

* "Joan of Arc: in reference to M. Michelet's *History of France.*" De Quincey's Works. Vol. iii. p. 217 [edition of 1862].

children yet, if you wish to keep them. But *do* you wish it? Suppose you had each, at the back of your houses, a garden, large enough for your children to play in, with just as much lawn as would give them room to run, — no more — and that you could not change your abode; but that, if you chose, you could double your income, or quadruple it, by digging a coal shaft in the middle of the lawn, and turning the flower-beds into heaps of coke. Would you do it? I hope not. I can tell you, you would be wrong if you did, though it gave you income sixty-fold instead of four-fold.

83. Yet this is what you are doing with all England. The whole country is but a little garden, not more than enough for your children to run on the lawns of, if you would let them *all* run there. And this little garden you will turn into furnace ground, and fill with heaps of cinders, if you can, and those children of yours, not you, will suffer for it. For the fairies will not be all banished; there are fairies of the furnace as of the wood, and their first gifts seem to be "sharp arrows of the mighty"; but their last gifts are "coals of juniper."[1]

84. And yet I cannot — though there is no part of my subject that I feel more — press this upon you; for we made so little use of the power of nature while we had it that we shall hardly feel what we have lost. Just on the other side of the Mersey you have your Snowdon, and your Menai Straits, and that mighty granite rock beyond the moors of Anglesea, splendid in its heathery crest, and foot planted in the deep sea, once thought of as sacred — a divine promontory, looking westward; the Holy Head or Headland, still not without awe when its red light glares first through storm.[2] These are the hills, and these the bays and blue inlets, which, among the Greeks, would have been always loved, always fateful in influence on the national mind. That Snowdon is your Parnassus; but where are its Muses? That Holyhead mountain is your Island of Ægina; but where is its temple to Minerva?

85. Shall I read you what the Christian Minerva had achieved under the shadow of our Parnassus up to the year 1848? — Here is a little account of a Welsh school, from page 261 of the Report on Wales, published by the

1. Psalms 120:4.

2. Ruskin stayed some days at Holyhead in 1862, and thus described the rocks in a letter to his father: — "(*August* 25.) — . . . I have never seen more tremendous rock scenery even on the Montanvert. The sheets of gneiss and granite go down to the sea far more sheer than the granite of the Charmoz goes under the ice, and the gorse and heather are in blossom together, intermingled, a thing I have never seen before — purple and gold with a witness! The rocks are intensely interesting in substance as well as sublime in form — the sea pure and terrific — the distant range of Snowdon very grand."

Committee of Council on Education. This is a school close to a town containing 5000 persons: —

> I then called up a larger class, most of whom had recently come to the school. Three girls repeatedly declared they had never heard of Christ, and two that they had never heard of God. Two out of six thought Christ was on earth now (they might have had a worse thought perhaps), three knew nothing about the Crucifixion. Four out of seven did not know the names of the months nor the number of days in a year. They had no notion of addition beyond two and two, or three and three; their minds were perfect blanks.

Oh, ye women of England! from the Princess of that Wales to the simplest of you, do not think your own children can be brought into their true fold of rest, while these are scattered on the hills, as sheep having no shepherd.[1] And do not think your daughters can be trained to the truth of their own human beauty, while the pleasant places, which God made at once for their schoolroom and their playground, lie desolate and defiled. You cannot baptize them rightly in those inch-deep fonts of yours, unless you baptize them also in the sweet waters which the great Lawgiver[2] strikes forth for ever from the rocks of your native land — waters which a Pagan would have worshipped in their purity, and you worship only with pollution. You cannot lead your children faithfully to those narrow axe-hewn church altars of yours, while the dark azure altars in heaven — the mountains that sustain your island throne, — mountains on which a Pagan would have seen the powers of heaven rest in every wreathed cloud — remain for you without inscription; altars built, not to, but by an Unknown God.[3]

86. (III.) Thus far, then, of the nature, thus far of the teaching, of woman, and thus of her household office, and queenliness. We now come to our last, our widest question. — What is her queenly office with respect to the state?

Generally, we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty, relating to his own home, and a public work or duty, which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work or duty, relating to her own home, and a public work or duty, which is also the expansion of that.

Now the man's work for his own home is, as has been said, to secure its

1. Matthew 9:36.
2. See Exodus 17:6.
3. Acts 17:23.

maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness.

Expand both these functions. The man's duty as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state.

What the man is at his own gate, defending it, if need be, against insult and spoil, that also, not in a less, but in a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home, if need be, even to the spoiler, to do his more incumbent work there.

And, in like manner, what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty: that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare.

And as within the human heart there is always set an instinct for all its real duties, — an instinct which you cannot quench, but only warp and corrupt if you withdraw it from its true purpose: — as there is the intense instinct of love, which, rightly disciplined, maintains all the sanctities of life, and, misdirected, undermines them; and *must* do either the one or the other; — so, there is in the human heart an inextinguishable instinct, the love of power, which, rightly directed, maintains all the majesty of law and life, and, misdirected, wrecks them.

87. Deep rooted in the innermost life of the heart of man, and of the heart of woman, God set it there, and God keeps it there. — Vainly, as falsely, you blame or rebuke the desire of power! — For Heaven's sake, and for Man's sake, desire it all you can. But *what* power? That is all the question. Power to destroy? the lion's limb, and the dragon's breath? Not so. Power to heal, to redeem, to guide, and to guard. Power of the sceptre and shield; the power of the royal hand that heals in touching, — that binds the fiend, and looses the captive; the throne that is founded on the rock of Justice, and descended from only by steps of Mercy. Will you not covet such power as this, and seek such throne as this, and be no more housewives, but queens?

88. It is now long since the women of England arrogated, universally, a title which once belonged to nobility only; and, having once been in the habit of accepting the simple title of gentlewoman as correspondent to that of gentleman, insisted on the privilege of assuming the title of "Lady,"* which properly corresponds only to the title of "Lord."

* I wish there were a true order of chivalry instituted for our English youth of certain ranks, in which both boy and girl should receive, at a given age, their knighthood and

I do not blame them for this; but only for their narrow motive in this. I would have them desire and claim the title of Lady, provided they claim, not merely the title, but the office and duty signified by it. Lady means "bread-giver" or "loaf-giver," and Lord means "maintainer of laws,"[1] and both titles have reference, not to the law which is maintained in the house, nor to the bread which is given to the household; but to law maintained for the multitude, and to bread broken among the multitude. So that a Lord has legal claim only to his title in so far as he is the maintainer of the justice of the Lord of lords; and a Lady has legal claim to her title only so far as she communicates that help to the poor representatives of her Master, which women once, ministering to Him of their substance, were permitted to extend to that Master Himself; and when she is known, as He Himself once was, in breaking of bread.[2]

89. And this beneficent and legal dominion, this power of the Dominus, or House-Lord, and of the Domina, or House-Lady, is great and venerable, not in the number of those through whom it has lineally descended, but in the number of those whom it grasps within its sway; it is always regarded with reverent worship wherever its dynasty is founded on its duty, and its ambition co-relative with its beneficence. Your fancy is pleased with the thought of being noble ladies, with a train of vassals. Be it so; you cannot be too noble, and your train cannot be too great; but see to it that your train is of vassals whom you serve and feed, not merely of slaves who serve and feed *you;* and that the multitude which obeys you is of those whom you have comforted, not oppressed, — whom you have redeemed, not led into captivity.

90. And this, which is true of the lower or household dominion, is equally true of the queenly dominion; that highest dignity is open to you, if you will also accept that highest duty. Rex et Regina — Roi et Reine — "*Right*-doers"; they differ but from the Lady and Lord, in that their power

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ladyhood by true title; attainable only by certain probation and trial both of character and accomplishment; and to be forfeited, on conviction, by their peers, of any dishonourable act. Such an institution would be entirely, and with all noble results, possible, in a nation which loved honour. That it would not be possible among us, is not to the discredit of the scheme.

1. According to Skeat (*Etymological Dictionary*) *lord* means "loaf-keeper (Anglo-Saxon *hláford* (loaf-ward)," and lady, "loaf-kneader (Anglo-Saxon *hláf* and *dáege* (kneader)." Ruskin, it will be seen, assumes a different derivation for "lord," deriving it from the Anglo-Saxon *lágu* (law).

2. Luke 24:30, 31, 35.

is supreme over the mind as over the person — that they not only feed and clothe, but direct and teach. And whether consciously or not, you must be, in many a heart, enthroned: there is no putting by that crown; queens you must always be: queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself, and will for ever bow, before the myrtle crown[1] and the stainless sceptre of womanhood. But, alas! you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest; and leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men, in defiance of the power which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all Peace, the wicked among you betray, and the good forget.

91. "Prince of Peace."[2] Note that name. When kings rule in that name, and nobles, and the judges of the earth, they also, in their narrow place, and mortal measure, receive the power of it. There are no other rulers than they; other rule than theirs is but *mis*rule; they who govern verily "Dei Gratiâ" are all princes, yes, or princesses of Peace. There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery, in the earth, but the guilt of it lies with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle; but men are feeble in sympathy, and contracted in hope; it is you only who can feel the depths of pain, and conceive the way of its healing. Instead of trying to do this, you turn away from it; you shut yourselves within your park walls and garden gates; and you are content to know that there is beyond them a whole world in wilderness — a world of secrets which you dare not penetrate; and of suffering which you dare not conceive.

92. I tell you that this is to me quite the most amazing among the phenomena of humanity. I am surprised at no depths to which, when once warped from its honour, that humanity can be degraded. I do not wonder at the miser's death, with his hands, as they relax, dropping gold. I do not wonder at the sensualist's life, with the shroud wrapped about his feet. I do not wonder at the single-handed murder of a single victim, done by the assassin in the darkness of the railway, or reed shadow of the marsh. I do not even wonder at the myriad-handed murder of multitudes, done boastfully in the daylight, by the frenzy of nations, and the immeasurable, unimaginable

1. For the myrtle as sacred to Venus, see Virgil, *Eclogues,* vii. 61.

2. Isaiah 9:6.

guilt heaped up from hell to heaven, of their priests, and kings. But this is wonderful to me — oh, how wonderful! — to see the tender and delicate woman among you, with her child at her breast, and a power, if she would wield it, over it, and over its father, purer than the air of heaven, and stronger than the seas of earth — nay, a magnitude of blessing which her husband would not part with for all that earth itself, though it were made of one entire and perfect chrysolite:[1] — to see her abdicate this majesty to play at precedence with her next-door neighbour! This is wonderful — oh, wonderful! — to see her, with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile upon her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would only look for its knowledge, that, outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood.

93. Have you ever considered what a deep under meaning there lies, or at least may be read, if we choose, in our custom of strewing flowers before those whom we think most happy? Do you suppose it is merely to deceive them into the hope that happiness is always to fall thus in showers at their feet? — that wherever they pass they will tread on herbs of sweet scent, and that the rough ground will be made smooth for them by depths of roses? So surely as they believe that, they will have, instead, to walk on bitter herbs and thorns; and the only softness to their feet will be of snow. But it is not thus intended they should believe; there is a better meaning in that old custom. The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, not before them. "Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy."[2]

94. You think that only a lover's fancy; — false and vain! How if it could be true? You think this also, perhaps, only a poet's fancy —

> Even the light harebell raised its head
> Elastic from her airy tread.

1. *Othello,* 5.2.146: — "Had she been true, / If Heaven would make me such another world, / Of one entire and perfect chrysolite, / I'd not have sold her for it."

2. Tennyson: *Maud,* i. xii. 6. Ruskin, it will be seen, treats the passage as "a lover's fancy, false and vain"; as an instance, that is, of the "Pathetic Fallacy" (see *Modern Painters,* vol. III). The poet resented this interpretation. "Why," he said to Thomas Wilson, "the very day I wrote it, I saw the daisies rosy in Maiden's Croft, and thought of enclosing one to Ruskin labelled 'A pathetic fallacy' " (*Memoir,* by his son, vol. i. p. 511).

But it is little to say of a woman, that she only does not destroy where she passes. She should revive; the harebells should bloom, not stoop, as she passes. You think I am rushing into wild hyperbole! Pardon me, not a whit — I mean what I say in calm English, spoken in resolute truth. You have heard it said — (and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one) — that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them: nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard; — if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare — if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind, in frost — "Come, thou south, and breathe upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out."[1] This you would think a great thing? And do you think it not a greater thing, that all this, (and how much more than this!) you *can* do, for fairer flowers than these — flowers that could bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them; flowers that have thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; and which, once saved, you save for ever? Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks, — far in the darkness of the terrible streets, — these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken: will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them in their trembling, from the fierce wind? Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death; but no dawn rise to breathe upon these living banks of wild violet, and woodbine, and rose; nor call to you, through your casement — call (not giving you the name of the English poet's lady, but the name of Dante's great Matilda, who, on the edge of happy Lethe, stood, wreathing flowers with flowers), saying: —

> Come into the garden, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
> And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
> And the musk of the roses blown?[2]

Will you not go down among them? — among those sweet living things, whose new courage, sprung from the earth with the deep colour of heaven upon it, is starting up in strength of goodly spire; and whose purity, washed

1. Song of Solomon 4:16.

2. *Maud,* part i. canto xxii. verse 1 (the first two and the last two lines).

from the dust, is opening, bud by bud, into the flower of promise; — and still they turn to you, and for you, "The Larkspur listens — I hear, I hear! And the Lily whispers — I wait."[1]

95. Did you notice that I missed two lines when I read you that first stanza; and think that I had forgotten them? Hear them now: —

> Come into the garden, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
> Come into the garden, Maud,
> I am here at the gate, alone.

Who is it, think you, who stands at the gate of this sweeter garden alone, waiting for you? Did you ever hear, not of a Maud, but a Madeleine, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found One waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener?[2] Have you not sought Him often; — sought Him in vain, all through the night; — sought Him in vain at the gate of that old garden where the fiery sword is set? He is never there; but at the gate of *this* garden He is waiting always — waiting to take your hand — ready to go down to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine has flourished, and the pomegranate budded. There you shall see with Him the little tendrils of the vines that His hand is guiding — there you shall see the pomegranate springing where His hand cast the sanguine seed; — more: you shall see the troops of the angel keepers that, with their wings, wave away the hungry birds from the path-sides where He has sown, and call to each other between the vineyard rows, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Oh — you queens — you queens! among the hills and happy greenwood of this land of yours, shall the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; and in your cities, shall the stones cry out against you, that they are the only pillows where the Son of Man can lay His head?

1. From verse 10 of the same canto.

2. John 20:15. The other biblical references are to Genesis 3:24; Song of Solomon 7:12, and 2:15; Matthew 8:20.

Glossary

"A countenance . . . promises as sweet": From William Wordsworth's "Perfect Woman" (§71).

Achilles: Legendary Greek fighter who slew his Trojan rival, Hector, during the Trojan War. Greek mythology provides two theories to explain the quasi-divine status of Achilles. According to one account, his mother Thetis rubbed the infant Achilles with ambrosia and held him over a purifying fire every day. A better-known account describes how Thetis dipped Achilles into the river Styx, thereby rendering his entire body immortal, save the heel by which she held him.

Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.): One of the greatest writers of Greek tragedy. Only seven of his plays survive in full, although he likely wrote many more. His best known work today is the *Oresteia* (450 B.C.), a sequence of three plays (*Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers,* and *The Eumenides*) describing the tragic aftermath of the Trojan War in the House of Atreus.

"Ah, wasteful woman! . . . men divine!": From the poem "Unthrift" by **Coventry Patmore** (§65).

Andromache: Wife of Hector, the great rival of **Achilles** in the Trojan War, Andromache was captured by the Greeks at the fall of Troy. She became the eponymous character of a tragedy written by **Euripides** in the fifth century B.C. (§61).

Anglesea: Island and county in northwest Wales which has been supposed the last homestead of the druids in Britain (§84).

Antigone: Eponymous heroine of the tragedy written by Sophocles in the fifth century B.C. In the play, King Creon decrees that the traitorous Polynices not be granted proper burial rites. The sister of Polynices, Antigone, defies this edict and is sentenced to be buried alive, even though she is betrothed to Creon's son. Creon realizes his error only after Antigone has already hanged herself in the tomb (§61).

Antony: In William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), one of three rulers of the Roman Empire. He suspects his lover, Cleopatra, of political deceit. Believing that Antony means to murder her, Cleopatra instructs a

messenger to inform him that she has already died. Antony takes his own life and, grieving for the loss of her lover, Cleopatra dies by applying a poisonous snake to her breast (§56).

Athena's shuttle: Roman goddess of wisdom, battle, and certain feminine crafts, particularly weaving. Athena was said to have sprung from the head of Zeus fully grown without the procreative assistance of a mother. In Greek mythology, she is known as **Minerva** (§45).

Australian miner: The Australian mining industry began in 1841 with the limited mining of silver near Adelaide, and gold was first discovered there in 1849 (§14).

Austrian guns: Refers to the Austrian occupation of Italy after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 (§34).

Beatrice: Celebrated love of **Dante** whose death in 1290 is the acknowledged source of his inspiration. In *The Divine Comedy,* Beatrice asks the Virgin Mary to convince Dante to abandon his sinful ways. To this end, Dante takes his famous journey through the afterlife and ultimately looks to heaven as the site of his reunion with Beatrice.

Bradwardine, Rose: In *Waverly* (1814) by **Sir Walter Scott,** the daughter of the Baron of Bradwardine who eventually marries young Edward Waverly (§59).

Bridgenorth, Alice: In *Peveril of the Peak* (1822) by **Sir Walter Scott**.

British Museum: Housing some of the most prized acquisitions of the British Empire, it was founded by Act of Parliament in 1753 and opened to the public in 1759. In 1802, after the defeat of Napoleon, the museum acquired relics from ancient Egypt, including the Rosetta Stone. In 1816, sculptures from the Parthenon were added to the collection.

Britomart: In Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590), warrior maiden and daughter of Arthur's foe, Rierce. Like her namesake, the Cretan goddess Britomartis, Britomart is often seen as a figure for female chastity (§62).

Caesar: In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599–1600), revered Roman statesman and general who becomes the object of an assassination plot. Caesar is famously killed by his friend, Brutus, who believes that the elimination of Caesar will save Rome from dictatorship (§56).

Camilla: In Greek mythology, woman warrior and favorite of Diana. When Camilla was an infant, her father Mitabus was driven from his home by insurgents. When he reached the river Amazenus, he tied Camilla to a lance, consecrated her to Diana, and threw the lance to the other side of the river where she landed safely.

Cassandra: During the Trojan War, she and her mother, Hecuba, were

captured by the Greeks. Apollo gave Cassandra the gift of prophecy, but when she fell out of his favor he condemned her to be doubted by all men.

chain of the Chamouni: A site of inspiration in such Romantic poems as Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Hymn Before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni" (§2, Preface to the Second Edition).

Chalmers, Thomas (1780–1847): Leading Scottish Evangelical during the first half of the nineteenth century. He believed that the solution to middle-class fears of an immoral lower class was the establishment of a rural parish which could communicate with and educate the common man.

Chaucer, Geoffrey (c. 1343–1400): Medieval English author of *The Canterbury Tales,* ***The Legend of Good Women***, *Troilus and Criseyde,* and *The Book of the Dutchess*.

China Seas: Refers to the famous Opium Wars of 1839–42 and 1856–60. The wars originated in British attempts to transport illegal opium exports to China in order to finance the tea trade. This series of trade wars accompanied by military hostility resulted in great financial gains for Britain, France, Russia, and the United States (§30).

circulating libraries: Circulating libraries were not a commonplace until the middle of the nineteenth century, when people began to consider the possibility of maintaining library facilities at public expense. In 1850, an Act of Parliament allowed local organizations to raise funds for these libraries, notably by demanding subscription fees. The famous Mudies Circulating Library was founded in 1842 in London and was almost entirely funded by public resources (§32).

Claverhouse, [John Graham of] (1649?–89): Scottish soldier, also known as "Bonnie Dundee." In 1688 he unsuccessfully commanded a Scottish force intended to repel William of Orange, but was nevertheless made "Viscount Dundee" by James II. Especially revered by the Jacobites, Claverhouse became the subject of *Bonnie Dundee* and *Old Mortality* by **Sir Walter Scott**. He died in battle at Killiecrankie attempting to restore James II to the throne.

Cocytus: One of the five rivers of Hades that flows into the Acheron. The unburied were doomed to walk the banks of the Cocytus for one hundred years, hence its literal designation as the "river of lamentation."

"come 'l frate che confessa lo perfido assassin": *Purgatory* 19.49–50. The passage from Dante's text is actually "come 'l frate che confessa / lo perfido assessin." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow translates the phrase: "as the friar who is confessing / the false assassin" (§25).

Cordelia: In William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605–6), the youngest and most beloved daughter of **King Lear**. She is disowned for conveying an honest account of her affection for him. Cordelia proves faithful to her father throughout the tragedy and is finally reconciled to him. They are imprisoned together by **Goneril,** and Cordelia is hanged before the order for her death can be suspended (§56).

Coriolanus: Eponymous character of William Shakespeare's drama (1607–9). Coriolanus is honored for his defeat of the Volcians who have recently invaded Rome. To prevent Coriolanus from being made consul, his enemies encourage the public to blame him for a recent food shortage. Coriolanus is banished to Antium and becomes the leader of the Voltian army which is preparing to invade Rome again. Only his mother, Volumnia, can persuade Coriolanus to desist from his vengeful scheme. Consequently, Coriolanus is brought before the Voltian senators and stabbed to death (§56).

Cranmer, Thomas (1489–1559?): During the reign of Henry VIII, he worked to publish an unauthorized translation of the Bible, but is best-known for publishing *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549). Cranmer was accused of heresy by Queen Mary, primarily on the grounds that he rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and was consequently executed (§25).

Cymbeline: Eponymous character of William Shakespeare's play (1609–10). Cymbeline is the widowed king of Britain whose two sons are kidnapped, leaving his daughter **Imogen** the only heir to the throne. Against her father's wishes, Imogen refuses to marry her stepbrother and marries Posthumus, who is subsequently banished (§56).

***Daily Telegraph*:** Founded in 1855 as the *Daily Telegraph and Courier,* it attempted to provide a middle-class, liberal approach to contemporary issues.

Dances of Death: Refers specifically to the moral emptiness of salon culture, but the dance of death or "dans macabre" is also a fourteenth-century mortality poem in which Death converses with representatives of various social classes. In the fifteenth century, the term referred to murals depicting such confrontations (§94).

Dante Aligheri (1265–1321): Renowned poet, born in Florence, who composed the *Divine Comedy* following the death of his beloved **Beatrice**.

De Quincey, Thomas (1785–1859): English essayist and writer of *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1820).

Dean of Christ Church: Christ Church, one of the Oxford University colleges, was founded in 1546. It was the educational point of departure for such eminent persons as John Locke, Robert Burns, and Lewis Carroll.

Henry George Liddell served as Dean of Christ Church between 1855 and 1891 (§81).

Deans, Jeanie: In *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) by **Sir Walter Scott,** the daughter of David Deans. When her sister Effie is accused of child-murder, Jeanie refuses to perjure herself to save Effie's life. Jeanie finally seeks a pardon on her sister's behalf, her integrity is rewarded, and Effie's life is spared.

"Dei Gratiâ": "The grace of God" (§91).

Delphian cliffs: According to one Homeric hymn, Apollo wanted to build his temple at Telephus, a spring named after the prophetic nymph who lived there. This nymph persuaded Apollo that the cliffs of Delphi were more appropriate for so elevated a god, and Apollo accordingly placed his temple there and the famous oracle at the foot of the heights (§45).

Desdemona: In Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603–4), wife of the eponymous hero. **Othello** suspects the chaste Desdemona of having an affair with his lieutenant and finally murders her for her presumed infidelity.

Deucalion: Ruskin's 1876 book of stones, which takes its name from a Greek myth that provides an analogue to the Old Testament story of Noah.

"disteso, tanto vilmente, nell' eterno esilio": *Inferno* xxiii.125–126. The passage from Dante's text is in fact "disteso in croce / tanto vilmente ne l'etterno essilio." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow translates the phrase: "extended on the cross / so vilely in eternal banishment" (§25).

distinction of species: Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. The discourse of evolution finds its way into countless subsequent Victorian texts (§8).

Dominic, Saint (1170–1221): Castilian churchman and founder of the Dominican order of monks. Saint Dominic famously claimed to have received a rosary from the Virgin Mary in a vision, an experience which committed him to a life of preaching and studying the word of God. In the nineteenth century there was a revival of Dominican practice, and members of the order became major figures in contemporary social movements.

Douglas, Ellen: In *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), a romantic metrical poem by **Sir Walter Scott,** heroine and daughter of James Douglas who has been outlawed by the Earl of Angus.

dunghill plague: Likely refers to the Black Death, which spread throughout medieval England largely owing to inadequate sanitation (§30).

Ecclesiastical Courts: Courts established by religious authorities to address conflicts between clerics or concerning spiritual matters, but which also dealt with secular matters. From the sixteenth century until 1857, for

example, the English ecclesiastical courts competed with the courts of chancery for jurisdiction over cases involving inheritance.

Egyptian people . . . Woman: Specifically, Neith (Nyeth), who also served as the goddess of war and figures significantly in Ruskin's *Ethics of the Dust* (1865) (§62).

Elysian: Refers to Elysium which, in Greek myth, is the abode of the blessed, a paradise for those who lived and fought virtuously in life (§12).

Emilia: In William Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603–4), wife of the scheming Iago. She finds a handkerchief given to **Desdemona** by **Othello** and surrenders it to Iago, who plants it in the lodgings of Othello's lieutenant. Emilia's actions thus lead indirectly to Othello's belief in Desdemona's infidelity. After the murder of Desdemona, Emilia brings Iago's deception to light and vindicates Desdemona's virtue (§57).

"Even the light harebell . . . airy tread": From *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) by **Sir Walter Scott** (§94).

fog fever: Little-known disease which primarily afflicts cattle and causes respiratory disease.

"For lo! . . . love I lived": Pannuccio dal Bagno of Pisa dedicated these verses, translated here by **Dante Rossetti,** to his own lady (§60).

Forward Murders: Refers to an article published in the ***Pall Mall Gazette*** on August 15, 1865. The writer of the article compares military action to the rise of crime in London and, by illustrating the failures of such a comparison, reveals the insufficiency of a pragmatic approach to moral problems. The article specifically alludes to murders committed by Ernest Forward who, the writer contends, could justify his crime as an effective method of population control (§6 fn2, Preface to the Second Edition).

Francis, Saint (1182–1226): Founder of the Franciscan order of monks. Saint Francis taught asceticism, humility, and religious fervor, but is especially known as the first individual to be afflicted with the stigmata.

Free Trade: Movement for a moderate tariff policy in international trade, especially trade with France. The movement was considerably elaborated in the eighteenth century, but became a critical economic and social issue in the nineteenth century with the introduction of the Corn Laws in England (§34 fn1).

Gardiner, Colonel: In *Waverly* by **Sir Walter Scott** (1814), the commander of Edward Waverly's regiment who dies at Preston.

gate of the Tuileries: Entrance to the famous royal palace located on the right bank of the River Seine in Paris. During the French Revolution, revolutionaries forced Louis XVI and his family to live there instead of at the royal home in Versailles. Napoleon I made the Tuileries his official

home, and it remained the royal residence after the Bourbon Restoration. Thomas Carlyle made the entrance to the Tuileries unforgettable in his bloody depiction of the Reign of Terror in *The French Revolution* (1837) (§1, Preface to the Second Edition).

Goneril: In William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605–6), the oldest daughter of **King Lear**. Goneril feigns filial devotion in order to obtain a share of her father's property. With her husband's assistance, Goneril turns Lear out of their home into a raging storm, and has Lear and **Cordelia** wrongly imprisoned for treason.

Helena: In William Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–96), she loves Demetrius, a man who has recently fallen in love with another woman. Oberon, king of the fairies, orders the mischievous Puck to administer a potion to Demetrius which will cause him to desire Helena, but Puck administers the potion to Lysander.

Henry the Fifth: Central character in William Shakespeare's play of the same name (1598–99). The Archbishop of Canterbury convinces Henry V to invade France. Henry V leads a very small army into France, leaving a greater number of soldiers at home to quell rebellion. Outnumbered, the English army nonetheless defeats the French, and the Treaty of Troyes dictates that Henry V will marry Princess Katherine of France and thus become heir to the French throne (§56).

"Her household motions . . . virgin liberty": From William Wordsworth's "Perfect Woman" (§78).

Hermione: In Greek myth, the daughter of Helen of Troy and Menelaus, the king of Sparta. In William Shakespeare's ***Winter's Tale*** (1610–11), Hermione is the wife of Leontes who is wrongly accused of adultery. Leontes is informed that she has died from the grief and shame to which he has subjected her. At the end of the play, Leontes laments his treatment of Hermione before what he believes to be a statue of his dead wife. The statue turns out to be the living Hermione, who has been living in seclusion since her trial (§56).

Hero: In William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598–9), Leonato's daughter and Claudio's lover. The malicious Don Pedro brings her virtue into question, causing Claudio to refuse her at the wedding altar. When it is announced that Hero has died of grief and humiliation Claudio regrets his cruelty. Leonato offers to forgive Claudio if he promises to marry one of his nieces. Claudio agrees and at the wedding ceremony, the niece turns out to be none other than Hero herself, whose reputation is publicly restored.

Homer: Author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* both of which were probably

composed around 800 B.C. It has been widely theorized that these works were in fact the product of multiple authors, particularly because both epic poems were originally transmitted orally.

Household Gods: In ancient Roman, the *Penates* were worshipped privately in the home and in public. In the home, worship occurred before a shrine with images of the household's specific protectors, usually at the family meal or on special occasions and involved offerings of food, wine, incense, and so forth. The *Penates Publici* was a focal point for political unity and state support (§68).

"il gran rifiuto": "The great refusal" (§43).

Imogen: In William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (1609–10), **Cymbeline**'s daughter from a previous marriage who refuses to marry her stepbrother and instead marries Posthumus, who is consequently banished. During his exile, Posthumus bets Iachimo that he cannot assail Imogen's chastity. Iachimo attempts to seduce Imogen and fails, but he steals one of her bracelets and uses it as evidence of her supposed infidelity (§56).

Iphigenia: In Greek tradition, the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. When Greek ships were delayed from the Trojan War by contrary winds, Agamemnon was told that Artemis demanded the sacrifice of his daughter. Iphigenia nobly consented to her father's request. In one version of the story, she is killed and the Greek ships return to war. According to another account, Artemis spares her at the altar and takes her to the land of Taurians where she serves as high priestess. Years later, Iphigenia saves her brother Orestes and returns to Greece. **Euripides** records both accounts in *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris,* respectively.

