

Unto this Last

John Kippin

The Rudimentary Series

No.1

No.1

‘We will suppose 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, reversion, to the servant himself.’

From ‘The Roots of Honour’ in Unto This Last by John Ruskin (first published 1860 in The Cornhill Magazine)



No.1



No.1



No.1



No.1



No.1



No.1



No.1

The Educational Series

No.2

No.2

'Primarily, which is very notable and curious, I observe that men of business rarely know the meaning of the word 'rich.' At least, if they know, they do not in their reasonings allow for the fact, that it is a relative word, implying its opposite 'poor' as positively as the word 'north' implies its opposite 'south.' Men nearly always speak and write as if riches were absolute, and it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself. The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you; the degree of power it possesses depends accurately

upon the need or desire he has for it,- and the art of making yourself rich, in the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbour poor.'

From 'The Veins of Wealth' in Unto This Last by John Ruskin (first published 1860 in The Cornhill Magazine)



No.2



No.2



No.2



No.2



No.2



No.2



No.2

The Standard Series

No.3

No.3

‘Most people’s minds are in curious confusion on the subject of free-trade because they suppose it to imply enlarged competition. On the contrary, free trade puts an end to all competition. ‘Protection’ (among various other mischievous functions) endeavours to enable one country to compete with another in the production of an article at a disadvantage. When trade is entirely free, no country can be competed with in the articles for the production of which it is naturally calculated; nor can it compete with any other, in the production of articles for which it is not naturally calculated. Tuscany, for instance, cannot compete in England in steel, nor England with Tuscany in oil. They must exchange their steel and oil. Which exchange should be as frank and free as honesty and the

sea-winds can make it. Competition, indeed arises at first, and sharply, in order to prove which is strongest in any given manufacture possible to both; this point once ascertained, competition is at an end.’

From ‘Qui Iuducatis Terram’ in Unto This Last by John Ruskin (first published 1860 in The Cornhill Magazine)



No.3



No.3



No.3



No.3



No.3



No.3



No.3

The Reference Series

No.4

No.4

'I desire, in closing the series of introductory papers, to leave this one great fact clearly stated. THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.

A strange political economy; the only one, nevertheless, that ever was or can be: all political economy founded on self-interest, being but the fulfilment of that which once brought schism into the policy of angels, and ruin into the Economy of Heaven.'

From 'Ad Valorem' in Unto This Last by John Ruskin (first published 1860 in The Cornhill Magazine)



No.4



No.4



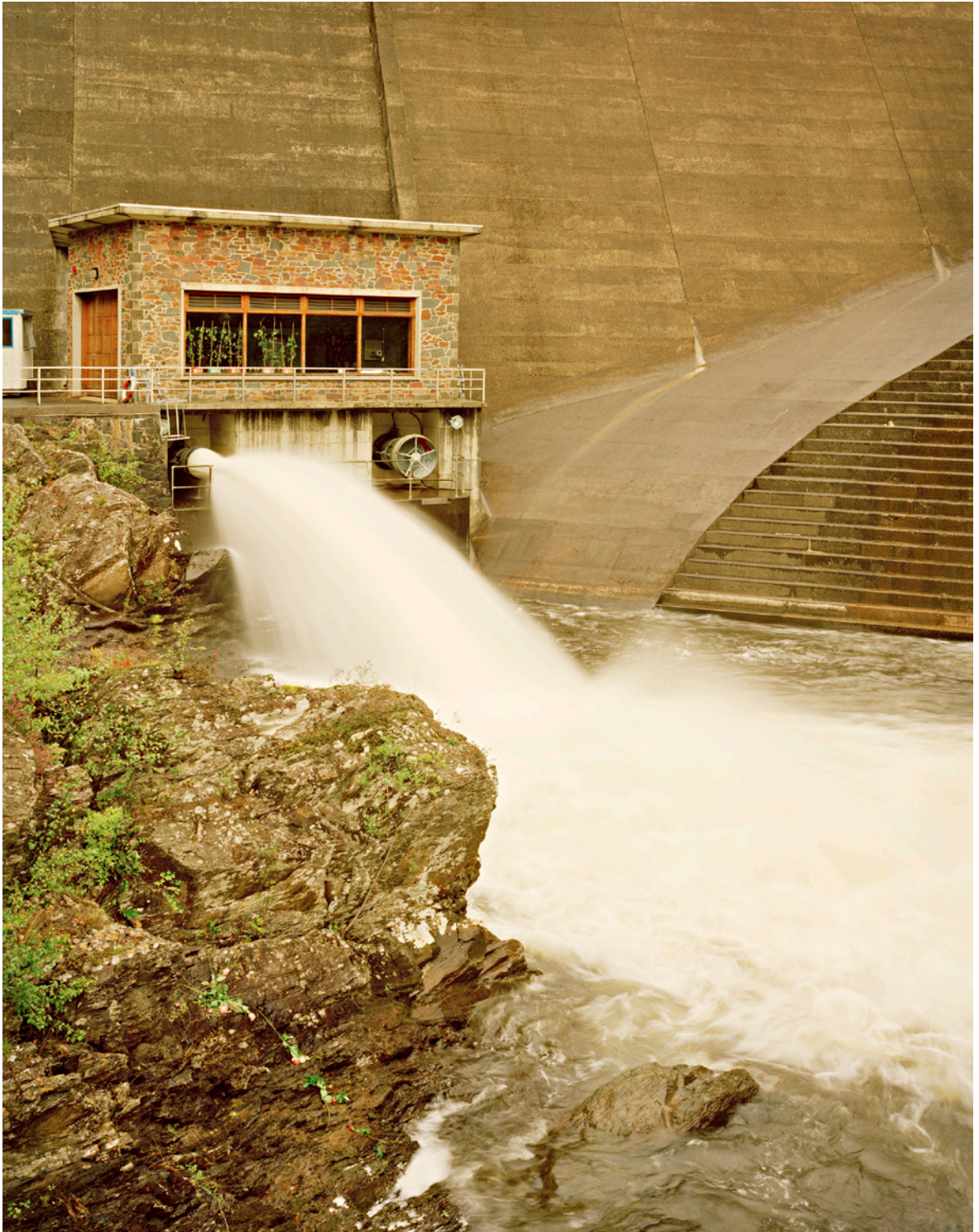
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No.4



No.4



No.4



No.4

My association with John Ruskin goes back for many years. I attended the John Ruskin Grammar School in Shirley, Surrey in the 1960s. Even then the reason that I opted for that school from the choices available to me was based on the fact that the school supported football as its major games activity as opposed to rugby (which I hated). I had no idea who John Ruskin was or why my school might be named after him. Even during my subsequent years studying fine art at Brighton the significance of John Ruskin largely escaped me, preoccupied as I was with what I thought to be 'cutting edge' contemporary arts practice.

It was only when asked to work on The Elements of Drawing that I really

began to acquaint myself with the life and work of John Ruskin. Having taken the trouble, my journey has been a fascinating opportunity to look in detail at an artist and thinker that truly engaged with not only his own art and the art of others, but with a whole range of other disciplines that he integrated within his worldview. His political writings intrigued me as a starting point from which to view his holistic vision of the activity and function of art. Like all of us, his approach to his work was roundly conditioned through the filter of his childhood and social background, and his initial, instinctual approach to the art of others was followed by his developing a critical and analytical approach to his own art and to his critical writing.

Like Leonardo, his mercurial intellect addressed the idea of his own artistic experiments rather than linger on its processes or spending his time completing major paintings. Many of Ruskin's works are unfinished as his restless imagination propelled him towards prodigious seminal and varied outputs. Whilst looking at his collection of works at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford, the diversity and egalitarian nature of his selection became clear to me and I was able to formulate an approach to *The Elements of Drawing*. There is so much here, so many interests and approaches, and all the time Ruskin is attempting to weave a giant tapestry encompassing his life and his art. Ruskin manages to develop a holistic vision of the creativity of the world that exists not only within the framework of his immediate experience, but to extend this view politically and to encompass a broad and generous view of society and civilisation.

Suddenly I could see Ruskin everywhere. His eclecticism became the focus for my own response to not only his collected works, but to his life and interests. One man has many avenues that one might approach in order to get a glimpse of him, and Ruskin offers many opportunities although, for most of us, there are aspects of his life that are shrouded in great mystery. This is particularly true with regards to his personal relationships, especially with the women and girls in his life. From the moment that I started this work I also started a greater project enriched and encouraged through my newly found knowledge and admiration of what Ruskin had achieved. My previous ignorance of Ruskin and his works gives me no pleasure, but I am sure

that my future progress, such as it might be, will be enriched through my contact with *The Elements of Drawing* and its understated, but totally relevant agenda for the whole of society.

My responses then have built on my understanding of Ruskin's life and work. His proclivities and predilections have fascinated (and astonished and mystified) me and I have constructed a series of images that mirrors the context of his own categorisation of his collection. I have not tried to stick to a simple script based on this collection. Neither have I attempted to illustrate elements of his life. Rather I have let my knowledge of Ruskin and his oeuvre guide my eye and my selection of images and texts. The texts are selected passages from *Unto This Last*, Ruskin's observations on the political economy of his day, laid out clearly and accessibly and with a prescience that is pure 'Ruskin'.

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