

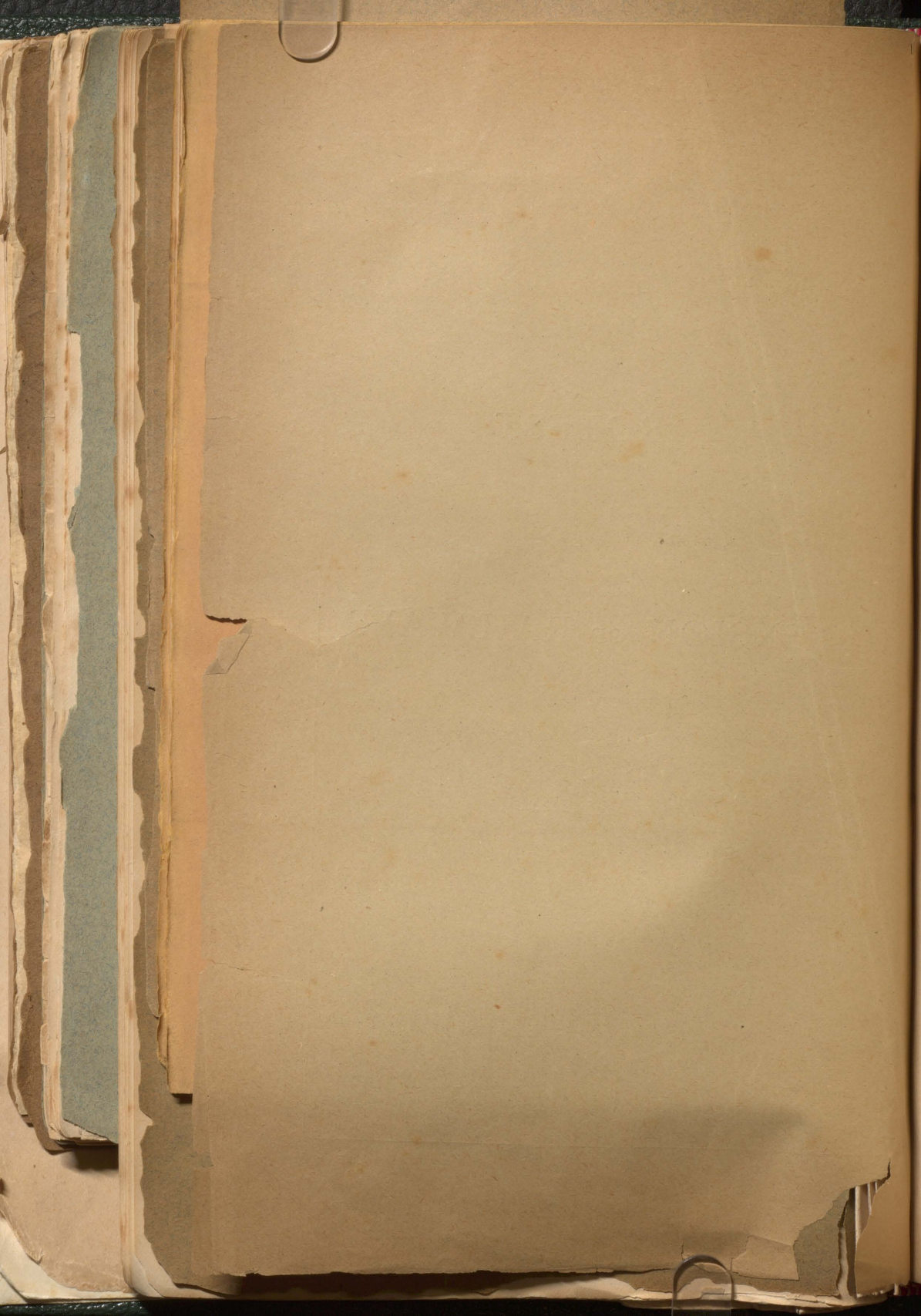
A PROTEST

AGAINST THE

EXTENSION OF RAILWAYS

IN THE

LAKE DISTRICT.



9

A PROTEST AGAINST THE  
EXTENSION OF RAILWAYS

IN THE  
LAKE DISTRICT,

BY ROBERT SOMERVELL,

*With Articles thereon reprinted from the 'Saturday Review,' &c.*

AND A PREFACE BY

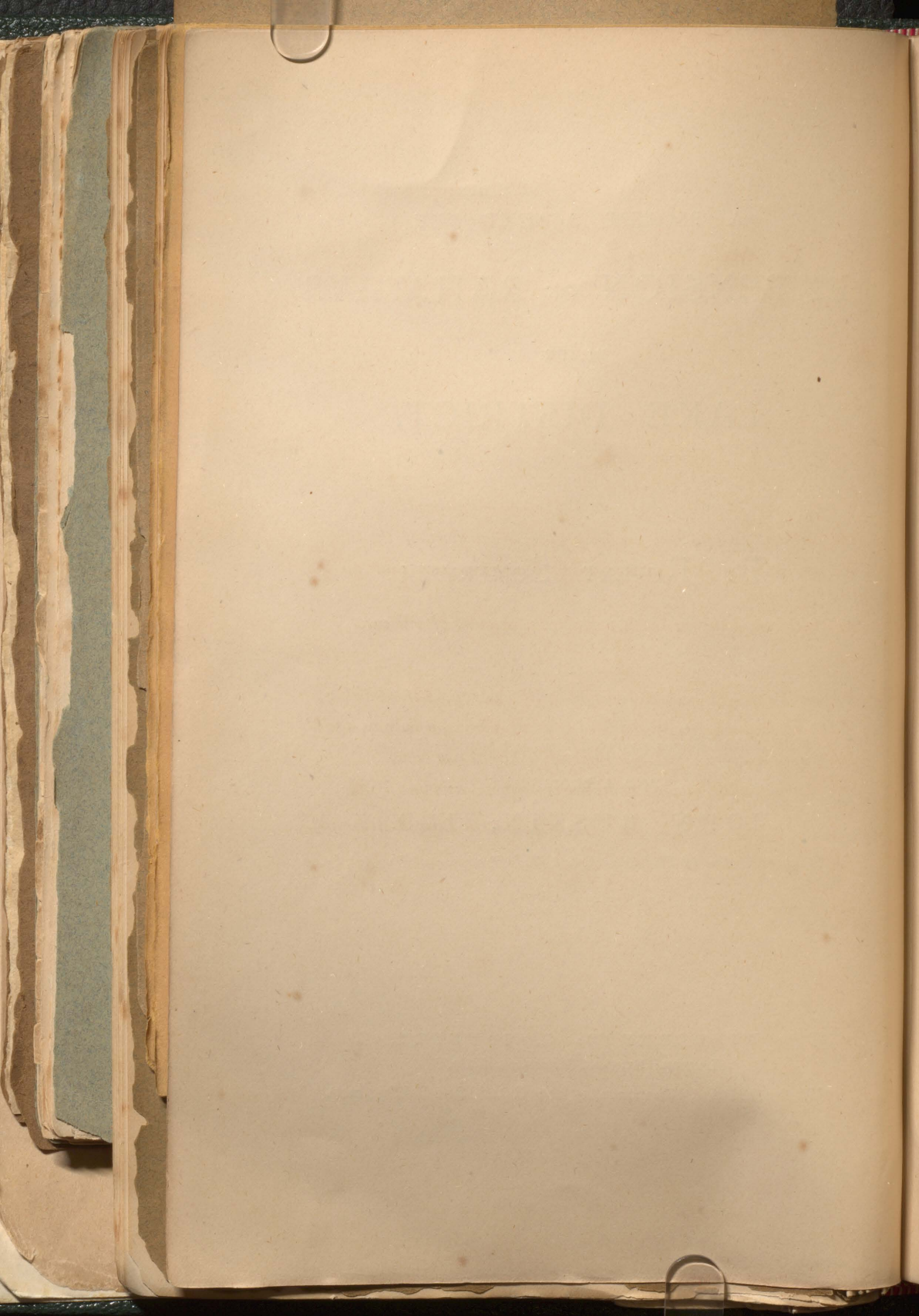
JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

*Honorary Student of Christchurch, and Slade Professor of Fine Art, &c.*

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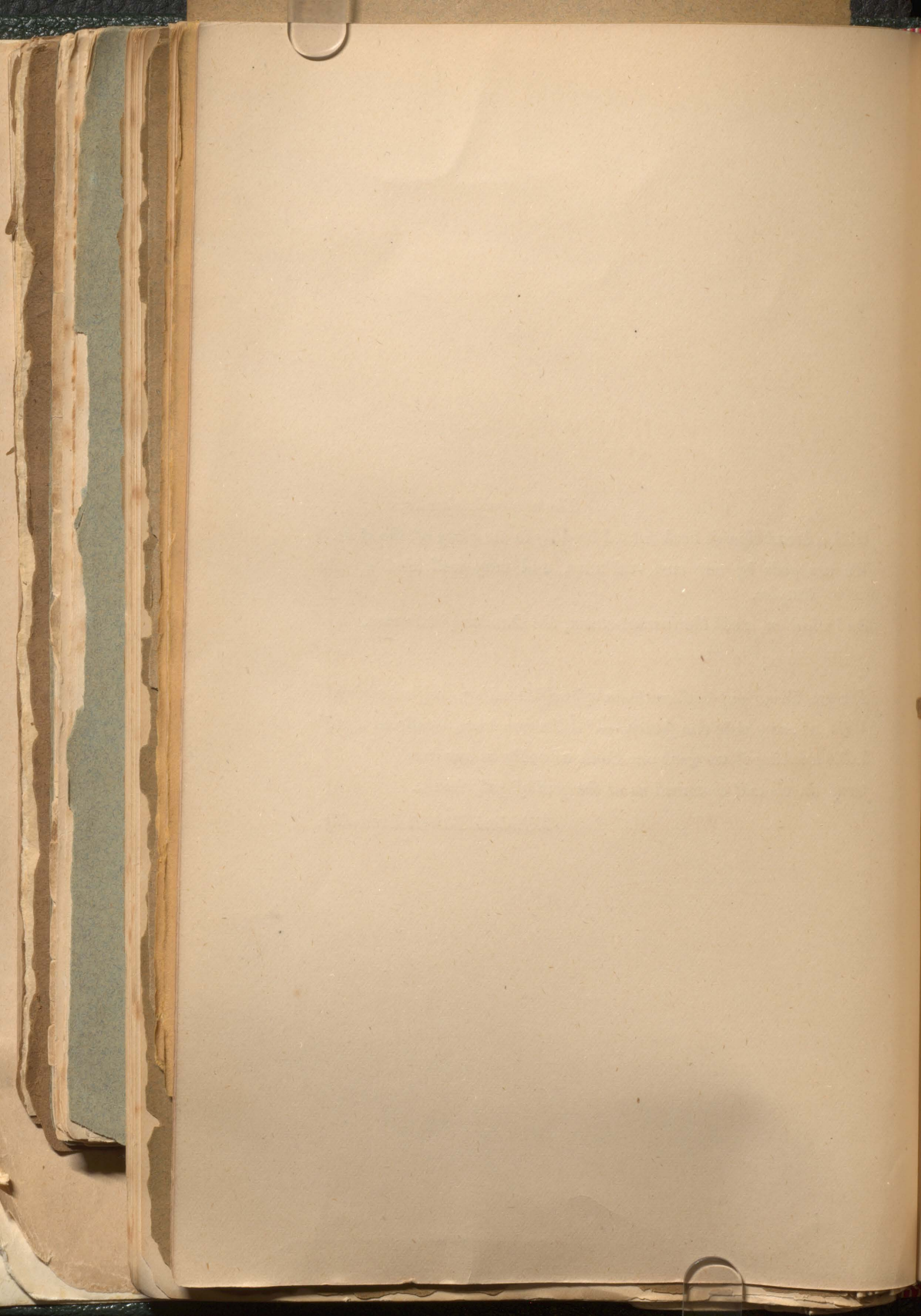
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*The age culls simples,  
With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the glory of the stars.  
We are gods by our own reck'ning, and may well shut up the  
temples,  
And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder of our cars.*

*For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,  
With, at every mile run faster, — 'O the wondrous, wondrous age!'  
Little thinking if we work our Souls as nobly as our iron,  
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.*

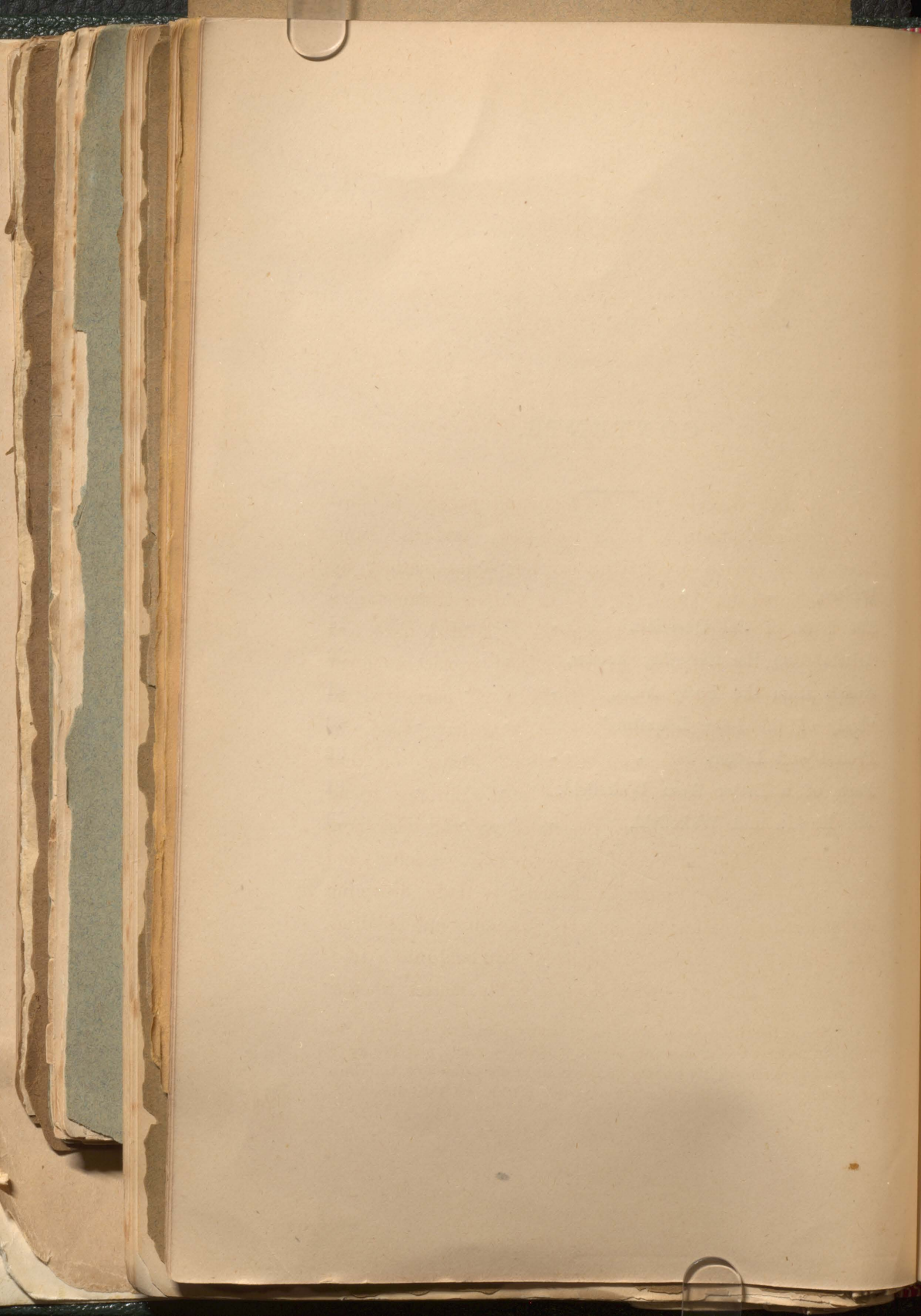
*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*



