THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

VOLUME 2

1834–1900

Edited by

J. R. de J. JACKSON

Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE
VOLUME 2, 1834–1900

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE SERIES

General Editor: B.C.Southam

The Critical Heritage series collects together a large body of criticism on major figures in literature. Each volume presents the contemporary responses to a particular writer, enabling the student to follow the formation of critical attitudes to the writer's work and its place within a literary tradition.

The carefully selected sources range from landmark essays in the history of criticism to fragments of contemporary opinion and little published documentary material, such as letters and diaries.

Significant pieces of criticism from later periods are also included in order to demonstrate fluctuations in reputation following the writer's death.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
VOLUME 2, 1834–1900

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

Edited by

J.R.DE J.JACKSON

London and New York

First Published in 1969

11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P4EE
&
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.

Compilation, introduction, notes and index © 1969 J.R.De J.Jackson

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

ISBN 0-415-13443-9 (Print Edition)
ISBN 0-203-19879-4 Master e-book ISBN
ISBN 0-203-19882-4 (Glassbook Format)

General Editor's Preface

The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS x
NOTE ON THE TEXT xi
INTRODUCTION 1
CHRONOLOGY 24

TABLE TALK (1835)

1 JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE in *Edinburgh Review* 1835 27
2 FRANCIS JEFFREY in *Edinburgh Review* 1835 55

GENERAL ESTIMATES (1836–42)

3 'D' in *London and Westminster Review* 1836 63
4 From an unsigned review in *Eclectic Review* 1837 65
5 JOHN STUART MILL in *London and Westminster Review* 1840 66
6 FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE in *The Kingdom of Christ; or, Hints to a Quaker* 1842 118

THEORY OF LIFE (1848)

7 JOHN ABRAHAM HERAUD in *Athenaeum* 1849 134

GENERAL ESTIMATES (1864–89)

8 MATTHEW ARNOLD from 'Joubert; or, a French Coleridge', 1864 141
9 ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, Prefatory Essay to his edition of *Christabel* 1875 145
10 JOHN TULLOCH in *Fortnightly Review* 1885 156
11 EDWARD DOWDEN in *Fortnightly Review* 1889 175

POETICAL WORKS (1893)

12 Unsigned review in *Athenaeum* 1893 187

LETTERS (1895)

13 Unsigned review, entitled 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge' in *Atlantic Monthly* 1895 198

SUPPLEMENT TO VOLUME 1

POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS (1796)

14 Unsigned notice in *English Review* 1796 227

ODE ON THE DEPARTING YEAR (1796)

15 Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor* 1797 230

POEMS, SECOND EDITION (1797)

16 Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor* 1797 233

FEARS IN SOLITUDE (1798)

17 Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor* 1798 237
18 Unsigned review in *Monthly Mirror* 1799 237
19 Review initialled 'λ' in *New London Review* 1799 238

LYRICAL BALLADS (1798)

20 Unsigned review in *Naval Chronicle* 1799 241

REMORSE (1813)

21 Unsigned review in *Country Magazine* 1813 243

CHRISTABEL, KUBLA KHAN, A VISION; THE PAINS OF SLEEP (1816)

22 CHARLES LAMB? in *The Times* 1816 246
23 Unsigned review in *Champion* 1816 251
24 Review, initialled T.O., in *Farrago* 1816 255
25 Unsigned review in *Augustan Review* 1816 260
26 Unsigned review in *Scourge and Satirist* 1816 268
27 Unsigned review in *British Lady's Magazine* 1816 278
28 Unsigned review in *Academic* 1821 281

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA (1817)

29 Unsigned review in *Literary Gazette* 1817 284

SIBYLLINE LEAVES (1817)

30 Review in [Gold's] *London Magazine* 1820 291

ZAPOLYA (1817)

31 Unsigned review in *Literary Gazette* 1817 297
32 Unsigned review in *Champion* 1817 303

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA TO VOLUME I 311
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 312
INDEX 313

Acknowledgments

The field of Coleridge studies has been exceptionally active during the past twenty years. In preparing this second volume I have been able to rely especially on the comprehensive survey of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writing about him provided by the Havens-Adams *Annotated Bibliography* and to add a Supplement of reviews previously overlooked and omitted from Volume 1. Donald Reiman's *The Romantics Reviewed* has also been drawn upon for reviews and for information about their authors. I am grateful to two reviewers of Volume 1, David V. Erdman and John Colmer, for suggestions and corrections that I have tried to follow. I wish to acknowledge my use of the explanatory notes of J.M.Robson on Mill and of R.H.Super on Arnold. A tip from Eric Rothstein enabled me to solve a puzzle that was proving obstinate. I had the great advantage of being able to talk over various aspects of the collection with H.J.Jackson while it was in progress.

The work was carried out at the British Library, the Library of the University of London, the Robarts Library of the University of Toronto, the E.J.Pratt Library of Victoria University, Toronto, and the Metro Library of Toronto; I have received exemplary and willing assistance from the librarians of each of these institutions. The Northrop Frye Centre of Victoria University, Toronto, provided practical support for the preparation of the typescript, and I am grateful to Jane Millgate and Michael Laine for agreeing to act as sponsors for the application.

Note on the text

Alterations to the materials presented in this volume have been kept to a minimum. Obvious printers' errors have been silently corrected, but irregularities of spelling that were once acceptable have not been interfered with. Lengthy quotations that are merely repetitive have been omitted, the omissions being indicated in each case; decorative capital letters at the opening of reviews, long 's's, titles and abbreviations have been made to conform to modern usage. Square brackets indicate editorial interventions.

The following abbreviated forms of reference have been used:

Coleridge the Talker: Richard W.Armour and Raymond F. Howes (eds), *Coleridge: the Talker: A Series of Contemporary Descriptions and Comments with a Critical Introduction* (New York and London 1969).

Haven: Richard and Josephine Haven, and Maurianne Adams (eds), *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Scholarship…1793–1899* (Boston, Mass. 1976).

Literary Remains: Henry Nelson Coleridge (ed.), *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London 1836–9), 4 vols.

PW: Ernest Hartley Coleridge (ed.), *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford 1912), 2 vols.

The Romantics Reviewed: Donald H.Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers* (New York and London 1972), 7 vols.

Introduction

I

The reception of a well-known author after his death generally goes through two phases. The first is one of summing up as critics begin to consider the literary career as a whole and try to assess it free of the pressure of the contemporary preoccupations that surrounded each work when it first appeared. In the second, readers make their preferences plain over a prolonged period of time and either confirm the critics' judgments or modify them. The reception considered in this way is largely a matter of assessment. Coleridge's reception differs from the usual pattern because so much of what he wrote and so much of what eventually came to be preferred remained unpublished when he died. To the conventional period of assessment was added what might be called a period of reidentification as wholly new works issued from the press and even old ones were presented in new forms. With Coleridge's 'Opus Maximum' and two volumes of his notebooks still awaiting publication, this process is still under way.

The new works consisted almost entirely of prose, and one of the most striking features of the change that took place in Coleridge's reputation between 1834 and 1900 was the development of the public perception of him as a thinker. To a certain extent the Victorian enthusiasm for Coleridge's prose may be thought of as an endorsement of opinions and ways of thinking that mattered particularly to them—a point that might be made about the reception of any author at any time. But Coleridge also has a claim to be seen as one of the makers of Victorian thought: first by way of the disciples who used to visit him in Highgate in his later years and who went on, inspired, as they testified, by his conversation, to write influentially on their own account; and later through the posthumous publication of a series of works that shared something of the character of the inspiring conversations.

At his death Coleridge was felt by the public and even by such sympathetic and well-informed friends as Wordsworth and Southey to be a poet whose talent had flowered when he was young and who had then squandered the rest of his life on unrealizable intellectual schemes. His poetic reputation was secure but somehow inadequate to the man. In the 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg' in 1835, Wordsworth included Coleridge in his list of the poets who had recently passed away:

> Nor has the rolling year twice measured
> From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
> Since every mortal power of Coleridge
> Was frozen at its marvellous source;
> The rapt One, of the godlike forehead, The heaven-
> eyed creature sleeps in earth….

To many readers the tribute must have seemed both personal and partial; by the end of the century it was merely Coleridge's due. In 1820 Shelley had regretted his eclipse as 'A cloud-encircled meteor of the air, /A hooded eagle among blinking owls'; in 1825 Hazlitt had felt able to say of him that 'All he had done of moment, he had done twenty years ago: since then he may be said to have lived on the sound of his own voice'.[1] In 1903 George Saintsbury could say in his *History of English Criticism* that out of the whole history of criticism 'there abide these three, Aristotle, Longinus, and Coleridge'.[2] The gulf between these judgments was made possible by the Victorian reappraisal.

II

Reviews of the 1834 *Poetical Works* that appeared in the years immediately following Coleridge's death had an obituary flavour about them. Some of them tried to make amends for previous neglect and almost all attempted to define what was distinctive about Coleridge's poetry. In doing so they followed the precedent set by H.N.Coleridge (see Vol. 1, No. 114) in turning from concentration on Coleridge's subject matter and opinions and from his breaches of literary decorum, and concentrating instead upon the general character of his imaginative power and upon the techniques with which he expressed it.

The reviews agreed that 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and 'Christabel' were his most significant poems; they differed from most modern commentaries in being satisfied to consider them both to be examples of the same skill, 'wild but exquisitely beautiful sports of his fancy'.[3] *Fraser's Magazine* called the 'Rime' 'that supernatural romance inspired with human interest, which eclipses all other attempts',[4] while the *Edinburgh Review* maintained that 'the supernatural imagery of… "Christabel" …is something of a peculiar and exquisite cast, which stands unrivalled in modern poetry'.[5] *Blackwood's Magazine* offered a distinction between the poems by remarking that '…Christabel is a fragment of the beautiful…and the Ancient Mariner a whole of the sublime',[6] but it too emphasized what they have in common when it claimed that 'there is one region in which Imagination has ever loved to walk—now in glimmer, and now in gloom—and now even in daylight—but it must be a nightlike day—where Coleridge surpasses all poets but Shakspeare—nor do we fear to say—where he equals Shakspeare. That region is the preternatural'.[7]

The ability to imagine what has never before been imagined may be what led the *North American Review* to say of the 1831 Philadelphia edition of Coleridge's *Poems* 'We know, in fact, no living writer who possesses so much originality'.[8] It was probably the strangeness of Coleridge's imaginings that led another reviewer to call his poetry 'tumultuous and violent' and to contrast it with Wordsworth's '*gentle* and *calm* observation'.[9]

The other quality that the reviewers stressed repeatedly is the musical quality of Coleridge's verse, especially as it is exhibited in these poems. Describing the 'Rime', *Fraser's Magazine* pointed to 'the sweetness of the diction and versification, with the splendid imagery every here and there introduced'.[10] The *Edinburgh Review* argues that 'Coleridge's own perception and power of melody was peculiar and incomparable' and states that 'The very sense aches with the perfect modulation, the almost over-wrought harmony of some portions of "Christabel", for example, and of the unfinished and incomprehensible lines entitled "Kubla Khan"'.[11]

Apart from this unusual but passing mention of 'Kubla Khan', there were two considerable and prescient departures from the criticism written when Coleridge was still alive. The first was the emphasis given by two of the reviewers to 'Dejection: An Ode', the *British Critic* quoting it in its entirety and saying that it 'combines

more of the writer's peculiarities than any other [poem]'.[12] The second is the following philosophical interpretation of the 'Rime' offered by the *North American Review:*

> Love is the central, sun-like principle of the moral universe. God is love. Every work in the wide creation is a symbol of that love. This is the great harmony of the whole. The mind of man is a portion of God's universe. It is the living link between it, and Him; —and as it parts with this heavenly principle, it wrenches itself away, by its own unworthiness, from the great whole. It becomes in discord with the spiritual world, as well as the natural; and thus dissevers itself from both. It crushes its best affections, and tears out the very nerve of its inner life. It sins against itself, and the divine law; and must be purified by its own fire. This is the key to the Ancient Mariner. This it is, which gives the whole tale its sublime grandeur. It lays bare the subterraneous springs of the human soul.[13]

The reviewer is satisfied to call Coleridge 'strictly a religious writer'.

III

So much of Coleridge's impact on his contemporaries when he was alive had been through personal contact, especially as a conversationalist at his Thursday evening gatherings in Highgate, that it was natural for those who knew him to want to share what they had enjoyed with a wider public. The impossibility of doing this adequately was recognized from the outset, but, as the editor of the two-volume *Table Talk,* his nephew and son-in-law Henry Nelson Coleridge, put it, '… [would fain hope that these pages will prove that all is not lost; —that something of the wisdom, the learning, and the eloquence of a great man's social converse has been snatched from forgetfulness, and endowed with a permanent shape for general use'.[14] The obvious precedent was Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* but H.N.Coleridge did not attempt Boswell's dramatic representation and recorded neither the occasions of Coleridge's remarks nor the names of those to whom he was speaking.[15] On the other hand he avoided the more recent precedent of William Hazlitt's *Conversations of Northcote,*[16] in trying to be faithful to what Coleridge actually said, even if he could not claim always to

use his very words. The result was a collection that was gratifyingly accessible to readers familiar with the demands of Coleridge's prose publications. The reaction of the *Dublin University Magazine* was representative: 'It is, in every respect, one of the most interesting books which we have ever happened to read, and, from the variety of its contents, one of the most difficult to review'.[17] The long and reflective review by J.H.Merivale in the *Edinburgh Review* (No. 1) gives a good sense of the contemporary impact of *Table Talk*.

But while the book is readable and lively it is by no means an anodyne collection. It records political and religious opinions that we now know from Coleridge's letters and notebooks were typical of his later years but which he had confined to the ears of sympathetic members of his own circle. It also included some unguarded comments on his contemporaries. Issued in the cold permanence of print with the evident approval of the editor, this material gave immediate offence. The *Eclectic Review,* for example, complained:

> The Editor of this strange medley has done his best to damage the memory of his principal. Saturated, himself, with the meanest prejudices, both political and ecclesiastical, he has exhibited his 'dear uncle and father-in-law' as a fiery, coarse, and 'one sided' declaimer against Whigs and Dissenters…[18]

While the *Eclectic* was content to blame the editor, the anonymous publication by the obviously naive Thomas Allsop of the *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S.T.Coleridge* in 1836 gave further publicity to a Coleridge who sometimes seemed to be bigoted and egotistical. The *Monthly Review* expressed a widespread opinion when it said 'There are statements, feelings, and opinions, in some of these Letters and Conversations, that we wish he had never put it into the power of anyone to publish'.[19] But Allsop's revelations were mild by comparison with the contents of Joseph Cottle's *Early Recollections, Chiefly Relating to the Late S.T.Coleridge During His Long Residence in Bristol,* published in two volumes in 1837 and 1839, a work that was devoted to showing the moral damage caused by opium addiction and that dwelt on the irregularities of Coleridge's early life. The book's currency was renewed by its reissue in a revised form in 1847, and the *Eclectic*

Review identifies two of its attractions. The first is the apparent candour of the biographer: 'It is most truly "a plain unvarnished tale". And it bears the striking peculiarity that a sincere and admiring *friend* has exhibited the dark and deplorable, as fully as the bright and laudable, parts of the character'.[20] The second is its characterization of Coleridge, which the *Eclectic* sums up by saying that 'regarded solely in the capacity of an author, he is (hitherto) one of the most remarkable instances in history, of the disproportion between splendid talents and success, in the ordinary sense of success, with the cultivated portion of the public'.[21] The *Edinburgh Review* made it quite plain that the fault lay with Coleridge rather than with his public when it asserted that the incompleteness of his work was the consequence of 'mere indolence and infirmity of purpose'.[22]

This image of Coleridge as a morally tarnished failure was an important element in his reputation throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and has persisted into the twentieth, but while he might have been allowed to join Byron and Shelley in the Romantic rogues' gallery his family and friends, especially those who had known him in his later years, came to his defence, mainly because they believed that he was being misrepresented, and partly perhaps because they recognized the importance of the claim to moral probity in most of his prose works. H.N.Coleridge, reviewing Cottle's book anonymously for the *Quarterly,* denounced it as 'this forty-years' deposit of Bristol garbage, smeared in the very idiocy of anecdote-mongering on a shapeless fragment, and a false name scratched in the fifth…'.[23]

IV

But although Coleridge's family members replied, both publicly and privately, to attacks on Coleridge's moral character, they, together with Coleridge's literary executor, Joseph Henry Green, laboured more effectually as editors to clear his name of the charge that he had wasted his talents. Coleridge himself had made it plain in his will that he hoped that the work that he and Green had been doing collaboratively would be brought to completion, and had expressed the opinion that his manuscript remains would repay publication in some form.[24] The appearance of *Table Talk* prompted a number of

reviewers to express a wish for more. Merivale in the *Edinburgh Review* is representative:

Any remains of such a man can hardly be without their value. We do not know in what state of forwardness any of the multifarious works which he had projected have been left; and we are well aware how difficult it would be for any hand but his own to arrange and classify his strange assortment of materials; insomuch, that if ever the philosophy of Coleridge is published in a complete form, it will be indebted, we suspect, more to the editor than the author. But we do not think that those who have the arrangement of his literary relics would be justified in withholding them on the score of imperfectness….[25]

By 1840, H.N.Coleridge had edited two new books, the *Literary Remains* in four volumes and *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit;* and new editions of *Lay Sermons, The Friend, Aids to Reflection,* and *On the Constitution of the Church and State* had appeared. Four more new titles were added between 1840 and 1853: *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare, Notes on English Divines, Notes, Theological, Political and Miscellaneous,* and the first edition of Coleridge's political journalism in book form, *Essays on His Own Times.* The effect of this activity was to place Coleridge before the public for the first time as a substantial writer of prose.

The new publications were reviewed individually as they appeared, usually with some comment on the way in which they modified Coleridge's reputation, but much the most important single contribution was John Stuart Mill's famous essay of 1840 in the *London and Westminster Review* (No. 5). This was originally a package review of all Coleridge's prose that had been published since his death, with the 1817 *Biographia Literaria* and James Gillman's *Memoirs of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* included by way of rounding out the picture. In a review of *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* in 1838, Mill had already stated that

There are two men recently deceased, to whom their country is indebted not only for the greater part of the important ideas which have been thrown into circulation among its thinking men in their time, but for a revolution in their general modes of thought and investigation…. These men are Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—the two great seminal minds of England in their age.[26]

In his review of Coleridge, Mill offered Bentham and Coleridge as the modern exemplars of two necessary but contrary tendencies in the history of human thought, filling the roles that he was to define in *On Liberty* in 1859 when he said that 'since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied'.[27] The effect of his lucid analysis, manifestly informed as it was by wide reading in the philosophical writing of the two preceding centuries, and all the more impressive for his admission that he himself belonged to the Benthamite way of thinking, was to make an apparently disinterested case for Coleridge as a major thinker for the first time. The reappearance of the essay in Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions* in 1859 made it more permanently available and added to it the weight of its author's increasingly formidable name.

V

Mill dealt even-handedly with the variety of Coleridge's intellectual contributions as well as with their prevailing character. For the Victorians, however, the religious writings had a special importance that is often overlooked anachronistically by twentieth-century readers. The only one of Coleridge's prose works that had much of a following during his lifetime was *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality, and Religion*. It appeared in 1825 and was reissued in 1831. An American edition with an influential introductory essay by James Marsh, President of the University of Vermont, was published in 1829. Three more editions appeared in 1836, 1839 and 1843. Apart from collections of his poetry, *Aids to Reflection* was the most frequently published of Coleridge's books in the nineteenth century.

With it should be associated his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, which was published posthumously in 1840. It had been written at about the same time as *Aids to Reflection* with the expectation for a while that both might be contained in a single volume, but Coleridge seems to have felt in the end that his contemporaries were not yet ready to face the German higher

criticism of the Bible and he retrieved it from his publisher. The early reactions were relatively muted. Serious opposition seems to have been expressed first in an essay called 'On Tendencies Towards the Subversion of Faith' in the *English Review* in which Coleridge's reasoning was denounced as leading to 'complete Infidelity'.[28] The storm broke, however, with the appearance of the second edition in 1849, which was given a long and hostile reception in the *English Review*.[29] But while Coleridge's religious writing finally began to receive the critical attention it had been denied when he was alive and he became identified as the leader of a recognizable school of thought, his impact on less professional and partisan readers was very considerable. F.D.Maurice expounded it majestically in the dedication to the second edition of his *The Kingdom of Christ* in 1842 (No. 6). Like Mill, Maurice provides a general survey of Coleridge's prose and he concentrates less on particular doctrines than on the spirit in which Coleridge approaches doctrines and on the skill with which he shares that spirit. Of *Aids to Reflection,* he says '…I have heard the simplest, most child-like men and women express an almost rapturous thankfulness for having been permitted to read this book, and so to understand their own hearts and the Bibles, and the connexion between the one and the other, more clearly', and he recommends it for 'its essentially practical character'.[30] This view persisted. Almost forty years later, John Tulloch (No. 10) was to call *Aids to Reflection* Coleridge's 'highest work' and say of *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* that it 'is eminently readable, terse and nervous, as well as eloquent in style. In none of his writings does Coleridge appear to better advantage, or touch a more elevating strain, rising at times into solemn music'.[31]

VI

While Coleridge's status as a thinker on both secular and religious matters had become very considerable by the middle of the century, the reputation as a critic that he was to attain in the twentieth century escaped him. His criticism was paid passing compliments. The *Dublin University Magazine,* for example, maintained that in *Biographia Literaria* 'there is more valuable criticism than in all the reviews in the language put together'; the *Monthly Review*

anticipated one modern view when it reported that 'it has been said that criticism with Coleridge was a great science, and that perhaps he is the first English critic, who has scientifically pursued it';[32] and the *Edinburgh Review* remarked that 'his critical tact was of the most exquisite character…' (see No. 1, 30). But while these opinions seem favourable enough, the fact is that, as Coleridge himself had complained, literary criticism was not felt to be a particularly important intellectual activity.

The failure to include *Biographia Literaria* among the works reprinted in the decade after Coleridge's death seems also to have been a result of the development of another aspect of Coleridge's reputation that was to have lasting consequences, the allegation that his work was improperly dependent on German sources. This contention had appeared in print as early as 1823, attributed to 'the English Opium-eater', Thomas De Quincey (see Vol. 1, No. 101) but was offered casually and humorously. In 1834, however, De Quincey embarked upon a series of biographical essays on Coleridge in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine,* in the first of which he compared Coleridge to the Earl of Ancaster, a rich man who could not resist the temptation to pocket other people's silver spoons and whose daughter had his valet search his pockets each day so that she could return the contents to their rightful owners.[33] Coleridge, according to De Quincey, was the intellectual equivalent of the Earl, stealing the thoughts of others, of which he had no need, and passing them off as his own.

The examples provided by De Quincey were of various importance. He claimed that Coleridge had claimed credit for the explanation that Pythagoras's admonition that one should abstain from beans meant that one should avoid public life. He pointed out that Coleridge's 'Hymn to Chamouni' was an expanded version of a German poem by Frederika Brun; he noted the unacknowledged use of some phrases from Milton in Coleridge's 'France: an Ode'; he showed that the germ of the story of the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' was to be found in Shelvocke; and he revealed that a substantial part of chapter xiii of *Biographia Literaria* was, 'from the first word to the last, …a *verbatim* translation from Schelling…'.[34] But in spite of Coleridge's failures to acknowledge his debts, De Quincey concludes his discussion on a positive note:

having read for thirty years in the same track as Coleridge…and having thus discovered a large variety of trivial thefts, I do, nevertheless, most heartily believe him to have been as entirely original in all his capital pretensions, as any one man that ever has existed; as Archimedes in ancient days, or as Shakspeare in modern.[35]

Quite apart from the accusation of plagiarism, De Quincey's essays are so fascinatingly written and so engagingly sympathetic to their subject that they have earned a permanent place as a description of Coleridge, but his family and friends took immediate alarm at them.[36] In the *British Magazine,* Julius Hare commented dismissively on each of De Quincey's specific examples.[37] H.N.Coleridge referred to them in his preface to *Table Talk* and quoted Hare approvingly and at length, giving reviewers of the book an occasion for discussing the question. John Anstey, in the *Dublin University Magazine,* gave the counterarguments further publicity.[38] Had Coleridge been no more in the public eye than, say, Charles Lamb, the matter might have been allowed to drop. But because he was beginning to be perceived as the leading figure in a movement, any hint of moral shortcomings was irresistible. The opposition added plagiarism to drug addiction and political apostasy, one of them expressing doubts about Coleridge's claim to have anticipated Schlegel's analysis of *Hamlet*.[39]

But the whole subject received a much more cogent presentation in an anonymous essay bluntly entitled 'The Plagiarisms of S.T.Coleridge' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1840. The author was James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64), a nephew of John Wilson, and soon to become Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at the University of St Andrew's.[40] Ferrier concentrates on *Biographia Literaria,* arguing that

it would be highly discreditable to the literature of the country, if any reprint of that work were allowed to go abroad, without embodying some accurate notice and admission of the very large and unacknowledged appropriations it contains from the writings of the great German philosopher Schelling.[41]

Ferrier is much more accurate than De Quincey, quoting chapter and verse; he concludes that 'we have the extraordinary number of nineteen full pages, copied almost *verbatim* from the works of the

German philosopher, without one distinct word of acknowledgment on the part of the transcriber…'.[42] To the borrowings from Schelling, Ferrier adds a substantial theft of history of philosophy in *Biographia Literaria* from Maass, Lecture 13 ('On Poesy and Art') in *Literary Remains* from Schelling, and two poems (the 'Homeric Hexameters' and 'To a Cataract') from Schiller and Stolberg.

Ferrier's essay made it impossible to pass over the debt to Schelling, but from the point of view of the family editors it raised the much more worrying spectre of unacknowledged borrowings lurking unrecognized among Coleridge's manuscript remains. For while Coleridge himself might reasonably be held responsible for what he himself published, even if extenuating circumstances may affect one's estimate of the blame, the responsibility for publishing what he left unpublished was necessarily the editors' and it has haunted their activities ever since. The problem had been recognized by H.N.Coleridge in his Preface to *Literary Remains* in 1836:

> In many of the books and papers, which have been used in the compilation of these volumes, passages from other writers, noted down by Mr Coleridge as in some way remarkable, were mixed up with his own comments on such passages, or with his reflections on other subjects, in a manner very embarrassing to the eye of a third person undertaking to select the original matter, after the lapse of several years.[43]

The effect of Ferrier's essay was to lay the blame on Coleridge himself. When the new edition of *Biographia Literaria* finally appeared in 1847, the detailed editorial defence included a presentation of the evidence in parallel texts so that readers could decide for themselves. By this method the editors could not be accused of improperly concealing anything; the presentation of the relevant parallel texts required 68 pages of the first volume. A similar procedure was followed in the second edition of *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* in 1849, to which J.H.Green provided an extensive introduction in which Coleridge's use of Lessing's 'Wolfenbüttel Fragments' was discussed and the relevant passages were quoted; when Sara Coleridge published her edition *of Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* also in 1849 the evidence for Coleridge's indebtedness to Schlegel (for Shakespearian material)

and to Schelling (in connection with the lecture 'On Poesy and Art') was set out fully in thirty-seven pages of notes. The family editors fulfilled what they felt was their obligation to Coleridge by doing their best to make the facts plain, believing that once that was done Coleridge's name would be cleared.

Two other publications contemporary with this effort seem to have taken the family editors and J.H.Green by surprise. The first of these was *Hints Towards the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life* in 1848. This contribution to biological theory is believed to have been written, shortly after Coleridge moved to Highgate, as a contribution to a medical paper being prepared by Gillman. Gillman did not complete his part and Coleridge's lay unrecognized among Gillman's papers and was passed on, apparently as Gillman's, to the editor, Seth Watson. The little book was not widely reviewed, but it was related usefully to the broader context of Coleridge's thought by J.A. Heraud in the *Athenaeum* (No. 7) and it was included in a package review of new scientific books in the *North American Review* in 1862. In each case it was represented as a serious contribution to modern science and it added weight to claims for Coleridge's intellectual range.

The second publication was more controversial. In 1856 John Payne Collier brought out an edition of what he claimed were the shorthand notes of Coleridge's 1811–12 series of lectures, under the title *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton*. These were of great interest both because they were relatively full notes that were not previously known to have been preserved and because the lecture series was one of Coleridge's earlier ones. They provided an important supplement to the *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* of 1849. Attention was distracted from them, however, by doubts that were raised about their genuineness. Collier had published selections from them, explaining their origin, in *Notes and Queries* in July and August of 1854, and a pamphlet by 'A Detective' —actually A.E.Brae—entitled *Literary Cookery with Reference to Matters Attributed to Coleridge and Shakespeare* that appeared in 1855 drew attention to various inconsistencies in Collier's account. These might quite easily have been cleared up, but the Coleridge question was overwhelmed by the controversy that broke out over Shakespearian materials, alleged emendations in the 'Perkins' Folio, that Collier had added to his book to make it a more substantial volume. Proof that the

Shakespearian emendations were modern fabrications, apparently by Collier himself, was provided by Brae in his anonymous *Collier, Coleridge, and Shakespeare* (1860) and by C.M.Ingleby in *A Complete View of the Shakespeare Controversy* (1861). Faith in the genuineness of the supposed Coleridge lectures evaporated for the time being.[44] The long-term effects on Coleridge's reputation were negligible, but the association of his name with yet another unsavoury literary quarrel was unfortunate.

VII

The long series of posthumous works edited by Coleridge's family may be said to have come to an end in 1853, following the death of Sara Coleridge the previous year. She had collaborated with her husband, H.N.Coleridge, at the outset, and at his death in 1843 had continued the work alone, assisted in her last years by her younger brother Derwent. Joseph Henry Green died in 1863 and the publication of his unfinished *Spiritual Philosophy, Founded on the Teaching of the Late S.T.Coleridge* (1865) was generally felt to be disappointing. The total amount of the posthumous publications had largely dispelled Coleridge's reputation for indolence and replaced it with a regret at his incapacity to finish what he had begun. His moral stature, however, so important to Victorian readers, remained open to question.

Coleridge's standing as a thinker had been articulated by the generation that followed him, by writers who had been born at the turn of the century. The generation that followed them naturally wished to test it for themselves. Matthew Arnold's essay on the French critic Joubert (No. 8) is a hostile example of such testing and at the same time a tacit acknowledgment of Coleridge's standing. Arnold praises Joubert by maintaining that although he resembles Coleridge in various superficial ways he is even more important; English readers who, it seems to be assumed, take Coleridge's centrality for granted, are being persuaded to turn to Joubert instead. But they are also being asked to question their faith in Coleridge. 'How little', Arnold asks, 'either of his poetry, or of his criticism, or his philosophy, can we expect permanently to stand!' And then, striking at the point that was most likely to introduce uneasiness, 'that which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus

of his continual effort, —not a moral effort, for he had no morals…'.

This view of Coleridge as a passing fad does not seem to have been widely shared. Critics continued to press his claims as poet, critic and philosopher; and even as a moral figure he began to emerge from behind the old cloud of opium addiction and plagiarism to seem like a heroic figure struggling effectively against terrible odds. The most important factor in this rehabilitation seems in fact to have been a corollary of the Victorian demand for morality; if only a moral person could be a moral writer, how could a moral writer not be a moral person? The moral importance of Coleridge's prose was stressed increasingly.

It is perhaps most impressively expounded in John Tulloch's 'Coleridge as Spiritual Thinker' in 1885 (No. 10), an essay that concentrates on the three works of Coleridge's later years to which least attention is paid nowadays, *Aids to Reflection, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* and *On the Constitution of the Church and State*. According to Tulloch, what is impressive about Coleridge's religious writings is not their specific doctrines but the way in which they are integrated into his life, a life made more aware by suffering and even failure. He calls Coleridge 'a great interpreter of spiritual facts—a student of spiritual life, quickened by a particularly vivid and painful experience'. In these terms Coleridge's addiction, although Tulloch never alludes to it explicitly, may be regarded as having had useful consequences for others. The part played by life in Coleridge's religious thinking, however, transcends the particularities of his individual experience; rather he is seen as arguing for the integration of faith with life as it is actually lived by everyone. In his hands, Christianity 'From being a mere traditional creed, with Anglican and Evangelical, and it may be added Unitarian alike, …became a living expression of the spiritual consciousness'. Tulloch emphasizes the way in which he manages to contemplate the most abstract spiritual issues while always bringing them to the bar of the familiar and the personal.

The really vital question is whether there is a divine root in man at all—a spiritual centre answering to a higher spiritual centre in the universe…. Coleridge…brought all theological problems back to this living centre, and showed how they diverged from it.

Tulloch's essay is of particular interest as testimony to a kind of value that many Victorian readers appear to have found in Coleridge's later prose and that is rarely acknowledged by modern readers.[45] His willingness to reappraise Coleridge's life in terms of its achievement also marked a significant shift. The appearance of three biographies of Coleridge between 1884 and 1893 gave the late Victorians an opportunity to accommodate the idea of Coleridge the man to their own requirements.

VIII

While the merits of Coleridge's prose were being debated, his poetry was not forgotten. Ten editions of it appeared between 1834 and 1870 and it was widely anthologized, but the fact that only two of the editions came out between 1850 and 1870, one in each decade, is symptomatic of the lack of new critical interest in it.[46] The importance of Swinburne's edition of *Christabel and the Lyrical and Imaginative Poems of S.T.Coleridge* in 1875 with its prefatory essay (No. 9) was that it made an emphatic case for Coleridge as a poet of unique qualities, one who deserved an important place in the literature of the world and not just in the poetry of the English Romantics. The essay, like Arnold's one on Joubert, betrays its author's awareness of breaking with orthodoxy, and also of praising a literary predecessor as a covert way of forwarding a literary cause. And even its most obvious difference from Arnold, that it is friendly to Coleridge rather than hostile, is double-edged; to accept Swinburne's Coleridge is in a very real sense to give up the thinker that the Victorians had come to respect.

Swinburne praises Coleridge for the musicality of his poetry and for its ethereal imagination. In doing so he feels obliged to dismiss from his estimate all but about half a dozen poems. He maintains that Coleridge's 'good work is the scantiest in quantity ever done by a man so famous in so long a life; and much of his work is bad'. Excepted from this indictment are 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', 'Christabel', and 'Kubla Khan', and, with reservations, 'France: an Ode', 'Glycine's Song' from *Zapolya,* and 'Dejection: an Ode'. In narrowing the body of Coleridge's significant poetry and insisting upon its being different in kind from the rest of his

verse, Swinburne was expressing a variant of a familiar opinion; its difference in his hands lay in the nature of the distinction that he perceived in the best poems, in his disregard of subject matter, and in his contemptuous dismissal of the rest of Coleridge's verse.[47]

Swinburne's claims for Coleridge are very great. Perhaps the most startling to the modern reader is his calling Wordsworth 'the lesser poet', 'for, great as he is, I at least cannot hold Wordsworth, though so much the stronger and more admirable man, equal to Coleridge as mere poet'. He made the meaning of this comparison plainer by an introductory distinction between 'Titans and Olympians':

Sometimes a supreme poet is both at once: such above all men is Aeschylus; so also Dante, Michel Angelo, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Hugo, are gods at once and giants; they have the lightning as well as the light of the world, and in heil they have command as in heaven; they can see in the night as by day. As godlike as these, even as the divinest of them, a poet such as Coleridge needs not the thews and organs of any Titan to make him greater.

Swinburne has some difficulty in expressing the essence of his claim for Coleridge's greatness, seeming satisfied to accept it as the wayward and inexplicable product of genius, but he comes closest to doing so in his advocacy of 'Kubla Khan' which he calls 'perhaps the most wonderful of all poems':

In reading it we seem rapt into that paradise revealed to Swedenborg, where music and colour and perfume were one, where you could hear the hues and see the harmonies of heaven. For absolute melody and splendour it were hardly rash to call it the first poem in the language. An exquisite instinct married to a subtle science of verse has made it the supreme model of music in our language, a model unapproachable except by Shelley. All the elements that compose the perfect form of English metre, as limbs and veins and features a beautiful body of man, were more familiar, more subject as it were, to this great poet than to any other.

Swinburne is content to point at what he wants us to admire and he does so effectively, and although he responds to the scenery of the poem he seems to be struck more by sound than sense. A reviewer of the 1893 edition of *The Poetical Works* in the *Athenaeum* (No. 11)

was much more analytical, focussing on what he calls Coleridge's 'power of fusing poetic sequences', in which he is said to have 'scarcely an equal in English poetry', and claiming that he was a master of 'artistic elaboration'. 'Coleridge's fragments are finer, from an artistic point of view', he says, 'than the completed poems of any one of his contemporaries'. The reviewer seems to agree with Swinburne that the cost of 'a witchery that has never been equalled in the English language' may have been a fastidiousness that made more workaday composition seem pointless. A case was being made for Coleridge as a poet's poet.

While this view may seem to be a product of recognizable late nineteenth-century literary trends, Coleridge's more familiar poetic role as an integral part of the Romantic movement was not being neglected. In a long essay on 'Coleridge as Poet' in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1889, for example, Edward Dowden (No. 11) acknowledged the difficulty of 'explaining' Coleridge's poetic gifts, but he turned the attention of his readers from technique and melody to the state of mind they must be supposed to express. He quoted approvingly the observation of D.G. Rossetti that 'the leading point about Coleridge's work is its human love'.[48] Dowden develops this view, making an interesting case for the conversation poems as worthy companion pieces for the preternatural poems, valuing both their element of sentimental domesticity and the faithful regionalism of their settings. The Coleridge praised by Dowden is one who would comfortably find a niche in Wordsworth's poetic milieu, a niche that he may still be said to occupy. At the same time, Dowden's portrait of Coleridge as an amiable and patriotic man of high principles is a striking illustration of the extent to which a moral rehabilitation had taken place.

IX

By the 18905 Coleridge's reputation had attained a kind of equilibrium. He was widely accepted as a major poet, a major thinker, and as a respectable if unfortunate man.[49] Before the end of the century, two more works appeared that were to unsettle the equilibrium again and that give a foretaste of the materials that have fuelled critical argument and occupied editors ever since.

The first of these was Ernest Hartley Coleridge's edition of *The Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* in 1895. An important anonymous review in the *Atlantic Monthly* (No. 13) took advantage of the opportunity to sum up Coleridge's standing and gave an excellent idea of the impact of the letters. The reviewer praised the way in which the letters had been selected and arranged so as to provide a 'continuous narrative' and, as a consequence, the equivalent of an autobiography. The unstudied informality of Coleridge's letters was judged to be especially attractive, and the immediacy of his expression made even such topics as his failed marriage and his opium addiction understandable and deserving of sympathy rather than blame. The prevailing attitude is observable in the reviewer's generalization: 'It is not, then, as a poet that Coleridge must be primarily or exclusively regarded. We understand him better if we think of him as a Dr. Johnson of the nineteenth century, but living in an ampler ether and breathing a diviner air'.[50] Coleridge figures in this account as a faithful old-fashioned Neoplatonist rather than as a Germanic Transcendentalist. He is perceived as a suitable partner for Wordsworth, whose attunement to nature he matches with a concomitant interest in 'humanity'. 'Poetry was but an incident in his career.' Even the dark years between Coleridge's return from Malta in 1806 and his withdrawal to Highgate in 1816 are given credit for their remarkable productivity.

The other publication that pointed the way towards a different Coleridge was *Anima Poetae,* Ernest Hartley Coleridge's edition, also in 1895, of selections from Coleridge's notebooks. It led an unsympathetic reviewer in the *Spectator* to dismiss Coleridge as 'a slightly damaged Guru or Eastern sage and mystic',[51] but Clarence Waterer's long essay in the *Westminster Review* gave some sense of its value, along with the letters, as source material for future biographers.[52] Waterer quoted extensively, following the chronological arrangement of the edition, and he drew attention to the way in which the privacy of the notebooks gives them a quality of intimacy and truthfulness that even the letters lack. 'As one lays it down', he says, 'one is struck with the astonishing and unrelaxing faculty of self-introspection, analysis, and original thought that the book displays'.[53]

In our own century selectivity has been discarded; the letters have multiplied from one volume to six and the notebooks from one to

five, giving us a more complicated and much less sunny Coleridge. Nineteenth-century readers continued to take an interest in him because he had addressed himself to issues that they increasingly came to feel were important; they deserve the credit for having taken the first steps towards recovering him for us. And if at times this work of recovery seems to border upon imaginative invention, it is nevertheless symptomatic of the enduring capacity of Coleridge's writing to stimulate his readers to think alongside him and to make his thoughts their own.

NOTES

1 Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Letter to Maria Gisborne', lines 207–8, *Poetical Works,* ed. Thomas Hutchinson (1905; rpt 1967), 362; first published in *Posthumous Poems* 1824; William Hazlitt, 'The Spirit of the Age', *The Complete Works,* ed. P.P.Howe (1930–4), xi, 30.
2 George Saintsbury, *History of English Criticism* (1903; rpt 1921), 340.
3 Unsigned review, *British Critic,* xvi (October 1834), 401. Attributed to Joseph Sortain (Haven, 84).
4 Unsigned article, 'Reminiscences of Coleridge, Biographical, Philosophical, Poetical, and Critical', *Fraser's Magazine,* x (October 1834), 392. Attributed to John Abraham Heraud (Haven, 82).
5 Unsigned review of *Table Talk, Edinburgh Review,* lxi (April 1835), 146. Attributed to John Herman Merivale (see No. 1).
6 Unsigned review, *Blackwood's Magazine,* xxxvi (October 1834), 566. By John Wilson (reprinted in his *Essays Critical and Imaginative*—1857–); this sympathetic essay differs sharply from his 1817 review *of Biographia Literaria* (see Vol. 1, No. 78) which he did not reprint.
7 ibid., 545.
8 Unsigned essay, 'Coleridge's Poems', *North American Review,* xxxix (October 1834), 440. Attributed to Robert Cassie Waterston 1812–93 (Haven, 84); although this review was published in October, after Coleridge's death, it was apparently written while he was still alive. Cf. the comment (in an unsigned review of *Table Talk* in *Dublin University Magazine,* vi–July 1835–, 1): 'Of our modern poets Coleridge is, in every respect, the most original…'.
9 *British Critic,* xvi (October 1834), 396.
10 *Fraser's Magazine,* x (October 1834), 393.
11 Unsigned review, *Edinburgh Review,* lxi (April 1835), 147.
12 *British Critic,* xvi (October 1834), 412, and *Blackwood's Magazine,* xxxvi (October 1834), 544 and 553–4.

