

**THE ETHICS OF THE DUST: TEN
LECTURES TO LITTLE
HOUSEWIVES ON THE ELEMENTS
OF CRYSTALLIZATION**

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The Ethics of the Dust: Ten Lectures to Little Housewives on the Elements of Crystallization by
John Ruskin

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TEN LECTURES

TO

LITTLE HOUSEWIVES

OR

THE ELEMENTS OF CRYSTALLIZATION.

BY

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FIFTH EDITION.

GEORGE ALLEN,
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1888.

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DEDICATION.



TO

THE REAL LITTLE HOUSEWIVES

WHOSE GENTLE LISTENING

AND THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONING

ENABLED THE WRITER TO WRITE THIS BOOK

IT IS DEDICATED

WITH HIS LOVE.



CHRISTMAS, 1865.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I HAVE seldom been more disappointed by the result of my best pains given to any of my books, than by the earnest request of my late publishers, after the opinion of the public had been taken on the 'Ethics of the Dust,' that I would "write no more in dialogue!" However, I bowed to public judgment in this matter at once, (knowing also my inventive powers to be of the feeblest); but in reprinting the book, (at the prevailing request of my kind friend, Mr. Henry Willett,) I would pray the readers whom it may at first offend by its disconnected method, to examine, nevertheless, with care, the passages in which the principal speaker sums the conclusions of any dialogue: for these summaries were written as introductions, for young people, to all that I have said

on the same matters in my larger books ; and on re-reading them, they satisfy me better, and seem to me calculated to be more generally useful, than anything else I have done of the kind.

The summary of the contents of the old book, beginning, " You may at least earnestly believe," at p. 211, is thus the clearest exposition I have ever yet given of the general conditions under which the Personal Creative Power manifests itself in the forms of matter ; and the analysis of heathen conceptions of Deity, beginning at p. 213, and closing at p. 225, not only prefaces, but very nearly supersedes, all that in more lengthy terms I have since asserted, or pleaded for, in 'Aratra Pentelici' and the 'Queen of the Air.'

And thus, however the book may fail in its intention of suggesting new occupations or interests to its younger readers, I think it worth reprinting, in the way I have also reprinted 'Unto this Last,'—page for page ; that the students of my more advanced works may be able to refer to these as the original documents of them ; of which the most essential in this book are these following.

I. The explanation of the baseness of the avaricious functions of the Lower Pthah, p. 52, with his beetle-gospel, p. 56, "that a nation can stand on its vices better than on its virtues," explains the main motive of all my books on Political Economy.

II. The examination of the connexion between stupidity and crime, pp. 83—91, anticipated all that I have had to urge in 'Fors Clavigera' against the commonly alleged excuse for public wickedness,—“They don't mean it—they don't know any better.”

III. The examination of the roots of Moral Power, pp. 142, 144, is a summary of what is afterwards developed with utmost care in my inaugural lecture at Oxford on the relation of Art to Morals; compare in that lecture, §§ 83—85, with the sentence in p. 143 of this book,—“Nothing is ever done so as really to please our Father, unless we would also have done it, though we had had no Father to know of it.”

This sentence, however, it must be observed, regards only the general conditions of action in the children of God, in consequence of which