## CONTENTS.

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Preface, - - - - -	1
The State of the Question, - - - - -	11
Article from the <i>Saturday Review</i> , - - - - -	33
Article from the <i>Daily News</i> , - - - - -	41
'Lady of the Lake Loquitur,' - - - - -	49
Protest and Letter, - - - - -	53
Parts of a Letter from Wakefield, - - - - -	61
Mr. Ruskin and Wakefield, - - - - -	71





## PREFACE.

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THE evidence collected in the following pages, in support of their pleading, is so complete; and the summary of his cause given with so temperate mastery by Mr. Somervell, that I find nothing to add in circumstance, and little to reinforce in argument. And I have less heart to the writing even of what brief preface so good work might by its author's courtesy be permitted to receive from me, occupied as I so long have been, in efforts tending in the same direction, because, on that very account, I am far less interested than my friend in this local and limited resistance to the elsewhere fatally victorious current of modern folly, cruelty, and ruin. When the frenzy of avarice is daily drowning our sailors, suffocating our miners, poisoning our children, and blasting the cultivable surface of England into a treeless waste of ashes,\* — what does it really matter whether

\* See, — the illustration being coincidentally given as I correct this page for press — the description of the horrible service, and history of the fatal explosion of Dynamite, on the once lovely estates of the Duke of Hamilton, in the 'Hamilton Advertiser' of 10th and 17th June.

a flock of sheep, more or less, be driven from the slopes of Helvellyn, or the little pool of Thirlmere filled with shale, or a few wild blossoms of St. John's vale lost to the coronal of English Spring? Little, to any one; and—let me say this, at least, in the outset of all saying—*nothing, to me.* No one need charge me with selfishness in any word, or action, for defence of these mossy hills. I do not move, with such small activity as I have yet shown in the business, because I live at Coniston, (where no sound of the iron wheels by Dunmail Raise can reach me,)—nor because I can find no other place to remember Wordsworth by, than the daffodil margin of his little Rydal marsh. What thoughts and work are yet before me, such as he taught, must be independent of any narrow associations. All my own dear mountain grounds, and treasure-cities, Chamouni, Interlachen, Lucerne, Geneva, Venice, are long ago destroyed by the European populace; and now, for my own part, I don't care what more they do; they may drain Loch Katrine, drink Loch Lomond, and blow all Wales and Cumberland into a heap of slate shingle; the world is wide enough yet to find me some refuge during the days appointed for me to stay in it. But it is no less my duty, in the cause of those to whom the sweet landscapes of England are yet precious, and to whom they may yet teach what they taught me, in early boyhood, and would still, if I had it now to learn,—it is my duty to plead with

what earnestness I may, that these sacred sibylline books may be redeemed from perishing.

But again, I am checked, because I don't know how to speak to the persons who *need* to be spoken to in this matter.

Suppose I were sitting, where still, in much changed Oxford, I am happy to find myself, in one of the little latticed cells of the Bodleian Library:—and my kind and much loved friend, Mr. Coxe, were to come to me, with news that it was proposed to send nine hundred excursionists through the library every day, in three parties of three hundred each;—that it was intended they should elevate their minds by reading all the books they could lay hold of while they stayed;—and that practically scientific persons accompanying them were to look out for, and burn, all the manuscripts that had any gold in their illuminations, that the said gold might be made of practical service:—but that he, Mr. Coxe, could not, for his part, sympathize with the movement, and hoped I would write something in deprecation of it! As I should then feel, I feel now, at Mr. Somervell's request that I would write him a preface in defence of Helvellyn. What could I say for Mr. Coxe? Of course, that nine hundred people should see the Library daily, instead of one, is only fair to the nine hundred, and if there is gold in the books, is it not public property? If there is copper or slate in Helvellyn, shall not the public burn or ham-

mer it out — and they say they will, of course — in spite of us? What does it signify to *them* how we poor old quiet readers in this mountain library feel? True, we know well enough, — what the nine hundred excursionist scholars don't — that the library can't be read quite through in a quarter of an hour; also, that there is a pleasure in real reading, quite different from that of turning pages; and that gold in a missal, or slate in a crag, may be more precious than in a bank, or a chimney pot. But how are these practical people to credit us, — these, who cannot read, nor ever will; and who have been taught that nothing is virtuous but care for their bellies, and nothing useful but what goes into them?

Whether to be credited or not, the real facts of the matter, made clear as they are in the following pages, can be briefly stated for the consideration of any candid person.

The arguments in favour of the new railway are in the main four, and may be thus answered.

I. 'There are mineral treasures in the district capable of development.'

*Answer.* It is a wicked fiction, got up by whosoever has got it up, simply to cheat shareholders. Every lead and copper vein in Cumberland has been known for centuries; the copper of Coniston does not pay; and there is none so rich in Helvellyn. And the main central volcanic rocks, through which the track lies, produce

neither slate nor hæmatite, while there is enough of them at Llanberis and Dalton to roof and iron grate all England into one vast Bedlam, if it honestly perceives itself in need of that accommodation.

II. 'The scenery must be made accessible to the public.'

*Answer.* It is more than accessible already; — the public are pitched into it head-foremost, and necessarily miss two-thirds of it. The Lake scenery really begins, on the south, at Lancaster, where the Cumberland hills are seen over Morecambe Bay; on the north, at Carlisle, where the moors of Skiddaw are seen over the rich plains between them and the Solway. No one who loves mountains would lose a step of the approach, from these distances, on either side. But the stupid herds of modern tourists let themselves be emptied, like coals from a sack, at Windermere and Keswick. Having got there, what the new railway has to do is to shovel those who have come to Keswick, to Windermere — and to shovel those who have come to Windermere, to Keswick. And what then?

III. 'But cheap, and swift transit is necessary for the working population, who otherwise could not see the scenery at all.'

*Answer.* After all your shrieking about what the operatives spend in drink, can't you teach them to save enough out of their year's wages to pay for a chaise and pony for a day, to drive Missis and the Baby that pleasant 20

miles, stopping when they like, to unpack the basket on a mossy bank? If they can't enjoy the scenery that way, — they can't any way; and all that your railroad company can do for them is only to open taverns and skittle grounds round Grasmere, which will soon, then, be nothing but a pool of drainage, with a beach of broken gingerbeer bottles; and their minds will be no more improved by contemplating the scenery of such a lake than of Blackpool.

IV. What else is to be said? I protest I can find nothing, unless that engineers and contractors must live. Let them live; but in a more useful and honourable way than by keeping Old Bartholomew Fair under Helvellyn, and making a steam merry-go-round of the lake country.

There are roads to be mended, where the parish will not mend them, harbours of refuge needed, where our deck-loaded ships are in helpless danger: get your commissions and dividends where you know that work is needed; not where the best you can do is to persuade pleasure-seekers into giddier idleness.

The arguments brought forward by the promoters of the railway may thus be summarily answered: of those urged in the following pamphlet in defence of the country as it is, I care only, myself, to direct the reader's attention to one (see pp. 27, 28.), the certainty, namely, of the deterioration of moral character in the inhabitants of

every district penetrated by a railway. Where there is little moral character to be lost, this argument has small weight. But the Border peasantry of Scotland and England, painted with absolute fidelity by Scott and Wordsworth, (for leading types out of this exhaustless portraiture, I may name Dandie Dinmont, and Michael,) are hitherto a scarcely injured race; whose strength and virtue yet survive to represent the body and soul of England, before her days of mechanical decrepitude and commercial dishonour. There are men working in my own fields who might have fought with Henry the Fifth at Agincourt, without being discerned from among his knights; I can take my tradesmen's word for a thousand pounds; my garden gate opens on the latch to the public road, by day and night, without fear of any foot entering but my own, and my girl-guests may wander by road, or moorland, or through every bosky dell of this wild wood, free as the heather bees or squirrels.

What effect, on the character of such a population, will be produced by the influx of that of the suburbs of our manufacturing towns, there is evidence enough if the reader cares to ascertain the facts, in every newspaper on his morning table.

And now, one final word, concerning the proposed beneficial effect on the minds of those whom you send to corrupt us.

I have said I take no selfish interest in this resistance

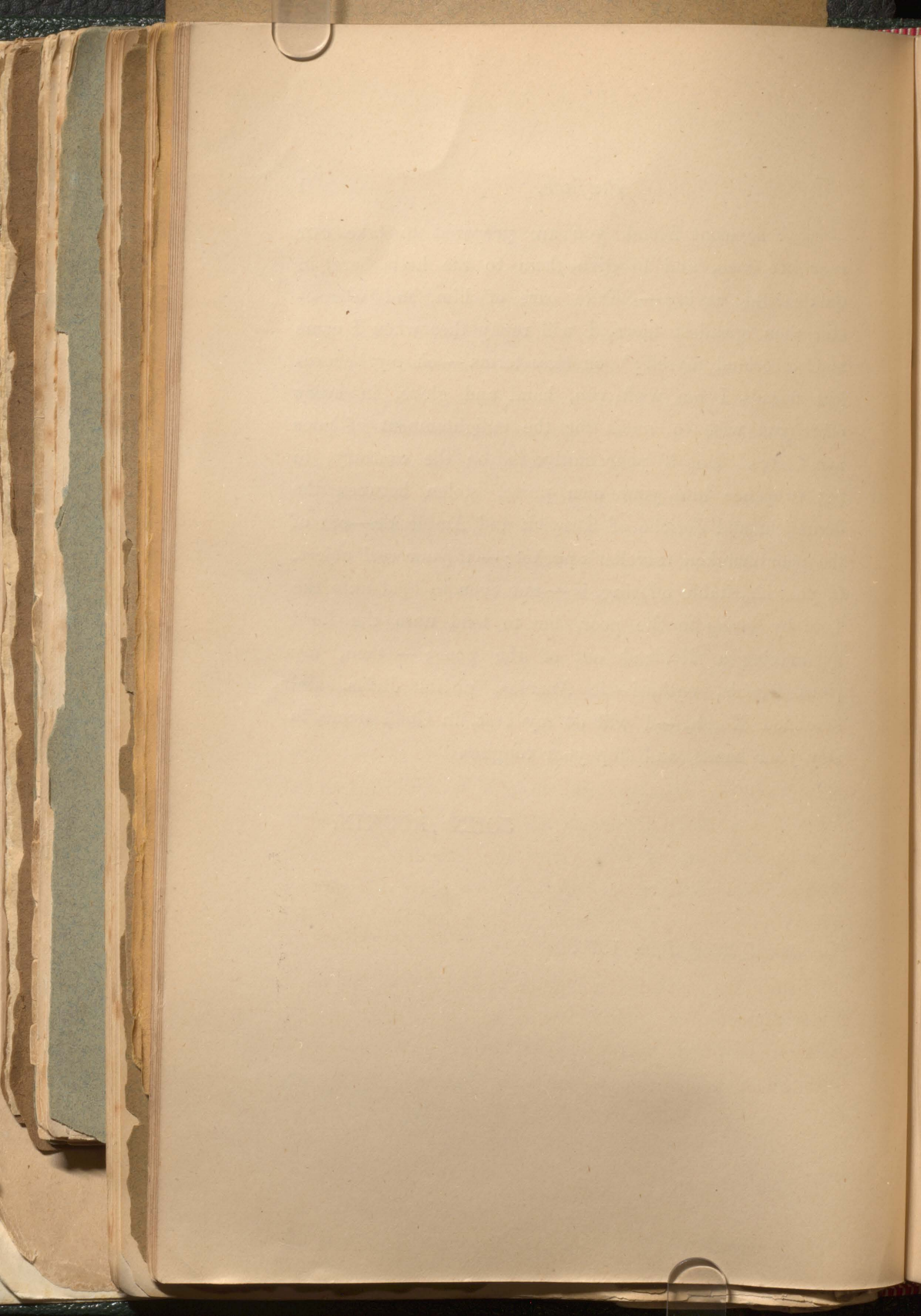
to the railroad—But I do take an unselfish one:— It is precisely because I passionately wish to improve the minds of the populace, and because I am spending my own mind, strength, and fortune, wholly on that object, that I don't want to let them see Helvellyn while they are drunk. I suppose few men now living have so earnestly felt—none certainly have so earnestly declared, that the beauty of Nature is the blessedest and most necessary of lessons for men; and that all other efforts in education are futile, till you have taught your people to love fields, birds, and flowers. Come then, my benevolent friends, join with me in that teaching. I have been at it all my life, and without pride, do solemnly assure you that I know how it is to be managed. I cannot indeed tell you, in this short preface, how, completely, to fulfil so glorious a task. But I can tell you clearly, instantly, and emphatically, in what temper you must set about it. *Here* are you, a Christian, a gentleman, and a trained scholar;— *there* is your subject of education—a Godless clown, in helpless ignorance. You can present no more blessed offering to God than that human creature, raised into faith, gentleness, and the knowledge of the works of his Lord. But, observe this—you must not hope to make so noble an offering to God of that which doth cost you nothing! You must be resolved to labour, and to lose, yourself,—before you can rescue this over-laboured lost sheep—and offer it alive to its Master. If then



—my benevolent friend, you are prepared to take out your twopence, and to give them to the hosts here in Cumberland, saying — ‘Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, I will repay thee when I come to Cumberland myself:’ on *these* terms — oh my benevolent friends I am with you, hand and glove, in every effort you wish to make for the enlightenment of poor men’s eyes. But if your motive is, on the contrary, to put twopence into your own purse, stolen between the Jerusalem and Jericho of Keswick and Ambleside—out of the poor drunken traveller’s pocket;— if your real object, in your charitable offering, is — not even to lend unto the Lord by *giving* to the poor, but to lend unto the Lord by making a dividend out of the poor;— then, my pious friends, enthusiastic Ananias, pitiful Judas, and sanctified Korah, — I will do my best, in God’s name, to stay your hands, and stop your tongues.

JOHN RUSKIN.

*Brantwood, 22nd June, 1876.*



## RAILWAYS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

---

'Is then no nook of English ground secure  
'From rash assault? Schemes of retirement sown  
'In youth, and mid the busy world kept pure  
'As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,  
'Must perish;—how can they this blight endure?  
'And must he too the ruthless change bemoan  
'Who scorns a false utilitarian lure  
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?  
'Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Orrest-head  
'Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance:  
'Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance  
'Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,  
'Speak, passing winds; ye torrents with your strong  
'And constant voice, protest against the wrong.'

IN these lines Wordsworth gave vent to the feelings of repugnance and regret with which he viewed the proposal, made now more than thirty years ago, to construct a line of railway from Kendal to a spot within a mile of the Head of Windermere. The sonnet was followed, a few weeks later, by two letters from the Poet, which appeared in the 'Morning Post.' These were afterwards revised and published, with some additions, in the form of a pamphlet.

Before the first of these letters was written, the site of the present Windermere Station had been fixed on as the terminus of the railway; and, although Wordsworth continued his opposition to the whole scheme, he wrote

not only with a view to the circumstances of his own day, but plainly foreseeing the revival of the attempt to penetrate to the heart of the district, in the future. It is meet then, at a time when such an attempt appears imminent, that we should, in any endeavour to rouse public interest in the fate of the district, begin with some notice of what was thus written in 1844.

