

John Ruskin : on himself and things in general.

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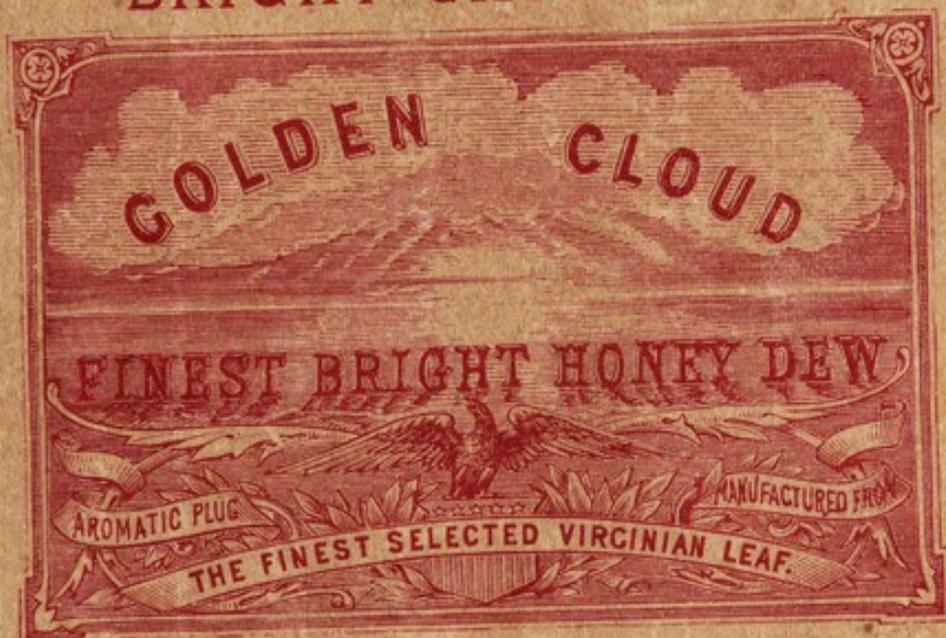
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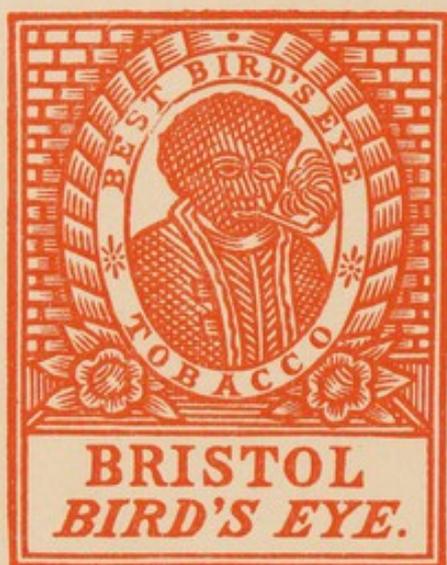
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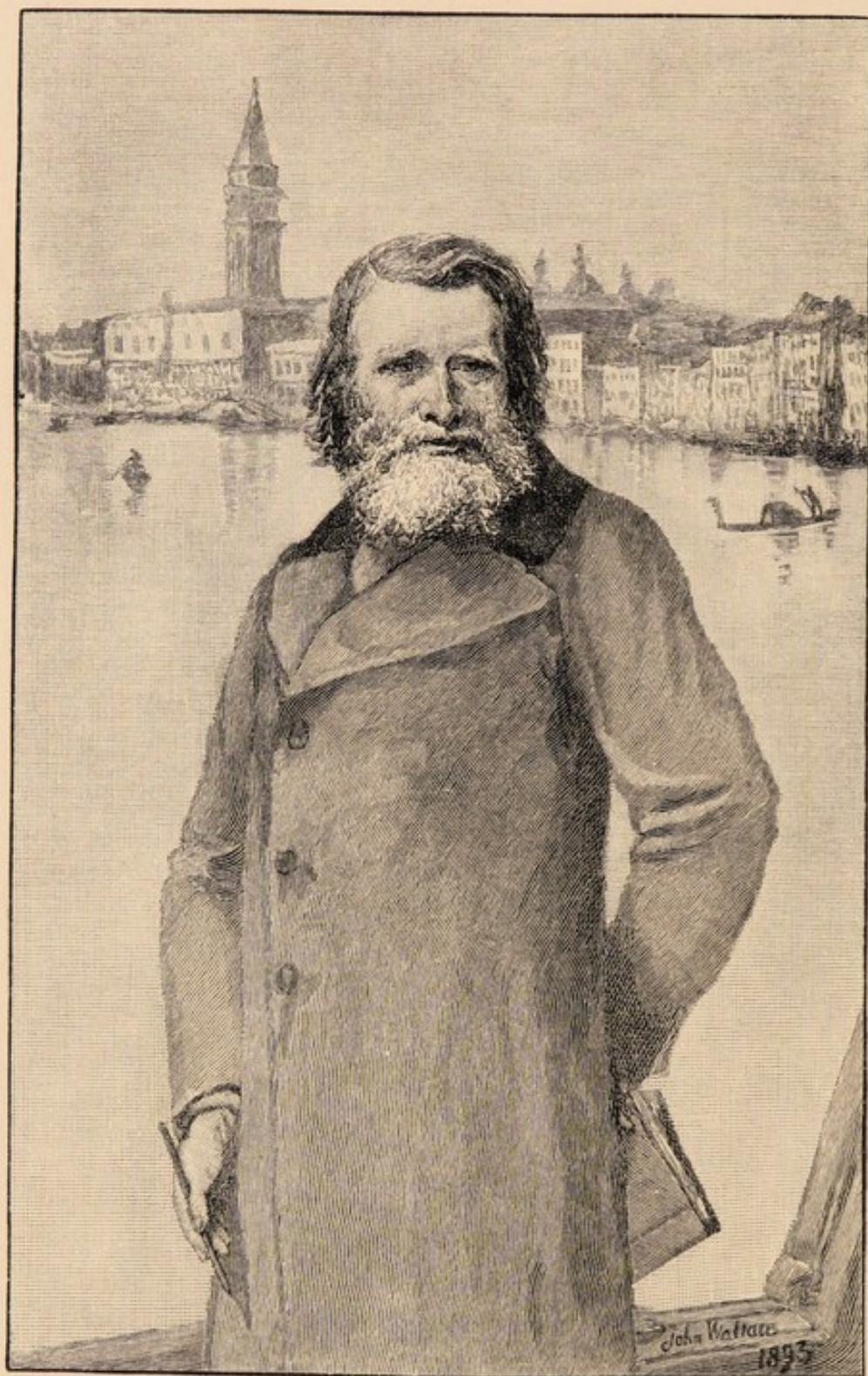
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Ever faithfully
W. R. R. R.

JOHN RUSKIN

ON HIMSELF
AND THINGS IN GENERAL



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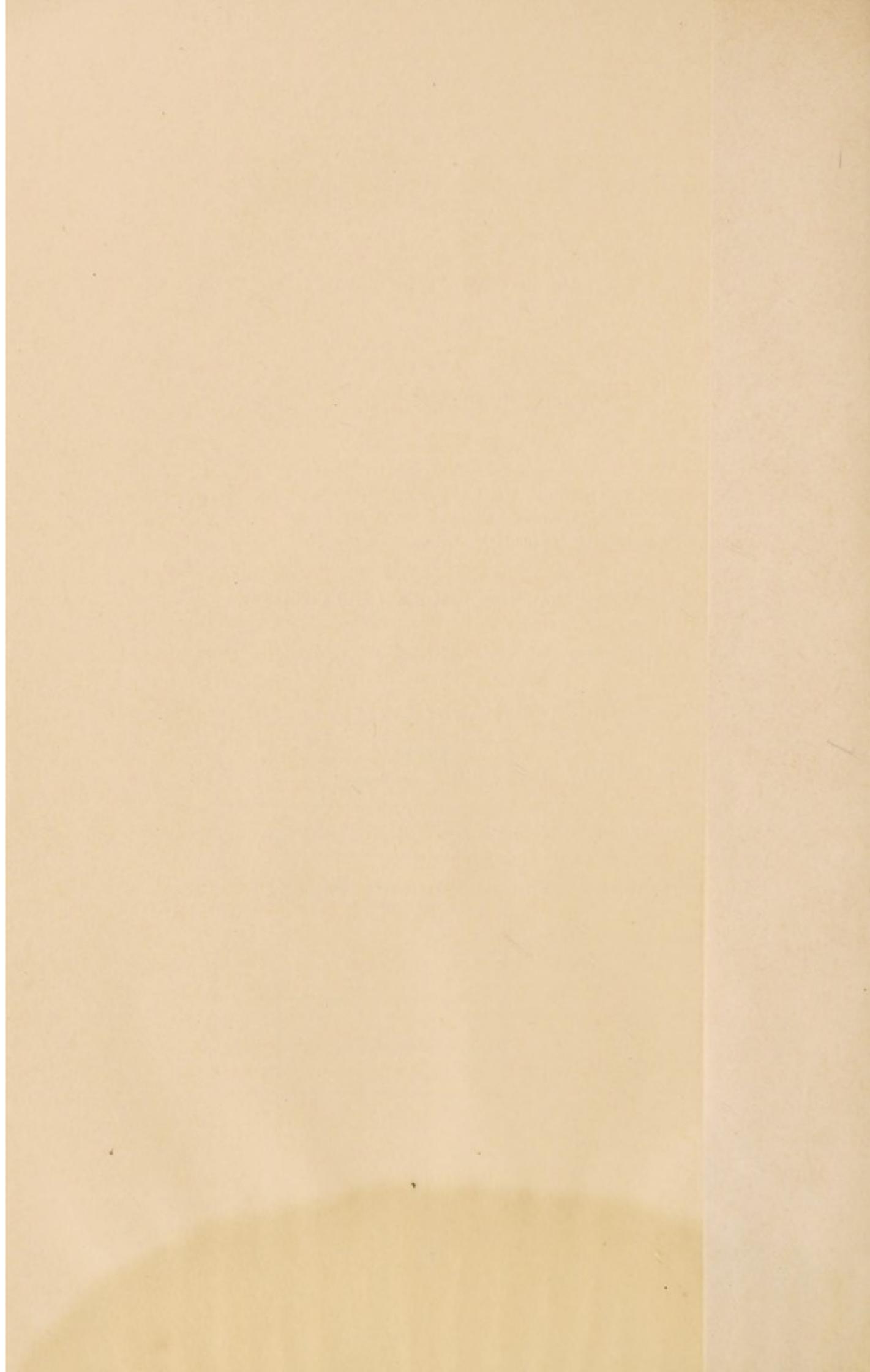
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JOHN RUSKIN ON HIMSELF

AND

THINGS IN GENERAL.

 INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THE story of Mr. RUSKIN's life has been told by himself in his own wayward way in *Præterita*. The incidents of his career, some significant, others trivial enough, may be learned from the pages of that work. The history of his mind is, however, better discerned in *Fors Clavigera*. Here he not merely writes *about* himself, but he may be said to *write himself*. It is the book, of all his books, into which he puts his being. Walt Whitman said of *Leaves of Grass* "this is no book; who touches this, touches a man." Mr. Ruskin might say the same thing of *Fors Clavigera*. The author's strength, his weakness, his success and failure, his beliefs and doubts are all there. There is laughter in it and there are tears; moods of cheerfulness, hope and contentment, of fierce anger and despair.

These "letters to the labourers and workmen of Great Britain" were issued during the years 1871 to 1884, appearing month by month with tolerable regularity until Mr. Ruskin's illness in 1878. They were written, as Mr. Ruskin himself affirmed, "on any matter which *chanced* and in any humour which *chance* threw me in." He explained that "by the adoption of the title *Fors*, I meant, among other meanings to indicate this desultory and accidental character of the work." Desultory it surely is: the range of its subjects the widest and wildest conceivable. On one page he is seen "copiously and desperately pouring" the "fierce lightning bolts" described by Carlyle "into the black world of anarchy" and, almost

on the next the absorbing topic is the best way of making Yorkshire goose-pie. Scattered up and down are exquisitely told stories meant to enforce the same lesson which elsewhere is offered with angry denunciations and cursings. The character of the author is truly mirrored in this discursiveness as well as in the variable temper displayed. After his recovery from his illness, the tone is changed; the work ends with a gentleness in striking contrast with its stormy beginning.

