

**SOMETHING ON  
RUSKINISM: WITH A  
"VESTIBULE" IN RHYME**

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Something on Ruskinism: with a "vestibule" in rhyme by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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SOMETHING

ON

RUSKINISM;

WITH A "VESTIBULE" IN RHYME.

BY AN ARCHITECT.

Οὐ τοῖς λόγοις μόνοις ἐγγεγραμμένος. — Luc.

DEFLUIT SAXIS AGITATUS HUMOR. — Hor.



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## PREFACE.

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THIS "Something," which many will call a Nothing, is in fact little more than nothing in comparison with what it would have been had the writer touched upon all the matters which he had noted down as characteristic of Mr. Ruskin's peculiar architectural doctrine, and of his truly unique idiosyncrasy.

These few pages do not pretend to exhibit a portraiture of Ruskinism, or anything like one. They amount to no more than a mere *croquis*, presenting some of its more striking traits, and such as can be understood by the general reader; which, prominent as they are, seem nevertheless to have escaped the attention of most of Mr. Ruskin's critics, some of whom appear to have been thrown into ecstasies of rapture by what they have been pleased to relish as eloquence of a superlative as well as a highly original kind.

Yet, however his style may be admired by those to whom his doctrine is matter of indifference, hardly can his opinions be relished by any one class of the architectural profession. They, then, ought to say of the following pages that they are at any rate so-so, and the writer of them will interpret such sentence as a sufficiently favourable one, viz., in the words of Touchstone :—

“*So-so* is good—very good—very excellent good.”

*April 11th, 1851.*

## Rhyming Epistle

TO J. RUSKIN, Esq.

BY WAY OF "VESTIBULE."

JOHN RUSKIN,

You are, if the truth may be told,  
 Most audaciously brave, and alarmingly bold.  
 In your merciless rage, man, you strike right and left,  
 Till you seem of your senses to be quite bereft.  
 You rip up reputations, great names you mow down,  
 And ride roughshod over most folks of renown.  
 Worse are you than "Newleaf," ay, very much worse,  
 Since you care not at all What or Whom you asperse.  
 Nor are you, i' faith, over nice and particular  
 In choosing your words, when you call "Perpendicular"  
 A "detestable" style. Oh fie! fie for shame!  
 Of that style of all others just now to make game,  
 When two or three millions upon it we're spending:—  
 'Tis really too bad—nay, 'tis downright heart-rending;



'Tis enough to put people quite out of conceit  
 With the Palace of Westminster,—wonder so great.  
 Then you chop down the "Orders," reduce them to *Two*,  
 So that many must think that the deuce is in you.  
 With a stroke of your pen you demolish Ionic,  
 While poor Sir Bob laughs, but with laughter sardonic,  
 At learning his favourite Order's downfall,  
 'Cause pronounced by you, just no Order at all.  
 His darling Ionic, his chief stock in trade,  
 You most coarsely revile, and most vilely degrade  
 Its capital calling—Oh, horror! disgrace!  
 An "invention" no less than "exceedingly base."  
 Shop-fronts you like not, but your own fronts are worse,  
 Your "*af-fronts*" I mean, which will cause some to curse  
 Both you and your books, as of mischief brim-full,  
 Though your rant and your nonsense mere noodles may  
 gull.

Your sneering at shops might be borne; but, oh dear!  
 You presume at our club-houses also to sneer:  
 Call them "coxcombry feeble," and then off you stalk,  
 Loudly crowing as if you were "Cock of the Walk!"

O Ruskin! most ruthless, can aught e'er be ruder  
 Than your scurvy remarks on our Old English Tudor?  
 Our Elizabethan you cannot endure;  
 (Compared with St. Mark's, 'tis, I own, not quite pure;)  
 So with your rough tongue, I suppose you would peck  
 At poor old Bess herself, and the ruff round her neck.  
 Yet, of all styles on earth, John, your own's the most  
 curious,  
 With its unction so canting, and foaming so furious.  
 Your book—since Reviewers so swear—may be rational;  
 Still, 'tis certainly not either loyal or national;

York Minster, York Column; come in for a scratch  
 Of your critical claws, for which neither's a match.  
 "Confectioner's Gothic" in one you behold,  
 And see round the other "a large sausage" roll'd.

'Tis a wonder, you Wretch, in your spite and your  
 malice,  
 You did not fall foul upon Buckingham Palace;  
 THAT'S, however, quite safe from your jeers and your  
 sallies;  
 Such pile is impregnable to all your criticism,  
 Your artillery of thunder, or your small shot of witticism;  
 So noble, so grand, with such gusto designed,  
 In style so imposing, in taste so refined.  
 Though you had not the grace to extol and applaud,  
 At least you were by 't into decency awed;  
 Else—what is more likely—were by it so scared,  
 That you scampered away and your thunder-bolts spared,  
 Opining that, so far from thunder, 'twas not  
 Worth even so much as mere "*powder and shot.*"

Of Professors themselves you have not the least fear,  
 Since "Friend" Cockerell for one you have ventured to  
 queer;  
 As to great Welby Pugin, you do not spare him,  
 For you pluck, then expose him in pitiful trim.  
 "Of architects smallest," you call him: Good gracious!  
 That will surely make Pugin quite wroth and pugnacious;  
 Such a dressing he'll give, you'll never need more  
 Have recourse to a tailor or enter his door.

I really was in a great fright more than once,  
 Lest you should Mister Bunning show up as a dunce:

Laugh at Donald's small Son deck'd with medal of gold,  
 And the Institute call a mere silly sheepfold.  
 For Hosking I quailed, for Gwilt I quite quaked,  
 Lest both should be pluck'd by you and turn'd out naked.

So many you strip of their *leafage* and laurels,  
 That you are likely to get into plenty of quarrels :  
 On Fergusson's system, for one thing, you've pounced,  
 And as quite "illogical" being denounced.  
 You "schoolmaster" Garbott with chiding and snubbing,  
 For which he, perhaps, will now give you a drubbing.  
 In short, you make blockheads of every one,  
 And so some will show fury while others show fun,—  
 Will laugh at your bluster—repay it with banter,  
 Protesting you ride the great horse in a *canter* ;  
 Since cant, "Kata-Phusin," you certainly do  
 About Nature, till folks for a Natural take you.

Of eloquence you, John, no doubt are the model,  
 Wherefore more is the pity you deal só in twaddle :  
 For twaddle you do in such singular style,  
 That although we are chafed we cannot but smile.  
 With your queer Stones of Venice you may make a fuss,  
 Yet why should you savagely fling them at us ?  
 O great LITHOLOGIC ! to you 't may be frolic,  
 But to us it is very far worse than the cholic.  
 Tho' Reviewers have graciously hailed you in form,  
 From Pugin and others look out for a storm ;  
 Their *hail* will be different, for 'twill not flatter you—  
 More likely 'twill be both to bruise and to batter you.

While you rail at deceptions, you deal in deceit,  
 As most of your titles with that are replete.