Wordsworth felt that he had to deal with three classes of opponents, each in its own way raising the cry of selfishness against him. There was first the herd of speculators and money-makers who sought to bring into discredit all who stood in the way of their gains; second, 'they who are dazzled by the application of physical science to the useful arts, and indiscriminately applaud what they call the spirit of the age as manifested in this way; and, lastly, those persons who are ever ready to step forward in what appears to them to be the cause of the poor, but not always with becoming attention to particulars.' It is to the latter classes that Wordsworth addresses himself.

Showing, first how the taste for what is called picturesque natural scenery is peculiarly a modern one, he insists further on its rarity; and observes that however desirable it may be that every one should possess it, such a taste cannot be implanted at once, but must be gradually developed. Then, after illustrating the assertion that 'the features of nature which go to the composition of

‘such scenery . . . cannot, in their finer relations to the human mind, be comprehended, or even very imperfectly conceived, without processes of culture or opportunities of observation in some degree habitual;’—he suggests that the dwellers in towns should be prepared, by more frequent intercourse with Nature in her gentle moods of field and wood, to appreciate her more majestic aspects. Finally he ridicules the folly of destroying the charm of the district, on the pretence of bringing people under its influence.

Such, in the main, is the scope of the first letter. In the second the argument is enforced by other considerations. Thus he deprecates the proposal to send people from the humbler ranks of society in large droves to the Lakes, on the ground, not only of their inability to gain any material benefit from the romantic scenery, but also of the want of respect for their independence shewn by such a proceeding. He puts in a plea on behalf of the resident gentry who, having settled in the locality for the sake of retirement, might be driven away by the proposed change; and observes, with much truth, that the poor would suffer by exchanging their old neighbours of the richer sort,—whose constant kindness and care he eulogizes,—for ‘strangers not linked to the neighbourhood, but flitting to and fro between their fancy villas and the homes where their wealth was accumulated and accumulating by trade and manufactures.’

He thus concludes his appeal. 'It will be felt by  
'those who think with me upon this occasion that I have  
'been writing on behalf of a social condition which no  
'one who is competent to judge of it will be willing to  
'subvert, and that I have been endeavouring to support  
'moral sentiments and intellectual pleasures of a high  
'order against an enmity which seems growing more and  
'more every day; I mean "Utilitarianism," serving as a  
'mask for cupidity and gambling speculations. My business  
'with this evil lies in its reckless mode of action by Rail-  
'ways, now its favourite instruments. Upon good authority  
'I have been told that there was lately an intention of  
'driving one of these pests, as they are likely too often  
'to prove, through a part of the magnificent ruins of  
'Furness Abbey — an outrage which was prevented by  
'some one pointing out how easily a deviation might be  
'made; and the hint produced its due effect upon the  
'engineer.

'Sacred as that relic of the devotion of our ancestors  
'deserves to be kept, there are temples of Nature, temples  
'built by the Almighty, which have a still higher claim  
'to be left unviolated. Almost every reach of the winding  
'vales in this district might once have presented itself to  
'a man of imagination and feeling under that aspect, or  
'as the Vale of Grasmere appeared to the Poet Gray  
'more than seventy years ago. "No flaring gentleman's  
'house" says he, "nor garden-walls break in upon the

“repose of this little unsuspected *paradise*, but all is peace,”  
‘&c., &c. Were the Poet now living, how would he have  
‘lamented the probable intrusion of a railway with its  
‘scarifications, its intersections, its noisy machinery, its  
‘smoke, and swarms of pleasure-hunters, most of them  
‘thinking that they do not fly fast enough through the  
‘country which they have come to see. Even a broad  
‘highway may in some places greatly impair the char-  
‘acteristic beauty of the country, as will be readily ac-  
‘knowledged by those who remember what the Lake of  
‘Grasmere was before the new road that runs along its  
‘eastern margin had been constructed.

‘Quanto præstantius esset  
‘Numen aquæ viridi si margine clauderet undas  
‘Herba—

‘As it once was, and fringed with wood, instead of the  
‘breast work of bare wall that now confines it. In the  
‘same manner has the beauty, and still more the sublimity  
‘of many Passes in the Alps been injuriously affected. Will  
‘the reader excuse a M.S. poem in which I attempted to  
‘describe the impression made upon my mind by the des-  
‘cent towards Italy along the Simplon before the new  
‘military road had taken place of the old muleteer track  
‘with its primitive simplicities?

‘Brook and road  
‘Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy pass,

'And with them we did journey several hours  
 'At a slow step. The immeasurable height  
 'Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,  
 'The stationary blast of waterfalls,  
 'And in the narrow rent, at every turn,  
 'Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,  
 'The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,  
 'The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,  
 'Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side  
 'As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
 'And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
 'The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,  
 'Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,  
 'Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
 'Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,  
 'Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
 'The types and symbols of Eternity,  
 'Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

1798.

'Thirty years afterwards I crossed the Alps by the  
 'same Pass; and what had become of the forms and powers  
 'to which I had been indebted for those emotions? Many  
 'of them remained, of course, undestroyed and indestruc-  
 'tible. But, though the road and torrent continued to  
 'run parallel to each other, their fellowship was put an  
 'end to. The stream had dwindled into comparative in-  
 'significance, so much had Art interfered with and taken  
 'the lead of Nature; and although the utility of the new  
 'work, as facilitating the intercourse of great nations, was  
 'readily acquiesced in, and the workmanship, in some  
 'places, could not but excite admiration, it was impossible  
 'to suppress regret for what had vanished for ever. The  
 'oratories heretofore not unfrequently met with, on a road



‘still somewhat perilous, were gone; the simple and rude  
‘bridges swept away; and instead of travellers proceeding,  
‘with leisure to observe and feel, were pilgrims of fashion  
‘hurried along in their carriages, not a few of them per-  
‘haps discussing the merits of “the last new Novel.” or  
‘poring over their Guide-books, or fast asleep. Similar  
‘remarks might be applied to the mountainous country of  
‘Wales; but there too, the plea of utility, especially as  
‘expediting the communication between England and Ire-  
‘land, more than justifies the labours of the Engineer.  
‘Not so would it be with the Lake District. A railroad  
‘is already planned along the sea coast, and another from  
‘Lancaster to Carlisle is in great forwardness: an inter-  
‘mediate one is therefore, to say the least of it, super-  
‘fluous. Once for all let me declare that it is not against  
‘Railways but against the abuse of them that I am con-  
‘tending. . . . .

‘I have now done with the subject. The time of life  
‘at which I have arrived may, I trust, if nothing else  
‘will, guard me from the imputation of having written  
‘from any selfish interests, or from fear of disturbance  
‘which a railway might cause to myself. If gratitude  
‘for what repose and quiet in a district hitherto, for the  
‘most part, not disfigured but beautified by human hands,  
‘have done for me through the course of a long life, and  
‘hope that others might hereafter be benefited in the same  
‘manner and in the same country, *be* selfishness, then,

'indeed, but not otherwise, I plead guilty to the charge.  
 'Nor have I opposed this undertaking on account of the  
 'inhabitants of the district *merely*, but, as hath been in-  
 'timated, for the sake of every one, however humble his  
 'condition, who coming hither shall bring with him an  
 'eye to perceive, and a heart to feel and worthily enjoy.  
 'And as for holiday pastimes, if a scene is to be chosen  
 'suitable to them for persons thronging from a distance,  
 'it may be found elsewhere at less cost of every kind.  
 'But, in fact, we have too much hurrying about in these  
 'islands; much for idle pleasure, and more from over  
 'activity in the pursuit of wealth, without regard to the  
 'good or happiness of others.

'Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,  
 'Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,  
 'Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:  
 'Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,  
 'That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,  
 'Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,  
 'And clear way made for her triumphant car  
 'Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!  
 'Heard ye that Whistle? As her long-linked Train  
 'Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?  
 'Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,  
 'Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,  
 'Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you  
 'To share the passion of a just disdain.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Thus Wordsworth thought and wrote thirty years ago.  
 His opinion concerning the appreciative powers of human

nature is not, certainly, so flattering to average humanity as that of the *Daily News*; but it will, I trust, be sufficiently clear to the reader of the following pages, that the opposition of to-day is based, not on any desire to return to a position of exclusiveness—however logically tenable upon Wordsworth's hypothesis—but on a frank acceptance of the existing state of things, including what, to be quite plain, we may as well call 'cheap trips.'

The changes wrought, during the last thirty years, in our manufacturing centres, have certainly increased, rather than diminished, the difficulty of educating any one to the appreciation of nature in their immediate vicinity. And this alone should make the preservation of the Lake District an object of greater solicitude to the country at large than ever before.

In another respect our position is stronger than Wordsworth's. Not only have the Railways which were planned when he wrote been constructed, but others have been added, bringing travellers up to, or beyond, the edge of the district on every side.

It must be observed that there are two distinct points from which the question of extending a line of railway into the Lake District may be regarded. Either the minerals of the district are worth working, or they are not. Upon this matter I am not disposed to hazard an

opinion. But the arguments made use of upon the one supposition, differ from those which are put forward upon the other, by those who favour the railway project; and it may be well to note their divergence, and to indicate some of the considerations which weigh against them.

Upon the supposition that there are no minerals in the district worth working, it is urged that the construction of a railroad, while it would scarcely damage the landscape, would make easy the access to places which must now be reached by a walk or a drive.

It would be idle to attempt to convince a man who can see nothing disfiguring or incongruous in the intrusion, upon a sequestered valley, of a railway with its staring accompaniments, that his opinion results from any lack of fineness in his perceptive powers. But concerning this question of access something may be said. Perfect accessibility, of course, would demand a complete network of lines, with stations at every lovely spot. Nobody, I believe, wants exactly that. It must therefore be a question of degree.

Considering it as such, I venture to say that a little study of present railway facilities will convince any one with a knowledge of the district that, unless we are to legislate solely for the indolent, or for the few who, being too weak to walk, are too poor to ride, no reasonable case for extending the railway can be made out. Even those who can afford but a day at a time may, by a

judicious use of their opportunities, and by varying the point of entrance, see a great part of the district.

The imputation of selfishness is always an easy and popular mode of attack, and so it is hardly surprising that the old cry should be raised, that our object is to keep the district 'select,' and to bar the way against the crowds of 'excursionists.' Such charges cannot be too warmly repudiated. For my own part I cannot help thinking that it would add greatly to the comfort and pleasure of the humbler classes of society if our benevolent Railway Companies would grant them special facilities for making cheap excursions at any time, by the regular trains, instead of packing them closely in old rolling-stock, and shortening the time of their enjoyment by an irregular and often tediously prolonged journey. But upon the present system—indeed, perhaps, upon any system, on public holidays—crowds are inevitable; and we bid them very heartily 'Welcome.' As has been said elsewhere, 'It is not to guard that district in the interest of a small section of society, but to preserve it for those—and they are found in every rank—who can enjoy its unsullied natural loveliness, that this movement has been set on foot.'

There are no doubt places which a pedestrian, starting from the railway station, can scarcely visit in a day of nine or ten hours. But, of the persons who have only such intervals at their disposal, those who

could best appreciate these inaccessible spots would be the last to desire that the grand solitude or peaceful beauty of the places they can reach should be abolished to make attainable those which they cannot.

We have no right to charge it scornfully upon our working classes that the number of such appreciative persons is small. The blame must rest, not so much upon them, as upon the circumstances of their daily life, in places where God's light is darkened, and His work destroyed, by the hands of men; in homes which they fly, not *to*, but *from*, upon their holidays. One wonders, indeed, upon what extent of actual observation is founded that singular creed of the *Daily News*, expressed, as it is, with almost Athanasian fervour:—'We are bound to believe that every one appreciates mountain glories, that he would not be found among them if he did not like them.' Alas! it is not so yet. But if, recognizing the beneficent and helpful power of noble scenery, we desire to widen the sphere of its influence so that, of all who shall be found among mountains, it may be truly said that they love them, let us not think to accomplish our purpose by making railways through their solitudes, and turning their hamlets into towns. If we are ever to raise men to communion with the powers of nature,—to develop in them the 'wise passiveness' of the 'heart that watches and receives' her lore—it will not be merely by giving

them occasional and hurried glimpses of strange beauty, but by dignifying the labour, and adorning the surroundings \* of their daily life.

But the question assumes, on both sides, a more serious aspect if it can be shewn that there are minerals worth working in the Lake District. On the one hand the arguments for making a railway will appear to many persons more cogent; while it must be admitted on the other, that, in such an event, the destruction of the beauty of the district would be more sudden and complete. Although, therefore, there are good reasons for doubting the existence of valuable mineral deposits, it will be well to look the question fairly in the face.

At a subsequent page will be found reprinted an article from the *Daily News*, in which the editor, accepting Wordsworth's authority as to the non-existence of any mineral wealth, urges the importance of preserving the district from further railway intrusion.

For much that the article contains, and for the firm stand it takes on this ground, we have every reason

\* I cannot forbear alluding with admiration to the effort to beautify in simple ways the homes of the London poor, which is being made by the 'Society for the Diffusion of Beauty.' A paper, explaining its object and mode of action, may be had from the founder, MISS HILL, 14, Nottingham Place, W. It is to be hoped that branches of the Society may spring up in other places. Only, let no one suppose that the best and wisest of such work can supersede the necessity for a change in the conditions of labour.

to be grateful. But it is, on this very account, the more important that its opening paragraphs should not be allowed to pass unchallenged. The notion that it is desirable to develop the wealth of the district by means of a railway exists, with more or less of confusion, in many minds, and runs through much of what is said on the subject. This idea is embodied with commendable perspicuity in the following sentences.

‘The projected line may,’ says the *Daily News*, ‘be designed to facilitate the transport of minerals, and to bring a working population within reach of mines. In that case, to oppose the railway because the steam-whistle frightens the wild birds, disturbs the poet as he hunts for that difficult rhyme in the tenth line of his sonnet, or makes the artist drop his brush, would be to protect sentiment at the cost of the material prosperity of individuals, and the material prosperity of the country. Now, though the moralist may deny that material prosperity should be allowed to outweigh finer considerations, and though the artist may repine, there can be little doubt that in most cases the ordinary laws of economy must have their way.’

Here be it observed that, whether with the intention of making an easy victory for the ‘laws of economy,’ or not, the opponent case has been stated in its weakest form. A perusal to its close of this very article, still more of the papers that follow it,



will convince the reader that there are grounds for opposing the railway, far stronger, and arguments more powerful, than the disturbance of birds and artists.

One naturally enquires, — What are these ‘laws of economy,’ the mere mention of which is supposed to settle the question in spite of all ‘finer considerations’? The political economists often tell us that the ‘laws’ of their science are not commands or injunctions, but merely scientific statements of facts. It may, for example, be a law of so-called political economy that, if a mountain contain deposits of ore which, when reached by a railway, might be profitably worked, the construction of such railway would increase ‘the material prosperity of individuals, and the material prosperity of the country.’ And hence it might be hastily assumed that, if there be iron in the vale of Grasmere, the sooner we make a line to the place the better. But, before taking this step, it must be shewn that the consummation, in the Lake District, of that state of individuals and country which we describe by the term ‘material prosperity,’ is so pre-eminently desirable, as to outweigh all other, — even confessedly ‘finer’ — considerations.

Now, of the material prosperity of the country at large, I suppose there can be no dispute. It may be suffering, so far as trade is concerned, a temporary relapse, after a period of inflation; but it is still happy

in the multitude of its 'materially prosperous' inhabitants; while its capital city, in spite of 'its unutterable external hideousness, and with its horrible 'internal canker of *publicé egestas, privatim opulentia,*' may still be styled, in the words of the late Professor Cairnes, 'a mighty monument of Economic achievement.'