Isabella: In William Shakespeare's ***Measure for Measure*** (1604–5), a Christian novitiate and the sister of Claudio, a man who has been sentenced to death for impregnating his intended bride. Isabella pleads on behalf of Claudio's life and is asked to save her brother by revoking her chastity.

Joan of Arc (c. 1412–31): French saint, also known as the Maid of Orléans. The daughter of a farmer in Domrémy, she was tried for heresy largely for claiming that her participation in the Hundred Years War was a result of direct inspiration from God. She was burned at the stake at the ecclesiastical court in Rouen in 1431.

Julia: In William Shakespeare's ***Two Gentlemen of Verona*** (1594–95), the lover of Proteus who travels to Milan to find him and, disguised as a boy, becomes his page.

Kent: In William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605–6), duke who is banished for defending **Cordelia** against her father's condemnation (§56).

King Lear: Eponymous character of William Shakespeare's play (1605–6).

King Lear asks his three daughters to describe the extent of their love for him, offering them each a share of his kingdom in return for a favorable response. Lear's oldest daughters, **Goneril** and **Regan,** are greedy for the property and exaggerate their affection for the aging king. The youngest, **Cordelia,** tells the truth and is disowned despite her great affection for her father.

Kirkby Lonsdale churchyard: Ruskin describes Turner's painting of the churchyard in his essay "Of the Turnerian Picturesque," which discusses Turner's ability to invoke sympathy for the painted subject visually (§41).

"La donna è mobile": Song from Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* (§69).

Lady Macbeth: Wife of Macbeth, the eponymous character of Shakespeare's tragedy (1605–6). She encourages her husband's murder of King Banquo and is a notorious figure of depraved femininity.

Lazarus: Name of two New Testament figures. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha of Bethany who was raised from the dead four days after being entombed. Lazarus is also the name Christ gives to a sick beggar in Luke 16. Because the description of the beggar's condition so resembles leprosy, Lazarus has become a synonym for lepers, but the word literally means "God has helped."

Lee, Alice: In *Woodstock* (1826) by **Sir Walter Scott,** daughter of Sir Henry Lee, the head ranger of Woodstock.

Legend of Good Women: Composed by **Geoffrey Chaucer,** probably between 1385 and 1386, this work is a collection of stories about tragic women of antiquity.

Lucy: Recurring figure in William Wordsworth's poems, though the specific identity of Lucy remains in dispute. It has been suggested that the figure represents Lucy Fortescue Lyttelton, a child Wordsworth knew, or Wordsworth's sister Dorothy (§70).

Ludgate apprentices: Probably refers to the street merchants of Ludgate Hill, many of whom trafficked in illegal goods and might thus be considered "apprentices" or future inmates of Ludgate Prison (§34).

"Lycidas": Written by **John Milton** in 1638, this poem is about Edward King, a fellow pupil at Christ's College who drowned on August 10, 1637.

MacIvor, Flora: Sister of a Jacobite chieftain in *Waverly* (1814) by **Sir Walter Scott**. The novel traces the experiences of a young English aristocrat, Edward W. Young, who is posted to Scotland and becomes involved in the Jacobite Rebellion. Flora MacIvor is educated in Paris and is known for her amazing musical talent. After the Jacobite Rebellion is over, she leaves Britain for a French convent.

Madeleine: French designation for Mary Magdalene, one of the first to view

Jesus after the resurrection. According to one account, Mary Magdalene discovers Jesus in Joseph's garden and mistakes him for the caretaker. In Ruskin's text, the proximity of this reference to a passage from Alfred Tennyson's **"Maud"** also recalls Tennyson's poem "Madeleine" (1830), which alludes to this encounter.

Mannering, Colonel: In *Guy Mannering* (1815) by **Sir Walter Scott,** the young student who uses astrology to predict the wayward fortune of a laird's son and later becomes a respected British soldier in India.

Master of Trinity: Trinity College was founded in 1546 by King Henry VIII, primarily as a school for clerical leaders. In the nineteenth century, it was the home of such eminent figures as Lord Byron, **William Thackeray,** Alfred Tennyson, and Thomas Macaulay. From 1820 until 1841, the Master of Trinity was Christopher Wordsworth, brother of William Wordsworth, and he was succeeded by William Whewell (§81).

Matilda: In the *Inferno,* woman who makes **Dante** drink of the River Lethe before entering Paradise.

Maud: Refers to a poem of the same name written by Alfred Tennyson in 1855. The poem, which largely takes the form of a lover's address, was widely criticized for its optimistic view of military action.

Measure for Measure: William Shakespeare's play (1604–5) in which a duke leaves his kingdom in the hands of his advisor Angelo. Angelo sentences a man to death for impregnating his intended bride, but offers to pardon this man if his sister **Isabella** will submit to Angelo's advances.

Merchant of Venice: William Shakespeare's comedic drama (1596–7) in which two lovers, Portia and Bassanio, can be married only by borrowing money from Bassanio's friend Antonio. Antonio borrows money for Bassanio from the Jewish merchant Shylock, promising that if he fails to return the money in time Shylock may extract one pound of flesh from his body. Antonio is unable to pay, and Shylock takes his suit to court. Portia disguises herself as a lawyer and wins the case for her lover. Shylock is forced to convert to Christianity and forfeit his property to the state.

Michelet, [Jules] (1798–1874): French Romantic historian and author of the *Histoire de France* (1837–1867). He was considered a champion of the people and lost his position at the Collège de France when he refused to swear allegiance to Napoleon in 1851 (§82).

Milton, [John] (1608–74): Seventeenth-century poet and essayist famous for writing **"Lycidas"** (1638), *Paradise Lost* (1667), *Paradise Regain'd* (1671), and *Samson Agonistes* (1671).

Minerva: In Roman myth, the goddess of handicrafts and the arts. Equivalent

to the Greek goddess Athena, Minerva maintained a temple at Aventine Hill that became a meeting place for artisans, actors, and writers.

Mont Cervin: Peak in the Pennine Alps on the Swiss-Italian border. It was first scaled in 1865 by the Englishman Edward Whymper and is more popularly known as the Matterhorn (§1, Preface to the Second Edition).

Müller, Max (1823–1900): German philologist and son of the poet Wilhelm Müller. His book *The Science of Language* (1861, 1863) describes how cultural myths arise from metaphors originally employed to explain natural phenomena.

Muses: In Greek myth, patron goddesses of the arts born to Zeus and Mnemosyne. There were originally three, and later nine, Muses.

Nausicaa: In the *Odyssey,* the daughter of Alcinaus, king of the Phaeacians. Nausicaa is playing ball with her maids when Odysseus appears before them at the river. She acts as his caregiver and protector, but also forestalls the return of Odysseus to his homeland.

Nephelo-coccygia: In *The Birds,* a play written by Aristophanes in the fifth century B.C., a city built in the clouds by the cuckoos and intended to prevent sacred incense from traveling from men to the gods.

"Oh murderous coxcomb! . . . wife?": *Othello* 5.2.268–9; words spoken by **Emilia** to **Othello** denouncing his murder of **Desdemona** (§57).

"Open Sesame": In *The Arabian Nights,* written by Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century, this phrase opened the door to the robber's dungeon (§50).

Orpheus: In Greek myth, the son of Apollo and the Muse Calliope. As the famed player of the lyre, he has become a classical figure for music and poetry.

Othello: In William Shakespeare's play of the same name (1603–4), the Moorish warrior who is misled by Iago into suspecting his wife, **Desdemona,** of adultery. Othello ultimately kills her for this presumed betrayal and, when his error is discovered, takes his own life.

Otterburn: Village in northern England. In 1388 it was the scene of a Scottish victory over the English that became immortalized in ballads like "Chevy Chase" and "Otterburn" (§7, Preface to Second Edition).

Owen, Sir Richard (1804–92): Zoologist and comparative anatomist who served as superintendent of the natural history branch of the **British Museum** from 1856 until 1884.

Pall Mall Gazette: Founded in 1865 by Frederick Greenwood, a magazine "written by gentlemen for gentlemen." The publication takes its name from a sketch by **William Thackeray.**

Parnassus: Mountain in central Greece sacred to Apollo, the **Muses,** and Dionysus. The oracle of Delphi lies at the foot of the mountain.

Patmore, Coventry (1823–96): Poet who composed "Angel in the House" (1854), a poem which embodies the Victorian notion of a woman's domestic duties.

Paul, Saint (c. 10–64): Jewish apostle to the Gentiles and major figure in the history of Christian doctrine. Educated in Jerusalem, Saint Paul is famously credited with having written the Pauline Epistles and Acts of the Apostles.

Penelope: Daughter of the Spartan prince Icarus and wife of Ulysses. When Ulysses left to fight in the Trojan War, Penelope was sought after by countless men, but steadfastly refused their advances. She began to weave a funeral robe for Laertes, her husband's dead father, and swore that when she completed this task she would accept a new husband. Whenever Penelope was almost finished, she would undo her work and begin anew. This ritual established Penelope as the embodiment of patience, chastity, and loyalty.

Perdita: In William Shakespeare's ***Winter's Tale*** (1610–11), the daughter of Leontes who falls in love with Palixenes's son, Florizel (§56).

"perplexed i' the extreme": ***Othello*** 5.2.347; words spoken by Othello when presented with the possibility that **Desdemona** has committed adultery (§30).

Pharos: A lighthouse that, according to Greek and Roman tradition, was one of the seven wonders of the world (§68).

Political Economy: Likely refers to Ruskin's *The Political Economy of Art* (1858), a volume containing two lectures originally delivered in Manchester. Ruskin also wrote "Essays on Political Economy," which were published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1862 and republished as *Munera Pulveris* in 1872.

price of cotton: Cotton textiles dominated England's growing industrial economy during the mid-nineteenth century, Manchester serving as the center of the industry (§30).

"Qual piùm al vento": "Woman is fickle, a feather to the wind." The famous aria from Act III of Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* begins with this statement (§69).

Queen Catherine [Katherine in the original]: In William Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (1612–13), Henry VIII seeks divorce on the grounds that his marriage to Queen Katherine, the widow of his own brother, constitutes incest (§56).

Redgauntlet, Lilias: In *Redgauntlet* (1824) by **Sir Walter Scott,** niece of the Laird of Redgauntlet during the final days of the Jacobite movement.

Regan: One of **King Lear**'s daughters who lies to her father in order to win her share of his kingdom.

Richard III: In William Shakespeare's play of the same name (1592–93), Richard III creates friction between his brothers King Edward IV and George, Duke of Clarence, in order to gain control over the entire kingdom (§25).

Rob Roy: **Sir Walter Scott**'s 1818 novel revolving around the exploits of Scottish hero Robert Macgregor. Francis Osbaldistone, the son of a businessman, is sent to live in the Scottish Highlands with his uncle after falling out of favor with his father. Francis falls in love with Diana Vernon, the cousin of his jealous cousin, Rasleigh.

Rosalind: In William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599–1600), the daughter of Duke Senior, who is banished to the forest of Arden. In the forest she disguises herself as the boy Ganymede. Rosalind ultimately marries Orlando, the gallant youth for whose sake she is originally banished.

Rossetti, Dante (1828–82): Founded the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, the man who would marry Ruskin's wife after their separation. Rossetti popularized the image of the tall, thin, and pale woman in both painting and poetry.

Salisbury steeple: Tallest steeple in England, probably built between 1260 and 1328.

Scott, Sir Walter (1771–1832): Scottish novelist and poet. He is generally considered the father of the historical novel and is especially well known for *Waverly* (1814), ***Rob Roy*** (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819), and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), among other novels, and for the creation of noble heroines.

Seyton, Catherine: In *The Abbot* (1820) by **Sir Walter Scott,** the daughter of Lord Seyton. At court, she becomes a Maid of Honor and inspires the Queen Mary's page to assist in the Queen's escape. Catherine remains with Queen Mary in captivity for two years before returning to Scotland to marry her loyal page.

Sylvia: In William Shakespeare's ***Two Gentlemen of Verona*** (1594–95), the lover of **Valentine** and intended bride of Thurio, a prosperous courtier (§56).

Talbot, [Philip] Colonel (1771–1853): In **Sir Walter Scott**'s *Waverly* (1814), an English officer who arranges for Edward Waverley's pardon when he is accused of treason.

Thackeray, William Makepeace (1811–1863): English novelist and satirist responsible for *Vanity Fair* (1848), *Henry Esmond* (1852), and countless illustrations and articles for contemporary periodicals.

Theocritus (310–250 B.C.): Hellenistic Greek poet credited as the inventor of the pastoral tradition.

"Three years . . . this happy dell": From William Wordsworth's "Education of Nature" (§70).

"Tra erto . . . della lacca": *Purgatorio,* canto 7; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow translates the passage: " 'Twixt hill and plain there was a winding path / Which led us to the margin of that dell" (§5, Preface to the Second Edition).

Two Gentlemen of Verona: William Shakespeare's play (1594–95) in which **Valentine** and his lover **Sylvia** attempt to elope but are betrayed by Valentine's friend, Proteus. Valentine is consequently banished and Sylvia jailed. Valentine becomes the leader of a band of outlaws and, when Sylvia escapes from her captivity, she is captured by some members of this band. The comedy ends happily with the union of Valentine and Sylvia, and Proteus and **Julia**.

Una: In Edmund Spenser's romance epic *The Faerie Queene* (1590), the damsel whose parents have been imprisoned by a dragon and must be rescued by the Redcrosse knight. Una is often seen as a representative of Christian faith (§62).

Unto This Last: Ruskin began releasing this work in monthly installments of the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860, but public protests interrupted publication. The controversy emerged largely from Ruskin's claim that an economy could not be scientific without also being moral. Ruskin published the essays in this single volume in 1862.

Urim: One of the sacred instruments of ancient Jews worn in a breastplate by the high priest in some ceremonies (§6, Preface to the Second Edition).

Valentine: In William Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594–95), the lover of **Sylvia** who is banished after being discovered attempting to elope with her. He later becomes the leader of a band of robbers who accidentally intercepts Sylvia as she escapes from her captivity (§56).

Valley of Humiliation: In *Pilgrim's Progress,* a work written by John Bunyan during six months of incarceration in 1675 and published in 1678, Christian encounters Apollyon here before moving on to the Valley of the Shadow of Death (§72).

"Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made": From *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) by **Sir Walter Scott** (§69).

Vernon, Diana: In ***Rob Roy*** (1818) by **Sir Walter Scott,** the virtuous cousin of Rashleigh and source of rivalry between him and Francis Osbaldistone.

Viola: In William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1599–1600), she is shipwrecked off the coast of Illyria. Dressed as a boy named Cesario, Viola

becomes a page at court. She is asked by Orsino, whom she loves, to secure the love of Olivia, who instead falls in love with the disguised Viola (§56).

Virgil (70–19 B.C.): Roman author who spent the last ten years of his life writing the *Aeneid* and who figures significantly in **Dante**'s ***Divine Comedy.***

Virgilia: In William Shakespeare's ***Coriolanus*** (1607–9), wife of Coriolanus. Whereas the mother of Coriolanus, Volumnia, appeals to her son's martial instincts, Virgilia continually appeals to his gentler inclinations (§56).

The Winter's Tale: Play by William Shakespeare (1610–11) which revolves around the groundless jealousy of Leontes, the king of Sicilia, over the imagined infidelity of his blameless wife, **Hermione**.

workhouse: An institution intended to provide paupers with employment and sustenance. In 1660, the English Poor Law assigned responsibility for the poor to individual parishes. In the eighteenth century these institutions degenerated into refuges for the mentally ill, criminals, the old, and the infirm. The Poor Law was amended in 1834 to establish a standing system of poor relief in the form of parish organizations specifically dedicated to this task. The amendment also required that individuals receiving aid live in the workhouse and not receive aid in their own homes. Workhouse conditions were kept extremely harsh, in part as a means of discouraging the poor from seeking relief of any kind (§36).

Rethinking *Sesame and Lilies*

Authority, Desire, and the Pleasures of Reading

ELIZABETH HELSINGER

Reading is a central concern of Ruskin's 1864 Manchester lectures. Their titles — "Of Kings' Treasuries," "Of Queens' Gardens" — point to differences in the roles Ruskin believed reading should play in the educations not only of men and women but also of the ruling and the working classes. For us, as for many educated Englishwomen and men in the 1860s, these lectures may offend by entwining reading with highly conservative views of social relations in pronouncements that themselves can sound irritatingly authoritative.[1] Yet Ruskin's lectures are more interesting than such an account might suggest. His figurative language and emotional rhetoric, strange performances as they are within literary or political debate, are passionate instances of a kind of reading that runs counter to the orderly exposition of rational argument and analysis, keeping alive a play of words and texts that will always exceed attempts to translate it into critical prose. This excess or play of the mind is one sign of the writer's delight in books. It can become in turn a source of pleasure for readers who enter the force fields of desire and authority that construct his — and our own — relations with reading. Understanding not only what he says but how he says it is the challenge of reading Ruskin.

Shortly after Ruskin published *Sesame and Lilies*, two women writers, Louisa May Alcott and George Eliot, wrote their own influential fictional accounts of reading and its relation to desire and education: *Little Women* (1868) and *Middlemarch* (1869–72). Although I look at Ruskin's ideas about reading primarily by attending to his own terms and practices, in the third section of this essay I use Alcott's and Eliot's fictional accounts of reading as alternative entries to Ruskin's texts, especially but not solely the troubling second lecture. Both are readers more sympathetic to Ruskin than many of his recent feminist critics and better informed about contemporary

reading practices, though each, like Ruskin, also invests heavily in a particular vision not only of the desires that reading engages but also of the place it should have in women's lives.

Let me first, however, set out some of the problems these two lectures present to modern as opposed to Victorian readers. Ruskin entered an already lively discussion of the education of women and the working classes in the 1860s, as Jan Marsh and Seth Koven elaborate elsewhere in this volume.[2] Ruskin's lectures, however, acknowledge this contemporary discussion only obliquely. His stern insistence on submitting to the authority of great books, while it immediately casts reading as a charged social relation within a highly hierarchical polity, is addressed not to the socially humble but to future "kings" and "queens" from "the upper, or undistressed middle, classes; who may be supposed to have choice of the objects and command of the industries of their life . . . [who] will be called to occupy responsible positions in the world" (1882 Preface; 18:51). His Manchester audiences were thus not prepared to find themselves the targets of his stern warning that reading requires "annihilating our own personality, and seeking to enter into" Milton's or Dante's or Plato's meanings (§25). Or that the reader must — in Ruskin's extended conceit — approach the text as an Australian miner wielding pickax, shovel, and furnace to "crush" and "smelt" meaning from words (§14). These figures of labor and submission are, moreover, extended in the companion lecture with Ruskin's urgent advocacy of a kind of indentured service to a "pure woman" as part of the process of education. "Absolute yielding of obedient devotion, by the lover, to his mistress," submitting to the guidance of a "beloved woman, however young," sounds equally annihilating to personality or independence of mind, for both men and women (§64). The aristocracy of great books is apparently closed to those who do not submit to their authority and engage in the harshly disciplined (and masculine) labor of reading. Neither the sons of the "undistressed middle classes" nor advocates of expanded education for women or the working classes imagined reading in this way.

Ruskin's use of the language of rank to describe and offend our understanding of the social relations of reading is, of course, quite deliberate. Addressing parents from the successful and aspiring middle classes, Ruskin assumes their ambitions for their children: entry into the ranks of power, social as well as economic. His account of reading adopts their language. But as in much of his writing in the second part of his career, the lectures published in *Sesame and Lilies* are structured rhetorically by a radical and at times perverse redefinition of the terms of power, wealth, and rank. His

"kings" and "queens" are the philosopher-kings — he adds queens — of a utopian version of the republic toward which Britain seemed to be heading. Ruskin intentionally recalls Plato's meditations on political states, which he had been studying intensely as he worked his way through the Greek of the *Republic* and *Laws*.[3] As we shall see, Ruskin's embrace of Plato as guide, using works that radically restrict the role of literature and the arts for the sake of aligning the republic with "truth," is not the whole story. But it is one reason for his otherwise peculiar appropriations of the language of rank. Ruskin insists on submission to the authority of the "wisest of men" who write "true" books (the philosophers in fact, if not in name) in order to educate those who will one day join this "aristocracy," this "eternal court," not as writers but as readers who are also actively engaged leaders of a modern, this-world society (§§7, 9, 11).

The conclusion of the first lecture unfolds the fantasy of a benevolent State that might be shaped even out of contemporary bourgeois capitalism, a State that will not only concern itself with basic literacy but also provide "royal or national libraries" "accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening" and subsidize the publication of "a royal series of books" (§49).[4] In short, the ideal State Ruskin envisions would take on a far wider responsibility for the education of its citizens in accumulated cultural riches and make a stronger commitment to present and future cultural production than current reformers dared to imagine. To create those who could envision universal education in this expanded sense is the goal of Ruskin's lectures; his strictures on reading are rhetorically gauged to this end. He is calling, exhorting (and shaming) his audiences to cultural leadership.

Even granted that goal, however, Ruskin's lectures jar modern audiences as they did his contemporaries. The passage he chooses to explicate as his example of how to read is a puzzling instance. A stern Saint Peter (the exemplar of "Church authority") denounces corrupt bishops and pastors who "for their bellies' sake, / Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold" and prepares to shut them forever behind the iron gates of Hell (§§25, 20). The unexpected force of Saint Peter's language in the midst of a poem of mourning for a drowned young man (Milton's "Lycidas") itself demands explanation. Why does Ruskin invite this severe judge to his scene of reading? No less perplexing than the voice Ruskin interpellates through citation is the tone and language of his own prose: the impassioned, denunciatory rhetoric into which these lectures on reading and the education of men and women rapidly modulate. Burning with wrath and indignation,

borrowing the coals that fire the prophet's tongue together with the sternness of Milton's Saint Peter, Ruskin turns on his listeners and readers to accuse them of "despising literature, despising science, . . . despising compassion, and concentrating [their] soul[s] on Pence" (§31). He accuses women, in particular, of "abdicat[ing] . . . majesty to play at precedence" with neighbors while "outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood" (§92). What begins as patient argument and demonstration of the rewards of careful reading is interrupted by the stark announcement that "It is simply and sternly impossible for the English public, at this moment, to understand any thoughtful writing, — so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice" (§31). What are we to make of this extraordinary anger?

Several generations of schoolteachers and parents managed to ignore disconcerting aspects of these lectures by imagining that they would be good for children. But Ruskin was not addressing children. Adult discomforts direct us accurately to troublesome questions at the heart of the book: the dissonance between Ruskin's stern prescriptions or his anger and the delight in reading that his words also reveal. The lectures insist on submission to authority in reading against a backdrop of insane avarice, blind mouths, and agonies of blood, yet this rhetoric feeds on a continued play of imagination in the fields of cultural wealth: those treasuries to which reading is to be the enabling key.

In approaching Ruskin's prose through a variety of perspectives, past and present — the terms and figures he uses, fictions written by contemporaries who absorbed and reacted to them, and texts which he in turn is interpreting — I want to give us a way of reading him both submissively and critically. Ruskin's prose extends his pedagogical strictures in extremely interesting ways, but these are not readily accessible, despite the seductive brilliance of his writing. To release the surprising twists of meaning Ruskin can condense into his writing and to create the distance for reflection on them requires hunting for echoes of his words in those of writers both before and after him — studying Ruskin, that is, as he reads. This labor of hearing the other voices that Ruskin discovered in his reading and wrote in his prose may allow us to work through our resistance to the authority his lectures claim by understanding better the complex mixture of obedience and freedom Ruskin himself exercised as reader.[5] In the process I trust we can recover some of the pleasures of reading to which his own writing both testifies and contributes. But we need to begin by looking at the models for

interpretation that inform Ruskin's conceptions of reading in *Sesame and Lilies*.

For the Ruskin of *Modern Painters* I and II (1843, 1846) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), God's two books of the Bible and the natural world provided an ultimate textual authority.[6] The "truths" of languages founded on God's written and created word could be relied upon. Hence Ruskin could famously advise that painters and viewers alike "go to nature" and study by close observation, aided by drawing, what God had written there, both as the basis for determining the meaning of figurative language in the Bible and as an aid to grasping (and judging) the insights of imaginative art and literature. In *The Stones of Venice*, for example, he urged Victorians to learn to "read" the sculptural programs of Gothic architecture by seeking its figures in the books of Nature and the Bible (10:269). The reading Ruskin describes is markedly active, as his metaphors for it in *Sesame* suggest (mining — digging, crushing, smelting, chiseling, fusing — and hunting). The reader plays important roles in the interpretive process, participating silently in what could be described as the textual equivalent of the demanding spoken dialectics of early philosophical enquiry.

This method of reading was shaped not only by Ruskin's education in biblical exegesis (requiring word-by-word attention to the written words of God in a process that valued careful comparison of recurring words and figures in different passages) but also by his experiences as an enthusiastic natural historian.[7] Especially in the first part of the century when Ruskin was growing up, geology, botany, and zoology still relied heavily on the observational and descriptive practices of passionate amateurs.[8] For the young Ruskin, reading and natural history converged: observation and description of the natural world would reveal its correspondences with the written revelation. The insights of the verbal and visual arts could be interpreted and tested against careful study of nature and close reading of the Bible.

By the time he wrote the last volumes of *Modern Painters* (1856, 1860), however, Ruskin had long lost his early belief in the literal truth of divinely authored books. Authority, if such were possible, must be dispersed across the accumulated historical stores of culture, and as guides to truth these were broken and obscured by the flawed abilities of even the wisest men. There was no longer any guarantee that the insights condensed into language, verbal or visual, expressed "true" relations between things, nor any secure way of determining which were "true" and which "false." The

Bible took its place in an accumulating tradition of great but human texts. Authority and authorship were severed, with authority the more desired as it became impossible to establish with any certainty. The risks for reading were much greater. The wisdom of educating every man and woman to interpretive reading was, Ruskin feared, questionable.

Ruskin now discovered two contemporary projects that promised help for textual interpretation in a secular world: F. D. Maurice and R. C. Trench's projected dictionary, combining etymologies with a history of usage (which became the OED), and Max Müller's philological study of myths.[9] In Ruskin's revised conception, textual authority rested wholly on the accumulated insights of human perception condensed into words and myths whose expressive potential had been gradually elaborated in the work of writers and artists over the course of human history. To the reader, as "Of Kings' Treasuries" explains, is assigned the hard work of excavating the meanings embedded through repeated creative uses in a word or a figure, in order both to understand its use in the particular text and to use that text to expand the meaning of word or figure. Reading in this sense ("mining" for meaning) involves — in a different metaphor — word hunts, tracing etymologies and changing meanings through the history of usage. It may also require figure or myth hunts, tracing similar thoughts behind diverse myths or figures and hence suggesting connections among them, across cultures or centuries. Knowledge of such similarities could then be used to gloss or expand the suggestiveness of the mythical thought.

Ruskin had already explored a version of this process in his studies of the landscape painter J. M. W. Turner's imaginative transformations of observed scenery, where he had noted the way that artist, viewing any particular scene, recalls "thousands of such images, of older scenes . . . each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him" (12:359–60). In the terms of his earlier accounts of imagination (*Modern Painters* II, 1846), Turner possessed not only an instantaneous, probing grasp of underlying structures and materials deduced from the visible aspects of things (the "imagination penetrative"), which enabled him to seize on a single illuminating feature and use it, through a series of visual echoes, to unify a composition. He also displayed the wide-ranging play of an unusually retentive memory, bringing related sights and ideas to bear upon immediate experience (the "imagination associative").[10] Moreover, as Ruskin argued in the closing chapters of *Modern Painters* V (1860), Turner's deeply mythologized landscapes show the painter drawing on the histories of usage contained in both words and verbal or visual figures, thus extending the reach of his associative imagination beyond the memory of

his own experience. "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens" apply that model of the associative imagination's dependence on a long creative tradition to reading densely figural verbal texts: the poetry of Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson.

This kind of associative reading requires a certain loosening of instrumental or calculating approaches to books. Increasingly for Ruskin in the 1860s, reading involves not only the hard work of mining for meaning or hunting for it with dictionaries and concordances but also a kind of serious play, entertaining the most unlikely associations suggested by linguistic or figurative echoes in a sort of wild hazard that this loosened play of mind might equally well hit on truths out of reach of a more methodical inquiry. Ruskin unfolds the possibilities of a word, a phrase, or an image by connecting it to instances in quite different works while setting aside, at least temporarily, any formal, substantive, or historical differences. Such associations may appear whimsical — not so very far removed from the nonsense of Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll, as Ruskin recognized when he declared (responding to a request for comment on "The Best Hundred Books" in 1886) that he would put Lear's *Book of Nonsense* first on his list (34:585). But they can also be brilliantly suggestive, as in the amazing long footnote on Shakespeare's names in Ruskin's second treatise on political economy, *Munera Pulveris* (1862; 17:223).[11] *The Queen of the Air* (1869), Ruskin's most sustained effort to read a mythical figure, is a tour de force combining the hard work of word — and myth — hunts through a variety of historical sources with the free play of the associative imagination. The aim of this kind of interpretive reading, where the controls of the logical mind are relaxed so that the reader may "enter into the meaning" of an imaginative author more fully, is not to prove a set of relationships but to entertain them. Its potential rewards include both illuminating meaning in a particular context and expanding the mythical figure for future use, thus adding to the historical stores of culture.

Sesame and Lilies is a more restrained book than *The Queen of the Air*, but here too, as one condensed and cryptic sentence toward the end of "Of Kings' Treasuries" indicates, Ruskin had already begun his expansive readings of myths, weaving together sources as disparate as Homer, Greek coins, Turner's paintings, and the Bible. In that sentence (§45), reaching for mythic language to describe a wealth that is not money, Ruskin invokes the help of Athena, Vulcan, and Apollo as "the three great Angels of Conduct, Toil, and Thought" to guide his figure for sorrowing humanity, Job. Each "angel" contributes a golden "treasure" displaying the consolations of human culture: the "deep-pictured tissue" woven from gold thread spun by

Athena — perhaps like that made by Penelope to put off her suitors, a never-completed tapestry of heroic deeds; impenetrable armor, like that Vulcan forged for Achilles, with its magical depictions of warfare and agriculture, music and dance, civic and religious ritual; and Apollonian gold — the light and color of great painting, according to Ruskin's own interpretations of Turner — "to be mined in the very sun's red heart." Marcel Proust caught exactly the spirit of Ruskin's allusive writing in passages like this, where the mind's controls are relaxed so that it can strike fire from the unexpected leaps of association, when he drew attention to the epigraph to "Of Kings' Treasuries" ("You shall each have a cake of sesame, — and ten pound. LUCIAN: *The Fisherman*"). Where Ruskin's title invokes one meaning of "sesame" (the magic word that opens the thieves' cave in *The Thousand and One Nights*) to create a second (the reading that opens for us the treasuries of wisdom: books), in choosing the epigraph, Proust observes, "Ruskin amused himself by taking up again the word *Sesame* in itself . . . insisting on its original meaning (the grain of sesame) and embellishing it with a quotation from Lucian which in a way makes of it a play on words by bringing out sharply, under the conventional meaning of the word in the oriental storyteller and in Ruskin, its primordial meaning."[12] As a grain from which bread can be made, "sesame" signals prospectively Ruskin's concern, in the second half of the lecture, with the starved bodies no less than the starved souls of a society that does not value reading. So the epigraph, in Proust's words, though it is "Ruskin amus[ing] himself" with "a play on words," "projects like a supplementary ray of light that reaches not only the last sentence of the lecture but illuminates retrospectively all that preceded."

