Food and Raiment.

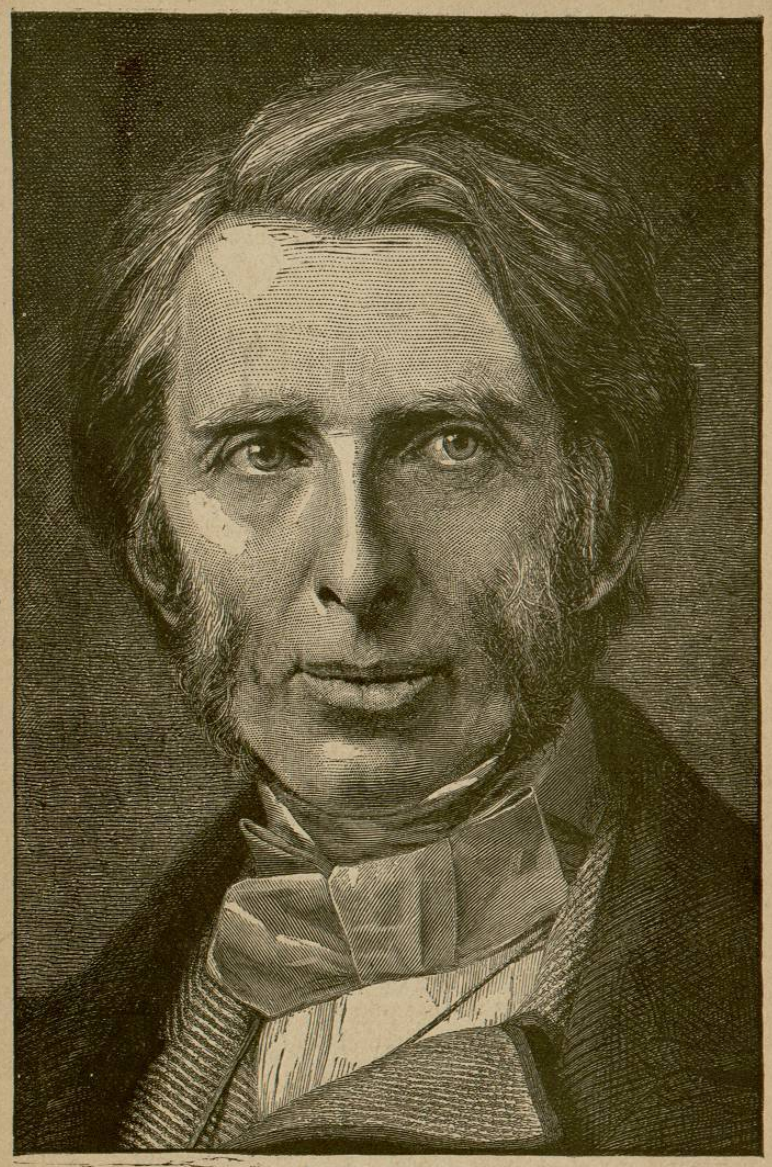
Man is born to expend every particle of strength that God Almighty has given him, in doing the work he finds he is fit for—to stand it out to the last breath of life, and do his best. We are called upon to do that; and the reward we all get—which we are perfectly sure of if we have merited it—is that we have got the work done, or, at least, that we have tried to do the work; for that is a great blessing in itself; and I should say there is not very much more reward than that going in this world. If the man gets meat and clothes, what matters it whether he have 10,000*l.*, or 10,000,000*l.*, or 70*l.* a year. He can get meat and clothes for that; and he will find very little difference intrinsically, if he is a wise man.

I warmly second the advice of the wisest of men—"Don't be ambitious; don't be at all too desirous to succeed; be loyal and modest." Cut down the proud towering thoughts that you get into you, or see they be pure as well as high. There is a nobler ambition than the gaining of all California would be, or the getting of all the suffrages that are on the planet just now.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WORKS OF JOHN RUSKIN.

Pride.

Pride is base from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, that is when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure, for there is not the man so lofty in his standing nor capacity but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him, and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether under-



JOHN RUSKIN.

stand not one: not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, which is the real essence and criminality of pride, nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them: but taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable.

The Truth of Truths.

Truth is to be discovered, and pardon to be won for every man by himself. This is evident from innumerable texts of Scripture, but chiefly from those which exhort every man to seek after truth, and which connect knowing with doing. We are to seek after knowledge as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; therefore, from every man she must be naturally hid, and the discovery of her is to be the reward only of personal search. The kingdom of God is as treasure hid in a field; and of those who profess to help us to seek for it, we are not to put confidence in those who say—Here is the treasure, we have found it, and have it, and will give you some of it; but to those who say—We think that is a good place to dig, and you will dig most easily in such and such a way.