13 Unsigned review, *North American Review,* xxxix (October 1834), 452–3.
14 *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1835), i, ix.
15 John Gibson Lockhart, writing anonymously in the *Quarterly Review,* liii (February 1835), 79–80, regretted this lack of context.
16 Published in book form in 1830 and as a series of magazine articles from 1826 to 1829.
17 Unsigned review, *Dublin University Magazine,* vi (July 1835), 1.
18 Unsigned review, *Eclectic Review,* 3rd series xiv (August 1835), 135–6. In the second edition of 1836, some of the offending matter was removed.
19 Unsigned review, *Monthly Review,* new series i (January 1836), 87.
20 Unsigned review, *Eclectic Review,* ii (August 1837), 138.
21 ibid., ii (August 1837), 163.
22 Unsigned review, *Edinburgh Review,* lxi (April 1835), 130.
23 *Quarterly Review,* lix (July 1837), 25. The first part of this review is *of Literary Remains* and has been attributed to John Gibson Lockhart (Haven, 101).
24 For the will see *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford 1956–71), vi, 998–1000.
25 (No. 1, 54). Cf. J.A.Heraud in *Fraser's Magazine,* xii (August 1835), 135, where the publication of the Greek grammar 'compiled by Mr. Coleridge out of an old printed one, with much original matter, for the use of one of his children when very young' is recommended. Cf. also Heraud's earlier appeal in *Fraser's Magazine,* x (October 1834), 401.
26 Unsigned review, *London and Westminster Review,* xxix (August 1838), 467–8. The polarization of philosophical types had been anticipated to some extent by Jeffrey (No. 2), but Mill was able to see the merits of both. Nor was he alone in rallying to the defence of Coleridge. William Bodham Donne, for example, in an unsigned review of Gillman's *Memoirs of the Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* in the *British and Foreign Review,* argues that 'At the very time that Coleridge was accused by his enemies, and even by his admirers, of wasting his extraordinary powers, he was laying solidly, if slowly, the great bases of a system, the principles of which are already visible in the current literature of the day' (viii–1839–425).
27 *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill,* ed. J.M.Robson *et al.* (Toronto and London 1963–91, xviii, 258.
28 *English Review,* x (December 1848), 416. The essay has been attributed to William Palmer (Charles Richard Sanders, *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement*—Durham, North Carolina 1942–239n).
29 Unsigned review, *English Review,* xii (December 1849), 247–71.

30 See pp. 125, 126 below.
31 See pp. 160, 168 below.
32 Unsigned review, *Dublin University Magazine,* vi (July 1835), 4—attributed to John Anstey (Haven, 87); unsigned review, *Monthly Review,* new series ii (June 1835), 255.
33 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine,* i (September 1834), 509–20; i (October 1834), 588–96; i (November 1834), 685–90; ii (January 1835), 3–10. The question of plagiarism is taken up more sympathetically by Merivale (No. 1, 46–7).
34 ibid., i (September 1834), 511.
35 ibid., i (September 1834), 512.
36 Wordsworth's reaction is typical. Writing to Coleridge's literary executor, he says: 'This notice is, in most points, relating to Mr C's personal *Character,* highly offensive, and utterly unworthy of a Person holding the rank of a Gentlemen in english society'. And he calls De Quincey's 'communications' 'injurious, unfeeling, and untrue' —*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth,* ed. Alan G.Hill *et al.* (Oxford 1967–), v, 740.
37 Unsigned essay, *British Magazine,* vii (January 1835), 18–22.
38 Unsigned review of *Table Talk, Dublin University Magazine,* vi (July and September 1835), 1–16 and 250–67. Attributed to Anstey (Haven, 87). Cf. Heraud in *Fraser's Magazine,* xii (May and August 1835), 124–6.
39 Samuel Carter Hall, in an unsigned review of *Literary Remains* in the *Examiner,* No. 1497, 9 October 1836, 646. Hall's authorship is revealed by his claim in the course of the review to have in his possession an annotated copy of Anderson's *British Poets;* for his ownership of this set and his rather unsatisfactory personal relations with Coleridge, see *Marginalia (CC),* i, 52.
40 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* xlvii (March 1840), 287–99. For the attribution see Haven, 111.
41 ibid., 287.
42 ibid., 296. Controversy over Coleridge's plagiarism in *Biographia Literaria* and elsewhere has continued ever since, new evidence being added from time to time. *Biographia Literaria (CC),* i, cxiv–cxxvii, sums up the evidence as far as that book is concerned; the case for Coleridge as a deliberate plagiarist is made in Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel* (1971).
43 *Literary Remains,* i, ix–x.
44 A full account of the controversy over Collier's shorthand reports may be found in R.A.Foakes (ed.), *Coleridge on Shakespeare: The Text of the Lectures of 1811–12* (1971), and a briefer one that concentrates on its bearing on modern choice of texts in R.A.Foakes (ed.), Samuel

Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808–1819: On Literature* (1987), i, 162–72.

45 A number of modern studies have drawn attention to it, however; see, for instance, James D.Boulger, *Coleridge as Religious Thinker* (1961), J.Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (1969) and Anthony John Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word* (1985).

46 These figures omit the 1852 edition of Coleridge's *Dramatic Works*.

47 The dismissal finds an echo in an unsigned review of the 1885 edition of *The Poetical Works* in the *Athenaeum,* 16 May 1885, 629: 'much that was written in the way of poetry by that rarely beautiful poet that is not poetry in any proper sense'. The Swinburnian taste is enshrined in Stopford Brooke's *The Golden Book of Coleridge* of 1895.

48 ibid., p. 176, below.

49 A memorial was unveiled in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in 1885

50 ibid., p. 206, below. An unsigned review in the *Edinburgh Review,* clxxxiii (January 1896), 99–128, stresses the vivacity of the letters and calls Coleridge 'the most interesting personality among the literary men of the first half of this century' (100)

51 Unsigned review, *Spectator,* 26 October 1895, No. 3513, 550.

52 Signed review, *Westminster Review,* cxlv (May 1896), 526–38.

53 ibid., 537.

Chronology

A list of the editions of books by Coleridge and of the major books about him published from 1834 to 1900:

1834 *Poetical Works* (3rd edition)
1835 *Specimens of the Table Talk*
1836 *Aids to Reflection* (3rd edition)
Letters, Conversations and Recollections (ed. T.Allsop)
Literary Remains (ed. H.N.Coleridge), Vols I and II
Poetical Works
Specimens of the Table Talk (2nd edition)
1837 *Aids to Reflection* (4th edition)
Joseph Cottle, *Early Recollections*
Friend (3rd edition)
Poetical Works
1838 James Gillman, *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* Vol. I
Literary Remains (ed. H.N.Coleridge), Vol. III
1839 *Aids to Reflection* (ed. H.N.Coleridge)
Literary Remains (ed. H.N.Coleridge), Vol. IV
On the Constitution of the Church and State (ed. H.N. Coleridge)
1840 *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (ed. H.N.Coleridge)
Poetical Works
1841 *Poetical Works*
1843 *Aids to Reflection*
1844 *Friend* (4th edition)
Poetical and Dramatic Works
Poems
1847 *Biographia Literaria* (ed. H.N. and S.Coleridge)
Joseph Cottle, *Reminiscences of…Coleridge and…Southey*
1848 *Aids to Reflection*
Hints towards the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory
of Life (ed. S.B.Watson)
Poems
1849 *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (2nd edition)
Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare (ed. S.Coleridge)

1850 *Essays on His Own Times* (ed. S.Coleridge)
Friend (5th edition)
1851 *Specimens of the Table Talk* (3rd edition)
1852 *Lay Sermons* (ed. D.Coleridge)
Poems (ed. D. and S.Coleridge)
Dramatic Works (ed. D.Coleridge)
1853 *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (3rd edition)
Notes on English Divines (ed. D.Coleridge)
Notes, Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous (ed. D. Coleridge)
1854 *Aids to Reflection* (ed. D.Coleridge)
1856 *Aids to Reflection*
Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton (ed. J.Payne Collier)
1858 *Letters, Conversations and Recollections* (ed. T.Allsop)
1863 *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (4th edition)
Friend (6th edition)
Poems (ed. D. and S.Coleridge)
1864 *Letters, Conversations and Recollections* (ed. T.Allsop)
1865 *Biographia Literaria* (Bohn edition)
Friend (Bohn edition)
Joseph Henry Green, *Spiritual Philosophy: Founded on the Teaching of…Coleridge*
1872 *Osorio*
Poetical Works (ed. W.M.Rossetti)
1873 *Aids to Reflection* (ed. T.Fenby)
1874 *Specimens of the Table Talk* (Routledge edition)
1877 *Poetical and Dramatic Works* (ed. R.H.Shepherd)
1880 *Poetical and Dramatic Works* (ed. R.H.Shepherd)
1883 *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere* (ed. T.Ashe)
1884 *Aids to Reflection and Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (Bohn edition)
H.D.Traill, *Coleridge*
Table Talk (ed. H.Morley)
Table Talk and Omniana (Bohn edition)
1885 *Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary* (ed. T.Ashe)
Poetical Works (ed. T.Ashe)
1887 Hall Caine, *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
1889 *Critical Annotations* (ed. W.F.Taylor)
1893 *Poetical Works* (ed. J.D.Campbell)

1894 James Dykes Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
1895 *Anima Poetae* (ed. E.H.Coleridge)
Letters (ed. E.H.Coleridge)
1896 James Dykes Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
1899 *Poetical Works* (ed. J.D.Campbell)

TABLE TALK

1835

1. John Herman Merivale in *Edinburgh Review*

1835

From *Edinburgh Review,* April, 1835, lxi, 129–53. Haven (90–1) attributes this unsigned review to Merivale (1779–1844). He was a barrister who wrote a number of pamphlets concerning legal reforms; he was also an accomplished classical scholar, a translator, and a minor poet. He had visited Coleridge in Highgate.

It is remarkable that so many distinguished poets appear, at an early period of their lives, to have abandoned for a time the career into which their genius had led them; and that a long interval of silence has frequently elapsed between their youthful efforts and the production of the great performances on which their fame chiefly rests. If the friends of Virgil, according to received tradition, had obeyed his dying injunctions, and destroyed the unfinished Æneid, the greatest of Latin poets would have been known to us only through a few juvenile essays in bucolic and descriptive poetry, differing very widely in character from the epic labour of his later days. If Milton had been surprised by death before the publication of his *Paradise Lost,* his name would only survive in the annals of English literature as that of an author of great early promise, who had deserted the paths of the Muses for political and religious controversy. Probably the truth is, that a strong poetical temperament, after giving way at first to its own irresistible impulses, subsides often into languor and inactivity, when the judgment, more tardy in its development, whispers how far all that has been already done falls short of that ideal model of

excellence which early aspirations had framed. True genius is ever distinguished by this peculiar craving and seeking after something more elevated than it has been able to attain, or than has been attained by others. It is also too easily discouraged by such disappointment; and either falls into inactivity, or turns its energies into a new direction. There is a precise point in the life of most writers of this higher class, at which the actual effort of composition ceases to be a pleasure, and becomes a toil; and this period generally coincides with that in which the mind becomes conscious of the imperfection of its own powers. With them, consequently, the poetical faculty appears after a time to become stationary; and whether it receives in after-life a fresh impulse or no, depends in great measure upon the course of external discipline into which the mind is thrown, and also upon its own powers of steadiness and concentration. If ever the second crop comes to maturity, it may realize far more than the first had promised. But with many it never comes to maturity at all. In some the engrossing occupations of a busy age, or an increased devotion to other and exclusive pursuits—in others, as was pre-eminently the case with the author from whose Conversations the work before us is compiled, mere indolence and infirmity of purpose—may have the effect of silencing for ever the voice which had once given birth to such bold and hopeful melody.

The name of Coleridge is amongst the most distinguished of those who, in our days, have obtained a wide and early celebrity; and he retained, for many years afterwards, a dubious reputation as a poet, moralist, and metaphysician, rather *in posse* than in actual and public notoriety. Beautiful as his early poetical essays were, and much as his readers have regretted that they are so few and so brief, yet all of them have the same purposeless and fragmentary character, which is equally perceptible in his prose compositions. In all, the writer appears, as was probably the case, to have had some distant and indistinct principle in view, which he sought to illustrate rather by the projection of dark hints and allusions, always approaching, but never wholly realizing the production of a distinct and finite idea. During all his life he had great and noble aims to compass. The science of psychology, its connexion with religion, poetry, and the social life of man, was the chief object of his contemplation, which he sought to reduce into a complete system. But he never appeared to advance beyond a few

steps in a straight direction towards his object. All his latter years were spent, for the most part, in that purposeless and hopeless exertion depicted in his own melancholy lines.—

> All nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair: The bees are stirring—birds upon the wing— And winter, slumbering in the open air, Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring. And I, the while, the sole unbusied thing, Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.
>
> Yet well I ken the haunts where amaranths blow— Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow: Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may! For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away: With lip unbrighten'd, wreathless brow, I stroll: And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul? Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve, And hope without an object cannot live.

It was in this habitually dejected frame of mind, and under the pressure of severe bodily infirmities, that he began to acquire that celebrity as a converser, or rather a discourser, which rendered him, during the latter years of his life, again an object of public curiosity and interest. The unfixed, excursive character of mind, which grew wearied and impatient under the trammels of composition, found scope enough for its wanderings in the freedom of unrestrained discussion. Those who were admitted to the small society in which he lived, spread every where the fame of his extraordinary fluency and variety of conversation, and that eccentric bias of mind which gave a peculiar flavour and zest even to the most ordinary topics, when illustrated by his fancy. Thus it became a sort of fashion, to attend occasionally at the evening reunions which took place at his retired dwelling. Many were attracted by his eloquent expositions of metaphysical theory; and discovered, or imagined that they discovered, some links of that connected system of philosophy which he was always announcing as about to be given to the world; but of which these Platonic fragments furnished the only specimen. Those who took less interest in these exalted speculations, or who candidly confessed their inability to comprehend them, found nevertheless much delight and instruction, when the course of his hurrying thoughts

led him to touch on subjects of more general attraction; —on history, literature (in which his critical tact was of the most exquisite character), or on a thousand topics of every day discussion. Conversation, in the ordinary sense of the word, was not to be met with in his company. His visitors came only for the purpose of hearing the dissertations of a lecturer. Mr Coleridge's manner, on first entering a room, previous to one of these exhibitions of his discursive genius, forcibly recalled to us the description given of Madame de Staël, by her biographer, Madame de Necker-Saussure. "Lorsque Madame de Staël entrait dans un salon, sa démarche était assez grave et solennelle: un peu de timidité l'obligeoit à recueillir sérieusement ses forces, quand elle allait attirer les regards. Et comme cette nuance d'embarras ne lui avait permis de rien distinguer d'abord, il semblait que son visage s'illuminaît à mesure qu'elle reconnaissait les personnes. On pouvait juger que tous les noms étaient inscrits chez elle avec bienveillance.' This expression of courteous benevolence of manner was peculiarly characteristic of him; and a few sentences of remark or enquiry, addressed as if casually to the youngest and least known of his guests, sufficed to place the visitor on a footing of unconscious self-confidence, and remove all the embarrassment which the presence of so singular and gifted a man was wont to create. But his hesitation was not produced, like hers, by the real or affected timidity of a person about to make a display. It was the *éblouissement* of a hermit, brought suddenly from his cell into a circle of devout admirers. 'There was no *mauvaise honte* in his manner,' says a powerful describer, 'but simple perplexity, and an apparent difficulty in recovering his position among daylight realities.' But the difficulty, from whatever source arising, soon vanished as he grew reconciled to his change of atmosphere. A few casual remarks on the occurrences or books of the day were, perhaps, hazarded by some member of the company; as soon as any of these had thrown his mind into its peculiar track, or connected itself by association with the course of ideas which had accumulated in his brain during the day, his mysterious grey eye seemed to light up, his countenance to expand into an expression of eagerness, as if labouring to communicate more than his utterance was able to embody; and the whole contents of his fancy were then poured out in one uninterrupted flow of eloquence, in which the transitions from one subject to another were scarcely

marked, even by a difference of tone or cadence. Those who were most frequently in his company, and most accustomed to his peculiarities of thought and expression, were seldom able to follow the tortuous ramifications of his discourse. It was amusing to see the field of listeners, if we may so express ourselves, successively distanced—some, unaccustomed to such exhibitions, thrown out at once, and content to gaze with a comic expression of mixed admiration and perplexity; —others maintaining their attention, and some few their argument, for a shorter or longer period, with occasional remarks dwindling at last to an inarticulate signification of assent, until their faculties were fairly bewildered by the strange succession of ideas thus forced upon them. But all were held alike by an inexplicable fascination of voice and manner, which seemed, while the display continued, to influence them as if they were in the presence of actual inspiration; although upon reflection they might not unfrequently conclude, that they had been deceived into imagining a transcendental meaning, where the speaker was in fact carried out of the sphere of meaning altogether by the force and rapidity of his own conceptions.

This was more particularly the case, when from any other of the miscellaneous subjects which his fertile fancy was wont to illustrate, or his reason to discuss, he retreated into his own favourite region—that half explored, but singularly attractive province, which lies on the intermediate confine between physiological science and metaphysical speculation; which connects the philosophy of matter with the philosophy of the spirit; and in which the phenomena of experience (whether observed in natural history, or in the common occurrences of life) are illustrated by the laws imposed *a priori* on the human mind. The theory of dreams and apparitions; the doctrines of phrenology, animal magnetism, and similar semi-medical questions; the singular forms in which enthusiasm or other disturbing causes has influenced the passive faculties of the mind; —all these topics, so attractive from their mysterious character, so much inviting and yet defying investigation, afforded a frequent exercise to his wandering fancy. On such subjects, and on the Platonic, or Kantian theory of the mind, to which they invariably led him, he would hold forth to his audience, mazed and half entranced, forgetting time, place, and company, in his eagerness to

unburden himself of the strange contents of his imagination, until his physical powers were exhausted, and his hearers dismissed at last through the ivory gate of his philosophical limbo.

Undoubtedly there were interspersed in Mr Coleridge's conversation numberless fragments of value as well as beauty, and which, from their independent excellence, well deserved to be recorded, and would lose little by being committed to writing. But still the general tone of his discourse was so tinctured, first with the peculiarities of his system of philosophy, and next with those of his singular life and character, that we should scarcely have expected to find, in volumes professing to give a report of his 'Table Talk,' any thing to satisfy the ideas which his occasional hearers might entertain of such a composition. We do not deny, that the editor of these volumes has acquitted himself in a manner highly creditable. We do not quarrel with the affectionate feelings of a relative and a disciple, although occasionally vented in unnecessary eulogy. And his notes display a variety of literary attainment, which render him well able to follow and to illustrate the excursions of his hero's oratory. But it appears to us, that he has sacrificed too much to the object of making his book easy and popular; by clearing the speaker's opinions from those peculiarities of thought and manner which so generally accompanied their delivery. He has endeavoured to reduce to the form of aphorisms the sayings of one of the most eloquent, but least concise and definite of reasoners; and has extracted in this manner, in unconnected fragments, much which was evidently wrapt up in the texture of some fine-spun but continuous theory. And many of these sentences, when thus presented in the form of ordinary language, are so little remarkable for point or originality, that the uninformed reader would be at a loss to conjecture the source of their utterer's reputation. In fact, the qualities which most attracted and captivated the attention of Mr Coleridge's hearers, were not such as would furnish matter for a compiler of his conversation. There was nothing dramatic in his mode of conveying instruction. He was fond of argument; but that sort of argument only in which he could display the vast resources of his own erratic talent. He overflowed far too much with metaphor and illustration, to be a disputant. He sought out, indeed, singular associates, and had a predilection for people of an extraordinary cast of opinion, especially if their sentiments widely differed from

his own; but we suspect that this was rather for the sake of conveying his own notions on their peculiar doctrines, than in order to confront them in logical controversy. These pages, like those of the 'Biographia Literaria,' contain some ludicrous anecdotes of his various essays in the way of discussion with Jews, infidels, and heretics of every description. 'He told me,' says the editor of these volumes, 'that he had for a long time been amusing himself with a clandestine attempt upon the faith of three or four persons whom he was in the habit of seeing occasionally. I think he was undermining, at the time he mentioned this to me, a Jew, a Swedenborgian, a Roman Catholic, and a New Jerusalemite, or by whatever name the members of that somewhat small, but very respectable, church, planted in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn Fields, delight to be known. He said he had made most way with the disciple of Swedenborg, who might be considered as a convert; that he had perplexed the Jew, and put the Roman Catholic into a bad humour; but that upon the New Jerusalemite he had made no more impression than if he had been arguing with the man in the moon.' It was odd to remark the contrast between the philosopher himself, with his magniloquent rhetoric and his unconscious simplicity of address, and the half-informed beings into whose company he was fond of throwing himself. It was something of the same propensity which made him at one time select the late Mr Irving [Edward Irving (1792–1834), fashionable preacher of the 1820s] as a favourite, —partly from his strange religious opinions, partly from his imitations of the old English divines, with whom Coleridge himself was so conversant. And although he appears to speak slightingly in these volumes of that unfortunate man, and to complain that he only visited the philosopher's retreat at Highgate for the purpose of picking up hints for sermons, he certainly felt at one time the blindest veneration for the preacher: witness the noble lines in which Irving is addressed in the 'Aids to Reflection.' But, in general, no one was less dependent on others for materials of conversation. Place, or company, seemed to make little or no difference to him. There was nothing of local or temporary peculiarity, no *apropos* or mere conversation of the day, in the circle in which he presided. He almost realized the character of his own imaginary hero of an intended romance —'a man who lived not in time at all, past, present, or future, but beside or collaterally.'

The editor has thus, we think, detracted somewhat from the interest of his work, by being rather too solicitous to render it fit for the perusal of that nondescript being, 'the general reader.' So large a portion of Coleridge's every-day thoughts and discourses was employed in developing his theory of metaphysics, that no record of his sayings can give a correct impression of the man in which it does not form a prominent feature. In the volumes before us, it is only introduced in a few insulated passages; and much of the philosopher's conversation, deprived of the spirit arising from its connexion with this topic, to which he sought to attach every thing, becomes a mere *caput mortuum*. What the system of philosophy may be found to contain, if ever thrown into a form for publication, we cannot anticipate; but we are inclined to suspect, that the author had never made any great progress in deducing ulterior results from his fundamental principle—the difference between reason and understanding— which he derived from Germany; and which, by illustrating and enforcing it in a thousand ways, he succeeded in establishing, in the minds of a large class of students, in opposition to the reigning system of Scottish metaphysics. 'Until you have mastered,' he says, in this work, 'the fundamental difference in kind between the reason and understanding, as faculties of the human mind, you cannot escape a thousand difficulties. It is pre-eminently the *Gradus ad Philosophiam*. '—Talent, lying in the understanding, is often inherited: genius, being the action of reason and imagination, rarely or never.' The reader will find striking, if not entirely satisfactory illustrations, of the different classes of minds in which these faculties are respectively exhibited, in the comparison between Plato and Aristotle (Vol. I. p. 182), Kepler and Newton (ib. p. 216), 'Pantagruel' and 'Panurge' (ib. p. 177). But to investigate these comparisons would lead us far beyond the bounds of our present purpose, and the work is chiefly filled with less recondite matter.

Many of these discourses relate to religious subjects, chiefly biblical criticism, and the history and peculiar doctrines of the Church of England. Of that Church Mr Coleridge was, during all the latter part of his life, a zealous advocate: but we are well convinced, from the tenor, both of his writings and conversation, that his attachment to her tenets and discipline was combined with a very unusual degree of candour, and freedom from sectarian prejudice. In fact, politically speaking, his reverence for a church

in the abstract, as an integral portion of the state, was a ruling principle in his scheme of social government. But with the supporters of a church in the narrow and empirical sense of the word, with tenets rigidly fixed by subscriptions and articles, we do not think he had any great sympathy. His strong antipathy to the political opponents of the Establishment did, we suspect, occasionally lead him into maintaining its cause with an energy which was not so much displayed when he argued dispassionately on its general and philosophical theory. We have heard him maintain, with an eloquence and a closeness of reasoning which we wish it were possible to transfer to our written report of his opinions, the position, that the revenues of the Church are, in fact, neither more nor less than a portion of the public property set apart for the mental and physical benefit of all, especially of the lower classes; that the mode of their application is in principle uncontrolled by any other law than the absolute good of the community; that all educated men whose line of study is such as to render their services available for the public benefit, including the whole body of the learned, are, in fact, the Clerisy,[1] to whose disposal these means are properly intrusted; and that there is no reason, for example, why the revenues of the Irish Church, if shown to be inapplicable for the present object to which they are devoted, should not serve to endow schools, or medical establishments, in remote districts, and thus turn at last to the general advantage of the people. We are quite aware that, in discussion with a Whig, such opinions as these would not easily have been elicited from him; —not that he was either insincere, or really inconsistent, but that his fear and dislike of those who appeared to him to be endangering the establishments of the country, led him to side with a party whose principles, when fully stated, were widely different from his own. To Catholicism he was strongly opposed, as fettering religious liberty; and to Unitarianism, as denying the elements of religious truth. But all sects between these two extremes were, in a religious sense, almost indifferent in his estimation. We refer, with the greater satisfaction, to his opinions respecting the controversies between Protestants, because there is at present growing up, in the bosom of the Anglican Church, a class of divines, the tendency of whose sentiments is to introduce a sort of modified Popery;—in whose minds the desire of unity in the Catholic Church works so strongly,

as nearly to supersede the old and liberal rule of faith for which Protestants have combated, in the field as well as the pulpit, ever since their separation from Rome. Such extreme opinions are not to be wondered at, in a country where perfect freedom of thought and argument must necessarily call into existence, and exaggerate by mutual opposition, those differences of doctrine which are founded, not on falsehood, but on that exclusive adherence to particular truths, which Pascal signalized as the principal cause of religious quarrels. Nor is there any real probability of such opinions gaining ground; arising, as they do, merely from the reaction produced by the prevalence of latitudinarian sentiments amongst others. But it is of some importance to show, that one whose high, and almost exaggerated, veneration for the Church, has been so widely cited, and who has had such extensive influence over the minds, especially of youthful and enthusiastic thinkers, differed thus far from many of his admirers and imitators, and entertained such temperate views on subjects regarded by them in a light distorted by enthusiasm. On this account, we quote his remarks on the favourite divine of that School, whose exquisite literary beauties, and high devotional feeling, no one could better appreciate than he.

Taylor's was a great and lovely mind; yet how much and injuriously was it perverted by his being a follower of Laud, and by his intensely popish feelings of church authority. His 'Liberty of Prophesying' is a work of wonderful eloquence and skill; but, if we believe the argument, what do we come to? Why, to nothing more or less than this, that—so much can be said for every opinion and sect, so impossible is it to settle any thing by reasoning or authority of scripture—we must appeal to some positive jurisdiction on earth, *ut sit finis controversiarum*. In fact, the whole book is the precise argument used by the papists, to induce men to admit the necessity of a supreme and infallible head of the church on earth. It is one of the works which pre-eminently gives countenance to the saying of Charles II. or James II., —I forget which, —'When you of the Church of England contend with the Catholics, you use the arguments of the Puritans; when you contend with the Puritans, you immediately adopt all the weapons of the Catholics.' Taylor never speaks with the slightest symptom of affection or respect of Luther, Calvin, or any other of the great reformers; at least, not in any of his learned works; but he *saints* every trumpery monk or friar, down to the very latest canonizations by the modern Popes. I fear you will

> think me harsh when I say, that I believe Taylor was, perhaps unconsciously, half a Socinian in heart. Such a strange inconsistency would not be impossible; the Romish church has produced many such devout Socinians. The cross of Christ is dimly seen in Taylor's works. Compare him, in this particular, with Donne, and you will feel the difference in a moment. —(Vol. I. p. 165.)

Such observations are not unworthy of attention, at a time when Jeremy Taylor appears to occupy the same post of honour on the *extreme right* of religious controversy, which is held by Jeremy Bentham on the *extreme left* in political discussion.

Biblical learning furnished Coleridge with many favourite subjects for the exercise of ingenuity; and, although not particularly tolerant towards those who take critical liberties with the sacred text, he was liberal, even to daring, in discussion and interpretation. In this respect, there could not be a better guide, a more encouraging monitor, to that class of students—and we believe there are many such—who are doubtful and perplexed, between the rigorous adherence to the letter and doctrines of plenary inspiration, which prevails among the orthodox in this country, and that freedom of critical judgment which, on the continent, appears to be attended with so much laxity of belief. With a mind deeply submissive to the mysteries of religion, he united a most fearless spirit of research, and never abandoned the only true canon of scriptural examination—that which pursues the truth without regard of consequences, and judges of every question simply by its evidence, undeterred by the contemplation of imaginary dangers to the good cause. We do not believe that his knowledge of Hebrew was extensive: his opinions on the Old Testament, therefore, are to be regarded as adopted rather on philosophical than strictly critical grounds. But he was very extensively conversant with the history and opinions of the Jews, both ancient and modern; and his remarks on the object and character of their divine government—on the language of Moses and the Prophets—and on the distinction between miraculous and providential interposition, as evinced in their history—appear to us acute and impressive. But he was sceptical as to the genuineness of great part of their scriptures, —especially the writings called by the name of Solomon, and the book of Daniel. In the New Testament, he attributed, as Luther had done, the Epistle to the

Hebrews to Apollos (Vol. I. p. 21); although he considered it as rightly admitted into the canon. Many other specimens of this line of criticism are scattered through these volumes, and all propounded in a learned and moderate spirit. And the following passage contains a summary of his opinions on the subject of *inspiration,* —a subject so harassing and perplexing to many a conscientious enquirer: —

There may be dictation, without inspiration; and inspiration, without dictation. They have been, and continue to be, grievously confounded. Balaam and his ass were the passive organs of dictation; but no one, I suppose, will venture to call either of these worthies inspired. It is my profound conviction that St. John and St. Paul were divinely inspired; but I totally disbelieve the dictation of any one word, sentence, or argument throughout their writings. Observe, there was revelation. All religion is revealed; *revealed* religion is, in my judgment, a mere pleonasm. Revelations of facts were undoubtedly made to the prophets; revelations of doctrines were as undoubtedly made to John and Paul; but is it not a mere matter of our very senses, that John and Paul each dealt with those revelations, expounded them, insisted on them, just exactly according to his own natural strength of intellect, habit of reasoning, moral, and even physical temperament? We receive the books ascribed to John and Paul as their books, on the judgment of men for whom no miraculous judgment is pretended; nay whom, in their admission and rejection of other books, we believe to have erred. Shall we give less credence to John and Paul themselves? Surely the heart and soul of every Christian give him sufficient assurance, that, in all things that concern him as a man, the words that he reads are spirit and truth, and could only proceed from Him who made both heart and soul. Understand the matter so, and all difficulty vanishes. You read without fear, lest your faith meet with some shock from a passage here and there, which you cannot reconcile with immediate dictation by the Holy Spirit of God, without an absurd violence offered to the text. You read the Bible as the best of all books, but still as a book; and make use of all the means and appliances which learning and skill, under the blessing of God, can afford towards rightly apprehending the general sense of it; not solicitous to find out doctrine in mere epistolary familiarity, or facts in clear *ad hominem* and *pro tempore* allusions to national traditions. — (Vol. II. pp. 30–32.)

As in religious, so in political speculation, it was his fate through life to embrace with ardour extreme opinions, first on one, and then on

the other side, of the great controversy of modern times; but always to support his own conclusions, whatever they were, by arguments which appeared suspicious, and excited distrust among his own partisans. Throughout life he was the sincerest of men; but instead of joining with others in the pursuit of what was practically expedient, he sought only after results which might attach themselves to his own ruling ideas on government and society. He wished to construct a state and a church on exalted principles of philosophy;—to build them up in practice, such as they existed in abstract conception, as the necessary conditions of perfect human society. When Mr Coleridge was an itinerant Lecturer at Birmingham and Bristol, or talking treason with Thelwall [John Thelwall (1764–1834), radical orator] on the hills of Nether Stowey, and when he poured forth those energetic Odes which, after their principles have long been disavowed, still please better and are more widely known than almost any other portion of his poetry; the real veiled object of his adoration, his imaginary Republic, was the same as when his pen was devoted to the daily defence of a Tory Ministry in the 'Morning Post,' and was known only for diatribes so fiercely warlike that they were supposed, not without some shadow of reason, to have had a real effect in exasperating national quarrels. Like most political visionaries, he either did not or would not see his own changes of opinion. In the long passages of self-justification which occur in so many of his works, he always treats his opponents as unable to comprehend or estimate his character; and never for a moment allows that his own versatility may have exposed him to such misunderstanding. In the 'Friend,' written at a period when he breathed fire and vengeance against all political reformers whatever, he reprints with much complacency, in order to prove his own consistency, one of his Jacobin lectures delivered at Bristol; in which the audience are addressed as 'sufficiently possessed of natural sense to despise the Priest, and of natural feeling, to hate the Oppressor!' In fact, he had through life no real party connexion. Conservative 'and Anglican' as he was in his latter days, he seemed to find more agreeable nourishment in the works of the old Commonwealth's men—of Milton, Sydney, and Harrington—than in those of any other class of political writers. And, consistently with his own eccentric turn of mind, he attached himself most exclusively to whatever was impracticable and visionary in their speculations. He loved the high aristocratic principle which they had undertaken the

fruitless task of marrying with democratic institutions. Like theirs, his reasonings were of too refined and metaphysical a nature to suit the comprehension of the multitude. But they deceived themselves in imagining that the multitude might, at least in practice, be brought to understand them; he, whom the experience of two additional centuries had only imbued with fear and distrust, held, that the multitude must be wholly excluded—not admitted, even as proselytes of the gate, to the mysteries of government. He altogether denied democracy as an active principle of the British Constitution; and had brought himself to the conclusion that the only true Commonwealth was one which experience warrants us in pronouncing impossible; —one where the people are wholly excluded from all active share in the management of their own interests, and yet exercise such influence from without as to cause those interests to be uniformly respected.

> 'It has never yet been seen,' he says, 'or clearly announced, that democracy, as such, is no proper element in the constitution of a state. The idea of a state is undoubtedly a government **ἐκ τῶν ἀϱιστῶν** ; an aristocracy. Democracy is the healthful life-blood which circulates through the veins and arteries, which supports the system, but which ought never to appear externally, and as the mere blood itself. A state, in idea, is the opposite of a church. A state regards classes, and not individuals: and it estimates classes, not by internal merit, but external accidents, as property, birth, &c. But a church does the reverse of all this; disregards all external accidents, and looks at men as individual persons, allowing no gradations of ranks, but such as greater or less wisdom, holiness, and learning ought to confer. A church is, therefore, in idea, the only pure democracy. The church, so considered, and the state exclusively of the church, constitute together the idea of a state in its largest sense.' — (Vol. I. p. 200.)

As he reverenced the church far more as a spiritual mother than a political ally, and neither possessed nor affected any of the *historical* feeling of loyalty towards kings and hereditary monarchy (see Vol. I. p. 198), so on this score also these old republicans gave him little or no offence.

Yet, at the same time, being philosophically a strict and stern theorist in politics, and practically desirous of the success of a party in the empire, and exceedingly subject to that nervous fear of change which distorts the principles of the wisest men ('in politics,' says he,

in one of his happiest aphorisms, 'what begins in fear usually ends in folly'), he was led by his opposite tendencies into contradictions, which are obvious enough in the work before us, and still more so when it is compared with former works of his own. For example, there is no principle more eloquently inculcated throughout his writings than the absolute sanctity of Truth, in political as well as individual morality. No favourite system, in his view, ought to be maintained, no defects palliated, by falsehood.

There is the love of the good for the good's sake, and the love of the truth for the truth's sake. I have known many, especially women, love the good for the good's sake; but very few indeed, and scarcely one woman, love the truth for the truth's sake. To see clearly that the love of the good and the true is ultimately identical, is given only to those who love both sincerely, and without any foreign ends. —(Vol. I. p. 247.)[2]

Yet the practical application of this high principle fails him, as soon as it is brought in collision with his reluctance to alter old institutions. Those who have confessed and exposed the admitted abuses of the constitution to the people, are accused of beckoning 'like Ham the accursed, with grinning faces, to a vulgar mob, to come and exult over the nakedness of a parent.' —(Vol. II. p. 11.) The unequivocal falsehoods and perversions of the old system of representation are gently termed 'accommodations, which the necessity of the case had worked out.' So again in the case of the Irish Church. We have said already, that no man was more fully aware of the monstrous practical fallacy of assuming that revenues destined, in the idea of government, for affording the people such moral or physical means of improvement as they cannot procure themselves, are so employed, when spent on the maintenance of an establishment political, not spiritual, among a population of strangers to its doctrines. Yet who ever inveighed with more vehement reprobation against those who have the boldness to propose a remedy, while at the same time he refuted those who deny the defect?

Dislike, moreover, towards the governing party in the British Empire (beginning with the advent of Mr Canning to power) seems to have produced in Coleridge somewhat of that querulous discontent with Government itself—that proneness to flatter the poor in their prejudices against law and the constitution of society,

which are so frequently discoverable in disappointed and gloomy politicians. There are passages in these volumes so inconsistent with the manlier and better views becoming an elevated mind, — so commonplace, moreover, so trivially false in morality, that we can only account them casual blotches, produced by an overflowing of political acrimony in the system. Take for instance the following passage on smuggling:

That legislation is iniquitous, which sets law in conflict with the common and unsophisticated feelings of our nature. If I were a clergyman in a smuggling town, I would *not* preach against smuggling. I would not be made a sort of clerical revenue officer. Let the Government which by absurd duties fosters smuggling, prevent it itself, if it can. How could I show my hearers the immorality of going twenty miles in a boat and honestly buying with their money a keg of brandy, except by a long deduction which they could not understand? But were I in a place where wrecking went on, see if I would preach on any thing else! — (Vol. I. p. 192.)

All duties are equally absurd in the eyes of the smuggler. It would be a singular rule of morality, which should make right or wrong depend on the correctness in political economy of the violated law. All taxation, all Government 'set law in conflict with the unsophisticated feelings of our nature.' He who resists the payment of direct taxes is not a whit the less the object of mistaken popular sympathy, than he who evades the payment of those which are indirect. Yet the first step in such resistance leads in one direction to rebellion, in another to murder. And what has religion done, but add her stern and uncompromising sanction to the holiness of law, independent of the moral nature of its precepts? The preacher who enforces individual purity and private honesty has an easy task: all will commend his advice, whether they follow it or no. Far more difficult is the duty of persuading men to abandon malpractices, which they justify by a convenient sophistry. It should be the great object of all, in whatever capacity, with whom the instruction of the people rests, to enforce the duty of subordination, not to their own wild principles of right and wrong, but to the essential Truth and Necessity which hold society together. They should show how infinitely the poor are indebted as well as the rich, whatever their flatterers may tell them, to the laws which alone prevent the cultivated earth from reassuming the garb of the wilderness; and

should endeavour, as far as possible, to extinguish that false morality, which in this country renders all, from the highest to the lowest, as careless of their positive duty to the state, as they are scrupulous in their private dealings with each other. Compare the feeble and sickly sophistry of our last extract, with the inspiration of Mr Coleridge's own better genius, in one of the most striking passages in our language.

Who dares struggle with an invisible combatant? with an enemy that exists, and makes us know its existence; but where it is, we ask in vain? No space contains it; time promises no control over it; it has no ears for my threats; it has no substance that my hands can grasp, or my weapons find vulnerable: it commands, and cannot be commanded; it acts, and is unsusceptible of any reaction; the more I strive to subdue it, the more am I compelled to think of it; and the more I think of it the more do I find it to possess a reality out of myself, and not to be a phantom of my own imagination; that all but the most abandoned men acknowledge its authority, and that the whole strength and majesty of my country are pledged to support it; and yet that for me its power is the same with that of my own permanent self, and that all the choice which is permitted to me, consists in having it for my guardian angel, or my avenging fiend! This is the spirit of law. (*The Friend,* Vol. I. p. 295.)

But all who are conversant with the writings of this distinguished individual, and still more those who have personally known him, and admired the meek and charitable spirit which usually guided his judgment on men's motives and actions; —all these, whether or no they partake in his political sympathies and aversions, will acknowledge, that no one ever entered that arena of exciting discussion with less malicious intentions, or left it with a more unruffled temper. All his readers will remember the 'apologetic preface' to the well-known ode, 'Fire, Famine and Slaughter,' in which, although we may smile at the poet's eagerness to justify himself from his former sins, in the eyes of his new associates, we recognise a sound and finely drawn distinction between the violent figurative language of a hearty disputant, and the cool, quiet malignity of a real enemy. And, as the 'letters four which formed the name' of Pitt seemed to his youthful eyes the symbols of all that deserved abhorrence, so in later times one or two other individuals of celebrity appeared to be constantly present to his imagination as the

root of all the evils, physical and moral, of the present generation; yet in speaking of them he never overstepped the delicate line between public hostility and personal abuse. He does himself great injustice in one unmeaning saying, unworthily recorded in these volumes. 'If an inscription be put upon my tomb, it may be that I was an enthusiastic lover of the church; and as enthusiastic a hater of those who have betrayed it, be they who they may!' Impersona-tions, not men, were the ideal objects of his enmity. He was easily led by impulse or prejudice; but most inaccessible to violent emotions of any kind, and especially of the malignant class; — partly from goodness of heart, partly from dreamy indolence of disposition. 'A long and attentive observation,' he says, in the introduction to one of his lay sermons, 'has convinced me that formerly men were worse than their principles; but that at present the principles are worse than the men.' Whether the aphorism be true or not, it strongly illustrates the author's real views of the political and social world.