Ruskin's serious play is also signaled in the inventive typography and layout that increasingly marked his books from the 1860s, where footnotes and appendices swell into lengthy digressions with extensive quotations, and these enter into lively dialogue (and at times change places with) the main text. In "Of Kings' Treasuries," for example, expansive footnotes (several of them added in the revised edition of 1871) interrupt with increasing frequency sections 35–37, piling up the allusions to other texts, until Ruskin's main text itself is deliberately broken up by the insertion of the grim newspaper clipping reporting the death of Michael Collins, printed in red in all the British editions of *Sesame and Lilies*.[13] The form of Ruskin's later books shapes a different rhythm of reading, encouraging constant movement between disparate texts as if to act out graphically the leaps of the figurative imagination: from Ruskin's exposition to inset quotation, lengthy and digressive footnote, or appendices bursting with citations from

art or literature, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and Ruskin's later editorial comments.

Mining for meaning, word — and myth — hunting, and the serious play of the associative mind are, then, essential to the reading that participates in a continuing process of expanding cultural stores, the flawed human substitute for divine authority. But they are not enough, Ruskin warns, in the face of the cultural poverty, the willed amnesia or involuntary distraction, of a nation "concentrating its soul on Pence." Writing very much from the perspective of the 1860s, when the British economy was thriving and both getting and spending were easier and more tempting than for many decades before, Ruskin stressed the importance of a third essential requisite for reading: the sympathy awakened by desire. He calls this the "touch-faculty of body and soul," yoking together the physical immediacy of "sensation" with the emotional engagement of "passion" (§28). Both terms are appropriated from then-current controversies over popular but lurid police reports and "sensation" fiction (novels of crime and passion) and the harms they were thought to cause to readers. Ruskin appropriated them in order to redefine them, with stunning perversity, as a mode of moral perception:

> As you go to [books] first for clear sight, so you must stay with them, that you may share at last their just and mighty Passion. Passion, or "sensation." I am not afraid of the word; still less of the thing. You have heard many outcries against sensation lately; but, I can tell you, it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another, — between one animal and another, — is precisely in this, that one feels more than another. . . . Nay, we are only human in so far as we are sensitive, and our honour is precisely in proportion to our passion. (§27)

"Sensation," in Ruskin's redefinition, is an antidote to that "bluntness of body and mind" that he defines as the true meaning (another redefinition) of "vulgarity" (§28). To be incapable of sensation is to be incapable of sympathy, to lack the "touch-faculty" that permits one to feel with and for another person, and hence to fail to be moved to ethical action.

There are great pleasures in mining for meaning and the associative play of the readerly memory, as in the writing it enables. But there are also, certainly for Ruskin, great anxieties. Authority — his own and that of the great writers whose words he invokes — was highly problematic for Ruskin in the 1860s, without the anchor of belief that had earlier enabled him to advocate radical departures from reigning conventions in writing about the natural world, the arts, or the "laws" of laissez-faire political economy. In

his personal life he was losing anchors as well: he was increasingly alienated from his father, to whose authority he had deferred, not always happily, and on whose support he had counted well into his adult life. Resentment against that authority abruptly changed to an irreparable guilt when his father died in 1864, nine months before Ruskin gave these lectures. The addresses of December 1864 on "the influence of good books, and good women" (1882 Preface; 18:49) are part of the painful reconstruction of authority that Ruskin began in the concluding volumes of *Modern Painters.*[14] His turn to the "touch-faculty," and to the special authority of women in its exercise, are an important if problematic step in that process.

Ruskin was drawing on widespread Victorian beliefs, buttressed by his readings of cultural tradition, when he maintained that women naturally possess strength of feeling and fineness of emotional or moral perception. This was not a belief which even committed advocates of enlarged education for women were willing to abandon. Both Louisa May Alcott and George Eliot, whose fictional accounts of women's relation to reading were written in the wake of Ruskin's book, defended the value of women's unique powers of feeling. They could agree with Ruskin in founding their own depictions of the good and bad aspects of women's education on that "tact which the Mimosa has in trees, which the pure woman has above all creatures: fineness and fulness of sensation, beyond reason; the guide and sanctifier of reason itself" (§28). Eliot did not share Ruskin's apparent confidence that the power of feeling was always allied to fineness of moral perception, or find its ideal embodiment in girlhood "purity," much less accept his readiness to exclude women from hard intellectual labor. But she was wary of any educational reforms that would undermine the potential for sympathy. There *was* "a special moral influence," she maintained, the historical consequence of physiological differences which "are the deep roots of psychological development." "That exquisite type of gentleness, tenderness, possibly maternity suffusing a woman's being with affectionateness, which makes what we mean by the feminine character" is something humanity cannot afford to lose, she wrote to Emily Davies in 1868. It forms part of "the spiritual wealth acquired for mankind by the difference of function founded on the other, primary difference [of physiology]."[15]

Ruskin puts great faith in this "touch-faculty of body and soul" to counter the uncertainty introduced into the authority of books. He has a peculiar awe for those who seem to possess such moral tact untaught, especially young girls, whom he observed from his perspective as an occasional resident and corresponding teacher at a progressive girls' school,

Winnington Hall, in the late 1850s and early 1860s, or in his tutorials with private pupils like the gifted Rose La Touche and her sister Emily, with the former of whom he was falling obsessively in love by 1864. Their apparently instinctive ability to "feel . . . what is just" (§29) reassured him when he despaired of the baffling obscurity of the figurative language in which the insights of the Bible or other monumental works of the merely human spirit were expressed. Or rather, he very much wanted to protect women's certainties from the labyrinths of doubt in which he was rapidly losing his way, lest the hope of guidance that their confident tact promised be lost. The possibility of knowing through feeling that Ruskin glimpsed in his encounters with children takes visible form in images borrowed from an idealizing art: especially Carpaccio's Venice paintings of the sleeping young Saint Ursula, and the tomb-statue of another dead young woman, also depicted as if in sleep, Ilaria di Caretto. Their importance to Ruskin is not so much that such idealized images of forever-unchanging purity are or are not like real girls, but that they offer a focus for aspiration and for the desire that is one of the keys to unlocking the meanings of great writers for both girls and boys. These images of preternatural calm and beautiful innocence figure for Ruskin the power of young womanhood to inspire and guide a man who willingly subscribes himself to the service of the ideals they embody, like Dante dedicated to the "new life" glimpsed through the memory of Beatrice. Where the wisest of books offer knowledge of the good and true, the ideal of the young woman gives form to Ruskin's conviction that such knowledge remains inaccessible, and useless, without sympathy and even passion. In "Of Queens' Gardens" Ruskin turns his rhetorical powers, helped by ample citation from his reading, toward inspiring women to want to embody this ideal. He believes such an ideal, however imperfectly embodied, is needed to help young men turn with desire to reading, an aesthetic pleasure that is sublimated sexual love. The idealized image of the sleeping young girl functions as a figure for and supplement to the pleasures that should motivate the labor and submission which reading demands.

Desire also has an important part to play in the education of women, but here Ruskin, observing contemporary women's lesser engagement with the soul-destroying concentration on pence, sees less need to supply a motive for reading. Pleasure in books will be, he assumes, easier for young women than it has become for young men. The challenges of educating women are different: their reading should make them desire to exercise their gifts of tact, the touch-faculty, and to enlarge, sharpen, and extend these to reach beyond family sentiment and become a passion for justice that will make women active in the larger world. (As Eliot observed to her friend Barbara

Bodichon, evidently explaining Ruskin's stress on the importance of expanding moral feeling rather than cultivating women's minds: "I think Ruskin has not been encouraged about women by his many and persistent efforts to teach them. He seems to have found them wanting in real scientific interest — bent on sentimentalizing everything.")[16] The risk with women's education is that it may fail to expand and even end by blunting the feelings and perceptions that young women already have. Ruskin welcomes Wordsworth's poetry, with its celebration and imitation of tutelage by nature, and even embraces the usefulness of passion (Tennyson's mad speaker's passionate love-song to Maud) to open the young woman to strong feeling for others beyond the narrow circle of home and family. As the other essays in this volume point out, he is, on the one hand, liberal in his views of women's relations to books. Unlike many of his contemporaries, there is little he would exclude from women's reading, and he urges women to engage in the word hunts that would take them ultimately down various by-ways of association.[17] Breadth of reading is a positive good; it opens women's minds and feelings to a larger world. Yet on the other hand, his conception of how women will study the books they read was disappointing from the perspective of many women who believed that women's education was insufficiently focused, ordered, rigorous, and practical. Like Eliot, Ruskin held that men's and women's differences fitted them for complementary social roles. Unlike her, he concluded that cultivating the feelings that would enable women to serve as authorities in matters of moral perception was incompatible with acquiring the fund of usable intellectual knowledge on which a professional life must be based. Believing, on the contrary, that worldly success was the problem to which expanded moral perception might be the solution, he opposed women's practical education for paid jobs — a central concern of the educational reforms advocated in *Alexandra* (and its predecessor, *The Englishwoman's Journal*). And believing that it was crucial to keep women's sympathies focused on the injustices of this world, he warned against their puzzling over arcane interpretations of the Bible.[18] Disputes about the shape of another world would only deaden sympathies to the problems of this one, and too much dwelling on obscurities mar women's once-sure tact with doubts.

There is thus a significant difference of emphasis in what Ruskin has to say about reading in the two lectures, though not in Ruskin's underlying understanding of the interpretive process. To summarize: in the first lecture, the major focus is on hard work and severe discipline, mining for meaning as part of the serious study of books. Yet Ruskin despairs of finding in the ambitious young men of bourgeois England in his day sufficient sympathy

and desire to truly "read" good books. In the second lecture he constructs a figure of desire, embodied in the image of the innocent young woman, to motivate submission to the discipline of books. By contrast, Ruskin assumes that girls approach reading with delight and ready sympathy. Speaking of their education, his emphasis is on browsing widely among a range of books, hence on freedom rather than discipline and hard work, though he still insists on the need for accuracy in ascertaining root meanings in words.

Some parts of Ruskin's lecture must have struck resonant chords in both George Eliot and Louisa May Alcott.[19] The freedom he encouraged in women's reading and the pleasure he implicitly allowed women to find in books were attitudes refreshingly different from pervasive contemporary disapproval of women's reading pleasures or worries about the dangers they posed.[20] *Middlemarch* and *Little Women* portray the strength of women's imaginative hungers and the pleasure anticipated from reading by young women who are looking for more than simple escape or vicarious sensual experience. Eliot's heroine, Dorothea, is consumed by the "soul-hunger" of "a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent . . . struggling in the bonds of a narrow teaching"; "the thing which seemed to her best, she wanted to justify by the completest knowledge."[21] Dorothea is frustrated with her "girlish instruction comparable to the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse" (27) and yearns for purpose and direction in her reading — so much so that she rushes to embrace the narrow pedant Casaubon as her husband in the vain hope that he will "deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path" (28).

Alcott's Jo March has something of the same passion and soul-hunger, if in a less epic key, but she does not look to a male guide for her reading. Jo retreats again and again to her refuge in the garret to read or write, when she is not impatiently serving as companion to her aunt for the sake of her library, that "wilderness of books, in which she could wander where she liked" in "a region of bliss."[22] Books are depicted as acceptable pleasures in Alcott's fictional world for less literary siblings as well: Meg, for example, who wants no more than a comfortable home and family of her own, is depicted without censure curled up with an absorbing book (Scott's *Ivanhoe*). Although both authors' novels show such appetites for books in need of some direction and discipline (Mr. Brooke's promiscuous reading, flitting from one subject to another, is not held up as a model for emulation; the March sisters discover that too much leisure to read at will creates its own

dissatisfactions), the right to enjoy reading is never denied. Moreover, Alcott's and Eliot's writing, rich in quotation, citation, and allusion to the wide range of their reading, works against any interpretation of their novels as disciplinary with respect to reading. Jo's exhilarating briskness may appear tamed, and Meg's and Marmee's domestically focused satisfactions may be praised again and again, but the first fifty pages alone of *Little Women* refer to Shakespeare, Bunyan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the Bible, two stories by the German romantic writer de la Motte Fouqué, the hymn collections of Isaac Watts, *Don Quixote*, Charlotte Yonge's *Heir of Redcliffe*, the *Arabian Nights*, and *Ivanhoe* — a veritable treasure-trove of enticing suggestions for the eager young reader. Dorothea's eyes are painfully opened to Casaubon's limitations, both intellectual and human, after her marriage; books and learning, the story implies, are not what will satisfy Dorothea's hungers, given the necessarily domestic roles through which even an ardent intellectual woman of the nineteenth century can alone hope to influence the lives of those around her. But Eliot's chapter epigraphs are drawn from an impressive range of English literature (including some written by herself), and the plot is dense with direct and indirect allusions to powerful writers like Milton and Sophocles. Both novels are evidence of the continuing pleasures and satisfying scope for ambition offered by books. Some readers will be encouraged to grow up, like Alcott and Eliot, to be successful authors.

Scenes of pleasurable reading proliferate in Alcott's novel, but they take a noticeably different shape from that which occupies the imaginations of Ruskin and Eliot. The latter writers evoke primarily the solitary reader, browsing in the library or hungering for the imagined riches of learning, and (in Eliot) its obverse, the solitary female reader forced to read aloud books of another's choosing, a disciplinary labor that takes all the pleasure away. While Alcott includes such scenes, particularly in relation to Jo, she also displays repeatedly the pleasures of incorporating books by reproducing them through home plays and literary productions, undertaken collectively by the sisters and their friends. As we know from other representations, this too was a possible form that reading might take in nineteenth-century Britain or America, important certainly in the case of a number of aspiring writers growing up in families of gifted siblings (the Brontës or the Rossettis, for example). As in *Little Women*, it could take the form of collective writing and circulation of imitated books and periodicals or of amateur theatrical projects (the "Pickwick Papers" that the March sisters write and circulate among themselves, the plays Jo invents for them all to

act, with plots and characters drawn freely from their reading), or — perhaps more rarely — an ongoing narration of actual lives in terms of tropes borrowed from books (the March sisters cast their trials and tribulations as a *Pilgrim's Progress*). Here reading is absorbed by acting out its figures and fictions, inhabiting characters, language, and situations and making them live in improvised speech and gesture, or even elaborating them into a collective fantasy that can give shape and meaning to "real" life. This more literal version of bodily incorporation seems to have been (and still to be) especially beloved, in retrospect, by the imaginative reader who could readily improvise her own text with fiction's fictions — the Jos or would-be Jos of this world. Reading satisfies a further urge to contribute by creating; it leads directly to writing. Alcott, whose book has served as much-loved bible for hungry girl readers for generations, thus offers more varied scenes of reading and more interesting alternatives by which girls might incorporate the fictions of books into their everyday worlds. Reading for girls, in her depictions, remains a highly pleasurable activity that need not conflict with preparing for the serious business of women's lives.

Eliot's vision is darker. She sees potential tragedy for the eager female consumer of books, where Alcott and Ruskin prefer not to. In Maggie (of *The Mill on the Floss*, 1860) and Dorothea, she depicts the painful frustrations that feeding inchoate ambition by reading can bring for the girl when she confronts the limitations of a nineteenth-century woman's life. Eliot shapes her novels in a conviction she shares with Ruskin, that it must be through sympathy that modern women will find a way to work on the world. But she diverges from "Of Queens' Gardens" by refusing to make use of "woman," in the purified and petrified image of the young girl, as a necessary inspiring illusion for young men (see her deflating depiction of the disastrous results this can have in the instance of Lydgate). And she firmly rejects Ruskin's prescription of unfocused "browsing" as an adequate model for women's education.[23]

To Ruskin's credit, he rightly sees the contradiction between putting woman on a pedestal as the pure, good, and true guardian of moral values, and yet assuming women must be themselves strictly guided and instructed by men (the father-as-teacher-as-husband model). But he quite misses (and instead tries to justify) the total impracticality of expecting women to guide men while placing all the social, legal, and economic power in the hands of men. What is most convincing is the strength of his desire or need to believe in and take for guide an ideal of moral perceptiveness embodied in a woman, his belief that submitting to be guided by a chosen woman will

provide stability, a point of reference and authority, for the man accepting such service, in a world where other forms of authority — divine, political, familial — are fatally eroded.

The idealized figure of the pure young woman as moral guide carries a heavy weight of responsibility for the real woman. She is praised by Ruskin above all for her constancy, her stability, her seemingly endless capacity both to find and to remain faithful to some high moral standard. Her "purity" must be "adamantine," like the marble statue of Ilaria. As if to convince himself as well as his listeners — for surely the constant repetition is an indication of deepest needs — he pleads: "But do you not see that . . . she must — as far as one can use such terms of a human creature — be incapable of error? . . . She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise" (§69). This is very far indeed from the world of the realist novel. And it is where one cannot help resenting what Ruskin is doing, the heavy burden that "must" imposes. For there is no comparable surety for the woman who takes on that burden. It is not possible for *her* to share his or any man's rest in her as a standing point, a source of moral stability.[24] And yet Ruskin insists on her responsibility, not just for the failings of individuals in her immediate family but for the state of the nation or indeed the world. Reading Ruskin as a woman can only make one shake one's head, all too aware that the absolute certainty he looks to the woman aspiring to the role of moral guide to provide in an otherwise morally obscure world will hardly be shared by the object of such adulation. Curiously, it is a tragic role that he has created for her: she must carry the burdens not only of his but of her own doubts.

Ruskin is not gentle in his address to women. But his conception of them is not as simple as some readers have assumed.[25] It is not only that the repose of the pure woman is held up more as necessary illusion than as achievable reality. Ruskin also sees and encourages the potential fierceness of girls; it is what must become the basis for the energizing passion that will move women to act not only within but outside the protected gardens of their homes. Passion must combat sentimentality. Ruskin's second lecture is less angry in tone than the denunciatory first lecture. Indeed, his confessed concern for girls' fragility is patronizingly protective: "You may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does, — she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough . . . you cannot fetter her" (§78). Ruskin is wrong about this fragility, and it irked some of his women readers, impatient with useless,

superficial educations produced by such refusals to hammer and chisel girls' minds. Feminists in Eliot's and Alcott's circles in the 1860s demanded discipline, application, and purpose in their reading. The epigraph (from Edward Young) to an 1864 article in *Alexandra* on "What to Read and How" reminded its women readers that

> If not to some peculiar end assigned
> Study's the specious trifling of the mind,
> Or is at best a secondary aim,
> A chase for sport alone and not for game.[26]

But Ruskin's lecture also takes account of another side of the untaught young woman's "natural" life of feeling and sensation: her capacity for anger and action, exactly what Ruskin despaired of discovering among the materially focused middle-class young men he considered in his first lecture. In 1858 Ruskin watched a half-clothed young girl at rest from play on a heap of sand in Turin, a vivid image he remembered for the rest of his life. Lithe, brown, black-haired, and bare-limbed, with small, white, "marble-like" breasts, at first seen in a rare moment of stillness in the sun, she is then transformed in the moment of a chance insult from supine form to coiled and springing fierceness.[27] This image haunts "Of Queens' Gardens," too, tempering the marble-like calm (in sleep or death) of Ilaria and Saint Ursula with the frankly sensual appeal of the bare, brown, small-breasted body in the hot sun and sand — sand soft like dust or ash (it mingles in her hair, as if anticipating her death, ashes to ashes, in the familiar language of the burial service, Ruskin notes) — with her quick sensitivity and readiness to fly out against insult. This double vision of the young girl's adamantine purity and calm together with her unapologetic sensuality and quick anger constitutes the unreconciled paradox of womanhood for Ruskin. These are contradictions he cannot afford to give up. If her touch-faculty never flames up to a passion for justice, she will indeed wither and decay in her sheaf like the self-regarding narcissus.

Neither Alcott nor Eliot was willing to urge a like reforming role outside the domestic sphere for real women, much as they agreed with Ruskin's emphasis on women's special capacities and responsibilities as agents of sympathy and moral perception. Dorothea's story is expressly cast in contrast to that of the saints and martyrs of an earlier era: "a new Theresa will hardly have the opportunity of reforming a conventual life, any more than a new Antigone will spend her heroic piety in daring all for the sake of a brother's burial: the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is for ever gone" (821–22). Dorothea's fate is to be "unhistoric," her narrative

suited rather to that lesser, prosaic child of the epic tradition, the domestic novel. By the end of Alcott's novel, even Jo is reconciled to "unromantic facts" (473) and learns to believe, with Meg — in what Alcott must have intended to be read as a pointed allusion to the title of Ruskin's lecture — "that a woman's happiest kingdom is home, her highest honor the art of ruling it — not as a queen, but a wise wife and mother" (384). Ruskin would exhort, shame, and inspire women to something more.

Passionate anger and grief fuel Ruskin's rhetoric, as they did Milton's. That energy is crystallized in the condensed figures of the passages he cites or explicates. Unlocking and seizing the meaning of a difficult figure of speech, Ruskin believed, reveals an emotion that penetrates deeply other details of the work in which it is used. Such reading also releases that energy for the reader — for Ruskin and for his audiences. Reading Ruskin we can apply much the same process he models for us, understanding that the figures he chooses to cite or explicate concentrate deeply felt ideas which in turn shape the allusive language he uses throughout the lectures, and provide the animating energy of a rhetoric he turns to quite different ends than those of Milton or Wordsworth or Tennyson.[28] Ruskin's use of citation, by no means as simple as the call for obedience might suggest, displays the convoluted relations of reading with authority and the countering play of imagination.

Let us return to "blind mouths." Not only anger — outrage at the "insanity of avarice" — is condensed for Ruskin in this figure. Saint Peter's harsh words interrupt Milton's lament for the drowned Edward King. The largely gentle tone of the elegy has earlier been broken by those moving passages where Milton's imagination follows the tossed body of the drowned youth:

> Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding Seas
> Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurled,
> Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
> Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
> Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world.

The "little ease" which "our frail thoughts" dallying "with false surmise" try to interpose is exposed as the pitiful shift it is, and Milton lingers on the particularly disturbing image of the body "weltering to the parching wind" as it is tossed about on the waves. Saint Peter's description of the bodies of hungry sheep "swoln with wind" seems to borrow from this image of the bloated body of King; to imagine that body at "the bottom of the monstrous

world" is by contrast a relief. That is, the horror of the bloated, floating corpse provokes the violence of the words Milton has put into Saint Peter's mouth as he condemns the effects of false shepherds, bad bishops and pastors, on their congregations. Similarly, perhaps, one could say that the violence of Ruskin's words ("harsh and wild" he calls them himself, §31) in these two lectures repeats that of Milton and Milton's Saint Peter, and is fed directly by the violence of Ruskin's revulsion at the dead hopes and ideals of England. In Ruskin's immediate circle he mourns the deaths, past or prospective, of the hopes of youth: the young women at Winnington Hall, or Rose La Touche. Perhaps too he is thinking of Elizabeth Siddal, the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti's dead wife, and of the lost innocence of Rossetti and his fellow painter John Everett Millais, once friends from whom he had parted. Anger and grief at the way painting for the market had killed the promise of the young painters and tempted Rossetti to neglect Lizzie, and fears for the futures of his Winnington pupils or Rose, help to animate Ruskin's denunciations of the "insanity of avarice" in a nation become "a money-making mob . . . despising literature, despising science, despising art, despising nature, despising compassion, and concentrating its soul on Pence." But Ruskin's response to Milton's elegy is, like the elegy itself, articulating more than personal emotion. "Blind mouths" is the figure by which Milton's Saint Peter condemns false authorities in the church as well as the senseless loss of a loved friend. As Ruskin explains, it is an epithet aimed with unerring accuracy at bishops who do not "oversee" and pastors who do not "feed," as they should, according to the etymological roots of both words. It is also an apt figure for what becomes of those whom the false leaders ignore, who should receive both light and food (spiritual but also material) from them, but are allowed instead to feed on what is poison, not nourishment, or to starve until they become "swoln with wind" or corpses "weltering to the parching wind," with unseeing eyes and gaping mouths. Ruskin's quotation of the passage within his own lecture is equally careful. "Blind mouths" becomes the mirroring figure for those Ruskin accuses of greed and negligence, complacent bourgeois Victorians, while at the same time summoning the moving image of their victims, the criminally neglected who die of starvation for lack of both real and cultural sustenance: ignorant and hungry like the cobbler and his young family in their garret, who look up to "kings" and "queens" and are not fed.

As in "Of Kings' Treasuries," so in "Of Queens' Gardens": Ruskin's sympathetic response to aspects of others' texts helps him to grasp undercurrents of conflicting emotions that are not readily apparent. If we give fuller voicing to these cited texts, they can, in turn, illuminate condensed

meanings and release emotional energies in the prose where Ruskin has embedded his borrowings. The passages of poetry Ruskin cites to exemplify the ideal of young womanhood are all poets' praise for what they have lost, not because the young grow up (though that may in fact be what is really mourned here) but, in the fiction of the poem, because they have died. "Vital feelings of delight" — Wordsworth's Lucy's sympathetic participation in the natural vitality of the world around her, the glee of the fawn, the dancing of the rivulets and the beauty born of their murmuring sound, the motions of the storm, even the silence and the calm of mute insensate things — are stilled and chilled in the concluding verse, which Ruskin does not quote:

> Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
> How soon my Lucy's race was run!
> She died, and left to me
> This heath, this calm and quiet scene:
> The memory of what has been,
> And never more will be.

And Tennyson's Maud is evoked by a speaker out of the anguish of his cry, in the germinal poem of the sequence:

> O that 'twere possible
> After long grief and pain
> To find the arms of my true love
> Round me once again! . . .
> A shadow flits before me,
> Not thou, but like to thee:
> Ah, Christ! that it were possible
> For one short hour to see
> The souls we loved, that they might tell us
> What and where they be!

Ruskin's own evocation of the promise of "perfect womanhood," as I have already suggested, is haunted by fears for its vulnerable brevity.

This is only part of what Ruskin has discovered in the poems from which he has chosen to quote, however. As we have seen, he lays down his strictures on women's education and women's "ordinary" roles in order to plead for their extension, for the education of woman for "public work or duty" "as a member of the commonwealth" (§86). Here the terms he uses to describe what that work should be are at first disappointingly familiar: ordering, comforting, adorning. Yet the echoes of the poetry in what he says

suggest otherwise. Ruskin's concluding admonition to women is that they must leave their gardens and tend the "flowers" — "flowers that have thoughts like yours, and lives like yours" — beyond their gates: "Far among the moorlands and the rocks, — far in the darkness of the terrible streets, — these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken: will you never go down to them, nor set them in order . . . nor fence them . . . from the fierce wind?" (§94). Ruskin may be remembering here a poem of Rossetti's that he had once thought too unpleasant in its subject matter for publication in the *Cornhill*.[29] In Rossetti's "Jenny" the eponymous prostitute is figured as just such a broken and bruised flower (though her looks are as yet untouched). The speaker muses on the unacknowledged kinship between her and his cousin Nell, the pure woman, who must never know that Jenny exists. In this complicated, delayed rereading of Rossetti's poem, Ruskin is rejecting the willed ignorance that Rossetti's speaker accepts as necessary for Nell (though not himself) and turning from the troubled, confused meditations of the speaker to what he urges should be the resolving action of Nell. As he had warned earlier in the lecture, the girl who "grows as a flower does" may "fall, and defile her head in the dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life" (§78). Borrowing the urgent pleas of another poetic speaker, the lover in Tennyson's "Maud," he urges women to leave their houses and go out to where "the Lily whispers — I wait" (§94). The Lily? The *lilies* of Ruskin's title refer here, we discover with no little surprise, not simply to the virginal white lily, a figure for the "incorruptible" moral authority of the pure woman. The Lily is also Jenny, or indeed any of the young women at risk through Manchester negligence and greed, their wild beauty soon to reveal the signs of harsh usage while their capacities to feel are already sadly distorted (the speaker of Rossetti's poem imagines Jenny "fond of a kiss and fond of a penny" but of little else). These flowers are more like Rossetti's fire lily, an image of passion according to William Morris's poem on Rossetti's strange 1857 watercolor *The Blue Closet* and invoked as the "love-lily" in a later Rossetti sonnet.[30]

Ruskin is also drawing on the larger narrative of Tennyson's poem for his strange identification of the Lily. The garden into which Tennyson's Maud descends, where not only the lily but also the passionflower waits, rapidly yields to a blood-soaked field as lover and brother (newly rich and crassly vulgar, in the ordinary and Ruskin's special sense of the word) quarrel and fight, leading to the brother's death and the lover's exile. Maud dies in his absence, confirming the lover's sense that the whole world is infected by an "insanity of avarice" (he is himself driven into a madness which leads him

to redeem or perhaps simply to lose himself in the blood-lust of war). Ruskin is urging the Mauds of his address, those would-be "queens," to leave their own gardens for far bloodier fields. They too will find lilies waiting, but these are fire lilies, the virginal lily and the passionflower as one: the slum child, the girl whose beauty may be fragile (she could be lying with her leaves torn and stems broken) but who is also unashamedly sensual and fierce. Like the girl Ruskin watched on the beach in Turin, brown and lithe but also vulgar, her sensibilities are already blunted by poverty and the struggle for mere survival, yet she retains traces of an original capacity for sudden passionate action. And with these "lilies," Ruskin concludes suddenly, protected English lilies should have everything to do. "Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death . . . ? . . . Will you not go down among them? . . . 'The Larkspur listens — I hear, I hear! And the Lily whispers — I wait.' "

These two extraordinary lectures, taken together, constitute Ruskin's effort to understand and accept the nature of authority and of desire. He works to understand that the anger and severity of Milton's Saint Peter and of Milton's God can be compatible with compassion — a compassion that, it may be, is learned through prior submission but also through awakened desire. Such understanding, he is arguing, is what young men (and he himself) must reach in order both to forgive the harshness of authority and to learn to exercise a compassionate form of it: to become "true kings," or leaders who will use their power to make their contributions to the commonwealth, feeding and preserving both bodies and minds. It is an understanding that right reading of literature can help to bring about, Ruskin believes, but such reading requires not only submitting to the hard work of finding out an author's meanings by careful attention to words and figures but doing so with the sympathy that will alone open texts. A young man can be educated in sympathy, he proposes, by falling in love: by submitting, out of a passionately idealizing love, to the guidance of a woman, he will learn to feel. At the same time, the lectures also argue for a parallel education in the demands of adulthood for women: in their case, what is most needed to educate women for positions of authority in the commonwealth, he argues, is the expansion of their ready sentiments and sympathies to the fierceness of compassion, again, it may be, requiring the knowledge of physical desire. But here the logic of Ruskin's arguments founders, and the second lecture threatens to split into two irreconcilable parts. The difficulty perhaps lies less in imagining such an education for young women (the ready feeling of the innocent young girl expanded to a passionate desire for justice

through exposure to adult passions and their effects, including bloody fields and bruised bodies) than in accepting the character of the desire for such young women in men like himself. It would mean acknowledging that they see and desire in the young girl both the pure, calm, remote beauty of a St. Ursula or an Ilaria, and the lithely sensual, potentially passionate responsiveness of the girl on the beach at Turin. Milton's "Lycidas," Wordsworth's Lucy poems, and Tennyson's "Maud" seem to say that the only way to preserve youth in innocence is its untimely death. Ruskin wanted women to grow up to be compassionate "members of the commonwealth," not just sentimental girls or domestically focused wives and mothers. And as in his arguments that young men must grow into the right kind of authority, so here too Ruskin's personal experience lent added urgency to his social convictions. Perhaps for the first time, he very much wanted the object of his own desires not to remain arrested in deathlike childhood but to live, grow up, and become his wife.

Here the poems he reads come to his aid after all. As we have seen, through citation and allusion he constructs a different kind of argument, creating an interpretive "reading" that operates not through the forms of discursive logic but through a language of emotionally charged metaphor and imaginative association more often seen in poems or pictures than in argumentative prose. Ruskin is both a submissive reader, finely attentive to what his authors are saying, however obliquely expressed, and a wildly free one, appropriating the stores of poetic language and its cultural energies for his own uses. By most standards he may seem a very untrustworthy guide to Milton or Wordsworth or Tennyson, yet the words on which he seizes—taken apparently quite out of context, as "readings" partial in every sense —nonetheless, when incorporated into the texture of his own writing, release meanings and reveal connections that neither he nor the authors he cites might be able to think as discursive statement. Following the play of his mind in its imaginative grasp and associative reuse of others' words we watch Ruskin enact the kind of reading he urges as an "Open Sesame!" for books. If we can see that his reading serves the needs of his psyche as well as those of his convictions, that may remind us that we too must encounter desires and struggle with authority to find our pleasures in such reading.

NOTES

1. Ruskin was later to defend, with deliberate provocativeness, his book's "old-fashioned" "ideas of higher and lower rank . . . of serene

authority and happy submission; of Riches and Poverty without dispute for their rights, and of Virtue and Vice without confusion of their natures." *The Works of John Ruskin* (Library Edition), ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903–12), 18:51 (from the Preface to the 1882 edition of *Sesame and Lilies*). Future references to this edition will be given by volume and page number in the text. For quotations from the two lectures, citations will refer to section numbers.

2. For example, articles and reports on education for women and for the poor appeared in *Alexandra* issues for September and December 1864, February-April, June, and December 1865. The magazine continued an earlier and better known publication, *The Englishwoman's Journal*, edited by Bessie Rayner Parkes, friend of Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (herself a close friend of George Eliot's) and part of the Langham Place Circle of activists for improvement in women's employment and education in the 1850s and 1860s. Alcott met many of the women in this circle when she visited London in June 1866.

3. For Ruskin's study of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, see his journal entries for the period fall 1862 to spring 1863, when he was living in isolation in Switzerland, and numerous references in *Munera Pulveris*, the latter parts of which were written during this period.

4. Ruskin would also have the State build art galleries and natural history museums in provincial towns and the metropolitan center, undertake the education of its artists as well as the working classes, and continue to support artists through public commissions and the provision of quality materials. For Ruskin's ideas on state support for art and art education, see his 1857 lectures, *A Joy For Ever: The Political Economy of Art* (*Works* 16:9–169), and various letters to newspapers and transcripts of his testimony to Parliamentary commissions in 1857 and 1863 (12:397–414, 13:81–84, 13:539–53, 14:476–89, 19:229–30). These are discussed more fully in my "Ruskin and the Politics of Viewing: Constructing National Subjects," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 18 (1994): 125–46.

5. The greatest student of Ruskin on reading is Marcel Proust, whose translation, notes, and preface to *Sesame and Lilies* were published in 1906. Proust's major quarrel with Ruskin is precisely about the authority Ruskin claimed for good books. Reading, Proust maintained *contra* Ruskin, can never give us wisdom, it can only give us desires; it is not a discipline but an incitement, an impetus to one mind from another. Like Eliot and Alcott through their fictions, Proust both counters and confirms Ruskin's ideas about reading by remembering the pleasures and the physical circumstances of his own reading practices as a boy. I shall take a different ap-

proach, looking in Ruskin's writing for evidence of his reading practices, through which to interpret his claims for reading.

6. For a fuller account of Ruskin's views of reading before and after the late 1850s, see chapter 8 in my *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), particularly pp. 253–67.

7. See Ruskin's autobiography, *Praeterita*, and George Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

8. See David Ellison Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

9. See sections 14–19; *Works* 18:64–69. On the new philology and the OED, see Hans Arsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780–1860* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967). Max Müller's lectures (given at Oxford from the late 1850s) are reprinted in his *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion* (London, 1881). On Max Müller and Victorian mythography, see the introduction and essays in J. B. Bullen, ed., *The Sun Is God: Painting, Literature and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), particularly "'The Sun Is God': Ruskin's Solar Mythology" by Dinah Birch (pp. 109–24) and "Myth and Meta-myth in Max Müller and Walter Pater" by Steven Connor (pp. 199–222); Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, *Ruskin's Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), pp. 41–72; Frank Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and James Kissane, "Victorian Mythology," *Victorian Studies* 6 (1962): 5–28. Dinah Birch has made the most extensive study of Ruskin's relation to this tradition; see her *Ruskin's Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

10. *Works* 4:228–88. See also the chapter entitled "Turnerian Topography" in *Modern Painters* IV (6:27–47).

11. In 1957 Northrup Frye singled out this note for special praise as an example of the kind of systematic, brilliant iconographic reading that critics of the first part of the twentieth century had forgotten how to do; see his *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 9–10. Tim Hilton likewise draws attention to the new, difficult, but remarkable style of the *Munera Pulveris* notes; see his *John Ruskin: The Later Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 34.

12. Quotations from Proust cited here and in the following sentences are taken from Richard Macksey, ed., *Marcel Proust: On Reading Ruskin*, trans. Jean Autret, William Burford, and Phillip J. Wolfe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 143–44.

13. For other examples of Ruskin's unusual uses of footnotes, appendices, and typography to embody the associative play of his thoughts, see the final chapters of *Modern Painters* V, *Munera Pulveris*, and *Fors Clavigera*, in particular.

14. Dinah Birch discusses Ruskin's efforts to construct new bases of authority for himself in the mid-1860s in "*The Ethics of the Dust:* Ruskin's Authorities," *Prose Studies* 12 (1989): 147–58, and "Ruskin's 'Womanly Mind,' " *Essays in Criticism* 38 (1988): 308–24. Birch points out that Ruskin had always preferred to present himself as an interpreter of authority located elsewhere (God, Nature, Turner, his own father), but that in *Sesame and Lilies* and *Ethics of the Dust* the Evangelical God and Ruskin's father, John James Ruskin, are gradually replaced by the figure of a "Personal Creative Power" given female forms. Ruskin's unique creation blends the Egyptian goddess Neith with the Greek Athena and the Christian Holy Spirit (see also Weltman, *Ruskin's Mythic Queen*). Neith-Athena allows Ruskin to experiment in *Ethics of the Dust* with a looser style and more playful assumption of paternal authority (as "the Old Lecturer" to an audience of young girls at the Winnington School). Birch and Weltman are right to see that in *Sesame and Lilies*, where Ruskin takes his authority from that of the good books he interprets (and to which he urges readers to submit), a new and less restrictively gendered image of authority and authorship is also emerging that will affect Ruskin's written and oral style profoundly. (See also Seth Koven's essay in this volume.) Ruskin's doubts and resentments about the old and largely masculine authorities on which he had once relied also had implications for how readers should read, authorizing, I think, the looser play of mind Ruskin's writing increasingly exhibited (and demands) but also giving a far larger role to the "feminine" quality of sympathy.

15. Quotations in this and the preceding two sentences are from *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 4:467–68.

16. *George Eliot Letters*, 4:425.

17. Ruskin did not encourage novel-reading, however, for girls or boys. Contemporaries tended to worry especially about the effect of novel-reading on the presumably greater and more vulnerable sensibilities of girls, and to assume that girls were major consumers of fiction. See Kate Flint, *The Victorian Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press for Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. part II. For Ruskin's insistence on accuracy in determining the meaning of words, see his advice to his girl students at Winnington Hall in his many letters on their Bible reading, in

The Winnington Letters: John Ruskin's Correspondence with Margaret Alexis Bell and the Children at Winnington Hall, ed. Van Akin Burd (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969).

18. For the latter, see his warnings in *Winnington Letters*, for example: "if anything I have said has appeared to you to explain anything mystically or unliterally — and you see any more clear or more literal interpretation to be possible — quit mine instantly and keep to the literal one; and above all, get into the habit of solving speculative difficulties by conduct. God does not mean us to think so much as we usually do. He means us to work much more — and half our religious errors arise from our dwelling selfishly on our own religious sensations, instead of forgetting them in the active services of life" (p. 188).

19. Although I have found no direct references to *Sesame and Lilies* in Eliot's or Alcott's published works, letters, or diaries, there is considerable indirect and circumstantial evidence to support the conclusion that they would have known the lectures. By the early 1860s, both writers knew and admired Ruskin's writings on art. In the middle and later years of that decade, both had close ties to progressive feminist circles in which women's education (and John Stuart Mill's proposal to include them in an expansion of the franchise) were frequent topics of discussion. "Of Queens' Gardens," with its irritating views on women's education pronounced by a famous and influential contemporary and included in his most popular book, would almost certainly have been known to the members of these circles. Eliot, moreover, refers to Ruskin's views on women's education in a letter to Barbara Bodichon of 1868 (though not to *Sesame and Lilies* specifically), quoted below. Alcott appears to allude to the title, "Of Queens' Gardens," in one passage of *Little Women* (see below).

For Alcott's account of her stay in May-June 1866 with Mrs. Peter Taylor (an active supporter of Mill's suffrage bill, also a friend and correspondent of Eliot's in the same period) during a month-long visit to London, and her introduction to Mrs. Taylor's feminist friends, see *The Journals of Louisa May Alcott*, ed. Joel Myerson, Daniel Shealy, and Madeleine B. Stern (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), p. 151. Among those Alcott met at Mrs. Taylor's was Barbara Bodichon, Eliot's closest woman friend and herself an active supporter of education and employment for women. For Eliot's correspondence in 1867–68 with Bodichon, Emily Davies (whose education projects Eliot supported), and Taylor on women's education and suffrage, see *The George Eliot Letters*, 4:196, 366–67, 390, 399, 401, 425, 467–68, 493–94.

20. As Flint's thorough study of Victorian advice manuals and articles

on women's reading in *The Woman Reader* makes clear, most of the positive good attributed to reading for and by women was associated with gaining knowledge, whereas the dangers of reading were usually associated with pleasure (particularly in reading fiction).

21. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 28. Subsequent references will be given by page number in the text.

22. Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*, ed. Valerie Alderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 38. Subsequent references will be given by page number in the text.

23. Eliot insists, here agreeing with feminist friends like Barbara Bodichon, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Mrs. Peter Taylor, and Emily Davies, that women approach books with as serious a need for knowledge as men. Her character Dorothea's unsatisfying education is the result of Mr. Brooke's refusal to take women's minds seriously, though he is himself a memorable example of the dangers of flitting from one topic to another. Will Ladislaw, who very soon appears as a better choice of husband than Casaubon, at first seems unlikely to help Dorothea satisfy her soul-hunger for knowledge because he approaches his own education without application or a goal. Indeed the young Will seems rather to be following, on a larger scale, Ruskin's prescription for young women's education, browsing through the libraries and galleries of Europe, until he enters Dorothea's service and acquires a guide and a goal. Will's ready sympathies in art, literature, and life provide, however, a welcome relief from Casaubon's dry and unimaginative pedantry, and perhaps a necessary corrective to Dorothea's painful if unfocused intensity. (Her pragmatic sister Celia has little patience with Dorothea's myopic intensities and the discomforts they cause.)

24. But women may turn to other women for just this stability: or so Alcott's and Eliot's novels suggest. Marmee fulfills this function for her daughters (as she is also their example for how to act on moral perception, both in the home and in the world). And Dorothea's finest moment comes in her embrace of Lydgate's wife, Rosamond, when the power of her feeling inspires Rosamond to a higher vision of conduct — not, certainly, in Dorothea's final inability to martyr herself for Casaubon's sake. Compare Dinah's embrace of Hester in Eliot's *Adam Bede*.

25. Kate Millett — in the most influential and earliest of modern feminist indictments of Ruskin's lecture — contrasts Ruskin's reactionary sentimentalism with John Stuart Mill's radical egalitarianism in her *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 88–108. For objections to her reading, see Deborah Epstein Nord's introduction and Seth Koven's essay

in this volume; Dinah Birch, "Ruskin's 'Womanly Mind' "; and David Sonstroem, "Millett Versus Ruskin: A Defense of Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens,' " *Victorian Studies* 20 (1977): 283–97. For additional discussion of contemporary responses to "Of Queens' Gardens," see Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder, *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837–1883* (1983; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 1:77–102.

26. "What to Read, and How," *Alexandra* (September 1864): 263 (unsigned article).

27. Ruskin describes her first in a letter to his father; see *John Ruskin: Letters from the Continent, 1858*, ed. John Hayman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p. 171. His 1865 retelling of this incident in *The Cestus of Aglaia* (*Works*, 19:83) includes the "ashes to ashes" comment cited below.

28. My account here uses language borrowed from Paul Walton's insightful account of the way Ruskin understood visual or verbal images to work within a larger composition (he is referring to Ruskin's "imagination penetrative" of *Modern Painters* II). Walton uses it to describe Ruskin's drawings of the same period, but it is applicable to his reading practices and his own prose writing, particularly in passages of allusive and emotionally resonant rhetoric. See Paul Walton, *Master Drawings by John Ruskin: Selections from the David Thomson Collection* (London: Pilkington Press, 2000), p. 42.

29. See Ruskin's letter to Rossetti in *Works*, 36:341–42.

30. Rossetti may be recalling the "fire lilies" of E. T. A. Hoffman's tale of fantastic passionate love, *Der Goldene Topf*. Jerome McGann suggests this source for the "love-lily" in Rossetti's 1869 sonnet of that title; if so, it seems a plausible inspiration for the red lily in Morris's poem on the earlier watercolor as well. See McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game That Must Be Lost* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 117. Ruskin certainly knew Rossetti's watercolor and Morris's poem. In 1864–65, moreover, he was increasingly dismayed at Rossetti's embrace of a more sensual art and his association with the young Swinburne, whose breathless poetry celebrating passion both shocked and greatly impressed Ruskin. Botanically speaking, there are, of course, as many varieties of red, yellow, and orange lily as there are of white.

Of *Sesame and Lilies*

EDUCATION IN A HUMANE SOCIETY

JAN MARSH

When Ruskin delivered the original lectures that make up *Sesame and Lilies*, he entered into a current and spirited discussion about appropriate educational aims and practices for children of both sexes, a debate in which other Victorian writers and social critics, such as Harriet Martineau and Matthew Arnold, were also involved. Considering "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens" together makes Ruskin's contribution to these issues more clearly apparent, as it also enables us to see the unexpected lines of argument opened up by his discursive—and in some sense—deceptive prose. In *Sesame and Lilies*, his attack in "Of Kings' Treasuries" on the conventional masculine ideals of sporting and military prowess, pursuit of conspicuous wealth and social position is matched by a defense of traditional feminine values of service and altruism in "Of Queens' Gardens." Although many of Ruskin's female readers and protegées drew strength from his support for reform of women's education and from his endorsement of their expanded public roles, his opposition to emerging demands for female independence and self-realization still constitutes the conservative core of his argument in *Sesame and Lilies*.

At the start of "Of Kings' Treasuries," which was originally delivered as a speech in Manchester in 1864, Ruskin states plainly that his title is a "slight mask": the subject is not royal exchequers but "the treasures hidden in books." He will therefore offer "a few simple thoughts about reading" at a time of expanding educational provision and in relation to the avowed occasion of his address, which was to raise funds for a public library.[1] Though true, this statement is not complete, for books and reading are themselves a slight mask, concealing subsidiary themes. Of these, the key theme is the proper education of boys, or (to remove yet another veil) John

Ruskin's critique of contemporary masculinity. This helps to explain why a text devoted to promoting public libraries, museums, art galleries, and gardens, which loops through a dozen distinct yet interlinked topics from etymology to literary criticism, from episcopal duties to international affairs, from the baseness of public curiosity to the building of tourist hotels, is published in tandem with "Of Queens' Gardens" on the education of girls and John Ruskin's notions of ideal femininity. The essays are twinned, and the question as to why "Of Kings' Treasuries" approaches its theme less directly than "Of Queens' Gardens" is worth pondering. The historical context of the original lectures is also worth consideration if we obey Ruskin's own instruction to "be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not yours" (§13).

Both lectures were composed at the end of a year in which secondary level (high school) education had been placed on the British national agenda through the establishment of a governmental Schools Inquiry Commission to investigate the provision available for middle-class boys.[2] The commission would not report for another few years, but the topic was widely discussed in the press, notably by Matthew Arnold, who in the autumn of 1864 floated the notion of state-supported high schools, such as existed in France.[3] The shape of the problem — the serious need for inexpensive and reliable schools for boys in all regions — was ably outlined by Harriet Martineau in the October issue of the *Cornhill Magazine*, a journal read by Ruskin.[4] Invited to speak in Manchester, he took the opportunity to make his first venture into the national debate; although, having begun as an art critic, Ruskin had broadened his remit as cultural sage over the years to include political economy and social relations, he had not hitherto pronounced on education.

"Of Kings' Treasuries" was addressed to an audience at Rusholme Town Hall, one of the inner suburbs of Manchester.[5] The following afternoon Ruskin spoke to the boys of Manchester Grammar School at the invitation of the principal, who had been in the Rusholme audience.[6] Introducing his guest, the principal remarked that the boys might not appreciate the value of what they were about to hear, but it would linger in their minds and one day they would understand Mr. Ruskin's books the better for hearing him speak. Probably because the grammar school occasion was an informal talk rather than an hour-long lecture, instead of repeating "Of Kings' Treasuries" Ruskin gave a short homily on the conventional virtues of serious study and a good conscience — "that free, open front which fears no man's eye."[7] He also confessed his diffidence in addressing boys, as it was "long since" he had been among them. Educated at home, he had in

fact never been a schoolboy, at either an ancient grammar or an aristocratic public school, and had no experience of boys' rough and tumble.[8]

The previous evening, one may infer, his audience had been drawn from the same bourgeois business class that sent their sons to Manchester Grammar School, and the second paragraph of "Of Kings' Treasuries" obliquely targets this class by alluding to parents whose wish is for their sons to receive an education that will result in social advancement.[9] This Ruskin takes to mean becoming distinguished in life not only through wealth but also through social position and applause — the eminence of fame or prestige — so that even a cleric wishes to become a bishop primarily so he may be deferentially addressed as "My Lord." "We want to get into good society," Ruskin adds, "not that we may have it, but that we may be seen in it; and our notion of its goodness depends primarily on its conspicuousness" (§5). Immediately, this raises the question — for the contemporary audience — as to whether desire for social distinction lay behind their own educational hopes for their sons, and behind the call for a governmental commission aimed at raising school standards. If so, the lecturer's words plainly imply, this is the wrong motivation for both individuals and the state.

To the good citizens of Manchester, who were not members of the aristocratic or intellectual elite, social eminence was linked to the honest pursuit of wealth that, earlier in 1864, Ruskin had denounced to a similar audience in Bradford, across the Pennines, as "the Goddess of Getting-on" or "Britannia of the Market."[10] Business success was in turn closely associated with what was then called "Manchester policy," to denote the free market economics of laissez-faire and financial self-interest based on the practice and power of that booming city, where "everything must pay" and commercial freedom was vigorously defended. At this period the industrialists of Manchester notoriously ignored antipollution legislation intended to curb manufacturing emissions, in bold and successful protest against "interference" in their affairs. Ruskin remarked at the start of his Rusholme lecture that he "always came to Manchester in a nervous state of mind" because his audience belonged to "a most powerful city" — one which, through its commerce, would influence the destiny of Britain and the world for the next hundred years.[11]

Additionally, Manchester was a byword for materialist ethics and cultural philistinism. It had no fashionable elite living in elegant town houses, no great cathedral or ancient university. Leading Mancunian citizens prided themselves on plain speaking and blunt, practical, Utilitarian attitudes,

somewhat in the style of the Coketown residents in Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854). In *North and South* (1855) Elizabeth Gaskell gave a brief account of mercantile views of education in the city of Milton-Northern (based on her knowledge of Manchester), where the "prevalent and well-founded notion" was that: "To make a lad into a good tradesman he must be caught young, and acclimated to the life of the mill, or office, or warehouse. If he were sent to even the Scotch universities, he came back unsettled for commercial pursuits; how much more so if he went to Oxford or Cambridge? So most of the manufacturers placed their sons in sucking situations at fourteen or fifteen years of age, unsparingly cutting away all off-shoots in the direction of literature or high mental cultivation, in hopes of throwing the whole strength and vigour of the plant into commerce."[12] Like those educators today who invoke nonmaterial aims and benefits, while all around the wider society stresses financial success and "getting on," so Ruskin's words were intended to rebuke men who saw education as a means to money and position, rather than of value in itself.

As well as the provision, the content of contemporary education was a matter for national discussion. As Gaskell's words make clear, men in industry and commerce — often self-made and self-educated — tended to scorn the traditional curriculum which in both schools and universities was heavily weighted toward Latin and Greek, of no practical business use. Ruskin's intervention in this debate thus partly flatters its original audience by stating that "a false Latin quantity" ought not to arouse a patronizing smile and that knowing ancient languages was not essential to a good education (§§16, 19). But only partly, for the intervening paragraphs plainly imply that such knowledge is essential for the proper understanding of words. And all Ruskin's arguments are in favor of education that leads "in the direction of literature or high mental cultivation," rather than toward practical or vocational learning.

Beyond this issue of high culture versus commerce lay the wider demand in Britain for a better-skilled population, which eventually resulted in the inclusion of compulsory schooling in the 1870 Education Act, and the concomitant emphasis in trade and industry for technical training for boys. And beyond the immediate educational context lay the contemporary belief in individualism and competitive endeavor, as popularized by Samuel Smiles, whose *Self-Help* (1859) was an effective manifesto for mid-Victorian economic man, and may have influenced Ruskin's thoughts. Alongside its life histories of numerous successful men, *Self-Help* contains typical admonitions:

> Every youth should be made to feel that his happiness and well-doing in life must necessarily rely mainly on himself and the exercise of his own energies, rather than upon the help or patronage of others. Comfort in worldly circumstances is a condition which every man is justified in striving to attain by all worthy means.[13]
>
> The respect which our fellow-men entertain for us in no slight degree depends upon the manner in which we exercise the opportunities which present themselves for our honourable advancement in life. . . . Money represents many things of great value; not only food, clothing and household satisfaction, but personal self-respect and independence.[14]

Ruskin's castigation of conspicuous financial and social advancement was thus a critique of prevailing wisdom. But while some of his audience may have welcomed a rich man's attack on the pursuit of material wealth, the businessmen of Manchester, Bradford, and other prosperous cities could well have replied that their lecturer's sentiments were all very fine, but how did he suppose their sons would be able to cultivate the best minds through reading the best books, and so on, unless first provided with economic comfort and security? In the dialogic manner invited by Ruskin's rhetorical style, his audiences could have retorted that he was able thus to admonish them only because his own father had ensured his son's economic prosperity.

This is true. Ruskin owed his ability to pontificate to the strenuous efforts of his own father, a self-made Smilesian businessman who, having started with no capital and large debts, had successfully amassed a fortune, shrewdly invested. Moreover, Ruskin's attack on the pursuit of conspicuous advancement followed his realization that eminence was precisely what his parents had sought for him when purchasing his expensive education at Oxford.[15] His father's idea, he later wrote, was that he "should enter at college into the best society, take all the prizes every year, and a double first to finish with; marry Lady Clare Vere de Vere, write poetry as good as Byron's only pious," and end up as archbishop.[16] And this was hardly exaggeration: when Ruskin was ten, his father famously wrote to him of the duties entailed by his evident talents, saying he might well be destined "to enlighten a People by your Wisdom and to adorn an age by your Learning."[17] Not long before *Sesame and Lilies*, moreover, Ruskin noted bitterly that paternal ambitions had not lessened, only grown more worldly, claiming that his father would now "give half his fortune to make me a member of Parliament, if he thought I would talk . . . and was in all the papers."[18] His advice to the young men of Manchester (and to their fathers and teachers)

not to pursue wealth, social status, and personal advancement was therefore also a reproach to his own parent. In declaring that "having no true work, we pour our whole masculine energy into the false business of money-making," the words of "Kings' Treasuries" subversively urged the lads of Manchester to repudiate their fathers' values, just as Ruskin himself had done (his father having signally failed to instill in his son the desire to make even more money).

Ruskin's mother, equally famously, had consecrated her son to God, so it is no surprise that in the manner of a secular sermon, *Sesame and Lilies* set out to combat the practical worldly wisdom of the day. Less concerned than Arnold or Martineau with the structures or forms of education, "Of Kings' Treasuries" looks to its aims as a moral lecture on the true masculine virtues that should be imparted through education and the vices to be rejected. As we read through the text, we learn that the virtues include the honest desire to do useful work; the pursuit of knowledge and truth through study, leading to wisdom; the cultivation of disciplined feeling and sympathy; and respect for literature, art, science, and the environment. These should be the goals of all teaching and reading. (Samuel Smiles, incidentally, dismissed "experience gathered from books" as but "of the nature of *learning*." By contrast, experience from life was *wisdom.*)[19]

False masculine values, according to Ruskin, consist of avarice and envy, the selfish desire to make money and — worst of all — to spend it on base amusements such as hunting, horse-racing, entertainment, luxurious living, tourist travel, and sports that make a playground of sublime Nature. "Alas!" Ruskin declaims, "it is the narrowness, selfishness, minuteness, of your sensation that you have to deplore in England at this day; — sensation which spends itself in bouquets and speeches: in revellings and junketings; in sham fights and gay puppet shows" (§29).

With its rhetorical repetitions, the style of the lecture is that of a commination, or cursing, of modern Mammonism and dumbing-down, cast in the preacherly manner that came so naturally to Ruskin and to other men of his day, notably his hero Thomas Carlyle. We have despised literature, Ruskin continues, in favor of conspicuous consumption of horses and wine instead of books and libraries. We have despised science in favor of field-sports (§§32, 33). You, he says (mark the transition and the attached footnote attacking Free Trade policies, identified with the Manchester School), have despised art in favor of making money and shooting gamebirds. Moreover, you have despised and despoiled nature throughout Europe by building railroads and hotels and rampaging through quiet valleys (§§34, 35).

It is worth noting that the image adduced in support of the last point is an

emblem of boys' perennial preference for sport rather than study: a group of schoolboys in one of Turner's landscape views, shying stones at a pile of schoolbooks (§41). To this was added, in the preface to the second edition, an attack on a band of English and German lads boisterously destroying Alpine roses. Like many others before and since, Ruskin was evidently dismayed by the violent behavior of adolescent males, or "modern youth," wishing that physical vigor were tempered by "courtesy and reverence . . . for men and things."[20] The same anxiety lay behind the promotion of football, hockey, rowing, and other competitive sports in British boys' schools.

Ruskin was probably wrong to surmise that those of his audience who subscribed to Smilesian views of economic self-advancement were disposed to spend their wealth on horseflesh and high living, for blunt Northern manufacturers were apt to scorn the profligate amusements they attributed to the landed classes; but there is a familiar pattern whereby the second generation — the sons of self-made men — *spend* their inheritance in such manner. Forcefully, "Of Kings' Treasuries" advises its audience to choose other pleasures. As Ruskin acknowledged in the preface of 1882, *Sesame and Lilies* was addressed to young people in "the upper or undistressed middle classes" who had choices in life. Many (of the boys at least) would one day hold responsible positions in the world; it therefore mattered whether they spent their time studying Plato or playing tennis.[21] They could do both, he allowed, so long as the athletic did not drive out the intellectual.

There was more, or rather worse. The businessmen of Manchester, the essay implies, believe theirs is a great nation because it is wealthy and powerful, like themselves. But just as the Manchester men were hardly gentlemen (being still engaged in commerce), so through their influence the nation was in danger of being dragged down to a low level, obsessed with sensational crimes and scandal but indifferent to social evils. According to Ruskin, self-interest made them tolerate the imprisonment of juveniles, the execution of those considered imbeciles, slum housing and homelessness — all, as it happens, matters of public concern today. Internationally, too, self-satisfaction made his fellow citizens indifferent to foreign conflicts and atrocities such as the Russian suppression of Polish patriotism or the American Civil War (both topical events in 1864), except insofar as the latter affected the price of cotton — another dig at a city whose prosperity was based on textiles and where the "Manchester School" opposed all political intervention overseas.[22] Most damningly, through the materialist pursuit of self-interest, people and nation made mockery of Christian com-

passion, condemning the poor to squalor, hunger, and ignorance. Those unable to "get on" were effectively left to starve—the lesson of the long inquest report from the *Morning Post* inserted into the published version of "Of Kings' Treasuries" and printed in red to mark its importance (§36).[23] Thus Ruskin connects educational matters with national and international politics, all of which fall within the male purview. Implicitly, he is asking his audience, his readers, to consider the role of education in building a humane society.

In place of commercial and self-interest, masculine education should promote individual and civic valuation of literature, science, art, and the environment, with accompanying public expenditure on libraries, museums, community gardens, and parks. "Of Kings' Treasuries" therefore insists on valuing culture in its widest sense, to include the sciences as well as the arts, the cultivation of sensibility and the Romantic response to nature. In this respect it may be read alongside Matthew Arnold's more famous text, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), with its vivid depiction of the British upper, middle, and working classes as Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. Like Ruskin, Arnold castigated those "nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day [who] believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich," and similarly saw education as the solution to social ills.[24] As a schools inspector, Arnold was better positioned to act in this cause.