But, at the same time, every step of its advancing career is marked, in its 'materially prosperous' districts, by the darkening of the light of heaven, and the defilement and destruction of the beauty of the earth. Sneer as we may about 'sentimentalism' and 'utopian ideas,'—and talk of the grandeur of industrial achievement, and the triumphs of commerce,—it remains, and will remain for ever true,—the curse of thorn and thistle and sweat of brow notwithstanding,—that the glory of the Divine work is intended for the joy and for the instruction of men; for their contemplation, and not for their contempt. And year by year, as the Divine ordinance is set at defiance, and the people are farther and farther separated from these holy influences, the 'materially prosperous' individuals, for whose welfare we are so solicitous, find themselves surrounded by an increasing crowd of lunatics, drunkards, and criminals. Surely it is idle to urge the development of 'material prosperity,' as in itself a sufficient argument for turning, if it were possible, this Lake Country into a mining region.

The most obvious reasons for opposing such a wanton act of destruction will be found stated in the following pages; and, as I remarked above, they exceed, both in number and cogency, those suggested in the quotation from the *Daily News*.

If, indeed, we care to have any poets or painters, we must give them a little room to grow, or even to run wild in. We may rest assured we shall get no great art, either of pen or pencil, out of the back streets of our manufacturing towns; and even South Kensington may be powerless to help us, if we turn the whole country into slums.

But supposing we resolve to be content with art of the 'School,' and satisfied with the poetry of the 'pavement,' — we may yet find that, in destroying our country districts, and levelling them up with an imported population, we have killed the 'goose that lays the golden egg.'

Hear what the *Times* says, in a leading article of January, in this year:—

'THE ARMY, THE NAVY, THE RAILWAYS, THE TRADES, AND EVEN THE PROFESSIONS, ALL GET THEIR BEST MEN FROM THE RURAL DISTRICTS. Cities, ports, and Water-  
'ing-places get all their domestic servants from the  
'villages, and generally afford them new homes. The  
'wonder is how mother earth stands the incessant drain.  
'But at this moment, in many a rural nook, the farmers

'are wild with indignation at the impossibility of keeping the more promising lands, and the necessity of putting up with the worst—that is, with any they can get. Yet, strange to say, this residuum, left on the soil because it has not the spirit, or the knowledge, or the physical power to seek its fortune elsewhere, goes on producing children that lords and ladies might envy it. The profoundest ignorance, or ideas about politics and religion, which it would be awful to enquire into, do not prevent them from supplying Her Majesty with by far the most useful, most loyal, and most convertible portion of her subjects.'

Apart altogether from its special claims, it would be hard to find a more powerful plea than this, for the preservation of the Lake District. In summing the wealth of a country, the *quality* of its men will surely count for something; and even the 'laws of economy,' if only one understood them, might be found to have something to say against diminishing the production of the 'most useful, most loyal, and most convertible' of Her Majesty's subjects.\*

\* The following paragraph from the same article shows that the work of the Company of St. George has the permissive sanction of the leading journal.

'If it is allowable to depopulate a district, to expatriate the poor, that encumbered it, to stop the paths and roads, to surround the whole area with a high paling, and then call the area a shooting, and stock it with game, it cannot be less allowable to take a similar area and prepare it for a larger population than it held before, and that a population, not of brutes, but of men.'

Following the papers relating to the Lake District, will be found a letter describing, simply and graphically, the changes wrought by forty years in a single Yorkshire town; and an article from the *Saturday Review*, giving some additional glimpses of the scenery in a manufacturing neighbourhood. Both documents are of interest in connection with what has been said above; — presenting us as they do with a picture of the present daily surroundings of large masses of the people, and furnishing a series of choice illustrations of ‘material prosperity.’

Now, it is an easy matter to condemn this state of things *in toto*, or to exclaim, with the much-shocked editor of a religious paper, that ‘if one half of this be true, the legislature ought to interfere, and to interfere with vigour.’ So also it is easy to blame in general those sometimes thoughtless and ignorant, but often well meaning though perplexed persons, who are more or less evidently involved in the sad progress of our industrial system, but of whose particular circumstances and difficulties we know nothing.

But it is a far different thing to deal actually with the evil; and worse than useless to shriek for legislative interference. Even now nothing is commoner than to hear manufacturers complain of the restraint of the law. The evil to be dealt with is not one but many. Like the hydra it has a hundred heads; but the strength

of them all is rooted in the selfishness that seeks its own advantage at the cost of the well-being of others. We have to cut down *that*, and cast it out; and for such conquest no Acts of Parliament will avail.

I am touching the edge of a great subject, and must forbear. But, depend upon it, we are none of us guiltless in this matter. We are shocked, every now and then, by the description of such a village as Ardsley;\* or startled to hear that some of the 'marvels of cheapness,' which so delight us, are wrung from the gasping poverty of children, or, ground by the pressure of hunger, out of dying men; but we do not enough remind ourselves that by the patronage we give to the production of cheap and specious rubbish,—by our encouragement of those sharp tradesmen, who wring their 'extraordinary bargains' often out of the dire necessities of those from whom they buy,—by our grudging or refusal of a just price for honest and good work,—by our every act of wastefulness, or wanton gratification of the thirst for luxury,—aye, and often by the beggarly meanness that takes the chattels of a poor tradesman, and impoverishes him by shamelessly-deferred payment,—we are aiding and abetting, by all the means in our power, the spread of the squalor and wretchedness which we profess to abhor.

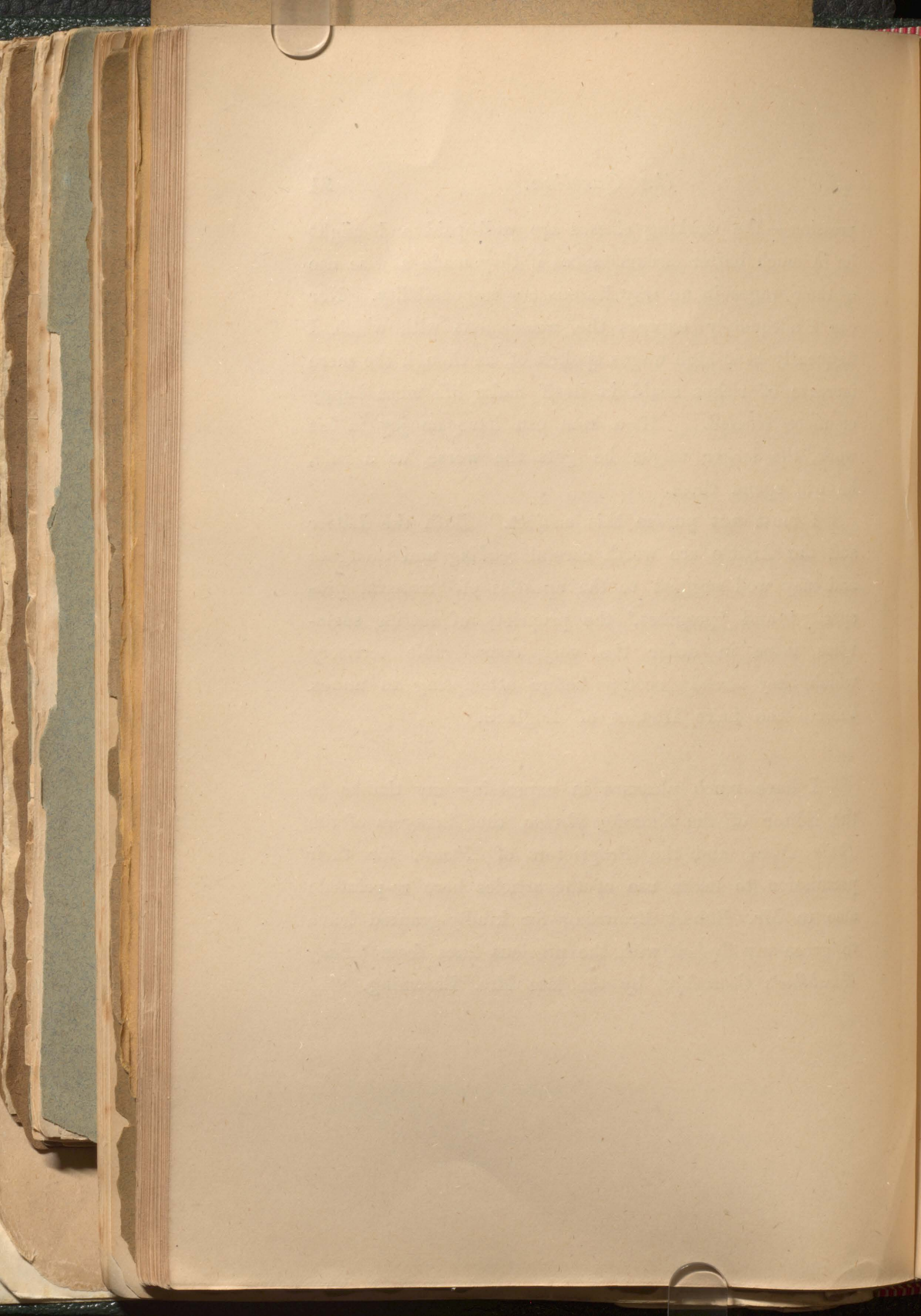
To say that—barring a few isolated cases of op-

\* See the second article from the *Saturday Review*.

pression—the working classes are well paid and might be in much better circumstances if they made a wise use of their wages in no way lessens *our* responsibility. Nor can I adequately express the amazement with which I frequently hear high wages spoken of, as though the mere increase of riches could in itself make life more happy or more blessed. If a man can have no joy in his work, the larger wages he gets the worse, as a rule, he will spend them.

I must not pursue this subject. Both the Letter and the Article are worth careful reading and thought; and may well suggest to the apostles of ‘material prosperity’ and ‘progress,’ the propriety of setting somewhat more in order the very considerable territory which they already occupy before attempting to annex thereto the Lake District of England.

I have much pleasure in expressing my thanks to the Editor of the *Saturday Review*, the Managers of the *Daily News*, and the Proprietors of *Punch*, for their permission to make use of the articles here re-printed; also to Mr. Robert Browning for kindly-granted leave to grace my fly-leaf with the precious lines from ‘*Lady Geraldine’s Courtship*,’ by the late Mrs. Browning.





## RAILWAYS AND SCENERY.

*Reprinted, by permission, from the 'Saturday Review' of  
22nd January, 1876.*

Whether a Bill for making a railway from Windermere to Ambleside, and thence through Rydal and Grasmere to Keswick, is or is not introduced in the coming Session, there is little doubt that some such application will be made in the course of a year or two. As regards scenery, it seems almost beyond the power of Railway Companies or hotel-keepers to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs for them. No matter how completely the characteristic qualities of a beautiful district may be destroyed, greater facilities of approach bring crowds of undiscerning travellers whose custom more than repays the loss of those who no longer care to look at a landscape which has been vulgarized past endurance. The change is not merely insufficient to outweigh in the minds of the new arrivals the fact that they can reach the scene of their holiday in a shorter time and with less inconvenience; it has for them positive attractions of its own. Monster hotels, with a *table-d' hôte* for every meal, and the opportunity of seeing everything in the society of a congenial crowd, are

not drawbacks to be got over in consideration of counterbalancing advantages; they are, in themselves additional recommendations. Cheerfulness takes the place of seclusion; and the heart of the tourist leaps within him as he recognizes the signs which tell him he is not far from his kind. Even if there were no other reason for proposing to carry the railway beyond Windermere, the anxiety of innkeepers whom the successes of their better-placed rivals will not suffer to sleep would probably supply sufficient promoters. Besides this, there may be fresh mines discovered in the mountains on either side of the valley, so that the new line might hope to secure industrial as well as passenger traffic. With these possibilities in prospect, it is useless to put aside the question as one which is not likely to become practical. The application for a new railway through the very heart of the Lake Country will be made, and it will be well if Parliament has had time to consider what answer shall be given to it.

There was a time when consent would have been almost a foregone conclusion. Until the financial collapse of so many lines had proved that, even as regards the means of locomotion, the supply may sometimes exceed the demand, those who preached that the construction of railroads is not an end in itself had no chance of gaining a hearing. For the moment the world and all that is therein belonged to the en-

gineer and the contractor, and any one who dreamed of setting bounds to their efforts was set down as a reactionary dreamer. Financial embarrassments have at length given the objector a chance of being listened to. Amidst the disgust which accompanies bad investments, the position that a given district is not of necessity the happier for the possession of a railroad no longer seems a patent absurdity. It must be admitted, indeed, that the *primâ facie* argument is always on the side of railways. The villagers of the district, through which it is proposed to carry one, will dispose of their produce to greater advantage, by reason both of the increased facilities for sending it to market, and of the increase in the number of those who will consume it on the spot. If, in addition to this new kinds of industry are developed, and mines or factories spring up on the mountain-side or along the course of the streams, still larger commercial gains may be gathered in. Are there any considerations of sufficient force to outweigh these?

In answer to this there are two things to be said. In the first place, the welfare of the particular district concerned is not the only point to be kept in view. It might conceivably be highly convenient to the inhabitants of Queen's Gate and Lancaster Gate to have a railway carried across the centre of Kensington Gardens. Mutual visits would be promoted, especially

in bad weather, and a healthy competition might be created between the tradesmen in the two neighbourhoods. But no amount of local unanimity would avail anything against the general determination to retain Kensington Gardens for the benefit, not only of the bordering districts, but of the whole of London.

If there is any part of Great Britain which can be said to be held in trust for the whole nation, it is the Lakes. It is the most generally accessible of the mountain districts, and notwithstanding all that has been done round Coniston and Ullswater, it is still the most unspoiled. What even mountain districts can become under certain combinations of industry and locomotion, may be seen in parts of Yorkshire: and if the ascent of Helvellyn or Fairfield had to be begun amidst the smoke of chimneys, the roar of furnaces, and the shrieks of railway engines, the special charm of the Lake scenery would be gone. Much, no doubt, that is striking and beautiful would remain, for it would be long before even the most sanguine speculator would be tempted to reproduce the Rigi railroad on a smaller scale; but the seclusion and freshness of the valleys would be destroyed, and the enjoyment even of the mountains would be half neutralized by the annoyances clustered at their feet.

We will not go the length of saying that there is no conceivable gain to the inhabitants of Rydal and

Grasmere, which would constitute a sufficient reason for depriving Englishmen of this means of escape from the irritating surroundings of town life, and especially of town life as it exists in the manufacturing districts, but the case made out ought to be one of very unusual strength. As a matter of fact, there is no ground to suppose that any case at all can be made out. The conversion of mountain valleys into theatres of mining or manufacturing industry may be a benefit to the country generally or to mankind, but it is a benefit which is usually conferred at the sacrifice of some of the comfort of the inhabitants.

The question is not, therefore, whether the interests of the people of the Lake country are to be subordinated to the interests of those who visit it in their holidays. It is whether the interests of those who wish to make money out of the Lake country ought to be treated as paramount over those of other classes. There are circumstances, no doubt, which might make it necessary to carry on the railway from Windermere; but these circumstances should be strictly investigated and severely judged. The creation of another valley bristling with chimneys and machinery would be but a poor compensation for the loss of one of the few districts left in England in which really grand scenery is still uninjured by man. Of the first kind of spectacle, Yorkshire and South Wales have examples enough to

offer. Of the last the number is now too small to make the destruction of any one of them a light matter.

