

**SESAME AND LILIES. TWO  
LECTURES DELIVERED AT  
MANCHESTER IN 1864**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649015399

Sesame and lilies. Two lectures delivered at Manchester in 1864 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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOHN RUSKIN**

**SESAME AND LILIES. TWO  
LECTURES DELIVERED AT  
MANCHESTER IN 1864**



# SESAME AND LILIES.

*TWO LECTURES*

DELIVERED AT MANCHESTER IN 1864.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.

1. OF KINGS' TREASURIES,
2. OF QUEENS' GARDENS.

“ἀπὸ τῆς χαρῆς αὐτοῦ ἰσχύει, καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν  
ἐκεῖνον.”



LONDON:  
SMITH, ELDER & CO. 65, CORNHILL.

1865.

# SESAME AND LILIES.



## LECTURE I.—SESAME.

### OF KINGS' TREASURIES.

*ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐξελεύσεται ἄρτος, \* \* \* καὶ χάμα χρυσίου.\**

I BELIEVE, ladies and gentlemen, that my first duty this evening is to ask your pardon for the ambiguity of title under which the subject of lecture has been announced; and for having endeavoured, as you may ultimately think, to obtain your audience under false pretences. For indeed I am not going to talk of kings, known as regnant, nor of treasuries, understood to contain wealth; but of quite another order

\* Job xxviii. 5, 6.

of royalty, and material of riches, than those usually acknowledged. And I had even intended to ask your attention for a little while on trust, and (as sometimes one contrives in taking a friend to see a favourite piece of scenery) to hide what I wanted most to show, with such imperfect cunning as I might, until we had unexpectedly reached the best point of view by winding paths. But since my good plain-spoken friend, Canon Anson, has already partly anticipated my reserved "trot for the avenue" in his first advertised title of subject, "How and What to Read;"—and as also I have heard it said, by men practised in public address, that hearers are never so much fatigued as by the endeavour to follow a speaker who gives them no clue to his purpose, I will take the slight mask off at once, and tell you

plainly that I want to speak to you about books; and about the way we read them, and could, or should read them. A grave subject, you will say; and a wide one! Yes; so wide that I shall make no effort to touch the compass of it. I will try only to bring before you a few simple thoughts about reading, which press themselves upon me every day more deeply, as I watch the course of the public mind with respect to our daily enlarging means of education, and the answeringly wider spreading, on the levels, of the irrigation of literature. It happens that I have practically some connexion with schools for different classes of youth; and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters, I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a "position



in life" takes above all other thoughts in the parents'—more especially in the mothers'—minds. "The education befitting such and such a *station in life*"—this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself: the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But an education "which shall keep a good coat "on my son's back ;—an education which "shall enable him to ring with confidence "the visitors' bell at double-belled doors ;— "education which shall result ultimately "in establishment of a double-belled door "to his own house ; in a word, which "shall lead to advancement in life." It never seems to occur to the parents that there may be an education which, in itself, *is* advancement in Life ;—that any other

than that may perhaps be advancement in Death;—and that this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way; while it is for no price, and by no favour, to be got, if they set about it in the wrong.

Indeed, among the ideas most prevalent and effective in the mind of this busiest of countries, I suppose the first—at least that which is confessed with the greatest frankness, and put forward as the fittest stimulus to youthful exertion—is this of “Advancement in life.” My main purpose this evening is to determine, with you, what this idea practically includes, and what it should include.

Practically, then, at present, “advancement in life” means becoming conspicuous in life;—obtaining a position which

shall be acknowledged by others to be respectable or honourable. We do not understand by this advancement, in general, the mere making of money, but the being known to have made it; not the accomplishment of any great aim, but the being seen to have accomplished it. In a word, we mean the gratification of our thirst for applause. That thirst, if the last infirmity of noble minds, is also the first infirmity of weak ones; and, on the whole, the strongest impulsive influence of average humanity: the greatest efforts of the race have always been traceable to the love of praise, as its greatest catastrophes to the love of pleasure.

I am not about to attack or defend this impulse. I want you only to feel how it lies at the root of effort; especially of all modern effort. It is the gratification