With all these diversions, however, the work has a steady purpose to relieve if it be possible, the abounding social misery. At the outset, while disclaiming a philanthropic motive, Mr. Ruskin declares that he simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that he likes, "because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not." Following upon this declaration Mr. Ruskin proceeds throughout the volumes of his work, in various ways according to his varying mood, to chronicle incidents of misery, to exhibit nobler ideals, to blame and warn those whom he holds to be by their position responsible for the evil—squires, capitalists, the clergy, and to admonish the working poor not to be misled by dreams, but, whatever befalls them, be faithful in their work. "There are no chagrins," he tells them "so venomous as the chagrins of the idle;" and again "no one can teach you anything worth learning but through manual labour." Their condition is sorrowful, he admits, but he warns them with great earnestness not to envy or desire or seek to secure for themselves, the false good their richer neighbours possess. "To do good work whether you live or die," is, he declares "the entrance to all Princedoms;" and turning to the luxurious rich he invites them to seek their salvation by doing some good work, if it be only making bricks or keeping an honest tavern. It is ungentlemanly, he tells them, to beg their dinner or to steal it, "but there is nothing ungentlemanly that I know of in beating clay and putting it in a mould." The workers are wronged and the wrongs must if possible be righted; but the upper classes,—the "wolf-shepherds" and the "hirelings," are in the more deadly peril, because it is they who by falseness to the duties of their station, have perpetrated the wrong.

Long before *Fors Clavigera* was projected, Mr. Ruskin had fully explained his ideas of the ethics of work in that famous chapter of *The Stones of Venice*, called "The Nature of Gothic Architecture," a chapter reprinted more than once already, the last time in the choice form which Mr. William Morris gives to the productions of his Kelmscott Press. This edition is the delight of the book-collectors, whether they read it or not, for the volume is beautiful to look upon. The same chapter is now wanted in the shape of a missionary tract for circulation among employers of labour.

"The modern English mind" writes Mr. Ruskin, "has this much in common with that of the Greek, that it intensely desires, in all things, the utmost completion or perfection, compatible with their nature. This is a noble character in the abstract, but becomes ignoble when it causes us to forget the relative dignities of that nature itself, and to prefer the perfectness of the lower nature to the imperfection of the higher."

"In the make and nature of every man, however rude or simple, whom we employ in manual labour, there are some powers for better things: some tardy imagination, torpid capacity of emotion, tottering steps of thought, there are, even at the worst; and in most cases it is all our own fault that they *are* tardy or torpid. But they cannot be strengthened, unless we are content to take them in their feebleness, and unless we prize and honour them in their imperfection above the best and most perfect manual skill. And this is what we have to do with all our labourers; to look for the *thoughtful* part of them, and get that out of them, whatever we lose for it, whatever faults and errors we are obliged to take with it. For the best that is in them cannot manifest itself, but in company with much error. Understand this clearly: You can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; and to copy and carve any number of given lines or forms, with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you find his work perfect of its kind: but if you ask him to think about any of those forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks, and ten to one he thinks wrong; ten to one he makes a mistake in the first touch he gives

to his work as a thinking being. But you have made a man of him for all that. He was only a machine before, an animated tool."

"Look round this English room of yours, about which you have been proud so often, because the work of it was so good and strong, and the ornaments of it so finished. Examine again all those accurate mouldings, and perfect polishings, and unerring adjustments of the seasoned wood and tempered steel. Many a time you have exulted over them, and thought how great England was, because her slightest work was done so thoroughly. Alas! if read rightly, these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our England a thousand times more bitter and more degrading than that of the scourged African, or helot Greek. Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin which, after the worm's work on it, is to see God, into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with,—this it is to be slavemasters indeed; and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lords' lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line!"

This is Mr. Ruskin's condemnation of our modern social condition; that we manufacture every thing except men. "We blanch cotton, strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages." "The lesson which Mr. Ruskin here teaches us," writes Mr. William Morris, in his Introduction, "is that art is the expression of man's labour; that it is possible for man to rejoice in his work, for, strange as it may seem to us to-day, there have been times when he did rejoice in it; and lastly, that unless man's work once again becomes a pleasure to him, the token of which change will be that beauty is once again

a natural and necessary accompaniment of productive labour, all but the worthless must toil in pain and therefore live in pain." Comparing the efforts of Mr. Ruskin with those of an earlier friend of the workers, Mr. Morris says—"Robert Owen showed how by companionship and good will, labour might be made at least endurable." He did more. He put into practical operation the economic principle (or heresy if you will) enunciated half a century later by Mr. Ruskin in *Unto This Last*:—"We will suppose," says Mr. Ruskin, "that the master of a household desires only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle; feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure, and in all things pushes his requirements to the exact point beyond which he cannot go without forcing the servant to leave him. In doing this, there is no violation on his part of what is commonly called 'justice.' He agrees with the domestic for his whole time and service, and takes them;—the limits of hardship in treatment being fixed by the practice of other masters in his neighbourhood; that is to say, by the current rate of wages for domestic labour. If the servant can get a better place, he is free to take one, and the master can only tell what is the real market value of his labour, by requiring as much as he will give. This is the politico-economical view of the case, according to the doctors of that science; who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore, the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the servant himself. That, however, is not so. It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of calculable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their results. The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the chaldron. It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its

own proper fuel ; namely, by the affections." The main-spring of Robert Owen's action was not love of gain, but love of mankind. Success in business, which he achieved, was his means whereby in his own circle he was able to diffuse happiness. To him that success was secondary ; if he had been able to diffuse as much happiness without it, he would have been well satisfied. His partners, however, were more interested in the business success than the diffusion of happiness and he was able to satisfy them. The success at New Lanark of this noble autocrat proved that better work could be got out of men and women by recognising that their "motive power is a Soul," and appealing, accordingly, to their affections. This fact is of value, as it may appeal to other manufacturers through their pockets, where it would fail to touch their hearts. Mr. Ruskin's practical effort—the Guild of St. George—was on another basis. It was not a business enterprise but a community ; as he himself said "not a mere sentimental association of persons who want sympathy in the general endeavour to do good," but "a body constituted for a special purpose ; that of buying land, holding it inviolably, cultivating it properly, and bringing upon it as many honest people as it will feed." He spent money, time and thought upon it, but without success. If like Robert Owen he had excelled in business talents and perseverance as well as in philanthropy, something might have been achieved, although in any case, the business basis was probably better. Robert Owen himself did not succeed in community making. Mr. Ruskin, however, could not concentrate his energy, and as a consequence much of his work remains as hint and suggestion merely. He confesses that his is "the incurably desultory character which has brought on me the curse of Reuben 'unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.' But," he adds, "I reflect hereupon with resolute self-complacency that water, when good, is a good thing, though it be not stable ; and that it may be better sometimes to irrigate than excel." Here he points to his true value to the world. Like Coleridge he leaves us many fragments, but fragments such as theirs are more effectual than most other men's completed labours.

WALTER LEWIN.

PARK VIEW,
BEBINGTON, *18th August, 1892.*

I.

ON HIMSELF AND HIS WORK.

1871—1884.

I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one ;
 I have no particular pleasure in doing good ; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any—which is seldom, now-a-days, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.

I have not the slightest intention—understand this, I beg of you, very clearly—of setting myself to mend or reform people ; when they are once out of form they may stay so, for me. But of what unspoiled stuff I can find to my hand I will cut the best shapes there is room for : shapes unalterable, if it may be, for ever.

You shall consider with me what you can do, or let me, if still living, tell you what I know you can do—those of you, at least, who will promise—(with the help of the three strong Fates), these three things :

1. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.
2. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.
3. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones.

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) I name these two out of the numberless great Tory writers, because they were my own two masters. I had Walter Scott's Novels, and the Iliad, (Pope's translation), for my only reading when I was a child, on week-days: on Sundays their effect was tempered by *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*; my mother having it deeply in her heart to make an evangelical clergyman of me. Fortunately, I had an aunt more evangelical than my mother; and my aunt gave me cold mutton for Sunday's dinner, which—as I much preferred it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the end of the matter was, that I got all the noble imaginative teaching of Defoe and Bunyan, and yet—am not an evangelical clergyman.

When I was a child, I lost the pleasure of some three-sevenths of my life because of Sunday; for I always had a way of looking forward to things, and a lurid shade was cast over the whole of Friday and Saturday by the horrible sense that Sunday was coming, and inevitable. Not that I was rebellious against my good mother or aunts in any wise; feeling only that we were all crushed under a relentless fate; which was indeed the fact. . . .

My mother, indeed, never went so far as my aunt; nor carried her religion down to the ninth or glacial circle of Holiness, by giving me cold dinner.

I find some of my friends greatly agitated in mind, for instance, about Responsibility, Free-will and the like. I settled all those matters for myself, before I was ten years old, by jumping up and down an awkward turn of four steps in my nursery-stairs, and considering whether it was likely that God knew whether I should jump only three, or the whole four at a time. Having settled it in my mind that He knew quite well, though I didn't, which I should do; and also whether I should fall or not in the course of the performance,—though I was altogether responsible for taking care not to,—I never troubled my head more on the matter, from that day to this.

As far as I know, nobody ever minds a word I say,

except a few nice girls, who are a great comfort to me, but can't do anything. They don't even know how to spin, poor little lilies!

I am myself now, hopelessly, a man of the world!—of that woful outside one, I mean. It is now Sunday; half-past eleven in the morning. Everybody about me is gone to church except the kind cook, who is straining a point of conscience to provide me with dinner. Everybody else is gone to church, to ask to be made angels of, and profess that they despise the world and the flesh, which I find myself always living in, (rather, perhaps, living, or endeavouring to live, in too little of the last). And I am left alone with the cat, in the world of sin.

The nobler passions are not merely disbelieved, but even the conception of them seems ludicrous to the impotent churl mind; so that, to take only so poor an instance of them as my own life—because I have passed it in almsgiving, not in fortune-hunting; because I have laboured always for the honour of others, not my own, and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street, and would rather watch a sea-gull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and the evil; therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar, talks of the “effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin.”

I believe, at this moment, the reason my voice has an uncertain sound, the reason that this design of mine * stays unhelped, and that only a little group of men and women, moved chiefly by personal regard, stand with me

* The Guild of St. George.

in a course so plain and true, is that I have not yet given myself to it wholly, but have halted between good and evil, and sit still at the receipt of custom, and am always looking back from the plough.

It is not wholly my fault this. There seem to me good reasons why I should go on with my work in Oxford; good reasons why I should have a house of my own with pictures and library; good reasons why I should still take interest from the bank; good reasons why I should make myself as comfortable as I can, wherever I go; travel with two servants, and have a dish of game at dinner. It is true, indeed, that I have given the half of my goods and more to the poor; it is true also that the work in Oxford is not a matter of pride, but of duty with me; it is true that I think it wiser to live what seems to other people a rational and pleasant, not an enthusiastic, life; and that I serve my servants at least as much as they serve me. But, all this being so, I find there is yet something wrong; I have no peace, still less ecstasy. It seems to me as if one had indeed to wear camel's hair instead of dress coats before one can get that; and I was looking at St. Francis's camel's-hair coat yesterday (they have it still in the sacristy), and I don't like the look of it at all; the Anglo-Russian Company's wear is ever so much nicer,—let the devil at least have this due.

There is nothing really more monstrous in any recorded savagery or absurdity of mankind, than that governments should be able to get money for any folly they choose to commit, by selling to capitalists the right of taxing future generations to the end of time. All the cruellest wars inflicted, all the basest luxuries grasped by the idle classes, are thus paid for by the poor a hundred times over. And yet I am obliged to keep my money in the funds or the bank, because I know no other mode of keeping it safe; and if I refused to take the interest, I should only throw it into the hands of the very people who would use it for these evil purposes, or, at all events, for less good than I can. Nevertheless it is daily becoming a more grave question with me what it may presently be right to do. It may be better to diminish private charities, and much more, my own luxury of life, than to comply in any sort with a national sin. But I am not agitated or anxious in

the matter: content to know my principle, and to work steadily towards better fulfilment of it.