Farther, it has been promised that if such earnest search be made, truth shall be discovered: as much truth, that is, as is necessary for the person seeking. These, therefore, I hold, for two fundamental principles of religion—that, without seeking, truth cannot be known at all; and that, by seeking, it may be discovered by the simplest. I say, without seeking it cannot be known at all. It can neither be declared from pulpits, nor set down in articles, nor in any wise "prepared and sold" in packages, ready for use. Truth must be ground for every man by himself out of its husk, with such help as he can get, indeed, but not without stern labor of his own. In what science is knowledge to be had cheap? or

truth to be told over a velvet cushion, in half an hour's talk every seventh day? Can you learn chemistry so?—zoology?—anatomy? and do you expect to penetrate the secret of all secrets, and to know that whose price is above rubies; and of which the depth saith—It is not in me, in so easy fashion? There are doubts in this matter which evil spirits darken with their wings, and that is true of all such doubts which we were told long ago—they can "be ended by action alone."

As surely as we live, this truth of truths can only so be discerned: to those who act on what they know, more shall be revealed; and thus, if any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God. Any man:—not the man who has most means of knowing, who has the subtlest brains, or sits under the most orthodox preacher, or has his library fullest of most orthodox books—but the man who strives to know, who takes God at His word, and sets himself to dig up the heavenly mystery, roots and all, before sunset, and the night come, when no man can work. Beside such a man, God stands in more and more visible presence as he toils, and teaches him that which no preacher can teach—no earthly authority gainsay. By such a man, the preacher must himself be judged.

Simplicity.

It is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated; far more difficult to sacrifice skill and cease exertion in the proper place, than to expend both indiscriminately. We shall find, in the course of our investigation, that beauty and difficulty go together; and that they are only mean and paltry difficulties which it is wrong or contemptible to wrestle with. Be it remembered then—Power is never wasted. Whatever power has been employed, produces excellence in proportion to its own dignity and exertion: and the faculty of perceiving this exertion, and appreciating this dignity, is the faculty of perceiving excellence.

Making a Right Choice.

A single knot of quartz occurring in a flake of slate at the crest of the ridge may alter the entire destinies of the mountain form. It may turn the little rivulet of water to the right or left, and that little turn will be to the future direction of the gathering stream what the touch of a finger on the barrel of a rifle would be to the direction of a bullet. Each succeeding year increases the importance of every determined form, and arranges in masses yet more and more harmonious, the promontories shaped by the sweeping of the eternal waterfalls.

The importance of the results thus obtained by the slightest change of direction in the infant streamlets, furnishes an interesting type of the formation of human characters by habit. Every one of those notable ravines and crags is the expression, not of any sudden violence done to the mountain, but of its little *habits*, persisted in continually. It was created with one ruling instinct; but its destiny depended nevertheless, for effective result, on the direction of the small and all but invisible tricklings of water, in which the first shower of rain found its way down its sides. The feeblest, most insensible oozings of the drops of dew among its dust were in reality arbiters of its eternal form; commissioned, with a touch more tender than that of a child's finger—as silent and slight as the fall of a half-checked tear on a maiden's cheek—to fix for ever the forms of peak and precipice, and hew those leagues of lifted granite into the shapes that were to divide the earth and its kingdoms. Once the little stone evaded—once the dim furrow traced—and the peak was for ever invested with its majesty, the ravine for ever doomed to its degradation. Thenceforward, day by day, the subtle habit gained in power; the evaded stone was left with wider basement; the chosen furrow deepened with swifter-sliding wave; repentance and arrest were alike impossible, and hour after hour saw written in larger and rockier characters upon the sky, the history of the choice that had

been directed by a drop of rain, and of the balance that had been turned by a grain of sand.

The Harvest is Ripe.

"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe." The word is spoken in our ears continually to other reapers than the angels—to the busy skeletons that never tire for stooping. When the measure of iniquity is full, and it seems that another day might bring repentance and redemption—"Put ye in the sickle." When the young life has been wasted all away, and the eyes are just opening upon the tracks of ruin, and faint resolution rising in the heart for nobler things—"Put ye in the sickle." When the roughest blows of fortune have been borne long and bravely, and the hand is just stretched to grasp its goal—"Put ye in the sickle." And when there are but a few in the midst of a nation, to save it, or to teach, or to cherish; and all its life is bound up in those few golden ears—"Put ye in the sickle, pale reapers, and pour hemlock for your feast of harvest home."