A thinker, whose tastes and feelings were so much coloured by his extensive acquaintance with the wits and divines of former days—who regarded the present as an age of sciolists and experimentalists—could not be expected to pronounce very favourable judgments on the writers, orators, or statesmen of his own times. We have not found much valuable remark under this head, or, indeed, much of any kind, beyond slight and contemptuous notices of his principal contemporaries. If the world in some degree neglected the philosopher, he repaid its inattention by a very general scorn of the world and its opinion. He lived so much in the atmosphere of his own peculiar ideas, that we do not suppose there ever was a literary man of equal notoriety who was, in unfeigned truth, less solicitous of popularity. It chafed and harassed his natural indolence of disposition to exert himself in any way to obtain applause; and applause thus became at last a matter of indifference. Many of his criticisms on others appear to us incorrectly raised upon right foundations; that is, he seldom failed to hit the weak point of a character; but through exclusive attention to that weakness, and by adopting a peculiar canon for judging of the relative importance of different mental qualifications, his general estimate is frequently biassed, and very rarely such as the public would adopt along with him. His prejudices were lasting as well as rigorous. He seldom, for instance, rendered any credit, or even justice, to those who had been the objects of his political opposition in early life; although he had

himself long abandoned his old opinions, and adopted those against which he had contended. But his prejudices were not founded on politics only, although undoubtedly his strong sentiments and stronger fears on that subject tended to warp his judgment in some instances. Much less were they connected with religion: on that topic he was almost always candid with respect to men, even when intolerant of opinions. They were, as we have said, connected with his own solitary and eremitical habits of thinking. He rejected the vulgar *idols* of the *market* and the *tribe,* in order to fall down and worship his own *idols* of the *den,*[3] which his proper hands had erected. Burke is only mentioned, in these volumes, with general disparagement, as a shallow thinker. Canning, as a mere eloquent rhetorician, who 'flashed such a light around the constitution, that it was difficult to see the ruins of the fabric through it.' Mackintosh is spoken of as follows: —

Sir James Mackintosh is the king of the men of *talent*. He is a most elegant converser. How well I remember his giving breakfast to me and Sir Humphrey Davy, at that time an unknown young man, and our having a very spirited talk about Newton and Locke, and so forth! When Davy was gone, Mackintosh said to me 'That's a very extraordinary young man: but he is gone wrong on some points.' But Davy was at that time at least a man of genius; and I doubt if Mackintosh ever heartily appreciated an eminently original man. He is uncommonly powerful in his own line; but it is not the line of a first-rate man. After all his fluency and brilliant erudition, you can rarely carry off any thing worth preserving. You might not improperly write on his forehead 'Warehouse to let.' He always dealt too much in generalities for a lawyer. He is deficient in power in applying his principles to the points in debate. I remember Robert Smith had much more logical ability; but Smith aimed at conquest by any gladiatorial shift; whereas Mackintosh was uniformly candid in argument. I am speaking now from old recollections. —(Vol. I. p. 24.)

Here, perhaps, some weak points are pointed out; but not a word is said respecting many great qualities of Mackintosh's mind; particularly his inestimable equability of judgment, and that truly philosophical power, in which he surpassed all, even those who were in other respects his superiors, of viewing and calmly weighing both sides of a question, in politics, history, or morals, and stating arguments without deciding on them; —a quality so widely different

from Coleridge's own rapidity and dogmatism of judgment, as to have excited probably little corresponding sympathy.

Nor were Coleridge's observations on the lighter literature of his time in general favourable. He had little similarity of mind or taste with most of his fellow poets, except Wordsworth and Southey. With these he was closely allied in the relations of life, as well as in the course of his mental education and progress. Nor was it without reason that the public, in general, classed the three writers together, under the well-known title of the 'Lake School;' although they all, and Coleridge more especially, were in the habit of protesting against being joined under the same denomination. In fact, the only title to fame about which he seemed particularly anxious, was originality; and it was his undoubtedly in an eminent degree. If in that tempestuous period, when the exploding Revolution scattered its new-created store of feelings and ideas over the literary as well as the political world—when national genius was aroused from the indolent calm in which it had so long lain entranced—when

> The upper air burst into life,
> And an hundred fire-flags sheen,
> To and fro they were hurried about—

many of these brilliant meteors encountered, and became confounded together in their casual wanderings, no one could justly affirm that either borrowed its light from a companion. Coleridge learnt little from others, and wrought out the principles and elements of his composition, both in prose and poetry, from the stores of his own singular genius; although in details he was at times, like Lord Byron, an unconscionable plagiarist. The supernatural imagery of his 'Christabel,' for example, is something of a peculiar and exquisite cast, which stands unrivalled in modern poetry. By the side of the mysterious Geraldine, the familiar spirits of Scott and Byron seem as corporeal and robust, as the sturdy theatrical ghost which used to occupy the chair of Banquo at Macbeth's haunted feast. But the originality of the form of versification, first introduced to English readers by that poem, seems a little more questionable, although contended for by the admirers of the writer. Whether the first edition of Goëthe's Faust, published in 1790, could have been known to the author of 'Christabel' before his visit to Germany, (the first part of it having been written, according to himself, in 1797),

we do not know: probably the forthcoming account of his life will clear up all doubts on that point. If not, it is a curious coincidence that the two writers should have been each the first to produce, in his respective country, that singular metre now so fashionable, in which the verse is measured, not by syllables, but by cadences; and that both should have dedicated it to similar subjects of wild, unearthly interest. This would not be the only unacknowledged debt due from Coleridge to Goëthe. There is in the 'Friend' a splendid passage, describing the temptations of Luther in his cell at Wartburg, which, although more high wrought, more varied and animated, is entirely borrowed, in substance, from that scene in Faust where the doctor is introduced labouring on a translation of the New Testament. Such plagiarisms are, we fear, common enough throughout Coleridge's works. In some recent papers respecting him, published in one of the Monthly Magazines, the writer (one of the few to be found in England who is qualified to detect thefts from a store so little explored) asserts that whole passages in the ' Biographia Literaria ' are mere translations, without acknowledgment, from Schelling.

In one point, Coleridge was not unnaturally severe in his criticisms on modern poets—that utter neglect of harmony in versification, so characteristic of some of the greatest amongst them, who seem to have imagined that verses are only meant for the eye; or that, provided the requisite number of syllables is closed by the requisite rhyme, the ear has no right to demand any farther pleasure. Coleridge's own perception and power of melody was peculiar and incomparable. We think we have read somewhere of the nice critics in Roman Catholic theology, that they have a method of denoting the merits of preachers and writers by a scale of corresponding numbers: thus, fervency is noted by so many units, unction by so many, elegance, perspicuity, &c., in proportion. If any one were to construct such a scale for arranging the merits of our modern poets, whatever rank might be assigned to Coleridge in other respects, he ought to be placed far above the highest of his rivals as to the mechanical enchantments of versification. The charm of his rhythm was like the charm of his voice—inexplicable in its depth, its sweetness, its continuity. The very sense aches with the perfect modulation, the almost over-wrought harmony of some portions of 'Christabel,' for example; and of the unfinished, and incomprehensible lines, entitled 'Kubla Khan.' We do not know

whether so high a character will be extended by most readers to his blank verse. Unrelieved by the artificial strength of rhyme, this most difficult of all our metrical forms requires to be diversified by breaks and irregularities. That continued equability of flow, the 'linked sweetness' of Coleridge's long periods, with their prolix and involved succession of ideas, here becomes monotonous, and were it not for the shortness of his poems, would be wearisome. This remark, however, only applies to the descriptive poetry of the ' Sibylline Leaves.' In the drama, Coleridge's blank verse is bold, manly, and varied, although not so peculiarly his own in its excellencies and defects. In lyrical melody, Campbell, perhaps, is the only writer who can be put in competition with him for accuracy of metrical tact [Thomas Campbell (1777–1844)]. But Campbell's best compositions, besides being of a more artificial character, appear finished and complete in themselves; they satisfy the mind's ear, as a common tune, a regular succession of cadences, which forms a perfect whole, and excites no range of associations beyond itself. Coleridge's are like the long unmeasured tones of irregular melody, which we imagine in dreams, and to which some German composers have almost given reality; —beautiful in themselves, but still more so from calling up a thousand visionary images, not only carrying the spirit along with them, but giving it an impulse and a direction far beyond themselves, into realms full of imaginable, but inimitable sights and sounds of loveliness.

Some of the criticisms on earlier literature, interspersed throughout these volumes, are expressed with infinite taste and accuracy of perception. We have often seen cause to regret that this branch of composition did not occupy more of Coleridge's time and thoughts. Had his indolence permitted, he would have made an editor or a commentator of our chief British classics such as they never yet have found. His refined perception of beauty, and power of seizing the prevailing characteristics of the mind and style of an author, were almost unsurpassed; whilst his vast store of miscellaneous study would have furnished him with a fund of illustration to support a theory, or to enliven a subject. His most valuable critical dissertations are, like the other beauties of his writings, so imbedded in a farrago of unconnected matter that it is no easy task to disinter them. But his readers will recollect, that the distinction between fancy and imagination in poetry, now so generally recognised and admitted; the most complete and

satisfactory refutation of Wordsworth's poetical theory; and many other received doctrines of criticism, are all to be found first collected in the ' Biographia Literaria.'

Respecting his lectures on Shakspeare, delivered many years ago, but never published, considerable difference of opinion appears to prevail among those who have recently noticed his life and writings. While some maintain that their non-publication was one of the greatest losses recent literature has sustained, others affirm that they were total failures, —hastily compiled for the purpose of fulfilling his engagements with the subscribers, at a time when he was suffering under severe illness, and under the influence of that unfortunate indulgence to which so many years of his life were abandoned; —that they consisted of loose, trivial notes of his own, mixed up with reckless plagiarisms from others. His voice and manner, however attractive in company, were certainly not calculated to give external advantages to a lecture. The first was inexpressibly sweet, but wanted power and modulation for addressing an assembly; and the last was too inartificial and unformed. His thoughts too, ever returning back upon themselves, —diverging from their given point through a bewildering maze of illustrations and refinements only to come back again to some fixed idea round which he was ever irregularly revolving, —could scarcely have been disciplined into the order and steady march so necessary, where the object is to leave definite ideas impressed on the minds of an audience, assembled to learn, as well as wonder. But whatever their general success may have been, undoubtedly they must have contained many a striking thought and happy expression, which, for our own parts, we confess we would willingly have purchased by the loss of ten times their mass in the shape of metaphysical dreams, or political speculations. We have only room on the present occasion, for the following remarks on Othello: —

Othello must not be conceived as a negro, but as a high and chivalrous Moorish chief. Shakspeare learned the spirit of the character from the Spanish poetry which was prevalent in England in his time. [Surely this is a mistake.] Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his passion; I take it to be rather an agony, that the creature whom he had believed angelic, with whom he had garnered up his heart, and whom he could not help still loving, should be proved impure and worthless. It was the struggle *not* to love her. It was a moral indignation and regret that virtue should so fall.

'But yet the *pity* of it, Iago—O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!' In addition to this, his honour was concerned. Iago would not have succeeded but by hinting that his honour was compromised. There is no ferocity in Othello, his mind is majestic and composed. He deliberately determines to die; and speaks his last speech with a view of showing his attachment to the Venetian state, though it had superseded him.

Although 'the jealous Moor' has become a stock character, — the established representative of a particular passion on our stage and in our literature, —we incline to believe with Coleridge, that jealousy is not his passion; at least, if suspicion be a necessary part of jealousy. Jealousy is the state of mind in which suspicions respecting the safety of a man's dearest property, the affection, or the esteem of others, are nourished and brooded over; or, as a quality, it is a propensity to nourish such suspicions. The condition of despairing anguish and wrath, in which feelings, high wrought by previous affection, are placed, when the unworthiness of the beloved object is, or appears to be demonstrated, is another state of the soul, deserving of a different name. The author proceeds.

I have often told you that I do not think there is any jealousy, properly so called, in the character of Othello. There is no predisposition to suspicion, which I take to be an essential term in the definition of the word. Desdemona very truly told Emilia that he was not jealous, —that is, of a jealous habit; and he says so as truly of himself. Iago's suggestions, you see, are quite new to him. They do not correspond with any thing of a like nature previously in his mind. If Desdemona had in fact been guilty, no one would have thought of calling Othello's conduct that of a jealous man. He could not act otherwise than he did with the lights he had; whereas, jealousy can never be strictly right. See how utterly unlike Othello is to Leontes, in the Winter's Tale, or even to Leonatus, in Cymbeline. The jealousy of the first proceeds from an evident trifle, and something like hatred is mingled with it; and the conduct of Leonatus in accepting the wager, and exposing his wife to the trial, denotes a jealous temper already formed. (Vol. I. 67, 68.)

Yet with so exquisite a tact for the perception of literary beauties, and for explaining and developing the thoughts of others, Coleridge had very little acuteness in verbal criticism, or accurate taste in style: so at least we should be inclined to conclude from the attempts in

this line which are scattered here and there through these volumes. Nor is this deficiency inconsistent with what we know of the prevailing characteristics of his mind. He had little power of noticing and grasping individual objects. His imagination always wandered from details to general principles. The same want of observation which made him, as he says of himself, have a dim perception of the relation of place—so that, in remembering a man or a tree, he could not recollect where he had seen them—rendered him, in literary criticism, little apt to fix the precise sense or collocation of individual words and passages in his memory; and hence, probably, arose a want of fine perception in dealing with those words and passages, and remarking small peculiarities of style and sense. We do not cite this as a defect of importance. Few men of genius have been good verbal critics; and those who have been so (Porson for example) [Richard Porson (1759–1808), regius professor of Greek at Cambridge], have but misplaced and wasted their genius on very trifling subjects. Nor should we mention it at all, were it not that the emendations suggested by Coleridge, in conversation, on the received text of authors, appear to us singularly unhappy. The following two are from Shakspeare: —

I have no doubt that, instead of 'the twinn'd stones upon the number'd beach' in Cymbeline, it ought to be read thus, 'the *grimed* stones upon the *umber'd* beach.'

Grimed stones suggests an idea neither agreeable nor true. The first impression made on the eye by the appearance of the rolled pebbles on the sea-shore is that of cleanliness and polish. Twinn'd stones signifies, we apprehend, only 'similar as twins to each other.' Umber'd does not bear, in Shakspeare, the meaning *brown,* which is evidently here intended. It only occurs in one passage: —

Each battle views the others' *umber'd* face;

that is, its face seen in shadow, or rather in *chiaroscuro,* by the doubtful light of the nightly illumination.

So, in Henry V., instead of

'His mountain (or mounting) sire on mountains standing', it ought to be read 'his monarch sire' —that is 'Edward the Third'.

We leave it to any reader of Shakspeare and his contemporaries, whether 'monarch-sire' be not a phrase entirely of the most approved modern art.

I confess I doubt the Homeric genuineness of **δακρυόεν γελάσασα**. It sounds to me much more like a prettiness of Bion and Moschus. [*Iliad,* BOOK vi, I. 484: 'Smiled through tears'.]

Any antithesis merely metaphysical, which sets in opposition, not visible effects or qualities, but visible with purely imaginary, or imaginary with each other, we should consider un-Homeric. Such a figure, which the Greeks would have termed an *Oxymoron,* and the Italians a *Concetto,* is clearly inconsistent with the objective character of early poetry. But the phrase 'smiling in tears,' only represents a natural appearance, which may be observed on the face of any woman or any child: no fanciful antithesis, but a real picture. We see no reason why Homer, or any one of the Homeridæ, may not have remarked and portrayed it, long before more artificial poets tortured it into point and epigram. We must observe, *en passant,* that Coleridge was a firm believer in the Wolfian theory; and contended that there was no more reason for ascribing the Iliad to a single composer, than the Scottish ballads, or romances of the Cid.

I certainly understand the **τι ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ γυναι** ['Woman, what have I to do with thee?'], in the second chapter of St John's Gospel, as having *aliquid increpationis* [something of a rebuke] in it—a mild reproof from Jesus to Mary for interfering in his ministerial acts, by requests on her own account. I do not think that was ever used by child to parent as a common mode of address; between husband and wife it was; but I cannot think **μῆτερ** that and **γύναι** ['mother' and 'woman'] were equivalent terms in the mouth of a son, speaking to his mother.

We are not aware either of any passage in which is so used. But it is, nevertheless, employed by inferiors to superiors; — by the chorus of Phrygian women, both in the Hecuba and Andromache of Euripides, in addressing their captive princesses. It seems occasionally to imply somewhat not of courtesy only, but even of reverence. A Roman Catholic, therefore, might easily meet on critical grounds this objection to the sacred character of the Virgin.

There are some other marks of carelessness, or more probably of inconsistency and loosely expressed sentiments, in the remarks on classical subjects contained in these volumes. How, for example, are we to reconcile the following *dicta* on a question which has given much occasion of dispute to Platonists and Anti-Platonists?

Negatively, there may be more of the philosophy of Socrates in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon than in Plato; that is, there is less of what does not belong to Socrates; but the general spirit of, and impression left by Plato, are more Socratic.

Plato's works are logical exercises for the mind. Little that is positive is advanced in them. Socrates may be fairly represented by Plato in the more moral parts; but in all the metaphysical disquisitions it is Pythagoras. Xenophon's representation of his master is quite different. Socrates, as such, was only a poetical character to Plato, who worked upon his own ground.

Unquestionably there never were minds more distinct, in the whole tenor of their composition, and practical tendency of their ideas, than those of Plato and Socrates. The same accidental causes made Plato first a disciple of the moral philosopher, and then, in name, a commentator on his ethical precepts, which made converts to the religion of Jesus among the learned of Antioch and Alexandria, and raised the visionary edifice of Gnosticism on the real foundations laid by the divine author of Christianity. Even Coleridge, Platonist as he was, must have been well aware how widely different were the methods and objects of the two philosophers. We conclude, therefore, that the first of these oracles was delivered in a hasty moment of argument, as it is clearly inconsistent with those which follow.

In conclusion, we must find fault with the editor, while we acknowledge ourselves indebted to his care and judgment in many respects, for filling his pages too much with commonplace remarks, which are so very trivial that they cannot be said to derive any additional value even when stamped with the token of a man of genius. He should have been on his guard also against Coleridge's inveterate tendency to pillage from himself and from others. Even in these volumes the repetitions are numerous; and many of the most pointed sayings are taken, with little variation, either from

Coleridge's printed works, or from other books. He should not have relied, moreover, on the philosopher's story-telling powers; inasmuch as living in perfect seclusion, it was impossible for him to know whether the anecdotes which he was fond of recounting were or were not public property. The story of the King and John Kemble, for example (Vol. I. p. 4), which is introduced as a confidential communication to the narrator from his friend 'dear Charles Mathews,' [comic actor and mimic (1776–1835)] is one, if we mistake not, which the latter has long been in the habit of imparting to large assemblies of friends at the Adelphi. These, and similar defects of execution, seem chiefly to arise out of a desire to make of the author of these conversations a sort of general oracle; —a compound of every thing that he was, with much that it was impossible for him, consistently with his nature, to be. He was not a man of the world; he was not a popular writer, because he never could describe superficial things in an intelligible and attractive manner; he was not deeply or critically learned, although a scholar; he was not a clear, although a forcible, logician. But he was gifted with a deep insight into the connexion which subsists between the material and the spiritual world; he had sounded the depths of metaphysical enquiry with an original and daring vigour; and, perhaps, wanted only steadiness and industry to have founded in England a new school of psychological science. Above all, religion and morality ever found in him a firm and uncompromising supporter, and yet one who brought to discussion a spirit of courtesy and catholic charity at once amiable and dignified. Any remains of such a man can hardly be without their value. We do not know in what state of forwardness any of the multifarious works which he had projected have been left; and we are well aware how difficult it would be for any hand but his own to arrange and classify his strange assortment of materials; insomuch, that if ever the philosophy of Coleridge is published in a complete form, it will be indebted, we suspect, more to the editor than the author. But we do not think that those who have the arrangement of his literary relics would be justified in withholding them on the score of imperfectness: no published work of Coleridge, during his lifetime, was any thing more than an incoherent collection of fragments; yet in all there is a vein of rich and genuine metal traversing the irregular matrix; and where that exists, the rudest mass will well repay the labour of its extraction from the mine.

NOTES

1 'There have been three silent revolutions in England, —first, when the professions fell off from the Church; secondly, when literature fell off from the professions; and, thirdly, when the press fell off from literature.' —Vol. II. p. 42.

2 There are sundry odd sayings in these volumes respecting love and women, which seem dictated half by gallantry and half by masculine contemptuousness. The following is more profound. 'The desire of the man is for woman; but the desire of the woman is rarely other than for the desire of the man.' But it is not Coleridge's. It is far better expressed by Swift; and he, again, says he had it from some lady of quality and intrigue, we forget who. Such women are, after all, the best judges of human nature.

Swift himself is characterised by Coleridge as 'anima Rabelaisii habitans in sicco,' the soul of Rabelais inhabiting in a dry place.

3 Bacon, *Nov. Organ, Lib. I.*

2. Francis Jeffrey in *Edinburgh Review*

1835

Edinburgh Review, October, 1835, lxii, 242–8. The unsigned review of *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh* (1835) from which this excerpt is taken was later included in Jeffrey's *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review* (1844). For Jeffrey's previous clashes with Coleridge, see Volume I. Mackintosh (1765–1832), an influential philosophical and political writer, was one of the most brilliant talkers of the age; he and Coleridge had met one another in 1797.

In the 'Table-Talk' of the late Mr Coleridge, we find these words, 'I doubt if Mackintosh ever heartily appreciated an eminently original man. After all his fluency and brilliant erudition, you can

rarely carry off any thing worth preserving. You might not improperly write upon his forehead, "Warehouse to let."' We wish to speak tenderly of a man of genius, and we believe of amiable dispositions, who has been so recently removed from his friends and admirers. But so portentous a misjudgment as this, and coming from such a quarter, cannot be passed over without notice. If Sir James Mackintosh had any talent more conspicuous and indisputable than another, it was that of appreciating the merits of eminent and original men. His great learning and singular soundness of judgment enabled him to do this truly; while his kindness of nature, his zeal for human happiness, and his perfect freedom from prejudice or vanity, prompted him, above most other men, to do it heartily. As a proof, we would merely refer our readers to his admirable character of Lord Bacon in this Journal (see No. 53, vol. xxvii.) And then, as to his being a person from whose conversation little could be carried away, why the most characteristic and remarkable thing about it, was that the whole of it might be carried away—it was so lucid, precise, and brilliantly perspicuous! The joke of the 'Warehouse to let' is not, we confess, quite level to our capacities. It can scarcely mean (though that is the most obvious sense) that the head was empty—as that is inconsistent with the rest even of this splenetic delineation. If it was intended to insinuate that it was ready for the indiscriminate reception of any thing which any one might choose to put into it, there could not be a more gross misconception; as we have no doubt Mr Coleridge must often have sufficiently experienced. And by whom is this discovery, that Mackintosh's conversation presented nothing that could be carried away, thus confidently announced? Why, by the very individual against whose own oracular and interminable talk the same complaint has been made, by friends and by foes, and with an unanimity unprecedented, for the last forty years. The admiring, or rather idolizing, nephew, who has lately put forth this hopeful specimen of his relics, has recorded in the preface, that 'his conversation at all times required attention; and that the demand on the intellect of the hearer was often very great; and that, when he got into his "huge circuit" and large illustrations, most people had lost him, and naturally enough supposed that he had lost himself.' Nay, speaking to this very point, of the ease or difficulty of carrying away any definite notions from what he said, the partial kinsman is pleased to inform

us, that, with all his familiarity with the inspired style of his relative, he himself has often gone away, after listening to him for several delightful hours, with divers masses of reasoning in his head, but without being able to perceive what connexion they had with each other. 'In such cases,' he adds, 'I have mused, *sometimes even for days afterwards*, upon the words, till at length, spontaneously as it were, the fire would kindle,' &c. &c. And this is the person who is pleased to denounce Sir James Mackintosh as an ordinary man; and especially to object to his conversation, that, though brilliant and fluent, there was rarely any thing in it which could be carried away!

An attack so unjust and so arrogant leads naturally to comparisons, which it could be easy to follow out to the signal discomfiture of the party attacking. But without going beyond what is thus forced upon our notice, we shall only say, that nothing could possibly set the work before us in so favourable a point of view as a comparison between it and the volumes of 'Table Talk,' to which we have already made reference—unless, perhaps, it were the contrast of the two minds which are respectively portrayed in these publications.

In these memorials of Sir James Mackintosh we trace throughout, the workings of a powerful and unclouded intellect, nourished by wholesome learning, raised and instructed by fearless though reverent questionings of the sages of other times (which is the permitted Necromancy of the wise), exercised by free discussion with the most distinguished among the living, and made acquainted with its own strength and weakness, not only by a constant intercourse with other powerful minds, but by mixing, with energy and deliberation, in practical business and affairs; and here pouring itself out in a delightful miscellany of elegant criticism, original speculation, and profound practical suggestions on politics, religion, history, and all the greater and the lesser duties, the arts and the elegancies of life—all expressed with a beautiful clearness and tempered dignity—breathing the purest spirit of good-will to mankind—and brightened not merely by an ardent hope, but an assured faith in their constant advancement in freedom, intelligence, and virtue.

On all these points, the ' Table Talk ' of his poetical contemporary appears to us to present a most mortifying contrast; and to render back merely the image of a moody mind, incapable of mastering its

own imaginings, and constantly seduced by them, or by a misdirected ambition, to attempt impracticable things—naturally attracted by dim paradoxes rather than lucid truth, and preferring, for the most part, the obscure and neglected parts of learning to those that are useful and clear—marching, in short, at all times, under the exclusive guidance of the Pillar of Smoke—and, like the body of its original followers, wandering all his days in the desert, without ever coming in sight of the promised land.

Consulting little at any time with any thing but his own prejudices and fancies, he seems, in his later days, to have withdrawn altogether from the correction of equal minds, and to have nourished the assurance of his own infallibility, by delivering mystical oracles from his cloudy shrine, all day long, to a small set of disciples, from whom neither question nor interruption was allowed. The result of this necessarily was, an exacerbation of all the morbid tendencies of the mind, a daily increasing ignorance of the course of opinions and affairs in the world, and a proportional confidence in his own dogmas and dreams, which must have been shaken, at least, if not entirely subverted, by a closer contact with the general mass of intelligence. Unfortunately this unhealthful training (peculiarly unhealthful for such a constitution) produced not merely a great eruption of ridiculous blunders and pitiable prejudices, but seems at last to have brought on a confirmed and thoroughly diseased habit of uncharitableness, and misanthropic anticipations of corruption and misery throughout the civilized world. The indiscreet revelations of the work to which we have alluded have now brought to light instances, not only of intemperate abuse of men of the highest intellect and most unquestioned purity, but such predictions of evil from what the rest of the world has been contented to receive as improvements, and such suggestions of intolerant and tyrannical remedies, as no man would believe could proceed from a cultivated intellect of the present age; if the early history of this particular intellect had not indicated an inherent aptitude for all extreme opinions, and prepared us for the usual conversion of one extreme into another.

And it is worth while to mark here also, and in respect merely of consistency and ultimate authority with mankind, the advantage which a sober and well-regulated understanding will always have over one which claims to be above ordinances; and trusting either to an unerring opinion of its own strength, or even to a true sense

of it, gives itself up to its first strong impression, and sets at defiance all other reason and authority. Sir James Mackintosh had, in his youth, as much ambition and as much consciousness of power as Mr Coleridge could have; but the utmost extent of *his* early aberrations (in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*) was an over-estimate of the probabilities of good from a revolution of violence; and a much greater under-estimate of the mischiefs with which such experiments are sure to be attended, and the value of settled institutions and long familiar forms. Yet, though in his philanthropic enthusiasm he did miscalculate the relative value of their opposite forces (and speedily admitted and rectified the error), he never for an instant disputed the existence of both elements in the equation, or affected to throw a doubt upon any of the great principles on which civil society reposes. On the contrary, in his earliest as well as his latest writings, he pointed steadily to the great institutions of Property and Marriage, and to the necessary authority of Law and Religion as essential to the being of a state, and the well-being of any human society. It followed, therefore, that when disappointed in his too-sanguine expectations from the French Revolution, he had nothing to retract in the substance and scope of his opinions; and merely tempering their announcement with the gravity and caution of maturer years, he gave them out again in his later days to the world, with the accumulated authority of a whole life of consistency and study. At no period of that life, did he fail to assert the right of the people to political and religious freedom, and to the protection of just and equal laws, enacted by representatives truly chosen by themselves; and he never uttered a syllable that could be construed into an approval or even an acquiescence in, persecution and intolerance, or in the maintenance of authority for any other purpose than to give effect to the enlightened and deliberate will of the community. To enforce these doctrines his whole life was devoted; and though not permitted to complete either of the great works he had projected, he was enabled to finish detached portions of each, sufficient not only fully to develope his principles, but to give a clear view of the whole design, and to put it in the power of any succeeding artist to proceed with the execution.

Mr Coleridge, too, was an early and most ardent admirer of the French Revolution; but the fruits of that admiration in him were, not a reasoned and statesmanlike apology for some of its faults

and excesses, but a resolution to advance the regeneration of mankind at a still quicker rate, by setting before their eyes the pattern of a yet more exquisite form of society: And accordingly, when a full grown man, he actually gave into, if he did not originate, the scheme of what he and his friends called a Pantisocracy—a form of society in which there was to be neither law nor government, neither priest, judge, nor magistrate—in which all property was to be in common, and every man left to act upon his own sense of duty and affection! This fact is enough—and whether he afterwards passed through the stages of a Jacobin, which he seems to deny—or a hotheaded Moravian, which he seems to admit, —is really of no consequence. The character of his understanding is settled with all reasonable men; as well as the authority that is due to the anti-reform and anti-toleration maxims which he seems to have spent his latter years in venting. Till we saw this posthumous publication, we had, to be sure, no conception of the extent to which these maxims were carried; and we now think that few of the Conservatives (who were not originally Pantisocratists) will venture to adopt them. Not only is the Reform Bill denounced as the spawn of mere wickedness, injustice, and ignorance, and the reformed House of Commons as 'low, vulgar, meddling, and sneering at every thing noble and refined,' but the wise and the good, we are assured, will, in every country, 'speedily become disgusted with *the representative form of government, brutalized as it is* by the predominance of democracy in England, France, and Belgium;' and then the remedy is, that they will recur to a new, though, we confess, not very comprehensible form of 'Pure Monarchy, in which the reason of the people shall become efficient in the apparent will of the King!' Moreover, he is for a total dissolution of the union with Ireland, and its erection into a separate and independent kingdom. He is against Negro emancipation—sees no use in reducing taxation—and designates Malthus's demonstration of a mere matter of fact by a redundant accumulation of evidence, by the polite and appropriate appellation of 'a lie;' and represents it as more disgraceful and abominable than any thing that the weakness and wickedness of man have ever before given birth to.

Such as his temperance and candour are in politics, they are also in religion; and recommended and excused by the same flagrant contradiction to his early tenets. Whether he ever was a proper

Moravian or not we care not to enquire. It is admitted, and even stated somewhat boastingly in this book, that he was a bold Dissenter from the church. He thanks heaven, indeed, that he 'had gone much farther than the Unitarians.' And to make his boldness still more engaging, he had gone these lengths, not only against the authority of our Doctors, but against the clear and admitted doctrine and teaching of the Apostles themselves. 'What care I,' I said, 'for the Platonisms of John, or the Rabbinisms of Paul? *My conscience revolts—that* was the ground of *my* Unitarianism.' And by and by, this infallible and oracular person does not hesitate to declare, that others, indeed, may do as they choose, but he, for his part, can never allow that Unitarians are Christians! and, giving no credit for 'revolting consciences' to any one but himself, charges all Dissenters in the lump, with hating the Church much more than they love religion—is furious against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Catholic Emancipation, —and at last actually, and in good set terms, denies that any Dissenter has a *right to toleration!* and, in perfect consistence, maintains that it is the duty of the magistrate to stop heresy and schism *by persecution*—if he only has reason to think that in this way the evil may be arrested; adding, by way of example, that he would be ready 'to ship off—*any where,*' any missionaries who might attempt to disturb the undoubting Lutheranism of certain exemplary Norwegians, whom he takes under his special protection.

We are tempted to say more. But we desist; and shall pursue this parallel no farther. Perhaps we have already been betrayed into feelings and expressions that may be objected to. We should be sorry if this could be done justly. But we do not question Mr Coleridge's sincerity. We admit, too, that he was a man of much poetical sensibility, and had visions of intellectual sublimity, and glimpses of comprehensive truths, which he could neither reduce into order nor combine into system. But out of poetry and metaphysics, we think he was nothing; and eminently disqualified, not only by the defects, but by the best parts of his genius, as well as by his temper and habits, for forming any sound judgment on the business and affairs of our actual world. And yet it is for his preposterous judgments on such subjects that his memory is now held in affected reverence by those who laughed at him, all through his life, for what gave him his only claim to admiration; and who now magnify his genius for no other purpose but to give them an opportunity to quote, as of grave

authority, his mere delirations, on reform, dissent, and toleration—his cheering predictions of the approaching millennium of pure monarchy—or his demonstrations of the absolute harmlessness of taxation, and the sacred duty of all sorts of *efficient* persecution. We are sure we treat Mr Coleridge with all possible respect, when we say, that *his* name can lend no more plausibility to absurdities like these, than the far greater names of Bacon or Hobbes could do, to the belief in sympathetic medicines, or in churchyard apparitions.

GENERAL ESTIMATES

1836–42

3. 'D'. From 'The Poets of Our Age, Considered as to Their Philosophic Tendencies'

1836

From *London and Westminster Review,* April, 1836, xxv, 67–8. The essay as a whole is mainly about Wordsworth and Shelley with whom Coleridge is associated as one of the 'metaphysical' poets.

When the name of Coleridge is mentioned in connexion with philosophy, we are led immediately to refer rather to his prose works than to his poems. To enter, however, into an argumentative examination of these, would conduct us into an endless labyrinth. We must endure, therefore, to pass for mere dogmatists, when we assert that he who hopes to find in them any distinct system, or just concatenation of thought, will be grievously disappointed, but he who reads for the brilliant fragments he may collect will be amply rewarded. To adopt a mode of illustration of his own, if a line be drawn with *admirable sense* written at one end, and *hopeless obscurity* at the other, Mr. Coleridge would be the *punctum indifferens* ['balancing point'] between the two, 'which may be conceived as both, in as far as it may be either.'

Men who combine a tenacious habit of reasoning with great susceptibility of feeling, are often doomed on the subjects of theology to suffer a painful alternation of doubt and belief. Truths which have flashed upon the mind vivid as lightning, have proved as difficult as it to be arrested or retained. In this interchange of light and darkness, Coleridge seems to have had large experience. Finding no steadfast footing in philosophy, he betook him to the sacred oracles. But he carried with him his old intellectual habits, and

sought an independent ground in human reason for truths which his wiser countrymen receive with silent acquiescence, as beyond the present scope of our faculties. Metaphysics were revisited to find a demonstration for the Trinity, and Kant was made subservient to St. Athanasius. It is evident that philosophy pursued after this fashion could lead to no satisfactory result.

Coleridge has claimed the merit of having thrown many a truth into general circulation through the medium of conversation. He may, perhaps, be taxed also with having, through the same medium, —by the charm of eloquence, and the fascination of his name, and the attraction of mystery, —exercised an unfortunate influence over minds, themselves of an influential order. He had power to darken knowledge, and his admirers are worshipping the eclipse.

The constitution of his mind was essentially poetic; his reasoning powers, strong as they were, lay too much under the influence of his feelings to be adapted to the calm as well as severe toils of philosophy. To his poetry, therefore, we turn. Here, however, we find no peculiar idea of a philosophical character; but a habit of intense thought is perceptible throughout. What is most predominant is a continual aspiration after a future life, without a corresponding confidence in immortality. He is never reconciled to earth, and never confident of Heaven. He wishes to exert a happy influence over his readers; but his muse is then strongest when his own hopes are at the lowest. He sings at the portal of the temple, sitting between its two guardians, Doubt and Faith.

There is no master-work of this poet that could be pointed out as especially exhibiting his mode of thought. All his writings are fragmentary. He wanted that inferior talent which constructs a plot, and fills up the vacancies from theme to theme. Besides which, he wrote ever from himself, from the fulness of his heart. His poetry waited on the changes of his mood, on the agitations of a many-thoughted spirit. In point of style, he is superior, we think, to either Shelley or Wordsworth. He never exhibits the giddy luxuriance of the first, nor that slow and toilsome progression which too often distinguishes the author of the 'Excursion.'

4. From an unsigned review in *Eclectic Review*

1837

Review of Joseph Cottle's *Early Recollections, Chiefly Relating to the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, During His Long Residence in Bristol, Eclectic Review, August,* 1837, ii, 140–1.

Coleridge's name and character have been too much and too long before the public to have any one unapprised, that a wonderful splendour of genius suffered a malignant moral eclipse during a large portion of his life. But the extent of that dark encroachment will be rendered far more distinctly apparent by this publication; which combines with an assemblage of the facts obvious to the view of spectators, emphatically sad and affecting testimonials from the eminent unhappy person himself.

It is, indeed, a most humiliating and melancholy spectacle: a mind at once of vast comprehension and minute and exquisite perception; opulent in multifarious knowledge; sympathetic with every thing good and amiable; ardent in admiration of the great, the noble, the sublime; but subjected, enslaved, degraded, and tormented by one tyrant habit; and that habit formed on a kind of indulgence of which many persons may wonder how the allurement should be so irresistible; especially when they see how severely it became its own punishment. That punishment fell on the conscience with even more deadly infliction than on the bodily frame. Many of the men of talent who have been the slaves of vicious habits have lived under a very lax conviction, some of them in a disbelief or contempt, of revealed religion. Some of them who did retain from their education a certain thoughtless impression of its truth and authority, were so ignorant of its nature, and so seldom reminded of it, that they were but slightly and transiently disturbed by some vague idea, never consolidated into faith, of the Christian laws, the Supreme Judge, and a future retribution. But Coleridge was a firm and even zealous believer in Christianity; an exercised theologian;

and, subsequently to the early stage of his inquiries and opinions, held a creed accordant, in the most material points, with what has been denominated the evangelic scheme of doctrine. To be, notwithstanding a constant recognition of all this, together with every other remonstrant consideration, and under the solemn menaces which such a faith was incessantly darting on the soul, and with the consciousness, all the while, of great intellectual power—still to be the hopeless victim of a vice abhorred while surrendered to; to have it clinging, and gnawing, and insatiable; to be, like Prometheus, chained for the vulture's repast—this is truly an exhibition fraught with all the powers of tragedy to raise pity and terror. It is but a feeble image for comparison that is recalled to us in the description of some fine fleet and powerful animal, desperately and vainly bounding and plunging over the wilderness under a leopard fixed with fangs and talons over its crest. The appropriate image would be that of a beautiful spirit, closely and relentlessly pursued, grappled at, poisoned, and paralyzed by a demon from the dark world.

5. John Stuart Mill, *London and Westminster Review*

1840

From *London and Westminster Review,* March, 1840, xxxiii, 257–302. This review, signed 'A.', is better known in its slightly revised form in Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions* (1859). The works surveyed were *Table Talk* (second edition, 1836), *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (third edition, 1839; which included the second edition of *Lay Sermons*), *Aids to Reflection* (third edition, 1836), *The Friend* (third edition, 1837), *Biographia Literaria* (1817), and James Gillman, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Vol. i, 1838). Mill (1806–73) is said to have been introduced to Coleridge's writings by F.D.Maurice.

The name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our own time which are likely to be oftener pronounced, and to become symbolical of more important things, in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward facts. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation. If it be true, as Lord Bacon [actually Sir James Steuart] affirms, that a knowledge of the speculative opinions of the men between twenty and thirty years of age is the great source of political prophecy, the existence of Coleridge will show itself by no slight or ambiguous traces in the coming history of our country; for no one has contributed more to shape the opinions of those among its younger men, who can be said to have opinions at all.

The influence of Coleridge, like that of Bentham, extends far beyond those who share in the peculiarities of his religious or philosophical creed. He has been the great awakener in this country of the spirit of philosophy, within the bounds of traditional opinions. He has been, almost as truly as Bentham, "the great questioner of things established;" for a questioner needs not necessarily be an enemy. By Bentham, beyond all others, men have been led to ask themselves, in regard to any ancient or received opinion, Is it true? and by Coleridge, What is the meaning of it? The one took his stand *outside* the received opinion, and surveyed it as an entire stranger to it: the other looked at it from within, and endeavoured to see it with the eyes of a believer in it; to discover by what apparent facts it was at first suggested, and by what appearances it has ever since been rendered continually credible—has seemed, to a succession of persons, to be a faithful interpretation of their experience. Bentham judged a proposition true or false as it accorded or not with the result of his own inquiries; and did not search very curiously into what might be meant by the proposition, when it obviously did not mean what he thought true. With Coleridge, on the contrary, the very fact that any doctrine had been believed by thoughtful men, and received by whole nations or generations of mankind, was a part of the problem to be solved, was one of the phenomena to be accounted for. And as Bentham's short and easy method of referring all to the selfish interests of aristocracies, or priests, or lawyers, or some

other species of impostors, could not satisfy a man who saw so much farther into the complexities of the human intellect and feelings—he considered the long or extensive prevalence of any opinion as a presumption that it was not altogether a fallacy; that, to its first authors at least, it was the result of a struggle to express in words something which had a reality to them, though perhaps not to many of those who have since received the doctrine by mere tradition. The long duration of a belief, he thought, is at least proof positive of an adaptation in it to some portion or other of the human mind; and if, on digging down to the root, we do not find, as is generally the case, some truth, we shall find some natural want or requirement of human nature which the doctrine in question is fitted to satisfy; among which wants the instincts of selfishness and of credulity have a place, but by no means an exclusive one. From this difference in the points of view of the two philosophers, and from the too rigid adherence of each to his own, it was to be expected that Bentham should continually miss the truth which is in the traditional opinions, and Coleridge that which is out of them, and at variance with them. But it was also likely that each would find, or show the way to finding, much of what the other missed.