It is not merely the substitution of one mode of locomotion for another that is involved in the extension of railways in the Lakes. If nothing but the conveyance of passengers were concerned, it might be possible so to construct the line as to prevent it from greatly disfiguring the country through which it passed. Much of the injury which has been inflicted in this way has been due, not to the fact that a railway has been made, so much as to the fact that it has been made in a particular way. A little deviation from the course actually taken, a little additional outlay in making a viaduct or embankment less conspicuous, or a bridge less ungraceful, even the simple expedient of planting an ugly wall with creepers, or hiding it with fast-growing trees, would often have made an immense difference. There has been great and culpable carelessness in this respect on the part of those who have had the power to say whether a railway shall be made or not. It ought long ago to have been made the duty of some department of the Government to see that, wherever the Legislature is asked to confer additional powers of taking land, no needless injury shall be done to the scenery of the district through which the Company applying for these powers, proposes to carry their line. Even in the absence of such a department, a Parliamentary

Committee might insist on exacting proper security against the needless disfigurement of so exceptional a district as the Lakes.

But in this case the railway is only a small part of the danger to be feared. The landowners in the interior of the Lake country are but human. They have their expenses, their embarrassments, their natural desires to increase their income or to lay up capital for their families; and if a railway is brought to their doors, it is certain that some of them will be induced to test the contents of the ground they own, in the hope that it may prove as rich in mineral wealth as the ground on the outskirts of the district has already proved. If it is urged that when this time arrives it will be soon enough to inquire how the destruction, so far as natural beauty is concerned, of a district in which, though it be not national property, the nation has a certain intelligible interest, can be prevented, it is enough to say that it will then be too late. Parliament must have greatly changed its nature before it interferes to hinder a landlord from doing what he will with his own land. If a man has a railway at his door there is no force, at least none that is likely to be brought into play, strong enough to prevent him from opening a mine in his field. Indeed, as the law stands now, there is no force strong enough to prevent him so polluting the stream that flows through his land that it becomes loathsome alike to sight and

taste. These things he can do without asking Parliament to help him, and with a reasonable certainty that Parliament, even if asked, will do nothing to hinder him. But so long as there is no railroad nearer than Windermere, Rydal Water is not likely to be invaded by either mines or mills, and as a railway cannot be made without the aid of Parliament, it is at this point that obstructives can most conveniently take their stand.

We have guarded ourselves against being supposed to say that no more railways ought to be made in the Lake country. It is enough for our purpose if it is conceded that no more ought to be made without careful inquiry, without full consideration of the weighty arguments against their extension in this particular district, and without a preliminary recognition that a very much more imperative case ought to be made out for their construction in this particular district than in almost any other. So far as is yet known, no advantage that we do not already possess can be secured by prolonging the railway beyond Windermere; whereas it is evident that against any gain that may be realized by prolongation must be set certainly the partial, and possibly the entire, destruction of scenes of natural beauty, and, by comparison, of unbroken solitude, which can never be reproduced. In the present condition of England this argument ought to have a strong influence on the Legislature which has to decide the question.



## RAILWAYS AND SCENERY.

*Reprinted by permission from the 'Daily News' of  
17th January, 1876.*

Mr. Ruskin has taught us all to delight in the 'mountain glory and the mountain gloom,' and therefore he has a right to a hearing when he thinks that these beauties of nature are endangered. It appears that there has been some talk of constructing a railway between Ambleside and Keswick, and Mr. Ruskin is distressed at the prospect. He has asked every one who shares his fears to oppose the projected railway. Many people will be ready with the ordinary sneer at sickly sentimentalism, exclusiveness, and the rest of it. The question, however, whether or no Mr. Ruskin has good reason to dislike the driving of a railway through such valleys as those of Ambleside and Grasmere is by no means to be settled in this easy way. An impression, or an opinion, may spring from sentiment without being sickly, and the sentiment which desires to keep a lovely corner of England free from noises which are hideous and sights which are certainly out of keeping with natural beauty is a

healthy one enough. The projected railway may, for all that we know to the contrary, be a necessary undertaking. It may be designed to facilitate the transport of minerals and to bring a working population within reach of mines. In that case, to oppose the railway because the steam-whistle frightens the wild birds, disturbs the poet as he hunts for that difficult rhyme in the seventh line of his sonnet, or makes the artist drop his brush, would be to protect sentiment at the cost of the material prosperity of individuals, and the material prosperity of the country. Now, though the moralist may deny that material prosperity should be allowed to outweigh finer considerations, and though the artist may repine, there can be little doubt that in most cases the ordinary laws of economy must have their way. Suppose that there is a mine of pencil lead, for example, in the Valley of Ambleside, and suppose that this material is becoming rapidly exhausted, and perhaps even Mr. Ruskin would allow that a commodity so indispensable would have to be got at, even at the cost of a railway along the shores of Grasmere. Now, the country thinks that other minerals are at least as desirable as lead for drawing-pencils, and is determined to have them. It would scarcely be possible to oppose a railway constructed for the purposes indicated, and yet the results would be such as every lover of nature must regret. The streams of the Lake district are already black as ink, even near

the head of Coniston Water—the brooks are poisoned, the mountain sides scarred, and broken up by a hundred hideous buildings. The hills round Grasmere would fare little better if mining operations were carried on there. It is a sad thought, but apparently an inevitable result of the discovery of valuable metals. But here, of course, the question arises, are there such veins of metal, and is the railway an economical necessity? On this subject we have evidence which ought to be good, if a poet, revered by all men of English speech, spoke true. We have the evidence of Wordsworth.

When the Kendal and Windermere Railway was projected, Wordsworth, as every one knows, wrote a sonnet on the subject, as indeed he did on most subjects. He contrasted the pride of the old hills and their indifference to the scars which their patriotic sons inflicted on them in the process of fortification, with the disgust of the same mountains at the sound of 'that whistle.' He called on the mountains, vales, and floods 'to share the passion of a just disdain.' This was poetry, if not pantheism; but Wordsworth returned to the charge in prose, and it is what he said in that humble medium that is most to the present purpose. 'In this district,' he observed, 'the manufactures are trifling; mines it has none, and its quarries are either wrought out or superseded; the soil is light, and the cultivateable parts of the country are very limited; so that it has little

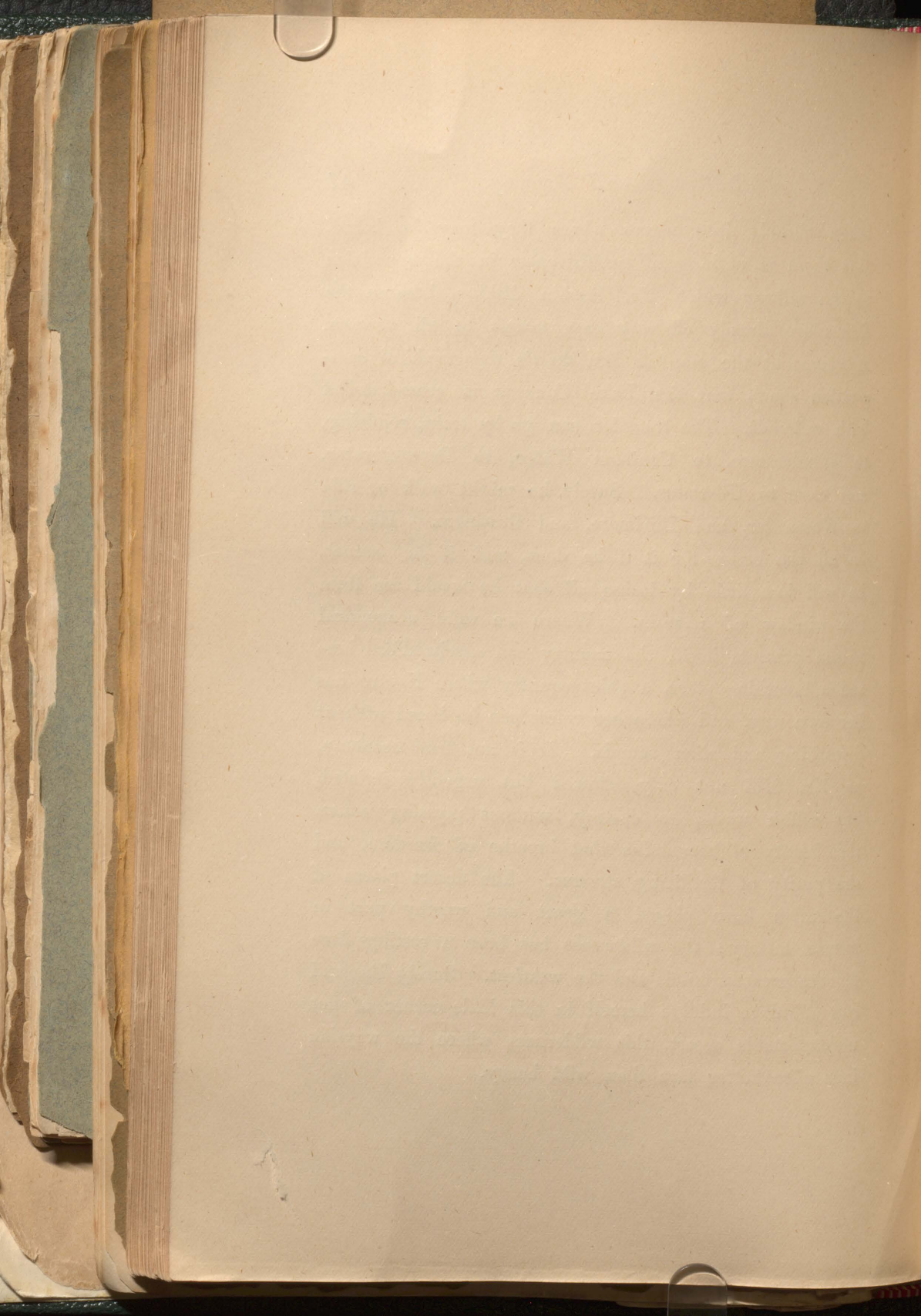
‘to send out, and little has it also to receive.’ Now if this is a true account of the state of mines and quarries — and, of course, in the discoveries of thirty years it may have been proved untrue — there is really no need for a railway in the most beautiful and secluded part of the Lake Country. It has been alleged that the district is closed to people who are too weak to take one of the most lovely and exhilarating walks in England, and too poor to hire a dog-cart, or the gig of respectability. Granting that this is so, the question arises whether they would find any consolation in railways. They would gain nothing but a hurried glance at lakes, waterfalls, trees, and the interior of tunnels, which enjoyments can be had in endless variety in most parts of this country. Any peculiar charm of the meres and hills they would necessarily miss, while they would carry along with them the noise, the turmoil, the unsightly cuttings which are necessary accompaniments and conditions of speedy travel elsewhere, but are surely uncalled for by the side of Grasmere. Of course, if the invalids get their railway the country people will be able to use it, and will journey from Ambleside to Keswick much quicker than they used to do. At the same time they will lose the healthy exercise or the beautiful drive. Perhaps they are wiser than the Virgilian rustics, and know the blessings they enjoy; perhaps they do not appreciate them, and think that speed is as necessary

in their beautiful country as it is on the road from Glasgow to London. Even granting that a Keswick man will be able to go to Ambleside in a very short time, does that argument make the railway desirable? Wordsworth observed, in his letters to a daily paper in 1844, that 'the staple of this country is, in fact, its beauty 'and its character of seclusion and retirement.' Cannot England afford herself the luxury of one district where she can enjoy this peaceful beauty? Are her men and women become so weak that they cannot walk in England the distances which would seem so short in Switzerland? Every one knows that this is not the case. The frosty Caucasus and the high Alps are the playing-ground of Englishmen and Englishwomen, and it is really curious if they cannot walk a few miles at home. To be spared a walk of that sort is almost all they could gain by the railway, if the railway has no other *raison d'être* than to save horse hire and shoe leather.

When Wordsworth wrote his letters in 1844, he had to combat the charge of selfish exclusiveness. Why, it was asked, should he, the patron of the poor when the poor chanced to be idiot boys and leech gatherers, try to prevent the intelligent poor from sharing his enjoyment? He had done for the Lakes what Clough was afraid of doing to his Highland waterfall, 'made it a 'lion, and got it at last into guide books.' Why did he wish to prevent the working classes from seeing

his lion? Wordsworth's answer came to this: first, that he did not prevent them, for the Lakes were already within easy reach of all; secondly, that the public had not been educated up to enjoying the Lakes and mountains. A Manchester man had told him that a beautiful detached rock near his house was 'a hugely 'lump.' People should not rush into his solitude and spoil it, and then talk about ugly lumps. He thought that the people should take walks in the fields, near their homes, where they could study botany and be out of the way. It was impossible that they could appreciate Grasmere, and their appearance annoyed and disturbed the poetic few, the county families, and the faithful peasantry. This view of Wordsworth's, which admits of being stated in a rather cynical way, is not one that could be seriously put forward any longer. We are bound to believe that every one appreciates mountain glories, that he would not be found among them if he did not like them, and that, at all events, he will never learn to appreciate them while he potters about a field in the rural neighbourhood of Birmingham. Moreover, fields near large towns are rather less easy to get at than Ambleside itself. If there are two voices — one of the sea, and the other of the mountains — as Wordsworth tells us, and if these voices have so many noble and moral remarks to make, as he implies, every one has a right to hear them, and a right to be

taken cheaply into places where they may be heard. But there is nothing of exclusiveness in the opposition to the railway which Mr. Ruskin dislikes, because the Lakes are already of very easy access to all persons. A glance at the map in Bradshaw's topographical compilation shows that the Lake Country is cross-hatched with railroads. The traveller can go by train, rejoicing, to Windermere, to Coniston Water, to Derwentwater, and close to Ullswater. Surely he might walk or ride to Wastwater, and Thirlmere, and Grasmere. He will be all the better for it if he does, and if he cannot, he will lose little by losing all that he would see from the window of a train. Where no valid economical reason presents itself, the country can surely afford herself a breathing place, a quiet country where Nature has her own way, and where her voices can be heard without disturbing and alien sounds. It is not true economy, as Mr. Mill not only allowed but urgently insisted, but selfish waste, to destroy, without pressing cause, the beauty of mountains that breathe of freedom, and the purity of fertilizing streams. The desert places of the earth have played a great and worthy part in human history; the wilderness has been a resting-place for the greatest minds and the weariest. Surely England can afford to indulge herself in this little corner of not uncomfortable desert, this wilderness where the wayside inns offer better fare than wild honey.





## LADY OF THE LAKE LOQUITUR.

*Reprinted by permission from 'Punch' of February 5, 1876.*

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'Mr. Ruskin has issued an invitation to all persons "who have any regard" for him or his writings, to sign a petition to Parliament to prevent the extension of railroads across the Lake country. It appears that longing eyes have been cast by those who desire to develop the material, and especially the mineral, resources of the district, upon the route which passes through Ambleside to Keswick. The ostensible reason assigned is to bring the most attractive parts of Westmorland within reach of the tourist, who now has to walk long distances or go to the expense of hiring a trap. But behind this the author of *Modern Painters* detects, and no doubt rightly, the intention of converting these pleasant places of rest into a mining region.' — *The Academy*, January 22, 1876.

LIST! Let my silver voice at least be heard,  
Echoing that eloquence which oft hath stirred  
    Even Philistine feeling!  
Let not the Trade-Gnome further still intrude  
Within the sweet sequestered solitude,  
Where Nature's coyest charms may yet be wooed  
    To full revealing.