Recreation.

It is one thing to indulge in playful rest, and another to be devoted to the pursuit of pleasure: and gaiety of heart during the reaction after hard labor, and quickened by satisfaction in the accomplished duty or perfected result, is altogether compatible with, nay, even in some sort arises naturally out of a deep internal seriousness of disposition.

Flowers.

Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity; children love them; quiet, tender, contented, ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered: They are the cottager's treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in whose heart rests the covenant of peace. Passionate or

religious minds contemplate them with fond, feverish intensity; the affection is seen severely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open and true country sentiment in those of our own pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always. But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets, but rarely for their own sake. They fall forgotten from the great workmen's and soldiers' hands. Such men will take, in thankfulness, crowns of leaves, or crowns of thorns—not crowns of flowers.

All Carving and no Meat.

The divisions of a church are much like the divisions of a sermon; they are always right so long as they are necessary to edification, and always wrong when they are thrust upon the attention as divisions only. There may be neatness in carving when there is richness in feasting; but I have heard many a discourse, and seen many a church wall, in which it was all carving and no meat.

Loss.

There is no subject of thought more melancholy, more wonderful, than the way in which God permits so often His best gifts to be trodden under foot of men, His richest treasures to be wasted by the moth, and the mightiest influences of His Spirit, given but once in the world's history, to be quenched and shortened by miseries of chance and guilt. I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder often at what they lose. We may see how good rises out of pain and evil; but the dead, naked, eyeless loss, what good comes of that? The fruit struck to the earth before its ripeness; the glowing life and goodly purpose dissolved away in sudden death; the words, half spoken, choked upon the lips with clay for ever; or, stranger than all, the whole majesty

of humanity raised to its fulness, and every gift and power necessary for a given purpose, at a given moment, centred in one man, and all this perfected blessing permitted to be refused, perverted, crushed, cast aside by those who need it most—the city which is not set on a hill, the candle that giveth light to none that are in the house:—these are the heaviest mysteries of this strange world, and, it seems to me, those which mark its curse the most.

Life Never a Jest.

The playful fancy of a moment may innocently be expressed by the passing word; but he can hardly have learned the preciousness of life, who passes days in the elaboration of a jest. And, as to what regards the delineation of human character, the nature of all noble art is to epitomize and embrace so much at once, that its subject can never be altogether ludicrous; it must possess all the solemnities of the whole, not the brightness of the partial, truth. For all truth that makes us smile is partial. The novelist amuses us by his relation of a particular incident; but the painter cannot set any one of his characters before us without giving some glimpse of its whole career. That of which the historian informs us in successive pages, it is the task of the painter to inform us of a once, writing upon the countenance not merely the expression of the moment, but the history of the life: and the history of a life can never be a jest.

The Love of Flowers.

Perhaps it may be thought, if we understood flowers better, we might love them less.

We do not love them much, as it is. Few people care about flowers. Many, indeed, are fond of finding a new shape of blossom, caring for it as a child cares about a kaleidoscope. Many, also, like a fair service of flowers in the greenhouse, as a fair service of plate on the table. Many are scientifically interested in them, though even these

in the nomenclature rather than the flowers. And a few enjoy their gardens; but I have never heard of a piece of land, which would let well on a building lease, remaining unlet because it was a flowery piece. I have never heard of parks being kept for wild hyacinths, though often of their being kept for wild beasts. And the blossoming time of the year being principally spring, I perceive it to be the mind of most people, during that period, to stay in towns.

A year or two ago, a keen-sighted and eccentrically minded friend of mine, having taken it into his head to violate this national custom, and go to the Tyrol in spring, was passing through a valley near Landech, with several similarly headstrong companions. A strange mountain appeared in the distance, belted about its breast with a zone of blue, like our English Queen. Was it a blue cloud? A blue horizontal bar of the air that Titian breathed in youth, seen now far away, which mortal might never breathe again? Was it a mirage—a meteor? Would it stay to be approached? (ten miles of winding road yet between them and the foot of its mountain). Such questioning had they concerning it. My keen-sighted friend alone maintained it to be substantial; whatever it might be, it was not air, and would not vanish. The ten miles of road were overpassed, the carriage left, the mountain climbed. It stayed patiently, expanding still into richer breadth and heavenlier glow—a belt of gentians. Such things may verily be seen among the Alps in spring, and in spring only. Which being so, I observe most people prefer going in autumn.

The Memory of Unkindness.

He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been forever closed, feeling how impotent *there* are the wild love, or the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur