THE LAKE ENGLISH CLASSICS. SESAME AND LILIES

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The Lake English Classics. Sesame and Lilies by John Ruskin

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JOHN RUSKIN

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The Lake English Classics

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SESAME AND LILIES

JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

J. W. LINN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The text of Sesame and Lilies here presented is that of the Brantwood edition, the recognized American edition. I have included Ruskin's own preface to the edition of 1882, as undoubtedly helpful in understanding the man and his book. The notes are fuller than could be wished. In the case of the Biblical allusions, for example, I should have preferred to leave the identification to the student as part of the "intense reading" that Ruskin eloquently urges. But I have quailed before the cry of "insufficient time," which comes from high-school teachers of English everywhere. Only a few parallel passages are adduced from Ruskin's other works. His message was, as I have tried to point out, so single, so constantly recurred to in all his writings, that his works may almost be said to be made up of a series of parallel passages. Only when what he has said elsewhere has served in some fashion to explain what he says here, have I cited it. How the student is to use the notes may safely be left to the individual teacher. But one thing it seems wise to urge, and urge strongly-that not a word of the lectures themselves be read until the first two sections of the Introduction have been talked over carefully in the class-This is to reverse the ordinary procedure. room.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

But whoever reads Ruskin without knowledge of the man himself is likely to be so affected by his dogmatic way of putting things that the value of what he says is minimized.

For valuable assistance in the compilation of the notes, I am indebted to Mr. James R. Hulbert, of the University of Chicago. J. W. L.

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Chicago, 1906.

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INTRODUCTION

I.

RUSKIN'S LIFE.

John Ruskin (born 1819, died 1900) had a singular youth. Until he was seventeen and went to Oxford he was absolutely sheltered from the world, knowing almost no one outside of his own family. Even at Oxford he lived under the careful eye of his mother, who left her home and husband in London to watch over her only son. Aware only of his own small circle, of which he was conscious all the while that he was the center; extremely precocious, with gifts and powers far above the ordinary ;-living, in his own words, "a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life," he fastened upon himself at this time a kind of shell ("conceit," he calls it, but it is not that), which he never wholly got rid of. And though he was personally the most gentle and generous of men, his writings show an almost querulous dogmatism which is repellent to those who do not know his life as wholehis consistent sweetness, sensitiveness, and modesty, and his passionate earnestness for what he believed to be the truth. It brought upon him abuse and ridicule, and plunged him into controversy which in the end wore down his body and wore out

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