What is required of the members of St. George's Company is, not that they should never travel by railroads, nor that they should abjure machinery; but that they should never travel unnecessarily, or in wanton haste; and that they should never do with a machine what can be done with hands and arms, while hands and arms are idle.

I have been so much angered, distressed, and defeated, by many things, during these last autumn and winter months, that I can only keep steadily to my business by insisting to myself on my own extreme value and importance to the world; and quoting, in self-application, the most flattering texts I can find, such as, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you," and so on; hoping that at least a little more of my foolishness is being pounded out of me at every blow; and that the dough I knead for *Fors* may be daily of purer wheat.

I wish I could raise it with less leaven of malice; but I dislike some things and some people so much, that, having been always an impetuous, inconsiderate, and weakly communicative person, I find it impossible to hold my tongue in this time of advanced years and petulance.

I remember while he [my father] was speaking to one of our artist friends, who admired Raphael, and greatly regretted my endeavours to interfere with that popular taste,—while my father and he were condoling with each other on my having been impudent enough to think I could tell the public about Turner and Raphael,—instead of contenting myself, as I ought, with explaining the way of their souls' salvation to them—and what an amiable clergyman was lost in me—"Yes," said my father, with tears in his eyes—(true and tender tears—as ever father shed,) "he would have been a Bishop."

Your order is precise, and clear; 'Give to him that asketh thee'—even to the half of your last cloak—says St. Martin; even to the whole of it, says Christ: 'Who-

soever of you forsaketh not *all* that he hath, cannot be my disciple.'

'And you yourself, who have a house among the lakes, and rooms at Oxford, and pictures, and books, and a Dives dinner every day, how about all that?'

Yes, you may well ask,—and I answer very distinctly and frankly, that if once I am convinced (and it is not by any means unlikely I should be so) that to put all these things into the hands of others, and live myself, in a cell at Assisi, or a shepherd's cottage in Cumberland, would be right, and wise, under the conditions of human life and thought with which I have to deal—very assuredly I will do so.

From my youth up, I have been seeking the fame, and honouring the work, of others;—never my own. I first was driven into literature that I might defend the fame of Turner; since that day I have been explaining the power, or proclaiming the praise, of Tintoret,—of Luini,—of Carpaccio,—of Botticelli,—of Carlyle;—never thinking for an instant of myself: and sacrificing what little faculty, and large pleasure, I had in painting, either from nature or noble art, that, if possible, I might bring others to see what I rejoiced in, and understand what I had deciphered. There has been no heroism in this, nor virtue;—but only, as far as I am myself concerned, quaint ordering of Fate; but the result is, that I *have* at last obtained an instinct of impartial and reverent judgment.

In 1858, it was with me, Protestantism or nothing: the crisis of the whole turn of my thoughts being one Sunday morning, at Turin, when, from before Paul Veronese's Queen of Sheba, and under quite overwhelmed sense of his God-given power, I went away to a Waldensian chapel, where a little squeaking idiot was preaching to an audience of seventeen old women and three louts, that they were the only children of God in Turin; and that all the people in Turin outside the chapel, and all the people in the world out of sight of Monte Viso, would be damned. I came out of the chapel, in sum of twenty years of thought, a conclusively *un*-converted man—converted by this little Piedmontese gentleman, so powerful in his organ grinding, inside-out, as it were. "Here is an end

to my 'Mother-Law' of Protestantism anyhow!—and now—what is there left?" You will find what was left, as, in much darkness and sorrow of heart I gathered it, variously taught in my books, written between 1858 and 1874. It is all sound and good, as far as it goes : whereas all that went before was so mixed with Protestant egotism and insolence, that, as you have probably heard, I won't republish, in their first form, any of those former books.

The St. George's creed includes Turks, Jews, infidels and heretics ; and I am myself much of a Turk, more of a Jew ; alas, most of all,—an infidel ; but not an atom of a heretic : Catholic, I, of the Catholics ; holding only for sure God's order to His scattered Israel.

I am beginning, for the first time in my life, to admit some notion into my head that I am a great man. God knows at how little rate I value the little that is in me ; but the maintaining myself now quietly against the contradiction of everyone of my best friends, rising as it does into more harmonious murmur of opposition at every new act to which I find myself compelled by compassion and justice, requires more than ordinary firmness : and the absolute fact that, being entirely at one in my views of Nature and life with every great classic author, I am yet alone in the midst of a modern crowd which rejects them all, is something to plume myself upon,—sorrowfully enough : but haughtily also.

When it took a twelve-months' hard work to make a single volume legible, men considered a little the difference between one book and another ; but now, when not only anybody can get themselves made legible through any quantity of volumes, in a week, but the doing so becomes a means of living to them, and they can fill their stomachs with the foolish foam of their lips, the universal pestilence of falsehood fills the mind of the world as cicadas do olive-leaves, and the first necessity for our mental government is to extricate from among the insectile noise, the few books and words that are Divine.

And this has been my main work from my youth up,—not caring to speak my own words, but to discern, whether in painting or scripture, what is eternally good and vital,

and to strike away from it pitilessly what is worthless and venomous. So that now, being old, and thoroughly practised in this trade, I know either of a picture—a book—or a speech, quite securely whether it is good or not, as a cheesemonger knows cheese;—and I have not the least mind to try to make wise men out of fools, or silk purses out of sows' ears; but my one swift business is to brand them of base quality, and get them out of the way, and I do not care a cobweb's weight whether I hurt the followers of these men or not,—totally ignoring them, and caring only to get the facts concerning the men themselves fairly and roundly stated for the people whom I have real power to teach. And for qualification of statement, there is neither time nor need.

Though, in *Fors*, I write what first comes into my head or heart, so long as it is true, I write no syllable, even at the hottest, without weighing the truth of it in balance accurate to the estimation of a hair.

Fors Clavigera is not, in any wise, intended as counsel adapted to the present state of the public mind, but it is the assertion of the code of Eternal Laws which the public mind *must* eventually submit itself to, or die; and I have really no more to do with the manners, customs, feelings, or modified conditions of piety in the modern England which I have to warn of the accelerated approach either of Revolution or Destruction, than poor Jonah had with the qualifying amiabilities which might have been found in the Nineveh whose overthrow he was ordered to foretell in forty days. That I should rejoice, instead of mourning, over the falseness of such prophecy, does not at all make it at present less passionate in tone.

Probably there is not another so much vexed person as I at present extant of his grave.

The thoughts of a man who from his youth up, and during a life persistently literary, has never written a word either for money or for vanity, nor even in the careless incontinence of the instinct for self-expression, but resolutely spoken only to teach or to praise others, must necessarily be incomprehensible in an age when Christian

preaching itself has become merely a polite and convenient profession,—when the most noble and living literary faculties, like those of Scott and Dickens, are perverted by the will of the multitude, and perish in the struggle for its gold ; and when the conceit even of the greatest men of science provokes them to the competitive exhibition of their conjectural ingenuity, in fields where argument is impossible, and respecting matters on which even certainty would be profitless.

The doctors said that I went mad, this time two years ago, from overwork. I had not been then working more than usual, and what was usual with me had become easy. But I went mad because nothing came of my work. People would have understood my falling crazy if they had heard that the manuscripts on which I had spent seven years of my old life had all been used to light the fire with, like Carlyle's first volume of the French Revolution. But they could not understand that I should be the least annoyed, far less fall ill in a frantic manner, because, after I had got them published, nobody believed a word of them. Yet the first calamity would only have been misfortune,—the second (the enduring calamity under which I toil) is humiliation,—resisted necessarily by a dangerous and lonely pride.

Fors contains much trivial and desultory talk by the way. Scattered up and down in it,—perhaps by the Devil's sowing tares among the wheat,—there is much casual expression of my own personal feelings and faith, together with bits of autobiography, which were allowed place, not without some notion of their being useful, but yet imprudently, and even incontinently, because I could not at the moment hold my tongue about what vexed or interested me, or returned soothingly to my memory.

I find, practically, that fifty pounds a year can often save me five—or at a pinch, seven—of them ;* nor should I be the least surprised if some merry-hearted apprentice lad, starting in life with a capital of ten pounds or so, were to send me one of them, and go whistling on his

* For St. George's Guild under the rule that members shall contribute one tenth of their income.

way with the remaining nine. But that ever a man of ten thousand a year should contrive, by any exertion of prudence and self-denial, to live upon so small a sum as nine thousand, and give one thousand to the poor,—this is a height of heroism wholly inconceivable to modern pious humanity.

The essential difference between me and other political writers of your day, is that I never say a word about a single thing that I don't know, while they never trouble themselves to know a single thing they talk of; but give you their own 'opinions' about it, or tell you the gossip they have heard about it, or insist on what they like in it, or rage against what they dislike in it; but entirely decline either to look at, or to learn, or to speak, the Thing as it is, and must be.

Looking back upon my efforts for the last twenty years, I believe that their failure has been in very great part owing to my compromise with the infidelity of this outer world, and my endeavour to base my pleading upon motives of ordinary prudence and kindness, instead of on the primary duty of loving God,—foundation other than which can no man lay. I thought myself speaking to a crowd which could only be influenced by visible utility; nor was I the least aware how many entirely good and holy persons were living in the faith and love of God as vividly and practically now as ever in the early enthusiasm of Christendom, until, chiefly in consequence of the great illnesses which, for some time after 1878, forbade my accustomed literary labour, I was brought into closer personal relations with the friends in America, Scotland, Ireland, and Italy, to whom, if I am spared to write any record of my life, it will be seen that I owe the best hopes and highest thoughts which have supported and guided the force of my matured mind. These have shown me, with lovely initiation, in how many secret places the prayer was made which I had foolishly listened for at the corners of the streets; and on how many hills which I had thought left desolate, the hosts of heaven still moved in chariots of fire.

II.

HIS IMPEACHMENT OF MODERN SOCIETY.

A 'civilized nation' in modern Europe consists, in broad terms, of (A) a mass of half-taught, discontented, and mostly penniless populace, calling itself the people; of (B) a thing which it calls a government—meaning an apparatus for collecting and spending money; and (C) a small number of capitalists, many of them rogues, and most of them stupid persons, who have no idea of any object of human existence other than money-making, gambling, or champagne-bibbing. A certain quantity of literary men, saying anything they can get paid to say,—of clergymen, saying anything they have been taught to say,—of natural philosophers, saying anything that comes into their heads,—and of nobility, saying nothing at all, combine in disguising the action, and perfecting the disorganization, of the mass; but with respect to practical business, the civilized nation consists broadly of mob, money-collecting machine, and capitalist.

Now when the civilized mob wants to spend money for any profitless or mischievous purposes,—fireworks, illuminations, battles, driving about from place to place, or what not,—being itself penniless, it sets its money-collecting machine to borrow the sum needful for these amusements from the civilized capitalist.

The civilized capitalist lends the money, on condition that, through the money-collecting machine, he may tax the civilized mob thenceforward for ever. The civilized

mob spends the money forthwith, in gunpowder, infernal machines, masquerade dresses, new boulevards, or anything else it has set its idiotic mind on for the moment; and appoints its money-collecting machine to collect a daily tax from its children, and children's children, to be paid to the capitalists from whom it had received the accommodation, thenceforward for ever.

This is the nature of a National Debt.

Those ages were feudal, ours free; those reverent, ours impudent; those artful, ours mechanical: the consummate and exhaustive difference being that the creed of the Dark Ages was, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" and the creed of the Light Ages has become, "I believe in Father Mud, the Almighty Plastic; and in Father Dollar, the Almighty Drastic."

We, indeed, were not till lately a loquacious people, nor a useless one; but the Romans did more, and said less, than any other nation that ever lived; and their language is the most heroic ever spoken by men.

You will find, if you think deeply of it, that the chief of all the curses of this unhappy age is the universal gabble of its fools, and of the flocks that follow them, rendering the quiet voices of the wise men of all past time inaudible.

At present wise men, for the most part, are silent, and good men powerless; the senseless vociferate, and the heartless govern; while all social law and providence are dissolved by the enraged agitation of a multitude, among whom every villain has a chance of power, every simpleton of praise, and every scoundrel of fortune.