Can you not keep one inch of all your isle  
In the unsullied light of Beauty's smile,  
    Which dirt and discord banish?  
Must your swart Titans thrust their iron arms  
Till, scared by driving reek and rude alarms,  
From their fouled path Pan's brood with all their charms  
    Shall wholly vanish?

If Progress its far aims to reach, must fill  
 The air with poison, choke the babbling rill,  
     And dye the limpid river,  
 And such compulsion, as a rule, 'tis vain  
 To challenge, yet *some* haunts should sure remain,  
 Which wiser Man to Mammon's grasping reign  
     Will scarce deliver.

Seeing all-liberal Heaven has given you here  
 Vales soft as those of Tempè or Cashmere,  
     Still lakes and solemn mountains,  
 Spurn not such largess! Do not drive away  
 All Solitude's shy nymphs, whose hands array  
 My banks with bowers, and keep in joyous play  
     My floods and fountains.

I am the Lady of the Silver Lake;  
 I would not have my mountain echoes wake  
     To shriek and snort incessant.  
 And you whose steps have strayed along my marge  
 Would Steam-Fiend's roar, gush of foul mines' discharge,  
 Fit the still scene where my smooth-shining targe  
     Reflects the crescent?

Even to cold Utilitaria's self—  
 Sole regent in these days to thirst of pelf  
     Given by self-dedication,—  
 I make appeal! Prudence forbids to spoil  
 The few fair spots on your sea-straitened soil,  
 Where poet-passion and o'erburdened toil  
     Find consolation.

Here have been nourished sons of Art whose song  
Or storied canvas shall your fame prolong,  
And swell your pride and pleasure.

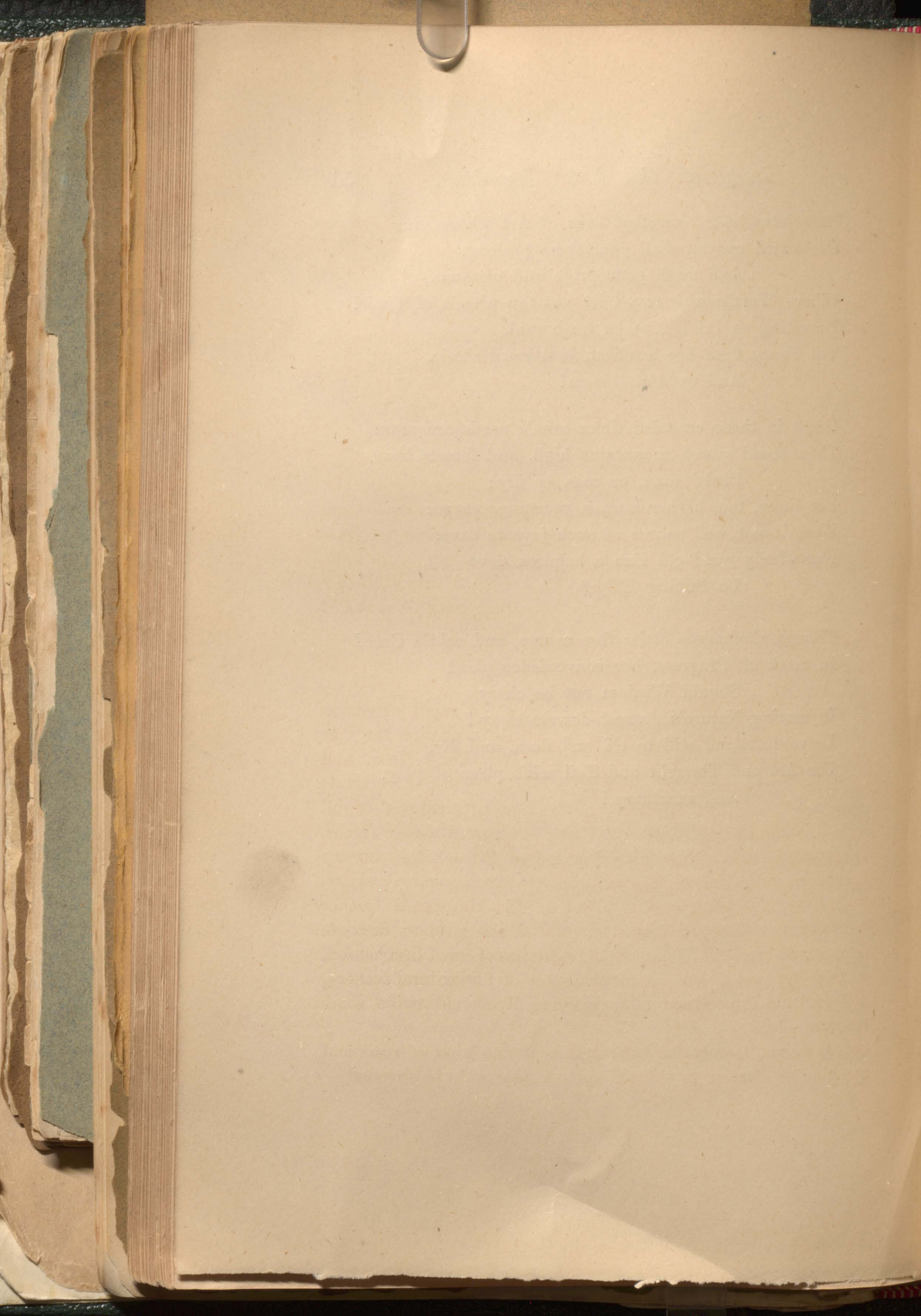
Where Wordsworth roved let not the wheels of Trade,  
Unresting as Ixion's, make fresh raid,  
Till Fancy flees her loveliest, best-loved shade,  
And needful leisure!

Grant in these crowded times men's needs are more  
Than broad meres, mountains high, and forests hoar,  
Birds' song, or rose, or lily;

For these, too, higher human yearnings crave:  
Were it not well source of such joys to save,  
Nor wholly yield old Pan a helpless slave  
To Puffing Billy?

Though Commerce claim free course, and subtle Greed  
In mask of Progress, her convenience plead  
Should Wisdom not be chary

In casting Nature's dearest dowers away?  
Leave Lakeland still to elf, and faun, and fay,  
For Art and Thought and Toil self's place of play,  
And sanctuary!



## PROTEST AND LETTER.

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*The following short Protest and Letter, with the connecting paragraphs, a small Map of the district, and form of Petition to Parliament, are issued as a separate paper for gratuitous circulation, and for signature. All who love the Lake Country may thus help in the work. Copies of this paper may be had, gratis, from R. Somervell, Hazelthwaite, Windermere; to whom forms of petition when filled should be forwarded.*

It cannot be denied that for some years the rapid extension of various industries has been doing much to change the face of our Country. What with Railways, Coals, Iron, and Chemicals, great tracts of country have been rendered frightful; while the general multiplication of smoking erections of all sorts has blackened earth and sky over still larger areas. It is evident that unless we are prepared to turn the country into a smoke-darkened shop some check must, sooner or later, be put upon this process. And as the threatened further encroachment of a railway upon one of the loveliest districts in England menaces it with the beginning of such destruction, it is needful that all who know the value of fine natural scenery, and feel the importance of preserving it, should make some resistive effort.

It is not merely the substitution of one kind of road and one kind of tractive power for another that is to be dreaded,—

but the change which such substitution always brings with it, and the precedent it furnishes for further and more disastrous innovation.

A glance at the accompanying map will shew that the Lake District is entirely surrounded by railway, and approachable on all sides. The London and North Western Company has access at Kendal, Windermere, Shap, Penrith, (for Pooley Bridge), Troutbeck, (for Ullswater), and Keswick; and the Furness Company, (in connection with the Midland) at Grange, the foot of Windermere (Lake Side), Broughton, Coniston, and Seascale, (for Wastwater and Ennerdale). So far as the public is concerned what more could be wished? In the very heart of the district the traveller is within three or four hours' drive of a railway station.

This notwithstanding, it is notorious that for some time past the rival companies have been casting longing eyes upon Ambleside, as a point desirable of attainment in itself, and possibly a convenient base for further enterprise in the direction of Grasmere or even Keswick.

Is such an extension by either Company desirable or permissible?

There are, perhaps, few Englishmen who would scruple, at the call of their favourite tutelary, to blast the loveliness of their mother country when it takes the modest form of cornfield and hedgerow; but surely it concerns us all to keep a few chosen places lovely and clean, if only for holiday time.

It is asserted that the mineral wealth of the district would be wonderfully developed by a line of railway. Probably there are persons living who would undertake to turn the country of Wordsworth into a Black Country, for a percentage on the transaction. But are we willing to give them the chance? Open up the district with a railway—give full scope to commercial enterprise—and we may find ourselves unable to hinder them.

Englishmen who fancy it might be for the public good to have a progressive Lake District, should spend their next

holiday in the Black Country, or take a run down, *via* Furness Abbey, to Barrow and its neighbourhood, and try how they like the change from Grasmere.

Surely now, if ever, a firm stand must be made, and the opinion of all wise and gentle persons stoutly expressed.

The Petition, of which a draft is annexed, is intended for presentation to Parliament should any Bill be introduced proposing to extend any line of railway into the district; and all visitors who have the smallest care for its preservation are earnestly asked, not only to sign their own names, but to induce their friends in other parts of the country to do so. There are many who would gladly sign, whose names might be obtained in this way; and it is only by the hearty co-operation of all that the work can be efficiently done.

(For Form of Petition see Page 60.)

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I have ventured, reluctantly, to reprint the following Letter, in no desire to perpetuate a controversy, but because it states plainly one or two things which are only hinted at in the foregoing Protest.

I do so in the hope that it may be found useful by those who are endeavouring to rouse in the public mind some sense of the utter folly of permitting all the lovely places in our country to be destroyed, one after another, by the advancing tide of what we are pleased to flatter ourselves by calling 'Progress.' Surely we must be blind to the real meaning of the word, or else to the nature of the realities which we use it to denominate, if we suppose that the change from the peaceful life of the country to the feverish stir of our filthy towns, and the endless mechanical drudgery of our degenerate and degrading manufactures, is truly *progressive*. While, therefore, we urge the importance of preserving the Lake District more particularly on the ground of its especial beauty, and national

value as a recreation ground, let us not lose sight of the other and larger question—How far, even in less favoured regions, the rapid growth of large towns and the peculiar developments of modern trade can be approved as conducing to the formation of noble character, and to the 'Progress,' physical, moral, and spiritual, of the people.

The attempt to call attention to the threatened destruction of the Lake District, before it is too late, is already meeting with the approval and support of persons in all parts of the country. But the Public has been long accustomed, either to look upon every railway as an unmistakable boon, or at best, to content itself, when any unusual sacrilege has been done, with a half-ejaculated 'Shame!' so that the work of arousing it to its duty is an arduous one. There are numbers of persons who are with us in principle and in sympathy, who are as yet only lukewarm. And these must be interested and roused if possible, and led to see that this is no selfish effort to save a few fields from being turned into cinder ground, but an honest endeavour to vindicate important but forgotten principles.

But we have not only to deal with objectors, but to meet opponents. Of these, some, it is true, are blinded only by selfishness or ignorance; but there are others who would openly trample underfoot all precious things to obtain one precious metal; and it is to contend with these that it behoves us earnestly to strengthen our forces.

To this deliberate service of Mammon, more than to any other cause, we owe the degradation of the arts of life, by division of labour and machinery, to merely mechanical toil; and their degeneracy,—for our vast machine power has been used not to supply our needs more easily and completely, but to encourage an extravagant and wasteful consumption of rubbish; with this pleasing result at the close of half a century of Progress,—that we can hardly obtain one of the manufactured products of our country of the sterling quality that our grandfathers could.



It is not likely that argument will shake the purpose, or contempt stay the hand of men whose prime principle is to make money. It simply remains for us now to determine whether they possess a majority in the councils of the nation, or whether, as one would hope, there be not yet strength of heart and purpose enough among the wise and gentle to say with authority to this restless herd—'thus far shall ye come and no farther.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE WESTMORLAND JOURNAL.'

SIR,—I have to thank you for your courteous insertion and notice of my protest and petition against the construction of new railways in the Lake District: and you are so far favourable to my views, that, with your permission, I will state what I have to say in answer to your objections.

Your article divides itself into two parts;—criticism of my position, and definition of your own. Critically you demolish me before a select committee of the House of Commons; and afterwards you give me some good-natured advice.

The argument which you put into the mouth of an 'acute Parliamentary barrister' is as follows:

(a) I accept your statements about the defilement of many parts of the country;

(b) that the Lake District is used by many as a place for health-getting and recreation is a fact, and I do not deny it;

(c) but the inhabitants of the smoke-darkened regions are the very people who most need the refreshment of your fine country, and yet, when they come for a day to the lakes, some of the grandest scenery is barred against them, since it can only be visited 'at an expenditure *far beyond* the reach of any one who does not belong to the affluent classes.'

(d) Hence it is desirable that railways should be pushed on into the heart of the district; Q.E.D.

The weight of the argument rests upon the statement in paragraph *c*.

Now, sir, I am not going to attempt myself, nor shall I ask you to attempt, to draw the line between the 'affluent' and the unaffluent classes; but the least affluent excursionists have legs; and such being the case, and supposing they are inclined to use them,—if they really love the fine scenery between Ambleside and Keswick, they have time in the nine or ten hours at their disposal to get into the heart of it.

But for those who are unable or unwilling to take a walk of 15 to 20 miles—is it really so,—that the cost of getting among the hills is 'far beyond their reach?' The return fare by steamer between Bowness and Ambleside is one shilling, and the 'bus from Waterhead to Grasmere a shilling or sixpence. I am within the truth in saying that hundreds of these excursionists might, for less money than they spend in paddling or being paddled about Bowness Bay, travel far into the heart of our hill country.

But living, as I do, at Windermere, I have taken some pains to study the bearing and temper of these crowds, and I do not scruple to say that the majority of the persons composing them are *bored* by our fine scenery, and have small care for anything in which the Lake District excels a suburban tea-garden.

Do not let me be thought to speak rashly. There are some of those who come to us for a day out of Lancashire and Yorkshire, who do love and enjoy the place; and the sight of their quiet, gladdened faces is beautiful and touching to behold. For *their* sakes, quite as much as for the sake of those whose means permit them to make a longer stay, I plead that the place may be kept as it is.

For observe—and this brings me to the examination of your position ('a railway—but as little of it as possible—and elegant bridges, &c.,')—when you make a railway to a place of perfect natural beauty, when you cast up your embankments and build your bridges, blast out your cuttings and bore your tunnels, erect your stations and sheds,

your sidings and signals, and finish with a row of square-set cottages, looking as if they had been baked whole in one ugly mould, and stuck down in a lump, you do not enable a larger number of people to visit the *same* place; you simply destroy all its characteristics past redemption, and put the *old* place out of sight of every one for ever.

Lastly—do not suppose that the Railway Companies care very greatly about running cheap trips to Ambleside and Grasmere. Their object in wanting a railway I hinted at pretty plainly in my protest. When it comes to THAT, elegant bridges will be of little avail. Only to-day I heard something which, with your permission I will *quote*, as an expression of opinion, though differing widely from your own; 'we are being undersold by foreigners in iron, and if these hills contain iron we must get it, and never mind the scenery. We can't afford to keep fine scenery for a few, &c., &c.' Now if we desire to be nothing but ironmongers, and to live our lives, and die, and be buried amid the sweat and dust, the darkness and flame of our forges—well and good. That is what some people call 'progress.' But if purity of mountain air is good to be enjoyed—if it be yet worth while to cherish the patriotism that springs from affection for a noble country—if we have any purer love than the love of gain, any joy in the works of God, any care for rest, or any thoughts of peace—call these things 'sentiment' if you will, but they are noble sentiment, that is worth preserving; and most surely to be nourished and strengthened by the contemplation of the unsullied grandeur of Nature. We may mar that beauty of Holiness, and despise that power for good if we will; but, believe me, when our work of destruction is done, we shall find that they cannot be bought back with the price of all the iron in the world.

