



# Praeterita

*John Ruskin*

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## **Praeterita** John Ruskin

As a memoir elevated to the level of fine art, John Ruskin's *Praeterita* stands alongside *The Education of Henry Adams* and the confessions of Augustine, Rousseau, and Tolstoy. A luminous account of his childhood and youth, *Praeterita* is the last major work of the revolutionary nineteenth-century critic.

Written in the lucid intervals between the bouts of dementia that haunted his final years, *Praeterita* tells the story of Ruskin's early life—the formation of his taste and intellect through education, travels in Europe, and encounters with great works of art and artists. In abandoning the traditional linear mode of autobiography, Ruskin opened up the form and was an important influence on Proust. He also provided a vivid, detailed portrait of pre-Victorian and Victorian England that is as indispensable an account of its era as Samuel Pepys's diary is of England in the seventeenth century.

This edition of *Praeterita* is accompanied by *Dilecta*, Ruskin's own selection from his letters, diaries, and other writings. In these more private writings we get a fascinating glimpse of genius as it flickers in and out of madness. Together these two works illuminate the life and mind of a towering intellect who left an extraordinary mark on the history of aesthetics and culture, and on the very course of autobiography. With a new Introduction by Tim Hilton

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

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