It is hardly possible to speak of Coleridge, and his position among his contemporaries, without reverting to Bentham: they are connected by two of the closest bonds of association—resemblance, and contrast. It would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another. Compare their modes of treatment of any subject, and you might fancy them inhabitants of different worlds. They seem to have scarcely a principle or a premiss in common. Each of them sees scarcely anything but what the other does not see. Bentham would have regarded Coleridge with a peculiar measure of the good-humoured contempt with which he was accustomed to regard all modes of philosophizing different from his own. Coleridge would probably have made Bentham one of the exceptions to the enlarged and liberal appreciation which (to the credit of *his* mode of philosophizing) he extended to most thinkers of any eminence, from whom he differed. But contraries, as logicians say, are but *quæ in eodem genere maxime distant,* the things which are farthest from one another *in the same* kind. These two agreed in being the men who, in their age and country, did

most to enforce, by precept and example, the necessity of a philosophy. They agreed in making it their occupation to recall opinions to first principles; taking no proposition for granted without examining into the grounds of it, and ascertaining that it possessed the kind and degree of evidence suitable to its nature. They agreed in recognizing that sound theory is the only foundation for sound practice, and that whoever despises theory, let him give himself what airs of wisdom he may, is self-convicted of being a quack. If a book were to be compiled containing all the best things ever said on the rule-of-thumb school of political craftsmanship, and on the insufficiency for practical purposes of what the mere practical man calls experience, it is difficult to say whether the collection would be more indebted to the writings of Bentham or of Coleridge. They agreed, too, in perceiving that the ground-work of all other philosophy must be laid in the philosophy of the mind. To lay this foundation deeply and strongly, and to raise a superstructure in accordance with it, were the objects to which their lives were devoted. They employed, indeed, for the most part, different materials; but as the materials of both were real observations, the genuine product of experience—the results will in the end be found not hostile, but supplementary, to one another. Of their methods of philosophizing the same thing may be said: they were different, yet both were legitimate logical processes. In every respect the two men are each other's "completing counterpart;" the strong points of each correspond to the weak points of the other. Whoever could master the premisses and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of his age. Coleridge used to say that every one is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian: it may be similarly affirmed, that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian; holds views of human affairs which can only be proved true on the principles either of Bentham or of Coleridge. In one respect, indeed, the parallel fails. Bentham so improved and added to the system of philosophy he adopted, that for his successors he may almost be accounted its founder; while Coleridge, though he has left on the system he inculcated, such traces of himself as cannot fail to be left by any mind of original powers, was anticipated in all the essentials of his doctrine by the great Germans of the latter half of the last century, and was accompanied in it by the remarkable

series of their French expositors and followers. Hence, although Coleridge is to Englishmen the type and the main source of that doctrine, he is the creator rather of the shape in which it has appeared among us, than of the doctrine itself.

The time is yet far distant when, in the estimation of Coleridge, and of his influence upon the intellect of our time, anything like unanimity can be looked for. As a poet, Coleridge has taken his place. The healthier taste and more intelligent canons of poetic criticism, which he was himself mainly instrumental in diffusing, have at length assigned to him his proper rank, as one among the great, and (if we look to the powers shown rather than to the amount of actual achievement) among the greatest, names in our literature. But as a philosopher, the class of thinkers has scarcely yet arisen by whom he is to be judged. The limited philosophical public of this country is as yet too exclusively divided between those to whom Coleridge and the views which he promulgated or defended are *all,* and those to whom they are *nothing*. A great thinker can only be justly estimated when his thoughts have worked their way into minds formed in a different school; have been wrought and moulded into consistency with all other true and relevant thoughts; when the noisy conflict of half-truths, angrily denying one another, has subsided, and ideas which seemed mutually incompatible, have been found only to require mutual limitations. This time has not yet come for Coleridge. The spirit of philosophy in England, like that of religion, is still rootedly sectarian. Conservative thinkers and Liberals, transcendentalists and admirers of Hobbes and Locke, regard each other as out of the pale of philosophical intercourse; look upon each other's speculations as vitiated by an original taint, which makes all study of them, except for purposes of attack, useless, if not mischievous. An error much the same as if Kepler had refused to profit by Ptolemy's or Tycho's observations, because those astronomers believed that the sun moved round the earth; or as if Priestley and Lavoisier, because they differed on the doctrine of phlogiston, had rejected one another's chemical experiments. Nay, it is a still greater error than either of these. For, among the great truths long recognized by the continental philosophers, but which very few Englishmen have yet found out, one is, the importance, in the present imperfect state of mental and social science, of antagonist modes

of thought: which, it will one day be felt, are as necessary to one another in speculation as mutually checking powers are in a political constitution. A clear insight, indeed, into this necessity is the only rational or enduring basis of philosophical tolerance; the only condition under which liberality in matters of opinion can be anything better than a polite synonym for indifference between one opinion and another.

All students of man and society who possess that first requisite for so difficult a study, a due sense of its difficulties, are aware that the besetting danger is not so much of embracing falsehood for truth, as of mistaking part of the truth for the whole. It might be plausibly maintained that in every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied; and that if either could have been made to take the other's views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to make its doctrine perfect. Take for instance the question how far mankind have gained by civilization. One man is forcibly struck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes: and he becomes that very common character, the worshipper of "our enlightened age." Another fixes his attention, not upon the value of these advantages, but upon the high price which is paid for them; the relaxation of individual energy and courage; the loss of proud and self-relying independence; the slavery of so large a portion of mankind to artificial wants; their effeminate shrinking from the shadow of pain; the dull, unexciting monotony of their lives, and the passionless insipidity, and absence of any marked individuality, in their characters; the contrast between the narrow mechanical understanding, produced by a life spent in executing by fixed rules a fixed task, and the varied powers of the man of the woods, whose subsistence and safety depend at each instant upon his capacity of extemporarily adapting means to ends; the demoralizing effect of great inequalities in wealth and social rank; and the sufferings of the great mass of the people of

civilized countries, whose wants are scarcely better provided for than those of the savage, while they are bound by a thousand fetters, in lieu of the freedom and excitement which are his compensations. The man who attends to these things, and to these exclusively, will necessarily infer that the savage life is the perfection of human nature; that the work of civilization should as far as possible be undone; and from the premisses of Rousseau, he will not improbably be led to the practical conclusions of Rousseau's disciple, Robespierre. No two thinkers can be more entirely at variance than the two we have supposed—the worshippers of Civilization and of Independence, of the present and of the remote past. Yet all that is positive in the opinions of either of them is true; and we see how easy it would be to choose one's path, if either half of the truth were the whole of it, and how great may be the difficulty of framing, as it is necessary to do, a set of practical maxims which combine both.

So again, one man sees in a very strong light, the need which the great mass of mankind have, of being ruled over by a degree of intelligence and virtue superior to their own. He is deeply impressed with the mischief done to the uneducated and uncultivated by weaning them of all habits of reverence, appealing to them as a competent tribunal to decide the most difficult questions, and making them think themselves capable, not only of being a light to themselves, but of giving the law to their superiors in culture. He sees, moreover, that cultivation, to be carried beyond a certain point, requires leisure; that leisure is the natural attribute of a hereditary aristocracy; that such a body has all the means of acquiring intellectual and moral superiority; and he needs be at no loss to endow them with abundant motives to it. An aristocracy indeed, being human, are, as he cannot but see, not exempt, any more than their inferiors, from the common need of being controlled and enlightened by a still greater wisdom and goodness than their own. For this, however, his reliance is upon reverence for a Higher above them, sedulously inculcated and fostered by the whole course of their education. We thus see brought together all the elements of a conscientious zealot for an aristocratic government, supporting and supported by an established Christian church. There is truth, and important truth, in this man's premisses. But there is a man of a very different description, in whose premisses there is an equal portion of truth.

This is he who says that an average man, even an average member of an aristocracy, if he *can* postpone the interests of other people to his own calculations or instincts of self-interest, will do so; that all governments have always done so, as far as they were permitted, and generally to a ruinous extent; and that the only possible remedy is a pure democracy, in which the people are their own governors, and can have no selfish interest in oppressing themselves.

Thus it is in regard to every important partial truth; there are always two conflicting modes of thought, one tending to give to that truth too large, the other to give it too small, a place: and the history of opinion is generally an oscillation between these extremes. From the imperfection inherent in the human faculties, it seldom happens that, even in the minds of great thinkers, each partial view of their subject passes for its worth, and none for more than its worth. But even if this just balance exist in the mind of the wiser teacher, it will not exist in his disciples, still less in the general mind. He cannot prevent that which is new in his doctrine, and on which, being new, he is forced to insist the most strongly, from making a disproportionate impression. The impetus necessary to overcome the obstacles which resist all novelties of opinion, seldom fails to carry the public mind almost as far on the contrary side of the perpendicular. Thus every excess in either direction determines a corresponding re-action; improvement consisting only in this, that the oscillation, each time, departs rather less widely from the centre, and an ever-increasing tendency is manifested to settle finally in it.

Now the Germano-Coleridgian doctrine is, in our view of the matter, the result of such a re-action. It expresses the revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic. In every respect it flies off in the contrary direction to its predecessor; yet, faithful to the general law of improvement last noticed, it is less extreme in its opposition, it denies less of what is true in the doctrine it wars against, than has been the case in any previous philosophic re-action; and in particular, far less than when the philosophy of the

eighteenth century triumphed, and so memorably abused its victory, over that which preceded it.

We may begin our consideration of the two systems either at one extreme or the other; with their highest philosophical generalizations, or with their practical conclusions. We prefer the former, because it is by their highest generalities that the difference between the two systems is most familiarly known.

Every consistent scheme of philosophy requires, as its starting point, a theory respecting the sources of human knowledge, and the objects which the human faculties are capable of taking cognizance of. The prevailing theory in the eighteenth century, on this most comprehensive of questions, was that proclaimed by Locke, and attributed to Aristotle—that all our knowledge consists of generalizations from experience. Of nature, or anything whatever external to ourselves, we know, according to this theory, nothing, except the facts which present themselves to our senses, and such other facts as may, by analogy, be inferred from these. There is no knowledge *a priori;* no truths cognizable by the mind's inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence. Sensation, and the mind's consciousness of its own acts, are not only the exclusive sources, but the sole materials of our knowledge. From this doctrine Coleridge, with the German philosophers since Kant (not to go farther back) and most of the English since Reid, strongly dissents. He claims for the human mind a capacity, within certain limits, of perceiving the nature and properties of "Things in themselves." He distinguishes in the human intellect two faculties, which, in the technical language common to him with the Germans, he calls Understanding and Reason. The former faculty judges of phenomena, or the appearances of things, and forms generalizations from these: to the latter it belongs, by direct intuition, to perceive things, and recognize truths, not cognizable by our senses. These perceptions are not indeed innate, nor could ever have been awakened in us without experience; but they are not copies of it: experience is not their prototype, it is only the occasion by which they are irresistibly suggested. The appearances in nature excite in us, by an inherent law, ideas of those invisible things which are the causes of the visible appearances, and on whose laws those appearances depend: and we then perceive that these things must have pre-existed to render the appearances

possible; just as (to use a frequent illustration of Coleridge's) we see, before we know that we have eyes; but when once this is known to us, we perceive that eyes must have pre-existed to enable us to see. Among the truths which are thus known *a priori,* by occasion of experience, but not themselves the subjects of experience, Coleridge includes the fundamental doctrines of religion and morality, the principles of mathematics, and the ultimate laws even of physical nature; which he contends cannot be proved by experience, although they must necessarily be consistent with it, and would, if we knew them perfectly, enable us to account for all observed facts, and to predict all those which are as yet unobserved.

It is not necessary to remind any one who concerns himself with such subjects, that between the partisans of these two opposite doctrines there reigns a *bellum internecinum*. Neither side is sparing in the imputation of intellectual and moral obliquity to the perceptions, and of pernicious consequences to the creed, of its antagonists. Sensualism is the common term of abuse for the one philosophy, mysticism for the other. The one doctrine is accused of making men beasts, the other lunatics. It is the unaffected belief of numbers on the one side of the controversy, that their adversaries are actuated by a desire to break loose from moral and religious obligation, and of equal numbers on the other that their opponents are either men fit for Bedlam, or who cunningly pander to the interests of hierarchies and aristocracies, by manufacturing superfine new arguments in favour of old prejudices. It is almost needless to say that those who are freest with these mutual accusations, are seldom those who are most at home in the real intricacies of the question, or who are best acquainted with the argumentative strength of the opposite side, or even of their own. But without going to these extreme lengths, even sober men on both sides take no charitable view of the tendencies of each other's opinions.

It is affirmed that the doctrine of Locke and his followers, that all knowledge is experience generalized, leads by strict logical consequence to atheism: that Hume and other sceptics were right when they contended that it is impossible to prove a God on grounds of experience; and Coleridge maintains positively, that the ordinary argument for a Deity, from marks of design in the universe, or, in other words, from the resemblance of the order in

nature to the effects of human skill and contrivance, is not tenable. It is further said that the same doctrine annihilates moral obligation; reducing morality either to the blind impulses of animal sensibility, or to a calculation of prudential consequences, both equally fatal to its essence. Even science, it is affirmed, loses its character of science in this view of it, and becomes empiricism; a mere enumeration and arrangement of facts, not explaining nor accounting for them: since a fact is only then accounted for, when we are made to see in it the manifestation of laws, which, as soon as they are perceived at all, are perceived to be *necessary*. These are the charges brought by the transcendental philosophers against the school of Locke, Hartley, and Bentham. They in their turn allege that the transcendentalists make imagination, and not observation, the criterion of truth; that they lay down principles under which a man may enthrone his wildest dreams in the chair of philosophy, and impose them on mankind as intuitions of the pure reason: which has, in fact, been done in all ages, by all manner of mystical enthusiasts. And even if, with gross inconsistency, the private revelations of any individual Behmen or Swedenborg be disowned, or, in other words, outvoted—(the only means of discrimination which, it is contended, the theory admits of), this is still only substituting, as the test of truth, the dreams of the majority for the dreams of each individual. Whoever form a strong enough party, may at any time set up the immediate perceptions of *their* reason, that is to say, any reigning prejudice, as a truth independent of experience; a truth not only requiring no proof, but to be believed in opposition to all that appears proof to the mere understanding; nay, the more to be believed, because it cannot be put into words and into the logical form of a proposition without a contradiction in terms: for no less authority than this is claimed by some transcendentalists for their *a priori* truths. And thus a ready mode is provided, by which whoever is on the strongest side may dogmatize at his ease, and instead of proving his propositions, may rail at all who deny them as bereft of “the vision and the faculty divine,” or blinded to its plainest revelations by a corrupt heart.

This is a very temperate statement of what is charged by these two classes of thinkers against each other, though a grossly exaggerated one of what can be alleged with justice against either.

In truth, a system of consequences from an opinion, drawn by an adversary, is seldom of much worth. Disputants are rarely sufficiently masters of each other's doctrines, to be good judges of what is fairly deducible from them, or how a consequence which seems to flow from one part of the theory may or may not be defeated by another part. To combine the different parts of a doctrine with one another, and with all admitted truths, is not indeed a small trouble, or one which a man is often inclined to take for other people's opinions. Enough if each does it for his own, which he has a greater interest in, and is more disposed to be just to. Were we to search among men's recorded thoughts for the choicest manifestations of human imbecility and prejudice, our specimens would be mostly taken from their opinions of the opinions of one another. Imputations of horrid consequences ought not, therefore, to bias the judgment of any person capable of independent thought. Coleridge himself says (in the 25th Aphorism of his 'Aids to Reflection') "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."

As to the fundamental difference of opinion respecting the sources of our knowledge (apart from the corollaries which either party may have drawn from its own principle, or imputed to its opponent's), the question lies far too deep in the recesses of psychology for us to discuss it here. The lists having been open ever since the dawn of philosophy, it is not wonderful that the two parties should have been forced to put on their strongest armour, both of attack and of defence. The question would not so long have remained a question, if the more obvious arguments on either side had been unanswerable. Each side has been able to urge in its own favour numerous and striking facts, to account for which on the opposite theory has required all the metaphysical resources which that theory could command. It will not be wondered at, then, that we here content ourselves with a bare statement of our opinion. It is, that the truth, on this much debated question, lies with the school of Locke and of Bentham. The nature and laws of Things in themselves, or of the hidden causes of the phenomena which are the objects of experience, appear to us radically inaccessible to the human faculties. We see no ground for believing that anything can be the object of our

knowledge except our experience, and what can be inferred from our experience by the analogies of experience itself; nor that there is any idea, feeling, or power in the human mind, which, in order to account for it, requires that its origin should be referred to any other source. We are therefore at issue with Coleridge on the central idea of his philosophy; and we find no need of, and no use for, the new technical terminology, which he and his masters the Germans have introduced into philosophy for the double purpose of giving logical precision to doctrines which we do not admit, and of marking a relation between those abstract doctrines and many concrete experimental truths, which this language, in our judgment, serves not to elucidate, but to disguise and obscure. Indeed, but for these peculiarities of language, it would be difficult to understand how the reproach of *mysticism* (by which nothing is meant in common parlance but *unintelligible-ness*) has been fixed upon Coleridge and the Germans in the minds of many, to whom doctrines substantially the same, when taught in a manner more superficial and less fenced round against objections, by Reid and Dugald Stewart, have appeared the plain dictates of "common sense," successfully asserted against the subtleties of metaphysics.

Yet, although we think the doctrines of Coleridge and the Germans, in the pure science of mind, erroneous, and have no taste for their peculiar terminology, we are far from thinking that even in respect of this, the least valuable part of their intellectual exertions, those philosophers have lived in vain. The doctrines of the school of Locke stood in need of an entire renovation: to borrow a physiological illustration from Coleridge, they required, like certain secretions of the human body, to be reabsorbed into the system and secreted afresh. In what form did that philosophy generally prevail throughout Europe? In that of the shallowest set of doctrines which perhaps were ever passed off upon a cultivated age as a complete psychological system—the ideology of Condillac and his school; a system which affected to resolve all the phenomena of the human mind into sensation, by a process which essentially consisted in merely *calling* all states of mind, however heterogeneous, by that name; a philosophy now acknowledged to consist solely of a set of verbal generalizations, explaining nothing, distinguishing nothing, leading to nothing. That men should begin by sweeping this away from them was the first sign, that the age of

real psychology was about to commence. In England the case, though different, was scarcely better. The philosophy of Locke, as a popular doctrine, had remained pretty much as it stood in his own book; which, as its title implies, did not pretend to give an account of any but the intellectual part of our nature; which, even within that limited sphere, was but the commencement of a system, and though its errors and defects as such, have been exaggerated beyond all just bounds, it did expose many vulnerable points to the searching criticism of the new school. The least imperfect part of it, the purely logical part, had almost dropped out of sight. With respect to those of Locke's doctrines which are properly metaphysical; however the sceptical part of them may have been followed up by others, and carried beyond the point at which he stopped; the only one of his successors who attempted, and achieved, any considerable improvement and extension of the analytical part, and thereby added anything to the explanation of the human mind on Locke's principles, was Hartley. But Hartley's views, so far as they are true, were so much in advance of the age, and the way had been so little prepared for them by the general tone of thinking which yet prevailed, even under the influence of Locke's writings, that the philosophic world did not deem them worthy of being attended to. Reid and Stewart were allowed to run them down uncontradicted: Brown, though a man of a kindred genius, had evidently never read them; and but for the accident of their being taken up by Priestley, who transmitted them as a kind of heir-loom to his Unitarian followers, the name of Hartley might have perished, or survived only as that of a visionary physician, the author of an exploded physiological hypothesis. It perhaps required all the violence of the assaults made by Reid and the German school upon Locke's system, to recall men's minds to Hartley's principles, as alone adequate to the solution, upon that system, of the peculiar difficulties which those assailants pressed upon men's attention as altogether insoluble by it.[1] We may here notice that Coleridge, before he adopted his later philosophical views, was an enthusiastic Hartleian; so that his abandonment of the philosophy of Locke cannot be imputed to unacquaintance with the highest form of that philosophy which had yet appeared. That he should pass through that highest form without stopping at it, is itself a strong presumption that there were more difficulties in the question than Hartley had solved. That anything has since

been done to solve them we probably owe to the revolution in opinion, of which Coleridge was one of the organs; and even in abstract metaphysics his writings, and those of his school of thinkers, are the richest mine from whence the opposite school can draw the materials for what has yet to be done to perfect their own theory.

If we now pass from the purely abstract to the concrete and practical doctrines of the two schools, we shall see still more clearly the necessity of the reaction, and the great service rendered to philosophy by its authors. This will be best manifested by a survey of the state of practical philosophy in Europe, as Coleridge and his compeers found it, towards the close of the last century.

The state of opinion in the latter half of the eighteenth century was by no means the same on the continent of Europe and in our own island; and the difference was still greater in appearance than it was in reality. In the more advanced nations of the continent the prevailing philosophy had done its work completely: it had spread itself over every department of human knowledge; it had taken possession of the whole continental mind; and scarcely one educated person was left who retained any allegiance to the opinions, or the institutions, of ancient times. In England, the native country of compromise, things had stopped far short of this; the philosophical movement had been brought to a halt in an early stage, and a peace had been patched up by concessions on both sides, between the philosophy of the time and its traditional institutions and creeds. Hence the aberrations of the age were generally, on the continent, at that period, the extravagances of new opinions; in England, the corruptions of old ones.

To insist upon the deficiencies of the continental philosophy of the last century, or, as it is commonly termed, the French philosophy, is almost superfluous. That philosophy is indeed as unpopular in this country as its bitterest enemy could desire. If its faults were as well understood as they are much railed at, criticism might be considered to have finished its work. But that this is not yet the case, the nature of the imputations currently made upon the French philosophers, sufficiently proves; many of these being as inconsistent with a just philosophic comprehension of their system of opinions, as with charity towards the men themselves. It is not

true, for example, that any of them denied moral obligation, or sought to weaken its force. So far were they from meriting this accusation, that they could not even tolerate the writers who, like Helvetius, ascribed a selfish origin to the feelings of morality, resolving them into a sense of interest. Those writers were as much cried down among the *philosophes* themselves, and what was true and good in them (and there is much that is so) met with as little appreciation, then, as now. The error of the philosophers was rather that they trusted too much to those feelings; believed them to be more deeply rooted in human nature than they are; to be not so dependent, as in fact they are, upon collateral influences. They thought them the natural and spontaneous growth of the human heart; so firmly fixed in it, that they would subsist unimpaired, nay invigorated, when the whole system of opinions and observances with which they were habitually interwined was violently torn away.

To tear away was, indeed, all that these philosophers, for the most part, aimed at: they had no conception that anything else was needful. At their millennium, superstition, priestcraft, error and prejudice of every kind, were to be annihilated; some of them gradually added that despotism and hereditary privileges must share the same fate; and, this accomplished, they never for a moment suspected, that all the virtues and graces of humanity could fail to flourish, or that when the noxious weeds were once rooted out, the soil would stand in any need of tillage.

In this they committed the very common error, of mistaking the state of things with which they had always been familiar, for the universal and natural condition of mankind. They were accustomed to see the human race agglomerated in large nations, all (except here and there a madman or a malefactor) yielding obedience more or less strict to a set of laws prescribed by a few of their own number, and to a set of moral rules prescribed by each other's opinion; renouncing the exercise of individual will and judgment, except within the limits imposed by these laws and rules; and acquiescing in the sacrifice of their individual wishes when the point was decided against them by lawful authority; or persevering only in hopes of altering the opinion of the ruling powers. Finding matters to be so generally in this condition, the philosophers apparently concluded that they could not possibly be in any other; and were ignorant, by what a host of civilizing and

restraining influences a state of things so repugnant to man's self-will and love of independence has been brought about, and how imperatively it demands the continuance of those influences as the condition of its own existence. The very first element of the social union, obedience to a government of some sort, has not been found so easy a thing to establish in the world. Among a timid and spiritless race, like the inhabitants of the vast plains of tropical countries, passive obedience may be of natural growth; though even there we doubt whether it has ever been found among any people with whom fatalism, or in other words, submission to the pressure of circumstances as the decree of God, did not prevail as a religious doctrine. But the difficulty of inducing a brave and warlike race to submit their individual *arbitrium* to any common umpire, has always been felt to be so great, that nothing short of supernatural power has been deemed adequate to overcome it; and such tribes have always assigned to the first institution of civil society a divine origin. So differently did those judge who knew savage man by actual experience, from those who had no acquaintance with him except in the civilized state. In modern Europe itself, after the fall of the Roman empire, to subdue the feudal anarchy and bring the whole people of any European nation into subjection to government (although Christianity in its most concentrated form was cooperating with all its influences in the work) required thrice as many centuries as have elapsed since that time.

Now if these philosophers had known human nature under any other type than that of their own age, and of the particular classes of society among whom they moved, it would have occurred to them, that wherever this habitual submission to law and government has been firmly and durably established, and yet the vigour and manliness of character which resisted its establishment, have been in any degree preserved, certain requisites have existed, certain conditions have been fulfilled, of which the following may be regarded as the principal: —

First: There has existed, for all who were accounted citizens, — for all who were not slaves, kept down by brute force, —a system of *education,* beginning with infancy and continued through life, of which, whatever else it might include, one main and incessant ingredient was *restraining discipline*. To train the human being in the habit, and thence the power, of subordinating his personal

impulses and aims, to what were considered the ends of society; of adhering, against all temptation, to the course of conduct which those ends prescribed; of controlling in himself all the feelings which were liable to militate against those ends, and encouraging all such as tended towards them; this was the purpose, to which every outward motive that the authority directing the system could command, and every inward power or principle which its knowledge of human nature enabled it to evoke, were endeavoured to be rendered instrumental. This system of discipline wrought, in the Grecian states, by the conjunct influences of religion, poetry, and law; among the Romans, by those of religion and law; in modern and Christian countries, mainly by religion, with little of the direct agency, but generally more or less of the indirect support and countenance, of law. And whenever and in proportion as the strictness of this discipline was relaxed, the natural tendency of mankind to anarchy reasserted itself; the state became disorganized from within; mutual conflict for selfish ends neutralized the energies which were required to keep up the contest against natural causes of evil; and the nation, after a longer or briefer interval of progressive decline, became either the slave of a despotism, or the prey of a foreign invader.

The second condition of permanent political society has been found to be, the existence, in some form or other, of the feeling of allegiance, or loyalty. This feeling may vary in its objects, and is not confined to any particular form of government; but whether in a democracy or in a monarchy, its essence is always the same; viz. that there be in the constitution of the state *something* which is settled, something permanent, and not to be called in question; something which, by general agreement, has a right to be where it is, and to be secure against disturbance, whatever else may change. This feeling may attach itself, as among the Jews (and, indeed, in most of the commonwealths of antiquity), to a common God or gods; the protectors and guardians of their state. Or it may attach itself to certain persons, who are deemed to be, whether by divine appointment, by long prescription, or by the general recognition of their superior capacity and worthiness, the rightful guides and guardians of the rest. Or it may attach itself to laws; to ancient liberties, or ordinances; to the whole or some part of the political, or even of the domestic, institutions of the state. But in all political societies which have had a durable

existence, there has been some fixed point; something which men agreed in holding sacred; which it might or might not be lawful to contest in theory, but which no one could either fear or hope to see shaken in practice; which, in short (except perhaps during some temporary crisis), was in the common estimation placed *above* discussion. And the necessity of this may easily be made evident. A state never is, nor, until mankind are vastly improved, can hope to be, for any long time exempt from internal dissension; for there neither is nor has ever been any state of society in which collisions did not occur between the immediate interests and passions of powerful sections of the people. What, then, enables society to weather these storms, and pass through turbulent times without any permanent weakening of the ties which hold it together? Precisely this—that however important the interests about which men fall out, the conflict does not affect the fundamental principles of the system of social union which happens to exist; nor threaten large portions of the community with the subversion of that on which they have built their calculations, and with which their hopes and aims have become identified. But when the questioning of these fundamental principles is (not an occasional disease, but) the habitual condition of the body politic; and when all the violent animosities are called forth, which spring naturally from such a situation, the state is virtually in a position of civil war; and can never long remain free from it in act and fact.

The third essential condition, which has existed in all durable political societies, is a strong and active principle of nationality. We need scarcely say that we do not mean a senseless antipathy to foreigners; or a cherishing of absurd peculiarities because they are national; or a refusal to adopt what has been found good by other countries. In all these senses, the nations which have had the strongest national spirit have had the least nationality. We mean a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation. We mean a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries. We mean, that one part of the community shall not consider themselves as foreigners with regard to another part; that they shall cherish the tie which holds them together; shall feel that they are one people, that their lot is cast together, that evil to any of their fellow-countrymen is evil to themselves,

and that they cannot selfishly free themselves from their share of any common inconvenience by severing the connexion. How strong this feeling was in the ancient commonwealths every one knows. How happily Rome, in spite of all her tyranny, succeeded in establishing the feeling of a common country among the provinces of her vast and divided empire, will appear when any one who has given due attention to the subject shall take the trouble to point it out.[2] In modern times the countries which have had that feeling in the strongest degree have been the most powerful countries; England, France, and, in proportion to their territory and resources, Holland and Switzerland; while England in her connection with Ireland, is one of the most signal examples of the consequences of its absence. Every Italian knows why Italy is under a foreign yoke; every German knows what maintains despotism in the Austrian empire; the woes of Spain flow as much from the absence of nationality among the Spaniards themselves as from the presence of it in their relations with foreigners; while the completest illustration of all is afforded by the republics of South America, where the parts of one and the same state adhere so slightly together, that no sooner does any province think itself aggrieved by the general government than it proclaims itself a separate nation.

These essential requisites of civil society the French philosophers of the eighteenth century unfortunately overlooked. They found, indeed, all three—at least the first and second, and most of what nourishes and invigorates the third, already undermined by the vices of the institutions, and of the men, that were set up as the guardians and bulwarks of them. If innovators, in their theories, disregarded the elementary principles of the social union, Conservatives, in their practice, had set the first example. The existing order of things had ceased to realise those first principles: from the force of circumstances, and from the short-sighted selfishness of its administrators, it had ceased to possess the essential conditions of permanent society, and was therefore tottering to its fall. But the philosophers did not see this. Bad as the existing system was in the days of its decrepitude, according to them it was still worse when it actually did what it now only pretended to do. Instead of feeling that the effect of a bad social order in sapping the necessary foundations of society itself, is the

very worst of its many mischiefs, the philosophers saw only, and saw with joy, that it was sapping its own foundations. In the weakening of all government they saw only the weakening of bad government; and thought they could not better employ themselves than in finishing the task so well begun—in expelling out of every mind the last vestige of belief in that creed on which all the restraining discipline recognised in the education of European countries still rested, and with which in the general mind it was inseparably associated; in unsettling everything which was still considered settled, making men doubtful of the few things of which they still felt certain; and in uprooting what little remained in the people's minds of reverence for anything above them, of respect to any of the limits which custom and prescription had set to the indulgence of each man's fancies or inclinations, or of attachment to any of the things which belonged to them as a nation, and which made them feel their unity as such.

Much of all this was, no doubt, unavoidable, and is not justly matter of blame. When the vices of all constituted authorities, added to natural causes of decay, have eaten the heart out of old institutions and beliefs, while at the same time the growth of knowledge, and the altered circumstances of the age, would have required institutions and creeds different from these even if they had remained uncorrupt, we are far from saying that any degree of wisdom on the part of speculative thinkers could avert the political catastrophes, and the subsequent moral anarchy and unsettledness, which we have witnessed and are witnessing. Still less do we pretend that those principles and influences which we have spoken of as the conditions of the permanent existence of the social union, once lost, can ever be, or should be attempted to be, revived in connexion with the same institutions or the same doctrines as before. When society requires to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan. By the union of the enlarged views and analytic powers of speculative men with the observation and contriving sagacity of men of practice, better institutions and better doctrines must be elaborated; and until this is done we cannot hope for much improvement in our present condition. The effort to do it in the eighteenth century would have been essentially premature, as the attempts of the Economistes (who, of all persons then living, came nearest to it, and who were the first to form the idea of a Social Science), sufficiently testify.

The time was not ripe for doing effectually any other work than that of destruction. But the work of the day should have been so performed as not to impede that of the morrow. No one can calculate what struggles, which the cause of improvement has yet to undergo, might have been spared if the philosophers of the eighteenth century had done anything like justice to the Past. Their mistake was that they did not acknowledge the historical value of much which had ceased to be useful, nor saw that institutions and creeds, now effete, had rendered essential services to civilization, and still filled a place in the human mind, and in the arrangements of society, which could not without the utmost peril be left vacant. Their mistake was, that they did not recognise in many of the errors which they assailed, corruptions of important truths, and in many of the institutions most cankered with abuse, necessary elements of civilised society, though in a form and vesture no longer suited to the age; and hence they involved, as far as in them lay, many great truths in a common discredit with the errors which had grown up around them. The philosophers threw away the shell without preserving the kernel; and attempting to new-model society without the binding forces which hold society together, met with such success as might have been anticipated.

Now we claim, in behalf of the philosophers of the reactionary school—of the school to which Coleridge belongs—that exactly what we blame the philosophers of the eighteenth century for not doing, they have done.

Every reaction in opinion, of course brings into view that portion of the truth which was overlooked before. It was natural that a philosophy which anathematized all that had been going on in Europe from Constantine to Luther, or even to Voltaire, should be succeeded by another, at once a severe critic of the new tendencies of society, and an impassioned vindicator of what was good in the past. This is the easy merit of all Tory and Royalist writers. But the peculiarity of the Germano-Coleridgian school is, that they saw beyond the immediate controversy, to the fundamental principles involved in all such controversies. They were the first who inquired systematically into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society. They were the first to bring prominently forward the three requisites which we have enumerated, as essential principles of all permanent forms of social existence; as principles, we say, and not as mere accidental

advantages inherent in the particular polity or religion which the writer happens to patronize. They were the first who pursued, philosophically and in the spirit of Baconian investigation, not only this inquiry, but others ulterior and collateral to it. They thus produced, not a piece of party advocacy, but a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history; not a defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution, the largest made by any class of thinkers, towards the philosophy of human culture.

The brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half century, has proceeded almost wholly from this school. The disrespect in which history was held by the *philosophes* is notorious; one of the soberest of them, D'Alembert we believe, was the author of the wish that all record whatever of past events could be blotted out. And indeed the ordinary mode of writing history, and the ordinary mode of drawing lessons from it, were almost sufficient to excuse this contempt. But the *philosophes* saw, as usual, what was not true, not what was. It is no wonder that men who saw, in the greater part of what had been handed down from the past, sheer hindrances to man's attaining a well-being which would otherwise be of easy attainment, should content themselves with a very superficial study of history. But the case was otherwise with those who regarded the maintenance of society at all, and especially its maintenance in a state of progressive advancement, as a very difficult task, actually achieved, in however imperfect a manner, for a number of centuries, against the strongest obstacles. It was natural that they should feel a deep interest in ascertaining how this had been effected; and should be led to inquire both what were the requisites of the permanent existence of the body politic, and what were the conditions which had rendered the preservation of these permanent requisites compatible with perpetual and progressive improvement. And hence that series of great writers and thinkers, from Herder to Michelet, by whom history, which was till then "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," has been made a science of causes and effects; who, by making the facts and events of the past have a meaning and an intelligible place in the gradual evolution of humanity, have at once given history, even to the imagination, an interest like romance, and afforded the only means of predicting and guiding the future, by

unfolding the agencies which have produced and still maintain the Present.[3]

The same causes have naturally led the same class of thinkers to do what their predecessors never could have done, for the philosophy of human culture. For, the tendency of their speculations compelled them to see in the character of the national education existing in any political society, at once the principal cause of its permanence as a society, and the chief source of its progressiveness: the former by the extent to which that education operated as a system of restraining discipline; the latter by the degree in which it called forth and invigorated the active faculties. Besides, not to have looked upon the culture of the inward man as the problem of problems, would have been incompatible with the belief which most of these philosophers entertained in Christianity, and the recognition by all of them of its historical value, and the prime part which it has acted in the progress of mankind. But here, too, let us not fail to observe, they rose to principles, and did not stick in the particular case. The culture of the human being had been carried to no ordinary height, and human nature had exhibited many of its noblest manifestations, not in Christian countries only, but in the ancient world, in Athens, Sparta, Rome; nay, even barbarians, as the Germans, or still more unmitigated savages, the wild Indians, and again the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Arabs, all had their own education, their own culture; a culture which, whatever might be its tendency upon the whole, had been successful in some respect or other. Every form of polity, every condition of society, whatever else it had done, had formed its type of national character. What that type was, and how it had been made what it was, were questions which the metaphysician might overlook, the historical philosopher could not. Accordingly, the views respecting the various elements of human culture and the causes influencing the formation of national character, which pervade the writings of the Germano-Coleridgian school, throw into the shade everything which had been effected before, or which has been attempted simultaneously by any other school. Such views are, more than anything else, the characteristic feature of the Goethian period of German literature; and are richly diffused through the historical and critical writings of the new French school, as well as of Coleridge and his followers.

In this long, though most compressed, dissertation on the continental philosophy preceding the reaction, and on the nature of the reaction, so far as directed against that philosophy, we have unavoidably been led to speak rather of the movement itself, than of Coleridge's particular share in it; which, from his posteriority in date, was necessarily a subordinate one. And it would be useless, even did our limits permit, to bring together from the scattered writings of a man who produced no systematic work, any of the fragments which he may have contributed to an edifice still incomplete, and even the general character of which, we can have rendered very imperfectly intelligible to those who are not acquainted with the theory itself. Our object is to invite men to the study of the original sources, not to supply the place of such a study. What was peculiar to Coleridge will be better manifested when we now proceed to review the state of popular philosophy immediately preceding him in our own island; and which was different, in some material respects, from the contemporaneous continental philosophy.

In England the philosophical speculations of the age had not, except in a few highly metaphysical minds (whose example rather served to deter than to invite others), taken so audacious a flight, nor achieved anything like so complete a victory over the counteracting influences, as on the Continent. There is, in the English mind, both in speculation and in practice, a highly salutary shrinking from all extremes. But as this shrinking is rather an instinct of caution than a result of insight, it is too ready to satisfy itself with any medium, merely because it is a medium, and to acquiesce in a union of the disadvantages of both extremes instead of their advantages. The circumstances of the age, too, were unfavourable to decided opinions. The repose which followed the great struggles of the Reformation and the Commonwealth; the final victory over Popery and Puritanism, Jacobitism and Republicanism, and the lulling of the controversies which kept speculation and spiritual consciousness alive; the lethargy which came upon all governors and teachers, after their position in society became fixed; and the growing absorption of all classes in material interest—caused a state of mind to diffuse itself, with less of deep inward workings, and less capable of interpreting those it had, than had existed for centuries. The age seemed smitten with an incapacity of producing deep or strong feeling, such at least as could ally itself

with meditative habits. There were few poets, and none of a high order; and philosophy fell mostly into the hands of men of a dry prosaic nature, who had not enough of the materials of human feeling in them to be able to imagine any of its more complex and mysterious manifestations; all of which they either left out of their theories, or introduced them with such explanations as no one who had experienced the feelings could receive as adequate. An age like this, an age without earnestness, was the natural era of compromise and halfness.

To make out a case for the feudal and ecclesiastical institutions of modern Europe was by no means impossible: they had a meaning, had existed for honest ends, and an honest theory of them might be made. But the administration of those institutions had long ceased to accord with any honest theory. It was impossible to justify them in principle, except on grounds which condemned them in practice; and grounds of which there was at any rate little or no recognition in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. The natural tendency, therefore, of that philosophy, everywhere but in England, was to seek the extinction of those institutions. In England it would doubtless have done the same had it been strong enough: but as this was beyond its strength, an adjustment was come to between the rival powers. What neither party cared about, the *ends* of existing institutions, the work that was to be done by teachers and governors, was fairly flung overboard. The wages of that work the teachers and governors did care about, and those wages were secured to them. The existing institutions in church and state were to be preserved inviolate, in outward semblance at least, but were required to be, practically, as much a nullity as possible. The Church continued to "rear her mitred front in courts and palaces," but not, as in the days of Hildebrand or Becket, as the champion of arts against arms, of the serf against the seigneur, peace against war, or spiritual principles and powers against the domination of animal force. Nor even (as in the days of Latimer and John Knox) as a body divinely commissioned to train up the nation in a knowledge of God and obedience to his laws, whatever became of temporal principalities and powers, and whether this end might most effectually be compassed by their assistance or by trampling them under foot. No; but the people of England liked old things, and nobody knew how the place might

be filled which the doing away with so conspicuous an institution would leave vacant, and *quieta ne movere* ['let sleeping dogs lie'] was the favourite doctrine of those times; therefore, on condition of not making too much noise about religion, or taking it too much in earnest, the church was supported, even by philosophers—as a "bulwark against fanaticism," a sedative to the religious spirit, to prevent it from disturbing the harmony of society or the tranquillity of states. The clergy of the establishment thought they had a good bargain on these terms, and kept its conditions very faithfully.

The state, again, was no longer considered, according to the old idea, as a concentration of the force of all the individuals of the nation in the hands of certain of its members, in order to the accomplishment of whatever could be best accomplished by systematic co-operation. It was found that the state was a bad judge of the wants of society; that it in reality cared very little for them; and when it attempted anything beyond that police against crime, and arbitration of disputes, which are indispensable to social existence, the private sinister interest of some class or individual was usually the prompter of its proceedings. The natural inference would have been that the constitution of the state was somehow not suited to the existing wants of society; having indeed descended, with no modifications that could be avoided, from a time when the most prominent exigencies of society were quite different. This conclusion, however, was shrunk from; and it required the peculiarities of very recent times, and the speculations of the Bentham school, to produce even any considerable tendency that way. The existing constitution, and all the arrangements of existing society, continued to be applauded as the best possible. The celebrated theory of the three powers was got up, which made the excellence of our constitution consist in doing less harm than would be done by any other form of government. Government altogether was regarded as a necessary evil, and was required to hide itself, to make itself as little felt as possible. The cry of the people was not "help us," "guide us," "do for us the things we cannot do, and show us the way to do those which we can" —and truly such requirements from such rulers would have been a bitter jest—the cry was "let us alone." Powers to decide questions of *meum* and *tuum,* to protect society from open violence, and from some of

the most dangerous modes of fraud, could not be withheld; these, though in stinted measure, the Government was left in possession of, and to these it became the expectation of the public that it should confine itself.