I am, yours truly,

ROBERT SOMERVELL.

*Hazeltwaite, Windermere, July 26th, 1875.*

## FORM OF PETITION.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in  
Parliament assembled.*

The humble petition of the undersigned, sheweth, that whereas a tract of country, comprising parts of the Counties of Westmorland, Cumberland, and Lancashire, and commonly known as the Lake District of England, contains some of the most beautiful scenery in Her Majesty's dominions, and has in time past been, and at this present time is, visited by large numbers of Her Majesty's subjects, and by them used as a place of enjoyment, health-getting, and relaxation of mind and body,

And whereas it is expedient to preserve the aforesaid District from the encroachment of all that may tend to destroy its natural beauty, or open the way for such destruction,

And whereas it is proposed in a Bill now before your Honourable House to extend a line of railway from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_,

Your petitioners therefore pray that your Honourable House will refuse to pass the said Bill, or any Bill proposing to extend any line of railway into the district aforesaid.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

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*It is possible that upon notice of a Railway Bill being given, it may be deemed desirable to re-collect the signatures, to a definitive Petition. In that event every signatory will be communicated with direct. The present collection of names is the most necessary and important part of the work; as it is desirable that in an emergency every one interested in the matter may be promptly informed. To defer organization until Parliamentary notice is given, would be to court certain defeat.*

PARTS OF  
A LETTER FROM WAKEFIELD.

By E. L.

*(Reprinted by permission from 'Fors Clavigera' of July and September, 1875.)\**

What long years have passed since my eyes first saw the calm sweet scene beyond Wakefield Bridge! I was but a small creature then, and had never been far from my mother's door. It was a memorable day for me when I toddled a full mile from the shady up-town street where we lived, past strange windows, over unfamiliar flags, to see the big weir and the chapel on the Bridge. Standing on tiptoe, I could just see over the parapet and look down-stream.

That was my first peep into fair, green England, and destined never to be forgotten. The grey old chapel, the shining water below, the far-winding green banks spangled with buttercups, the grove-clad hills of Heath and Kirkthorpe,—all seemed to pass into my heart for ever.

There was no railway then, only the Doncaster coach careering over the Bridge with a brave sound of horn; fields and farmsteads stood where the Kirkgate Station is; where the twenty black throats of the foundry belch out flame and soot, there were only strawberry-grounds and blossoming pear-orchards, among which the throstles and blackbirds were shouting for gladness.

\* 'Fors Clavigera; letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain' by J. Ruskin, LL.D., &c., published monthly, by G. Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent.

The chapel lay neglected in a nest of wild willows, and a peaceful cobbler dwelt in it. As I looked at it, Duke Richard and King Edward became living realities to me; the dry bones of Pinnock's Catechism started suddenly into life. That was the real old chapel of the fifteenth century. Some years after, they ousted the cobbler, pulled down the old stones, restored it, and opened it for ritualistic worship; but the cheap stonework has crumbled away again, and it now looks as ancient as in days of yore. Only, as I remember it, it had a white hoariness: the foundry smoke has made it black at the present day.

Some of my companions had been farther out in the world than myself. They pointed out the dusky shape of Heath Hall, seen through the thinly-clad elm-trees, and told me how old Lady ——'s ghost still walked there on stormy nights. Beyond was Kirkthorpe, where the forlorn shapes of the exiled Spanish nuns had been seen fitting about their graves in the churchyard.

There on the right was the tree-crowned mound of Sandal Castle, which Cromwell had blown down; the dry ditch was full of primroses, they told me; those woods bounded Crofton, famous for its cowslip fields; and in Heath Wood you would see the ground white with snowdrops in March.

I do not think that it is the partiality of a native that makes me think you could hardly find a fairer inland pastoral scene, than the one I beheld from Wakefield Bridge the first time I stood there. On the chapel side there was the soft green English landscape, with woods and spires and halls, and the brown sails of boats silently moving among the flowery banks; on the town side there were picturesque traffic and life; the thundering weir, the wide still water beyond, the big dark-red granaries, with balconies and archways to the water, and the lofty white mills grinding out their cheering music.

But there were no worse shapes than honest, dusty millers' men, and browned boatmen, decent people; no open vileness and foul language were rampant in our quiet clean town in those days. I can remember how clean the pavement used to look there, and at Doncaster. Both towns are incredibly dirty now. I cannot

bear to look at the filthy beslavered causeway, in places where I remember to have never seen anything worse than the big round thunder-drops I used to watch with gleeful interest.

In those days we were proud of the cleanness and sweet air and gentility of Wakefield. Leeds was then considered rather vulgar, as a factory town, and Bradford was obscure, rough, and wild; but Wakefield prided itself in refined living on moderate means, and cultured people of small income were fond of settling there.

Market day used to be a great event for us all.

I wish that you could have seen the handsome farmers' wives ranged round the church walls, with their baskets of apricots and cream cheese, before reform came, and they swept away my dear old school-house of the seventeenth century, to make an ugly barren desert of a market ground. You might have seen, too, the pretty cottagers' daughters, with their bunches of lavender and baskets of fruit, or heaps of cowslips and primroses for the wine and vinegar Wakefield housewives prided themselves upon. On certain days they stood to be hired as maid-servants, and were prized in the country round as neat, clean, modest-spoken girls.

I do not know where they are gone to now,—I suppose to the factories. Anyhow, Wakefield ladies cry out that they must get servants from London, and Stafford, and Wales. So class gets parted from class.

Things were different then. Well-to-do ladies prided themselves on doing their marketing in person, and kindly feeling and acquaintanceship sprang up between town and country folk. My Wakefield friends nowadays laugh at the idea of going to market. They order everything through the cook, and hardly know their own tradespeople by sight. We used to get delicious butter at tenpence a pound, and such curds and cream cheese as I never taste now. 'Cook' brings in indifferent butter mostly, at near two shillings.

As for the farmers' wives, they would not like to be seen with a butter-basket. They mostly send the dairy produce off by rail to people whom they never see, and thus class is more sundered

from class every day, even by the very facilities that railways afford. I can remember that the townspeople had simple merry-makings and neighbourly ways that this generation would scorn. Many a pleasant walk we had to the farms and halls that belted the old town; and boating parties on the Calder, and tea-drinkings and dances—mostly extempore,—in the easy fashion of Vicar Primrose's days.

But pleasure must be sought farther off now. Our young folks go to London or Paris for their recreation. People seem to have no leisure for being neighbourly, or to get settled in their houses. They seem to be all expecting to make a heap of money, and to be much grander presently, and finally to live in halls and villas, and look down on their early friends.

But I am sorry for the young people. They run through everything so soon, and have nothing left to hope for or dream of in a few years. They are better dressed than we were, and have more accomplishments; but I cannot help thinking that we young folks were happier in the old times, though shillings were not half so plentiful, and we had only two frocks a year.

Tradespeople were different, too, in old Wakefield.

They expected to live with us all their lives; they had high notions of honour as tradesmen, and they and their customers respected each other.

They prided themselves on the 'wear' of their goods. If they had passed upon the housewives a piece of sized calico or shoddy flannel, they would have heard of it for years after.

Now the richer ladies go to Leeds or Manchester to make purchases; the town tradesmen are soured and jealous. They put up big plate-glass fronts, and send out flaming bills; but one does not know where to get a piece of sound calico or stout linen, well spun and well woven.

Give me back our dingy old shops where everything was genuine, instead of these glass palaces where we often get pins without points, needles without eyes, and sewing thread sixty yards to the hundred — which I actually heard a young Quaker defend the other day as an allowable trade practice.



Yet people tell me that those were very benighted Tory days I am regretting. Wakefield was held to be a Tory place, given up hand and foot to the magnates who owned the great estate around. I know how, when a small thing in frilled slops, but with my bosom full of patriotic pride in our town, I used to feel bitterly depressed at hearing a rising Radical Leeds clothier, who came to see us sometimes, denounce Wakefield as a 'one-eyed hoil,' his emphatic way of indicating our want of sweep of vision. I remember he generally capped his arguments by demanding, in sonorous tones, if any men worthy of the name of Britons would put up with that 'obsolete monopoly' of the (soke)\* mills.

To tell the truth, I am afraid that we felt a good deal of mean-spirited admiration for the neighbouring squires and lords on the occasions when they showed themselves and their handsome carriages in our streets: but at least the Wentworths and Pilkingtons and Squire Waterton were gentlemen and scholars; our new magnates have nothing to boast of but their money. It seems to me better that people should boast of the old oaks of Walton, and the old pictures of ——— Priory, than tell how many thousands an iron lord made by the last rise in iron: and that is what they talk of now. And if the iron kings have supplanted the landlords, they are not any more free. The old farmers might vote blindly out of blind respect for the old landlords; but is it not better than the newly-enfranchised puddlers and strikers selling votes openly for the price of a gallon of whisky? We have lost a good deal, although we are long rid of the soke monopoly, which used to be a standing reproach to us. I think that the town bought off the soke just after the Corn Law agitation, when the great railways began to enclose the wide meadows about the town with their ugly ramparts and arches, where the trains keep up a continual scream.

\* I don't know what this word means, and may have mistaken the reading of it.

But the wool and corn magnates of the place held to their old traditions long after that. I had gone abroad, but my heart was in the old place, and I caught up eagerly all concerning it. Sometimes I heard doleful accounts of its decadence — how the big houses were empty altogether, how the inns were closed, the coaches stopped, the river traffic diminished, and the great corn warehouses by the bridge falling to ruin. There was no trace left of the gaieties that once gave the town the name of 'Merrie Wakefield.' All the smart young men were leaving it to push their way in Leeds or Manchester, and the girls left behind were growing up into a population of old maids.

So the doleful story went on for many a year. But insensibly the key changed. Mills were springing up and shops; and the houses had gone up in rent. The sleepy streets were thronged with workers; in short the town seemed new-born altogether.

And now, on the once green Calder bank, where I used to see garlands of brown pears ripening in the sweet sunshine, there is a desert of dross and ashes, and twenty black throats vomiting fire and fumes into the summer sky; and under the big sheds you see hundreds of the liberated Britons of these improved days, toiling, half-naked, in sweltering heat and din, from morning to evening. This, however, is 'the activity and spread of the iron trade,' which our local paper tells us 'are the most satisfactory pledge of the future progress and prosperity of our town.'

I wish that I could believe it; but it vexes me beyond comfort to see the first landscape I knew and loved blighted by the smoke of the forges, and to find one sweet association after another swept away.

Even Sunday brings no respite to the eye. The forges are fired up shortly after noonday, and many of the long chimneys follow suit. And in the town the noise is so constant, you can scarcely hear the church chimes unless you are close to the tower.

Did you ever hear Wakefield chimes? We were very

proud of them in the old time. They had a round of pleasant sleepy tunes, that never failed us through summer suns and winter frost; and came to be bound up indelibly with the early memories of us children. How I loved to hear them as I bounded, full of morning gladness, across the green Vicar's Croft to school; or at night when lying an unwilling prisoner in bed, before the warm summer evening was ended. To my childish fancy there was a strange wizardry bound up with that dark church steeple, frosted and crumbling with age, which would break out overhead into mysterious music when I was far afield, but expecting it.

Years after, when poor and lonely in a foreign city, I came, one bitter winter's day, upon an obscure cloister church standing by a frozen river. It was a city without bells, and I had often longed for the familiar sound. I was dreadfully homesick that day, and stood upon the bridge, hapless, and listless; looking at the strange spire, the strange houses and frozen-up boats, in a kind of dream. Suddenly the cloister tower struck the hour,—four o'clock of a dark December day, and presently it broke into a chime.

It was a very simple ditty; but what a passion of longing it wakened for England and the old chimes of that little English town! I felt as if my heart could bear no more. I *must* go home; I *must* see the old places again, cost what it might. But morning brought fresh counsels, and many a year passed before I revisited the old place.

At last I was there again, after many disappointments, and laid my head to rest once more beneath the shadow of the old steeple.

I woke with an expectant heart. It was a bright May day, such as I remembered twenty years before. The big church bell tolled nine: then came a pause, and my thirsty ears were strained to catch the first sounds of the dear old chimes. 'Ding' went a treble bell high in the air, the first note of 'Tara's Halls,' and then!—a hideous sound I cannot describe, a prolonged malignant yell, broke from the sky and

seemed to fill the earth. I stopped my ears and ran indoors, but the sound followed to the innermost chambers. It gathered strength and malignancy every moment, and seemed to blast all within its reach. It lasted nearly two minutes, and ended with a kind of spasm and howl that made every nerve shudder. I do not exaggerate. I cannot adequately describe the hideous sound. When I had recovered my wits, I asked the meaning of this horrible noise. My informant, a rising young townsman of the new stamp, told me that it was the new steam-whistle at the foundry, commonly called the 'American Devil;' that it was the most powerful in the West Riding, and could be heard five miles off.

It was only at half-power then, calling the workmen from breakfast; but at six in the morning I could hear it in double force. I asked if it was possible that people would quietly put up with such a hideous disturbance. He owned that the old inhabitants did not like it; but then, he said, they were a sleepy set, and wanted stirring up.

Indeed, I actually found that the town was infected by four other similar whistles, profaning dawn and eve with their heaven-defying screech.

The nuisance has been abolished since, I hear. They say it actually killed one old lady by starting her up just at the only moment when it was possible for her weary nerves to get sleep. She happened to have a relation in the town council: a stir was made about it, and the whistles were suppressed.

But the peaceful, half town, half rural life of Wakefield is gone for ever, I fear.

