

JOHN RUSKIN

MODERN PAINTERS

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VOL.II

"OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY"
AND
"OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY"

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"Accuse me not
Of arrogance,
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH

*RE-ARRANGED IN TWO VOLUMES, AND REVISED BY
THE AUTHOR*

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CONTENTS.

SECTION I.....	9
OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.....	9
<i>CHAPTER I.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Of the Rank and Relations of the Theoretic Faculty.	9
<i>CHAPTER II.....</i>	<i>20</i>
Of the Theoretic Faculty as Concerned with	
Pleasures of Sense.....	20
<i>CHAPTER III.....</i>	<i>28</i>
Of Accuracy and Inaccuracy in Impressions of	
Sense.....	28
<i>CHAPTER IV.....</i>	<i>40</i>
Of False Opinions held Concerning Beauty.....	40
SECTION II.....	49
OF TYPICAL BEAUTY.....	49
<i>CHAPTER I.....</i>	<i>49</i>
Of Infinity, or the Type of Divine	
Incomprehensibility.....	49
<i>CHAPTER II.....</i>	<i>62</i>
Of Unity, or the Type of the Divine	
Comprehensiveness.....	62
<i>CHAPTER III.....</i>	<i>79</i>
Of Repose, or the Type of Divine Permanence.....	79
<i>CHAPTER IV.....</i>	<i>88</i>
Of Symmetry, or the Type of Divine Justice.....	88
<i>CHAPTER V.....</i>	<i>91</i>
Of Purity, or the Type of Divine Energy.....	91
<i>CHAPTER VI.....</i>	<i>97</i>
Of Moderation, or the Type of Government by Law.	97
<i>CHAPTER VII.....</i>	<i>103</i>
General Inferences respecting Typical Beauty.....	103
SECTION III.....	107
OF VITAL BEAUTY.....	107
<i>CHAPTER I.....</i>	<i>107</i>

Of Vital Beauty; I. Relative.	107
<i>CHAPTER II.</i>	120
Of Vital Beauty: II. Generic.	120
<i>CHAPTER III.</i>	131
III. Of Vital Beauty in Man.	131
<i>CHAPTER IV.</i>	154
General Conclusions Respecting the Theoretic Faculty.	154

PREFACE.

My reasons for this carefully revised reprint of the second volume of "Modern Painters," after so often declaring that I would reprint none of the book except the pieces relating to natural history, are given in the eighth number of "Deucalion": and I will only say farther here, that many and many a time during the revision, I wished I had persisted in my old resolution; not in the mere wounded vanity of an old author looking back on his earliest essays, but in much shame, and some indignation, at finding the most solemn of all subjects of human thought handled at once with the presumption of a youth, and the affectation of an anonymous writer.

But that the confession of faults might be complete, I have made no attempt to amend the text. Not a word is omitted; and, I believe, only three or four changed, which were too obscure, or evidently at the time inadvertent. A few, now useless, notes, referring to buildings since destroyed, or pictures carried away from their homes to Berlin or St. Petersburg, have been cancelled, — and a few pedantic ones shortened; while the parts of the text which needed definite contradiction, or correction, have been dealt with as they occurred, in notes distinguished from the old ones by being placed within marks of parenthesis.

To the addenda given in the former second edition I have subjoined a little piece of autobiography, which explains the peculiar temper in which the whole book was written: and it remains for me here, only to give such general account of its contents as may enable the reader to make what use of them may seem best to him.

Its first great assertion is, that beautiful things are useful to men because they are beautiful, and for the sake of their beauty only; and not to sell, or pawn — or, in any other way, turn into money. This, the beginning of all my political economy, is very sufficiently established in the opening chapter.

It then proceeds to ask — What makes anything beautiful, or ugly, in itself? implying therefore that positive beauty, and positive ugliness, are independent of anybody's taste. This,