

**LOVE'S MEINIE. LECTURES
ON GREEK AND ENGLISH
BIRDS, VOLUME I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649640331

Love's Meinie. Lectures on Greek and English Birds, Volume I by John Ruskin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN RUSKIN

**LOVE'S MEINIE. LECTURES
ON GREEK AND ENGLISH
BIRDS, VOLUME I**

LOVE'S MEINIE.

VOLUME I.

LOVE'S MEINIE.

LECTURES

ON

GREEK AND ENGLISH BIRDS.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD; AND HONORARY FELLOW OF
CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

VOLUME I.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1881.



Harrell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

PREFACE
TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

BRANTWOOD, *9th June*, 1881.

Quarter past five, morning.

THE birds chirping feebly,—mostly chaffinches answering each other, the rest discomposed, I fancy, by the June snow;* the lake neither smooth nor rippled, but like a surface of perfectly bright glass, ill cast; the lines of wave few and irregular, like flaws in the planes of a fine crystal.

I see this book was begun eight years ago;—then intended to contain only four Oxford lectures: but the said lectures also 'intended' to contain the cream of forty volumes of scientific ornithology. Which intentions, all and sundry, having gone, Carlyle would have said, to water, and more piously-minded

* The summits of the Old Man, of Wetherlam, and Helvellyn, were all white, on the morning when this was written.

persons, to fire, I am obliged now to cast my materials into another form : and here, at all events, is a bundle of what is readiest under my hand. The nature and name of which I must try to make a little more intelligible than my books have lately been, either in text or title.

'Meinie' is the old English word for 'Many,' in the sense of 'a many' persons attending one, as bridesmaids, when in sixes or tens or dozens ;—courtiers, footmen, and the like. It passes gradually into 'Menial,' and unites the senses of Multitude and Servitude.

In the passages quoted from, or referred to in, Chaucer's translation of the Romance of the Rose, at the end of the first lecture, any reader who cares for a clue to the farther significances of the title, may find one to lead him safely through richer labyrinths of thought than mine : and ladder enough also,—if there be either any heavenly, or pure earthly, Love, in his own breast,—to guide him to a pretty bird's nest ; both in the Romances of the Rose and of Juliet, and in the Sermons of St. Francis and St. Bernard.

The term 'Lecture' is retained, for though I lecture no more, I still write *habitually* in a manner suited for oral delivery, and imagine myself speaking to my pupils, if ever I am happily thinking in myself. But it will be also seen that by the help of this very familiarity of style, I am endeavouring, in these and my other writings on Natural History, to compel in the student a clearness of thought and precision of language which have not hitherto been in any wise the virtues, or skills, of scientific persons. Thoughtless readers, who imagine that my own style (such as it is, the one thing which the British public concedes to me as a real power) has been formed without pains, may smile at the confidence with which I speak of altering accepted, and even long-established, nomenclature. But the use which I now have of language has taken me forty years to attain; and those forty years spent, mostly, in walking through the wilderness of this world's vain words, seeking how they might be pruned into some better strength. And I think it likely that at last I may put in my pruning-hook with effect; for indeed a time must come when English fathers and mothers

will wish their children to learn English again, and to speak it for all scholarly purposes; and, if they use, instead, Greek or Latin, to use them only that they may be understood by Greeks or Latins;* and not that they may mystify the illiterate many of their own land. Dead languages, so called, may at least be left at rest, if not honoured; and must not be torn in mutilation out of their tumuli, that the skins and bones of them may help to hold our living nonsense together; while languages called living, but which live only to slack themselves into slang, or bloat themselves into bombast, must one day have new grammars written for their license, and new laws for their insolence.

Observe, however, that the recast methods of classification adopted in this book, and in 'Proserpina,' must be carefully distinguished from their recastings of nomenclature. I am perfectly sure that it is wiser to use plain short words than obscure long ones; but not in the least sure that I am doing the best that can be done for my pupils, in classing

* Greek is now a living nation's language, from Messina to Delos—and Latin still lives for the well-trained churchmen and gentlemen of Italy.