I wrote a letter to one of my lady friends, who gives rather frequent dinners, the other day, which may perhaps be useful to others: it was to this effect mainly, though I add and alter a little to make it more general:—

"You probably will be having a dinner-party to-day; now, please do this, and remember I am quite serious in what I ask you. We all of us, who have any belief in

Christianity at all, wish that Christ were alive now. Suppose, then, that He is. I think it very likely that if He were in London, you would be one of the people whom He would take some notice of. Now, suppose He has sent you word that He is coming to dine with you to-day; but that you are not to make any change in your guests on His account; that He wants to meet exactly the party you have; and no other. Suppose you have just received this message, and that St. John has also left word, in passing, with the butler, that his Master will come alone; so that you won't have any trouble with the Apostles. Now this is what I want you to do. First, determine what you will have for dinner. You are not ordered, observe, to make no changes in your bill of fare. Take a piece of paper, and absolutely *write* fresh orders to your cook,—you can't realise the thing enough without writing. That done, consider how you will arrange your guests—who is to sit next Christ on the other side—who opposite, and so on; finally, consider a little what you will talk about, supposing, which is just possible, that Christ should tell you to go on talking as if He were not there, and never to mind *Him*. You couldn't, you will tell me? Then, my dear lady, how can you in general? Don't you profess—nay, don't you much more than profess—to believe that Christ *is* always there, whether you see Him or not? Why should the seeing make such a difference?"

We have, it seems, now set our opening hearts much on this one point, that we will have education for all men and women now, and for all boys and girls that are to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more desirable, if only we determine also what kind of education we are to have. It is taken for granted that any education must be good;—that the more of it we get, the better; that bad education only means little education; and that the worst thing we have to fear is getting none. Alas, that is not at all so. Getting no education is by no means the worst thing that can happen to us. One of the pleasantest friends I ever had in my life was a Savoyard guide, who could only read with difficulty, and write scarcely intelligibly, and by great effort. He knew no language but his own—no science, except as much practical agriculture as served

him to till his fields. But he was, without exception, one of the happiest persons, and, on the whole, one of the best, I have ever known: and after lunch, when he had had his half-bottle of Savoy wine, he would generally, as we walked up some quiet valley in the afternoon light, give me a little lecture on philosophy; and after I had fatigued and provoked him with less cheerful views of the world than his own, he would fall back to my servant behind me, and console himself with a shrug of the shoulders, and a whispered "Le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre!"—"The poor child, he doesn't know how to live.")

Your present system of education is to get a rascal of an architect to order a rascal of a clerk-of-the-works to order a parcel of rascally bricklayers to build you a bestially stupid building in the middle of the town, poisoned with gas, and with an iron floor which will drop you all through it some frosty evening; wherein you will bring a puppet of a cockney lecturer in a dress coat and a white tie, to tell you smugly there's no God, and how many messes he can make of a lump of sugar. Much the better you are for all that, when you get home again, aren't you?

I have been asked to contribute to the purchase of the Alexandra Park, and I will not: and beg you, my working readers, to understand, once for all, that I wish your *homes* to be comfortable, and refined; and that I will resist, to the utmost of my power, all schemes founded on the vile modern notion that you are to be crowded in kennels till you are nearly dead, that other people may make money by your work, and then taken out in squads by tramway and railway, to be revived and refined by science and art. Your first business is to make your homes healthy and delightful: then, keep your wives and children there, and let your return to *them* be your daily "holy-day."

A working man ought to be able to find "holy-days" *in* his home as well as out of it.

For years back, you, or your foolish friends, have been

making a mighty fuss to get yourselves into the British Museum on Sundays: so I suppose you want to see the Theseus, or the stuffed birds, or the crabs and spiders, or the skeleton of the gorilla, or the parched alligator skins; and you imagine these contemplations likely to improve and sanctify, that is to say, recreate, your minds.

But are you quite sure you have got any minds yet to be recreated? Before you expect edification from that long gallery full of long-legged inconceivable spiders, and colossal blotchy crabs, did you ever think of looking with any mind, or mindfulness at the only too easily conceivable short-legged spider of your own English acquaintance? or did you ever so much as consider why the crabs on Margate sands were minded to go sideways instead of straightforward? Have you so much as watched a spider making his cobweb, or, if you have not yet had leisure to do that, in the toil of your own cobweb-making, did you ever *think* how he threw his first thread across the corner?

No need for you to go to the British Museum yet, my friends, either on Sundays or any other day.

Your literary institutes must everywhere fail, as long as you think that merely to buy a book, and to know your letters, will enable you to read the book. Not one word of any book is readable by you except so far as your mind is one with its author's, and not merely his words like your words, but his thoughts like your thoughts.

The personal conceit and ambition developed by reading, in minds of selfish activity, lead to the disdain of manual labour, and the desire of all sorts of unattainable things, and fill the streets with discontented and useless persons, seeking some means of living in town society by their wits.

Whether there be one God or three,—no God, or ten thousand,—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean. It is not *I* who say that. Every mother's heart under the sun says that, if she has one.

You who are eating luxurious dinners, call in the tramp from the highway and share them with him,—so

gradually you will understand how your brother came to *be* a tramp; and practically make your own dinners plain till the poor man's dinner is rich,—or you are no Christians; and you who are dressing in fine dress, put on blouses and aprons, till you have got your poor dressed with grace and decency,—or you are no Christians; and you who can sing and play on instruments, hang your harps on the pollards above the rivers you have poisoned, or else go down among the mad and vile and deaf things whom you have made, and put melody into the souls of them,—else you are no Christians.

Wretch that you are, if indeed, calling yourself a Christian, you *can* find any dim fear of God, or any languid love of Christ, mixed in the dregs of you,—then, for God's sake, learn at least what prayer means, from Hezekiah and Isaiah, and not from the last cockney curly-tailed puppy who yaps and snaps in the *Nineteenth Century*,—and for Christ's sake, learn what alms mean, from the Lord who gave you His Life, and not from the lady patronesses of the last charity ball.

It is too true that very often you fancy you think one thing, when, in reality, you think quite another. Most Christian persons, for instance, fancy they would like to be in heaven. But that is not their real opinion of the place at all. See how gravely they will look if their doctor hints to them that there is the least probability of their soon going there.

In Cœur-de-Lion's day, it was not esteemed of absolute necessity to put agreements between *Christians* in writing! Which if it were not now, you know we might save a great deal of money, and discharge some of our workmen round Temple Bar, as well as from Woolwich Dockyards.

After the most careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend, of the influences of Catholicism for good and evil, I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. I do not enter into any question as to the truth or fallacy of the

idea ; I no more wish to defend the historical or theological position of the Madonna than that of St. Michael or St. Christopher ; but I am certain that to the habit of reverent belief in, and contemplation of, the character ascribed to the heavenly hierarchies, we must ascribe the highest results yet achieved in human nature, and that it is neither Madonna-worship, nor saint-worship, but the evangelical self-worship and hell-worship—gloating with an imagination as unfounded as it is foul, over the torments of the damned, instead of the glories of the blest,—which have in reality degraded the languid powers of Christianity to their present state of shame and reproach. There has probably not been an innocent cottage home throughout the length and breadth of Europe during the whole period of vital Christianity, in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties, and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women ; and every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts and strength of manhood has been the fulfilment of the assured prophecy of the poor Israelite maiden, “He that is mighty hath magnified me, and Holy is His name.”

Your modern conscience will not incur the responsibility of shortening the hourly more guilty life of a single rogue ; but will contentedly fire a salvo of mitrailleuses into a regiment of honest men—leaving Providence to guide the shot.

Indeed, my pious public, you cannot, at present, by any coal or blanket subscription, do more than blind yourselves to the plain order “Give to him that asketh thee ; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.”

To him that asketh us, say the public,—but then—everybody would ask us.

Yes, you pitiful public, —pretty nearly everybody would : that is indeed the state of national dignity, and independence, and gushing prosperity, you have brought your England into ; a population mostly of beggars, (at heart) ; or, worse, bagmen, not merely bearing the bag—but nothing else *but* bags ;—sloppy, star-fishy, seven-suckered stomachs of indiscriminate covetousness, ready

to beg, borrow, gamble, swindle, or write anything a publisher will pay for.

Nevertheless your order is precise, and clear; 'Give to him that asketh thee.'

You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbour as yourselves.

You have founded an entire Science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man—the desire to defraud his neighbour.

And you have driven your women mad, so that they ask no more for Love, nor for fellowship with you; but stand against you, and ask for "justice."

In a state of society in which men and women are as good as they can be, (under mortal limitation), the women will be the guiding and purifying power.

There is one fixed idea in the mind of every European progressive politician, at this time; namely, that by a certain application of Financial Art, and by the erection of a certain quantity of new buildings on a colossal scale, it will be possible for society hereafter to pass its entire life in eating, smoking, harlotry, and talk; without doing anything whatever with its hands or feet of a laborious character. And as these new buildings, whose edification is a main article of this modern political faith and hope,—(being required for gambling and dining in on a large scale),—cannot be raised without severely increased taxation of the poorer classes, and this increased taxation and distress are beginning to be felt too grievously to be denied; not only so, but—which is still less agreeable to modern politicians—with slowly dawning perception of their true causes,—one finds also the popular journalists, for some time back addressing themselves to the defence of Taxation, and Theft in general,

I very positively can inform you, the considerablest part of the misery of the world comes of the tricks of unjust taxation. All its evil passions—pride, lust, revenge, malice, and sloth—derive their main deadliness from the facilities of getting hold of other people's money open to the persons they influence. Pay every man for his work,—pay nobody *but* for his work,—and see that the work be

sound ; and you will find pride, lust, and sloth have little room left for themselves.

Does not Mr. Darwin show you that you can't wash the slugs out of a lettuce without disrespect to your ancestors? Nay, the ancestors of the modern political economist cannot have been so pure ;—they were not—he tells you himself—vegetarian slugs, but carnivorous ones—those, to wit, that you see also carved on your tombstones, going in and out at the eyes of skulls. And truly, I don't know what else the holes in the heads of modern political economists were made for.

The substantial wealth of man consists in the earth he cultivates, with its pleasant or serviceable animals and plants, and in the rightly produced work of his own hands.

The material wealth of any country is the portion of its possessions which feeds and educates good men and women in it.*

Of modern machinery for locomotion, my readers, I suppose, thought me writing in ill-temper, when I said in one of the letters on the childhood of Scott, "infernal means of locomotion?" Indeed, I am always compelled to write, as always compelled to live, in ill-temper. But I never set down a single word but with the serenest purpose. I *meant* "infernal" in the most perfect sense the word will bear.

* Mr. Ruskin terms this "the first principle of my political economy." In *Unto This Last*, he writes :—"Since the essence of wealth consists in power over men, will it not follow that the nobler and the more in number the persons are over whom it has power, the greater the wealth? Perhaps it may even appear after some consideration, that the persons themselves *are* the wealth—that these pieces of gold with which we are in the habit of guiding them, are, in fact, nothing more than a kind of Byzantine harness or trappings, very glittering and beautiful in barbaric sight, wherewith we bridle the creatures ; but that if these same living creatures could be guided without the fretting and jingling of the Byzants in their mouths and ears, they might themselves be more valuable than their bridles. In fact, it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock, but in Flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures."

For instance. The town of Ulverstone is twelve miles from me, by four miles of mountain road beside Coniston lake, three through a pastoral valley, five by the seaside. A healthier or lovelier walk would be difficult to find.

In old times, if a Coniston peasant had any business at Ulverstone, he walked to Ulverstone; spent nothing but shoe-leather on the road, drank at the streams, and if he spent a couple of batz when he got to Ulverstone, "it was the end of the world." But now, he would never think of doing such a thing! He first walks three miles in a contrary direction, to a railroad station, and then travels by railroad twenty-four miles to Ulverstone, paying two shillings fare. During the twenty-four miles transit, he is idle, dusty, stupid; and either more hot or cold than is pleasant to him. In either case he drinks beer at two or three of the stations, passes his time, between them, with anybody he can find, in talking without having anything to talk of; and such talk always becomes vicious. He arrives at Ulverstone, jaded, half-drunk, and otherwise demoralized, and three shillings, at least, poorer than in the morning. Of that sum a shilling has gone for beer, threepence to a railway shareholder, threepence in coals and eighteenpence has been spent in employing strong men in the vile mechanical work of making and driving a machine, instead of his own legs, to carry the drunken lout. The results, absolute loss and demoralization to the poor, on all sides, and iniquitous gain to the rich. Fancy, if you saw the railway officials actually employed in carrying the countryman bodily on their backs to Ulverstone, what you would think of the business! And because they waste ever so much iron and fuel besides to do it, you think it a profitable one!

Women usually apologise to themselves for their pride and vanity, by saying, 'It is good for trade.'

Now you may soon convince yourself, and everybody about you, of the monstrous folly of this, by a very simple piece of definite action.

Wear, yourself, becoming, pleasantly varied, but simple dress, of the best possible material.

What you think necessary to buy (beyond this) 'for the good of trade,' buy, and immediately *burn*.

Even your dullest friends will see the folly of that

proceeding. You can then explain to them that by wearing what they don't want (instead of burning it) for the good of trade, they are merely adding insolence and vulgarity to absurdity.*

Dick Turpin is blamed—suppose—by some plain-minded person, for consuming the means of other people's living. "Nay," says Dick to the plain-minded person, "observe how beneficently and pleasantly I spend whatever I get!"

"Yes, Dick," persists the plain-minded person, "but how do you get it?"

"The question," says Dick, "is insidious and irrelevant."

The Manchester (or typically commercial) heresy in political economy is two-fold,—first, what may specifically be called the Judasian heresy,—that the value of a thing is what it will fetch in the market: "This ointment might have been sold for much,—this lake may be sold for much,—this England may be sold for much,—this Christ may be sold for—little; but yet, let us have what we can get," etc.; and, secondly, what may specifically be called the 'heresy of the tables'—*i.e.* of the money-changers—that money begets money, and that exchange is the root of profit. Whereas only labour is the root of profit, and exchange merely causes loss to the producer by tithe to the pedlar.

* "W.R.G." having asserted in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that "heartless expenditure all goes into the pockets" of the poor, Mr. Ruskin wrote to that journal (24th Jan., 1873), "as I happened to have over-eaten myself the day before, and taken, perhaps, a glass too much besides of quite priceless port," the article named "would have been a great comfort to my mind, showing me that if I had done some harm to myself, I had at least conferred benefit upon the poor by these excesses, had I not been left in some painful doubt, even at the end of W.R.G.'s most intelligent illustrations, whether I ought not to have exerted myself further in the cause of humanity, and by the use of some cathartic process, such as appears to have been without inconvenience practised by the ancients, enabled myself to eat two dinners instead of one. But I write to you to-day, because if I were a poor man, instead of a (moderately) rich one, I am nearly certain that W.R.G.'s paper would suggest to me a question, which I am sure he will kindly answer in your columns, namely, These means of living, which this generous and useful gentleman is so fortunately disposed to bestow on me—where does he get them himself?"

Lo and behold—we can see a dozen stars where David saw but one ; we know how far they are from each other ; nay, we know where they will all be, the day after to-morrow, and can make almanacks. What wise people are we ! Solomon, and all the Seven Sages of Greece,—where are they ? Socrates, Plato, and Epaminondas—what talk you to us of them ! Did they know, poor wretches, what the Dog Star smelt of ?

You think it a great triumph to make the sun draw brown landscapes for you. But the sun had drawn landscapes before for you, not in brown, but in green, and blue, and all imaginable colours, here in England. Not one of you ever looked at them then ; not one of you cares for the loss of them now, when you have shut the sun out with smoke, so that he can draw nothing more, except brown blots through a hole in a box.

Go out on the seashore when the tide is down, on some flat sand ; and take a little sand up into your palm, and separate one grain of it from the rest. Then try to fancy the relation between that single grain and the number in all the shining fields of the far distant shore, and onward shores immeasurable. Your astronomer tells you, your world is such a grain compared with the worlds that are, but that he can see no inhabitants in them, no sign of habitation, or of beneficence. Terror and chance, cold and fire, light struck forth by collision, desolateness of exploding orb and flying meteor. Meantime—you, on your grain of sand—what are you ? The little grain is itself mostly uninhabitable ; has a damp green belt in the midst of it. In that,—poor small vermin,—you live your span, fighting with each other for food, most of the time ; or building—if perchance you are at peace—filthy nests, in which you perish of starvation, phthisis, profligate diseases, or despair. There is a history of civilization for you ! briefer than Mr. Buckle's, and more true—when you see the Heavens and Earth without their God.

You can have no more Queens of Heaven, nor assumptions of triumphing saints. Even your simple country Queen of May, whom once you worshipped for a goddess

—has not little Mr. Faraday analysed her, and proved her to consist of charcoal and water, combined under what the Duke of Argyle calls the “reign of law?” Your once fortune-guiding stars, which used to twinkle in a mysterious manner, and to make you wonder what they were,—everybody knows what they are now: only hydrogen gas, and they stink as they twinkle. My wiseacre acquaintances, it is very fine, doubtless, for you to know all these things, who have plenty of money in your pockets, and nothing particular to burden your chemical minds; but for the poor, who have nothing in their pockets, and the wretched, who have much on their hearts, what in the world is the good of knowing that the only heaven they have to go to is a large gasometer?

“Poor and wretched!” you answer. “But when once everybody is convinced that heaven is a large gasometer, and when we have turned all the world into a small gasometer, and can drive round it by steam, and in forty minutes be back again where we were,—nobody will be poor or wretched any more. Sixty pounds on the square inch,—can anybody be wretched under that general application of high pressure?”

How many actual deaths are now annually caused by the strain and anxiety of competitive examination, it would startle us all if we could know: but the mischief done to the best faculties of the brain in all cases, and the miserable confusion and absurdity involved in the system itself, which offers every place, not to the man who is indeed fitted for it, but to the one who, on a given day, chances to have bodily strength enough to stand the cruellest strain, are evils infinite in their consequences, and more lamentable than many deaths.

Professors Huxley and Tyndall are of opinion that there is no God: they have never found one in a bottle. Well: possibly there isn't; but, my good Sheffield friends, do you wish there was? or are you of the French Republican opinion—“If there were a God, we should have to shoot him” as the first great step towards the “abolition of caste” proposed by our American friends.

III.

OF WOLF-SHEPHERDS AND HIRELINGS.

THE guilty Thieves of Europe, the real sources of all deadly war in it, are the Capitalists—that is to say people who live by per centages or the labour of others ; instead of by fair wages for their own.

All social evils and religious errors arise out of the pillage of the labourer by the idler : the idler leaving him only enough to live on (and even that miserably,) and taking all the rest of the produce of his work to spend in his own luxury, or in the toys with which he beguiles his idleness.

And this is done, and has from time immemorial been done, in all so-called civilized, but in reality corrupted, countries,—first by the landlords ; then, under their direction, by the three chief so-called gentlemanly ‘professions,’ of soldier, lawyer, and priest ; and, lastly, by the merchant and usurer. The landlord pillages by direct force, seizing the land, and saying to the labourer, You shall not live on this earth, but shall here die, unless you give me all the fruit of your labour but your bare living :—the soldier pillages by persuading the peasantry to fight, and then getting himself paid for skill in leading them to death :—the lawyer pillages by prolonging their personal quarrels with marketable ingenuity ; and the priest by selling the Gospel, and getting paid for theatrical displays of it.

Judases with the big bag—game-bag to wit !—to think how many of your dull Sunday mornings have been spent, for propriety’s sake, looking chiefly at those carved angels blowing trumpets above your family vaults ; and

never one of you has had Christianity enough in him to think that he might as easily have his moors full of angels as of grouse. And now, if ever you did see a real angel before the Day of Judgment, your first thought would be,—to shoot it.

Obedience!—you dare not so much as utter the word, whether to pot boy, or any other sort of boy, it seems, lately; and the half of you still calling themselves Lords, Marquises, Sirs, and other such ancient names, which—though omniscient Mr. Buckle says they and their heraldry are naught—some little prestige lingers about still. You yourselves, what do you yet mean by them—Lords of what?—Herrs, Signors, Dukes of what?—of whom? Do you mean merely, when you go to the root of the matter, that you sponge on the British farmer for your living, and are strong-bodied paupers compelling your dole?

I suppose the last idea which is likely ever to enter the mind of a representative squire, in any vivid or tenable manner, would be that anything he had ever done, or said, was liable to a judgment from superior powers; or that any other law than his own will, or the fashion of his society, stronger than his will, existed in relation to the management of his estate. Whereas, according to any rational interpretation of our Church's doctrine, as by law established; if there be one person in the world rather than another to whom it makes a serious difference whether he dies in the Lord or out of Him: and if there be one rather than another who will have strict scrutiny made into his use of every instant of his time, every syllable of his speech, and every action of his hand and foot,—on peril of having hand and foot bound, and tongue scorched, in Tophet,—that responsible person is the British Squire.

We, of the so-called 'educated' classes, who take it upon us to be the better and upper part of the world, cannot possibly understand our relations to the rest better than we may where actual life may be seen in front of its Shakespearean image, from the stalls of a theatre. I never stand up to rest myself, and look round

the house, without renewal of wonder how the crowd in the pit, and shilling gallery, allow us of the boxes and stalls to keep our places! Think of it;—those fellows behind there have housed us and fed us; their wives have washed our clothes, and kept us tidy;—they have bought us the best places,—brought us through the cold to them; and there they sit behind us, patiently, seeing and hearing what they may. There they pack themselves, squeezed and distant, behind our chairs;—we, their elect toys and pet puppets, oiled and varnished, and incensed, lounge in front, placidly, or for the greater part, wearily and sickly contemplative.

To me the strangest point in the whole matter is, that though we idlers always speak as if we were enriched by Heaven, and became ministers of its bounty to *you*; if ever you think the ministry slack, and take to definite pillage of us, no good ever comes of it to you; but the sources of wealth seem to be stopped instantly, and you are reduced to the small gain of making gloves of our skins; while, on the contrary, as long as we continue pillaging you, there seems no end to the profitableness of the business; but always, however bare we strip you, presently, more, to be had.

Nearly every problem of State policy and economy, as at present understood, and practised, consists in some device for persuading you labourers to go and dig up dinner for us reflective and æsthetical persons, who like to sit still, and think, or admire. So that when we get to the bottom of the matter, we find the inhabitants of this earth broadly divided into two great masses;—the peasant paymasters—spade in hand, original and imperial producers of turnips; and, waiting on them all round, a crowd of polite persons, modestly expectant of turnips, for some—too often theoretical—service. There is, first, the clerical person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for giving him moral advice; then the legal person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for telling him, in black letter, that his house is his own; there is, thirdly, the courtly person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for presenting a celestial appearance to him; there is, fourthly, the literary person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for

talking daintily to him ; and there is, lastly, the military person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for standing, with a cocked hat on, in the middle of the field, and exercising a moral influence upon the neighbours.

As your virtues have been made costly to you by the clergyman, so your vices have been made costly to you by the lawyers ; and you have one entire learned profession living on your sins, and the other on your repentance.

You are free Britons that rule the waves, and free Frenchmen that lead the universe, of course ; but you have not a bit of land you can stand on—without somebody's leave, nor a house for your children that they can't be turned out of, nor a bit of bread for their breakfast to-morrow, but on the chance of some more yards of riband being wanted.

The wealth of the world is yours ; even your common rant and rabble of economists tell you that—"No wealth without industry." Who robs you of it, then, or beguiles you ? Whose fault is it, you clothmakers, that any English child is in rags ? Whose fault is it, you shoemakers, that the street harlots mince in high-heeled shoes, and your own babes paddle barefoot in the street slime ? Whose fault is it, you bronzed husbandmen, that through all your furrowed England, children are dying of famine ? Primarily, of course, it is your clergymen's and masters' fault : but also in this your own, that you never educate any of your children with the earnest object of enabling them to see their way out of this, not by rising above their father's business, but by setting in order what was amiss in it : also in this your own, that none of you who do rise above your business, ever seem to keep the memory of what wrong they have known, or suffered ; nor, as masters, set a better example than others.

For the possession of the land, mind you, if you try to take it by force, you will have every blackguard and vaut-rien in the world claiming his share of it with you,—for by that law of force he has indeed as much right to it as you ; but by the law of labour he has not. Therefore you must get your land by the law of labour ; working

for it, saving for it, and buying it, as the spendthrifts and idlers offer it you : but buying never to let go.