Whether over economic growth, the need for "pure" research, or state subsidy for the arts, similar debates continue, shaping public policies in democratic nations. In mid-nineteenth-century Britain, the culture/commerce opposition also held a gendered dimension, arising from the commonplace wisdom of the time that located men on the practical, material, instrumental side of the debate (and of life), and women on the spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic side. Victorian gender prescriptions figured men as industrious breadwinners and competitors in the amoral, economic realm, with women as decorative trophies and/or gentle, spiritual guardians of men's souls. Thus, in a division that long prevailed, the male role was concerned with "hard" matters: finance, business, politics, facts, the female sphere with "soft" areas: family, fashion, arts, and feeling.

Although culture was by no means an exclusively female arena, to contest the association between women and the homelier arts was to some extent to argue for the "feminization" of men, as Seth Koven discusses in the essay that follows. This would have been an issue of anxiety to many men who, owing to the emergent demands for women's access to education

and legal equity, already felt their traditional privileges were threatened. "Of Kings' Treasuries" only indirectly approaches this theme, but a sentence in "Of Queens' Gardens" does advocate that boys should "learn things in a womanly sort of way," seeking those disciplines of mind that will "be afterwards fittest for social service" (§74). Moreover, the man who truly advances in life is not he who accumulates wealth and power but he "whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker" (§42).

Although "Of Kings' Treasuries" thus valorizes social service, or service to the community, it does not offer much overt advice on the subject of leadership — a topic that often seemed the keystone of Victorian boys' education. In the years after mid-century, Britain increasingly elected to rule other countries directly, through its armed forces and colonial officers. The male role models Ruskin here proposes are unusual: the urban police officer patrolling the "black lanes" (the impoverished urban neighborhoods), the sailor, the quiet student, the laborer fulfilling his task like a cart-horse (§38). Somewhat obliquely, however, another masculine model is advanced earlier in the lecture, where bishops and pastors are told to know and minister to their flocks, especially those in the inner cities who are as physically and spiritually destitute as the characters in Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, "down in that back street . . . knocking each other's teeth out" (§22). Placed within the digressive attack on contemporary churchmen desiring "power rather than light," prompted by the quotation from Milton's "Lycidas," this account of true religious leadership is an indirect tribute, one may conjecture, to those in the audience devoted to social and moral improvement in the black lanes of Manchester. These individuals no doubt included Ruskin's "good plain-spoken friend Canon Anson," who had arranged (and presumably chaired) the lecture.[25] For, as in all Britain's major cities, there were churchmen of this persuasion in Manchester, among them the Rev. William Gaskell, the novelist's husband. Ruskin was closely acquainted with several such social reformers. Moreover, for some years now — certainly since the publication of *Unto This Last* in 1860 — he was effectively ranged on their side in the battle against poverty, squalor, and ignorance.

In contrast to such role models, with the discussion of "true kings" Ruskin launches an emphatic attack on those traditionally set before young men. Like commercial success, military leadership was an admired masculine goal. Throughout the nineteenth century, British boys were dressed in miniature uniforms, with toy weapons to match, and fed a cultural diet that glorified battle and victories, from Trafalgar and Waterloo onward.

Both sexes, indeed, were schooled to revere individual "courage" and collective exploits wherever British forces were engaged: in Crimea, China, India, and Africa. The early 1860s were additionally notable for an intense period of militarization without war, in response to a perceived threat from the old enemy, France, which led to a national volunteer militia movement.

With satirical eloquence, "Of Kings' Treasuries" pours scorn on those who reverence rulers bent on enlarging their domains through military conquest. In cadences that echo Carlyle (whose *Heroes and Hero-worship,* published in 1840, is an antecedent text) such monarchs are "people-eating" and their armies "a large species of marsh mosquito, with bayonet proboscis and . . . glittering mists of midge companies" (§43). Imagine, says preacher Ruskin, that kings pursued wisdom instead of empire; suppose that "we should bring up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise!" and train "armies of thinkers, instead of armies of stabbers!" What an absurd idea, "that the wealth of the capitalists of civilised nations should ever come to support literature instead of war!" (§46).

In personal terms, John Ruskin was hardly a pacifist. He supported the need for national defense and admired the military leaders of his era—thanks perhaps to his own bookish boyhood in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. In 1862 he wrote warmly of the "joy in seeing good fighting," explaining that although, when "rightly trained," boys and men dislike fighting of any kind, "when it is to be done, [they] like to see it done well." He himself would have "liked" to see the heroic charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, during the Crimean War (the subject of Tennyson's famous poem). However, he would not have enjoyed watching gladiators at Rome, because the cause or reason for fighting was all important.[26] From this came the hope advanced in *Sesame and Lilies* that war should be waged only for necessary (and indeed noble) ends, rather than commercial or chauvinist gains, by wise rulers, who hated both fighting and ruling, and sought only to guide. Furthermore, the money currently spent on "defense" should instead fund the national libraries, art museums, and public gardens. And thus "Of Kings' Treasuries" returns to its opening theme: the best books available to everyone at all times (§§48, 49).

Ruskin returned to the issue of masculine leadership at the start of "Of Queens' Gardens," where "kingly" attributes are briefly outlined and it is confidently asserted that the well-directed reading commended in "Of Kings' Treasuries" will lead to "power over the ill-guided and illiterate," enabling the educated man to "guide or to raise" the ignorant and undisciplined (§§51–52). It is not accidental that this definition of "kingship"

or leadership is close to the role Ruskin had elected to play himself, as moral counselor to the nation. Nevertheless, this mentor or school-prefect ideal is relatively standard fare, endorsing the views put forward by many headmasters, including the famous Thomas Arnold of Rugby, and recently popularized in Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and F. W. Farrar's *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858). Despite Ruskin's unfamiliarity with the inside of British boys' schools, he numbered both Hughes and Farrar among his acquaintances, and their books contribute to the educational context of his own lecture.

If *Sesame and Lilies* was bought largely by adults as an elevating text to give to young people, its popularity may have derived from its spirit of "do as I say, not as I do." It enabled adults to endorse — or at least pay lip service to — views they knew did not generally prevail in practice. Homilies notwithstanding, as both *Tom Brown* and *Eric* make plain, in actuality most British boys' schools retained what can be dubbed historic masculinist values, with endemic bullying, ritual as well as casual violence, and widespread anti-intellectualism. Indeed these problems were one of the concerns behind the Schools Inquiry Commission. Moreover, coupled with the strong emphasis on competitive games and conspicuous success in the world, the "best" schools of the day were as geared to "getting on" materially and socially as were the manufacturers and merchants of Manchester.

Strikingly absent from the critique of contemporary masculinity amidst the discursive views on boys' education in "Of Kings' Treasuries" is any discussion of men's role within the family. Briefly, a glance in this direction was added with the new Preface to *Sesame and Lilies*, where readers were instructed that every home should contain at least some good books. Therefore, wrote Ruskin, "I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily — however slowly — increasing, series of books for use through life" (§4, 1871 Preface). Behind this advice lies the unstated assumption of the masculine duty to maintain for the household. It was unstated because often taken for granted: there was little debate in Victorian Britain over men's financial responsibility for the family unit; it was, for the most part, an uncontested element in the definition of masculinity. In the middle classes, wives did not expect to contribute financially, and husbands unable to provide for "their" womenfolk were regarded as failures. The loss of status incurred by a man whose wife or daughter was obliged to take paid employment is one cause of the controversy generated by women's demands for access to profes-

sional training. Accompanying the male duty to provide was the responsibility to rule, within the home.

If Ruskin's views on masculinity in "Of Kings' Treasuries" all related to the public spheres of commerce and politics and not at all to those of personal life, his ideas about girls' education in "Of Queens' Gardens" were offered wholly within the framework of personal and familial relationships. This second lecture was delivered a week later at a comparable fund-raising occasion, this time on behalf of a parish school in Ancoats, one of Manchester's poorest districts, as Ruskin told his mother, at the request of the rector, Rev. Richson.[27] The address was delivered in Manchester's city hall, a more prestigious location than Rusholme, but it presumably attracted a similar audience of worthy citizens and their wives. Announced in the press as "Mr. Ruskin on the Education of Women," the lecture began significantly by asserting that "we cannot consider how education may fit [women] for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty." The topic under analysis, then, is not the structure or content of girls' schooling but the approved model of femininity. Moreover, "Of Queens' Gardens" inquires only into "the relations of the womanly to the manly nature" and "what womanly mind and virtue are . . . *with respect to man's*" and into "*their relations, rightly accepted*" (§54–55; emphasis added).

Contemporary manhood is thus discussed without reference to women; but contemporary womanhood can only be defined in dependent relation to men. Such was standard practice throughout the century, it being almost universal to discuss "women's issues" not on their own merits but always as they affected existing relations between the sexes. What could otherwise be considered a simple matter — say, curriculum content in girls' schools — was typically entwined with and obscured by opinion on the current state of gender relations within the family and society. Inevitably, therefore, Ruskin's intervention in the debate on girls' education also covered the respective roles of wives and husbands. This too is a reflection of prevailing assumptions that whether or not all individuals married (and a considerable proportion of both sexes in nineteenth-century Britain remained single), heterosexual lifelong marriage was the desired aim for all, and for society.

The currency of "the woman question" enabled Ruskin to approach the theme of femininity far more directly than he could discuss the subject of contemporary masculinity, which was not understood as an arguable issue. Given that femininity was a topic on which every man was a self-appointed expert (as Ruskin noted, with some exaggeration, "there never was a time

when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question"), the media of the day carried regular items, usually conservative in tenor (§52). Two representative examples in the months before "Of Queens' Gardens" — "The Rights of Woman" in *Blackwood's* (August 1862) and "Strong-minded Women" in *Fraser's* (November 1863) — are both couched in the supposedly humorous tone that served to mock as well as repudiate. Insulting gallantry was another familiar mode on which "Of Queens' Gardens" appears to draw. By contrast, women's views were less often heard. They had typically less access to the media and were doubly inhibited by the traditional ban on "speaking out" in public. This was somewhat ironic, since it was mainly women's dissatisfaction with prevailing laws and customs that brought gender issues into public discourse.

During the 1850s one major demand in the campaign for gender equality (which until the 1970s was still being contested in the Western world) focused on women's access to education and professional training. Alongside the national debate over how to improve boys' schools, therefore, ran another, distinct, argument over the basic aims and form of female education. It was widely agreed that girls' schooling was inferior to boys' in quantity and quality, particularly in the middle and upper classes. The majority of girls were taught at home, with perhaps a year or two at a small private school in their teens comparable to the "young ladies' academy" described by Thackeray in the opening pages of *Vanity Fair* (1847). Here, after studying music, French, needlework, religion, and deportment, a young gentlewoman was deemed worthy to occupy a fitting position in polished and refined society — and ready for the marriage market. In such schools the aim of education was to teach moral attitudes, accomplishments, and agreeable manners, rather than to cram girls' brains with information.[28] As a result, girls acquired less knowledge than boys of math, science, and the classics, which long remained a male preserve, and were indeed discouraged from further learning on the grounds that wives should not know more than their husbands; women with intellectual abilities were pejoratively labeled "blue-stockings." Beyond school, women were excluded from the historic professions of law, medicine, and religion, and generally denied access to business careers.[29] The newly opening professions in nursing, teaching, and welfare work were effectively extensions of their domestic role.

At mid-century, pioneer attempts began with the establishment of schools offering serious study for teenage girls, two of the earliest being North London Collegiate School (1850) and Cheltenham Ladies College (1854), whose respective principals Frances Buss and Dorothea Beale were

famously said not to feel "Cupid's darts."[30] At first, most of these new schools were modest in size and aims; although favoring a curriculum more akin to that offered to boys, they also shared many more traditional beliefs regarding the lower mental capacities of women, and the importance of "ladylike" morals and manners. Few experts, for example, argued that boys' and girls' schooling should be identical, much less combined. "The aim of education is to fit children for the position in life which they are thereafter to occupy," wrote influential educator Elizabeth Sewell in 1865 (in unconscious or deliberate echo of "Of Queens' Gardens"). "Boys are to be sent out into the world to buffet with its temptations, to mingle with bad and good, to govern and direct. . . . Girls are to dwell in quiet homes, amongst few friends; to exercise a noiseless influence, to be submissive and retiring."[31] There was therefore no way that girls should attend large, bustling, competitive schools. Moreover, even serious schools had to cater to parents who held that rigorous education was at least wasted on and at worst injurious to young women, owing to the "delicate" nature of their health around puberty.[32] Since men did not want "clever" wives, too much learning might also harm women's marriage prospects. Furthermore, as ladies were not expected to earn a living, their education was not an investment but a sort of luxury; girls were frequently withdrawn from school when "needed at home" for social and domestic tasks.

The issue of girls' education was topical when Ruskin prepared "Of Queens' Gardens." In September 1864, for example, delegates to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (a platform for progressive and liberal causes) heard a paper on the deplorable state of girls' education prepared by Emily Davies, the future founder of Girton College, Cambridge.[33] She had lobbied for the Schools Inquiry Commission to include girls within its remit, and her views would be confirmed by its damning eventual report, which found serious failings in the majority of girls' schools: "want of thoroughness and foundation; want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments; and those not taught intelligently or in any scientific manner; want of organisation."[34] A month after Davies's paper, Harriet Martineau published a companion "Girls" piece to her *Cornhill* article on "Boys' Education" that appeared just as Ruskin was preparing for his Manchester lectures. Martineau's essay opened with a protest of "despair" at the deplorable state of middle-class girls' schooling: "no tradition, no common conviction, no established method, no imperative custom," and poor hope of practical reform.[35]

We do not know whether Ruskin or Rev. Richson proposed the subject

for "Of Queens' Gardens," but girls' education was a topic on which the former had at least some firsthand knowledge. For several months past, he had been a regular visitor to Winnington Hall, a private girls' school in Cheshire, the county south of Manchester where Mancunian families customarily sent daughters for education. Here he engaged in informal teaching on subjects of his choice such as drawing, botany and mineralogy.[36] Through this practical if limited experience and through conversations with Margaret Bell, Winnington's proprietor, he had developed views on the subject of girls and education, which inform parts of "Of Queens' Gardens."

Ruskin allied himself with the girls' schools that scorned "frivolous" accomplishments when he alleged that "there is hardly a girls' school in this Christian kingdom where the children's courage or sincerity would be thought of half so much importance as their way of coming in at a door" (§80). And in several specific instances, his lecture supports the more "progressive" position in the debate. Note for example the spirited defense of the female teacher in section 81, possibly inspired by the staff at Winnington who had not received the respect they wished for from pupils' parents. Note, too, how section 70 advocates inclusion in the curriculum of physical exercise, the value of which "no thoughtful persons" are said to doubt. In fact, very many still believed strenuous activity was bad for growing girls and would "coarsen" young ladies. Ruskin therefore refutes this fear by asserting that exercise will instead serve to "perfect their beauty," adducing in support Wordsworth's well-known poem on "Lucy." Perhaps, lest it conjure too athletic an image for his listeners' notions of deportment, however, he omitted the third stanza, which opens:

> She shall be sportive as the fawn
> That with wild glee across the lawn
> Or up the mountain springs.

With respect to actual learning, section 72 of his lecture partly challenges and then panders to conservative views, when it urges that girls should be given "all such knowledge . . . as may enable [them] to understand and even to aid, the work of men." Though heavily qualified (why should women not have the knowledge that will aid their own work?), this at least suggests that learning should not be denied to girls. Further, "habits of accurate thought," at least "one path of scientific attainment," and careful study of history are specifically mentioned as elements in the preferred curriculum. However, as the rest of the paragraph makes plain, education in knowledge and logical thinking is not to be pursued for its own sake or

indeed to any rigorous extent at all, but only in order to cultivate the "feminine" sensibilities of modesty, compassion, and sympathy. It follows that while the subjects studied by girls and boys should be "nearly the same," the mode and purpose of study should be entirely different. Moreover, girls should never be *superior* in knowledge, for "a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends" (§74). Not surprisingly, "Of Queens' Gardens" has been eloquently described as a "honey-tongued defense of the subjection of women."[37]

By selective quotation, however, it is possible to suggest that the author of "Of Queens' Gardens" did support fully equal access to education. And, as the other essayists in this volume point out, this may explain why women were Ruskin's most eager and sympathetic audience, crowding his lectures and ordering his books. In this respect, the "honey-tongued" prose can partly be seen as camouflage, half-disguising a forward-looking perspective with more traditional trappings. Readers must use their own judgment as to how far this was the author's intention, but, when listening to or reading a persuasive text, it is possible to take some messages and ignore others, which is what seems to have happened with *Sesame and Lilies.* Indeed, in comparison with the frequently negative commentary on female capability found throughout the Victorian age, the sympathetic gallantry of "Of Queens' Gardens" must have been attractive, whatever its limits or contradictions. Moreover, the dialectical, argumentative mode of its discourse invites and stimulates disagreement, qualification, and challenge. This was not precisely Ruskin's pedagogic style in the classroom (both at the Working Men's College and with the young women at Winnington he preferred to be the fount of authority), but it is implicit in his public and published lectures. Frequently, his professed aim was to jolt audiences out of unexamined preconceptions, and show that conventional wisdom could be questioned.

So it is with his most radical and startling proposal in "Of Queens' Gardens": that girls should not study "theology" or religious knowledge. Religion was an inescapable subject in all schoolrooms, deemed essential especially for girls, who would in adulthood have responsibility for training children and servants in matters of morality and obedience, and in whom devotional habits were customarily regarded as a key aspect of ideal feminine virtue. No doubt dismissed by many of Ruskin's readers as rhetorical provocation, the attack had both public and private relevance. It reflected Ruskin's current obsession with Rose La Touche, a girl upon whom he had pressed his intensely subjective needs for some years and who, as it were in

self-defense, had responded with equally intense piety, aiming to bring her suitor back to the Christian beliefs of his childhood and youth.

This contest took place in the wider theater of the Victorian crisis of faith, which Ruskin's own "unconversion" in 1858 neatly illustrates. Skeptical rationalism, geological discoveries, and evolutionary theories all combined in mid-century to throw doubt on the biblical creation, personal immortality, all revealed religion. To the ordinary individual, "all the bases of his creed are undermined," declared a contributor to the *Westminster Review* in 1860; "the whole external authority on which it rests is swept away; the mysterious book of Ruth fades into an old collection of poetry and legend; and the scheme of Redemption in which he has been taught to live and die turns out to be a demoralizing invention of man." By 1865, as William Michael Rossetti noted, the whole age-old edifice had crumbled with surprising speed, in just three or four years.[38]

The spectacular erosion of faith intensified the gender divide. For one thing, religious observance was traditionally instilled by women, who as mothers, aunts, and governesses gave Bible lessons, escorted children to church, and supervised their prayers. Second, as for example with the Rossettis and Swinburnes, in many mid-century families the loss of faith was faster and stronger among men than women, leading the latter to redouble their piety, fearing for their menfolk's souls. Hence Ruskin's intemperate attack on devout women who "turn the household Gods of Christianity into ugly idols of their own . . . from which their husbands must turn away in grieved contempt, lest they should be shrieked at for breaking them" (Rose La Touche's mother, it is thought, was one such) (§73).

Overall, however, in "Of Queens' Gardens" both religious and educational questions are subservient to the central theme of ideal femininity. Here, as with the advocacy of such knowledge as may enable women "to understand and even to aid, the work of men," the standpoint is less aggressively patriarchal than sentimentally retrograde. Effectively, the difference is hard to detect, but it does help explain why the message of "Of Queens' Gardens" was generally welcomed in its time. Thus the opening passage of extended gallantry in praise of female virtue, wisdom, and nobility (§§56–62) draws from Western literature's traditional idealization of woman, the aim being to gratify and flatter those readers, male and female, who shared such perspectives and were familiar with the invocation of such heroines in "woman question" debates. To be sure, it is a double-edged compliment, for the well-read audience, invited to survey female characters from Homer onward, can easily, if silently, supply a full range of evil counterparts to those listed. But the passage convincingly serves to intro-

duce the now notorious picture of essential gender difference and the concomitant prescription for "woman's true place and power" as wise, loving helpmeet to her husband:

> Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest . . .
>
> . . . to fulfil this, she must — as far as one can use such terms of a human creature — be incapable of error. . . . So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise — wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side; wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service — the true changefulness of woman. (§§68–69)

By any measure, this is an extraordinary piece of rhetoric, as if the preacher has been rapt by his own construction of a heavenly image of perfection. Applied to the quotidian world of social and family relations, it conjures up a somewhat unattractive saintly model. Today, its paean to female subservience is apt to rouse only anger and rejection.

To place *Sesame and Lilies* again in historical context, the passage reflects the early Victorian ideal of gender relations inherited by Ruskin's generation, which was memorably also hymned by both Coventry Patmore (whom Ruskin quotes in §65) in "The Angel in the House" (1850) and by Alfred Tennyson in "The Princess" (1847):

> For woman is not undeveloped man,
> But diverse.
> Not like to like, but like in difference
> Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
> The man be more of woman, she of man;
> He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
> Not lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
> She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
> Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
> Till at the last she set herself to man,
> Like perfect music unto noble words.
> . . . . . .
> Either sex alone
> Is half itself, and in true marriage lies

> Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
> Defect in each, and always thought in thought
> Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow
> The single pure and perfect animal
> The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke.

Like the speaker in "The Princess," who invokes his mother's example, so "Of Queens' Gardens" also reflects its author's experience. If in "Of Kings' Treasuries" Ruskin was repudiating the model of masculine enterprise and pride represented by his own father, in "Of Queens' Gardens" he endorsed the model of femininity represented by his mother. Margaret Ruskin was known never to have openly opposed her husband or son and yet exercised over both a powerful influence, such as is invoked in phrases like "infallibly faithful and wise . . . incorruptibly just and pure . . . strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save" (§58). We may surmise further that Ruskin was also venting anger toward his former wife, Effie, who had so signally proved neither "incapable of error" nor "wise for self-renunciation," but had taken the drastic step of leaving her spouse and having their marriage annulled. In the eyes of John Ruskin and his parents, Effie was guilty of "insolent and loveless pride," in place of the desired "modesty of service" (§69).

Although backward-looking, in 1864 Ruskin's praise of female wisdom, virtue, counsel, and "sweet ordering" could therefore be construed as a "positive" defense of women's rights and abilities, in opposition to those who thought women were biologically inferior beings who deserved no civil rights. To some extent, it can be seen to (gently) pave the way for the crushing demolition of all "arguments" sustaining male supremacy by Ruskin's rival author John Stuart Mill in *On the Subjection of Women* (1869). In this context, the "honey-tongue" of "Of Queens' Gardens" is camouflage or decoy in preparation for the final discussion of women's public duties, neatly introduced as the statement of "the inextinguishable instinct" of love, directed "to heal, to redeem, to guide, and to guard" (§87). This was a highly contentious issue, for there were as many women who shrank from the responsibility of social action as there were men who wished them confined to the domestic sphere. Here Ruskin's intention seems quite apparent, if typically eccentric. Pass by a characteristic digression on the etymology of "lady" and the grandiloquent repetition of "queens you must always be: queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond," and consider the ambiguities of

section 91, which tells women they are responsible for all the war, suffering, injustice and misery in the world, because "men can bear the sight of it . . . but . . . it is you only who can feel the depths of pain, and conceive the way of its healing." This is as fine nonsense as the final passionate (and indeed religious) peroration about leaving the garden and going down into the cities to comfort and succor the Son of Man. But it is conceived inspirationally, inviting young women to widen their horizons — to forget the trivial matters of social rank and domestic comfort in order to engage in active, practical schemes of social reform. Just as "Of Kings' Treasuries" challenges material self-interest in men in favor of moral leadership, so "Of Queens' Gardens" questions complacency among women, preaching in high rhetoric a secular gospel of active social virtue.

NOTES

1. "Of Kings' Treasuries" was delivered at Rusholme Town Hall, Manchester, on December 6, 1864, to an audience which expected to hear a discourse on literature, advertised by Rev. G. H. G. Anson as "Mr. J. Ruskin on 'How and What to Read' " (see *Works* 18:5 and 53, n. 2). A month earlier, while preparing his talk, Ruskin told a correspondent that his proposed title was "On Choosing Acquaintance." He went on: "I say acquaintance instead of Friends, because we should be acquainted with many books — Friends with few" (*The Winnington Letters: John Ruskin's Correspondence with Margaret Alexis Bell and the Children at Winnington Hall*, ed. Van Akin Burd [Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969], letter no. 331, November 4, 1864).

2. Working-class children commonly received only elementary (junior) level schooling, starting work at around twelve years of age. There was no compulsory attendance until the Education Act of 1870.

3. See Matthew Arnold, "A French Eton; or, Middle-Class Education and the State," *Macmillan's Magazine* 10 (1864) (3 parts). Arnold had worked as an inspector of schools since 1851, and was at the time (1857–67) also professor of poetry at Oxford. See also Edward Alexander, *Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and the Modern Temper* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973).

4. "Middle-class Education in England: Boys," *Cornhill Magazine* 10 (1864): 409ff. The ancient public schools catered, more or less poorly, to boys from the upper classes, and church or voluntary schools to the working classes, leaving the middle ranks dependent on the old endowed grammar

schools and private establishments, of variable quality. The situation was substantially different in Scotland. An additional reason for seeking national standards in high schools was the recent introduction of the first university-qualifying exams.

5. Some three miles from the city center, Rusholme was a lately urbanized district engulfed by the rapidly expanding city as Manchester developed in the nineteenth century. In the 1860s it had a crowded, indiscriminate mix of poor housing, industry, and small trades. Today it lies south and east of the university and main hospital, close to libraries, a major art museum, and several large parks.

6. Manchester Grammar School was an ancient endowed foundation that had expanded and adapted to provide a classical education for local students (boys only) and would form a major model for publicly funded high schools.

7. *Works*, 18:555–57, reprinted from the verbatim summary in the *Manchester Examiner*, December 8, 1864. As well as the school students, some visitors "including a few ladies" were in the audience; perhaps a press reporter was also invited.

8. Ibid. Moreover, Ruskin claimed that when himself a boy, he "did not write well, nor did he to this day," so that when lecturing, he often could not read his own text with perfect ease — an interesting remark in view of his renowned eloquence.

9. Although Ruskin says "children" he means boys, as the rest of §2 demonstrates.

10. In "Traffic," a lecture delivered in Bradford on April 21, 1864, and printed in *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), *Works*, 18:433–58.

11. From a press report of the original lecture in the *Manchester Examiner*, quoted in *Works*, 18:53, n. 2. Ruskin's "nervous state" is also an indirect allusion to lecturing in Manchester on his first visit in 1857 when, invited in connection with the major "Art Treasures" exhibition, he dismayed his audience by opening with comments on poverty and destitution, in the earliest of his texts on political economy, later retitled *A Joy for Ever (and Its Price in the Market)*. On a second visit in 1859, he spoke less contentiously on "The Unity of Art."

12. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1855), ch. 8. It is likely that Ruskin derived some of his knowledge and ideas about the industrial north from novels such as this and *Hard Times*, although he did visit Manchester (see n. 11) and spoke with employers and educators, as well as with Gaskell herself, whom he had previously met in London. It may be noted that university education in Britain in the 1850s was limited to Oxford, Cam-

bridge, four foundations in Scotland (Edinburgh, Glasgow, St. Andrews, and Aberdeen), one in Ireland, and the newly established University College and Kings College in London.

13. Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: with illustrations of Character and Conduct* (London: John Murray, 1866), p. 267.

14. Ibid., p. 291.

15. See his rebuke to John James Ruskin in *Winnington Letters*, pp. 369–71.

16. *Works*, 35:185.

17. *The Ruskin Family Letters*, ed. Van Akin Burd, 2 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 1:209.

18. To Pauline Jermyn Trevelyan, July 20, 1861, *Works*, 36:276. In *Munera Pulveris*, the essays first published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1862, Ruskin also attacked money-seeking and material accumulation.

19. Smiles, *Self-Help*, p. 327.

20. Works, 18:26–27. This preface was added to the edition published on October 2, 1865, barely three months after the first edition on June 21, 1865.

21. *Works*, 18:51.

22. The events respectively referred to in §30 as the nation ruled by a man [the Czar] "who is bayoneting young girls in their fathers' sight," and that seeing "its own children murder each other by their thousands." In the United States, Ruskin thought the North should not have taken up arms to preserve the Union.

23. February 13, 1865; and not from *Daily Telegraph* of 1867 as stated in the text. See *Works*, 18:90, n. 5. [§36].

24. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1867), p. 13. In his preface, Arnold characterized "America [as] just ourselves, with the Barbarians quite left out, and the Populace nearly."

25. From a sentence deleted from editions of *Sesame and Lilies* after 1882: see *Works*, 18:53, n. 2.

26. *Winnington Letters*, no. 348.

27. *Winnington Letters*, December 9, 1864, no. 336. Annotating this letter, Van Akin Burd identified Rev. Richson of Ancoats as being a Canon of Manchester Cathedral, and it may be that both he and Rev. Anson of Rusholme held this title, or that in his dealings with the two clergymen Ruskin confused their positions. To his mother he described Richson as hard-working and honest, but vain, which presumably indicates that he felt Richson's motive for arranging the event — and perhaps for choosing the venue — was partly self-promotion.

28. See Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch. 1, for a lucid defense of early Victorian educators' aims that resemble those of Ruskin.

29. Married women were, for example, unable to enter into contracts.

30. "Miss Buss and Miss Beale / Cupid's darts do not feel; / How different from us / Miss Beale and Miss Buss" was an anonymous rhyme attributed to the students at North London Collegiate School and familiar to the present author from her days at the school.

31. E. M. Sewell, *Principles of Education, drawn from Nature and Revelation applied to Female Education in the Upper Classes* (London, 1865), 2:219.

32. Most forcfully argued in Henry Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and Education," *Fortnightly Review*, 21 (1874): 466–83, this widely held view asserted that female reproductive capacities were impaired by studious mental activity draining vital energies.

33. "On Secondary Instruction as Relating to Girls," 1864, reprinted in Emily Davies, *Thoughts on Some Questions Relating to Women, 1860–1908* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1910). Indicatively, Davies's paper was read for her, in deference to views on women appearing on public platforms. See also Emily Davies, *The Higher Education of Women* (London: Alexander Strachan, 1866).

34. Schools Inquiry Commission, *Parliamentary Papers* (London: HMSO, 1867–68), 1:548–49.

35. "Middle-Class Education in England: Girls," *Cornhill Magazine* 10 (1864): 549ff.