Such was the prevailing tone of English belief in temporals; what was it in spirituals? Here too a similar system of compromise had been at work. Those who pushed their philosophical speculations to the denial of the received religious belief, whether they went to the extent of infidelity or only of heterodoxy, met with little encouragement: neither religion itself, nor the received forms of it, were at all shaken by the few attacks which were made upon them from without. The philosophy, however, of the time, made itself felt as effectually in another fashion; it pushed its way *into* religion. The *a priori* arguments for a God were first dismissed. This was indeed inevitable. The internal evidences of Christianity shared nearly the same fate; if not absolutely thrown aside, they fell into the background, and were little thought of. The doctrine of Locke, that we have no *innate* moral sense, perverted into the doctrine that we have no moral sense at all, made it appear that we had not any capacity of judging from the doctrine itself, whether it was worthy to have come from a righteous Being. In forgetfulness of the most solemn warnings of the Author of Christianity, as well as of the Apostle who was the main diffuser of it through the world, belief in this religion was left to stand upon miracles—a species of evidence which, according to the universal belief of the early Christians themselves, was by no means peculiar to true religion: and it is melancholy to see on what frail reeds able defenders of Christianity preferred to rest, rather than upon that better evidence which alone gave to their so-called evidences any value as a collateral confirmation. In the interpretation of Christianity, the palpablest *bibliolatry* prevailed: if (with Coleridge) we may so term that superstitious worship of particular texts, which persecuted Galileo, and, in our own day, anathematized the discoveries of geology. Men whose faith in Christianity rested upon the literal infallibility of the sacred volume, shrunk in terror from the idea that it could have been included in the scheme of Providence that the human opinions and mental habits of the particular writers should be allowed to mix with and colour their mode of conceiving and of narrating the divine transactions. Yet

this slavery to the letter has not only raised every difficulty which envelopes the most unimportant passage in the Bible, into an objection to revelation, but has paralysed many a well-meant effort to bring Christianity home, as a consistent scheme, to human experience and capacities of apprehension; as if there were much of it which it was more prudent to leave *in nubibus* [in the clouds], lest, in the attempt to make the mind seize hold of it as a reality, some text might be found to stand in the way. It might have been expected that this idolatry of the words of Scripture would at least have saved its doctrines from being tampered with by human notions: but the contrary proved to be the effect; for the vague and sophistical mode of interpreting texts which was necessary in order to reconcile what was manifestly irreconcileable, engendered a habit of playing fast and loose with Scripture, and finding in it, or leaving out of it, whatever one pleased. Hence, while Christianity was, in theory and in intention, received and submitted to with even "prostration of the understanding" before it, much alacrity was in fact displayed in *accommodating* it to the received philosophy, and even to the popular notions of the time. To take only one example, but so signal a one as to be *instar omnium* [as good as all the rest]. If there is any one requirement of Christianity less doubtful than another, it is that of being spiritually-minded; of loving and practising good from a pure love, simply because it is good. But one of the crotchets of the philosophy of the age was, that all virtue is self-interest; and accordingly, in the text book adopted by the Church (in one of its universities) for instruction in moral philosophy, the reason for doing good is declared to be, that God is stronger than we are, and is able to damn us if we do not. This is no exaggeration of the sentiments of Paley, and hardly even of the crudity of his language.

Thus, on the whole, England had neither the benefits, such as they were, of the new ideas nor of the old. We were just sufficiently under the influences of each to render the other powerless. We had a government, which we respected too much to attempt to change it, but not enough to trust it with any power, or look to it for any services that were not compelled. We had a Church, which had ceased to fulfil the honest purposes of a church, but which we made a great point of keeping up as the pretence or *simulacrum* of one. We had a highly spiritual religion (which we were instructed

to obey from selfish motives) and the most mechanical and worldly notions on evey other subject; and we were so much afraid of being wanting in reverence to each particular syllable of the Book which contained our religion, that we let its most important meanings slip through our fingers, and entertained the most grovelling conceptions of its spirit and general purposes. This was not a state of things which could recommend itself to any earnest mind. It was sure in no great length of time to call forth two sorts of men—the one demanding the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed, the other, that they be made a reality; the one pressing the new doctrines to their utmost consequences; the other reasserting the better meaning and purposes of the old. The first type attained its greatest perfection in Bentham; the last in Coleridge.

We hold that these two sorts of men, who seem to be, and believe themselves to be, enemies, are in reality allies. The powers they wield are opposite poles of one great force of progression. What was really hateful and contemptible was the state which preceded them, and which each, in its way, has been striving now for many years to improve. Each ought to hail with rejoicing the advent of the other. But most of all ought an enlightened Radical or Liberal to rejoice over such a Conservative as Coleridge. For such a Radical must know, that the Constitution and Church of England, and the religious opinions and political maxims professed by their supporters, are not mere frauds, nor sheer nonsense—have not been got up originally, and all along maintained, for the sole purpose of picking people's pockets; without aiming at, or being found conducive to, any honest end during the whole process. Nothing, of which this is a sufficient account, would have lasted a tithe of five, eight, or ten centuries, in the most improving period and the most improving nation of the world. These things, we may depend upon it, were not always without much good in them, however little of it may now be left: and Reformers ought to hail the man as a brother Reformer who points out what this good is; what it is that we have a right to expect from things established—which they are bound to do for us, as the justification of their being established—so that they may be recalled to it and compelled to do it, or the impossibility of their any longer doing it may be conclusively manifested. What is any case for reform good for, until it has passed this test? What mode is

there of determining whether a thing is fit to exist, but by considering what purposes it exists for, and whether it be still capable of fulfilling them?

We have not room here to consider Coleridge's Conservative philosophy in all its aspects, or in relation to all the quarters from which objections might be raised against it. We shall consider it with relation to Reformers, and especially to Benthamites. We would assist them to determine whether they would have to do with Conservative philosophers or with Conservative fools, and whether, since there are Tories, it be better that they should learn their Toryism from Lord Roden, or even Sir Robert Peel, or from Coleridge.

Take, for instance, Coleridge's view of the grounds of a church establishment. His mode of treating any institution is to investigate what he terms the idea of it, or what in common parlance would be called the principle involved in it. The idea or principle of a national church, and of the church of England in that character, is, according to him, the reservation of a portion of the land, or of a right to a portion of its produce, as a fund—for what purpose? For the worship of God? For the performance of religious ceremonies? No, —for the advancement of knowledge, and the civilization and cultivation of the community. This fund he does not term Church-property, but "the nationalty," or national property. He considers it as destined for "the support and maintenance of a permanent class or order, with the following duties. A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. The members of this latter and far more numerous body were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave even the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these—to preserve the stores and to guard the treasures of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of

knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent; finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighbouring states, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies, and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power."

This organized body, set apart and endowed for the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge, is not, in Coleridge's view, necessarily a religious corporation. "Religion may be an indispensable ally, but is not the essential constitutive end, of that national institute, which is unfortunately, at least improperly, styled the church; a name which, in its best sense, is exclusively appropriate to the Church of Christ.… The *clerisy* of the nation, or national church in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological. The last was, indeed, placed at the head of all; and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages, the conservation and tradition of past events, the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation, the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and lastly, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia,* as it was named, —philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas.

"Theology formed only a part of the objects, the theologians formed only a portion of the clerks or clergy, of the national Church. The theological order had precedency indeed, and deservedly; but not because its members were priests, whose office was to conciliate the invisible powers, and to superintend the interests that survive the grave; nor as being exclusively, or even principally, sacerdotal or templar, which, when it did occur, is to be considered as an accident of the age, a misgrowth of ignorance and oppression, a falsification of the constitutive principle, not a

constituent part of the same. No; the theologians took the lead, because the science of theology was the root and the trunk of the knowledge of civilized man, because it gave unity and the circulating sap of life to all other sciences, by virtue of which alone they could be contemplated as forming collectively the living tree of knowledge. It had the precedency because, under the name theology, were comprised all the main aids, instruments, and materials of national education, the *nisus formativus* of the body politic, the shaping and informing spirit, which, educing or eliciting the latent man in all the natives of the soil, trains them up to be citizens of the country, free subjects of the realm. And, lastly, because to divinity belong those fundamental truths which are the common ground-work of our civil and our religious duties, not less indispensable to a right view of our temporal concerns than to a rational faith respecting our immortal well-being. Not without celestial observations can even terrestrial charts be accurately constructed." —*Church and State,* chap. v.

The nationalty, or national property, according to Coleridge, "cannot rightfully, and without foul wrong to the nation [it] never has been, alienated from its original purposes," from the promotion of "a continuing and progressive civilization," to the benefit of individuals, or any public purpose of merely economical or material interest. But the state may withdraw the fund from its actual holders, for the better execution of its actual purposes. There is no sanctity attached to the means, but only to the ends. The fund is not dedicated to any particular scheme of religion, nor even to religion at all; religion has only to do with it as the principal instrument of civilization, and in common with all the other instruments. "I do not assert that the proceeds from the nationalty cannot be rightfully vested, except in what we now mean by clergymen and the established clergy. I have everywhere implied the contrary.... In relation to the national church, Christianity, or the church of Christ, is a blessed accident, a providential boon, a grace of God.... As the olive tree is said in its growth to fertilize the surrounding soil, to invigorate the roots of the vines in its immediate neighbourhood, and to improve the strength and flavour of the wines; such is the relation of the Christian and the national Church. But as the olive is not the same plant with the vine, or with the elm or poplar (that is, the state) with which the vine is wedded; and as the vine, with its prop, may

exist, though in less perfection, without the olive, or previously to its implantation; even so is Christianity, and *a fortiori* any particular scheme of theology derived, and supposed by its partisans to be deduced, from Christianity, no essential part of the being of the national Church, however conducive or even indispensable it may be to its well-being." —Chap. vi.

What says Sir Robert Inglis, or Sir Robert Peel, or Mr Gladstone, to such a doctrine as this? Will they thank Coleridge for this advocacy of Toryism? What would become of the three years' debates on the Appropriation Clause, which so disgraced this country before the face of Europe? Will the ends of practical Toryism be much served by a theory under which the Royal Society might claim a part of the church property with as good right as the bench of Bishops, if, by endowing that body like the French Institute, science could be better promoted—a theory by which the state, in the conscientious exercise of its judgment, having decided that the church of England does not fulfil the object for which the nationalty was intended, might transfer its endowments to any other ecclesiastical body, or to any other body not ecclesiastical, which it deemed more competent to fulfil those objects; might establish any other sect, or all sects, or no sect at all, if after anxious and scrupulous consideration it should deem that in the divided condition of religious opinion in this country, the state can no longer with advantage attempt the complete religious instruction of its people, but must for the present content itself with providing secular instruction, and such religious teaching as all can take part in, leaving each sect to apply to its own communion that which they all agree in considering as the keystone of the arch? We believe this to be the true state of affairs in Great Britain at the present time. We are far from thinking it other than a serious evil. We entirely acknowledge, that in any person fit to be a teacher, the view he takes of religion will be intimately connected with the view he will take of all the greatest things which he has to teach.[4] Unless the same teachers who give instruction on those other subjects, are at liberty to enter freely on religion, the scheme of education will be, to a certain degree, fragmentary and incoherent. But the state at present has only the option of such an imperfect scheme, or of entrusting the whole business to perhaps the most unfit body that could be found for it among persons of any intellectual attainments, namely, the

established clergy as at present trained and composed. Such a body would have no chance of being selected as the exclusive administrators of the nationalty, on any foundation but that of divine right; the ground avowedly taken by the only other school of Conservative philosophy which is attempting to raise its head in this country, —that of the new Oxford theologians and Mr Gladstone.

Coleridge's merit in this matter consists, as it seems to us, in two things. First, that by setting in a clear light what a national church establishment ought to be, and what, by the very fact of its existence, it must be held to pretend to be, he has pronounced the severest satire upon what, in fact, it is. There is some difference, truly, between Coleridge's church, in which the schoolmaster forms the first step in the hierarchy, "who, in due time, and under condition of a faithful performance of his arduous duties, should succeed to the pastorate,"[5] and the church of England such as we now see. But to say the church, and mean only the clergy, "constituted," according to Coleridge's conviction, "the first and fundamental apostasy."[6] He, and the thoughts which have proceeded from him, have done more than would have been effected in thrice the time by Dissenters and Radicals, to make the church ashamed of the evil of her ways, and to determine that movement of improvement from within, which has begun where it ought to begin, at the Universities and among the younger clergy, and which, if this sect-ridden country is ever to be really taught, must proceed *pari passu* with the assault carried on from without.

Secondly, we honour Coleridge for having rescued from the discredit in which the corruptions of the English church had involved everything connected with it, and for having vindicated against Bentham and Adam Smith and the whole eighteenth century, the principle of an endowed class, for the cultivation of learning, and for diffusing its results among the community. That such a class is likely to be behind, instead of before, the progress of knowledge, is an induction erroneously drawn from the peculiar circumstances of the last two centuries, and in contradiction to all the rest of modern history. If we have seen somewhat of the abuses of endowments, we have not seen what this country might be made by a proper administration of them, as we trust we shall not see what it would be without them. On this subject we (that is, the

present writer) are entirely as one with Coleridge, and with the other great defender of endowed establishments, Dr Chalmers [Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), church reformer and author]; and we consider the definitive establishment of this fundamental principle to be one of the permanent benefits which political science owes to the Conservative philosophers.

Coleridge's theory of the Constitution is not less worthy of notice than his theory of the Church. The Delolme and Blackstone doctrine, the balance of the three powers, he declares he never could elicit one ray of common sense from, no more than from the balance of trade.[7] There is, however, according to him, an Idea of the Constitution, of which he says—

"Because our whole history, from Alfred onwards, demonstrates the continued influence of such an idea, or ultimate aim, in the minds of our forefathers, in their characters and functions as public men, alike in what they resisted and what they claimed; in the institutions and forms of polity which they established, and with regard to those against which they more or less successfully contended; and because the result has been a progressive, though not always a direct or equable, advance in the gradual realization of the idea; and because it is actually, though (even because it is an idea) not adequately, represented in a correspondent scheme of means really existing; we speak, and have a right to speak, of the idea itself as actually existing, that is, as a principle existing in the only way in which a principle can exist—in the minds and consciences of the persons whose duties it prescribes, and whose rights it determines."[8] This fundamental idea "is at the same time the final criterion by which all particular frames of government must be tried: for here only can we find the great constructive principles of our representative system—those principles in the light of which it can alone be ascertained what are excrescences, symptoms of distemperature, and marks of degeneration, and what are native growths, or changes naturally attendant on the progressive development of the original germ, symptoms of immaturity, perhaps, but not of disease; or, at worst, modifications of the growth by the defective or faulty, but remediless or only gradually remediable, qualities of the soil and surrounding elements."[9]

Of these principles he gives the following account: —

"It is the chief of many blessings derived from the insular character and circumstances of our country, that our social institutions have formed themselves out of our proper needs and interests; that long and fierce as the birth-struggle and growing pains have been, the antagonist powers have been of our own system, and have been allowed to work out their final balance with less disturbance from external forces than was possible in the continental states... Now, in every country of civilized men, or acknowledging the rights of property, and by means of determined boundaries and common laws united into one people or nation, the two antagonist powers or opposite interests of the State, under which all other state interests are comprised, are those of *permanence* and of *progression*."

The interest of permanence, or the Conservative interest, he considers to be naturally connected with the land, and with landed property. This doctrine, false in our opinion as an universal principle, is true of England, and of all countries where landed property is accumulated in large masses.

"On the other hand," he says, "the progression of a State, in the arts and comforts of life, in the diffusion of the information and knowledge useful or necessary for all; in short, all advances in civilization, and the rights and privileges of citizens, are especially connected with, and derived from, the four classes, — the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive, and the professional."[10] (We must omit the interesting historical illustrations of this maxim.) "These four last-mentioned classes I will designate by the name of the Personal Interest, as the exponent of all moveable and personal possessions, including skill and acquired knowledge, the moral and intellectual stock in trade of the professional man and the artist, no less than the raw materials, and the means of elaborating, transporting, and distributing them."[11]

The interest of permanence, then, is provided for by a representation of the landed proprietors; that of progression, by a representation of personal property and of intellectual acquirement: and while one branch of the Legislature, the Peerage, is essentially given over to the former, he considers it a part both of the general theory and of the actual English constitution, that the representatives of the latter should form "the clear and effectual majority of the Lower House;" or if not,

that at least, by the added influence of public opinion, they should exercise an effective preponderance there. That "the very weight intended for the effectual counterpoise of the great landholders," has, "in the course of events, been shifted into the opposite scale;" that the members for the towns "now constitute a large proportion of the political power and influence of the very class of men whose personal cupidity and whose partial views of the landed interest at large they were meant to keep in check;" —these things he acknowledges: and only suggests a doubt, whether roads, canals, machinery, the press, and other influences favourable to the popular side, do not constitute an equivalent force to supply the deficiency.[12] Whether this be the case or not, let the Corn Laws tell; laws more odious to the Personal Interest, as well as to the whole mass of public opinion except the agriculturists alone, than any other abuse of the power of the landed interest is likely to be; and which are steadily supported, not only by the House in which that interest is avowedly predominant, but by two-thirds of that which, according to Coleridge, is destined to keep its selfish views constitutionally in check.

How much better a Parliamentary Reformer, then, is Coleridge, than Lord John Russell, or any Whig who stickles for maintaining this unconstitutional omnipotence of the landed interest. If these became the principles of Tories, we should not wait long for further reform, even in our organic institutions. It is true Coleridge disapproved of the Reform Bill, or rather of the principle, or the no-principle, on which it was supported. He saw in it the dangers of a change amounting almost to a revolution, without any real tendency to remove those defects in the machine, which alone could justify a change so extensive. And that this is pretty nearly a true view of the matter, all parties seem to be now agreed. The Reform Bill was not calculated materially to improve the general composition of the Legislature. The good it has done, which is considerable, consists chiefly in this, that being so great a change, it weakened the superstitious feeling against great changes. Any good, which is contrary to the selfish interest of the dominant class, is as little to be looked for as ever. But improvements, which threaten no powerful body in their social importance or in their pecuniary emoluments, are no longer resisted as they once were, because of their greatness— because of the very benefit which they

promised. Witness the speedy passing of the Poor Law Amendment and the Penny Postage Acts.

Meanwhile, although Coleridge's theory is but a mere commencement, not amounting to the first lines of a political philosophy, has the age produced any other theory of government which can stand a comparison with it as to its first principles? Let us take, for example, the Benthamic theory. The principle of this may be said to be, that since the general interest is the object of government, a complete control over the government ought to be given to those whose interest is identical with the general interest. The authors and propounders of this theory were men of extraordinary intellectual powers, and the greater part of what they meant by it is true and important. But if considered as the foundation of a science, it would be difficult to find among theories proceeding from philosophers one looking less like a philosophical theory, or, in the works of analytical men, anything more entirely unanalytical. What can a philosopher do with such complex notions as "interest" and "general interest," without breaking them down into the elements of which they are composed? If by men's interest be meant what would appear such to a calculating bystander, judging what would be good for a man during his whole life, and making no account, or but little, of the gratification of his present passions, his pride, his envy, his vanity, his cupidity, his love of pleasure, his love of ease—it may be questioned whether, in this sense, the interest of an aristocracy, and still more that of a monarch, would not be as accordant with the general interest as that of either the middle or the poorer classes; and if men's interest, in this understanding of it, usually governed their conduct, absolute monarchy would probably be the best form of government. But since men usually do what they like, often being perfectly aware that it is not for their ultimate interest, still more often that it is not for the interest of their posterity, and (even when they do believe that the object they are seeking is permanently good for them) almost always overrating its value; it is necessary to consider, not who are they whose permanent interest, but who are they whose immediate interests and habitual feelings, are likely to be most in accordance with the end we seek to obtain. And as that end (the general good) is a very complex state of things, comprising as its component elements

many requisites which are neither of one and the same nature, nor attainable by one and the same means—political philosophy must begin by a classification of these elements, in order to distinguish those of them which go naturally together (so that the provision made for one will suffice for the rest), from those which are ordinarily in a state of antagonism, or at least of separation, and require to be provided for apart. This preliminary classification being supposed, things would, in a perfect government, be so ordered, that corresponding to each of the great interests of society, there would be some branch or some integral part of the governing body—so constituted that it should not be merely deemed by philosophers, but actually and constantly deem itself, to have its strongest interests involved in the maintenance of that one of the ends of society which it is intended to be the guardian of. This, we say, is the thing to be aimed at, the type of perfection in a political constitution. Not that there is a possibility of making more than a limited approach to it in practice. A government must be composed out of the elements already existing in society, and the distribution of power in the constitution cannot vary much or long from the distribution of it in society itself. But wherever the circumstances of society allow any choice, wherever wisdom and contrivance are at all available, this, we conceive, is the principle of guidance; and whatever anywhere exists is imperfect and a failure, just so far as it recedes from this type.

Such a philosophy of government, we need hardly say, is in its infancy: the first step to it, the classification of the exigencies of society, has not been made. Bentham, in his 'Principles of Civil Law,' has given a specimen, very useful for many other purposes, but not available, nor intended to be so, for founding a theory of representation upon it. For that particular purpose we have seen nothing comparable as far as it goes, notwithstanding its manifest insufficiency, to Coleridge's division of the interests of society into the two antagonist interests, of Permanence and Progression. The Continental philosophers have, by a different path, arrived at the same division; and this is about as far probably as the science of political institutions has yet reached.

In the details of Coleridge's political opinions there is much good, and much that is questionable or worse. In political economy especially he writes like an arrant driveller, and it

would have been well for his reputation had he never meddled with the subject.[13] But this department of knowledge can now take care of itself. On other points we meet with far-reaching remarks, and a tone of general feeling sufficient to make a Tory's hair stand on end. Thus, in the work from which we have most quoted, he calls the state policy of the last half-century "a Cyclops with one eye, and that in the back of the head," its measures "either a series of anachronisms, or a truckling to events instead of the science that should command them."[14] He styles the great commonwealthsmen "the stars of that narrow interspace of blue sky between the black clouds of the First and Second Charles's reigns."[15] The 'Literary Remains' are full of disparaging remarks on many of the heroes of Toryism and Church-of-Englandism. He sees, for instance, no difference between Whitgift and Bancroft, and Bonner and Gardiner, except that the last were the most consistent—that the former sinned against better knowledge;[16] and one of the most poignant of his writings is a character of Pitt, the very reverse of panegyrical.[17] As a specimen of his practical views, we have mentioned his recommendation that the parochial clergy should begin by being schoolmasters. He urges "a different division and subdivision of the kingdom" instead of "the present barbarism, which forms an obstacle to the improvement of the country of much greater magnitude than men are generally aware."[18] But we must confine ourselves to instances in which he has helped to bring forward great principles, either implied in the old English opinions and institutions, or at least opposed to the new tendencies.

For example, he is at issue with the *let alone* doctrine, or the theory that governments can do nothing better than to do nothing; a doctrine generated by the manifest selfishness and incompetence of modern European governments, but of which, as a general theory, we may now be permitted to say, that one half of it is true and the other half false. All who are on a level with their age now readily admit that government ought not to *interdict* men from publishing their opinions, pursuing their employments, or buying and selling their goods, in whatever place or manner they deem the most advantageous. Beyond suppressing force and fraud, governments can seldom, without doing more harm than good, attempt to chain up the free agency of individuals. But does it follow from this that government cannot exercise a free agency of its own? —that it

cannot beneficially employ its powers, its means of information, and its pecuniary resources (so far surpassing those of any other association, or of any individual) in promoting the public welfare by a thousand means which individuals would never think of, would have no sufficient motives to attempt, or no sufficient powers to accomplish? To confine ourselves to one, and that a limited, view of the subject: a state ought to be considered as a great benefit society, or mutual insurance company, for helping (under the necessary regulations for preventing abuse) that large proportion of its members who cannot help themselves.

"Let us suppose," says Coleridge, "the negative ends of a state already attained, namely, its own safety by means of its own strength, and the protection of person and property for all its members; there will then remain its positive ends: — 1. To make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual: 2. To secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition or that of his children: 3. The development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity, that is, to his rational and moral being."[19]

In regard to the two former ends, he of course does not mean that they can be accomplished merely by making laws to that effect; or that, according to the wild doctrines now afloat, it is the fault of the government if every one has not enough to eat and drink. But he means that government can do something directly, and very much indirectly, to promote even the physical comfort of the people; and that if, besides making a proper use of its own powers, it would exert itself to teach the people what is in theirs, indigence would soon disappear from the face of the earth.

Perhaps, however, the greatest service which Coleridge has rendered to politics in his capacity of a Conservative philosopher, though its fruits are mostly yet to come, is in reviving the idea of a *trust* inherent in landed property. The land, the gift of nature, the source of subsistence to all, and the foundation of everything that influences our physical well-being, cannot be considered a subject of *property* in the same absolute sense in which men are deemed proprietors of that which no one has any interest in but themselves—that which they have actually called into existence by their own bodily exertion. As Coleridge points out, such a notion is altogether of modern growth: —

The very idea of individual or private property in our present acceptation of the term, and according to the current notion of the right to it, was originally confined to moveable things; and the more moveable the more susceptible of the nature of property.[20]

By the early institutions of Europe, property in land was a public function, created for certain public purposes, and held under condition of their fulfilment; and as such, we predict, under the modifications suited to modern society, it will again come to be considered. In this age, when everything is called in question, and when the foundation of private property itself needs to be argumentatively maintained against shallow and crude indeed, but plausible and persuasive sophisms, one may easily see the danger of mixing up what is not really tenable with what is—and the impossibility of maintaining an absolute right in an individual to an unrestricted control, a *jus utendi et abutendi,* over an unlimited quantity of the mere raw material of the globe, to which every other person could originally make out as good a natural title as himself. It will certainly not be much longer tolerated that agriculture should be carried on (as Coleridge expresses it) on the same principles as those of trade; "that a gentleman should regard his estate as a merchant his cargo, or a shopkeeper his stock;"[21] that he should be allowed to deal with it as if it only existed to yield rent to him, not food to the numbers whose hands till it; and should have a right, and a right possessing all the sacredness of property, to turn them out by hundreds and make them perish on the high road, as has been done before now by Irish landlords. We believe it will soon be thought, that a mode of property in land which has brought things to this pass, has existed long enough.

We shall not be suspected (we hope) of recommending a general resumption of landed possessions, or the depriving any one, without compensation, of anything which the law gives him. But we say that when the state allows any one to exercise ownership over more land than suffices to raise by his own labour his subsistence and that of his family, it confers on him power over other human beings—power affecting them in their most vital interests; and that no notion of private property can bar the right which the state inherently possesses, to require that the power which it has so given shall not be abused. We say, also, that, by giving this *direct* power over so large a portion of the community,

indirect power is necessarily conferred over all the remaining portion; and this, too, it is the duty of the state to place under proper control. Further, the tenure of land, the various rights connected with it, and the system on which its cultivation is carried on, are points of the utmost importance both to the economical and to the moral well-being of the whole community. And the state fails in one of its highest obligations, unless it takes these points under its particular superintendence; unless, to the full extent of its power, it takes means of providing that the manner in which land is held, the mode and degree of its division, and every other peculiarity which influences the mode of its cultivation, shall be the most favourable possible for making the best use of the land: for drawing the greatest benefit from its productive resources, for securing the happiest existence to those employed upon it, and for setting the greatest number of hands free to employ their labour for the benefit of the community in other ways. We believe that these opinions will become, in no very long period, universal throughout Europe. And we gratefully bear our testimony to the fact, that the first among us who has given the sanction of philosophy to so great a reform in the popular and current notions, is a Conservative philosopher.

Of Coleridge as a moral and religious philosopher (the character which he presents most prominently in his principal works), there is neither room, nor would it be expedient for us to speak more than generally. On both subjects few men have ever combined so much earnestness with so catholic and unsectarian a spirit. "We have imprisoned," says he, "our own conceptions by the lines which we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others. *J'ai trouvé que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient.*"[22] That almost all sects, both in philosophy and religion, are right in the positive part of their tenets, though commonly wrong in the negative, is a doctrine which he professes as strongly as the eclectic school in France. Almost all errors he holds to be "truths misunderstood," "half-truths taken as the whole," though not the less, but the more dangerous on that account.[23] Both the theory and the practice of enlightened tolerance in matters of opinion, might be exhibited in extracts from his writings more copiously than in those of any other writer we know; though there are a few (and but a few) exceptions to his

own practice of it. In the theory of ethics, he contends against the doctrine of general consequences, and holds that, *for man*, "to obey the simple unconditional commandment of eschewing every act that implies a self-contradiction" —so to act as to "be able, without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings—is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality."[24] Yet even a utilitarian can have little complaint to make of a philosopher who lays it down that "the *outward* object of virtue" is "the greatest producible sum of happiness of all men," and that "happiness in its proper sense is but the continuity and sum-total of the pleasure which is allotted or happens to a man."[25]

But his greatest object was to bring into harmony Religion and Philosophy. He laboured incessantly to establish that "the Christian faith—in which," says he, "I include every article of belief and doctrine professed by the first reformers in common" — is not only Divine truth, but also "the perfection of Human Intelligence."[26] All that Christianity has revealed, philosophy, according to him, can prove, though there is much which it could never have discovered; human reason, once strengthened by Christianity, can evolve all the Christian doctrines from its own sources.[27] Moreover, "if infidelity is not to overspread England as well as France,"[28] the Scripture, and every passage of Scripture, must be submitted to this test; inasmuch as "the compatibility of a document with the conclusions of self-evident reason, and with the laws of conscience, is a condition *a priori* of any evidence adequate to the proof of its having been revealed by God;" and this, he says, is no philosophical novelty, but a principle "clearly laid down both by Moses and by St Paul."[29] He thus goes quite as far as the Unitarians in making man's reason and moral feelings a test of revelation; but differs *toto cælo* from them in their rejection of its mysteries, which he regards as the highest philosophic truths, and says that "the Christian to whom, after a long profession of Christianity, the mysteries remain as much mysteries as before, is in the same state as a schoolboy with regard to his arithmetic, to whom the *facit* at the end of the examples in his cyphering-book is the whole ground for his assuming that such and such figures amount to so and so."

These opinions are not likely to be popular in the religious world, and Coleridge knew it: "I quite calculate,"[30] said he once,

"on my being one day or other holden in worse repute by many Christians than the Unitarians" and even infidels. "It must be undergone by every one who loves the truth for its own sake beyond all other things." For our part, we are not bound to defend him; and we must admit that, in his attempt to arrive at theology by way of philosophy, we see much straining, and not unfrequently, as it appears to us, total failure. The question, however, is not whether Coleridge's attempts are always successful, but whether it is desirable or not that such attempts should be made. Whatever some religious people may think, philosophy will and must go on, ever seeking to understand whatever can be made understandable; and, whatever some philosophers may think, there is little prospect at present that philosophy will take the place of religion, or that any philosophy will be generally received in this country, unless supposed not only to be consistent with, but even to yield collateral support to, Christianity. What is the use, then, of treating with contempt the idea of a religious philosophy? We must be looking for a religious philosophy, and our main hope ought to be that it will be such a one as fulfils the conditions of a philosophy—the very foremost of which is, unrestricted freedom of thought. There is no philosophy possible where fear of consequences is a stronger principle than love of truth; where speculation is paralyzed, either by the belief that conclusions honestly arrived at will be punished by a just and good Being by eternal damnation, or by seeing in every text of Scripture a foregone conclusion, with which the results of inquiry must, at any expense of sophistry and self-deception, be made to quadrate.

From both these withering influences, that have so often made the acutest intellects exhibit specimens of obliquity and imbecility in their theological speculations which have made them the pity of subsequent generations, Coleridge's mind was perfectly free. Faith—the faith which is a religious duty—was, in his view, a state of the will and of the affections, not of the understanding. Heresy, in "the literal sense and scriptural import of the word," is, according to him, "wilful error, or belief originating in some perversion of the will;" he says, therefore, that there may be orthodox heretics, since indifference to truth may as well be shown on the right side of the question as on the wrong; and denounces, in strong language, the contrary doctrine of the "pseudo-

Athanasius," who "interprets Catholic faith by belief,"[31] an act of the understanding alone. The "true Lutheran doctrine," he says, is, that "neither will truth, as a mere conviction of the understanding, save, nor error condemn. To love truth sincerely is spiritually to have truth; and an error becomes a personal error, not by its aberration from logic or history, but so far as the causes of such error are in the heart, or may be traced back to some antecedent unchristian wish or habit."[32] "The unmistakable passions of a factionary and a schismatic, the ostentatious display, the ambitious and dishonest arts of a sect-founder, must be superinduced on the false doctrine before the heresy makes the man a heretic."[33]

Against the other terror, so fatal to the unshackled exercise of reason on the greatest questions, the view which Coleridge took of the authority of the Scriptures was a preservative. He drew the strongest distinction between the inspiration which he owned in the various writers, and an express dictation by the Almighty of every word they wrote. "The notion of the absolute truth and divinity of every syllable of the text of the books of the Old and New Testament as we have it," he again and again asserts to be unsupported by the Scripture itself; to be one of those superstitions in which "there is a heart of unbelief;"[34] to be, "if possible, still more extravagant" than the Papal infallibility; and declares that the very same arguments are used for both doctrines.[35] God, he believes, informed the minds of the writers with the truths he meant to reveal, and left the rest to their human faculties. He pleaded most earnestly, says his nephew and editor, for this liberty of criticism with respect to the Scriptures, as "the only middle path of safety and peace between a godless disregard of the unique and transcendent character of the Bible, taken generally, and that scheme of interpretation, scarcely less adverse to the pure spirit of Christian wisdom, which wildly arrays our faith in opposition to our reason, and inculcates the sacrifice of the latter to the former; for he threw up his hands in dismay at the language of some of our modern divinity on this point, as if a faith not founded on insight were aught else than a specious name for wilful positiveness; as if the Father of Lights could require, or would accept, from the only one of his creatures whom he had endowed with reason, the sacrifice of fools!... Of the aweless doctrine that God might, if he had so pleased, have

given to man a religion which to human intelligence should not be rational, and exacted his faith in it, Coleridge's whole middle and later life was one deep and solemn denial."[36] He bewails "bibliolatry" as the pervading error of modern Protestant divinity, and the great stumbling-block of Christianity, and exclaims,[37] "O might I live but to utter all my meditations on this most concerning point…in what sense the Bible may be called the word of God, and how and under what conditions the unity of the Spirit is translucent through the letter, which, read as the letter merely, is the word of this and that pious, but fallible and imperfect, man." It is known that he did live to write down these meditations; and speculations so important will one day, it is devoutly to be hoped, be given to the world.

Theological discussion is beyond our province, and it is not for us, especially in this place, to judge these sentiments of Coleridge; but it is pretty clear that they are not the sentiments of a bigot, or of one who is to be dreaded by Liberals, lest he should illiberalize the minds of the rising generation of Tories and High-Churchmen. We think the danger is rather lest they should find him vastly too liberal. And yet, now when the most orthodox divines, both in the Church and out of it, find it necessary to explain away the apparent sense of the whole first chapter of Genesis, one would think the time gone by for expecting to learn from the Bible what it never could have been intended to communicate, and to find in all its statements a literal truth neither necessary nor conducive to what the volume itself declares to be the ends of revelation. Such at least was Coleridge's opinion: and whatever influence such an opinion may have over Conservatives, it cannot do other than make them less bigots, and better philosophers.

But we must close this long essay: long in itself, but short in relation to its subject, and to the multitude of topics involved in it. We do not pretend to have given any sufficient account of Coleridge; but we hope we may have proved to some, not previously aware of it, that there is something both in him, and in the school to which he belongs, not unworthy of their better knowledge. We may have done something to show that a Tory philosopher cannot be wholly a Tory, but must often be a better Liberal than Liberals themselves; while he is the natural means of rescuing from oblivion truths which

Tories have forgotten, and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew.

And even if we were wrong in this, and a Conservative philosophy were an absurdity, it is well calculated to drive out a hundred absurdities worse than itself. Let no one think that it is nothing, to accustom men to give a reason for their opinion, be the opinion ever so untenable, the reason ever so insufficient. A man accustomed to submit his fundamental tenets to the test of reason, will be more open to the dictates of reason on every other point. Not from him shall we have to apprehend the owl-like dread of light, the drudge-like aversion to change, which were the characteristics of the old unreasoning race of bigots. A man accustomed to contemplate the fair side of Toryism (the side that every attempt at a philosophy of it must bring to view), and to defend the existing system by the display of its capabilities as an engine of public good, —such a man, when he comes to administer the system, will be more anxious than another man to realize those capabilities, to bring the actual fact a little nearer to the specious theory. "Lord, enlighten thou our enemies," should be the prayer of every true Reformer; sharpen their wits, give acuteness to their perceptions, and consecutiveness and clearness to their reasoning powers: we are in danger from their folly, not from their wisdom; their weakness is what fills us with apprehension, not their strength.

For ourselves, we are not so blinded by our particular opinions as to be ignorant that in this and in every other country, the great mass of the owners of property, and of all the classes intimately connected with the owners of property, are, and must be, in the main, Conservative. To suppose that so mighty a body can ever be without immense influence in the commonwealth, or to lay plans for effecting great changes, either spiritual or temporal, in which they are left out of the question, would be weakness itself. Let those who desire such changes, ask themselves, if they are content that these classes should be, and remain, to a man, banded against them; and what progress they expect to make, or by what means, unless a process of preparation shall be going on in the minds of these very classes; not by the impossible method of converting them from Conservatives into Liberals, but by their being led to adopt one liberal opinion after another, as a part of Conservatism itself. The first step to this, is to inspire them with the desire to

systematize and rationalize their own actual creed: and the feeblest attempt to do this has an an intrinsic value; far more, then, one which has so much in it, both of moral goodness and true insight, as the philosophy of Coleridge.

NOTES

1 The solution of them, so far as it is yet completed, is to be found in a book, in our own opinion, the greatest accession to abstract psychology since Hartley, the 'Analysis of the Human Mind,' by the late Mr [James] Mill.

2 We are glad to quote a striking passage from Coleridge on this very subject. He is speaking of the misdeeds of England in Ireland; towards which misdeeds this Tory, as he is called (for the Tories, who neglected him in his lifetime, show no little eagerness to give themselves the credit of his name after his death), entertained feelings scarcely surpassed by those which are excited by M. de Beaumont's masterly exposure [Gustave de Beaumont's *L'Irlande sociale, politique et réligieuse* (1839)]: —

"Let us discharge (he says) what may well be deemed a debt of justice from every well educated Englishman to his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects of the Sister Island. At least, let us ourselves understand the true cause of the evil as it now exists. To what and to whom is the present state of Ireland mainly to be attributed? This should be the question: and to this I answer aloud, that it is mainly attributable to those who, during a period of little less than a whole century, used as a substitute what Providence had given into their hand as an opportunity; who chose to consider as superseding the most sacred duty a code of law, which could be excused only on the plea that it enabled them to perform it. To the sloth and improvidence, the weakness and wickedness, of the gentry, clergy, and governors of Ireland, who persevered in preferring intrigue, violence, and selfish expatriation to a system of preventive and remedial measures, the efficacy of which had been warranted for them alike by the whole provincial history of ancient Rome, *cui pacare subactos summa erat sapientia,* and by the happy results of the few exceptions to the contrary scheme unhappily pursued by their and our ancestors.

"I can imagine no work of genius that would more appropriately decorate the dome or wall of a Senate-house, than an abstract of Irish history from the landing of Strongbow to the battle of the Boyne, or to a yet later period, embodied in intelligible emblems—an allegorical

history-piece designed in the spirit of a Rubens or a Buonarotti, and with the wild lights portentous shades, and saturated colours of a Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Spagnoletti. To complete the great moral and political lesson by the historic contrast, nothing more would be required than by some equally effective means to possess the mind of the spectator with the state and condition of ancient Spain, at less than half a century from the final conclusion of an obstinate and almost unremitting conflict of two hundred years by Agrippa's subjugation of the Cantabrians, *omnibus Hispaniæ populis devictis et pacatis*. At the breaking up of the Empire the West Goths conquered the country, and made division of the lands. Then came eight centuries of Moorish domination. Yet so deeply had Roman wisdom impressed the fairest characters of the Roman mind, that at this very hour, if we except a comparatively insignificant portion of Arabic derivatives, the natives throughout the whole Peninsula speak a language less differing from the *Romana rustica* or provincial Latin of the times of Lucan and Seneca than any two of its dialects from each other. The time approaches, I trust, when our political economists may study the science of the provincial policy of the ancients in detail, under the auspices of hope, for immediate and practical purposes." —*Church and State,* p. 161.

3 There is something at once ridiculous and discouraging in the signs which daily meet us, of the Cimmerian darkness still prevailing in England (wherever recent foreign literature or the speculations of the Coleridgians have not penetrated) concerning the very *existence* of the views of general history, which have been received throughout the continent of Europe for the last twenty or thirty years. A writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' certainly not the least able publication of our day, nor this the least able writer in it, lately announced with all the pomp and heraldry of triumphant genius, a discovery which was to disabuse the world of a universal prejudice, and create "the philosophy of Roman history." This is, that the Roman empire perished not from outward violence, but from inward decay, and that the barbarian conquerors were the renovators, not the destroyers of its civilization. Why, there is not a schoolboy in France or Germany who did not possess this writer's discovery before him; the contrary opinion has receded so far into the past, that it must be rather a learned Frenchman or German who remembers that it was ever held—if indeed it ever *was* held by any cultivated intelligence. If the writer in 'Blackwood' had read a line of Guizot (to go no further than the most obvious sources) he would probably have abstained from making himself very ridiculous, and his country, so far as depends upon him, the laughing-stock of Europe. We would recommend to him, as a sort of ABC, or

first spelling lesson in history, Guizot's Essay on the Municipal Institutions of the Romans. When he is a little older and stronger he may attempt M.Guizot's Lectures.

4 For the illustration of this truth from almost every branch of a liberal education, we may refer the reader to a remarkable pamphlet, entitled 'Subscription no Bondage,' by the Rev. Frederick Maurice; which, though we think it signally unsuccessful in its direct object, the justification of the exclusive regulations of the Universities, contains, like all that author's works, many important truths incidentally illustrated, and a lavish display of the resources of a subtle and accomplished as well as a devoted and earnest mind.

5 P. 57.

6 'Literary Remains,' iii. 386.

7 'The Friend,' first collected edition (1818), vol. ii, p. 75.

8 'Church and State,' p. 18.

9 'Church and State,' p. 19.