You think that there ought to be no such differences of habitation : that nobody should live in a palace, and nobody under a heap of turf ? But if ever you become educated enough to know something about the arts, you will like to see a palace built in noble manner ; and if ever you become educated enough to know something about men, you will love some of them so well as to desire that at least they should live in palaces, though you cannot.

It has been shown by Professor Kirk, that out of the hundred and fifty-six millions of pounds which you prove your prosperity by spending annually on beer and tobacco, you pay a hundred millions to the rich middlemen, and thirty millions to the middling middlemen, and for every two shillings you pay, get threepence-halfpenny-worth of beer to swallow !

Meantime, the Bishop, and the Rector, and the Rector's lady, and the dear old Quaker spinster who lives in Sweetbriar Cottage, are *so* shocked that you drink so much, and that you are such horrid wretches that nothing can be done for you ! and you mustn't have your wages raised, because you *will* spend them in nothing but drink. And to-morrow they are all going to dine at Drayton Park, with the brewer who is your Member of Parliament, and is building a public-house at the railway station, and another in the High Street, and another at the corner of Philpott's Lane, and another by the stables at the back of Tunstall Terrace, outside the town, where he has just bricked over the Dovesbourne, and filled Buttercup Meadow with broken bottles ; and, by every measure, and on every principle of calculation, the growth of your prosperity is established !

You helpless sots and simpletons ! Can't you at least manage to set your wives—what you have got of them—to brew your beer, and give you an honest pint of it for your money ? Let *them* have the halfpence first, anyhow, if they must have the kicks afterwards.

I have told you the wealth of the world consists, for one great article, in its useful animals.

How to get the most you can of those, and the most serviceable?

“Rob the squire’s stables, to begin with?”

No, good friends,—no. Their stables have been to them as the first wards of Hell, locked on them in this life, for these three hundred years. But you must not open them that way, even for their own sakes.

“Poach the squire’s game?”

“No, good friends,—no. Down among the wild en’mies, the dust of many a true English keeper forbids you that form of theft, for ever.

“Poison the squire’s hounds, and keep a blood bull terrier?”

Worse and worse—merry men, all.

No—here’s the beginning. Box your own lad’s ears the first time you see him shy a stone at a sparrow; and heartily, too; but put up, you and mother—(and thank God for the blessed persecution,)—with every conceivable form of vermin the boy likes to bring into the house,—and go hungry yourselves rather than not feed his rat or his rabbit.

Then, secondly,—you want to be a gentleman yourself, I suppose?

Well, you can’t be, as I have told you before, nor I neither; and there’s an end, neither of us being born in the caste: but you may get some pieces of gentlemen’s education, which will lead the way to your son’s being a better man than you.

Understand that a mad dog is to be slain; though with pity—infinite of pity,—(and much more, a mad *man*, of an injurious kind; for a mad dog only bites flesh; but a mad man, spirit: get your rogue, the supremely maddest of men, with supreme pity always, but inexorably, hanged). But to all good and sane men and beasts, be true brother; and as it is best, perhaps, to begin with all things in the lowest place, begin with true brotherhood to the beast: in pure simplicity of practical help, I should like a squad of you to stand always harnessed, at the bottom of any hills you know of in Sheffield, where the horses strain;—ready there at given hours; carts ordered not to pass at any others: at the low level, hook yourselves on before the horses; pull them up too, if need

be; and dismiss them at the top with a pat and a mouthful of hay. Here's a beginning of chivalry, and gentlemanly life for you, my masters.

The men are rebuked, in the magistral homilies, for their ingratitude in striking! Then there must be a law of *Grace*, which at least the masters recognize. The men are mocked in the magistral homilies for their folly in striking. Then there must be a law of *Wisdom*, which at least the masters recognize.

Appeal to *these*, then, for their entire verdict, most virtuous masters, all gracious and all-wise. These reprobate ones, graceless and senseless, cannot find their way for themselves; you must guide them. That much I told you, years and years ago. You will have to do it, in spite of all your liberty-mongers. Masters, in fact, you must be; not in name.

But, as yet blind; and drivers—not leaders—of the blind, you must pull the beams out of your own eyes, now; and that bravely. Preach your homily to yourselves first. Let me hear once more how it runs, to the men. "Oh foolish and ungrateful ones," you say, "did we not once on a time give you high wages—even so high that you contentedly drank yourselves to death; and now, oh foolish and forgetful ones, that the time has come for us to give you low wages, will you not contentedly also starve yourselves to death?"

Alas, Wolf-Shepherds—this is St. George's word to you:—

"In your prosperity you gave these men high wages, not in any kindness to *them*, but in contention for business among yourselves. You allowed the men to spend their wage in drunkenness, and you boasted of that drunkenness by the mouth of your Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the columns of your leading journal, as a principal sign of the country's prosperity. You have declared again and again, by vociferation of all your orators, that you have wealth so overflowing that you do not know what to do with it. These men who dug the wealth for you, now lie starving at the mouths of the hell-pits you made them dig; yea, their bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth, like as when one cutteth and

cleaveth wood upon the earth. Your boasted wealth—where is it? Is the war between these and you, because you now mercilessly refuse them food, or because all your boasts of wealth were lies, and you have none to give?

“Your boasts of wealth *were* lies. You were working from hand to mouth in your best times; now your work is stopped, and you have nothing in the country to pay for food with; still less any store of food laid by. And how much distress and wrath you will have to bear before you learn the lesson of justice, God only knows. But this is the lesson you *have* to learn.”

I have many friends among priests, and should have had more had I not long been trying to make them see that they have long trusted too much in candlesticks, not quite enough in candles; not at all enough in the sun, and least of all enough in the sun's Maker.

An English lawyer spoke twenty-six hours but the other day—the other four days, I mean—before the Lords of Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, to prove that an English clergyman had used a proper quantity of equivocation in his statement that Christ was in Bread. Yet there is no harm in anybody thinking that He is in Bread,—or even in Flour! The harm is, in their expectation of His Presence in gunpowder.

What can be said of more deadly and ghastly blame against the clergy of England, or any other country, than that they are the poor man's only friends? Have they, then, so betrayed their Master's charge and mind, in their preaching to the rich; so smoothed their words, and so sold their authority,—that, after twelve hundred years' entrusting of the gospel to them, there is no man in England (this is their chief plea for themselves forsooth) who will have mercy on the poor, but they; and so they must leave the word of God, and serve tables.

The real difficulty of our Ecclesiastical party has of late being that they could not venture for their lives to explain the Decalogue, feeling that Modernism and all

the practices of it must instantly be turned inside-out, and upside-down, if they did; but if, without explaining it, they could manage to get it *said* every Sunday, and a little agreeable tune on the organ played after every clause of it, that perchance would do, (on the assumption, rendered so highly probably by Mr. Darwin's discoveries respecting the modes of generation in the Orchideæ, that there *was* no God, except the original Baalzebub of Ekron, Lord of Bluebottles and flyblowing in general; and that this Decalogue was only ten crotchets of Moses's, and not God's at all,)—on such assumption, I say, they thought matters might still be kept quiet a few years longer in the Cathedral Close, especially as Mr. Bishop was always so agreeably and inoffensively pungent an element of London society; and Mrs. Bishop and Miss Bishop so extremely proper and pleasant to behold, and the grass of the lawn so smooth shaven. But all that is drawing very fast to its end. Poor dumb dogs that they are, and blind mouths, the grim wolf with privy paw daily devouring apace, and nothing said, and their people loving to have it so, I know not what they will do in the end thereof; but it is near. Disestablishment? Yes, and of more powers than theirs; that prophecy of the Seventh from Adam is of judgment to be executed upon all, and conviction of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.

I simply and most utterly mean, that, so far as my best judgment can reach, the present Bishops of the English Church, (with only one exception, known to me,—the Bishop of Natal,) have forfeited and fallen from their Bishoprics by transgression; and betrayal of their Lord, first by simony, and secondly, and chiefly, by lying for God with one mouth, and contending for their own personal interests as a professional body, as if these were the cause of Christ. And that in the assembly and Church of future England, there must be, (and shall be so far as this present body of believers in God and His law now called together in the name of St. Michael and St. George are concerned,) set up and consecrated other Bishops; and under them, lower ministering officers and true "Dogs of the Lord," who, with stricter inquisition than ever Dominican, shall take knowledge—not of creeds, but of

every man's way and means of life ; and shall be either able to avouch his conduct as honourable and just, or bound to impeach it as shameful and iniquitous, and this down to minute details ;—above all, or before all, particulars of revenue, every companion, retainer, or associate in the Company's work being bound to keep such accounts that the position of his affairs may be completely known to the Bishops at any moment : and all bankruptcies or treacheries in money matters thus rendered impossible. Not that direct inquisition will be often necessary ; for when the true nature of Theft, with the other particulars of the Moral Law, are rightly taught in our schools, grown-up men will no more think of stealing in business than in burglary. It is merely through the quite bestial ignorance of the Moral Law in which the English Bishops have contentedly allowed their flocks to be brought up, that any of the modern English conditions of trade are possible.

The Simony of to-day differs only from that of apostolic times, in that, while the elder Simon thought the gift of the Holy Ghost worth a considerable offer in ready money, the modern Simon would on the whole refuse to accept the same gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, without a nice little attached income, a pretty church, with a steeple restored by Mr. Scott, and an eligible neighbourhood.

No way will ever be discovered of rightly ordaining men who have taken up the trade of preaching as a means of livelihood, and to whom it is matter of personal interest whether they preach in one place or another. Only those who have *left* their means of living, that they may preach, and whose peace follows them as they wander, and abides where they enter in, are of God's ordaining : and, practically, until the Church insists that every one of her ministers shall either have an independent income, or support himself, for his ministry on Sunday, by true bodily toil during the week, no word of the living Gospel will ever be spoken from her pulpits. How many of those who now occupy them have verily been invited to such office by the Holy Ghost, may be easily judged by observing how many the Holy Ghost

has similarly invited, of religious persons already in prosperous business, or desirable position.

That a lad just out of his teens, and not under the influence of any deep religious enthusiasm, should ever contemplate the possibility of his being set up in the middle of a mixed company of men and women of the world, to instruct the aged, encourage the valiant, support the weak, reprove the guilty, and set an example to all ;—and not feel what a ridiculous and blasphemous business it would be, if he only pretended to do it for hire ; and what a ghastly and murderous business it would be, if he did it strenuously wrong ; and what a marvellous and all but incredible thing the Church and its power must be, if it were possible for him, with all the good meaning in the world, to do it rightly ;—that any youth, I say, should ever have got himself into the state of recklessness, or conceit, required to become a clergyman at all, under these existing circumstances, must put him quite out of the pale of those whom one appeals to on any reasonable or moral question, in serious writing.

The day *must* come when your poor little honest puppy, whom his people have been wanting to dress up in a surplice, and call, “The to be Feared,” that he might have pay enough, by tithe or tax, to marry a pretty girl, and live in a parsonage,—some poor little honest wretch of a puppy, I say, will eventually get it into his glossy head that he would be incomparably more reverend to mortals, and acceptable to St. Peter and all Saints, as a true monger of sweet fish, than a false fisher for rotten souls ; and that his wife would be incomparably more ‘lady-like’—not to say Madonna-like—marching beside him in purple stockings and sabots—or even frankly barefoot—with her creel full of caller herring on her back, than in administering any quantity of Ecclesiastical scholarship to her Sunday-schools.

To hew wood—to draw water ;—you think these base businesses, do you ? and that you are noble, as well as sanctified, in binding faggot burdens on poor men’s backs, which you will not touch with your own fingers ;—and in preaching the efficacy of baptism inside the Church, by

yonder stream (under the first bridge of the Seven Bridge Road here at Oxford,) while the sweet waters of it are choked with dust and dung, within ten fathoms from your font;—and in giving benediction with two fingers and your thumb, of a superfine quality, to the Marquis of B.? Honester benediction, and more efficacious, can be had cheaper, gentlemen, in the existing market. Under my own system of regulating prices, I gave an Irishwoman twopence yesterday for two oranges, of which fruit—under pressure of competition—she was ready to supply me with three for a penny. “The Lord Almighty take you to eternal glory!” said she.