36. Something of Ruskin's pedagogic experience at Winnington is conveyed in *The Ethics of the Dust: Ten Lectures to Little Housewives on the Elements of Crystallisation*, first issued in December 1865 (*Works,* 18:189–368). See also *Winnington Letters*, passim. This theme is also explored in Dinah Birch, " 'What Teachers Do You Give Your Girls?' Ruskin and the Education of Women," in *Ruskin and Gender*, ed. Dinah Birch and Francis O'Gorman (London: Macmillan, forthcoming).

37. Paul Sawyer, "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos," in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power*, ed. Thais E. Morgan (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 130.

38. "Neo-Christianity," *Westminster Review* (October 1860): 296; *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti*, ed. R. W. Peattie (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), no. 91.

How the Victorians Read *Sesame and Lilies*

SETH KOVEN

John Ruskin's lectures on reading and women's roles in society, published under the title *Sesame and Lilies* in 1865, appeared in dozens of editions in many forms and sold several hundred thousand copies by the turn of the century.[1] As an 1895 reviewer of a handsome "umber colored ooze calf" edition aptly noted, *Sesame and Lilies* was a "protean" book, constantly changing its physical form and content.[2] I would add that *Sesame and Lilies* has disclosed new and different meanings to the men and women, adults and children who continue to read it.

At first glance, the enduring importance of this slender volume may seem surprising. While preparing to publish *Sesame and Lilies* in June 1865, Ruskin confided to Coventry Patmore, the author of the famed paean to domestic bliss "Angel in the House," that he had written "that ridiculous book of mine" merely to amuse "a couple of schoolgirls."[3] When it first appeared in print, reviewers such as the novelist Anthony Trollope were even more critical in their appraisal. They assailed gaps in his logic, the thinness of his evidence, and his overheated rhetoric.[4] *Sesame and Lilies* appears insubstantial as an intellectual and stylistic achievement when compared to Ruskin's monumental studies on art and political economy such as *The Stones of Venice* and *Unto This Last*. How then can we make sense of the extraordinary hold *Sesame and Lilies* came to have over the reading public, not only in Britain but throughout the English-speaking world, and, thanks to Marcel Proust's translation, in France as well? What is it about this "protean" text that has made people want to read it and debate its meanings and merits?

An answer to this question is suggested by Henry James's brilliant pen-portrait of Ruskin, written in the aftermath of one of the many controversies to which Ruskin was addicted. Ruskin often infuriated those who loved him

best and inspired the begrudging admiration of those who derided him. James, the expatriate bachelor novelist and anatomist of unconsummated desires, had a keen eye for kindred spirits whose failings he lambasted. Ruskin was, James believed, "a chartered libertine." His language "quite transgresses the decencies of criticisms, and he has been laying about him for some years past with such promiscuous violence that it gratifies one's sense of justice to see him brought up as a disorderly character."[5] James criticizes not merely Ruskin's words but his public persona as a man of letters. James's sexualized vocabulary and his estimate of Ruskin as a "chartered libertine," indecent critic, and "disorderly character" seem willfully perverse. How could he have mistaken the conspicuously celibate Ruskin for a libertine, the epitome of sexual lawlessness? Can a libertine be "chartered" — with the implication that his behavior and pronouncements have received official approval?

James's assessment is worth pondering for several reasons. It captures some of the ambiguities of Ruskin's persona and his writings, in particular *Sesame and Lilies*. It encourages us to understand how contemporaries responded to Ruskin. No one, not even James, would have denied that Ruskin was the quintessential Victorian moralist, admitted into the pantheon of prophetic sages by his contemporaries even before he reached midlife. His writings on art and architecture trained generations of men and women to understand aesthetic categories in moral terms. His denunciations of bourgeois materialism and indifference to the conditions of the poor galvanized many of the best and brightest women and men in Victorian Britain to devote themselves to mending the social order. But James also insinuated that Ruskin stood apart from social conventions — a ruffian, an outlaw, a transgressor, not an upholder of established proprieties. James positions Ruskin as an insider *and* outsider, a disrupter *and* supporter of social and sexual norms.

Rather than attempting to explain away the apparent contradictions suggested by James's characterization, we can learn a great deal about Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies,* and Victorian society by exploring them. Ruskin's transgressive moralism is nowhere more evident than in his formulation of the relation between public and private life, and men's and women's roles, in *Sesame and Lilies*. Scholars today ubiquitously cite *Sesame and Lilies* as the classic statement of the Victorian ideology of separate spheres — the belief that men and women ought to occupy separate but complementary spheres of activity, men in the competitive public world of politics and work, women in the harmonious private arena of family life. I am sympathetic, up to a point, with this reading of *Sesame and Lilies*. It is an exem-

plary articulation of Victorian gender ideology, but not because it satisfies smug preconceptions about the backwardness of nineteenth-century ideas about men and women. Instead, I argue that what made *Sesame and Lilies* powerful to nineteenth-century readers and to us today is the way it registers so effectively fundamental instabilities in the theory and practice of separate spheres. *Sesame and Lilies* reminds us that the Victorians' deep investment in separate spheres was matched by their willingness to efface the boundaries separating men's and women's spheres in their ideological pronouncements and in the conduct of their daily lives.

This essay traces the relation between public and private, and gender and sexuality, in *Sesame and Lilies,* in Ruskin's life and the lives of many of his followers, and in the ways in which Victorians responded to and read Ruskin. It opens by placing *Sesame and Lilies* within the broader historical context of its production and reception: Manchester and Britain in the first half of the 1860s. These public contexts help to explain key aspects of Ruskin's message linked to specific historical circumstances unfamiliar to readers today. *Sesame and Lilies* also contains several subtle but important autobiographical elements which make sense only against the backdrop of Ruskin's private life, in particular his unhappy "romance" with the girl Rose La Touche, for whom he wrote *Sesame and Lilies*. In this respect, we know a great deal more than all but a handful of Ruskin's mid-century readers about the ways in which Ruskin used *Sesame and Lilies* to express the intimate secrets of his heart. If *Sesame and Lilies* was a public declaration of its author's views about gender and society, it was also an intensely private communication about thwarted desires. Ruskin bombastically idealized the virtues of domesticity in *Sesame and Lilies* even though the circumstances of his private life were profoundly at odds with domestic norms. Ruskin's ideas about women were deeply marked by his loving but sometimes vexed relationships with other "queens" — girls and women — whose behavior helped to shape his ideas about gender, and who, for their part, looked to Ruskin for guidance. Once again, we find slippage between public and private as each informs and transforms how we understand the other. Neither Ruskin's text nor the lives of "spinster" women such as the famed housing reformer Octavia Hill, who counted themselves among his most ardent followers, conformed in a straightforward manner to the gender and sexual expectations of conventionally distinct roles for men and women. In Ruskin's hands, "separate spheres" was an unstable ideology, at once a conservative bulwark against the vagaries of an ever-changing free market society and the foundation for a progressive expansion of women's social duties and responsibilities. Ruskin simultaneously codified and

transformed prevailing notions of female domesticity without ever acknowledging or resolving the instabilities of his own construction.

In the final sections, I turn to Ruskin's readers and disciples who variously interpreted him and attempted to incorporate the arguments presented in *Sesame and Lilies* into how they lived their lives. The unresolved ideological tensions within *Sesame and Lilies* encouraged a wide range of responses among readers, some conservative, others quite radical. I examine three groups of Ruskin's readers at the forefront of debates about gender, sexuality, and social activism: Victorian spinsters, Edwardian feminists, and men committed to exploring new forms of masculinity. These readers had a great deal at stake in trying to shape public discourse about separate spheres ideology — and hence were themselves deeply committed to interpreting *Sesame and Lilies* to serve their needs. Most leaders of the multifaceted women's movements in Victorian Britain admired *Sesame and Lilies,* in marked contrast to so many twentieth-century feminists who fought to free themselves from the burdens and restrictions they believed Ruskin's proscriptions imposed upon them. What attracted so many capable and intelligent Victorian women to *Sesame and Lilies* and its author? How can we explain why so many of their daughters and granddaughters in the twentieth century rejected Ruskin and his vision of women? How and why did Ruskin inspire some men to connect their criticisms of bourgeois materialism with their discontent with bourgeois masculinity and heterosexuality? *Sesame and Lilies* derived at least some of its force for these male and female readers because it simultaneously appeared to conform to prevailing norms of masculinity and femininity while also critiquing and reconfiguring them.

Public Contexts

Sesame and Lilies had its origins in two public lectures Ruskin delivered in Manchester in December 1864. When Ruskin traveled to Manchester, Britain's manufacturing juggernaut, he had no reason to expect a sympathetic audience. Since the publication of *Unto This Last* in 1860, Ruskin had grown ever more strident in his assault on industrial England. Its false political economy, he insisted, had put the accumulation of wealth before human dignity and encouraged production based not on human needs but on the dictates of the marketplace. Transformed in less than a century from "the greatest mere village in England" into a sprawling and wealthy industrial capitalist metropolis, Manchester and its leading citizens were invari-

ably associated with precisely those mechanistic principles of economic liberalism that Ruskin despised: laissez-faire individualism based upon unregulated free markets in goods and labor. It was Manchester men with their Manchester School of economics who had championed the repeal of protective tariffs on grain in 1846 (the so-called Corn Laws). The repeal of the Corn Laws did in fact lower the cost of bread and other staples but it also enshrined the free market and free trade as sacrosanct economic principles of Victorian prosperity. Manchesterism was anathema for Ruskin, whose organic vision of society was predicated on his own curious mixture of radicalism and deference, a passionate commitment to cross-class friendship mingled with a keen appreciation for the necessity for social hierarchy.[6]

Ruskin ended his first lecture with an unmistakable assault on the values he identified with Manchester. Lamenting the exclusion of laboring people from the nation's cultural riches, he called for the creation of art galleries and natural history museums along with "kings' treasuries," Ruskin's fanciful term for collections of books and free libraries. "You have got [Britain's] corn laws repealed for it," he reminded his audience. For Ruskin, Manchester's role in liberating English trade from protective tariffs on grain (generically called "corn") and other products had done nothing to ensure the spiritual, economic, and intellectual freedom of most men and women. Ruskin believed such freedom could be obtained only by giving men and women access to great books and creating conditions under which they could understand them. This was the complex and densely allusive message contained in the poignant concluding sentence of "Kings' Treasuries": "Try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread;—bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame, which opens doors;—doors not of robbers', but of Kings', Treasuries" (§50).

It is unlikely that many in his audience, besides the handful of adoring female students from the Winnington School, were thinking about the "precious" and "needful things" preoccupying Ruskin. The first years of the 1860s were exceptionally difficult ones for Mancunians. The Civil War in the United States had disrupted entirely the vast trade in cotton, produced by black slave labor in the South, which for decades had fed Manchester's great textile mills. The Lancashire Cotton Famine threw tens of thousands out of respectable and steady industrial work into casual labor and poverty. It also bankrupted merchants and financiers, the "Manchester men" whose pride in their self-making was reflected in the city's burgeoning civic institutions and monuments. Ruskin made no concessions to the hardships of his bourgeois audience. In "Of Kings' Treasuries," he claimed that it was

impossible for men and women to appreciate and understand books in the social and economic environment of mid-century Britain, a nation that had made itself into a "money-making mob." In words that must have rung with bitter irony in the ears of many Manchester men, he chastised them for pouring "our whole masculine energy into the false business of money-making" (§39). Ruskin had famously argued in *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Stones of Venice* that the moral history of nations could be read in the design and adornment of the buildings they constructed. Now, he turned from buildings to books and reading as signs by which to diagnose the health of the nation. The well-being of Britain, he argued in "Of Kings' Treasuries," depended upon creating the social and economic conditions under which all men and women could "rightly" read and purchase carefully "chosen books, the best in every kind" (§49).

While many citizens of Manchester confronted bleak economic prospects in the waning days of 1864, Britons everywhere grappled with fundamental questions about the boundaries and rights of citizenship and the obligations of the subject. To be sure, parliamentary reform did not become a broad-based popular cause until after the death of its inveterate opponent, the Whig Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, in the autumn of 1865. Nonetheless, by the time Ruskin came to Manchester, it loomed large in the consciousness of members of the city's industrial middle class and working class, the latter who felt keenly the unfairness of their exclusion from the parliamentary franchise. The Reform Union, the spearhead for the national campaign, was established by middle-class Mancunians in 1864.

In the mid-1860s, franchise and educational reform were closely linked. The prospect of an untutored electorate controlling Britain's political destiny horrified many who concurred with the anti-reform Whig Robert Lowe that most laboring men lacked the knowledge and wisdom to select the nation's governors. In the aftermath of the Second Reform Bill (1867), which nearly doubled the electorate to two million men, Gladstone's Liberal government eschewed Ruskin's proposal in *Sesame and Lilies* to nationalize the diffusion of knowledge through libraries and museums — what he called "kings' treasuries" — and instead embarked upon creating a national system of rate-supported elementary schools (initiated by the 1870 Forster Education Act).

Debates over the enfranchisement of laboring men, and the need for educating the poor, galvanized women (and their male supporters) to press with renewed vigor their case for extending the vote to women and expanding their educational opportunities. After all, educated middle-class women reasoned, if untutored laboring men deserved the vote, how much

worthier were they to assume the privileges of the franchise? The 1860s were a pivotal time for the burgeoning women's movements of Victorian Britain. A lively periodical press emerged, edited by capable and progressive women such as Bessie Raynor Parkes, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, and Jessie Boucherett, which addressed women readers, their needs, and their aspirations. Intellectuals such as Anna Jameson outlined new public roles for women, closely allied to their motherly qualities, in concert with practical-minded workers such as Louisa Twining who believed that women were specially suited to serve the poor and the infirm.[7]

Ruskin acknowledged and importantly contributed to the charged climate of debate over women's roles in society at the outset of his second lecture, "Of Queens' Gardens." "We cannot determine what the queenly power of women should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. . . . And there never was a time when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question — quite vital to all social happiness." In words that would satisfy the most demanding present-day theoretician of gender, Ruskin observed that "we hear of the 'mission' and of the 'rights' of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man" (§54).

What internal logic led Ruskin to turn from the issue of reading and the evils of industrial capitalism in his first lecture to contemplating the status of men's and women's relations to one another and society in his second? Why did Ruskin, in contemplating women's social roles, invoke woman's "mission" and "rights" and what did these terms mean to him and to his contemporaries? Let me answer each of these closely connected questions in turn.

The two essays in *Sesame and Lilies* were part of Ruskin's overarching project in the 1860s and 1870s to map out his own idiosyncratic principles of political economy. Ruskin, ever attentive to the origins and histories of words themselves, knew well that "political economy" joined together two terms — the "polis," the public space of debate, exchange, and governance within the city state of antiquity, and the "oikos," the private world of men, women, and children within the family. The word "oikonomia" in classical Greek roughly translated into the "law of the house" or rules of housekeeping.[8] If "Of Kings' Treasuries" used the issue of reading as a springboard to criticize the public institutions and free market dominated by men, "Of Queens' Gardens" extended his analysis to the world of family and home where women reigned supreme.

The two-part structure of *Sesame and Lilies* powerfully reflects one of its central claims: gender is crucial to political economy and to the systems

of production and consumption that political economists sought to understand. And each part reiterates this argument by illustrating the way in which ostensibly private matters important to women impinge on fundamental aspects of male-dominated public life. In "Of Kings' Treasuries" Ruskin shows that the private matter of how and what books we read hinges upon our social and economic relations; in "Of Queens' Gardens," he demonstrates that the sphere of women extends beyond the home into the surrounding public spaces of civic life. "Generally, we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so," Ruskin explains. For all that men must assert their manful authority in the contentious and competitive public world, they too have "personal" work within the home. Woman's duties expanded "without her gates" to "assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state" (§86).

As soon as Ruskin's reader grabs hold of his argument, it begins to transform itself into something altogether quite different from what it first appears to be. Ruskin seems to tell us that men and women are equal and need to be well educated, but he then shows how they are and must be different from one another; each is called to fulfill a royal function in the commonwealth, but their techniques of rule and their kingdoms are profoundly dissimilar. Women, far from being sequestered within their gardens, are obliged to attend to the poor and weak in society.[9] At their peril, men forget to cultivate affection and sympathy. Ruskin undeniably asserts the need to keep separate public and private life, men's and women's spheres. At the same time he insists not only that the two spheres complement one another, but that they burst their boundaries and flow into one another. For all that Ruskin revered order, his vision of how best to achieve it within and outside the home seems to depend upon turning categories and received ideas inside out.[10]

How can we make sense of this confusion? Why would he go to such pains to construct oppositions between men and women, public and private, only to set in motion their dissolution? Was Ruskin simply illogical, unaware, or uninterested in the apparent inconsistencies of his own argument? I don't think he was any of these. Such unstable formulations of gender roles and political economy had many precedents in Ruskin's writing and suggest his deep and deliberate investment in them.[11] In his renowned chapter "The Nature of Gothic" in the second volume of his *Stones of Venice* (1851), Ruskin had movingly called upon readers to look around their private interior spaces and see the ugliness of "accurate mouldings and perfect polishings" created by workers degraded into machines rather than

thinking beings. He enjoined "every young lady who buys glass beads" to acknowledge that she was "engaged in the slave-trade" because her ornaments were produced by men whose repetitive labor palsied their hands and numbed their minds and souls. Ruskin's unmistakable, albeit implicit, argument here is that the female domain of consumption cannot be divorced from the male world of production and that women bear direct moral and economic responsibility for the exploitative conditions of men's labor.[12]

Sesame and Lilies offers surprisingly little direct guidance about how men should behave beyond the claim that they had "personal work" to do within their homes. However, in *Unto This Last* (1860), his best known and most controversial work of political economy, Ruskin anticipated key elements of his arguments about gender in *Sesame and Lilies.* In *Unto This Last* Ruskin had begun to develop the trope of manly "kingship" and had insisted that men ought to emulate the ennobling values associated with women, femininity, and domesticity. Just as evangelical intellectuals of the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s claimed a large place for "love" in their Christian political economies, so too Ruskin, the son of devout evangelicals, insisted that a master could obtain the "greatest material result" from his workers not through antagonism and conflict but through affection.[13] We can also find in *Unto This Last* distinct glimmerings of his ideas about the powers and duties of "queenship."[14] "The housewife who takes care of her furniture in the parlour, and guards against all waste in her kitchen" was, Ruskin insisted, a paradigmatic example of true and salutary "political economy." Ruskin reserved for women the "most directly positive" form of human labor: "the bearing and rearing of children." This was no mere sop to women as reproducers, for women's work in creating human life was the result of "exertion and self-denial prolonged through years." Men, to their disgrace, failed to acknowledge England's housewives and mothers as the creators of "life"—the most essential and enduring source of public "valor"/"value" in society.[15]

Middle-class activist women in mid-Victorian Britain, much like Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies,* were busy turning gender categories inside out while insisting all the while that they were conforming to the dictates of separate spheres ideology. They seized upon a central tenet of separate spheres ideology, that women were specially suited to nurture life to forge new public identities as experts in the welfare of poor women and children. Deploying the rhetoric of domesticity and invoking images of motherliness, the spinster Unitarian reformer Mary Carpenter, for example, had championed the establishment of state-funded and inspected juvenile reformatories for the loving rehabilitation of Britain's criminal children in the 1840s

and 1850s.[16] Other women had begun to demand access to secondary education through the creation of rigorous day-schools for female students, the extension of university teaching to women, and the opening of the great universities to women students. In 1863, Cambridge University provisionally allowed women to take its Local Examinations for the first time; two women's colleges at Cambridge, Girton (1869) and Newnham (1871), soon opened their doors to students. Girton aspired to teaching its students the same syllabus used by men while the leaders of Newnham, much more in keeping with Ruskin's views, believed that women's education should differ from men's. In "Of Queens' Gardens," Ruskin affirmed the value of interpretations of women's mission and rights which broadened both their educational horizons and their power over members of their own sex and the poor without challenging his belief in their essential differences from men.

At the same time, Ruskin and many of his female followers were alarmed by the application of the logic of liberal political economy to the question of woman suffrage. Under the aegis of John Stuart Mill, author of the defining treatise on Victorian liberalism *On Liberty* (1859), some women and men in the 1860s began to clamor for women's right to elect and serve as members of Parliament. Inspired by the sexual egalitarianism of Harriet Taylor, Mill audaciously attempted to amend the second Reform Bill to include qualified women. On this and so many other key issues in the 1860s — most notably Ruskin's defense of Governor Eyre, whose brutal repression of people of color in Jamaica in 1865 outraged Mill — Ruskin and Mill publicly opposed one another.

Despite their profound differences with one another, most Victorian women saw *both* Ruskin and Mill as champions of the advancement of women. Nothing illustrates this more powerfully than the *Woman's Herald,* a Liberal weekly paper for women established in 1888. The *Woman's Herald* saw no contradiction or editorial inconsistency in alerting its readers that a new edition of Mill's *Subjection of Women* would soon be available at low cost while devoting an entire column of the same page to what it called "Gems from Ruskin." Drawn almost entirely from *Sesame and Lilies,* these "gems" centered on women's important public and private duties and mission. Three of the first four "gems" came from the single brief section of *Sesame and Lilies* encouraging women to bring their domestic values into the public realm; other quotes highlighted the malign social consequences of women's failure to take up public duties. No reader of these "gems" could imagine for a moment that *Sesame and Lilies* even hinted that women should subordinate themselves to men in any aspect of public or private life.[17]

In developing his argument in "Of Queens' Gardens," Ruskin staked out his own distinct position, at once expansive and conservative, within the broader set of debates over the status of women in mid-Victorian Britain. *Sesame and Lilies* certainly did codify some widely accepted and restrictive ideas about female domesticity and morality. But it also offered a challenging and progressive vision of women's education and their social obligations. Domesticity for Ruskin and so many of his contemporaries was at least partly a defensive and critical response to the dehumanizing effects of industrial capitalism.[18] But in Ruskin's hands, domesticity was also a positive response to them as well because he valorized the home as the site where women as mothers and housewives created "life" and consumed the products of human labor. Ruskin's formulation of domesticity seems to contain within itself an emancipatory critique of its apparently conservative premises by simultaneously separating and then linking together public and private, male and female domains. Such arguments appealed deeply to many independent Victorian women seeking to liberate themselves from socially restricted lives and men who sought to claim feeling and sympathy as cornerstones of their vision of class relations and masculinity.

Private Contexts

Although *Sesame and Lilies* and the various prefaces Ruskin wrote for it (1865, 1871, and 1882) were first and foremost treatises in political economy, they were also private communications, written in coded language fully intelligible to only a handful of readers. Ruskin had penned "Of Queens' Gardens" for one particular "queen," Rose La Touche, who had captured his heart from the moment he first encountered her as a ten-year-old Anglo-Irish schoolgirl in 1858. Ruskin's courtship of his erstwhile drawing pupil and her ultimate refusal to marry him dominated Ruskin's inner life in the 1860s and left its mark on all of his writings.[19]

In *Sesame and Lilies,* Ruskin offered his vision of what he fancied the girl he adored was—or, more likely, what he hoped she could become. *Sesame and Lilies* pays homage to his "rosie-posie," the name he called Rose in the playful childish language they used with one another, even when discussing serious matters. Rose invented many terms of endearment for Ruskin, each associated with some private joke they shared. It requires considerable effort on our part to imagine Ruskin, the great Victorian sage, joyously submitting to being called St. Crumpet (St. C, for short) or Archegosaurus by a girl nearly thirty years his junior whom he longed to make

his second wife.[20] In the copy of *Sesame and Lilies* Ruskin presented to Rose and which she read and underlined carefully, he wrote simply "Posie, with St. C's love." As Rose and her father embraced an ever more fervent brand of evangelical Anglicanism in the early 1860s, Ruskin's religious doubts posed a growing obstacle to their friendship and Rose's peace of mind. Ruskin also believed that by 1864 Rose's mother had grown jealous of her daughter's relationship with him and "pulled us sharply asunder." In the months leading up to Ruskin's writing *Sesame and Lilies,* Rose's health had broken down completely and his contact with her, even by letter, was severely restricted. Ruskin blamed Rose's ill health on what he took to be her narrow-minded religious fanaticism, "those accursed religious hot-mushroom sauces of her poor little head."[21]

In early 1866, during one of the rare periods when Ruskin and Rose saw a great deal of one another and were allowed private time together, he proposed marriage. She deferred answering him for three years, until she was old enough legally to decide for herself whom she would marry. As Rose's parents came to understand fully Ruskin's intentions, their relationship with him deteriorated into mutual hostility and suspicion. They refused to countenance such an inappropriate match for their intellectually and spiritually precocious but delicate daughter. To make matters worse, Ruskin's first wife, Effie, implied to Rose's parents that Ruskin's sexual impotence was the legal basis for the annulment of their marriage. "From his peculiar nature," she explained, "he was utterly incapable of making a woman happy. He is quite unnatural." Barred by her parents from communicating directly with Rose, Ruskin resorted to public pronouncements and published texts to express his love for her and his rage at those who thwarted it. Rose, for her part, secretly sent Ruskin flowers, each blossom meaningfully connected to the complex floral iconography of their relationship. Without any awareness of just how misguided his romantic love for Rose was, Ruskin chose to believe that narrow-minded religion and conventional morality in the form of "a foolish father's care, and a wicked mother's cruelty" had thwarted "a true lover's love."[22]

This complex web of intense affections and romantic disappointments helps to make sense of several otherwise inscrutable passages in *Sesame and Lilies* and the various prefaces and lectures he added to (and subtracted from) the original two essays. He vented his private agony about Rose's religious convictions in his splenetic diatribe in "Of Queens' Gardens" against women who studied theology. On its own terms, Ruskin's first preface of 1865, ostensibly inspired by news reports of a recent disaster in the Swiss Alps, bears no meaningful connection to the arguments of *Ses-*

ame and Lilies. However, at its emotional apex, Ruskin laments the careless destruction of a bed of Alpine roses, which, like his beloved adolescent Rosie, were on the verge of "rounding into faultless bloom." In Ruskin's eyes, the elder La Touches, like the heedless alpinists, would allow neither Rose nor her love for Ruskin to round into "faultless bloom" (§5).

Ruskin's unconventional love for Rose colored the elaboration of the most famous motif in "Of Queens' Gardens" — his image of the enclosed garden as the proper space of feminine accomplishment and women themselves as flowers of purity. Just as Ruskin neither expects nor desires the walls of the garden wholly to contain the young women within its precincts, so too he gestured at the feminine capacity for evil as well as good in his 1871 preface. He sadly acknowledged that "it has chanced to me, untowardly in some respects, fortunately in others (because it enables me to read history more clearly), to see the utmost evil that is in women, while I have had but to believe the utmost good" (§19). Like the primordial garden of Eden in Hebrew Scripture, Ruskin's garden and its inhabitants could not escape the destructive powers of various serpents, whose malign presence threatens to disrupt its seemingly idyllic social and sexual economy. The figurative serpent in Ruskin's private life in the 1860s was none other than Rose's mother Maria La Touche, conveniently nicknamed "by her cleverest and fondest friend 'Lacerta,' " the Latin word for lizard or serpent. By the late 1880s, long after he had made peace with Mrs. La Touche in the aftermath of Rose's death in 1875, he claimed that her name signified that "she had the grace and wisdom of the serpent, without its poison."[23] But in the 1871 preface, he declared that he had seen women "betray their household charities to lust, their pledged love to devotion; I have seen mothers dutiful to their children, as Medea; and children dutiful to their parents, as the daughter of Herodias [Salome]" (§20). In Ruskin's complex and coded symbology of the 1860s in works such as *The Queen of the Air,* snakes and lizards serve as tropes for "Lacerta" or Maria La Touche. They often figure as highly sexualized figures of feminine power whose presence impedes Ruskin's attempts to cleanse society and realize his pure love for Rose.

If the public contexts of *Sesame and Lilies* demonstrate Ruskin's opposition to the prevailing economic, social, and gender values of industrial capitalism, its private context of production reveals Ruskin even farther removed from conventional bourgeois norms and mores. Deemed sexually "unnatural" by his first wife and tormented by his love for his girl-pupil Rose, Ruskin could not have been more unlike the paterfamilias expected to be the spouse and kingly partner of the housewifely "queen." These paradoxes not only animate the text and contexts of *Sesame and Lilies,* but also

informed Ruskin's relationships with many other girls and women, the queens on whom he modeled his ideals.

Who Were Ruskin's Queens?

Soon after the publication of *Sesame and Lilies,* Mrs. Cowper-Temple, a close friend and intermediary in his courtship of Rose La Touche, gently chided Ruskin for presuming to pronounce upon woman's nature, a subject about which she was quite sure he knew very little.[24] Although Ruskin lacked intimate knowledge of women's bodies and sexuality, he did sustain a remarkable number of friendships with girls and women. I say remarkable because it was very unusual for a single man, in the prime of his life, to socialize as Ruskin did so frequently and intensely with girls and women. The author Isabella Fyvie Mayo glowingly recalled one such occasion, a luncheon and afternoon she spent engaged in high-toned and charming conversation with Ruskin and four other women (including an American sculptor and a famous spiritualist) at his London home Denmark Hill around 1870. In Mayo's vignette, Ruskin occupies the commanding position within this otherwise all-female gathering, but he seems to play the part of head eunuch rather than lustful caliph within his own harem.[25]

The pattern and character of Ruskin's affections resembled those of his younger contemporary at Oxford, Charles Dodgson, better known by his pen name Lewis Carroll. Ruskin and Dodgson shared not only friendship with Alice Liddell, for and about whom Dodgson wrote *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), but a marked love for young girls and an equally notable lack of romantic interest in mature women. Only at the end of Alice's journey in *Through the Looking Glass* (first published in 1872) does she herself finally become a queen; however, we can assume that the real Alice, along with her creator, were familiar with the quite different path to queendom Ruskin had laid out in *Sesame and Lilies*. It cannot be accidental that Ruskin, in his autobiography, describes his own delight at spending time with Alice Liddell and her sisters in the chapter leading up to his introduction of Rose.[26] Articulate girls from the comfortable middle class like the Liddell sisters and Rose were precisely the group of readers *Sesame and Lilies* most obviously addressed. Few books were more beloved by Victorian teachers, based upon the frequency with which they presented *Sesame and Lilies* as a prize to their best pupils and the large number of editions designed specifically for schoolroom use in Britain and America.[27]

Mrs. Cowper-Temple's low estimate of Ruskin's knowledge of women may have stemmed from her perception that *Sesame and Lilies* painted an impossibly idealized vision of womanhood, one whose expectations no flesh-and-blood woman could ever satisfy. While Ruskin had a gift for forming friendships with girls and women, he was also sometimes disastrously disappointed by them. His stormy relationship with his most influential female disciple, Octavia Hill, illustrates just how powerful an influence Ruskin was on many Victorian middle-class girls and women and how difficult it actually was to be one of Ruskin's queens.