10 Ibid., pp. 23–4.

11 Ibid., p. 29.

12 Ibid., pp. 31–2.

13 Yet even on this subject he has occasionally a just thought, happily expressed; as this: "Instead of the position that all things find, it would be less equivocal and far more descriptive of the fact to say, that things are always finding their level; which might be taken as the paraphrase or ironical definition of a storm." —*Second Lay Sermon,* p. 403.

14 'Church and State,' p. 69.

15 'Church and State,' p. 102.

16 'Literary Remains,' ii, 388.

17 Written in the *Morning Post,* and now (as we rejoice to see) reprinted in Mr Gillman's biographical memoir.

18 'Literary Remains,' p. 56.

19 'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 414.

20 Ibid., p. 414.

21 'Second Lay Sermon,' p. 414.

22 'Biographia Literaria,' ed. 1817, vol. i, p. 249.

23 'Literary Remains,' iii, 145.

24 'The Friend,' vol. i, pp. 256 and 340.

25 'Aids to Reflection,' pp. 37 and 39.

26 Preface to the 'Aids to Reflection.'

27 'Literary Remains,' i, 388.

28 'Literary Remains,' iii, 263.

29 Ib. p. 293.

30 'Table Talk,' 2nd ed. p. 91.

31 'Literary Remains,' iv, 193.

32 Ibid., iii, 159.
33 Ibid., p. 245.
34 'Literary Remains,' iii, 229; see also pp. 254, 323, and many other passages in the 3rd and 4th volumes.
35 'Literary Remains,' ii. 385.
36 Preface to the 3rd vol. of the 'Literary Remains.'
37 'Literary Remains,' iv, 6.

6. Frederick Denison Maurice in *The Kingdom of Christ; or, Hints to a Quaker…*

1842

The 'Dedication' to the second edition of *The Kingdom of Christ; or, Hints to a Quaker…*, 1842, i, v–xxxii. Maurice (1805–72) was Professor of English Literature and History at King's College, London, and Chaplain to Guy's Hospital, at the time when this essay appeared. As a student at Cambridge he had been one of the founders of the 'Apostles', a friend of John Sterling, and a pupil of Julius Hare.

TO THE

REV. DERWENT COLERIDGE

STANLEY GROVE, CHELSEA.

MY DEAR MR. COLERIDGE,

In a note to your volume on the Scriptural character of the English Church, you have alluded to the first edition of these

Hints. Your object was to correct one of my many inaccuracies, and this service, which was itself a very kind one, you made more acceptable, by the approbation which you expressed of my general design. Under any circumstances I must have valued such a recognition from one who had bestowed so much serious and intelligent consideration upon the subject of which I had treated; I was still more pleased with it, because there were qualities in your work which might have made me fear that you would be less tolerant of mine. Its calm scholar-like tone and careful English style, were strikingly contrasted with the crudeness and hastiness which were visible in every part of my Letters to a Quaker. Nevertheless, I found with great delight, that neither you nor the accomplished Editor of Mr. Coleridge's works [H.N. Coleridge], had been hindered by these defects from taking an interest in my thoughts, or from recognizing in them one among a thousand indications of the influence which your father's writings are exercising over the mind of this generation.

Every one who has felt this influence must, I think, be anxious to acknowledge it. You may well be surprised therefore, that in a book of some length I should have referred to it so seldom. Twenty years ago you might have attributed such an omission to a cowardly and dishonourable dread of being associated with an unpopular name. But at the time I wrote, the basest man could not have been affected by such a motive as this, for the different English parties which, during Mr. Coleridge's life-time, had only differed in the degrees of their dislike to him, were scrambling for a share of his opinions. It seemed to me that the only danger of another reaction lay in the ambition of his admirers to make him responsible for their statements of his views or their inferences from them. To this evil I wished not to be accessary. I had never enjoyed the privilege of intercourse with him. I had no means therefore of correcting the impressions of him which I had derived from his works. I was of course liable to the greatest mistakes of judgment in my interpretation of these, as well as to the moral temptation of perverting them to my own purposes. I thought it better therefore, to seem even to myself ungrateful and a plagiarist, than to incur the risk of abusing his name to the support of sentiments which he might have disapproved, and perhaps, of hindering some from profiting by his wisdom, because I had taught them to connect it with my follies. This

caution, however, was of little avail. The only two reviews which, so far as I know, bestowed any attention upon my book—the one treating it with extreme kindness, the other with unbounded contempt, —brought my name into flattering but most undeserved juxta-position with Mr. Coleridge's. And I could not help fancying that one of these critics would have been well pleased that its readers should have attributed to the master, the monstrous absurdity, self-sufficiency, love of priestcraft, hatred of the rights of conscience, preference of Fathers and Councils to Scripture, which were affirmed to be characteristic of the disciple. Every person, I conceive, who has been thus spoken of, should be ready to explain, as well as he can, how far the charge is true, that he has derived his method of thought from his supposed teacher, and if it be true, to what extent that teacher is answerable for his application of the method. Such an explanation I am anxious to make now for the relief of my own mind, and that I may rescue your father's memory from any injury which I may have done it. I might have addressed my confession to many dear friends who are admirers of his writings. But I would rather make it to one of his family, first, because I rejoice to think that those who have most profited by what he has taught them, do not and cannot form a school, and because it is most desirable that the English public, with its party notions and tendencies, should not suppose that they form one; and secondly, because my feeling towards him, though as I have said not founded upon any personal acquaintance in the ordinary sense of the word, is yet so strictly and vividly personal, that I cannot bear to think of him chiefly as a writer of books, and that I am always delighted to connect him with any human representative.

There are persons who can feel no affection for a book unless they can associate it with a living man. I am not sure whether I labour under this incapacity, but I own that the books of Mr. Coleridge are mainly interesting to me as the biography of one who passed through the struggles of the age to which we are succeeding, and who was able, after great effort and much sorrow, to discover a resting-place. Those juvenile poems which exhibit him to us, when he was seeking in Unitarianism a refuge from the flatness and the falsehood of a mere state Christianity—the fierce and magnificent ode in which he sees the old European world of convention and oppression falling to pieces, and rejoices in the sight—the noble

recantation of his hopes from republican ascendancy—his ode to Despondency, embodying so perfectly the feelings of a man who, after the disappointment of all practical hopes, had sought in meditation for deliverance and rest, and then on returning to the actual world had found its glory departed and his capacities of enjoyment dead—these poems have always seemed to me so intensely and painfully real, and so expressive of what thousands of minds in different measures must have been experiencing, that I do not suppose I have ever done justice to any of them, merely as a work of art. I do not think there is any thing inconsistent in this acknowledgment with the belief, that in him as in every great poet, the exercise of the creative faculty implied self-forgetfulness, and the power of passing beyond the region of personal experience. No one can utter the thoughts of other men as well as his own, can be in any degree the spokesman of his time, to whom this quality does not belong. But it consists, I should imagine, nearly always with much of inward suffering. The person who enters most into what a number of others are experiencing, does, in the strictest and liveliest sense, experience it himself. On these points, however, I have no right to speak, and if I speak ignorantly, you must remember, that I merely pretend to tell you what my own impressions have been, not to make them a standard for other readers. Your father's greater poems, such as the Ancient Mariner, and Christabelle, seem undoubtedly to belong to the region of the pure imagination. But I question whether I should be as much interested as I am even in these, if I did not discover in them many veins and fibres which seem to me to connect them with his personal being; if they did not help me to read more clearly the history of his mind, and therein the history of our time.

And as I have never learnt to separate his poetical genius from himself, so I fear I have been as little able to appreciate him formally and abstractedly in the character of a philosopher. In his "Friend" I seem to discover the very same man whom I had known amidst the storms of the revolutionary period. Nor do I find him less impatient of mere rules and decrees than he was then; only the impatience has taken a new form. He has been convinced that society is a reality, that it would not become at all more real by being unmade and reconstructed, and therefore he has begun to enquire what are the grounds of its reality, and how we may be preserved from making it into a fiction and a falsehood. That this

enquiry is complete and satisfactory I do not affirm, I rejoice to think that it is not; I believe, if it had been more complete, it would not be half so profitable as it has been and is likely to be for generations to come. Its merit is, that it is an enquiry, that it shews us what we have to seek for, and that it puts us into a way of seeking. Hence it was and is particularly offensive to more than one class of persons. The mere Destructive complains, that it recognizes the worth of that which ought to be swept away. The mere Conservative is indignant, because it will not assume existing rules and opinions as an ultimate basis, but aims at discovering their meaning and their foundation. The man of Compromises is most bitter, because it assumes that the statesman has some other law of conduct than that of sailing with the wind. The mere Englishman is angry to find the common topics of the day, taxes, libels, bombardments of Copenhagen, not treated of as they are treated in his favourite journals. The man of Abstractions cannot understand what such topics have to do with a scientific book. This combination of enemies, with the advantage which each derives from being able to speak of the book as *"neither one thing nor the other,"* is quite sufficient to explain any measure of unpopularity which it may have met with. To account for the power which it has exerted in spite of these disadvantages—and many others of an outward kind which I need not hint at in writing to you—to explain how a book, which is said to be utterly unpractical, has wrought a change in men's minds upon the most practical subjects, how a book, which is said to have no sympathy with the moving spirit of this age, should have affected the most thoughtful of our young men; this is a work of greater difficulty, which I hope that some of our Reviewers will one day undertake. I am not attempting to solve any such problems, but am merely accounting for its influence upon my own mind, an influence mainly owing to those very peculiarities which seem to have impaired or destroyed its worth in the opinions of wiser people. For this, at least, I am thankful, that this book, so far from diminishing my interest in those which treat of the same subject, or tempting me to set Mr. Coleridge up as the one teacher upon it, has enabled me to honour others of the most different kind, belonging to our own and to former times, which I otherwise should not have understood, and might, through ignorance and self-conceit, have undervalued; above all, to reverence the facts of history, and to

believe that the least perversion of them, for the sake of getting a moral from them, is at once a folly and a sin.

And it seems to me that I have found help of a similar kind to this in a different department of thought from that still more irregular work, the *Biographia Literaria*. If a young man in this age is much tormented by the puzzles of society, and the innumerable systems by which men have sought to get rid of them, he is haunted almost as much by the different problems of Criticism, by a sense of the connexion between his own life and the books which he reads, by theories about the nature and meaning of this connexion, by authoritative dogmas respecting the worth or worthlessness of particular poems and paintings, by paradoxical rebellions against these dogmas, by questions as to the authority of antiquity and the distinct province of our time, by attempts to discover some permanent laws of art, by indignant assertions of its independence upon all laws. A person cannot have observed himself or his contemporaries with any attention, nay, he can scarcely read over the rude statement of these difficulties which I have just made, without feeling how intricately they are involved with our thoughts upon some of the very highest subjects. To say that we do not need to understand ourselves upon these critical questions, that it is of no importance to have principles in reference to them, is merely to say that we ought not to meddle with them at all. A person who is not brought into contact with such topics is certainly not bound to think about them; if he be, he will find the absence of thought respecting them a more serious impediment to him in matters directly concerning his personal life than he may at first suppose. Now, if any one reads Mr. Coleridge's literary life, taking him to be a great poet, and therefore able to supply the principles of his art ready made and fit for immediate use and exportation, he will, I should think, be much disappointed. I cannot discover here, more than in his political work, a system. I have lately heard that there is one, and that it has been taken whole and alive out of the works of a great German author. But I am speaking only of what I saw there myself, and I am bound to say that it escaped my notice. I seemed to see a writer, who was feeling his way into the apprehension of many questions which had puzzled me, explaining to me his own progress out of the belief that all things are dependent upon association, into the acknowledgment of something with which

they are associated; into a discovery that there is a key-note to the harmony. I learnt from him, by practical illustrations, how one may enter into the spirit of a living or a departed author, without assuming to be his judge; how one may come to know what he means without imputing to him our meanings. I learnt that beauty is neither an accidental nor an artificial thing, that it is to be sought out as something which is both in nature and in the mind of man, and which, by God's law, binds us to her. But all this comes out in a natural experimental method, by those tests and trials in which a man may be greatly assisted by the previous successes or failures of another, just as Faraday may be assisted by Davy [Michael Faraday (1791–1867), physicist and former assistant to Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829)], but which he cannot adopt from another, and which we cannot adopt from him, except by catching his spirit of investigation and applying it to new facts.

The "Aids to Reflection" is a book of a different character from either of these, and it is one to which I feel myself under much more deep and solemn obligations. But the obligation is of the same kind. If I require a politician or a critic who has indeed worked his own way through the region in which he pretends to act as my guide, I certainly should be most dissatisfied with one who undertook to write moral and spiritual aphorisms, without proving that he was himself engaged in the conflict with an evil nature and a reluctant will, and that he had received the truths of which he would make me a partaker, not at second hand, but as the needful supports of his own being. I do not know any book which ever brought to me more clear tokens and evidences of this kind than the one of which I am speaking. I have heard it described both by admirers and objectors as one which deals with religion philosophically. In whatever sense that assertion may be true, and in a very important sense I believe it is quite true, I can testify that it was most helpful in delivering me from a number of philosophical phrases and generalizations, which I believe attach themselves to the truths of the Creed, even in the minds of many who think that they receive Christianity with a most child-like spirit—most helpful in enabling me to perceive that the deepest principles of all are those which the peasant is as capable of apprehending and entering into as the Schoolman. I value and love his philosophy mainly because it has led me to this

discovery, and to the practical conclusion, that those who are called to the work of teaching must cultivate and exercise their understandings, in order that they may discriminate between that which is factitious and accidental, or belongs to our artificial habits of thought, and that which is fixed and eternal, which belongs to man as man, and which God will open the eyes of every humble man to perceive. I have learnt in this way the preciousness of the simple Creeds of antiquity; the inward witness which a gospel of Facts possesses, and which a gospel of Notions must always want; how the most awful and absolute truths, which notions displace or obscure, are involved in facts, and through facts may be entertained and embraced by those who do not possess the faculty for comparing notions, and have a blessed incapacity of resting in them.

It is inevitable that the person who first applies this principle to religious questions, should sometimes be involved in the obscurity from which he is seeking to deliver us. Any one who begins the work of encountering notions and theories, will himself be accounted the greatest notionalist and theorist. To get rid of crudities and confusions, he will sometimes be obliged to adopt or invent a nomenclature. His rigid adherence to this will be called pedantry; his followers repeating his words, instead of carrying the meaning of them into their studies and their life, will deserve the charge; his enemies will have a plausible pretence for saying that he has made simple truths complex by his way of handling them. The "Aids to Reflection" have been exposed to all these misfortunes. Nevertheless, I have heard them generally denounced as unintelligible by persons whom I had the greatest difficulty in understanding, who were continually perplexing me with hard words to which I could find nothing answering among actual things, and with the strangest attempts to explain mysteries by those events and circumstances which were to me most mysterious, and which, as they lay nearest to me, it was most important for my practical life that I should know the meaning of. On the other hand, I have heard the simplest, most child-like men and women express an almost rapturous thankfulness for having been permitted to read this book, and so to understand their own hearts and their Bibles, and the connexion between the one and the other, more clearly. It is a book, I believe, which has given offence, and will always give offence to many, not for its theories, but for

its essentially practical character. Its manly denunciation of the sentimental school must be painful to many in our day who have practically adopted the Rousseau cant, though they have changed a little the words that express it; who praise men for being good, though they do the most monstrously evil acts, and account it a vulgar worship of decency to say, that one who is the slave of his own passions, and enslaves others to them, may not be a very right and true man notwithstanding. And yet those who do really exalt decency above inward truth and conformity to a high standard, will not at all the more own Mr. Coleridge for an ally because the school which pretends to oppose them reject[s] him. The whole object of his book is to draw us from the study of mere worldly and external morality, to that which concerns the heart and the inner man. But here, again, he is so unfortunate, that those who have turned "heart religion" into a phrase—who substitute the feelings and experiences of their minds for the laws to which those feelings and experiences may, if rightly used, conduct us—will be sure to regard him as peculiarly their enemy. So that if there were no persons in the land who did not belong to one or other of these classes, if there were not many who have tried them all, and are weary of them all, it would indeed be very difficult to understand how it is that this volume has found its way into so many studies, and has gained access to so many hearts.

The idea of the first "Lay Sermon," that the Bible is the Statesman's Manual, is less developed, I think, than any of those to which I have alluded hitherto. But the bare announcement of it has been of more value to me than any lengthened exposition that I know of. There is no topic which has more engaged my attention in these volumes than the national history of the Bible, but I have said very little indeed of which that thought was not the germ.

The little book upon Church and State you will suppose, from the title and character of these volumes, that I am likely to have studied still more attentively. And indeed, if you watch me closely, you will discover, I doubt not, many more thoughts which I have stolen from it than I am at all aware of, though I think I am conscious of superabundant obligations. It seems to me that the doctrine which I have endeavoured to bring out in what I have said respecting the relations between Church and State, is nothing but an expansion of Mr. Coleridge's remark respecting the opposition and necessary harmony of Law and Religion, though in this, as in many other

cases, I have departed from his phraseology, and have even adopted one which he might not be inclined to sanction.

The robberies which I have confessed are such in the truest sense; they are conscious and deliberate robberies. If any one had chanced to discover in my book twenty or thirty pages which he could trace to some English or foreign author, I should think his common sense, though he might allow no scope for charity, would induce him to hesitate before he imputed to me a wilful fraud. It is so much more likely that I should mistake what had been for years mixed with my own compositions for one of them, than that I should take such a very stupid and blundering way of earning a reputation, which a few years must destroy altogether, that a court of justice, on the mere ground of evidence, would be inclined, I should suppose, to take the tolerant side. If it had any hesitation, the reason would be, that an insignificant author might do many things with impunity, which a writer of eminence, who had enemies in every direction, would be a madman to venture upon; or else it would be from a feeling of this kind, that if I had merely forgotten myself, I should have had some vague wandering impression of having read a similar passage somewhere else, and, therefore, that I should, being honest, have at least thrown out some hint, though it might not be exactly the right one, as to the place whence I might have derived it, thus making my reader anxious to see what had been said by the writer to whom I referred: if I did *that,* of course all suspicion of evil design would vanish immediately from the mind of any one who was capable of judging, or did not industriously pervert his judgment for the purpose of making me out to be an offender. But the use I have made of your father's writings is of entirely a different kind from this. I could not be convicted of it by a mere collating of paragraphs, and, therefore, if I were anxious to conceal it, I should be really, and not apparently, dishonest. And this is not the less true because it is also true that the main subject of my book is one which (so far as I know) he has not distinctly treated of, that the thoughts which he has scattered respecting it, though deeply interesting, are not always satisfactory to me, that I have, therefore, very commonly found myself without his guidance, and that I have sometimes wilfully deserted it. I shall not fulfil the purpose of this letter, if I do not shew how these two apparently opposite statements are reconciled.

No man, I think, will ever be of much use to his generation, who does not apply himself mainly to the questions which are occupying those who belong to it. An antiquary, I dare to say, leads a much easier and quieter life than one who interferes with his contemporaries, and takes part in their speculations. But his quietness is his reward: those who seek another, must be content to part with it. Often times, I doubt not, every man is tempted to repose in some little nook or dell of thought, where other men will not molest him, because he does not molest them; but those to whom any work is assigned are soon driven, by a power which they cannot resist, out of such retirement into the dusty high ways of ordinary business and disputation. This, it seems to me, was your father's peculiar merit and honour. The subjects to which he addressed himself were not those to which he would have been inclined, either by his poetical or his metaphysical tendencies. But they were exactly the questions of the time; exactly those which other men were discussing in the spirit of the time. And as we who belong to a younger generation have inherited these questions, we inherit also the wisdom which dealt with them. But there are, it seems to me, questions which we have not inherited—questions which belong more expressly to us than they did to our immediate predecessors. These, I suspect, we must humbly study for ourselves, though the difference will be very great to us, whether we invent a way of investigation for ourselves, or try to walk in a path which better men who have been before us have with great labour cleared of its rubbish, and by foot-marks and sign-posts have made known to us.

One of the questions to which I allude is that which your father was led, I believe by the soundest wisdom, to banish, in a great measure, from his consideration, after the events of the French Revolution had taught him the unspeakable importance of a distinct National life. I mean the question whether there be a Universal Society for man as man. I have stated some reasons in these volumes why I think every one in this day must be more or less consciously occupied with this enquiry; why no other topics, however important, can prevent it from taking nearly the most prominent place in our minds. There is another question belonging apparently to a different region of thought, yet I believe touching at more points than one upon this: how all thoughts, schemes, systems, speculations, may contribute their

quota to some one which shall be larger and deeper than any of them. If I am indebted to your father on one account more than another, it is for shewing me a way out of the dreadful vagueness and ambition which such a scheme as this involves, for leading me not merely to say, but to feel, that a knowledge of The Being is the object after which we are to strive, and that all pursuit of Unity without this is the pursuit of a phantom. But at the same time I cannot help believing that there is a right meaning hid under this desire; that it will haunt us till we find what it is; that we cannot merely denounce or resist this inclination in ourselves or in others; that we shall do far more good, yea, perhaps the very good which we are meant in this age to accomplish, if we steadily apply ourselves to the consideration of it. Again, there is a question which thrusts itself before us continually, and which is the mover of more party feelings just at this time than any other, respecting the reception of those doctrines which are expressed in old Creeds, and which concern the nature of God himself: whether these are to be taken upon trust from the early ages, or whether we are to look upon them as matters for our own enquiry, to be acknowledged only so far as they accord, with what seems to us either the declaration of Scripture, or the verdict of reason. In preparing for the consideration of this great subject, I have felt, with many others, that Mr. Coleridge's help has been invaluable to us. Nearly every thoughtful writer of the day would have taught us, that the highest truths are those which lie beyond the limits of Experience, that the essential principles of the Reason are those which cannot be proved by syllogisms, that the evidence for them is the impossibility of admitting that which does fall under the law of experience, unless we recognize them as its foundation; nay, the impossibility of believing that we ourselves are, or that any thing is, except upon these terms. The atheism of Hume has driven men to these blessed discoveries, and though it was your father's honour that he asserted them to an age and a nation which had not yet discovered the need of them, he certainly did not pretend, and no one should pretend, that he was the first reviver or expositor of them. But the application of these principles to *Theology,* I believe, we owe mainly to him. The power of perceiving that by the very law of the Reason the knowledge of God must be *given* to it; that the moment it attempts to create its Maker, it denies itself; the conviction that

the most opposite kind of Unity to that which Unitarianism dreams of is necessary, if the demands of the reason are to be satisfied—I must acknowledge, that I received from him, if I would not prove myself ungrateful to the highest Teacher, who might certainly have chosen another instrument for communicating his mercies, but who has been pleased in very many cases, as I know, to make use of this one. This instruction, I say, seems to me a most precious preparation for the enquiry which belongs more strictly to our age, but still it is only a preparation. I cannot help feeling, while I read the profound, and, to a theological student invaluable, hints respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, which occur in Mr. Coleridge's writings—"This is not enough. If the reason be, as he said it was, expressly the human faculty, belonging to rich and poor alike—not merely those personal truths which belong to each individual's state and condition, but this highest truth, which he presents to us as demanding the highest efforts of thought and abstraction, must belong to the very humblest man; must be a sacred part of his inheritance; must in some way or other be capable of being presented to him." Any one who has entertained this thought will find that this theological subject very soon becomes involved with the other two of which I was speaking. The hope that some day

> Wisdom may teach her lore
> In the low huts of them that toil and groan,
> ['France: an Ode'll 59–60 (*PW,* i, 246)]

must wax much brighter, if we can really believe that the deepest lore is the most universal. The hope that diverse sides of thought may some day be brought into reconciliation, may begin to disconnect itself with the dreary vision of a comprehensive System, from which all life is excluded, if the central Unity be that of the living Being.

But how can such a dream ever be realized? To me the promise of its realization came in sounds which belong to our nursery, in the words in which our infants are baptized. Here, it seemed to me, lay the assurance that this truth belongs to no esoterical region; that it is one of those all embracing mysteries which is about us at every moment, which is gradually drawing us into itself, and

which becomes ours most truly when we attain most of the privilege of men by becoming most like little children. Thus I was led to consider the meaning of this ordinance of Baptism as a key to the nature of ordinances generally. I found that they had been much prized by Luther, and by the most earnest of those who, like him, regarded Christianity almost exclusively in its reference to their own personal life. They felt the extreme danger of substituting their belief for the object of it, and so destroying the reality of both. Their testimony was of the highest practical value, and it was abundantly confirmed to me by the experience of those who had rejected ordinances for the sake of attaining to a more spiritual state of mind. Still I could not discover how one contemplating the subject from their point of view, could ultimately escape from the conclusion which the disciples of the Reformers have so generally adopted, that he who first entertains a reverence for inward Truth, and then acquires a reverence for outward Signs, begins in the spirit, and is made perfect in the flesh. And I could entirely sympathize with the feeling of Mr. Coleridge, that those who for the sake of exalting Ordinances turn them into Charms, are not making a harmless addition to that which was before sufficient, but are actually destroying its meaning and reality. But supposing them to be signs to the Race—signs of the existence of that universal body which we were enquiring after, they become invested with a very different importance. They become indispensable in a higher sense than those dream of, who seem to value them chiefly as means of exclusion; they are the very voice in which God speaks to his creatures; the very witness that their fellowship with each other rests on their fellowship with Him, and both upon the mystery of his Being; the very means by which we are meant to rise to the enjoyment of the highest blessings which He has bestowed upon us. In this way there rose up before me the idea of a CHURCH UNIVERSAL, not built upon human inventions or human faith, but upon the very nature of God himself, and upon the union which He has formed with his creatures; a church revealed to man as a fixed and eternal reality by means which infinite wisdom had itself devised. The tokens and witnesses of such a church, it seemed to me, must be divine, but the feeling of its necessity, apprehensions of the different sides and aspects of it, must, if it be a reality, be found in all the different schemes which express human thought and feeling. No

amalgamation of these can create a real harmony, but each may find its highest meaning in that harmony which God has created, and of which He is Himself the centre.

These are the leading thoughts which in this book I have been trying to express, and you will therefore understand what I mean when I say that I may have uttered innumerable sentiments for which your father would not have chosen to be responsible, even while I have wished to study and apply the lessons which he has taught me. He would, I conclude, not have agreed with me in my views respecting Baptism, he would probably have thought that I over-exalted the Ministry, he would not have acquiesced in every one of my statements respecting the Eucharist, he would have judged me wrong in some of my opinions respecting the Scriptures. Upon all these subjects I have deviated from what I think would have been his judgment, without losing the least of my reverence and affection for his memory, perhaps without approximating nearer than he did to the sentiments of any one of the parties which divide the Church. I am sure that I should not have had courage to differ with them or him, if he had not assisted me to believe that Truth is above both, most of all above myself and my own petty notions and apprehensions, that it is worthy to be sought after and loved above all things, and that He who is truth, is ready, if we will obey Him, to guide us into it.

I have been so much occupied with a subject which I am sure must be interesting to you above all others, that I have left myself no time to express as I should wish my gratitude for your personal kindness, and for the advantage which I have received from my opportunities of intercourse with you. But I cannot conclude without wishing you God speed in the noble undertaking in which you are engaged. If you are permitted to raise up a body of wise and thoughtful teachers out of our trading classes, you will do more for the Church than all the persons together who are writing treatises about it. Proportionate, however, to the importance and the novelty of the work will be the trials and the discouragements attending it. In these I trust you will be sustained by the highest consolations which a Christian man and a Christian priest can experience. But there are times in which you will need lower helps also, if they be but of the right kind. I can scarcely think of any which will be more cheering to you than the recollection that you are carrying into effect principles which were years ago urged upon our countrymen

by your father, and that you are doing what in you lies to prove, that one who has been called a theorist and a dreamer, was in truth labouring to procure the most practical benefits for his country and for mankind.

Believe me,
My dear Mr. Coleridge,
Yours very sincerely,
F.MAURICE.

HINTS TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF A MORE COMPREHENSIVE THEORY OF LIFE

1848

7. John Abraham Heraud in *Athenaeum*

1849

From *Athenaeum*, 10 February, 1849, No. 1111, 139–41. This unsigned review is attributed (Haven, 129) to Heraud (1799–1887). He was a poet, an active reviewer, and a Germanist. He had met Coleridge in 1827. The editor of the *Theory of Life* was Seth B.Watson, M.D. (1810–85); he seems to have received the manuscript from James Gillman, Jr, the son of Coleridge's friend.

This book is one of the finest of the late Mr. Coleridge's philosophical essays. We should, however, have been better pleased if the Editor had revealed the source whence he obtained it. He is wholly silent on the subject—save that he makes his "acknowledgments to Sir John Stoddart, L.L.D., to the Rev. James Gillman, Incumbent of Trinity, Lambeth, and to Henry Lee, Esq., Assistant Surgeon to King's College Hospital, for their great kindness in regard to this publication." More than one example of the argument here elaborated have already appeared.

In November and December, 1835, were published in *Fraser's Magazine* two fragments—one 'On Life,' and another 'On the Science and System of Logic;' the former stated to be merely an *excursus* in, and the latter an Introduction to, "a Discourse upon Logic." These were printed under the name of Mr. Coleridge; but they have never been gathered into his acknowledged works by his literary executors. They were then alleged to be portions of "the Sibylline Leaves" scattered abroad by their author, and retained in

the affectionate hands of some who were proud to be esteemed his pupils. Many of the treatises so frequently referred to by Mr. Coleridge in his Conversations and yet not discoverable among his papers were suspected to be in this condition. The internal evidence of the fragments alluded to and of the present *brochure* is sufficient to establish their authorship. Both in matter and in form they are indubitably Coleridgean.

Dr. Watson, who, in the above publication, has at this late day volunteered the editorship of Mr. Coleridge's 'Theory of Life.' dissents from his author's definition of the term. He thinks it would have been better had a different phraseology been adopted "in tracing the operation of certain natural agencies first on unorganized and then on organized bodies." This assertion inclines us to doubt whether Dr. Watson can have properly appreciated the argument proposed. Mr. Coleridge had already disposed of the alleged objection in one single sentence. The philosopher has insisted on contemplating "the Power in kind, abstracted from the degree"; and added, that "the ideas of caloric, whether as substance or property, and the conceptions of latent heat, the heat in ice, &c., that excite the wonder or the laughter of the vulgar, though susceptible of the most important practical applications, are the result of this abstraction." —The very first sentence of the work condemns "the arbitrary division of all that surrounds us into things with life and things without life." Mr. Coleridge maintained "that rocks and mountains, nay, 'the great globe itself,' share with mankind the gift of life," —and the object of his treatise was to show "that the term Life is no less applicable to the irreducible *bases* of chemistry, such as sodium, potassium, &c., or to the various forms of crystals, or the geological strata which compose the crust of our globe, than it is to the human body itself, the acme and perfection of animal organization." —Against this purpose so announced, it is idle to refer to the early history of language in justification of a more limited meaning. The signification of the term is philosophically enlarged, that a general law which science had previously neglected to enforce may be thereby marked and distinguished. Dr. Watson should have disputed the propriety of the abstraction, not of the term. If the former be legitimate, the latter is so likewise. This objection of Dr. Watson, therefore, and a similar one as to the use of the word "Nature," must be passed by as beside the question. The dispute is not about a phrase, but about an idea.

For our part, we wish that Mr. Coleridge had not chosen to assume an abstraction at all, since his philosophy could afford to dispense with any such. He might have first established the principle desired in the *a priori* elements of the human consciousness, and then worked downward to its examples and corroborations in the material world. But it was Mr. Coleridge's aim in this inquiry to pursue the Baconian method, regulated however by an idea previously conceived; and thus to rise by laborious induction from the meanest to the most complex phenomena in sensible experience.

All intention of "accounting" for life Mr. Coleridge repudiated:—his design was limited to "explaining" it. Such an explanation, he himself stated,

> would consist in the reduction of the idea of Life to its simplest and most comprehensive form or mode of action; that is, to some characteristic *instinct* or *tendency,* evident in all its manifestations, and involved in the idea itself. This assumed as existing in *kind,* it will be required to present an ascending series of corresponding phenomena as involved *in,* proceeding *from,* and so far therefore explained *by,* the supposition of its progressive intensity and of the gradual enlargement of its sphere, the necessity of which again must be contained in the idea of the tendency itself. In other words, the tendency having been given in *kind,* it is required to render the phenomena intelligible as its different degrees and modifications. Still more perfect will the explanation be, should the necessity of this progression and of these ascending gradations be contained in the assumed idea of life, as thus defined by the general purport of all its various tendencies. This done, we have only to add the conditions common to all its phenomena, and those appropriate to each place and rank, in the scale of ascent, and then proceed to determine the primary and constitutive forms, *i.e.* the elementary powers in which this tendency realizes itself under different degrees and conditions.

Dr. Watson admits that "there are certain great powers—such as magnetism, electricity, and chemistry—whose action may be traced, even by the limited means that science at present possesses, in admirable gradation, from purely unorganized to the most highly organized matter;" and he thinks that "Mr. Coleridge has done this with great ingenuity and striking effect." Of these powers—magnetism, electricity, and chemistry—Mr. Coleridge has mainly considered the relation with the three dimensions of space—length,

breadth, and depth; an argument too abstruse for any but a transcendental reasoner. Mr. Coleridge himself was, however, so satisfied of its certainty that he hesitated not to declare the three following hypotheses. —

I affirm that a power, acting exclusively in length, is (wherever it be found), *magnetism;* that a power which acts *both* in length and in breadth, and *only* in length and breadth, is (wherever it be found) *electricity,* and finally, that a power which, together with length and breadth, includes depth likewise, is (wherever it be found) *constructive agency*. That is but *one* phenomenon of magnetism, to which we have appropriated and confined the term magnetism; because of all the natural bodies at present known, iron, and one or two of its nearest relatives in the family of hard yet coherent metals, are the only ones in which all the conditions are collected, under which alone the magnetic agency can appear in and during the act itself. When, therefore, I affirm the power of reproduction in organized bodies to be magnetism, I must be understood to mean that this power, as it exists in the magnet, and which we there (to use a strong phrase) catch in the very act, is to the same kind of power, working as reproductive, what the root is to the cube of that root. We no more confound the force in the compass needle with that of reproduction, than a man can be said to confound his liver with a lichen, because he affirms that both of them grow.

Mr. Coleridge throws the *onus probandi* ['burden of proof'] "on those who assert of any quality that it is *not* Life." —Let us content ourselves with a brief sketch of his argument.

By Life is not necessarily implied consciousness, or sensibility, or growth. The life of metals, as the power which effects and determines their comparative cohesion and ductility, is only lower in the scale than the life which produces the first attempts at organization. This wide view taken of Life fills up the arbitrary chasm between physics and physiology. We are, moreover, the better enabled to form a notion of the *kind,* the lower the *degree* and the simpler the form in which it appears. Life is "the Principle of Individuation, or the power which unites a given *all* into a *whole* that is presupposed by all its parts." The lowest instances are metals—

those, namely, that are capable of permanent reduction. For, by the established laws of nomenclature, the others (as sodium, potassium,

calcium, silicium, &c.) would be entitled to a class of their own, under the name of *bases*. It is long since the chemists have despaired of decomposing this class of bodies. They still remain, one and all, as elements or simple bodies, though, on the principles of the corpuscularian philosophy, nothing can be more improbable than that they really are such; and no reason has [been] or can be assigned on the grounds of that system, why, in no one instance, the contrary has not been proved. But this is at once explained, if we assume them as the simplest form of unity, namely, the unity of powers and properties. For these, it is evident, may be endlessly modified, but can never be decomposed. If I were asked by a philosopher who had previously extended the attribute of Life to the *Byssus speciosa,* and even to the crustaceous matter or outward bones of a lobster, &c., whether the ingot of gold expressed *life,* I should answer without hesitation, as the *ingot* of gold assuredly not, for its form is accidental and *ab extra*. It may be added to or detracted from without in the least affecting the nature, state, or properties in the specific matter of which the ingot consists. But as *gold,* as that special union of abstract and of relative gravity, ductility, and hardness, which, wherever they are found, constitute *gold,* I should answer no less fearlessly in the affirmative. But I should further add, that of the two counteracting tendencies of nature, namely, that of *detachment* from the universal life, which universality is represented to us by gravitation, and that of *attachment* or reduction into it, this and the other noble metals represented the units in which the latter tendency, namely, that of identity with the life of nature, subsisted in the greatest overbalance over the former. It is the form of unity with the least degree of tendency to individuation. Rising in the ascent, I should take, as illustrative of the second step, the various forms of crystals as a union, not of powers only, but of parts, and as the simplest forms of composition in the next narrowest sphere of affinity. Here the form, or apparent *quantity,* is manifestly the result of the *quality,* and the chemist himself not seldom admits them as infallible characters of the substances united in the whole of a given crystal. In the first step, we had Life, as the mere *unity* of powers; in the second we have the simplest forms of *totality* evolved. The third step is presented to us in those vast formations, the tracing of which generically would form the science of Geology, or its history in the strictest sense of the word, even as their description and diagnostics constitute its preliminaries. Their claim to this rank I cannot here even attempt to support. It will be sufficient to explain my reason for having assigned it to them, by the avowal, that I regard them in a twofold point of view: 1st, as the residue and product of vegetable and animal life; 2nd, as manifesting the tendencies of the Life of Nature to

vegetation or animalization. And this process I believe—in one instance by the peat morasses of the northern, and in the other instance by the coral banks of the southern hemisphere—to be still connected with the present order of vegetable and animal Life, which constitute the fourth and last step in these wide and comprehensive divisions. In the lowest forms of the vegetable and animal world we perceive totality dawning into *individuation,* while in man, as the highest of the class, the individuality is not only perfected in its corporeal sense, but begins a new series beyond the appropriate limits of physiology. The tendency to individuation, more or less obscure, more or less obvious, constitutes the common character of all classes, as far as they maintain for themselves a distinction from the universal life of the plant; while the degrees, both of intensity and extension, to which this tendency is realized, form the species and their ranks in the great scale of ascent and expansion.

The degrees or intensities of life consist in the progressive realization of the tendency to individuation; but this tendency to individuation, adds Mr. Coleridge,

cannot be conceived without the opposite tendency to connect, even as the centrifugal power supposes the centripetal, or as the two opposite poles constitute each other, and are the constituent acts of one and the same power in the magnet. We might say that the life of the magnet subsists in their union, but that it lives (acts or manifests itself) in their strife. Again, if the tendency be at once to individuate and to connect, to detach, but so as either to retain or to reproduce attachment, the individuation itself must be a tendency to the ultimate production of the highest and most comprehensive individuality. This must be the one great end of Nature, her ultimate object, or by whatever other word we may designate that something which bears to a final cause the same relation that Nature herself bears to the Supreme Intelligence.

This, we believe, gives the entire theory of the posthumous publication before us. The doctrine of polarity or dualism which it involves implies the whole of the Coleridgean philosophy. The relation of the subject to the fancy and the imagination is thus stated by its author. —

Nothing would be more easy than, by the ordinary principles of sound logic and common sense, to demonstrate the impossibility and expose the

absurdity of the corpuscularian or mechanic system, or than to prove the intenable nature of any intermediate system. But we cannot force any man into an insight or intuitive possession of the true philosophy, because we cannot give him abstraction, intellectual intuition, or constructive imagination; because we cannot organize for him an eye that can see, an ear that can listen to, or a heart that can feel, the harmonies of Nature, or recognize in her endless forms the thousand-fold realization of those simple and majestic laws, which yet in their absoluteness can be discovered only in the recesses of his own spirit, —not by that man, therefore, whose imaginative powers have been *ossified* by the continual reaction and assimilating influences of mere *objects* on his mind, and who is a prisoner to his own eye and its reflex, the passive fancy! —not by him in whom an unbroken familarity with the organic world, as if it were mechanical, with the sensitive, but as if it were insensate, has engendered the coarse and hard spirit of a sorcerer. The former is unable, the latter unwilling, to master the absolute pre-requisites. There is neither hope nor occasion for him 'to cudgel his brains about it, he has no feeling of the business.' If he do not see the necessity from without, if he have not learned the possibility from within, of interpenetration, of total intussusception, of the existence of all in each as the condition of Nature's unity and substantiality, and of the latency under the predominance of some one power, wherein subsists her life and its endless variety, as he must be, by habitual slavery to the eye or its reflex, the passive fancy, under the influences of the corpuscularian philosophy, he has so paralysed his imaginative powers as to be unable—or by that hardness and heart-hardening spirit of contempt, which is sure to result from a perpetual commune with the lifeless, he has so far debased his inward being—as to be unwilling to comprehend the pre-requisite, he must be content, while standing thus at the threshold of philosophy, to receive the results, though he cannot be admitted to the deliberation—in other words, to act upon *rules* which he is incapable of understanding as LAWS, and to reap the harvest with the sharpened iron for which others have delved for him in the mine.

The work demands and deserves the studious and earnest perusal of the philosophic reader.

GENERAL ESTIMATES

1864–89

8. Matthew Arnold, from 'Joubert; or, a French Coleridge'

1864

From *National Review,* January, 1864, xviii, 172–7. This unsigned essay by Arnold (1822–88) was republished in his *Essays in Criticism* (1865). Joseph Joubert (1754–1824), whose *Pensées* were published in two volumes in 1842, was the subject of Arnold's Crewian Oration as Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1863. The reference in the essay to de Rémusat is to Charles de Rémusat's 'Des controverses religieuses en Angleterre, II: Coleridge—Arnold', *Revue des deux mondes,* v (October 1856), 512.

We have likened Joubert to Coleridge; and indeed the points of resemblance between the two men are numerous. Both of them great and celebrated talkers, Joubert attracting pilgrims to his upper chamber in the Rue St.-Honoré, as Coleridge attracted pilgrims to Mr. Gilman's at Highgate; both of them desultory and incomplete writers, —here they had an outward likeness with one another. Both of them passionately devoted to reading in a class of books, and to thinking on a class of subjects, out of the beaten line of the reading and thought of their day; both of them ardent students and critics of old literature, poetry, and the metaphysics of religion; both of them curious explorers of words, and of the latent significance hidden under the popular use of them; both of them, in a certain sense, conservative in religion and politics, by antipathy to the narrow and shallow foolishness of vulgar modern liberalism; —here they had their inward and real likeness. But that in which the essence of their likeness consisted is this, —that they both had from nature an ardent impulse for seeking the genuine

truth on all matters they thought about, and an organ for finding it and recognising it when it was found. To have the impulse for seeking it is much rarer than most people think; to have the organ for finding it is, we need not say, very rare indeed. By this they have a spiritual relationship of the closest kind with one another, and they become, each of them, a source of stimulus and progress for all of us.