If some pious young English boys and girls, instead of setting up for clergymen and clergywomen, would set up, on their marriage, for publicans, and keep clean parlours, lavendered sheets, and honest fare, all for honest price, for poor wanderers, like myself, I doubt not their reward would be great in Heaven.

Judge what the delight of travelling would be, for nice travellers, (read the word ‘nice’ in any sense you will)—if at every village there were a Blue Boar, or a Green Dragon, or Silver Swan—with Mark Tapley of the Dragon for Ostler—and Boots of the Swan for Boots—and Mrs. Lupin or Mrs. Lirriper for Hostess—only trained at Girton in all that becomes a Hostess in the nineteenth century! Gentle girl-readers mine, is it any excess of Christianity in you, do you think, that makes you shrink from the notion of being such an one, instead of the Curate’s wife?

If ever your clergy mean really to help you to read your Bible,—the whole of it, and not merely the bits which tell you that you are miserable sinners, and that you needn’t mind,—they must make a translation retaining as many as possible of the words in their Greek form, which you may easily learn, and yet which will be quit of the danger of becoming debased by any vulgar English use.

IV.

THE KINGSHIP OF LABOUR.

“TO do good work, whether you live or die,” it is the entrance to all Princedoms; and if not done, the day will come, and that infallibly, when you must labour for evil instead of good.

Both by Homer and Scott, I was taught strange ideas about kings, which I find, for the present, much obsolete; for, I perceived that both the author of the Iliad and the author of Waverley made their kings, or king-loving persons, do harder work than anybody else. Tydides or Idomeneus always killed twenty Trojans to other people's one, and Redgauntlet speared more salmon than any of the Solway fishermen, and—which was particularly a subject of admiration to me,—I observed that they not only did more, but in proportion to their doings, got less, than other people—nay, that the best of them were even ready to govern for nothing, and let their followers divide any quantity of spoil or profit. Of late it has seemed to me that the idea of a king has become exactly the contrary of this, and that it has been supposed the duty of superior persons generally to do less, and to get more than anybody else; so that it was, perhaps, quite as well that in those early days my contemplation of existent kingship was a very distant one, and my childish eyes wholly unacquainted with the splendour of courts.

In common language, and in vulgar thought, the possession of land is confused with “Freedom.” But no man is so free as a beggar; and no man is more solemnly a servant to God, the king, and the laws of his country, than an honest land-holder.

Neither almsgiving nor praying, nor psalm-singing, nor even—as poor Livingstone thought, to his own death, and our bitter loss—discovering the mountains of the Moon, have anything to do with “good work,” or God’s work. But it is not so very difficult to discover what that work is. You keep the Sabbath, in imitation of God’s rest. Do, by all manner of means, if you like; and keep also the rest of the week in imitation of God’s work.

No one can teach you anything worth learning but through manual labour; the very bread of life can only be got out of the chaff of it by “rubbing it in your hands.”

There are no chagrins so venomous as the chagrins of the idle; there are no pangs so sickening as the satieties of pleasure. Nay, the bitterest and most enduring sorrow may be borne through the burden and heat of day bravely to the due time of death, by a true worker. And, indeed, it is this very dayspring and fount of peace in the bosoms of the labouring poor which has till now rendered their oppression possible. Only the idle among *them* revolt against their state;—the brave workers die passively, young and old, and make no sign. It is for you to pity them, for you to stand with them, for you to cherish, and save.

The woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, is, I believe, the teacher of labour for lascivious purpose, beginning by the adornment of sacred things, not verily for the honour of God, but for our own delight, (as more or less in all modern Ritualism). It is of all manner of sins the most difficult to search out and detect the absolute root or secret danger of. It is the ‘depth of Satan’—the most secret of his temptations, and the punishment of it, death in torture. For if our *charity* and *labour* are poisoned, what is there more to save us.

The most fearful practical lessons in modern history are that the entire teaching of Mazzini, a man wholly upright, pure, and noble, and of subtlest intellectual power—Italian of the Italians, was rendered poisonous to Italy because he set himself against Kinghood; and the entire war of Garibaldi, a soldier of ten thousand,

innocent and gentle and true, and of old Roman valour, was rendered utterly ruinous to Italy, by his setting himself against the Priesthood.

The practice of faith and obedience to some of our fellow-creatures is the alphabet by which we learn the higher obedience to heaven; and it is not only needful to the prosperity of all noble united action, but essential to the happiness of all noble living spirits.

The fool, whatever his wit, is the man who doesn't know his master.

Obey *something*; and you will have a chance of some day finding out what is best to obey. But if you begin by obeying nothing, you will end by obeying Beelzebub and all his seven invited friends.

If . . . instead of merely praying, when you hear that disagreeable crotchet of Moses's announced, "Thou shalt not steal," "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this—crotchet," which is all you can now do,—resolve solemnly that you will yourselves literally obey, (and enforce with all your power such obedience in others,) the Christian answering article of Decalogue, "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth," you will, in that single piece of duty to God, overthrow, as I have said, the entire system of modern society, and form another in righteousness and true holiness, by no rage refusing, and in no cowardice denying, but wholly submitting to, the Lord who bought them with a price, the only Despot, God.

A despot is a master to whom servants belong, as his property, and who belongs to his servants as their property. My *own* master, my *own* servant. It expresses the most beautiful relation, next to that of husband and wife, in which human souls can stand to each other; but is only perfected in the right relation between a soul and its God.

On the other hand, a Tyrant, Tyrannus, Doric for

Cyranus, a person with the essential power of a Cyrus, or imperial commander from whose decision there is no appeal, is a king exercising state authority over persons who do not in any sense belong to him as his property, but whom he has been appointed, or has appointed himself to govern for general purposes of state benefit.

Modern Utopianism imagines that the world is to be stubbed by steam, and human arms and legs to be eternally idle; not perceiving that thus it would reduce man to the level of his cattle indeed, who can only graze and gore, but not dig! It is indeed certain that advancing knowledge will guide us to less painful methods of human toil; but in the true Utopia, man will rather harness himself, with his oxen, to his plough, than leave the devil to drive it.

Whatever machinery is needful for human purposes can be driven by wind or water; the Thames alone could drive mills enough to weave velvet and silk for all England. But even mechanical occupation not involving pollution of the atmosphere must be as limited as possible; for it invariably degrades. You may use your slave in your silver mine, or at your loom, to avoid such labour yourself, if you honestly believe you have brains to be better employed;—or you may yourself, for the service of others, honourably *become* their slave; and, in benevolent degradation, dig silver or weave silk, making yourself semi-spade, or semi-worm. But you must not eventually, for no purpose or motive whatsoever, live amidst smoke and filth, nor allow others to do so; you must see that your slaves are as comfortable and safe as their employment permits, and that they are paid wages high enough to allow them to leave it often for redemption and rest.

You are to make shoes with the extremest care to please your customers in all matters which they ought to ask; by fineness of fit, excellence of work, and exactitude of compliance with special orders: but you are not to please them in things which they ought not to ask. It is *your* business to know how to protect, and adorn, the human foot. When a customer wishes you really to protect and adorn his or her foot, you are to do it with

finest care: but if a customer wishes you to injure their foot, or disfigure it, you are to refuse their pleasure in those particulars, and bid them—if they insist on such *dis-service*—to go elsewhere. You are not, the smiths of you, to put horseshoes hot on hoofs; and you are not, the shoemakers of you, to make any shoes with high heels, or with vulgar and useless decorations, or—if made to measure—that will pinch the wearer.

Every following day the beautiful arrangements of modern political economists, obeying the law of covetousness instead of the law of God, send me more letters from gentlemen and ladies asking me ‘how they are to live?’

Well, my refined friends, you will find it needful to live, if it be with success, according to God’s law; and to love that law, and make it your meditation all the day. And the first uttered article in it is, “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.”

“But you don’t really expect us to work with our hands, and make ourselves hot?”

Why, who, in the name of Him who made you, are you then, that you shouldn’t? Have you got past the flaming sword, back into Eden; and is your celestial opinion, there, that we miserable Egyptians are to work outside, here, for *your* dinners, and hand them through the wall to you as a tourniquet? or, as being yet true servants of the devil, while you are blessed, dish it up to you, spiritually hot, through a trap-door?

Fine anti-slavery people you are, forsooth! who think it is right not only to make slaves, but *accursed* slaves, of other people, that you may slip your dainty necks out of the collar!

What *can* you do, that’s useful? Not to ask too much at first; and, since we are now coming to particulars, addressing myself first to gentlemen,—Do you think you can make a brick, or a tile?

You rather think not? Well, if you are healthy, and fit for work, and can do nothing better,—go and learn.

You would rather not? Very possibly: but you can’t have your dinner unless you do. And why would you so much rather not?

“So ungentlemanly!”

No; to beg your dinner, or steal it, is ungentlemanly. But there is nothing ungentlemanly, that I know of, in beating clay, and putting it in a mould.

“But my wife wouldn’t like it!”

Well, that’s a strong reason: you shouldn’t vex your wife, if you can help it; but why will she be vexed? If she is a nice English girl, she has pretty surely been repeating to herself, with great unction, for some years back, that highly popular verse,—

“The trivial round, the common task,
Will give us all we ought to ask,—
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us daily nearer God.”

“Oh, but my wife didn’t mean *that* sort of ‘common task’ at all!”

No; but your wife didn’t know what she meant; neither did Mr. Keble. Women and clergymen have so long been in the habit of using pretty words without ever troubling themselves to understand them, that they now revolt from the effort, as if it were an impiety. So far as your wife had any meaning at all, it was that until she was made an angel of, and had nothing to do but be happy, and sing her flattering opinions of God for evermore,—dressing herself and her children becomingly, and leaving cards on her acquaintances, were sufficiently acceptable services to Him, for which, trivial, though they were, He would reward her with immediate dinner and everlasting glory.

I hate republicans, as I do all other manner of fools. I love Lords and Ladies, (especially unmarried ones, with beautiful three-syllabled Christian-names. I know a simple two-syllabled one, also, very charming); and Earls and Countesses, and Marquises and Marchionesses, and Honourables, and Sirs; and I bow down before them and worship them, in the way that Mr. Thackeray, thought ‘snobs’ did: he never perceiving with all the wit of him, (being mostly spent in mean smell-fungus work which spoiled its scent,) that it is *himself* the snob truly worships, all the time, and not the Lord he looks at.

Now, therefore, if there be any God, and if there be

any virtue, and if there be any truth, choose ye this day, rulers of men, whom you will serve. Your hypocrisy is not in pretending to be what you are not; but in *being* in the uttermost nature of you—Nothing—but dead bodies in coffins suspended between Heaven and Earth, God and Mammon.

If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. You would fain be respectful to Baal, keep smooth with Belial, dine with Moloch, sup, with golden spoon of sufficient length, with Beelzebub;—and kiss the Master to bid Him good night.

If instead of quitting his father's trade, that he might nurse lepers, he [St. Francis] had made his father's trade holy and pure, and honourable more than beggary, perhaps at this day the Black Friars might yet have had an unruined house by Thames shore, and the children of his native village not be standing in the porches of the temple built over his tomb, to ask alms of the infidel.

That is the literal fulfilment of what we are to pray for—"Give us each day—our daily *bread*," observe—not our daily money. For, that wages may be constant they must be in kind, not in money. So much bread, so much woollen cloth, or so much fuel, as the workman chooses; or, in lieu of these, *if* he choose, the order for such quantity at the government stores; order to be engraved as he chooses, on gold, or silver, or paper; but the "penny" a day to be always and everywhere convertible, on the instant, into its known measure of bread, cloth, or fuel, and to be the standard, therefore, eternal and invariable, of all value of things and wealth of men. That is the lesson you have to learn from St. George's lips, inevitably, against any quantity of shriek, whine, or sneer, from the swindler, the adulterator, and the fool. Whether St. George will let me teach it you before I die, is his business, not mine; but as surely as *I* shall die, these words of his shall *not*.

V.

PRECEPTS AND GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

ALL the teachings of Heaven are given—by sad law—in so obscure, nay, often in so ironical manner, that a blockhead necessarily reads them wrong. Very marvellous it is that Heaven, which really in one sense *is* merciful to sinners, is in no sense merciful to fools, but even lays pitfalls for them, and inevitable snares.