Hill and Ruskin first met in 1853 when they both supported the work of the great Christian socialist theologian Frederick Denison Maurice at the newly established Working Men's College and its associated Ladies' Guild. The Ladies' Guild was an all-female offshoot of the college, founded upon cooperative principles to provide craft training for unskilled girls and women. Hill's able mother, Caroline, served as the guild's first manager and bookkeeper. The college aimed to educate and elevate working men and form bridges of sympathy between rich and poor at a time when most Victorians felt acutely a growing sense of class conflict and estrangement. It attracted a range of elite men as teachers who, like Ruskin, were in more or less open rebellion against Victorian conventions—economic, artistic, social, cultural, theological, and sometimes sexual as well. Bohemian Pre-Raphaelites like Dante Gabriel Rossetti mingled with socialists like J. M. Ludlow; paragons of domestic respectability such as Thomas Hughes taught side by side with the minor poet A. J. Munby, who secretly married his maid-of-all-work, Hannah Cullwick, and obsessively photographed laboring women.[28] By the time Ruskin first met the fifteen-year-old Hill, she had already begun to exhibit her precocious passion for helping the poor.

Hill was reared in a heady but penurious atmosphere of social service under the loving tutelage of her mother and her grandfather, Dr. Southwood Smith, one of Britain's most respected sanitary reformers. Like Rose La Touche after her, she studied drawing with Ruskin, but her competence and her financial need soon led Ruskin to employ her in executing copies to illustrate his lectures and writings. Hill shared Ruskin's antagonism to female suffrage and his views on women's education. Anticipating some of Ruskin's arguments in *Sesame and Lilies* about women's education as a complement to men's, Hill suggested in an 1860 article that the ladies attending the women's classes at the Working Men's College did so to sympathize better with the tastes of their husbands, brothers, and fathers.[29] Hill revered Ruskin and rejoiced in their deepening friendship, which was

"so precious" it "can hardly be described even in words."[30] Ruskin partially reciprocated Hill's affection and gave her a copy of Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House," whose words and message he cited approvingly in *Sesame and Lilies*.[31] However, by the early 1860s, it was clear that Ruskin neither expected nor wanted Hill to be an angel *in* the house. Instead, he provided the capital and lent his prestige to launch Hill's career as Britain's most celebrated housing reformer. Hill managed the growing number of working men's properties Ruskin owned in South London according to her own principles of domestic economy, which included personal visiting among tenants by lady rent collectors. Far from devoting her time managing servants and children within her own home — a key role both Patmore and Ruskin envisioned for middle-class women — Hill spent her days tramping through impoverished streets, evaluating applications for relief sent to the Charity Organisation Society she helped to establish in the late 1860s, training new women workers, and devising schemes to preserve open spaces for city and country dwellers alike. Hill's varied and innovative public activities suggest that the flesh-and-blood "queens" closest to Ruskin received his financial and moral support in shaping unmistakably public roles and identities for women.[32]

By the mid-1870s, Hill had emerged as a formidable figure in her own right in the world of metropolitan charity. While her admiration for Ruskin's inspirational power remained undiminished, she had come to recognize his impracticality as a guide to pressing social problems. According to Ruskin, Hill had dared to express private doubt about his "ability to conduct any practical enterprise successfully." Ruskin's reprisal for such heresy was swift and merciless. He used his monthly letters to working men, *Fors Clavigera,* as the pulpit from which to denounce the supposed treachery and disloyalty of his erstwhile protégée. In yet another undermining of the "privacy" of women's separate sphere, Ruskin insisted on publishing and viciously annotating all his correspondence with Hill about the miserable affair. Even today, it is impossible to read Ruskin's diatribes against Hill in *Fors* without feeling the pain they inflicted on her and the ensuing long period of madness in Ruskin's life they adumbrated.[33]

Ruskin never quite mended his relationship with Hill, though in private he came to realize how cruel and unfair he had been thanks to the efforts of siblings Sydney and Olive Cockerell, youthful admirers of both Ruskin and Hill in the late 1880s. In response to one of the Cockerells' entreaties that Ruskin and Hill reconcile, Ruskin explicitly paralleled his estrangement from Hill with the injuries he believed he had sustained from the La

Touches during his ill-fated romance with Rose. " 'I never forgive,' he answered firmly; 'it was too great an injury. And yet I can "forgive," ' he added after a pause. 'I forgave the parents who denied me the girl I loved and I invited them to Brantwood.' "[34] In a deeply revealing moment, Ruskin thought about the two girl "queens" who, he chose to believe, had most profoundly failed him.

The impossibly exalted burdens Ruskin imposed on his ideal queens in *Sesame and Lilies* were matched by the equally unrealistic and even cruel expectations he imposed on the flesh-and-blood "queens" who were closest to his heart (Rose La Touche) and to his work (Octavia Hill). Ruskin's violent break with Hill in the 1870s does not alter the fact that two decades earlier he enthusiastically had launched her public work as a housing reformer. By investing a substantial amount of his own capital in purchasing property for her to manage, he demonstrated his deep commitment to the efficacy of Hill's "queenly" authority to ameliorate — if not eradicate — the worst evils of capitalism: its undermining of the physical and moral foundations of the home. Hill's distinguished public career illustrates that Ruskin's "queens" could and did live creative and accomplished public lives by exploiting the tensions within domestic ideology, and, in particular, the version of it Ruskin put forward in *Sesame and Lilies*.

Victorian Spinsters, Edwardian Feminists, and Queenly Men Reading Ruskin

Despite the fact that *Sesame and Lilies* assumed women would live within male-controlled households as wives, daughters, and sisters, women like Hill were among Ruskin's most outspoken defenders and followers. Unmarried women of the middle class had vaulted into public consciousness in the aftermath of the 1851 census not merely as an expanding segment of the population but as ominous "social problems." "Redundant women," a quasi-scientific phrase used by many Victorian polemicists as an alternative to "old maids," were symptoms of middle-class women's growing autonomy and threats to conjugal domesticity.[35] A reviewer of *Sesame and Lilies* for the progressive women's periodical *Victoria Magazine* noted in 1865 that Ruskin had conspicuously failed either to acknowledge or to grapple with the implications of the half million "surplus" women in mid-Victorian England. Writers and readers of *Victoria Magazine* were in the vanguard of debates about women's roles in society. The magazine offered penetrating

attacks on the sexual double standard that excused male lust and blasted women's exclusion, even as spectators, from Parliament.[36] Given the advanced views of *Victoria Magazine,* the reviewer's sincere admiration for Ruskin is at least as notable as her critique of him. "Our hearts swell with gratitude towards the man [Ruskin] who can thus nobly conceive and trace out woman's mission," she acknowledged. At the same time, she was astonished by Ruskin's failure to see that woman "is not only the helpmate of man — the dispenser of all that is loveliest in him — but that she has often, alone and unsupported, to live without a home to sweeten, and wander forth in the rough and stony places of the world's highway." In light of the economic challenges facing single women, Ruskin's contention that women could afford to be educated merely as helpers to men rather than as future workers was "worse than useless." Furthermore, the reviewer observed that the sort of woman likely to seek out the education Ruskin envisioned for her would "naturally have her own thoughts on all important subjects" quite apart from the views of men.[37]

Rather than castigating Ruskin, the anonymous reviewer for *Victoria Magazine* was intent on interpreting his writings according to her own lights. She invoked Ruskin's words to support women's advances in higher education and their claims to be "more powerful in the affairs of the world." Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies,* the reviewer believed, had helpfully contributed to the debate over "how to turn the powers of women to the best and highest advantage" by encouraging the education of women "in questions of public and national morality, the fulfillment of public duty." Acutely aware of Ruskin's limitations and contradictions, the reviewer nonetheless saw Ruskin as an ally in women's struggle to gain a voice in shaping the nation's destiny.[38] Nearly twenty-five years later, the pioneering scholar and librarian Lucy Toulmin Smith assessed *Sesame and Lilies* for the young women's periodical *Atalanta* and was even more appreciative. "His ideal of womanhood and woman's duties is lofty," she reminded readers, and *Sesame and Lilies* contained "one of the messages the most reasonable and vivifying ever spoken to women."[39] *Atalanta's* editor, the "new girl" novelist L. T. Meade (Mrs. Alfred Toulmin Smith) quite literally presented herself to her public as an embodiment of Ruskin's queen. She not only cared deeply for the sufferings of the poor and edited magazines and wrote wholesome books for girls and young woman, but was a devoted mother and wife. When the evangelical *Sunday Magazine* sent an interviewer to speak with Mrs. Meade "At Home" about her life and writerly craft, Mrs. Meade made sure the article was accompanied by an image of her wearing fashionably conventional clothes, sitting in her beautiful garden surrounded by her children.[40]

Sesame and Lilies had a vast bourgeois female readership in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it appealed particularly to highly accomplished single women, who, like the *Victoria Magazine* reviewer, read it admiringly but critically. Because Ruskin was rightly associated with advancing women's higher education, many unmarried students and faculty at the first women's colleges approvingly cited him in justifying their intellectual labors and in defining their social roles. In Alice Stronach's *Newnham Friendship,* a novel written by and about spinster graduates of Newnham College, Cambridge, the strong-minded female protagonists, bursting with Ruskinian social idealism, vie to win the "Sesame," a coveted scholarship to support social work in the London slums.[41] The real-life Newnham don and pioneering anthropologist Jane Ellen Harrison used the single-sex Sesame Club as her London pied-à-terre. Populated by an array of advanced women entering new professions — many far from Ruskin's demure queenly ideal — the Sesame Club's "one high toned room" was called the Ruskin Room. Interestingly, in both fiction and life, women commemorated the kingly Sesame rather than the queenly Lilies in paying homage to Ruskin's contribution to the advancement of their sex. Harrison was not altogether impressed with Ruskin, whom she called an "old humbug" for demanding that the books in Newnham's college library be bound in white vellum and then sending his own works bound in dark blue calf.[42]

Miss Carrie May of the Cheltenham Ladies College gladly accepted the burden Ruskin imposed on educated women in *Sesame and Lilies* to redress the suffering, injustice, and misery of the world around them. But, like so many other single women readers of *Sesame and Lilies,* she took Ruskin's arguments much farther than he cared to. She exhorted Cheltenham students and old girls to boycott sweated goods and "help in the formation of new unions, by undertaking some of the work of organisation which the [laboring] women themselves can hardly be expected to carry out unaided when we consider how little time or strength they have to give anything beyond bread-winning."[43] While Ruskin had urged women to understand their roles as consumers in political and economic terms, he abhorred as unwomanly direct organizing by elite women with their working-class sisters. It obliged "ladies" to immerse themselves in the rough and uncouth world of competition and struggle.

Ruskin's words had a talismanic quality for many single women engaged in social work in the Victorian slums who were committed to bettering the lives of the poor and expanding the boundaries of paid work for themselves. Margaret Sewell, the determined and creative warden of the first women's settlement house established in the slums of South London,

concluded her essay on "The Conditions of Effectual Work Amongst the Poor" by quoting at length Ruskin's belief in the indispensability of "self-command, whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced." Sewell's citation of Ruskin seems perverse on at least two counts. First, she strayed far from Ruskin's proscriptions in *Sesame and Lilies* by devoting herself to creating a same-sex community of independent women in a poor and unrespectable neighborhood. Second, Ruskin made no attempt to disguise the fact that he was speaking of "masculine" — and emphatically not "feminine" — work.

The broader context of Sewell's ambitions and her paper make it possible to explain why she turned approvingly to Ruskin. She, like Octavia Hill, championed "scientific" charity and systematic social work for women. As a consequence, she sought to differentiate her progressive agenda for training women workers from popular perceptions of women's philanthropy as "undisciplined sympathy" and "sentimentality." In carving out the profession of social work for women, Sewell was at pains to distance the female scientific charity worker from her predecessor, Lady Bountiful.[44] Sewell appeared to accept Ruskin's definition of masculine work but only so that she could reject for herself and her workers the supposedly undesirable effects of traditional feminine benevolence.[45] In so doing, Sewell and other independent spinsters in the slums ran the risk of being condemned as manly women, indifferent to "feminine" charms and hardened against womanly sympathy.

In a similar fashion, Alice Lewis, writing for the Christian socialist-inspired *Economic Review,* deployed Ruskin's queenly metaphor to legitimize women's leading roles as housing reformers. "Women are born rulers," she explained, "if we may accept Ruskin's authority":

> Not every man aspires to be a king but every woman aspires to be a queen; and it is this tendency towards rules that makes of use in a London slum. . . . Women's peculiar work has always been keeping house; it is now almost an instinct, and house management is only housekeeping on a large scale. . . . And for this wider sphere of work we need the same qualifications — orderliness, power of rapid judgement, eyes that see, perception of character, economy in buying, knowledge of sanitation, and, above all, the capacity to exercise firm rule which will fit itself to the needs of the human creatures for whom we are working.[46]

Lewis shared with Isabella Beeton, author of the Victorian age's best-selling guide to cooking and housewifery, the belief that the qualities of an ideal housewife resembled those of an effective general in the field of

battle.[47] But unlike both Beeton and Ruskin, Lewis actually looked forward to women deploying their "housewifely" qualifications as experts in emerging social welfare professions such as housing management.

Some single women mobilized Ruskin's ideas to support their own radical sexual politics. Ellice Hopkins, the spinster social purity crusader, draped her womanly mission under Ruskin's banner. She, like Ruskin, fostered a quasi-chivalrous view of relations between the sexes. Her extended manifesto, *The Power of Womanhood, or Mothers and Sons, A Book for parents and those in loco parentis,* is literally framed by quotes from Ruskin in the first and last chapters. Ruskin's claim that women's role in marriage was to "purge into purity" all that is dark in men lay at the core of Hopkins's plea to abandon the sexual double standard undergirding male vice and female prostitution.[48] While *Lilies* was preoccupied with the ideal woman, Hopkins focused on the need for men to rise to the standard "which women choose to set them." She saw purity as a women's crusade, but she demanded and expected men to adhere to her vision of strict celibacy outside of marriage. Far from shying away from confronting sexual misconduct, she walked among the poorest and most "degraded" victims of male lust in the seaside resort of Brighton and claimed sisterhood with them. A crusader against vice, Hopkins nonetheless placed herself in intimate proximity to prostitutes and their sexually dangerous world. Contrary to Ruskin, Hopkins argued that women could achieve their purifying mission only through the parliamentary franchise and organizing women's labor to secure living wages. She skillfully transformed Ruskin's arguments about women's obligation to expand their private moral values into public life to justify women's suffrage.[49]

How can we account for the paradoxical appeal of Ruskin and *Sesame and Lilies* to spinsters like Sewell and Hopkins, precisely those women Ruskin chose to exclude from his gendered construction of political economy? First, middle-class spinsters were among the few women who had the time, educational skills, and legal independence to pursue fully the social dimensions of Ruskin's mission for women. Second, they also had a great deal at stake in the way in which they interpreted *Sesame and Lilies*. Spinsters were at best a marginal group with very little social and economic standing. By reading *Sesame and Lilies* as a call for them to enter into welfare work, they used it to justify their authority over laboring people and created fledgling professions that allowed them to eke out respectable livelihoods. Third, Ruskin-inspired spinsters limited their professional and social work ambitions to arenas of activity that appeared to be logical extensions of the domestic sphere. They gladly used the rhetoric of domesticity

in proclaiming their suitability to be social mothers engaged in housekeeping on a grand scale. Some single women, like the author of a lively essay "In Defence of Old Maids" published in *The Young Woman* (1897), even claimed that "the more lofty a woman's nature, the less likely she is to marry." The "best and ablest women of the generation" had voluntarily eschewed marriage in favor of working in schools, hospitals, prisons, and workhouses and myriad other philanthropic endeavors.[50] One such exemplary woman, the high Anglican spinster Flora Lucy Freeman, happily recalled that she had even managed to persuade a member of her club for working girls to read *Sesame and Lilies*. Freeman left no record of what the servant girl thought about the book, though it is hard to imagine she found its vision of bourgeois housekeeping and education very edifying.[51]

Finally and most speculatively, spinsters may well have felt kinship with Ruskin because he — as they did — occupied ambiguous terrain outside the boundaries of marriage. Ruskin was simultaneously a man who had — and had never been — married since the legal annulment of his marriage to Effie erased the fact of its ever having existed at all. Spinsters were defined negatively as unmarried and sexless. Despite their apparent celibacy, they were also hypersexualized by many doctors who insistently traced their somatic disorders to unruly psychosexual origins.[52] Contemporaries often represented spinsters as gender and sexual renegades whose moral and sexual purity especially suited them to play leading parts in combating poverty and promoting working-class domesticity. They were peculiarly positioned as both "social problems" and as people well suited to solve the most intractable "social problems" of the age. Many late Victorians concurred with Alice Stronach that the "regeneration of England requires three consecutive generations of single women . . . women without family ties — prepared to work wholeheartedly in the service of their fellow-creatures on boards of guardians, on school boards, on parish councils." Stronach's spinster heroines can only fulfill their *regenerative* mission by renouncing their *generative* capacities as mothers. Their freedom to nurture the outcast poor depends upon the lack of their own biological children.[53]

The authority of spinsters like Ellice Hopkins to enter into the "polluted" spaces of Victorian society — slums and brothel districts — rested upon their own impeccable claims to be sexless and pure. And yet just as Ruskin's queens must go outside their gardens to fulfill their duties, so too spinster social workers, inspired by Ruskin to purify the world, necessarily immersed themselves in the very dirt, disorder, and vice they sought to eradicate. Alice Hodson, who lived with a small colony of educated single women in the slums, vividly captured this tension between her desire to

preserve her own bodily purity and the immanent threat of bodily pollution. "The dirt is so trying," she confessed, "nothing is ever really clean, for dust, fog and smuts are continually depositing themselves, not only on obvious and convenient places, but even the innermost recesses of your being." In language revealing an almost sexualized fear of invasion, she fantasized that "it would be nice to walk about with a sponge, a can of water, and towel hung round the waist; but as this is obviously impossible, the only thing is to go dirty, and take the top layer off whenever you have a chance."[54]

Even at the peak of his influence among advanced women and men in the 1880s and 1890s, some suspected that Ruskin's gender ideology was incompatible with the new physical, social, economic, and psychological freedoms women were claiming for themselves. The novelist George Gissing, unlike so many Victorian spinsters, was quite sure that *Sesame and Lilies* was not a tool of women's emancipation but their oppression. In his 1893 novel about the lives and loves of *Odd Women,* the odious Widdowson demands that his free-spirited and beautiful young wife Monica conform to Ruskin's strictures in *Sesame and Lilies*. "Never had it occurred to Widdowson," the narrator explains, "that a wife remains an individual, with rights and obligations independent of her wifely condition." As Widdowson's despotism drives Monica to ever more desperate measures, he gently explains his vision of the home. "Woman's sphere is the home, Monica. Unfortunately, girls are often obliged to go out and earn their living, but this is unnatural, a necessity which advanced civilization will altogether abolish. You shall read John Ruskin; every word he says about women is good and precious." In Gissing's hands, the message of *Sesame and Lilies* constrains women's freedoms and can offer educated spinsters only "pity" for their "odd" lives.[55]

Gissing's scathing depiction of the gender politics of *Sesame and Lilies* was not unique; however, it remained a distinctly minority position in the 1890s, despite the growing numbers of "New Women" who flagrantly violated Victorian conventions of bourgeois femininity by taking to their bicycles, smoking cigarettes, and daring to venture into urban space without benefit of chaperones. Mrs. E. T. Cook, the wife of the reforming journalist and Ruskin's great editor, feared the consequences of the rising tide of "Ruskin Mania" in 1895. One "dainty, refined Englishwoman" had followed Ruskin's injunctions about manual labor and the virtues of simple living to absurd extremes and spent her days spinning coarse linen garments for herself and her husband. The spinning wheel, which would prove such a potent symbol of anticolonial protest in the hands of an Indian follower of

Ruskin, Mohandas Gandhi, was mere comic affectation in England.[56] Mrs. Cook absolved Ruskin of responsibility for the humorous excesses of his disciples, some of whom tortured their daughters by attempting to rear them according to Ruskin's exacting standards of purity and goodness. Cook, herself an admirer of Ruskin, anticipated the day when "that Ruskinian girl will break loose, and run away into Philistia or Bohemia."[57] In so many respects, the Ruskinian girl already had broken loose from many Victorian conventions of femininity. In performing her queenly mission, she had contributed powerfully to a redefinition of women's sphere which validated spinsterdom and women's benevolent and educational work.

A decade later, *Sesame and Lilies* and its author had fallen into disfavor with the rising generation of emancipated women. Gladys Jones, writing in the June 1906 issue of the *Westminster Review,* belittled *Sesame and Lilies* as "that book, strange to say, much beloved of women." She blasted Ruskin for criticizing class inequalities and then offering his counsels exclusively for wealthy women; for ignoring the economic and social realities of single women's lives; for preaching "pedestal virtues"; for badly misreading Shakespeare's heroines. Unlike the critical reviewer for the *Victoria Magazine* fifty years earlier, Jones could find nothing to praise in *Sesame and Lilies*.[58] What gulf had opened up in the history of women, in general, and readers of *Sesame and Lilies,* in particular, to induce Jones's amnesia about how and why *Sesame and Lilies* had for so long been beloved by women?

The answer can be found in the emergence in the early 1900s of the social and political movement which, for the first time in British history, called itself "feminism." In the late 1890s, British writers occasionally used the term "feminism," but they invariably placed it in quotation marks to signal that it was a French import.[59] In the years immediately following Ruskin's death in 1900, leaders of the multifaceted women's movements of Victorian Britain were challenged by "feminists" — women determined both to gain the parliamentary suffrage at all costs and to develop a far-reaching critique of the ideological and practical consequences of male domination. Even at its inception, feminism was never a monolithic movement capable of wholly disciplining the diverse perspectives brought to it by women who claimed the name feminist. It owed an immense debt to the women's movements out of which it emerged and some of whose leaders and ideas feminists embraced as their own. Many influential Edwardian feminists had themselves played important roles in Victorian women's movements such as the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, the campaign for married women's right to own property, and women's access to

higher education. But the political imperatives of the fledgling movement also dictated that its leaders make choices about whom and what they claimed as antecedents. By the turn of the century, feminists were busily writing their own history even as they were just beginning to enact it.

A few Edwardian feminists, notably Elizabeth and Ben Wolstoneholme Elmy, refused to disavow their youthful admiration for and debts to Ruskin. Manchester-based suffrage campaigners and tireless polemicists on behalf of women's rights, the Elmys helped introduce English readers to the word "feminism" in the late 1890s and promoted its use through their writings for *Westminster Review*. Ben Elmy often published under the nom de plume Ellis Ethelmer, though some Ellis Ethelmer articles such as the 1898 essay "Feminism" were almost certainly joint productions of husband and wife. Feminism was defined as a "phase of larger civilisation; it is the recognition of the autonomy and human right of woman as equal with that of man." Feminism did not entail unsexing either men or women, but instead meant embracing that which is most noble in both. To prove the point, the author rapidly moved from defining feminism to invoking the authority of the American poet of democracy, Walt Whitman, the physiologist-social philosopher Thomas Huxley, and John Ruskin, in particular *Sesame and Lilies*. All three men rejected the prevailing "woman-reviling systems" of their day and prophesized the coming of a "higher humanity."[60] The Elmys' belief that Ruskin's vision of women was compatible with "feminism" found fewer and fewer supporters at the turn of the century, even within the pages of *Westminster Review.*

For most Edwardian feminists, Ruskin had no place in a feminist past. His close ties with leaders of Victorian women's movements in education and social welfare were a source of embarrassment, not pride. Why? By the 1890s, it was clear that Ruskin's views in *Sesame and Lilies* were decidedly old-fashioned. In part because of the pioneering social labors of Ruskin's female disciples, women had vastly expanded the public spaces in government and civic life they claimed for themselves. Women had entered local government in large numbers as electors and as members of school boards (after 1869) and county councils (after 1889); tens of thousands of late Victorian women formed the rank and file of grassroots Conservative and Liberal party organizations; thousands worked as inspectors and friendly visitors for a widening panoply of social welfare programs and institutions.[61] While still denied the right to receive official degrees, they were well entrenched in colleges of their own at Oxford and Cambridge. Women had succeeded in dismantling many of the legal, social, and educational

restrictions prevailing in 1864 while Ruskin's pronouncements on women in the intervening years had grown undeniably more conservative and reactionary. In *Arrows of the Chace,* for example, Ruskin ranted that he could not find "strong enough words to express my hatred and disdain that I feel for the modern idea that woman should cease to be a mother . . . to be an engineer."[62]

But Ruskin's unpopularity among the first generation of women to call themselves feminists cannot wholly be explained by changes in women's status, which made his once-progressive views seem maliciously anachronistic. Several of the most prominent female leaders of the late Victorian campaign against women's suffrage (so-called Antis) were also admirers of Ruskin. They were only too happy to invoke his perspectives, implicitly and explicitly, in defending their antisuffrage views. Mary Ward, a best-selling novelist and pioneer in women's higher education and social reform along with her close friend, Louise Creighton, an accomplished scholar in her own right and wife of the bishop of London, were the authors of the original Appeal Against Female Suffrage in 1889. Both were closely identified with Ruskin. Creighton's meeting and courtship with her brilliant husband, the future bishop of London Mandell Max Creighton, began during one of Ruskin's Oxford lectures in 1871. "Whenever Ruskin lectured we went to hear him," she recalled in her *Memoir;* for years, she could only see the world around her through Ruskin's aesthetic and ethical lens.[63] While Ward was powerfully shaped by her uncle Matthew Arnold and her friend the Oxford idealist philosopher T. H. Green, she too made no attempt to conceal her intellectual debts to Ruskin. In their Appeal, Ward and Creighton used Ruskin's arguments about women's moral purity to argue that the parliamentary suffrage would corrupt them and diminish their capacity to do good by forcing women to take a part in the violence of warfare and empire.[64]

More disastrously for Ruskin's and *Sesame and Lilies*'s standing among turn-of-the-century feminists, "Antis" continued to propound the same arguments in the 1900s which they had put forward in 1889. In her antisuffrage essay "Women and Suffrage" (1908), Lady Lovat turned to Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* and his famous elaboration of the idea of "complementarity" between men and women and the home as haven from the battles of the surrounding world. Ruskin was such a compelling authority, Lovat averred, because of his unwavering "belief in woman and her high destiny." "Never has Ruskin lost an opportunity," she continued, "of avowing his admiration for her gifts, her mission, and her power, provided she follows

those well-indicated paths in which nature, and the common-sense of mankind (and by mankind her own sex should be included), has hitherto held her restrained."[65] Effusive invocations of *Sesame and Lilies* by "Antis" reminded Edwardians that Ruskin was still worth reading. But they also goaded feminists, in the heat of the battle to gain suffrage, to take a firm stand on Ruskin.[66] Ruskin's posthumous encounter with feminists in the first decades of the twentieth century paved the way for Kate Millett, who cast him as the patriarchal bogeyman of *Sexual Politics* (1970).

Scholars have long recognized deep tensions between radical and reactionary, democratic and hierarchal impulses in Ruskin's writings about class and culture. I have argued that we find a similar blend of seemingly opposed tendencies in his vision of gender. Because *Sesame and Lilies* was a text shot through with unstable formulations of gender, some unambiguously conservative and others quite progressive, it should come as no surprise that its female readers could and did find in it both a source of inspiration and loathing. Many Victorian spinsters took much farther than Ruskin intended his injunction to assume public duties, while most Edwardian feminists angrily rejected his idealization of women's housewifely duties and self-sacrifice.

But how did men respond to Ruskin? Did they too read *Sesame and Lilies*? Ruskin inspired a large, devoted, and diverse following among men. One of late Victorian Britain's most influential social reformers, Samuel Barnett, embarked on his remarkable life partnership with his future wife Henrietta by jointly pondering the meanings of *Sesame and Lilies.* They were both committed to Ruskinian ideas about social duty and the complementarity of the sexes. But they also espoused genuine equality between men and women; Samuel more often played the suggestive and intuitive "queenly" role to Henrietta's brashly rational and "kingly" directing one.[67] Among the Barnetts' most cherished visitors to their outpost of Ruskinian idealism in the East London slums during the 1870s was Leonard Montefiore. Scion of one of Anglo-Jewry's most powerful and wealthiest families, Leonard Montefiore combined reverence for Ruskin, whose eloquence he likened to Shakespeare's, with keen sympathy for social outcasts. Montefiore had little truck with conventional ideas about class and gender. An extrovert with a hatred of all "pomposity and pretence," he "had an almost excessive admiration of manly strength and beauty in others" and cultivated intense friendships with a handful of fellow students at Oxford. "Hospitable to strange ideas," he also refused to allow class differences to stand in the way of jolly fellowship with the poor among whom he regularly

went. In Montefiore, we find a configuration of attributes that recurs among many male Ruskinians: self-consciously heterodox ideas about gender; an almost playful rejection of bourgeois domesticity; and keen awareness of the social costs of class alienation.[68]

Most male Ruskinians, unlike their female counterparts, did not single out *Sesame and Lilies* for commentary. More often than not, they were drawn to *Modern Painters, The Stones of Venice, Fors Clavigera,* and especially *Unto This Last*. The Fabian socialist playwright and wit George Bernard Shaw famously insisted that Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris, not Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, had provided the intellectual foundations of British socialism and the Labour Party. Ruskin's influence is unmistakable in the writings of leading social democratic thinkers such as J. A. Hobson, who wrote a wide-ranging biography of Ruskin (1898) just a few years before publishing his landmark study, *Imperialism.* While Ruskin preached "the subordination of women" in *Sesame and Lilies,* Hobson was willing to excuse his retrograde gender ideology because it grew out of his "soulful protest" against "a shallow philosophy of natural right."[69]

Perhaps as a consequence of Ruskin's centrality to the genealogy of male socialist, radical, and progressive thought, scholars have not noticed just how important he was in encouraging Victorian men to think about masculinity in new and sometimes quite radical ways. Many male Ruskinians were drawn to Ruskin's powerful ethical critique of capitalism and of bourgeois values, including bourgeois conceptions of manliness and womanliness. They responded not only to the content of Ruskin's message, with its insistence that elite men should cultivate brotherly affection and love for their subordinates, but to Ruskin's own subversive charisma as a prose stylist and as a man. Ruskin's jeremiads of the 1860s may have been explicitly about the sins of capitalism, but many of his male listeners and readers were attracted — or sometimes repelled — by signs of his unconventional sexual persona.