Coleridge had less delicacy and penetration than Joubert, but more richness and power; his production, though far inferior to what his nature at first seemed to promise, was abundant and varied. Yet in all his production how much is there to dissatisfy us! How many reserves must be made in praising either his poetry, or his criticism, or his philosophy! How little either of his poetry, or of his criticism, or of his philosophy, can we expect permanently to stand! But that which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus of his continual effort, —not a moral effort, for he had no morals, —but of his continual instinctive effort, crowned often with rich success, to get at and to lay bare the real truth of his matter in hand, whether that matter were literary, or philosophical, or political, or religious; and this in a country where at that moment such an effort was almost unknown; where the most powerful minds threw themselves upon poetry, which conveys truth indeed, but conveys it indirectly; and where ordinary minds were so habituated to do without thinking altogether, to regard considerations of established routine and practical convenience as paramount, that any attempt to introduce within the domain of these the disturbing element of thought, they were prompt to resent as an outrage. Coleridge's great action lay in his supplying in England, for many years and under critical circumstances, by the spectacle of this effort of his, a stimulus to all minds, in the generation which grew up round him, capable of profiting by it; his action will still be felt as long as the need for it continues; when, with the cessation of the need, the action too has ceased, Coleridge's memory, in spite of the disesteem, nay repugnance, which his character may and must inspire, will yet for ever remain invested with that interest and gratitude which invests the memory of founders.

M.de Rémusat, indeed, reproaches Coleridge with his *jugetnents saugrenus;* the criticism of a gifted truth-finder ought not to be *saugrenu;* so on this reproach we must pause for a

moment. *Saugrenu* is a rather vulgar French word, but, like many other vulgar words, very expressive; used as an epithet for a judgment, it means something like *impudently absurd*. The literary judgments of one nation about another are very apt to be *saugrenus;* it is certainly true, as M.Sainte-Beuve remarks in answer to Goethe's complaint against the French that they have undervalued Du Bartas, that as to the estimate of its own authors every nation is the best judge; the *positive* estimate of them, be it understood, not, of course, the estimate of them in comparison with the authors of other nations. Therefore a foreigner's judgments about the intrinsic merit of a nation's authors will generally, when at complete variance with that nation's own, be wrong; but there is a permissible wrongness in these matters, and to that permissible wrongness there is a limit. When that limit is exceeded, the wrong judgment becomes more than wrong, it becomes *saugrenu,* or impudently absurd.

But when a critic denies genius to a literature which has produced Bossuet and Molière, he passes the bounds; and Coleridge's judgments on French literature and the French genius are undoubtedly, as M.de Rémusat calls them, *saugrenus*.

And yet, such is the impetuosity of our poor human nature, such its proneness to rush to a decision with imperfect knowledge, that his having delivered a *saugrenu* judgment or two in his life by no means proves a man not to have had, in comparison with his fellow-men in general, a remarkable organ for truth, or disqualifies him for being, by virtue of that organ, a source of vital stimulus for us. Joubert had far less smoke and turbid vehemence in him than Coleridge; he had also a far keener sense of what was absurd. But Joubert can write to M.Molé (the M.Molé who was afterwards Louis Philippe's well-known minister): "As to your Milton, whom the merit of the Abbé Delille" (the Abbé Delille translated *Paradise Lost*) "makes me admire, and with whom I have nevertheless still plenty of fault to find, why, I should like to know, are you scandalised that I have not enabled myself to read him? I don't understand the language in which he writes, and I don't much care to. If he is a poet one cannot put up with, even in the prose of the younger Racine, am I to blame for that? If by force

you mean beauty manifesting itself with power, I maintain that the Abbé Delille has more force than Milton." That, to be sure, is a petulant outburst in a private letter; it is not, like Coleridge's, a deliberate proposition in a printed philosophical essay. But is it possible to imagine a more perfect specimen of a *saugrenu* judgment? It is even worse than Coleridge's because it is *saugrenu* with reasons. That, however, does not prevent Joubert from having been really a man of extraordinary ardour in the search of truth, and of extraordinary fineness in the perception of it; and so was Coleridge.

Joubert had round him in France an atmosphere of literary, philosophical, and religious opinion as alien to him as that in England was to Coleridge. This is what makes Joubert, too, so remarkable, and it is on this account that we begged the reader to remark his date. He was born in 1754; he died in 1824. He was thus in the fulness of his powers at the beginning of the present century, at the epoch of Napoleon's consulate. The French criticism of that day—the criticism of Laharpe's successors—of Geoffroy and his colleagues in the *Journal des Débats,* had a dryness very unlike the telling vivacity of the early Edinburgh reviewers, their contemporaries, but a fundamental narrowness, a want of genuine insight, much on a par with theirs. Joubert, like Coleridge, has no respect for the dominant oracle; he treats his Geoffroy with much the same want of deference as Coleridge treats his Jeffrey. "Geoffroy," he says, of an article in the *Journal des Débats* criticising Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme,* — "Geoffroy in this article begins by holding out his paw prettily enough; but he ends by a volley of kicks, which lets the whole world see but too clearly the four iron shoes of the four-footed animal." There is, however, in France a sympathy with intellectual activity for its own sake, and for the sake of its inherent pleasurableness and beauty, keener than any which exists in England; and Joubert had more effect in Paris—though his conversation was his only weapon, and Coleridge wielded besides his conversation his pen—than Coleridge had or could have in London. We mean, a more immediate, appreciable effect—an effect not only upon the young and enthusiastic, to whom the future belongs, but upon formed and important personages, to whom the present belongs, and who are actually moving society. He owed this partly to his real advantages over Coleridge. If he had, as we have already said, less

power and richness than his English parallel, he had more tact and penetration. He was more *possible* than Coleridge; his doctrine was more intelligible than Coleridge's, more receivable. And yet, with Joubert, the striving after a consummate and attractive clearness of expression came from no mere frivolous dislike of labour and inability for going deep, but was a part of his native love of truth and perfection. The delight of his life he found in truth, and in the satisfaction which the enjoying of truth gives to the spirit; and he thought the truth was never really and worthily said, so long as the least cloud, clumsiness, and repulsiveness hung about the expression of it.

9. Algernon Charles Swinburne, Prefatory Essay to his edition of *Christabel*

1875

From *Christabel and the Lyrical and Imaginative Poems of S.T.Coleridge,* 1875, v–xxiii. Swinburne (1837–1909) had already made a name for himself as a lyric poet with his *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865); by the 1870s he had also acquired a reputation for flouting moral conventions.

The great man of whom I am about to speak seems to me a figure more utterly companionless, more incomparable with others, than any of his kind. Receptive at once and communicative of many influences, he has received from none and to none did he communicate any of those which mark him as a man memorable to all students of men. What he learnt and what he taught are not the precious things in him. He has founded no school of poetry, as Wordsworth has, or Byron, or Tennyson; happy in this, that he has escaped the plague of pupils and parodists. Has he founded a

school of philosophy? He has helped men to think; he has touched their thought with passing colours of his own thought; but has he moved and moulded it into new and durable shapes? Others may judge better of this than I, but to me, set beside the deep direct work of those thinkers who have actual power to break down and build up thought, to construct faith or destroy it, his work seems not as theirs is. And yet how very few are even the great names we could not better afford to spare, would not gladlier miss from the roll of 'famous men and our fathers that were before us' [adaptation of *Ecclesiasticus* xliv, 1]. Of his best verses I venture to a affirm that the world has nothing like them, and can never have: that they are of the highest kind, and of their own. They are jewels of the diamond's price, flowers of the rose's rank, but unlike any rose or diamond known. In all times there have been gods that alighted and giants that appeared on earth; the ranks of great men are properly divisible, not into thinkers and workers, but into Titans and Olympians. Sometimes a supreme poet is both at once: such above all men is Æschylus; so also Dante, Michel Angelo, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Hugo, are gods at once and giants; they have the lightning as well as the light of the world, and in hell they have command as in heaven; they can see in the night as by day. As godlike as these, even as the divinest of them, a poet such as Coleridge needs not the thews and organs of any Titan to make him greater. Judged by the justice of other men, he is assailable and condemnable on several sides; his good work is the scantiest in quantity ever done by a man so famous in so long a life; and much of his work is bad. His genius is fluctuant and moonstruck as the sea is and yet his mind is not, what he described Shakespeare's to be, "an oceanic mind." His plea against all accusers must be that of Shakespeare, a plea unanswerable:

> I am that I am; and they that level
> At my abuses reckon up their own
> [Sonnet 121, ll. 9–10]

"I am that I am;" it is the only solid and durable reply to any impertinence of praise or blame. We hear too much and too often of circumstances or accidents that extenuate this thing or qualify that; there always may be; but usually—at least it seems so to me—we get

out of each man what he has in him to give. Probably at no other time, under no other conditions, would Coleridge for example have done better work or more. His flaws and failures are as much ingrained in him as his powers and achievements.

For from the very first the two sides of his mind are visible and palpable. Among all verses of boys who were to grow up great, I remember none so perfect, so sweet and deep in sense and sound, as those which he is said have written at school, headed "Time, Real and Imaginary." And following hard on these come a score or two of "poems," each more feeble and more flatulent than the last. Over these and the like I shall pass with all due speed, being undesirous to trouble myself or any possible reader with the question whether "Religious Musings" be more damnable than "Lines to a Young Ass," or less damnable. Even when clear of these brambles, his genius walked for some time over much waste ground with irregular and unsure steps. Some poems, touched with exquisite grace, with clear and pure harmony, are tainted with somewhat of feeble and sickly which impairs our relish; "Lewti" for instance, an early sample of his admirable melody, of tender colour and dim grace as of clouds, but effeminate in build, loose hung, weak of eye and foot. Yet nothing of more precious and rare sweetness exists in verse than that stanza of the swans disturbed [ll. 57–75 (*PW,* i, 255–6)]. His style indeed was a plant of strangely slow growth, but perfect and wonderful in its final flower. Even in the famous verses called "Love," he has not attained to that strength and solidity of beauty which was his special gift at last. For melody rather than for harmony it is perfect; but in this œnomel there is as yet more of honey than of wine.

Coleridge was the reverse of Antæus; the contact of earth took all strength out of him. He could not handle to much purpose any practical creed; his political verse is most often weak of foot and hoarse of accent. There is a graceful Asiatic legend cited by his friend Southey of "the footless birds of Paradise" who have only wings to sustain them, and live their lives out in a perpetual flight through the clearest air of heaven. Ancient naturalists, Cardan and Aldrovandus, had much dispute and dissertation as to the real or possible existence of these birds, as to whether the female did in effect lay her eggs in a hollow of the male's back, designed by nature to that end; whether they could indeed live on falling dew; and so forth. These questions we may presume to be decided; but it is clear

and certain enough that men have been found to live in much this fashion. Such a footless bird of Paradise was Coleridge; and had his wings always held out it had been well for him and us. Unhappily this winged and footless creature would perforce too often furl his wings in mid air and try his footing on earth, where his gait was like a swan's on shore.

Of his flight and his song when in the fit element, it is hard to speak at all, hopeless to speak adequately. It is natural that there should be nothing like them discoverable in any human work; natural that his poetry at its highest should be, as it is, beyond all praise and all words of men. He who can define it could "unweave a rainbow" [Keats, 'Lamia', l. 237]; he who could praise it aright would be such another as the poet. The "Christabel," the "Kubla Khan," with one or two more, are outside all law and jurisdiction of ours. When it has been said that such melodies were never heard, such dreams never dreamed, such speech never spoken, the chief thing remains unsaid, and unspeakable. There is a charm upon these poems which can only be felt in silent submission of wonder. Any separate line has its own heavenly beauty, but to cite separate lines is intolerable. They are to be received in a rapture of silence; such a silence as Chapman describes; silence like a god "peaceful and young," which

Left so free mine ears,
That I might hear the music of the spheres,
And all the angels singing out of heaven.[1]

More amenable to our judgment, and susceptible of a more definite admiration, the "Ancient Mariner," and the few other poems cast in something of a ballad type which we may rank around or below it, belong to another class. The chief of these is so well known that it needs no fresh comment. Only I will say that to some it may seem as though this great sea-piece might have had more in it of the air and savour of the sea. Perhaps it is none the worse; and indeed any one speaking of so great and famous a poem must feel and know that it cannot but be right, although he or another may think it would be better if this were retrenched or that appended. And this poem is beyond question one of the supreme triumphs of poetry. Witness the men who brought batteries to bear on it right and left. Literally: for one critic said

that the "moral sentiment" had impaired the imaginative excellence; another, that it failed and fell through for want of a moral foothold upon facts. Remembering these things, I am reluctant to proceed—but desirous to praise, as I best may. Though I doubt if it be worth while, seeing how the "Ancient Mariner" —praised or dispraised—lives and is like to live for the delight equally of young boys and old men; and seeing also that the last critic cited was no less a man than Hazlitt. It is fortunate— among many misfortunes—that for Coleridge no warning word was needed against the shriek of the press-gang from this side or that. He stooped once or twice to spurn them: but he knew that he stooped. His intense and overwrought abstraction from things of the day or hour did him no ill service here.

The "Ancient Mariner" has doubtless more of breadth and space, more of material force and motion, than anything else of the poet's. And the tenderness of sentiment which touches with significant colour the pure white imagination is here no longer morbid or languid, as in the earlier poems of feeling and emotion. It is soft and piteous enough, but womanly rather than effeminate; and thus serves indeed to set off the strange splendours and boundless beauties of the story. For the execution, I presume no human eye is too dull to see how perfect it is, and how high in kind of perfection. Here is not the speckless and elaborate finish which shows everywhere the fresh rasp of file or chisel on its smooth and spruce excellence; this is faultless after the fashion of a flower or a tree. Thus it has grown: not thus has it been carved.

Nevertheless, were we compelled to the choice, I for one would rather preserve "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel" than any other of Coleridge's poems. It is more conceivable that another man should be born capable of writing the "Ancient Mariner" than one capable of writing these. The former is perhaps the most wonderful of all poems. In reading it we seem rapt into that paradise revealed to Swedenborg, where music and colour and perfume were one, where you could hear the hues and see the harmonies of heaven. For absolute melody and splendour it were hardly rash to call it the first poem in the language. An exquisite instinct married to a subtle science of verse has made it the supreme model of music in our language, a model unapproachable except by Shelley. All the elements that compose the perfect form of English metre, as limbs and veins and features a beautiful body

of man, were more familiar, more subject as it were, to this great poet than to any other. How, for instance, no less than rhyme, assonance and alliteration are forces, requisite components of high and ample harmony, witness once for all the divine passage[2] which begins—

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion, &c.

All these least details and delicacies of work are worth notice when the result of them is so transcendent. Every line of the poem might be subjected to the like scrutiny, but the student would be none the nearer to the master's secret. The spirit, the odour in it, the cloven tongue of fire that rests upon its forehead, is a thing neither explicable nor communicable.

Of all Coleridge's poems the loveliest is assuredly "Christabel." It is not so vast in scope and reach of imagination as the "Ancient Mariner;" it is not so miraculous as "Kubla Khan;" but for simple charm of inner and outer sweetness it is unequalled by either. The very terror and mystery of magical evil is imbued with this sweetness; the witch has no less of it than the maiden; their contact has in it nothing dissonant or disfiguring, nothing to jar or to deface the beauty and harmony of the whole imagination. As for the melody, here again it is incomparable with any other poet's. Shelley indeed comes nearest; but for purity and volume of music Shelley is to Coleridge as a lark to a nightingale; his song heaven-high and clear as heaven, but the other's more rich and weighty, more passionately various, and warmer in effusion of sound.[3] On the other hand, the nobler nature, the clearer spirit of Shelley, fills his verse with a divine force of meaning, which Coleridge, who had it not in him, could not affect to give. That sensuous fluctuation of soul, that floating fervour of fancy, whence his poetry rose as from a shifting sea, in faultless completion of form and charm, had absorbed—if indeed there were any to absorb—all emotion of love or faith, all heroic beauty of moral passion, all inner and outer life of the only kind possible to such other poets as Dante or Shelley, Milton or Hugo. This is neither blameable nor regrettable; none of these could have done his work; nor could he have done it had he been in any way other or better than he was. Neither, for that matter, could we have had a Hamlet or a Faust from any of these, the poets of moral faith and passion, any more

than a "Divina Commedia" from Shakespeare, a "Prometheus Unbound" from Goethe. Let us give thanks for each after their kind to nature and the fates.

Alike by his powers and his impotences, by his capacity and his defect, Coleridge was inapt for dramatic poetry. It were no discredit to have fallen short of Shelley on this side, to be overcome by him who has written the one great English play of modern times [*The Cenci* (1820)]; but here the very comparison would seem a jest. There is little worth praise or worth memory in the " Remorse " except such casual fragments of noble verse as may readily be detached from the loose and friable stuff in which they lie imbedded. In the scene of the incantation, in the scene of the dungeon, there are two such pure and precious fragments of gold. In the part of Alhadra there are lofty and sonorous interludes of declamation and reflection. The characters are flat and shallow; the plot is at once languid, violent, and heavy. To touch the string of the spirit, thread the weft of evil and good, feel out the way of the soul through dark places of thought and rough places of action, was not given to this the sweetest dreamer of dreams. In " Zapolya " there are no such patches of imperial purple sewn on, but there is more of air and motion; little enough indeed of high dramatic quality, but a native grace and ease which give it something of the charm of life. In this lighter and more rapid work, the song of Glycine flashes out like a visible sunbeam; it is one of the brightest bits of music ever done into words.

The finest of Coleridge's odes is beyond all doubt the "Ode to France." Shelley declared it the finest of modern times, and justly, until himself and Keats had written up to it at least. It were profitless now to discuss whether it should take or yield precedence, when weighed with the "Ode to Liberty" or the "Ode to Naples." There is in it a noble and loyal love of freedom, though less fiery at once and less firm than Shelley's, as it proved in the end less durable and deep. The prelude is magnificent in music, and in sentiment and emotion far above any other of his poems, nor are the last notes inadequate to this majestic overture. Equal in force and sweetness of style, the "Ode on Dejection" ranks next in my mind to this one; some may prefer its vaguer harmonies and sunset colours to the statelier movement, the more august and solemn passion of the earlier ode.[4]

It is noticeable that only his supreme gift of lyrical power could

sustain Coleridge on political ground. His attempts of the kind in blank verse are poor indeed: —

Untimely breathings, sick and short assays. [Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece,* l. 1720]

Compare the nerveless and hysterical verses headed "Fears in Solitude" (exquisite as is the overture, faultless in tone and colour, and worthy of a better sequel) with the majestic and masculine sonnet of Wordsworth, written at the same time on the same subject [thinking, perhaps, of 'It is not to be thought of…']: the lesser poet—for, great as he is, I at least cannot hold Wordsworth, though so much the stronger and more admirable man, equal to Coleridge as mere poet—speaks with a calm force of thought and resolution; Coleridge wails, appeals, deprecates, objurgates in a flaccid and querulous fashion without heart or spirit. This debility of mind and manner is set off in strong relief by the loveliness of landscape touches in the same poem. The eclogue of "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," being lyrical, is worthier of a great name; it has force and motion enough to keep it alive yet and fresh, impeded and trammelled though it usually be by the somewhat vain and verbose eloquence of a needlessly "Apologetic Preface." Blank verse Coleridge could never handle with the security of conscious skill and a trained strength; it grows in his hands too facile and feeble to carry the due weight or accomplish the due work. I have not found any of his poems in this metre retouched and reinvigorated as a few have been among his others. One such alteration is memorable to all students of his art; the excision from the "Ancient Mariner" of a stanza (eleventh of the Third Part) which described the Deathmate of the Spectre-Woman, his bones foul with leprous scurf and green corruption of the grave, in contrast to the red lips and yellow locks of the fearfuller Nightmare Life-in-Death. Keats in like manner cut off from the "Ode on Melancholy" a first stanza preserved for us by his biographer, who has duly noted the delicate justice of instinct implied by this rejection of all ghastly and violent images, however noble and impressive in their violence and ghastliness, from a poem full only of the subtle sorrow born of beauty. The same keen and tender sense of right made Coleridge reject from his work the horrors while retaining the terrors of death. But of his studies in

blank verse he seems to have taken no such care. They remain mostly in a hybrid or an embryonic state, with birthmarks on them of debility or malformation. Two of these indeed have a charm of their own, not shallow or transient: the "Nightingale" and "Frost at Midnight." In colour they are perfect, and not (as usual) too effusive and ebullient in style. Others, especially some of the domestic or religious sort, are offensive and grievous to the human sense on that score. Coleridge had doubtless a sincere belief in his own sincerity of belief, a true feeling of his own truth of feeling; but he leaves with us too often an unpleasant sense or taste—as it were a tepid dilution of sentiment, a rancid unction of piety. A singular book published in 1835 without author's name, the work of some female follower, gives further samples of this in "Letters, Conversations and Recollections;" samples that we might well have spared.[5] A selection from his notes and remains, from his correspondence and the records of his "Table-Talk," even from such books as Cottle's and his anonymous disciples, would be of rare interest and value, if well edited, sifted and weeded of tares and chaff. The rare fragments of work done or speech spoken in his latter years are often fragments of gold beyond price. His plastic power and flexible charm of verse, though shown only in short flashes of song, lose nothing of the old freshness and life. To the end he was the same whose "sovereign sway and masterdom" [Shekespeare, *Macbeth,* Act I, Scene v, l. 71] of music could make sweet and strong even the feeble and tuneless form of metre called hexameters in English; if form of metre that may be called which has neither metre nor form. But the majestic rush and roll of that irregular anapæstic measure used once or twice by this supreme master of them all, no student can follow without an exultation of enjoyment. The "Hymn to the Earth" has a sonorous and oceanic strength of harmony, a grace and a glory of life, which fill the sense with a vigorous delight. Of such later work as the divine verses on "Youth and Age," "The Garden of Boccaccio," sun-bright and honey-sweet, "Work without Hope," (what more could be left to hope for when the man could already do such work?) —of these, and of how many more! what can be said but that they are perfect, flawless, priceless? Nor did his most delicate and profound power of criticism ever fail him or fall off. To the perfection of that rare faculty there were but two things wanting; self-command, and the natural cunning of words which has made many lesser men as

strong as he was weak in the matter of verbal emendation. In that line of labour his hand was unsure and infirm. Want of self-command, again, left him often to the mercy of a caprice which swept him through tangled and tortuous ways of thought, through brakes and byways of fancy, where the solid subject in hand was either utterly lost and thrown over, or so transmuted and transfigured that any recognition of it was as hopeless as any profit. In an essay well worth translating out of jargon into some human language, he speaks of "the holy jungle of transcendental metaphysics" [*Literary Remains,* ii, 349]. Out of that holy and pestilential jungle he emerged but too rarely into sunlight and clear air. It is not depth of thought which makes obscure to others the work of a thinker; real and offensive obscurity comes merely of inadequate thought embodied in inadequate language. What is clearly comprehended or conceived, what is duly thought and wrought out, must find for itself and seize upon the clearest and fullest expression. That grave and deep matter should be treated with the fluency and facility proper to light and slight things, no fool is foolish enough to desire: but we may at least demand that whatever of message a speaker may have for us be delivered without impediment of speech. A style that stammers and rambles and stumbles, that stagnates here, and there overflows into waste marsh relieved only by thick patches of powdery bulrush and such bright flowerage of barren blossom as is bred of the fogs and the fens—such a style gives no warrant of depth or soundness in the matter thus arrayed and set forth. What grains of truth or seeds of error were borne this way or that on the perpetual tide of talk concerning "subject and object," "reason and understanding," those who can or who care may at their leisure determine with the due precision. If to the man's great critical and philosophic faculty there had been added a formative power as perfect as was added to his poetic faculty, the fruit might have been as precious after its kind. As it is, we must judge of his poetic faculty by what is accomplished; of the other we must judge, not by what is accomplished, but by what is suggested. And the value of this is great, though the value of that be small: so great indeed that we cannot weigh or measure its influence and its work.

Our study and our estimate of Coleridge cannot now be discoloured or misguided by the attraction or repulsion to which all contemporary students or judges of a great man's work

cannot but be more or less liable. Few men, I suppose, ever inspired more of either feeling than he in his time did. To us his moral or social qualities, his opinion on that matter and his action in that, are nothing except in so far as they affect the work done, the inheritance bequeathed us. With all fit admiration and gratitude for the splendid fragments so bequeathed of a critical and philosophic sort, I doubt his being remembered, except by a small body of his elect, as other than a poet. His genius was so great, and in its greatness so many-sided, that for some studious disciples of the rarer kind he will doubtless, seen from any possible point of view, have always something about him of the old magnetism and magic. The ardour, delicacy, energy of his intellect, his resolute desire to get at the roots of things and deeper yet, if deeper might be, will always enchant and attract all spirits of like mould and temper. But as a poet his place is indisputable. It is high among the highest of all time. An age that should forget or neglect him might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. At least, any poet whom it did remember such an age would remember as something other than a poet; it would prize and praise in him, not the absolute and distinctive quality, but something empirical or accidental. That may be said of this one which can hardly be said of any but the greatest among men; that come what may to the world in course of time, it will never see his place filled. Other and stronger men, with fuller control and concentration of genius, may do more service, may bear more fruit; but such as his was they will not have in them to give. The highest lyric work is either passionate or imaginative; of passion Coleridge's has nothing; but for height and perfection of imaginative quality he is the greatest of lyric poets. This was his special power, and this is his special praise.

NOTES

1 *Euthymiae Raptus; The Tears of Peace* (1609).

2 Witness also the matchless fragments of metrical criticism in Coleridge's "Remains," which prove with what care and relish the most sweet and perfect harmonist among all our poets would set himself to examine and explain the alternations and sequences of sound in the noblest verse of others.

3 From this general rule I except of course the transcendent antiphonal music which winds up the "Prometheus" of Shelley, and should perhaps except also the "Ode to the West Wind," and the close of the "Ode to Naples." Against "Christabel" it would for example be fairer to set "The Sensitive Plant" for comparison of harmonies.

4 Some time later, when France, already stript of freedom and violated by treason, was openly paraded in her prostitution to the first Buonaparte, Coleridge published his "Ode to Tranquillity," beginning with two stanzas since retrenched. Having unearthed them in the "Annual Register for 1801" (vol. xliii, p. 525) I set them down here as better worth saving than most of his political verse.

[quotes ll. 1–16 of the original *Morning Post* version (*PW,* i, 360)]

5 It contains however among others one elaborate letter of some interest and significance, in which Coleridge, not without a tone of contempt, falls foul of the orthodox vulgarity of Wordsworth's theism ("what Hartley," his son, I presume, "calls the popping in of the old man with a beard") in a fashion showing how far apart his own theosophic mysticism, though never so daintily dressed up in cast church-clothes, had drifted from the more clear and rigid views of a harder and sounder mind.

10. John Tulloch, 'Coleridge as a Spiritual Thinker'

1885

From *Fortnightly Review,* January, 1885, new series xxxvii, 11–25. Tulloch (1823–86), Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrew's, was an eminent member of the Church of Scotland and a prolific author of books and essays on religious topics. His enthusiasm for German thought and for Neoplatonism was unusual. This essay seems to have been occasioned by H.D.Traill's *Coleridge* (1884), Chapter xii of which quotes at length from Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* to which Tulloch refers at the beginning and end of his essay.

Mr. Traill's recent volume has recalled the poet-philosopher who died just fifty years ago, leaving a strongly marked but indefinite impression upon the mind of his time. The volume has done something to renew and vivify the impression both in respect of Coleridge's poetry and criticism. His work as a critic has never, perhaps, been better or more completely exhibited. It is recognised generously in all its largeness and profundity, as well as delicacy and subtlety; and justice is especially done to his Shakesperian commentary, which in its richness, variety, felicity, combined with depth and acuteness, is absolutely unrivalled. But Mr. Traill cannot be said to have even attempted any estimate of Coleridge as a spiritual thinker. It may be questioned how far he has recognised that there is a spiritual side to all his thought, without which neither his poetry nor his criticism can be fully understood, cleverly as they may be judged.

It is not only out of date, but outside of all intelligent judgment, to quote at this time of day Mr. Carlyle's well-known caricature from his *Life of Sterling* [Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of John Sterling* (1851), Chapter 8], and put readers off with this as a "famous criticism." We now know how to value utterances of this kind, and the unhappy spirit of detraction which lay beneath such wild and grotesque humours. Carlyle will always remain an artist in epithets—but few will turn to him for an intelligent or comprehensive estimate of any great name of his own or of recent time.

We propose to look at Coleridge for a little as a religious thinker, and to ask what is the meaning and value of his work in this respect now that we can calmly and fully judge it. If Coleridge was anything, he was not only in his own view, as Mr. Traill admits, but in the view of his generation, a religious philosopher. It is not only the testimony of men like Hare, or Sterling, or Maurice, or even Cardinal Newman, but of John Stuart Mill, that his teaching awakened and freshened all contemporary thought. He was recognised with all his faults as a truly great thinker, who raised the mind of the time and gave it new and wide impulses. This judgment we feel sure will yet verify itself. If English literature ever regains the higher tone of our earlier national life—the tone of Hooker and Milton and Jeremy Taylor—Coleridge will be again acknowledged, in Julius Hare's words, as "a true sovereign of English thought." He will take rank in the same line of spiritual

genius. He has the same elevation of feeling, the same profound grasp of moral and spiritual ideas, the same wide range of vision. He has, in short, the same love of wisdom, the same insight, the same largeness—never despising nature or art, or literature, for the sake of religion, still less ever despising religion for the sake of culture. In reading over Coleridge's prose works again, returning to them after a long past familiarity, I am particularly struck by their massive and large intellectuality, akin to our older Elizabethan literature. There is everywhere the play of great power—of imagination as well as reason—of spiritual perception as well as logical subtlety.

To speak of Coleridge in this manner as a great spiritual power, an eminently healthy writer in the higher regions of thought, may seem absurd to some who think mainly of his life, and the fatal failure which characterised it. It is the shadow of this failure of manliness in his conduct, as in that of his life-long friend Charles Lamb, which no doubt prompted the great genius who carried manliness, if little sweetness, from his Annandale home [i.e. Carlyle], to paint both the one and the other in such darkened colours. We have not a word to say on behalf of the failings of either. They were deplorable and unworthy; but it is the fact, notwithstanding, that the mind of both retained a serenity and a certain touch of respectfulness which are lacking in their great Scottish contemporary. They were both finer-edged than Carlyle. They inherited a more delicate and polite personal culture; and delicacy can never be far distant from true manliness. Neither of them could have written of the treasures of old religion as Carlyle did in his *Life of Sterling*. Whether they accepted for themselves those treasures or not, they would have spared the tender faith of others and respected an ancient ideal. And this is the higher attitude. Nothing which has ever deeply interested humanity or profoundly moved it is treated with contempt by a good and wise man. It may call for and deserve rejection, but never insult. Unhappily this attitude of mind, reserved as well as critical, reverent as well as bold, has been conspicuously absent in some of the most powerful and best-known writers of our era.

There is a striking contrast between the career of Coleridge and that of his friend Wordsworth. Fellows in the opening of their poetic course, they soon diverged widely. With a true instinct, Wordsworth devoted himself, in quietness and seclusion, to the

cultivation of his poetic faculty. He left aside the world of politics and of religious thought, strongly moved as he had been by the interests of both. It may be said that Wordsworth continued a religious thinker as well as poet all his life. And to some extent this is true. The "Wanderer" [in *The Excursion*] is a preacher and not only a singer. He goes to the heart of religion, and lays again its foundations in the natural instincts of man. But while Wordsworth's poetry was instinct with a new life of religious feeling, and may be said to have given a new radiancy to its central principles,[1] it did not initiate any movement in Christian thought. In religious opinion Wordsworth soon fell back upon, if he ever consciously departed from, the old line of Anglican traditions. The vague Pantheism of the *Excursion* implies rather a lack of distinctive dogma than any fresh insight into religious problems or capacity of co-ordinating them in a new manner. And so soon as definite religious conceptions came to the poet, the Church in her customary theology became a satisfactory refuge. The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* mark this definite stage in his spiritual development. Wordsworth did for the religious thought of his time something more and better perhaps than giving it any definite impulse. While leaving it in the old channels, he gave it a richer and deeper volume. He showed with what vital affinity religion cleaves to humanity, in all its true and simple phases, when uncontaminated by conceit or frivolity. Nature and man alike were to him essentially religious, or only conceivable as the outcome of a Spirit of life, "the Soul of all the worlds."[2] Wordsworth, in short, remained as he began, a poet of a deeply religious spirit. But he did not enter the domain of theological speculation or attempt to give any new direction to it.

In all this Coleridge is his counterpart. He may be said to have abandoned poetry just when Wordsworth in his retirement at Grasmere (1799) was consecrating his life to it. Whether it be true, according to De Quincey, that Coleridge's poetical power was killed by the habit of opium-eating, it is certainly true that the harp of Quantock[3] was never again struck save for a brief moment. The poet Coleridge passed into the lecturer and the poetical and literary critic, and then, during the final period of his life, from 1816 to 1834, into the philosopher and theologian. It is to this latter period of his life in the main that his higher prose writings belong, and especially the well-known *Aids to Reflection,* which—disparaged as

it is by Mr. Traill—may be said to contain, as his disciples have always held to contain, all the finer substance of his spiritual thought. It is true that it is defective as a literary composition. We are even disposed to allow that it has "less charm of thought, less beauty of style," and in some respects even less "power of effective statement,"[4] than is common with Coleridge; but withal it is his highest work. These very defects only serve to bring out the more its strong points, when we consider the wonderful hold the book has taken of many minds, and how it has been the subject of elaborate commentary.[5] It is a book, we may at the same time say, which none but a thinker on divine things will ever like. All such thinkers have prized it greatly. To many such it has given a new force of religious insight; for its time, beyond all doubt, it created a real epoch in Christian thought. It had life in it; and the living seed, scattered and desultory as it was, brought forth fruit in many minds.

What, then, were its main contributions to religious thought, and in what respects generally is Coleridge to be reckoned a spiritual power?

(1.) First, and chiefly in the *Aids to Reflection,* Coleridge may be said to have transformed and renewed the current ideas of his time about religion. He was, we know, a man of many ambitions never realised; but of all his ambitions, the most persistent was that of laying anew the foundations of spiritual philosophy. This was "the great work" to which he frequently alluded as having given "the preparation of more than twenty years of his life."[6] Like other great tasks projected by him, it was very imperfectly accomplished; and there will always be those in consequence who fail to understand his influence as a leader of thought. We are certainly not bound to take Coleridge at his own value, nor to attach the same importance as he did to some of his speculations.[7] No one, indeed, knew better than Coleridge himself that there was nothing new in his Platonic Realism. It was merely a restoration of the old religious metaphysic which had preceded "the mechanical systems," that became dominant in the reign of Charles the Second. He himself constantly claims to do nothing more than re-assert the principles of Hooker, of Henry More, of John Smith, and Leighton, all of whom he speaks of as "Platonizing divines!" But the religious teaching of Coleridge came upon his generation as a new breath, not merely or mainly because he revived these ancient principles, but because he vitalised anew their application to Christianity, so as to transform it from a

mere creed, or collection of articles, into a living mode of thought, embracing all human activity. Coleridge was no mere metaphysician. He was a great interpreter of spiritual facts—a student of spiritual life, quickened by a peculiarly vivid and painful experience; and he saw in Christianity, rightly conceived, at once the true explanation of the facts of our spiritual being and the true remedy for their disorder. He brought human nature, not merely on one side, but all sides, once more near to Christianity, so as to find in it not merely a means of salvation in any limited evangelical sense, but the highest Truth and Health—a perfect philosophy. His main power lies in this subjective direction, just as here it was that his age was most needing stimulus and guidance.

The Evangelical School, with all its merits, had conceived of Christianity rather as something superadded to the highest life of humanity than as the perfect development of that life; as a scheme for human salvation authenticated by miracles, and, so to speak, interpolated into human history rather than a divine philosophy, witnessing to itself from the beginning in all the higher phases of that history. And so Philosophy, and no less Literature, and Art, and Science, were conceived apart from religion. The world and the Church were not only antagonistic in the Biblical sense, as the embodiments of the Carnal and the Divine Spirit—which they must ever be; but they were, so to speak, severed portions of life divided by outward signs and badges; and those who joined the one or the other were supposed to be clearly marked off. All who know the writings of the Evangelical School of the eighteenth and earlier part of the nineteenth century, from the poetry of Cowper and the letters of his friend Newton, to the writings of Romaine, John Forster, and Wilberforce, and even Chalmers, will know how such commonplaces everywhere reappear in them. That they were associated with the most devout and beautiful lives, that they even served to foster a peculiar ardour of Christian feeling and love of God, cannot be disputed. But they were essentially narrow and false. They destroyed the largeness and unity of human experience. They not merely separated religion from art and philosophy, but they tended to separate it from morality.

Coleridge's most distinctive work was to restore the broken harmony between reason and religion, by enlarging the conception of both, but of the latter especially, —by showing how man is essentially a religious being having a definite spiritual constitution,

apart from which the very idea of religion becomes impossible. Religion is not, therefore, something brought to man, it is his highest education. Religion, he says, was designed "to improve the nature and the faculties of man, in order to the right governing of our actions, to the securing the peace and progress, external and internal, of individuals and communities." Christianity is in the highest degree adapted to this end; and nothing can be a part of it that is not duly proportioned thereto. In thus vindicating the rationality of religion, Coleridge had a twofold task before him, as every such thinker has. He had to assert against the Epicurean and Empirical School the spiritual constitution of human nature, and against the fanatical or hyper-evangelical school the reasonable working of spiritual influence. He had to maintain, on the one hand, the essential divinity of man, that "there is more in him than can be rationally referred to the life of nature and the mechanism of organisation," and on the other hand to show that this higher life of the spirit is throughout rational—that it is superstition and not true religion which professes to resolve "men's faith and practice" into the illumination of such a spirit as they can give no account of, —such as does not enlighten their reason or enable them to render their doctrine intelligible to others. He fights, in short, alike against materialistic negation and credulous enthusiasm.

The former he meets with the assertion of "a spirituality in man," a self-power or Will at the root of all his being. "If there be ought spiritual in man, the will must be such. If there be a will, there must be a spirituality in man." He assumes both positions, seeing clearly—what all who radically deal with such a question must see—that it becomes in the end an alternative postulate on one side and the other. The theologian cannot prove his case, because the very terms in which it must be proved are already denied *ab initio* by the materialist. But no more can the materialist, for the same reason, refute the spiritual thinker. There can be no argument where no common premiss is granted. Coleridge was quite alive to this, yet he validly appeals to common experience. "I assume," he says, "a something the proof of which no man can give to another, yet every man may find for himself. If any man assert that he has no such experience, I am bound to disbelieve him, I cannot do otherwise without unsettling the foundation of my own moral nature. For I either find it as an essential of the humanity common to him and to me, or I have not found it at

all.... All the significant objections of the materialist and necessitarian," he adds, "are contained in the term morality, and all the objections of the infidel in the term religion. These very terms imply something granted, which the objector in each case supposes not granted. A moral philosophy is only such because it assumes a principle of morality, a will in man, and so a Christian philosophy or theology has its own assumptions resting on three ultimate facts, namely, the reality of the law of conscience; the existence of a responsible will as the subject of that law; and lastly, the existence of God...The first is a fact of consciousness; the second, a fact of reason necessarily concluded from the first; and the third, a fact of history interpreted by both."

These were the radical data of the religious philosophy of Coleridge. They imply a general conception of religion which was revolutionary for his age, simple and ancient as the principles are. The evangelical tradition brought religion to man from the outside. It took no concern of man's spiritual constitution beyond the fact that he was a sinner and in danger of hell. Coleridge started from a similar but larger experience, including not only sin but the whole spiritual basis on which sin rests. "I profess a deep conviction," he says, "that man is a fallen creature," "not by accident of bodily constitution or any other cause, but as diseased in his will—in that will which is the true and only strict synonyme of the word I, or the intelligent Self." This "intelligent Self" is a fundamental conception lying at the root of his system of thought. Sin is an attribute of it, and cannot be conceived apart from it, and conscience, or the original sense of right and wrong governing the will. Apart from these internal realities there is no religion, and the function of the Christian Revelation is to build up the spiritual life out of these realities—to remedy the evil, to enlighten the conscience, to educate the will. This effective power of religion comes directly from God in Christ. Here Coleridge joins the Evangelical School, as indeed every school of living Christian Faith. This was the element of truth he found in the doctrine of Election as handled "practically, morally, humanly," by Leighton. Every true Christian, he argues, must attribute his distinction not in any degree of himself— "his own resolves and strivings," "his own will and understanding," still less to "his own comparative excellence," —but to God, "the being in whom the promise of life originated, and on whom its fulfilment depends." Election so far is

a truth of experience. "This the conscience requires; this the highest interests of morality demand." So far it is a question of facts with which the speculative reason has nothing to do. But when the theological reasoner abandons the ground of fact and "the safe circle of religion and practical reason for the shifting sand-wastes and mirages of speculative theology," then he uses words without meaning. He can have no insight into the workings or plans of a Being who is neither an object of his senses nor a part of his self-consciousness.