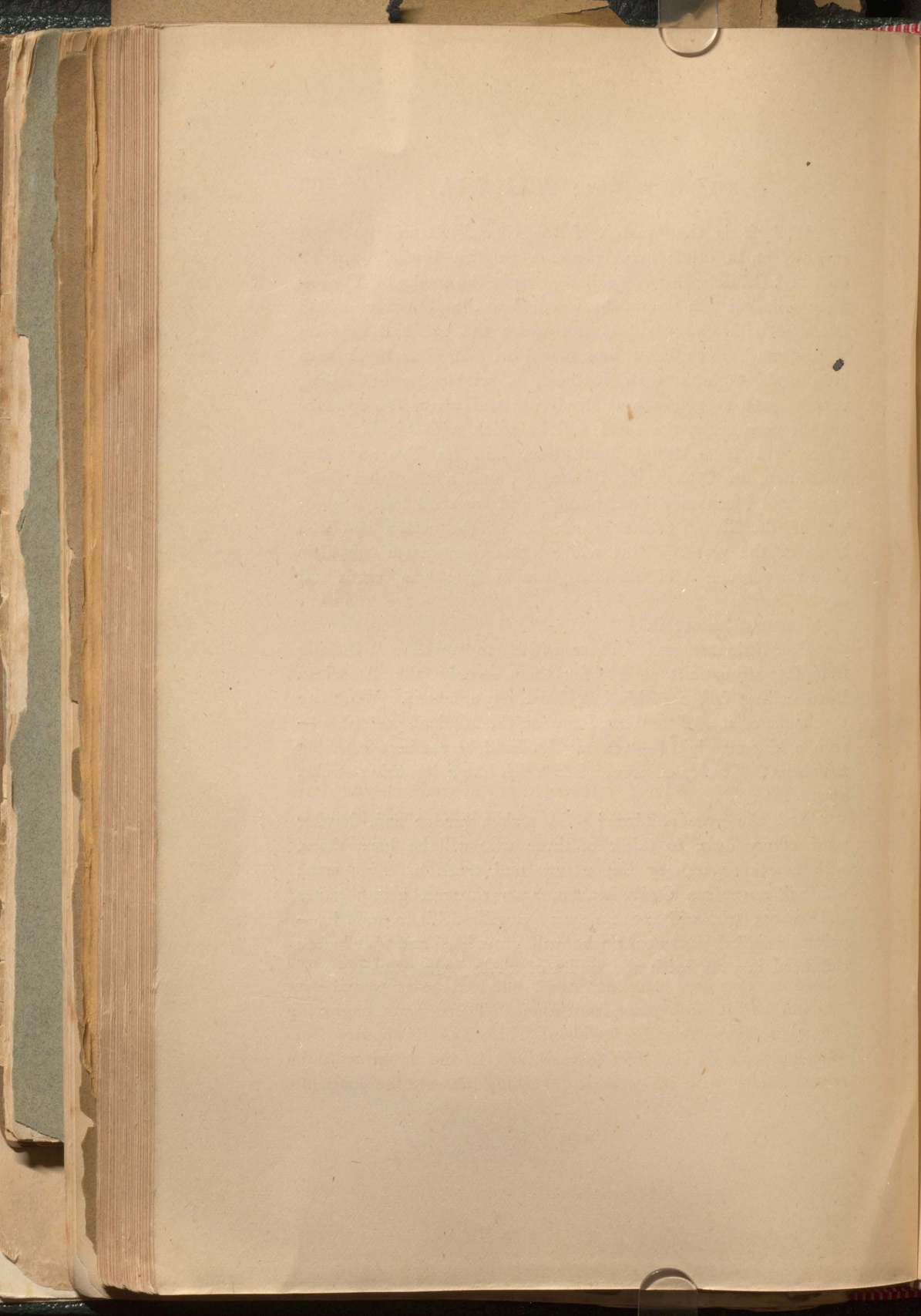
Silk-mills and dye-works are encroaching on the corn-fields and pastures; rows of jerry-built cottages are creeping up Pinder's Fields, where I used to pull orchises; greasy mill-girls elbow ladies in the Westgate, and laugh and jeer at passing young men in a way that would have horrified the old inhabitants. And everywhere there is an indescribable smokiness and dirtiness more demoralizing than any tongue can tell, or mind conceive.

Well, it is the 'march of the times.' It will go on, I suppose, as in other quiet pleasant English towns, until all the sweet Calder valley is swallowed up in the smoke of Tophet. They will cut the snowdrop wood down, and cover Heath Common with cheap villas, and make the old hall into an 'institution.' You know how it will be. A river black with filth, and stagnant with foulness, a wilderness of toiling suburbs such as you saw at Bradford; and where the cowslips and the corn grew, the earth will be thick with 'institutions.' There will be a Blind Institution, and an Eye and Ear Institution, an Orthopædic Institution, and a Magdalen Institution, and Mechanics' Institutions; and we shall hear a great deal of the liberality and beneficence of the cotton and iron kings of the place. But will all this compensate one little child for robbing it of its God-given birthright of earth and sky?

I cannot believe it.

Poor little martyrs! There will be no 'swallow twittering from the straw-built shed' for them,—only the American Devil calling father to his hot, hard day's labour. What can they make of it all? What I saw on the Medlock yesterday—such a hideous sight!—yet my husband remembers catching fish there. The gases would kill a fish like a lightning-stroke, now.

And the poor children! It makes me so sad, having some of my own, to think of those who will be born there, with hearts as hungry for nature and truth as mine was; who will never see God's heaven, save through grimy panes and smoke; who will have no sweet cowslip-fields to walk in,—only the defiled pavement; who will grow hard and sour before childhood is over, with the riddle of their joyless lives.



## MR. RUSKIN AND WAKEFIELD.

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'But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind.'  
*Tennyson.*

Mr. Ruskin is the Don Quixote of the nineteenth century, who makes war against chimneys and manufactories instead of windmills. In the *Fors Clavigera* of last September and in several succeeding numbers the town of Wakefield has been the subject of unfavourable comment, and a correspondent goes so far as to hint that an accession of trade has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. In looking back to the old account of the town—unless, indeed, we are to suppose that each historian merely copied the words of his predecessor—Wakefield seems to have given the impression that it was a pleasant place to live in. 'There be few towns in the inward parts of Yorkshire that hath a fairer site or soil about it,' says Leland, and he adds that a right honest man shall fare well there for twopence a meal. Two hundred years passed over it, and left it very much the same. There is an engraving of it in Thoresby's *Leeds*, about 1715, 'as it appears from London road.' The chief features are, in the foreground, the river Calder with its weir and rushing waters, the long line

of arches supporting the well-known Memorial Chapel on the bridge, and in the background the parish church with its lofty spire, around which are grouped clusters of houses and cottages, which cover the sides of the hill down to the river banks. Commerce is unrepresented; no one seems in a hurry; wood-cutting is going on in one corner, sheep-washing in another; two magnificently dressed gentlemen in Cavalier hats with fowling-pieces, a spaniel, and game-bag, are standing in the middle of the road, while a fisherman is wading across the river just above the weir. This is the spot which Mr. Ruskin speaks of as being now one of the two most frightful things he has ever yet seen. In 1770 the chapel was used as a warehouse for goods, and its 'beautiful carving much defaced.' Arthur Young, who was in Wakefield about that time on his Northern tour, gives an encouraging account of the town from an æsthetic point of view. Mutton and beef were  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb., wages from 6s. to 14s. a week, manufacturer's house-rent from 40s. to 50s.; the trade of the place was very dull, and had been so ever since the peace. In 1801, the population was about 8000; in 1811, 8,593; in 1821, nearly 11,000; and in 1838, Dibdin became eloquent and prophetic on its future:— 'It is the most opulent as well as trade-stirring town in the West Riding of York, and contains a population of upwards of 15,000 souls. By this time thirty years to come, it will have quadrupled that number.' Thirty-eight years have gone by, and Wakefield has only doubled the number. The chimneys have, however, more than kept pace with the population, nor is Dibdin's account out of place now of the 'curling columns of dense and slowly moving smoke which seem to involve everything within its immediate neighbourhood in impenetrable obscurity.' Had Wakefield but increased in the same proportion as its neighbours, the loss of the advantages given to it by nature would have been less felt. In all the great West Riding towns, Leeds or Sheffield or Bradford, there is a certain sense of power, of concentrated energy, which, though the sky is darkened and the air poisoned, strikes and impresses



the mind. The shops are large, the streets are thronged, and the traveller will feel himself as much a mere unit as if he were in London or Manchester. But Wakefield is neither a commercial centre nor is it the county town. It has an historic past, and once had buildings of architectural merit. It possesses a lovely natural site, and broad streets, which the competition of its rivals would have made as grass-grown as those of Ferrara if grass were a possible product. This useful herb will soon be a luxury in many parts of the West Riding.

It is sad to watch a district as it becomes a seat of manufacture. The little villages on the hill-sides soon encroach on one another, year by year demanding from the State fresh machinery to supply their social wants. The face of the land is changed. Refuse from the mill or colliery is plastered up into great unsightly masses. There is neither earth, nor air, nor water. Chemical constituents and filth of every description take their place, and the train must be made use of to obtain an illustration from natural history. First the rivers, then the trees are poisoned. Neither can be replaced. In twelve years a plantation will not have grown as many feet; everything is either dead or dying. Long lines of rotten hedges, mended with disused wire ropes from the nearest colliery, separate the fields, while here and there dead trees fling their black arms to the sky. It is not worth while to fell them, so there they stand giving evidence of the past existence of life in the district. If a Hercules is required to clean the rivers, the roads might tax the powers of General Wade. It is nearly as dangerous to venture out upon the highways as it was in 1685, or in the days when Mary Wollstonecraft was upset four times on her journey from Havre to Paris. The roads are full of holes and pitfalls, caused partly by the heavy traffic, partly by the fact that they are never mended, as it is the business of no one to attend to them. It is a sad irony to read now of such or such a town or village being pleasantly situated on the banks of its river. It is hardly possible to walk along the side of the stream. The blue scum which floats sullenly

by has killed everything with which it has come into contact. There is no boat on the river, only here and there barges sunk at the back-waters and in the creeks, with their lines just above the water, telling of work done and homes lived in, but now gradually rotting away in filth. Further on a drain or beck discharges its contents, steaming with vapour, but the river is too foul to be coloured by the accession of any tributary, however filthy. Here is the evidence of a witness in the employment of the Aire and Calder Company:—‘He saw a quantity of water containing hair and other sediment flowing from some tanks in the defendant’s works over a large sump, and thence into Sheepscar beck. The sump was almost filled with a pulpy sediment. In the vicinity of the point where this discharge entered the beck there were several cart-loads of sediment in the bed of the stream. The sediment looked like lime and hair mixed. The water in the beck was white as far down as he could see.’ Not a bird is to be heard or seen; not that this is a matter to regret, as an ill-looking lad sneaks by with a single-barrelled gun. No animal life cheers the naturalist. No hare or partridge ventures near a population which would sally forth with every known implement of warfare to destroy it. The attested neighbourhood of a rabbit would empty a colliery for a week. Everything in your walks in such a country calls up some unpleasant association. The landscape reminds you of the illustrations in Dickens’s novels; the ponds are those in which Bill Sykes tried to drown his dog. It is neither town nor country. Miserable cottages are being built in rows to arrive at which you must plunge through a slough of black mud. Damp, ill-built, and ill-drained, disease clings to them, and family after family is compelled to leave. It is impossible to build houses with profit, and the result is overcrowding. Sanitary inspection is in many places unknown or useless. The Inspector is appointed as a matter of form, but is not called upon to furnish the Board with a report. The *Barnsley Times* gives an account of the village of Ardsley which is probably

true of many others. The cesspools overflow the highways; an open field is used as a slaughter-house; so many people live in the same building that they have to go to bed in turns; while in one case fourteen people slept in one great round bed with their feet to the centre. Water is a necessity of life, but it does not exist. The river we have already described is the substitute discovered for it by the nineteenth century. The historian of the University of Lagado, when he represented one of its professors as endeavouring to produce food by a process which we had rather not specify, little thought that the day would come when his description would be far from a satire. The town of Wakefield has solved the problem, and derives much of its sustenance from the source referred to. Paracelsus is said to have invented a perfume of the same material, and, were not the West Riding already so well supplied, enterprising tradesmen might turn their attention to a new means of profit. The time will come when a water merchant's trade will be a very important one, and when the manufacturer will set before his guests as a princely treat a bottle of some celebrated year, ascertained by analysis to be free from organic matter.

No sense escapes in the new order of things, and the shrill scream of the 'buzzer' can be heard at a distance of miles. Thicker and more deadly smoke is vomited forth each year, and no attempt is made to deal with the evil. Lord Winmarleigh presented a petition the other day for an amendment of the Acts relating to noxious vapours, and said that he knew a property which had been all but destroyed by them. 'The trees in it were like a forest of masts even at midsummer, and whereas there were formerly on it oaks worth £100, it would be difficult now to find in or anywhere near it an oak or other tree worth a hundred shillings.' The Duke of Richmond, in reply, assured their Lordships that the Government felt the importance of the subject. If Goodwood were only between Leeds and Bradford, the Duke's assurance would be far more valuable. In those

parts of Lancashire which lie around Wigan and Bolton and southwards to Manchester, the country is permanently disfigured, and we cannot believe that the Inspectors of Nuisances have ever put into execution the powers they possess. In the West Riding towns something has been done, though to a very small extent. In Huddersfield orders to abate the nuisance in a few cases have been issued, but with little or no effect. In Barnsley some of the principal manufacturers and colliery owners have been compelled to erect new chimneys. In Bradford over seven hundred informations have been laid against offenders, and penalties were inflicted and orders to abate by the borough justices were made in all cases, the number of chimneys coming under the Act being about four hundred and seventy-six. In Halifax, owing to the measures enforced, there is a great improvement in the consumption of smoke. In Leeds a local Act of Parliament has been enforced. In Wakefield Mr. Ruskin will be interested in hearing that nothing has been done, and it is said that a meeting which was held many years ago to protest against the non-consumption of smoke resulted in a vote of thanks to the manufacturers who made it and brought trade to the town. Charles Lamb was heard to declare that his love of natural scenery would be abundantly satisfied by the patches of long waving grass and the stunted trees that blacken in the old churchyard nooks which you may yet find bordering on Thames Street. Wakefield, though not entirely consisting of Charles Lambs, shares the same opinion.

It may be asked, What is to be the end of all this desolation and destruction of life? Those who can undoubtedly will migrate in search of pure air and water, and evidences of refinement will become gradually scarcer. Houses descend very fast in the social scale in the neighbourhood of towns. In the agricultural counties the downward progress of the old manor-house is often slow. It has probably but one tenant, and when his farm-servants are dining together at the long oaken table in the central hall he is

conforming more nearly than he is aware to the habits of those who lived there three hundred years ago. Occasionally the landlord comes there for a week's shooting, and the best bedroom, with its wainscoted panels and carved cornice, its Jacobean chests and faded Turkey carpet, is preserved from being the apple or the onion chamber. In the garden the yew trees and the walnuts are in their full glory, and the red brick walls that enclose them have all the delightful depth of colour which belongs to their age. A colliery, however, is not a helpful neighbour to the gabled hall. The lane that leads to it is dirtier than the dirtiest of those that lead to the *Porta Salara* at Rome. The porch is blocked up with bricks, and an open drain trickles along the slope in front of the house. The wall has fallen down which once inclosed the neglected garden, and half buried in the soil lies the stone escutcheon which bears the arms of the family that owned the property in the seventeenth century. There is no particular road anywhere; paths lie in every direction, for the collier is the typical crow that flies straight from point to point. In Lord John Manners's well-known poem, 'England's Trust,' the claims of our 'old nobility' are advocated in preference to those of wealth, commerce, learning, and laws. Had his sentiment been expended upon the Tudor and Elizabethan manor-houses of the country, we should have been more inclined to sympathize with him. There is very little old nobility, and that little is not easy to discover. In Yorkshire, and especially in the manufacturing parts of the county, property has changed owners very often. Two hundred years ago hardly a country house was in the hands of the ancestors of those who now hold it. The ordinary Yorkshire family dates back about two centuries, at which time it struggled out of some town to invest a little capital in land. The West Riding is very deficient in great houses built before the beginning of last century. Hardly a fragment is left of Howley, the old home of the Saviles; and Temple Newsam, the only Elizabethan palace

in the West Riding, will soon become lost in the smoke that surrounds it. If Mr. Ruskin can save a single tree or stream, he will have done a great deal of good, and if he can purify and educate Wakefield, nothing need appear hopeless to him. It is not given to every town to have a lunatic asylum with 1,400 patients and a goal with 1,300 criminals. Lunacy, as is well known, is spreading out of all proportion to the increase of population, and in the event of the establishment of electoral districts Wakefield might hope for a second member. What might not then be expected from a town whose political history for the last forty years has been so bright, and has justified so well the hopes of those who extended the franchise? We can conceive of a millennium of universal happiness, when no man's house shall be without a buzzer, beer shall be the only available drink, and twenty persons shall sleep in the same round bed.

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