The first (and most vicious) reviewers of *Sesame and Lilies* were almost certainly men who were as disturbed by Ruskin's tone as they were unconvinced by his arguments.[70] Ruskin's offense, in their eyes, was his loss of control over his words and ideas, which one reviewer likened to those of a "shrieking revivalist." Given Ruskin's distress at the impact of "shrieking revivalists" on his beloved Rose, we can only imagine how infuriated he was by this comparison. The reviewer for *Saturday Review* disdained Ruskin's shrill "scream" and "shriek"; his "sentimental writing"; and his "indecent arrogance."[71] A more sympathetic but still fiercely critical

reviewer for *Contemporary Review* concurred that Ruskin had written *Sesame and Lilies* "in a scream." Without directly accusing Ruskin of being unmanly, these reviewers implied that *Sesame and Lilies* was the work of a hysteric, who, like members of the "shrieking sisterhood" of emancipated women, appealed to irrational emotions rather than calm reason.[72] "To lose temper or betray over-excitement," wrote a reviewer for *Contemporary Review,* "is of all things the most fatal to him who would influence Englishmen: they have a strange, cruel way of turning from the earnest man's matter to analyse him and his earnestness."[73]

When contemporaries did turn from Ruskin's "matter" to the man himself, they often detected signs of profound gender and sexual ambiguity. Ruskin's Christian socialist colleague F. J. Furnivall claimed that he had "never met any man whose charm of manner at all approacht [*sic*] Ruskin's. Partly feminine it was, no doubt; but the delicacy, the sympathy, the gentleness and affectionateness of his way, the fresh and penetrating things he said, the boyish fun, the earnestness, the interest he showed in all deep matters, combined to make a whole which I have never seen equalld." "In Mr. Ruskin himself," W. J. Dawson observed, "there is a certain feminine element that perhaps enables him to judge woman with a finer delicacy and more accurate eye than belong to most men; certainly with a graver sympathy and more chivalrous regard."[74]

Peter Quennell, one of Ruskin's many biographers, paints a portrait of Ruskin that moves well beyond fond allusions to Ruskin's mingling of masculine and feminine traits.

> Kisses he bestowed with a remarkable exuberance, not only on attractive women and children but on a mendicant Roman friar or a Venetian archaeologist; while "Darling" was a favourite form of address, whether it was applied to Downs, his elderly gardener, Miss Kate Greenaway, the spinster protegée whom he advised and teased and scolded, or some seven-year-old girl whom he encountered in a drawing room. His worship of youth was vehement as ever; but it remained always strangely innocent. There was nothing about him of the lickerish middle-aged man; for his masculine ardour was counterbalanced by a touch of feminine delicacy, and his femininity had increased with age as his masculine passions were denied their proper outlet. Many admirers noted this ambiguous charm; with his "small bird-like head and hands," his celebrated blue cravat, "and the collars and the frock-coat, which made him look something between an old-fashioned nobleman of the Forties, and

> an angel that had lost its way." "He moved one (wrote Canon Scott Holland) as one might have expected to be moved by some frail and charming woman."[75]

It is difficult to disentangle Holland's enthusiasm for Ruskin's persona as an unconventional man and moralist from his admiration of Ruskin's radicalism. Quennell's description presents us with an almost "camp" portrait of Ruskin. It teeters on the borders of gender and sexual identities in revealing a Ruskin who is both knowing and innocent, a perpetual youth and an aging prophet.

Ruskin, the "chartered libertine" author of *Sesame and Lilies,* appealed deeply to theatrical and flamboyant men like the celibate High Anglican slum priests Scott Holland, James Adderley, and Stewart Headlam. These second-generation Christian socialists of the 1870s and 1880s were determined to explore heterodox gender and sexual identities and shared Ruskin's commitment to aestheticizing social problems and politicizing aesthetics. They eschewed conjugal domesticity and devoted their lives to serving the poor in slum districts. Such direct and loving contact between rich and poor, Ruskin argued in *Unto This Last,* was "as appointed and necessary a law . . . as the flow of stream to sea."[76] Some, like Headlam, were even notable for their radically egalitarian sexual politics and support for the economic and political rights of laboring women.

Nor should it seem difficult to understand why Oscar Wilde, perhaps the late Victorian world's most notable literary Decadent and sexual dissident, joined a circle of ardent young Oxford students who, under Ruskin's tutelage, tried to repair a road in a village outside of Oxford in 1873. Wilde remained deeply interested in the wide array of cultural philanthropic projects inspired by Ruskin, and most of Wilde's writings reveal his ongoing interest in that fusion of cross-class brotherhood and aestheticism characteristic of so many of the projects led by male Ruskinians.[77] In the aftermath of Wilde's disastrous 1895 trial for committing acts of "gross indecency," Headlam and Adderley were conspicuously the only two clergymen to offer Wilde support and comfort.

In the mid-1880s, another sexual "invert," Charles Ashbee, left Kings College, Cambridge, with a burning desire to apply Ruskin's ideas to his work in the slums of London. Ashbee dreamed of forging loving bonds of Whitmanic comradeship between elite and laboring men by establishing a Guild and School of Handicraft founded upon Ruskinian principles of socialism, craft training, and production. Just as activist women chose to focus only on the gemlike aphorisms that suited their goals, so too Ashbee

offered his working-class audiences a highly selective version of Ruskin. Ashbee reported to his friend Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson that "Ruskin goes down like anything and I feel that I am learning a deal a deal. First in discovering to myself the great truths in Ruskin's teaching, for the man grows upon one and becomes a very giant to one, and second, from the B.[ritish] W.[orking] M.[an], *his* keenness, *his* strength, *his* enthusiasm." Dickinson, a bit more skeptical, was astonished that the "BWM" of East London "should be keen on Ruskin." But he expected that Ashbee "gave them all the sweet and none of the bitter, i.e. all the socialism and none of the hero-worship."[78]

While *Sesame and Lilies* was not a particularly important Ruskin text for these men, it exerted an immense influence on one of the founding fathers of French literary modernism, Marcel Proust. Proust, like Wilde, Ashbee, and Dickinson, was a homosexual whose imaginative sensibility was shaped by reading — and translating into French — Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*. Proust's relation with Ruskin's thought and writing "began with the casualness of a love affair." Proust's infatuation with Ruskin's ideas and prose, Richard Macksey has argued, "could stand as a paradigm for the trajectory of all those amorous case histories chronicled later in his [Proust's] synoptic novel [*À la recherche du temps perdu*]." In the extended preface to his translation of *Sesame and Lilies,* Proust argued that reading was "salutary" when it functioned like magic keys opening "to our innermost selves the doors of abodes into which we would not have known how to penetrate."[79] *Sesame and Lilies* was such a "salutary" text for Proust.

Proust perceived deep tensions in Ruskin between his "rather bourgeois" presentation of some of his ideas and the moral profundity of his message. Proust imagined how Flaubert's fictional creation Madame Bovary, the emblematic bourgeoise-in-rebellion against sexual repression, would have responded to the moral injunctions of *Sesame and Lilies*. "Ruskin, when he writes, never bears in mind Mme. Bovary, who can read him. Or rather he loves to offend her and to appear mediocre to her." But he only "appears" mediocre to those who are incapable of grasping the full meaning of his "masked" messages. For Proust, the experience of reading *Sesame and Lilies* led him to collapse the distinction between pleasure and duty, to see private desire and social obligation as inseparable parts of a single ethical system. Proust confessed that such a startling conclusion, so deeply at odds with conventional Christian morality, entailed "straining, and rather roughly" Ruskin's thought.[80] We need not accept Proust's radical interpretation of *Sesame and Lilies* to recognize that it importantly participates in a much broader pattern of heterodox responses — by male and female readers,

spinsters and bachelors, socialists and homosexuals — to this seemingly straightforward piece of high Victorian morality.

Sesame and Lilies continues to provoke strong responses in its readers and to raise important questions about gender and class, sameness and difference, sexuality and social identity. This essay has argued that *Sesame and Lilies* was indisputably an exemplary expression of Victorian separate spheres ideology. But it has also shown just how riddled with tensions the theory and practice of this ideology were. The separate spheres of men and women, public and private, were not so separate after all. *Sesame and Lilies* tends to be most thought-provoking precisely where it reveals its own ideological fault lines. Ruskin assumes women, by their essential natures, possess different and greater moral capacities and sympathetic faculties than men. These differences provide the foundation for women's queenly authority and their queenly mission to serve others, which in turn compel them to move outside their homes into the messy, disordered world of capitalist inequalities and injustices. To a remarkable extent, Victorian women readers of *Sesame and Lilies* were inspired by Ruskin's words to make ever broader — and more public — claims to cleanse their morally and physically tainted society. Many of these women, like Ruskin himself, lived their lives outside the dominant sexual system of heterosexual marriage and domesticity to which they nonetheless remained ideologically committed.

We rightly associate Ruskin's influence among male readers with that coterie of advanced political thinkers who spanned the spectrum from Christian Socialism, New Liberalism, progressivism to radicalism and outright socialism. At the same time, many of these same men, anxious to experiment with new ways of being manly in the late nineteenth century, were attracted to Ruskin's writings and to his ambiguous gender and sexual persona. Some of these men were homosexuals but most were not. For Ruskin and his male and female readers alike, social and political questions cannot be divorced from issues about gender roles and sexual identities.

In the decade after Ruskin's death, Edwardian men and women tried to sort out their relation with Ruskin and with their Victorian fathers and mothers. In an essay full of only half-jesting resentment at the Edwardian "sex revolt," Austin Harrison satirically commented upon the changing meaning of molding a life according to the principles of *Sesame and Lilies*. Ruskin, Harrison recalled, had once been an icon of bohemian avant-garde femininity and masculinity in his youth in the 1880s when "we were all Pre-Raphaelites." As a small boy, he sat at the feet of a beautiful lady (presumably his mother) who, every third day "read to me 'Sesame and

Lilies,' and descanted upon its teaching." He dressed for the part of a Ruskinian youth with his "hair cut long like the Cavaliers, clad in a gabardine which the boys in Kensington Gardens would throw mud at; and though a good deal of 'Sesame' seemed to me rather 'pie jaw,' it was an aesthetic education." But from the vantage of 1911, *Sesame and Lilies* was hopelessly out of date — no longer a sign of advanced femininity and masculinity but of nostalgia for a quaint aesthetic past.[81] This essay has tried to recapture the mental landscape of Harrison's youth, in which women and men found encouragement in *Sesame and Lilies* to change not only the world around them but the world within themselves.

NOTES

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1. Ruskin sometimes added or omitted a third chapter and wrote several prefaces. Ruskin's editors E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn provide an extensive history of the publication of *Sesame and Lilies*. They account for 160,000 printed copies by 1906, but there were also thirty-five printings in the United States in the nineteenth century according to Roger Stein, *John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Cook and Wedderburn rightly note in their introduction to volume 18 that *Sesame and Lilies,* "in its original and in its most widely circulated form, consists of two lectures entitled respectively 'Of Kings' Treasuries' and 'Of Queens' Gardens' " (liv). They also provide a detailed and lengthy bibliographical note that details the content and form of every edition of *Sesame and Lilies* from 1865 to 1904. See *The Works of John Ruskin,* edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 18 (London: George Allen, 1905), pp. 5–18. Hereinafter, I will refer to this edition of *Sesame and Lilies* by volume and section number or parenthetically in the text with section number only.

2. Review of the "Elia" edition of *Sesame and Lilies*, *The Dial* 19 (1895): 392.

3. John Ruskin to Coventry Patmore, June 1865, in Basil Champneys, ed., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore,* vol. 2 (London:

George Bell, 1900), p. 283. He later came to believe that *Lilies* in particular contained "everything . . . I know of vital truth." See *Fors Clavigera,* Letter 57, as quoted in introduction, in *Works,* 18:xx.

4. See Anthony Trollope's review of *Sesame and Lilies* in *Fortnightly Review* (July 15, 1865): 633–35.

5. Henry James, "Contemporary Notes on Whistler vs. Ruskin," in *Views and Reviews* (1908; reprt. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), p. 210, originally published as an unsigned note in the *Nation,* December 19, 1878. James offered his remarks in the context of Ruskin's trial in 1878 for libeling the American painter James McNeill Whistler by describing his art as "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

6. On the fusion of progressive and reactionary elements in Ruskin, see Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1788–1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958).

7. See Anna Jameson, *Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour: Two Lectures on the Social Employments of Women* (London: Longman, 1859); and Louisa Twining, *Recollections of Workhouse Visiting and Management During Twenty-five Years* (London: C. K. Paul, 1880).

8. See John Ruskin, "Preface of 1862" to *Unto This Last* in *Works,* 17:3.

9. As one recent critic has rightly observed, "by making housewives into queens rather than angels, [Ruskin] compares them to the very public and politically powerful — but entirely prosaic — Queen Victoria." See Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, *Ruskin's Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1998) 18. See also her extended analysis of "Of Queens' Gardens" in chapter 5.

10. See paragraphs xiii and xvii in "The Nature of Gothic," ch. vi, *Stones of Venice,* vol. II.

11. As Sharon Aronofsky Weltman astutely notes, Ruskin does "not relinquish the polarities he appears to undo; rather he maintains them in an ever-collapsing dynamic." *Ruskin's Mythic Queen*, 150.

12. *Stones of Venice,* vol. II, *Works*, 10:193, 197. From the 1880s onward, such perspectives powerfully informed members of the Women's Cooperative Guild, led by Margaret Llewellyn Davies, the daughter of one of Ruskin's friends. Davies and the Guild ultimately moved beyond issues of consumption in defending the rights and interests of laboring women. On consumption as women's "revolutionary weapon," see Catherine Webb, *The Woman with the Basket: The History of the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1883–1927* (Manchester, 1927).

13. See Boyd Hilton's brilliant exposition of moderate and extreme evangelical ideas about love and political economy in *The Age of Atone-*

ment: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1865 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

14. In the preface to the 1882 "small" edition of *Sesame and Lilies,* Ruskin himself came to see *Sesame and Lilies* as closely tied to *Unto This Last*. See *Works,* 18:52.

15. *Unto This Last* in *Works,* 17:28, 72.

16. On this, see Seth Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840 to 1914," in *Mothers of a New World,* ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge, 1993).

17. *The Woman's Herald* (March 2, 1893): 29.

18. On domesticity as a response to industrial capitalism, see John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinities and the Middle Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

19. The story of Ruskin's relationship to Rose La Touche is explored in depth by Derrick Leon, *Ruskin the Great Victorian* (London, 1949) but the definitive account upon which I have drawn is Van Akin Burd's lengthy introduction to *John Ruskin and Rose La Touche: Her Unpublished Diaries of 1861 and 1867* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

20. Ruskin left his own account of Rose and how he got his nicknames in his unfinished autobiography, *Praeterita*. See *Works,* 35:56. Most of the third chapter of the third volume of *Praeterita* is devoted to Ruskin's relationships with the La Touches.

21. Van Akin Burd, introduction to *John Ruskin and Rose La Touche,* p. 92.

22. All quotes from Van Akin Burd, introduction to *John Ruskin and Rose La Touche,* p. 107.

23. *Praeterita*, section 56, *Works*, 35:56.

24. In recognition of her love and support of him, Ruskin dedicated the 1871 edition of *Sesame and Lilies* to Mrs. Cowper-Temple.

25. See Isabella Fyvie Mayo, "When I Met John Ruskin," *The Young Woman* (June 1900): 344.

26. On the affinities between Ruskin and Dodgson and their interest in the Liddell sisters, see Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially chapter 3.

27. See the often-reprinted edition of *Sesame and Lilies* with notes by Lois G. Hufford, teacher of English literature in the High School of Indianapolis (Indianapolis, 1894), and the edition and introduction by Herbert Bates, head teacher of English in the Manual Training High School of Brooklyn, New York (New York, 1900).

28. See Derek Hudson, *Munby, Man of Two Worlds* (London: Gambit, 1972). See also Griselda Pollock, " 'With My Own Eyes': Fetishism, the Labouring Body and the Colour of Its Sex," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 342–82.

29. Gillian Darley, *Octavia Hill* (London: Constable, 1990), p. 58.

30. Octavia Hill to Emma Baumgartner, January 18, 1863, as quoted in C. Edmund Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill, as told in her letters* (London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 203.

31. Ibid., p. 194.

32. Hill chronicled her work with Ruskin before their break in a series of articles reprinted in Octavia Hill, *Homes of the London Poor* (London: Macmillan, 1875).

33. Hill expressed her agony over the break with Ruskin to a fellow-admirer of Ruskin, Henrietta Barnett. See Octavia Hill to Henrietta Barnett, February 1878, Hill Papers, British Library of Economic and Political Science, Coll. Misc. 512.

34. See the Sydney Cockerell Papers, British Library, Add MS 52571, ff. 19–20.

35. See Francis Power Cobbe, *Essays on the Pursuits of Women* (London: E. Faithfull, 1863), in praise of the freedoms and possibilities of women's single life.

36. On the sexual double standard and the restrictive laws governing married women's property, see "One Sided Morality," *Victoria Magazine* (April and May 1866).

37. See "Mr. Ruskin on Books and Women," *Victoria Magazine* (November 1865): 76, and "Mr. Ruskin on Books and Women," *Victoria Magazine* (December 1865): 131.

38. See "Mr. Ruskin on Books and Women," *Victoria Magazine* (November 1865) and "Mr. Ruskin on Books and Women," *Victoria Magazine* (December 1865).

39. Lucy Toulmin Smith [Mrs. L. T. Meade], "English Men and Women of Letters of the Nineteenth Century, John Ruskin," *Atalanta* (August 1889): 747. I explore Meade's blend of gender and sexual radicalism and conservatism in "Nasty Books: Dirt, Sex and Cross-Class Sisterhood in Victorian and Edwardian London," paper presented at the American Historical Association, Boston, January 2001.

40. "Mrs. L. T. Meade at Home," *Sunday Magazine* 23 (1894): 618.

41. Alice Stronach, *A Newnham Friendship* (London: Blackie and Son, 1901), p. 99. The creator of the scholarship in the novel, Lady Diana Ashurst, is described by the narrator as "an ardent Ruskinite."

42. On the Ruskin Room, see Jessie Stewart, *Jane Ellen Harrison, A Portrait in Letters* (London, 1959), 40; on Harrison's own meetings with Ruskin, see Jane Ellen Harrison, *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (London, 1925), p. 44.

43. Miss Carrie May, "Social Responsibility," address to Conference of the Guild of Cheltenham Ladies College, published in *The Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine* 22 (Autumn 1890): 60, 69, 70.

44. See Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work, Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales, 1850–1914* (Hamden, Conn., 1973), p. 9.

45. See Margaret Sewell, "The Conditions of Effectual Work Amongst the Poor," *Charity Organisation Society Occasional Paper* no. 41 (September 1893), p. 8. Clara Grant, an unmarried child-welfare advocate and school manager in the south London slums, also invoked Ruskin in explaining her work in the 1880s and 1890s. See Clara Grant, *Farthing Bundles* (London: A. and E. Walter, 1931), pp. 42, 86.

46. Alice Lewis, "The Housing of the Poor in London," *Economic Review* (April 1900): 168.

47. See Isabella Beeton, "Duties of the Mistress of the House," from Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861) as excerpted in Janet Murray, *Strong-Minded Women and Other Lost Voices from Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), pp. 83–88.

48. Hopkins was quoting from Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive* (1866). See *Works,* 18:491.

49. See Ellice Hopkins, *The Power of Womanhood, or Mothers and Sons, A Book for parents and those in loco parentis* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1899), pp. 225, 224, 192. See also Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880–1930* (London: Pandora, 1985), ch. 1. Unlike Jeffreys, I argue for the need to distinguish the activism of women like Hopkins in the 1880s from the movement that will later be called feminism at the turn of the century.

50. Phyllis Browne, "In Defence of Old Maids," *The Young Woman* (November 1897): 62–63.

51. Flora Lucy Freeman, *Religious and Social Work Amongst Girls,* with a prefatory letter by R. R. Dolling (London: Skeffington, 1901), p. 69.

52. Though Isaac Baker Brown did not represent a mainstream position within Victorian gynecology, he viewed his patients, many of whom were spinsters drawn to benevolent work as nurses and sisters of charity, as sexually dangerous. He performed cliterodectomies as the appropriate cure for the symptoms of hysteria exhibited by his patients.

53. Stronach, *Newnham Friendship,* p. 216.

54. Alice Hodson, *Letters from a Settlement* (London: E. Arnold, 1909), pp. 12–13. A graduate of Lady Margaret Hall, Hodson worked at the college's settlement in South London with a boys' club at Waterloo Crypt. She noted that her father believed that a woman's sphere should be the home, but also believed his daughter should be well informed and educated.

55. George Gissing, *Odd Women* (1893; reprt. New York: First Meridian Classic, 1983), p. 173. My interpretation of Ruskin differs markedly from Elaine Showalter's introduction to this edition, x–xii.

56. See Patrick Brantlinger, "A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism: John Ruskin, William Morris, and Gandhism," *Critical Inquiry* (spring 1996): 466–85. Gandhi alluded to *Sesame and Lilies* in his sustained critique of British claims to civilizational superiority over India. "Women [in Britain], who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or they slave away in factories." See M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and other writings,* ed., Anthony J. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 37.

57. Mrs. E. T. Cook, "Ruskin Mania," *Good Words* 35, no. 38 (1895): 539–40.

58. Gladys Jones, "Ruskin's Views on Women. From a Woman's Point of View," *Westminster Review* (June 1906): 685–88.

59. On the French origins of "feminisme" see Charles Dawbarn, " 'Feminisme' in France," *The Nineteenth Century* (November 1906): 817–22. For examples of the use of the word *feminism* as a French import in the 1890s, see Juliette Adam, "The Position of Woman in France," *The Humanitarian* (February 1897): 85.

60. Ellis Ethelmer, "Feminism," *Westminster Review* 49 (January 1898): 60–61.

61. See Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

62. Ruskin first published this statement in French in *L'Espérance, Journal Mensuel, organe de l'Association des Femmes,* on May 8, 1873. He republished it in *Arrows of the Chace*. See *Works,* 34:509.

63. Louise Creighton, *Memoir of a Victorian Woman: Reflections of Louise Creighton, 1850–1936,* ed. James Covert (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 36, 47, 92.

64. "An Appeal Against Female Suffrage," *The Nineteenth Century* (June 1889): 781–87. See also Mary Ward, "The Women's Anti-Suffrage Movement," *The Nineteenth Century* (August 1908): 343–52.

65. A. M. Lovat, "Women and Suffrage," *The Nineteenth Century* (July 1908): 67.

66. The feminist Eva Gore-Booth replied to Lovat by blasting Ruskin's anachronistic conception of "Early Victorian Ladies." See Eva Gore-Booth, "Women and the Suffrage, A Reply to Lady Lovat and Mrs. Humphry Ward," *The Nineteenth Century* (September 1908): esp. pp. 495–97.

67. For a discussion of the ways the Barnetts read *Sesame and Lilies* and crafted their own "subversive complementarity" in marriage, see Seth Koven, "Henrietta Barnett: The (Auto)biography of a Late-Victorian Marriage," in *After the Victorians*, ed. Susan Pedersen and Peter Mandler (London: Routledge, 1994).

68. See Leonard A. Montefiore, *Essays and Letters* (London: Chiswick Press, 1881), pp. viii–ix, xx. Montefiore extolled Ruskin's influence on Oxford men in his essay "Undergraduate Oxford," which first appeared in *Harper's* magazine and was republished in this memorial volume. Unlike Ruskin, Montefiore was an ardent supporter of women's trade unionism in his essay "The Position of Women in the Labour Market" (c. 1879, also republished in this volume).

69. J. A. Hobson, *John Ruskin, Social Reformer* (Boston: Dana Estes and Co., 1898), p. 289.

70. Here, I am assuming that several unsigned reviews written for major periodical reviews were by men based on their tone and the editorial policies of these periodicals.

71. Unsigned review of *Sesame and Lilies, The Saturday Review* (July 15, 1865): 83–84.

72. On the centrality of self-control to conceptions of middle-class manliness, see Janet Oppenheim, "*Shattered Nerves": Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), ch. 5.

73. Unsigned review of *Sesame and Lilies*, *The Contemporary Review* (February 1866): 176–78.

74. W. J. Dawson, "Ruskin's Ideal Woman," *The Young Woman* (July 1893): 373–76. Furnivall as quoted in William Benzie, *Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Victorian Scholar Adventurer* (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1983), p. 49. A. C. Benson likewise insisted that "it is idle to deny a certain feminine touch in Ruskin's nature . . . perhaps he overvalued sympathy and demonstrative attention and petting and tender ways of life." A. C. Benson, *Study in Personality*, as cited in Amabel Williams-Ellis, *The Exquisite Tragedy: An Intimate Life of John Ruskin* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1929), p. 206.

75. Peter Quennell, *John Ruskin: The Portrait of a Prophet* (London: Collins, 1949), p. 286.

76. See *Unto This Last,* essay 3, *Works,* 17:65.

77. See Diana Maltz, "Wilde's *The Woman's World* and the Culture of Aesthetic Philanthropy," in *Wilde Writings: Contextual Criticisms,* ed. Joseph Bristow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

78. C. R. Ashbee to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, November 30, 1886; Roger Fry to Ashbee, December 7, 1886. Ashbee Papers, Kings College, Cambridge.

79. Richard Macksey, introduction, *Marcel Proust, On Reading Ruskin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. xix, 118.

80. Macksey, "Introduction," pp. 160, 164.

81. Austin Harrison, "The New Sesame and Lilies," *English Review* 10 (1911): 486–87.

Suggestions for Further Reading

One of the oldest and most comprehensive editions of Ruskin's works, *The Works of John Ruskin* edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, includes incisive notes, impressive illustrations, and an exhaustive index (39 vols.; London: George Allen, 1903–12). John Rosenberg's *Genius of John Ruskin,* an excellent selection of passages from Ruskin's major works, provides valuable commentaries on Ruskin's life and professional development (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

Ruskin's prolific epistolary career has been well preserved in countless volumes of correspondence with family, friends, and contemporaries. *Ruskin's Letters from Venice* (1851–52), edited by John Lewis Bradley, provides an insightful glimpse into a critical point in Ruskin's career through letters that treat Ruskin's early intellectual struggles and the awakening of his artistic sensibility (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955). *The Winnington Letters,* edited by Van Akin Burd, catalogues Ruskin's letters to Margaret Alexis Bell and the girls at Winnington School, and the editor's interceding commentaries elaborate on Ruskin's experience as a teacher of young girls (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969). An especially interesting collection, *The Ruskin Family Letters,* also edited by Van Akin Burd, reaches into the period before Ruskin's birth and allows the reader the unique opportunity of encountering Ruskin's mother in her own words (2 vols.; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

A record of Ruskin's daily life can be found in *The Diaries of John Ruskin,* edited by Joan Evans and Howard Whitehouse, which also contains Ruskin's sketches and verbal descriptions of his experiences abroad (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–59). Helen Gill Viljoen has compiled *The Brantwood Diary of John Ruskin,* a volume that catalogues Ruskin's thoughts during the period of serious mental breakdown and includes letters written by individuals mentioned in Ruskin's text (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). One work that may prove especially illuminating alongside *Sesame and Lilies* is *John Ruskin and Rose La Touche: Her Unpublished Diaries of 1861 and 1867,* edited by Van Akin Burd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Many of the most comprehensive Ruskin biographies are quite old. E. T. Cook's *Life of John Ruskin* is an exhaustive and lucid resource for details on Ruskin's personal life (2 vols.; London: Allen, 1911). Another extremely useful, if unwieldy, volume is Derrick Leon's *Ruskin: The Great Victorian,* which contains a wealth of information on Ruskin's affair with Rose La Touche (London: Routledge, 1949). More recently, George Landow has published *Ruskin,* a shorter and extremely accessible point of departure for more sophisticated research on Ruskin's work (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). Tim Hilton's two-volume biography, *John Ruskin: The Early Years 1819–1859* and *John Ruskin: The Later Years,* gives a masterful account of Ruskin's life and work (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985 and 2000).

The critical literature treating Ruskin is as vast as it is diverse. John Rosenberg's classic work in Ruskin studies, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius,* explores the relation between Ruskin's turbulent mental life and his artistic vision (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). Another incisive study of Ruskin's relation with nineteenth-century aesthetic and philosophical trends is George P. Landow's *Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). A sophisticated study of Ruskin's artistic and critical vision, Elizabeth Helsinger's *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder,* is an excellent introduction to Ruskin's status as a Victorian critic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). In an even more historicized gesture, Jeffrey L. Spear's *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and His Tradition in Social Criticism* reads Ruskin's romantic and pessimistic attitudes through the lens of Victorian industrialization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). Two excellent critical works unite biographical and literary interest in Ruskin's works: Paul Sawyer's *Ruskin's Poetic Argument: The Design of the Major Works* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) and Sheila Emerson's *Ruskin: The Genius of Invention,* which specifically addresses Ruskin's early development as a writer and explores the role of his identification with femininity in that development (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

A wide-ranging modern discussion of Ruskin in relation to gender began with Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970). David Sonstroem's "Millett Versus Ruskin: A Defense of Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens,' " (*Victorian Studies* 20 [1977]: 283–97), mounted an interesting critique of Millett's feminist analysis. In the 1980s, several essays looked again at gender in *Sesame and Lilies* in a more open-ended way than Millett had proposed: Elizabeth Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder's "John Ruskin and 'Of Queens' Gardens'," in *The Woman Question: Defining Voices, 1837–1883* (New York: Garland, 1983); Deborah Epstein Nord's "Mill and Ruskin on the Woman Question Revisited," in *Teaching Literature: What Is*

Needed Now, ed. James Engell and David Perkins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 73–83; and Dinah Birch's "Ruskin's 'Womanly Mind,' " *Essays in Criticism* 38 (October 1988): 308–24. Birch added an interest in Ruskin's views of masculinity to the discussion. Paul Sawyer has also engaged in an astute reading of Ruskin's stylistics in terms of gender in "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos," in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power,* ed. Thais E. Morgan (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990). In "Ruskin and the Ideal Woman" (*South Central Review* 4 [Winter 1987]: 28–39), Linda M. Austin examined Ruskin's view of the ideal woman as an outgrowth of his aesthetics and in the context of his charitable activities. Subsequently, Ruskin's relationship to and cultivation of women artists has been explored in Jan Marsh, " 'Resolve to be a Great Paintress': Women Artists in Relation to John Ruskin as Critic and Patron" (*Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 18 [1994]: 177–85), and Pamela Gersh Nunn, "The 'Woman Question': Ruskin and the Female Artist" in *Ruskin's Artists: Studies in the Victorian Visual Economy,* ed. Robert Hewison (Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2000), 167–82. Sharon Aronofsky Weltman's full-length study, *Ruskin's Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture,* investigates how Ruskin's attempt to elevate women through myth-making actually jettisons the very notion of gender (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999).

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