

**FORS CLAVIGERA. LETTERS
TO THE WORKMEN
AND LABOURERS OF
GREAT BRITAIN, VOL. III**

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JOHN RUSKIN

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LETTERS
*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART.

VOL. III.



GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1873.

FORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTER XXV.

BRANTWOOD,

January 4th, 1873.

THE Third Fors, having been much adverse to me, and more to many who wish me well, during the whole of last year, has turned my good and helpful printer adrift in the last month of it; and, with that grave inconvenience to him, contrived for me the minor one of being a fortnight late with my New Year's letter. Under which provocation I am somewhat consoled this morning by finding in a cookery book, of date 1791, "written purely from practice, and dedicated to the Hon. Lady Elizabeth Warburton, whom the author lately served as housekeeper," a receipt for Yorkshire Goose Pie, with which I think it will be most proper and delightful to begin my economical instructions to you for the current year. I am, indeed, greatly tempted to give precedence to the receipt for making "Fairy Butter," and further disturbed by an extreme desire to tell you how to

construct an "Apple Floating-Island"; but will abide, nevertheless, by my Goose Pie.

"Take a large fat goose, split it down the back, and take all the bones out; bone a turkey and two ducks the same way, season them very well with pepper and salt, with six woodcocks; lay the goose down on a clean dish, with the skin-side down; and lay the turkey into the goose, with the skin down; have ready a large hare, cleaned well, cut in pieces, and stewed in the oven, with a pound of butter, a quarter of an ounce of mace, beat fine, the same of white pepper, and salt to your taste, till the meat will leave the bones, and scum the butter off the gravy, pick the meat clean off, and beat it in a marble mortar very fine, with the butter you took off, and lay it in the turkey; take twenty-four pounds of the finest flour, six pounds of butter, half-a-pound of fresh rendered suet, make the paste pretty thick, and raise the pie oval; roll out a lump of paste, and cut it in vine-leaves or what form you please; rub the pie with the yolks of eggs, and put your ornaments on the walls; then turn the hare, turkey, and goose upside down, and lay them in your pie, with the ducks at each end, and the woodcocks on the sides; make your lid pretty thick, and put it on; you may lay flowers, or the shape of the fowls in paste, on the lid, and make a hole in the middle of your lid; the walls of the pie are to be one inch and a half higher than the lid; then rub it all over with the yolks of eggs, and bind it round with threefold

paper, and lay the same over the top; it will take four hours baking in a brown-bread oven; when it comes out, melt two pounds of butter in the gravy that comes from the hare, and pour it hot in the pie through a tin-dish; close it well up, and let it be eight or ten days before you cut it; if you send it any distance, make up the hole in the middle with cold butter, to prevent the air from getting in."

Possessed of these instructions, I immediately went to my cook to ask how far we could faithfully carry them out. But she told me nothing could be done without a "brown-bread oven;" which I shall therefore instantly build under the rocks on my way down to the lake: and, if I live, we will have a Lancashire goose-pie next Michaelmas. You may, perhaps, think this affair irrelevant to the general purposes of '*Fors Clavigera*'; but it is not so by any means: on the contrary, it is closely connected with its primary intentions; and, besides, may interest some readers more than weightier, or, I should rather say, lighter and more spiritual matters. For, indeed, during twenty-three months, I had been writing to you, fellow-workmen, of matters affecting your best interests in this world, and all the interests you had, anywhere else:—explaining, as I could, what the shrewdest of you, hitherto, have thought, and the best of you have done;—what the most selfish have gained, and the most generous have suffered. Of all this, no notice whatever is taken. In my twenty-fourth letter, incident-

ally, I mentioned the fact of my being in a bad humour, (which I nearly always am, and which it matters little to anybody whether I am or not, so long as I don't act upon it,) and forthwith I got quite a little mailcartful of consolation, reproof, and advice. Much of it kind,—nearly all of it helpful, and some of it wise; but very little bearing on matters in hand: an eager Irish correspondent offers immediately to reply to anything, “though he has not been fortunate enough to meet with the book;” one working man's letter, for self and mates, is answered in the terminal notes;—could not be answered before for want of address;—another, from a south-country clergyman, could not be answered any way, for he would not read any more, he said, of such silly stuff as ‘Fors’;—but would have been glad to hear of any scheme for giving people a sound practical education. I fain would learn, myself, either from this practical Divine, or any of *his* mates, what the ecclesiastical idea of a sound practical education is;—that is to say, what—in week-day schools (—the teaching in Sunday ones being necessarily to do no manner of work)—our clergy think that boys and girls should be taught to practise, in order that, when grown up, they may with dexterity perform the same. For indeed, the constant object of these letters of mine, from their beginning, has been to urge you to do vigorously and dextrously what was useful; and nothing but that. And I have told you of Kings and Heroes, and now am about to tell you what I can of a Saint,

because I believe such persons to have done, sometimes, more useful things than you or I: begging your pardon always for not addressing you as heroes, which I believe you all think yourselves, or as kings, which I presume you all propose to be, or at least, if you cannot, to let nobody else be. Come what may of such proposal, I wish you would consider with me to-day what form of "sound practical education," if any, would enable you all to be Saints; and whether, such form proving discoverable, you would really like to be put through it, or whether, on the contrary, both the clergy and you mean, verily, and in your hearts, nothing by "practical education" but how to lay one penny upon another. Not but that it does my heart good to hear modern divines exhorting to *any* kind of practice—for, as far as I can make out, there is nothing they so much dread for their congregations as their getting into their heads that God expects them to do anything, beyond killing rabbits if they are rich, and being content with bad wages, if they are poor. But if any virtue more than these, (and the last *is* no small one) be indeed necessary to Saint-ship—may we not prudently ask what such virtue is, and, at this Holiday time, make our knowledge of the Hos more precise? Nay, in your pleading for perennial Holiday,—in your ten hours or eight hours bills, might you not urge your point with stouter conscience if you were all Saints, and the hours of rest you demanded became a realization of Baxter's Saints' Rest?

Suppose we *do* rest, for a few minutes, from that process of laying one penny upon another, (those of us, at least, who have learned the trick of it,) and look with some attention at the last penny we laid on the pile—or, if we can do no better, at the first of the pile we mean to lay.

Show me a penny—or, better, show me the three pages of our British Bible—penny, shilling, and pound, and let us try what we can read on them together. You see how rich they are in picture and legend: surely so practical a nation, in its most valued Scriptures, cannot have written or pictured anything but with discretion, and to the benefit of all beholders.

We begin with the penny;—not that, except under protest, I call such a thing as that a Penny! Our farthings, when we were boys, were as big as that; and two-pence filled our waistcoat pockets. Who, then, is this lady, whom it represents, sitting, apparently, on the edge of a dish-cover? Britannia? Yes,—of course. But who is Britannia? and what has she got on her head, in her hand, and on her seat?

“Don't I know who Britannia is?” Not I; and much doubt if you do! Is she Great Britain,—or Little Britain? Is she England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and the Indies,—or a small, dishonest, tailoring and engineering firm, with no connection over the way, and publicly fined at the police court for sneakingly supplying customers it had engaged not to? Is she a Queen, or an Actress, or a slave? Is she a Nation, mother of nations; or a