The magnificent cheat which the Devil played on the Protestant sect, from Knox downwards, in making them imagine that Papists were disbelieving idolaters, and thus entirely effacing all spiritual meaning from the word 'idolatry,' was the consummation of his great victory over the Christian Church, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The father of Frederick the Great was an Evangelical divine of the strictest orthodoxy,—very fond of beer, bacon, and tobacco, and entirely resolved to have his own way, supposing, as pure Evangelical people always do, that his own way was God's also.

Yes ; the Holy Ghost of Life, not yet finally departed, can still give fair colours even to an empty shell. Evangelical friends,—worms, as you have long called yourselves, here is a deeper expression of humility suggested possible : may not some of you be only painted shells of worms,—alive, yet empty ?

I am a simpleton, am I, to quote such an exploded book as Genesis ? My good wiseacre readers, I know as many flaws in the book of Genesis as the best of you, but I knew the book before I knew its flaws, while you know the flaws, and never have known the book, nor can know it.

If the Word of Christ be true, the facts of the physical universe are *not* steadfast. They are steadfast only for the infidel. But these signs shall evermore follow them that believe. "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." No matter how bad the drainage of the town, how foul the water, "He shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence; and though a thousand fall at thy right hand, it shall not come nigh *thee*." This, as a Christian, I am bound to believe. This, speaking as a Christian, I am bound to proclaim, whatever the consequences may be to the town, or the opinion of me formed by the Common Council; as a Christian, I believe prayer to be, in the last sense, sufficient for the salvation of the town; and drainage, in the last sense, insufficient for its salvation. Not that you will find me, looking back through the pages of *Fors*, unconcerned about drainage. But, if the two, I must choose between drains and prayer—why, 'look you'—whatever you may think of my wild and whirling words, I will go pray.

The true miracle, to my mind, would not be in the sun's standing still, but in its going on! We are all of us being swept down to death in a sea of miracle; we are drowned in wonder, as gnats in a Rhine whirlpool: unless we are worse,—drowned in pleasure, or sloth, or insolence.

It has been a prevalent notion in the minds of well-disposed persons, that if they acted according to their own conscience, they must, therefore, be doing right . . . "I must act according to the dictates of my conscience."

By no means, my conscientious friend, unless you are quite sure that yours is not the conscience of an ass.

The world's time, seen truly, is but one long and fitful April, in which every day is All Fools' day.

Miss Edgeworth made her morality so impertinent that, since her time, it has only been with fear and trembling that any good novelist has ventured to show the slightest bias in favour of the Ten Commandments.

Understand that Virtue does not consist in doing what will be presently paid, or even paid at all, to you, the virtuous person. It may so chance; or may not. It will be paid, some day; but the vital condition of it, as virtue, is that it shall be content in its own deed, and desirous rather that the pay of it, if any, should be for others; just as it is also the vital condition of vice to be content in its own deed, and desirous that the pay thereof, if any, should be to others.

False shame is the Devil's pet weapon. He does more work with it even than with false pride. For with false pride, he only goads evil; but with false shame, paralyzes good.

His [Scott's] ideal of honour in men and women is inbred, indisputable; fresh as the air of his mountains; firm as their rocks. His conception of purity in woman is even higher than Dante's; his reverence for the filial relation, as deep as Virgil's; his sympathy universal;—there is no rank or condition of men of which he has not shown the loveliest aspect; his code of moral principle is entirely defined, yet taught with a reserved subtlety like Nature's own, so that none but the most earnest readers perceive the intention: and his opinions on all practical subjects are final; the consummate decisions of accurate and inevitable common sense, tempered by the most graceful kindness.

You must read, for the nourishment of your mind, precisely under the moral laws which regulate your eating for the nourishment of the body. That is to say, you must not eat for the pleasure of eating, nor read for the pleasure of reading. But, if you manage yourself rightly, you will intensely enjoy your dinner, and your book. If you have any sense, you can easily follow out this analogy: I have not time at present to do it for you; only be sure it holds, to the minutest particular, with this difference only, that the vices and virtues of reading are more harmful on the one side and higher on the other, as the soul is more precious than the body. Gluttonous reading is a worse vice than gluttonous eating; filthy and foul reading, a much more loathsome habit than filthy eating.

Epicurism in books is much more difficult of attainment than epicurism in meat, but plain and virtuous feeding the most entirely pleasurable.

A small chamber, with a fair world outside:—such are the conditions, as far as I know or can gather, of all greatest and best mental work. At heart, the monastery cell always, changed sometimes, for special need, into the prison cell. But, as I meditate more and more closely what reply I may safely make to the now eagerly pressed questioning of my faithful scholars, what books I would have them read, I find the first broadly-swept definition may be—Books written in the country. None worth spending time on, and few that are quite safe to touch, have been written in towns.

The dissection of a sentence is as bad a way to the understanding of it as the dissection of a beast to the biography of it.

The principle of free trade is, that French gentlemen should employ English workmen, for whatever the English can do better than the French; and that English gentlemen should employ French workmen, for whatever the French can do better than the English. It is a very right principle.

What are we to do against powder and petroleum, then? What men may do; not what poisonous beasts may. If a wretch spit in your face, will you answer by spitting in his?—if he throw vitriol at you, will you go to the apothecary for a bigger bottle?

A Frenchman is selfish only when he is vile and lustful; but a German, selfish in the purest states of virtue and morality. A Frenchman is arrogant only in ignorance; but no quantity of learning ever makes a German modest. "Sir," says Albert Durer of his own work, (and he is the modestest German I know,) "it cannot be better done." Luther serenely damns the entire Gospel of St. James, because St. James happens to be not precisely of his own opinions.

You need not think you can ever have seamen in iron ships ; it is not in flesh and blood to be vigilant when vigilance is so slightly necessary : the best seaman born will lose his qualities, when he knows he can steam against wind and tide and has to handle ships so large that the care of them is necessarily divided among many persons.

When I was a boy I used to like seeing the sun rise. I didn't know, then, there were any spots on the sun ; now I do, and am always frightened lest any more should come.

It was probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle, and have nothing to be astonished at. Though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles.

If any journal would limit itself to statements of well-sifted fact, making itself not a "news" paper, but an "olds" paper, and giving its statements tested and true, like old wine, as soon as things could be known accurately ; choosing also, of the many things that might be known, those which it was most vital to know, and summing them in few words of pure English,—I cannot say whether it would ever pay well to sell it ; but I am sure it would pay well to read it, and to read no other.

It is necessary that you should understand accurately the difference between swearing and cursing, vulgarly so often confounded. They are entirely different things : the first is invoking the witness of a Spirit to an assertion you wish to make ; the second is invoking the assistance of a Spirit, in a mischief you wish to inflict. When ill-educated and ill-tempered people clamorously confuse the two invocations, they are not, in reality, either cursing or swearing ; but merely vomiting empty words indecently. True swearing and cursing must always be distinct and solemn.

Ever since Carlyle wrote that sentence about rights

and might, in his *French Revolution*, all blockheads of a benevolent class have been declaiming against him, as a worshipper of force. What else, in the name of the three Magi, *is* to be worshipped? Force of brains, Force of heart, Force of hand;—will you dethrone these, and worship apoplexy?—despise the spirit of Heaven and worship phthisis? Every condition of idolatry is summed in the one broad wickedness of refusing to worship Force, and resolving to worship No-Force;—denying the Almighty, and bowing down to four-and-twopence with a stamp on it.

Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers; and when once the obedience, if required, is certain, the little creature should be very early put for periods of practice in complete command of itself; set on the barebacked horse of its own will, and left to break it by its own strength.

A girl's proper confidant is her father. If there is any break whatever in her trust in him, from her infancy to her marriage, there is wrong somewhere,—often on his part, but most likely it is on hers; by getting into the habit of talking with her girl-friends about what they have no business with, and her father much. What she is not inclined to tell her father, should be told to no one; and, in nine cases out of ten, not thought of by herself.*

When a youth is fully in love with a girl, and feels that he is wise in loving her, he should at once tell her so plainly, and take his chance bravely, with other suitors.

* "In the strongest conviction I would assert that the father should never provide for his children. He should educate and maintain them to the very best of his power till they are of mature age, never living upon them in their youth, (damned modernism eats its own children young, and excuses its own avarice by them when they are old!) When they are strong enough, throw them out of the nest as the bird does. But let the nest be always open to them. No guilt should ever stand between child and parent. Doors always open to daughter-harlot or son-thief if they come. But no fortune left to them. Father's house open; nothing more. Honourable children will have their own houses—if needs be provide for their parents, not their parents for them."—*From a letter from Mr. Ruskin to a correspondent; printed in the newspapers in 1885.*

No lover should have the insolence to think of being accepted at once, nor should any girl have the cruelty to refuse at once; without severe reasons. If she simply doesn't like him, she may send him away for seven years or so—he vowing to live on cresses, and wear sackcloth meanwhile, or the like penance: if she likes him a little, or thinks she might come to like him in time, she may let him stay near her, putting him always on sharp trial to see what stuff he is made of, and requiring, figuratively, as many lion-skins or giants' heads as she thinks herself worth. The whole meaning and power of true courtship is Probation; and it oughtn't to be shorter than three years at least,—seven is, to my own mind, the orthodox time. And these relations between the young people should be openly and simply known, not to their friends only, but to everybody who has the least interest in them: and a girl worth anything ought to have always half a dozen or so of suitors under vow for her.

There are no words strong enough to express the general danger and degradation of the manners of mob-courtship, as distinct from these, which have become the fashion,—almost the law,—in modern times: when in a miserable confusion of candlelight, moonlight, and lime-light—and anything but daylight,—in indecently attractive and insanely expensive dresses, in snatched moments, in hidden corners, in accidental impulses and dismal ignorances, young people smirk and ogle and whisper and whimper and sneak and stumble and flutter and fumble and blunder into what they call Love;—expect to get whatever they like the moment they fancy it, and are continually in the danger of losing all the honour of life for a folly, and all the joy of it by an accident.

In the actual practice of daily life you will find that wherever there is secrecy, there is either guilt or danger.

I have no respect whatever for boy or girl martyrs;—we old men know the value of the dregs of life: but young people will throw the whole of it away for a freak, or in a pet at losing a toy.

There is a new Emperor [of Russia] every fifteen or

twenty years, on the average; and by strange hap and fortunate cabal, anybody might be made Emperor. But there is only one Turner in five hundred years, and God decides, without any admission of auxiliary cabal, what piece of clay His soul is to be put in.

There are certain men who *know* the truths necessary to human life; they do not 'opine' them; and nobody's 'opinions' on any subject, are of any consequence opposed to them. Hesiod is one of these, Plato another, Dante another, Carpaccio is another.

I find it takes a great deal of living to get a little deal of learning.

We cannot live in the country without hunting animals, or shooting them, unless we learn how to look at them.

Whatever in literature, art, or religion, is done for money, is poisonous itself; and doubly deadly, in preventing the hearing or seeing of the noble literature and art which have been done for love and truth.

You will find, alike throughout the record of the Law and the promises of the Gospel, that there is, indeed, forgiveness with God, and Christ, for the passing sins of the hot heart, but none for the eternal and inherent sin of the cold. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;'—find it you written anywhere that the *unmerciful* shall? 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' But have you record of anyone's sins being forgiven who loved not at all?

You cannot get anything out of Nature, or from God, by gambling;—only out of your neighbour.

No man who is wretched in his own heart, and feeble in his own work, can rightly help others.

Both lending and borrowing are virtuous, when the borrowing is prudent, and the lending kind.

There are three great loves that rule the souls of men:

the love of what is lovely in creatures, and of what is lovely in things, and what is lovely in report. And these three loves have each their relative corruption, a lust—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

A man's happiness consists infinitely more in admiration of the faculties of others than in confidence in his own.

Only be clear about what is finally right, whether you can do it or not; and every day you will be more and more able to do it if you try.

Bibliography for the Studious Smoker.

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* * * First printed as four essays in the *Cornhill Magazine*, but the readers protested so vigorously that Thackeray, then editor, was obliged to ask the author to desist. The readers were quite right. Such essays were not the kind of mental food they paid their shillings for. Nevertheless this is a book to be read and re-read, for it is a sure and healthy stimulus to thought.

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