Nothing can show better than this brief exposition how closely Coleridge in his theology clung to a base of spiritual experience, and sought to measure even the most abstruse Christian mysteries by facts. The same thing may be shown by referring to his doctrine of the Trinity, which has been supposed the most transcendental and, so to speak, "Neo-Platonist" of all his doctrines. But truly speaking his Trinitarianism, like his doctrine of Election, is a moral rather than a speculative truth. The Trinitarian idea was, indeed, true to him notionally. The full analysis of the notion "God" seemed to him to involve it. "I find a certain notion in my mind, and say that is what I understand by the term God. From books and conversation I find that the learned generally connect the same notion with the same word. I then apply the rules laid down by the masters of logic for the involution and evolution of terms, and prove (to as many as agree with my premisses) that the notion 'God' involves the notion 'Trinity.'" So he argued, and many times recurred to the same Transcendental analysis. But the truer and more urgent spiritual basis of the doctrine of the Trinity, even to his own mind, was not its notional but its moral necessity. Christ could only be a Saviour as being Divine. Salvation is a Divine work. "The idea of redemption involves belief in the Divinity of our Lord. And our Lord's Divinity again involves the Trinitarian idea, because in and through this idea alone the Divinity of Christ can be received without breach of faith in the Unity of the Godhead." In other words, the best evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity is the compulsion of the spiritual conscience which demands a Divine Saviour; and only in and through the great idea of Trinity in Unity does this demand become consistent with Christian Monotheism.[8]

These doctrines are merely used in illustration, as they are by Coleridge himself in his *Aids to Reflection*. But nothing can show in

a stronger light the general character of the change which he wrought in the conception of Christianity. From being a mere traditional creed, with Anglican and Evangelical, and it may be added Unitarian alike, it became a living expression of the spiritual consciousness. In a sense, of course, it had always been so. The Evangelical made much of its living power, but only in a practical and not in a rational sense. It is the distinction of Coleridge to have once more in his age made Christian doctrine alive to the reason as well as the conscience—tenable as a philosophy as well as an evangel. And this he did by interpreting Christianity in the light of our moral and spiritual life. There are aspects of Christian truth beyond us—*Exeunt in mysteria* ['They culminate in mysteries']. But all Christian truth must have vital touch with our spiritual being, and be so far at least capable of being rendered in its terms, or, in other words, be conformable to reason.

There was nothing absolutely new in this luminous conception, but it marked a revolution of religious thought in the earlier part of our century. The great principle of the Evangelical theology was that theological dogmas were true or false without any reference to a subjective standard of judgment. They were true as pure data of revelation, or as the propositions of an authorised creed settled long ago. Reason had, so far, nothing to do with them. Christian truth, it was supposed, lay at hand in the Bible, an appeal to which settled every thing. Coleridge did not undervalue the Bible. He gave it an intelligent reverence. But he no less reverenced the spiritual consciousness or divine light in man; and to put out this light, as the Evangelical had gone far to do, was to destroy all reasonable faith. This must rest not merely on objective data, but on internal experience. It must have not merely authority without, but *rationale* within. It must answer to the highest aspiration of human reason, as well as the most urgent necessities of human life. It must interpret reason and find expression in the voice of our higher humanity, and so enlarge itself as to meet all its needs.

If we turn for a moment to the special exposition of the doctrines of sin and redemption which Coleridge has given in the *Aids to Reflection,* it is still mainly with the view of bringing out more clearly his general conception of Christianity as a living movement of thought rather than a mere series of articles or a traditionary creed.

In dealing first with the question of sin, he shows how its very idea is only tenable on the ground of such a spiritual constitution in man as he has already asserted. It is only the recognition of a true will in man—a spirit or supernatural in man, although "not necessarily miraculous" —which renders sin possible. "These views of the spirit and of the will as spiritual," he says more than once, "are the groundwork of my scheme." There was nothing more significant or fundamental in all his theology. If there is not always a supernatural element in man in the shape of spirit and will, no miracles or anything else can ever authenticate the supernatural to him. A mere formal orthodoxy, therefore, hanging upon the evidence of miracles, is a suspension bridge without any real support. So all questions between infidelity and Christianity are questions here, at the root, and not what are called "critical" questions as to whether this or that view of the Bible be right, or this or that traditionary dogma be true. Such questions are, truly speaking, inter-Christian questions, the freest views of which all Churches must learn to tolerate. The really vital question is whether there is a divine root in man at all—a spiritual centre answering to a higher spiritual centre in the universe. All controversies of any importance come back to this. Coleridge would have been a great Christian thinker if for no other reason than this, that he brought all theological problems back to this living centre, and showed how they diverged from it. Apart from this postulate, sin was inconceivable to him; and in the same manner all sin was to him sin of origin or "original sin." It is the essential property of the will that it can originate. The phrase original sin is therefore "a pleonasm." If sin was not original, or from within the will itself, it would not deserve the name. "A state or act that has not its origin in the will may be a calamity, deformity, disease, or mischief, but a sin it cannot be."

Again he says: "That there is an evil common to all is a fact, and this evil must, therefore, have a common ground. Now this evil ground cannot originate in the Divine will; it must, therefore, be referred to the will of man. And this evil ground we call original sin. It is a mystery, that is, a fact which we see but cannot explain; and the doctrine a truth which we apprehend, but can neither comprehend nor communicate. And such by the quality of the subject (namely, a responsible will) it must be, if it be truth at all."

This inwardness is no less characteristic of Coleridge's treatment of the doctrine of atonement or redemption. It is intelligible so far as it comes within the range of spiritual experience. So far its nature and effects are amply described or figured in the New Testament, especially by St. Paul. And the apostle's language, as might be expected, "takes its predominant colours from his own experience, and the experience of those whom he addressed." "His figures, images, analogies, and references," are all more or less borrowed from this source. He describes the Atonement of Christ under four principal metaphors: 1. Sin-offering, sacrificial expiation. 2. Reconciliation, atonement, [reconciliation]. 3. Redemption, or ransom from slavery. 4. Satisfaction, payment of a debt. These phrases are not designed to convey to us all the Divine meaning of the atonement, for no phrases or figures can do this; but they set forth its general aspect and design. One and all they have an intelligible relation to our spiritual life, and so clothe the doctrine for us with a concrete living and practical meaning. But there are other relations and aspects of the doctrine of atonement that transcend experience, and consequently our powers of understanding. And all that can be said here is, "exit in mysteria." The rationalism of Coleridge is at least a modest and self-limiting rationalism. It clears the ground within the range of spiritual experience, and floods this ground with the light of reason. There is no true doctrine can contradict this light, or shelter itself from its penetration. But there are aspects of Christian doctrine that outreach all grasp of reason, and before which reason must simply be silent. For example, the Divine act in redemption is "a causative act—a spiritual and transcendent mystery *that passeth all understanding. 'Who knoweth the mind of the Lord, or being his counsellor who hath instructed him?' Factum est.*" This is all that can be said of the mystery of redemption, or of the doctrine of atonement on its Divine side.

And here emerges another important principle of the Coleridgian theology. While so great an advocate of the rights of reason in theology, of the necessity, in other words, of moulding all its facts in a synthesis intelligible to the higher reason, he recognises strongly that there is a province of Divine truth beyond all such construction. We can never understand the fulness of Divine mystery, and it is hopeless to attempt to do so. While no mind was less agnostic in the modern sense of the term, he was yet,

with all his vivid and large intuition, a Christian agnostic. Just because Christianity was Divine, a revelation, and not a mere human tradition, all its higher doctrines ended in a region beyond our clear knowledge. As he himself said, "If the doctrine is more than a hyperbolical phrase it must do so." There was great pregnancy in this as in his other conceptions; and probably no more significant change awaits the theology of the future than the determination of this province of the unknown, and the cessation of controversy, as to matters which come within it, and therefore admit of no dogmatic settlement.

(2) But it is more than time to turn to the second aspect, in which Coleridge appears as a religious leader of the thought of the nineteenth century. The *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* was not published till six years after his death, in 1840; and it is curious to notice their accidental connection with the *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul,* which had been translated by Carlyle some years before.[9] These *Confessions,* in the shape of seven letters to a friend, gather together all that is valuable in the Biblical criticism of the author scattered through his various writings; and although it may be doubtful whether the volume has ever attained the circulation of the *Aids to Reflection,* it is eminently deserving—small as it is, nay, because of its very brevity—of a place beside the larger work. It is eminently readable, terse and nervous, as well as eloquent in style. In none of his writings does Coleridge appear to greater advantage, or touch a more elevating strain, rising at times into solemn music.

The *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* were of course merely one indication of the rise of a true spirit of criticism in English theology. Arnold, Whately, Thirlwall [Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), Richard Whately (1787–1863), and Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875)], and others, it will be seen, were all astir in the same direction, even before the *Confessions* were published. The notion of verbal inspiration, or the infallible dictation of Holy Scripture, could not possibly continue after the modern spirit of historical inquiry had begun. As soon as men plainly recognised the organic growth of all great facts, literary as well as others, it was inevitable that they should see the Scriptures in a new light, as a product of many phases of thought in course of more or less perfect development. A larger and more intelligent sense of the conditions attending the origin and progress of all civilisation, and of the

immaturities through which religious as well as moral and social ideas advance, necessarily carried with it a changed perception of the characteristics of Scriptural revelation. The old Rabbinical notion of an infallible text was sure to disappear. The new critical method besides is, in Coleridge's hands, rather an idea—a happy and germinant thought—than a well-evolved system. Still to him belongs the honour of having first plainly and boldly announced that the Scriptures were to be read and studied, like any other literature, in the light of their continuous growth, and the adaptation of their parts to one another.

The divinity of Scripture appears all the more brightly when thus freely handled. "I take up the work," he says, "with the purpose to read it as I should read any other work—so far as I can or dare. For I neither can nor dare throw off a strong and awful prepossession in its favour, certain as I am that a large part of the light and life in and by which I see, love, and embrace the truths and the strengths organised into a living body of faith and knowledge have been directly or indirectly derived to me from the sacred volume." All the more reason why we should not make a fetish of the Bible, as the Turk does of the Koran. Poor as reason may be in comparison with "the power and splendour of the Scriptures," yet it is and must be for him a true light. "While there is a Light higher than all, even the *Word that was in the beginning;* —the Light of which light itself is but the Shechinah and cloudy tabernacle; —there is also a 'Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;' and the spirit of man is declared to be 'the candle of the Lord.'" "If between this Word," he says, "and the written letter I shall anywhere seem to myself to find a discrepance, I will not conclude that such there actually is. Nor, on the other hand, will I fall under the condemnation of those that would *lie for God,* but, seek as I may, be thankful for what I have and wait."

Such is the keynote of the volume. The supremacy of the Bible as a divinely inspired literature is plainly recognised from the first. Obviously it is a book above all other books in which deep answers to deep, and our inmost thoughts and most hidden griefs find not merely response, but guidance and assuagement. And whatever there *finds* us "bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from the Holy Spirit." "In the Bible," he says again, "there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being, and

whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

But there is much in the Bible that not only does not find us in the Coleridgian sense, but that seems full of contradictions, both moral and historical; the psalms in which David curses his enemies; the obviously exaggerated ages attributed to the patriarchs; and the incredible number of the armies said to be collected by Abijah and Jeroboam (2 Chron. xiii. 3), and other incidents familiar to all students of Scripture. What is to be made of such features of the Bible? According to the old notion of its infallibility such parts of Scripture, no less than its most elevating utterances of "lovely hymn and choral song and accepted prayer of saint and prophet," were to be received as dictated by the Holy Spirit. They were stamped with the same Divine authority. Coleridge rightly enough emphasises this view as that of the fathers and reformers alike; but he no less rightly points out that not one of them is consistent in holding to their general doctrine. Their treatment of the Scriptures in detail constantly implies the fallacy of the Rabbinical tradition to which they yet clung. He no less forcibly points out that the Scriptures themselves make no such pretension to infallibility, "explicitly or by implication." "On the contrary, they refer to older documents, and on all points express themselves as sober-minded and veracious writers under ordinary circumstances are known to do." The usual texts quoted, such as 2 Tim. iii. 16, have no real bearing on the subject. The little we know as to the origin and history of many of the books of the Bible, of "the time of the formation and closing of the canon," of its selectors and compilers, is all opposed to such a theory. Moreover, the very nature of the claim stultifies itself when examined. For "how can infallible truth be infallibly conveyed in defective and fallible expression?"

But if the tenet of verbal inspiration has been so long received and acted on "by Jew and Christian, Greek, Roman, and Protestant, why can it not now be received?" "For every reason," answered Coleridge, "that makes me prize and revere these Scriptures; —prize them, love them, revere them beyond all other books." Because such a tenet "falsifies at once the whole body of holy writ, with all its harmonious and symmetrical gradations." It turns "the breathing organism into a colossal Memnon's head, a hollow passage for a voice," which no man hath uttered, and no

human heart hath conceived. It evacuates of all sense and efficacy the fact that the Bible is a Divine literature of many books "composed in different and widely distant ages under the greatest diversity of circumstances and degrees of light and information." So he argues in language I have partly quoted and partly summarised. And then he breaks forth into a magnificent passage about the song of Deborah, a passage of rare eloquence with all its desultoriness, but which will hardly bear separation from the context. The wail of the Jewish heroine's maternal and patriotic love is heard under all her cursing and individualism— mercy rejoicing against judgment. In the very intensity of her primary affections is found the rare strength of her womanhood; and sweetness lies near to fierceness. Such passages probably give us a far better idea of the occasional glory of the old man's talk as "he sat on the brow of Highgate Hill," than any poor fragments of it that have been preserved. Direct and to the point it may never have been, but at times it rose into an organ swell with snatches of unutterable melody and power.

(3.) But Coleridge contributed still another factor to the impulsion of religious thought in his time. He did much to revive the historic idea of the Church as an intellectual as well as a spiritual commonwealth. Like many other ideas of our older national life this had been depressed and lost sight of during the eighteenth century. The Evangelical party, deficient in learning generally, was especially deficient in breadth of historical knowledge. Milner's History, if nothing else, serves to point this conclusion. The idea of the Church as the mother of philosophy and arts and learning, as well as the nurse of faith and piety, was unknown. It was a part of the Evangelical creed, moreover, to leave aside as far as possible mere political and intellectual interests. These belonged to the world, and the main business of the religious man was with religion as a personal affair, of vast moment, but outside all other affairs. Coleridge helped once more to bring the Church as he did the gospel into larger room as a great spiritual power of manifold influence.

This volume *On the Constitution of Church and State according to the idea of each* was published in 1830, and was the last volume which the author himself published. The Catholic Emancipation question had greatly excited the public mind, and some friend had appealed to Coleridge expressing astonishment that he should be in

opposition to the proposed measure. He replied that he is by no means unfriendly to Catholic emancipation, while yet "scrupling the means proposed for its attainment." And in order to explain his difficulties he composed a long letter to his friend which is really an essay or treatise, beginning with the fundamental principles of his philosophy and ending with a description of antichrist. The essay is one of the least satisfactory of his compositions from a mere literary point of view, and is not even mentioned by Mr. Traill in his recent monograph. But amidst all its involutions and ramblings it is stimulating and full of thought on a subject which almost more than any other is liable to be degraded by unworthy and sectarian treatment. Here, as everywhere in Coleridge's writings, we are brought in contact with certain large conceptions which far more than cover the immediate subject in hand.

It has been sometimes supposed that Coleridge's theory of the Church merely revived the old theory of the Elizabethan age so powerfully advocated by Hooker and specially espoused by Dr. Arnold in later times. According to this theory the Church and State are really identical, the Church being merely the State in its educational and religious aspect and organization. But Coleridge's special theory is different from this, although allied to it. He distinguishes the Christian Church as such from any national church. The former is spiritual and catholic, the latter institutional and local. The former is opposed to the "world," the latter is an estate of the realm. The former has nothing to do with states and kingdoms. It is in this respect identical with the "spiritual and invisible church known only to the Father of Spirits," and the compensating counterpoise of all that is of the world. It is, in short, the Divine aggregate of what is really Divine in all Christian communities, and more or less ideally represented "in every true church." A national church again is the incorpora-tion of all the learning and knowledge—intellectual and spiritual— tion of all the learning and knowledge—intellectual and spiritual— in a country. Every nation in order to its true health and civilisation requires not only a land-owning or permanent class along with a commercial, industrial, and progressive class, but moreover, an educative class to represent all higher knowledge, "to guard the treasures of past civilisation," to bind the national life together in its past, present, and future, and to communicate to all citizens a clear understanding of their rights and duties. This third estate of

the realm Coleridge denominated the "Clerisy," and included not merely the clergy, but, in his own language, "the learned of all denominations." The knowledge, which it was their function to cultivate and diffuse, embraced not only theology, although this pre-eminently as the head of all other knowledge, but law; music, mathematics, the physical sciences, "all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and cultivation of which constitute the civilisation of a country."

This is at any rate a large conception of a national church. It is put forth by its author with all earnestness, although he admitted that it had never been anywhere realised. But it was his object "to present the *Idea* of a national church as the only safe criterion by which we can judge of existing things." It is only when "we are in full and clear possession of the ultimate aim of an institution" that we can ascertain how far "this aim has ever been attained in other ways."

These, very briefly explained, are the main lines along which Coleridge moved the national mind in the third decade of this century. They may seem to some rather impalpable lines, and hardly calculated to touch the general mind. But they were influential, as the course of Christian literature has since proved. Like his own genius, they were diffusive rather than concentrative. The Coleridgian ideas permeated the general intellectual atmosphere, modifying old conceptions in criticism as well as theology, deepening if not always clarifying the channels of thought in many directions, but especially in the direction of Christian philosophy. They acted in this way as a new circulation of spiritual air all around, rather than in conveying any new body of truth. The very ridicule of Carlyle testifies to the influence which they exercised over aspiring and younger minds. The very emphasis with which he repudiates the Coleridgian metaphysic probably indicates that he had felt some echo of it in his own heart.

NOTES

1 Admiration, Hope, and Love. *Excursion,* b. iv.
2 Ditto, b. ix.
3 Not only the *Ancient Mariner* and the first part of *Christabel,* but also *Kubla Khan* were composed at Nether Stowey among the Quantock

Hills in 1797. The second part of *Christabel* belongs to the year 1800, and was written at Keswick, although not published till 1816. Nothing of the same quality was ever produced by Coleridge, although he continued to write verses.

4 It is strange, however, to find Mr. Traill commending Coleridge's very last volume (1830), *On the Constitution of Church and State*, as "yielding a more characteristic flavour of the author's style" than the *Aids to Reflection*. Characteristic, no doubt, this volume is of the author's mode of thought; but in point of style, it and his *Lay Sermon* or *Statesman's Manual* in 1816 appear to us the most desultory and imperfect of all his writings.

5 By Dr. James Marsh, an American divine, whose preliminary essay is prefaced to the fifth English edition, and by Mr. Green in his *Spiritual Philosophy* (1865), founded on Coleridge's teaching.

6 *Spiritual Philosophy, founded on the Teaching of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. By Jos. Henry Green, F.R.S., D.C.L. 1865.

7 The idea is elaborated in a clever but superficial and narrow book, *Modern Anglican Theology,* by the Rev. James H.Rigg. 1857.

8 This was a favourite thought with Coleridge, as, for example, in his *Literary Remains* (vol. i. p. 393–4): "The Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead would have been a necessary idea of my speculative reason. God must have had co-eternally an adequate idea of Himself in and through which He created all things. But this would only have been a speculative idea. Solely in consequence of our redemption does the Trinity become a doctrine, the belief of which as real is commanded by conscience."

9 In his well-known translation of *Wilhelm Meister*.

11. From Edward Dowden, 'Coleridge as a Poet', *Fortnightly Review*

September, 1889, new series xlvi, 342–66

Dowden (1843–1913) was Professor of English Literature in Trinity College, Dublin. His *Life of Shelley* had appeared in 1886.

It would need Coleridge the critic to discover the secrets of the genius of Coleridge the poet. To solve intellectual puzzles in verse, to condense a diffused body of doctrine, to interpret what is called a poet's criticism of life is after all not difficult; but to find expressions in the language of thought corresponding to pure melody and imaginative loveliness is a finer exercise of wit. In one of his pieces of blank verse Coleridge has described a vision of the graceful white-armed Isabel reflected in the placid waters of a lonely stream; let but a blossom of willow-herb or a fox-glove bell be tossed upon the pool and the charm is broken—

> All that phantom-world so fair
> Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
> And each mis-shape the other.
> ['The Picture', ll. 92. 92–4 (*PW,* i, 372)]

The description might stand for that of Coleridge's own poetry personified, with its visionary beauty and its harmony of exquisite colours; and what shall be said of the critic who flings his heavy stone of formula and scatters the loveliness?

There is a quality of Coleridge's work as a poet which has obtained little attention from the critics, and yet which submits itself to criticism without injury to the beauty of the whole. The critics tell us of the romantic strangeness of his work like that of "a lady from a far countree," its wealth of fantastic incident, its dream-like inconsequence, its cloud-like and rainbow-like splendours; and the critics have a reason for what they say. But they hardly recognise

enough the fine humanity in Coleridge's poetry. He has been admirably compared by Mr. Swinburne to a footless bird of paradise. Another great poet, Mr. Swinburne's friend, Dante Rossetti, has a far different comparison, though here also to a bird, in his sonnet on Coleridge, and the lines are valuable, at least, as containing a fragment of sound criticism.

> His Soul fared forth (as from the deep home-grove
> The father-songster plies the hour-long quest),
> To feed his soul-brood hungering in the nest;
> But his warm Heart, the mother-bird, above
> Their callow fledgling progeny still hove
> With tented roof of wings and fostering breast
> Till the Soul fed the soul-brood. Richly blest
> From Heaven their growth, whose food was Human Love.

"I conceive the leading point about Coleridge's work," wrote Dante Rossetti, "is its human love;" and yet Rossetti least of all men could be insensible to its romantic beauty, or the incantation of its verse. If we would express the whole truth about Coleridge as a poet, we must find some mode of reconciling the conception of him as the footless bird of paradise with our knowledge of his affluent and sweet humanity.

To understand and to feel his poetry aright we must think of him, not as for ever floating on golden and emerald plumes somewhere above Mount Abora and feeding on the honey-dew, but also as nestling in that cottage at Clevedon or at Nether Stowey with a wife and child, loving the Somerset hills and coombs, rich in friendships, and deeply interested in the great public events of his own time. It was a fortunate time, if to be compelled to think, to hope, and to fear in early manhood be fortunate; a time when the great name for honour or detestation in English politics was that of William Pitt; when the French Revolution was not a thing to be studied in documents, but an enormous phenomenon in process of actual development, a neighbouring Vesuvius, glorious or terrible, in active eruption; when the chief rival political teachers of England were the doctrinaire Godwin with his haughty abstractions of reason, and Edmund Burke who inspired the historical British habit of thinking with the perfervid passion of the Celt; when Hartley's system of physical psychology had all the force derived from its presenting a

novel view of human nature apparently in harmony at once with science and with religion; when in literature the return to nature and the sentimental reaction from the dryness and formality of the earlier part of the century were represented by Cowper and Burns, and when with the return to nature there came the discovery of the supernatural and the romantic; when Macpherson's Ossian, if discredited by scholarship, was still an influence; when the genius of Chatterton had aided in the revival of an imaginative mediævalism, and when Mrs. Radcliffe thrilled the nerves of our fair foremothers with her tales of the forest and mountain, the lonely lake, the ruined castle, the vault, the secret passage, the cowled monk, the torturer of the Inquisition, the high-souled chieftain of banditti, and the gliding apparitions of the dead. We smile at the stage-heroes, stage-villains, and tarnished stage-properties, but they interested a simple generation which had not learnt to sympathise with the trials, difficulties, and dangers of fervid young clergymen struggling amid the shallows of biblical criticism.

Such was the time; and the place was no less faithfully mirrored in Coleridge's verse. The landscape poetry of England gains not a little in interest when we can recognise its truthfulness to the local character and spirit of the several districts which it depicts. We hardly do justice to Cowper's descriptive fidelity until we have grown familiar with the low-lying country watered by the Ouse; nor to that of Crabbe, until we have become acquainted with the coast scenery of Suffolk, its sullen ocean, its sandy levels, its commons wild and bleak, its scanty herbage, and the saline vegetation of its fens. The genius of the English Lake District through all its moods, from the nestling beauty of the cottage, owning "its own small pasture, almost its own sky," to the visionary glory of the mountain-heights at sunrise or in wreathing mists or under the midnight stars, is expressed in the poetry of Wordsworth. But if we would find a poetical rendering of the landscape of the Quantocks, with its unambitious loveliness of coomb and cliff, the exquisite delicacy of its green dells, each possessing a murmuring and living stream, and again those fine bursts of prospect, including the Severn and the Bristol Channel, visible from its smooth green heights, we must turn to the Nether Stowey poems of Coleridge. For Coleridge the peculiar charm of the district lay in its twofold beauty—the beauty of those nooks made for silent repose or secluded meditation, and

the larger and freer beauty of wide-spreading woods and pastures beheld in one and the same moment with the glory of the sea. The elevation of the Quantock hills, reaching at most twelve hundred feet, is never such as to disconnect the climber from the humanity which reposes or toils below. There are hills of snow and even hills of heather which seem to lead us to the gate of heaven; the smooth airy ridge of the Quantocks is not framed for ecstasy or awe, but it enlarges our sense of the cheerful beauty of the earth.[1] In April, 1798, when England was alarmed by the report of an intended French invasion, Coleridge wrote his *Fears in Solitude,* and the opening and closing lines of the poem present us with this twofold beauty of the Quantock district: —

> A green and silent spot amid the hills,
> A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
> No singing skylark ever poised himself.
> The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
> Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
> All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
> Which now blooms most profusely; but the dell,
> Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
> As vernal cornfield, or the unripe flax,
> When, through its half-transparent stalks at eve,
> The level sunshine glimmers with green light.

In this silent dell among the hills the poet meditates on the great events of the time, and in truth grows over-rhetorical and over-didactic in the utterance of his fears and hopes. And when heart and brain are weary he turns homeward to wind his way by the green sheep-track up the height of Dousborough, when suddenly he pauses upon the brow, startled, and yet pleased by the prospect below: —

> This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
> Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty
> Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
> And elmy fields, seems like society—
> Conversing with the mind, and giving it
> A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!

And the heart of all this beauty is the cottage which shelters the beings whom he loves: —

> And now beloved Stowey! I behold
> Thy church-tower, and methinks, the four huge elms
> Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend:
> And close behind them, hidden from my view,
> Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe,
> And my babe's mother dwell in peace.

It is the same contrast, characteristic of the Quantock scenery, between the coomb or dell and the landscape as seen from the heights, which reappears in that poem, the title of which is itself a poem, "The Lime-tree Bower my Prison." A delightful prison for the limbs, but none for the thoughts and wishes which follow his friends to that spot now known as Wordsworth's Glen, then called "The Mare's Pool," about a quarter of a mile from Alfoxden: —

> The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
> And only speckled by the midday sun;
> Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
> Flings arching like a bridge;

and where within the breathing of the little waterfall the hart's-tongue ferns—

> Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
> Of the blue slate-stone.

But presently the wanderers, as he imagines them, are on the hilltop edge, and view—

> The many-steepled tract magnificent
> Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
> With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
> The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two isles
> Of purple shadow!

Assuredly the writer of these lines, who was a traveller at times through cloudland, and who could create from his imagination such visions as those of *Kubla Khan,* had also his foot on English grass and heather, and writing, to use Wordsworth's phrase, with his eye upon the object, was able to add a page of rare fidelity to the descriptive poetry of our country.

Old Parkinson [John Parkinson (1567–1650), author of *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640), etc.], in recounting the virtues of the hart's-tongue fern, tells us that divers commend the distilled water thereof to be taken against the passions of the heart; but the ferns of Wordsworth's Glen—and the fact has not been noticed—exerted a malign influence over Coleridge. My readers will remember the unhappy "Drip, drip, drip, drip" in the cavern scene of *Osorio,* and the sorry jest of Sheridan, to whom Coleridge had sent his manuscript— "In short," said he, "it was all dripping:"

> A jutting clay-stone
> Drips on the long lank weed that grows beneath;
> And the weed nods and drips.

The cavern in which Osorio murders Ferdinand is in Grenada, among the Alpujarras; but we have only to glance at "The Lime-Tree Bower my Prison" to make sure that the ferns are those of Somerset, for here too we find "the dark green file of long lank weeds" that "nod and drip beneath the dripping edge of the blue clay-stone." Dioscorides [or Dioscurides (1st century A.D.), author of a *Materia medica*], who saith that the hart's-tongue water is a preservative against the stings of serpents, as regards this instance at least did vainly teach.

The character of the Quantock landscape is interpreted in Coleridge's poetry, but what of the inhabitants of the district—cottagers of Stowey, toilers in the fields and shepherds of the hills? Where are they? Nowhere in any of his poems. He lived with his own thoughts and fancies in dell or on upland, his affections twined themselves around the beloved inmates of his cottage and certain cherished friends; he was deeply interested in great national questions of the day, but neither now nor at any other time did he exercise his imagination with the joys and sorrows of the humble men and women among whom his lot was cast. We must turn to Wordsworth's poems of this period if we would find any imaginative record of the life of the inhabitants of the district; it is there we read of the Holford peasant mourning for the last of his dwindled flock, of the wronged and distracted mother bearing her infant on her breast, of the old huntsman Simon Lee and his pathetic gratitude, of Martha Ray and the mysterious hillock of moss beside the solitary thorn-tree, of the idiot boy and his moonlight adventures.

Coleridge's domestic life was not fortunate or wisely managed, but at Clevedon, for some time after his early marriage, he was as happy as a lover. Every one who knows his early verse remembers the frequent references to his beloved Sara, which are provoking in their lack of real characterisation. With the most exquisite feeling for womanhood in its general features, he seems to have been incapable of drawing strongly the features of any individual woman. His nearest approach to the creation of a heroine is perhaps in his Illyrian queen, Zapolya. Even Christabel is a figure somewhat too faintly drawn, a figure expressing indeed the beauty, innocence, and gentleness of maidenhood, but without any of the traits of a distinctive personality. All his other imaginings of women are exquisite abstractions, framed of purely feminine elements, but representing Woman rather than being themselves veritable women. His comment on Pope's line, "Most women have no character at all," [variant on *Moral Essays,* 'Epistle II', l. 2] is an unconscious apology for his own practice. Shakespeare, he says, who knew man and woman much better than Pope, saw that it was the perfection of woman to be characterless. This, which is conspicuously untrue of the creator of the two Portias, Rosalind, Viola, Isabel, Hermione, Juliet, Imogen, is absolutely true of Coleridge himself, and of what he saw or thought he saw in woman. He can no more paint a variety of female portraits than can Stothard [Thomas Stothard (1755–1834), book illustrator; Coleridge's 'The Garden of Boccaccio' was written to accompany one of his plates]. The delicacy of design and occasionally the exquisite execution almost, but not quite, prevent us from feeling a certain monotony in Stothard's charming pictures of maidenhood, in which no line is ever introduced which is not purely feminine, but in which also a type is presented rather than a person; and so it is with the poet who has justly praised the art of Stothard. We can collect no portrait of Sara Coleridge from her husband's verse, but we get a delightful picture of the happiness of early wedded life from such a poem as that which describes husband and wife seated together in the twilight beside their jasmine-covered cottage at Clevedon, while they watch the darkening clouds and the evening star as it shines forth: —

How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hush'd!
The stilly murmur of the distant sea
Tells us of silence.

We seem to know the baby Hartley through his father's poetry better than we know his "pensive Sara." Coleridge indeed has said nothing of his son in verse so admirable as what he said in a letter which describes Hartley as "a strange, strange boy, exquisitely wild, an utter visionary, like the moon among thin clouds he moves in a circle of his own making. He alone is a light of his own. Of all human beings I never saw one so utterly naked of self." Nor has he written of Hartley in verse anything so happy in characterisation or so pathetic in its power of prophecy as Wordsworth's lines addressed to the fairy-like boy at the age of six ['Ode: Intimations of Immortality', ll. 86–129]. But his father has recorded in a sonnet his hopes and fears while hastening to his wife from a distance on hearing of the infant's birth; and in another well-known sonnet has told of the momentary sadness that seized him when he first gazed into the face of his child, a sadness that passed away in the rapture of a father's and a husband's love. Nor will any reader of Coleridge forget his midnight companionship with the cradled and sleeping infant as related in "Frost at Midnight," all tenderest paternal hopes and wishes hovering over the cot and mingling with the gentle breathings of the sleeper. We are told that the pensive Sara had a just ground of complaint against Samuel for the late hours that he kept, the Bard pacing up and down the room composing poetry when he and she ought to be sleeping the sleep of the just.[2] Wordsworth looking back upon his past life thought with remorse of the many occasions on which in consequence of yielding to his immoderate passion for walking, he had kept the family dinner waiting. But as we can forgive Wordsworth his domestic crime for the sake of a "Leech Gatherer" or a "Michael," so "Frost at Midnight" may atone for many a darkling reverie of Coleridge in that Stowey cottage where solitude and silence were not always to be had in the workaday hours. In another of the Nether Stowey poems, while Coleridge recalls the "skirmish and capricious passagings" of the nightingales, his fatherly thoughts turn to his boy, just now beginning to "mar all things with his imitative lisp," and he imagines how the little one would hearken to the nightingale's song with baby hand held up:

And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's playmate. He knows well
The evening star; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain

Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream!)
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hush'd at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam!

"Well," adds the poet apologetically, "it is a father's tale." Let us not mar the tale by cynical conjecture as to how the mother, his serious Sara, may have regarded this mode of treating an infant's "inward pain." Let us rather think of what Rossetti dwells on, the human love in Coleridge's poetry, and think also of the pathos of these paternal cares and fears and hopes when viewed in connection with Hartley's gentle yet not blameless future life.

Although in his poetry Coleridge never deals, as Wordsworth does, with the characters and lives of the men and women among whom he dwelt, his verse no less than his prose informs us how deeply moved he was by the general concerns of the nation and by the public events of his time. His earliest volume of poems had given utterance, sometimes in turbid rhetoric, to his democratic ardour and that desire to simplify life which was one of the better characteristics of the revolutionary temper. The young ass which he hails as "Brother" (with all the emphasis of capital letters), if transported to the dell of peace and mild equality on the banks of the Susquehanna, would frisk as gleesome as a kitten, and his Bray of Joy would be more musically sweet to his poet than warbled melodies—

That soothe to rest
The tumult of some Scoundrel Monarch's breast![3]

Earl Stanhope, the "Friend of the Human Race," is great and glorious because he has redeemed himself from "that leprous stain Nobility," and refuses to sit with the rest complotting against Gallic Liberty—

Who from the Almighty's bosom leapt
With whirlwind arm, fierce Minister of Love.

The sainted form of Freedom mourns over the errors of Burke (styled elsewhere by Coleridge the Hercules Furens of politics) whose crime it was, not indeed to be corrupted by the bribes of

tyranny, but to be bewildered by the disturbance of his own nobler faculties, by "stormy pity" and "proud precipitance of soul." The name of Iscariot, a convenient term of reproach then as now, is reserved for the statesman whose name was formed by letters four, him who kissed his country with the apostate's lips—

> Staining most foul a godlike father's name.

Yet his abhorrence of Pitt's policy could not wholly alienate Coleridge's affections from the land of his birth. The declaration of war against France put a strain upon his loyalty, and he felt as Tom Poole and many other excellent men felt, that he could not wish for success in arms to the Powers leagued against what seemed to be the hope of the whole human race. But even when he opposed or stood aloof from the action of the English nation, he did this, as he believed, out of a care for the highest interests of the country. In the ode which apostrophises Albion as "doomed to fall, enslaved and vile" (to be significantly altered in a later text to "not yet enslaved, not wholly vile"), occurs that exquisite address to his sea-encircled native land—the Somerset landscape appearing once again, but now in the ideal light of imaginative vision—of which the last lines haunt the memories of all lovers of poetry who are lovers of England, almost with the charm of some of Shakespeare's patriotic words: —

> And Ocean mid his uproar wild
> Speaks safety to his island-child.

In the *Fears in Solitude,* while Coleridge still declaims against the sins of England, and protests against the mad idolatry of national wrong-doing, which in claiming the appellation of patriotism insults that great name, he yet utters himself before the close with all the filial loyalty of a true son of England, and he declares in a noble strain of eloquence how the foundations of his patriotism have been laid in the domestic affections, in friendship, in the strength of natural love, in the spiritual influences derived from the beauty of external nature, and in whatever other ground there may be for joys and hopes that ennoble the heart.

> There lives nor form nor feeling in my Soul
> Unborrow'd from my country! O divine

> And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
> And most magnificent temple, in the which
> I walk with awe.

Such patriotism as this can only be uprooted together with the very foundations of our moral being.

Now in these two things—first, his alienation from the policy of England and attachment to principles of broader import than the traditional; and secondly, his loyalty to England founded on deep and abiding affections—lay much of Coleridge's future way of thinking and feeling. He broke with tradition in the vulgar sense of the word; he broke with tradition in theology, philosophy, politics; yet he did so in a spirit more truly loyal to the past than was the common orthodoxy in theology or philosophy, or the common Toryism in politics. One of the chief moral and intellectual effects of the French Revolution was that it threw ardent young minds abroad upon a search for first principles. "In tranquil moods and peaceable times," Coleridge writes, "we are quite practical. Facts only and cool common sense are then in fashion. But let the winds of passion swell, and straightway men begin to generalise; to connect by remotest analogies; to express the most universal positions of reason in the most glowing figures of fancy; in short, to feel particular truths and mere facts as poor, cold, narrow, and incommensurate with their feelings."[4] The passion for truth-seeking and the desire to find rest in primary principles were, through all his changes of opinion, characteristic of Coleridge from first to last, and if these had not their origin in, they derived a confirming impulse from, his early revolutionary excitement. As a critic of literature he lights up the subjects of which he treats, because he is not willing to pronounce dogmatic judgments as if from a magisterial chair, but rather seeks after and finds the inner springs of life in each work of art, and so puts us on the track which the artist followed in the act of creation. As a thinker on politics he begins by comparing the several systems of political justice and tracing the origin of government to what he holds to be its true foundation in expediency and prudence. When he would write of the National Church he must first ascertain the "idea" of the Church as the clerisy of the nation, comprehending not the ministers of religion alone, but also the learned of all denominations. His writings on theology have been pointed to as aiding at once the development of the High-Church school of thought and the

rationalistic movement; for in fact he could not think on behalf of a mere party. "Even with regard to Christianity itself," he says, "like certain plants, I creep towards the light, even though it draw me away from the more nourishing warmth. Yea, I should do so, even if the light had made its way through a rent in the wall of the Temple." If anything imparts unity to his marred life, now soaring high or diving deep, now trailing in the dust with broken wing, it is this, that alike in the glory of his youth and the dawn of his genius, in the infirmity and conscious self-degradation of his manhood, and amid the lassitude and languor of his latest days, he was always one who loved the light and grew towards it. [The review continues with a biographically arranged critique of Coleridge's poetry.]

NOTES

1 I may refer the reader to an interesting little volume, *The Quantocks and their Associations,* by the Rev. W.L.Nichols (Bath: printed for private circulation, 1873), to which I owe the identification of some of the localities described by Coleridge.
2 Mrs. Sandford's *Thomas Poole and his Friends,* i. 239.
3 Altered in the edition of 1797 to "The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast".
4 Coleridge's *Lay Sermons,* p. 16, third edition.

POETICAL WORKS

1893

12. Unsigned review in *Athenaeum*

1893

From *Athenaeum,* 17 June, 1893, No. 3425, 757–60

Though Mr. Dykes Campbell has been unable, notwithstanding all his research, to unearth a single unpublished verse of Coleridge's that was worth unearthing, he has given us by far the most complete edition of Coleridge's poems that has ever appeared. Besides this he has produced a monograph on the life of the poet so full and yet so compact that it must needs supersede its predecessors. In dealing with works of this kind it is always easy for the critic to point out sins both of omission and of commission; but where such sins are so few as those to be found in this volume, to direct prominent attention to them, in a review article whose brevity will not allow justice to be done to a tithe of the merits of the book, would be as unfair to our readers as to the author. Scarcely ever is there a biography issued from the press that is free from slight errors which, if challenged in a review, would furnish material for several columns of strictures. On the whole, it may be said that Mr. Campbell's biographical sketch is as admirable in accuracy as in proportion and symmetry. Only on very rare occasions does it appear that further research might have resulted in the discovery of new facts such as would enable the reader to form a true judgment of Coleridge's complex character. Perhaps, however, that portion of the biography which deals with the poet's life at Jesus College, Cambridge (where he was entered as a sizar in 1791), might have gained by a little expansion. In the career of a man of poetic genius there is often no period more important, as certainly there is none more plastic, than that which is covered by his undergraduate days. Notwithstanding such notable cases of

"poetic families" as those of the Brontës, the Tennysons, the Rossettis, poetic genius seems to be governed by none of those laws of heredity about which it is so much the fashion in these days to talk. The probabilities are always in favour of a poet's early environment being as anti-poetic as that of Shakspeare and Shelley. The poet's entry into college life is, therefore, very likely to be the first occasion when he meets his kind in the matter of true sympathy. In every arena of life "birds of a feather flock together." And it is inevitable that the effect of the impact of his surroundings upon him, at a period of the poet's life when mind and character are so specially sensitive to every impression, should remain through his entire life.

There can be no doubt, for instance, that the fact of Coleridge's going to Jesus College, Cambridge, had a very great influence upon him as a thinker. It was at the time when William Frend's controversial pamphlets (published by Bloom, of St. Ives, Hunts, because they could not be published at Cambridge) were producing a very great effect, not only at Jesus, but among many undergraduates of other colleges. With regard to those of Jesus, it may be said, perhaps, that they generally sympathized with Frend, and Coleridge's bold expressions of sympathy made him at once a marked man. When Frend, a Fellow of Jesus, was tried in the Vice-Chancellor's Court in May, 1793, for having given expression not only to Unitarianism in religion, but to opinions equally obnoxious in politics, Coleridge comported himself in such fashion at the trial that he must needs afterwards move under a cloud at Cambridge. Moreover, one of Coleridge's intimate friends was a man who, although his name is now forgotten, was, as some who knew him have asserted, the originator of the entire movement—John Hammond, of Fenstanton. A Fellow of Queens', a man of great accomplishments, a good Hebrew scholar, a botanist, an enthusiastic amateur gardener, and an original thinker—a talker rather than a writer—Hammond nevertheless, in his pamphleteering quarrels, such as that with Cowling, showed himself to be a master of a vigorous polemical style. Coleridge and other undergraduates used to visit Hammond at his house, about ten miles from Cambridge; but perhaps the only record of him that is likely to survive is George Dyer's 'Ode' to him, "written in a garden," the best poetical effusion of that eccentric man.

The monograph is not entirely free from that droll patronizing tone which every man feels called upon to adopt as soon as he writes about Coleridge. While the Wordsworthian speaks with hushed breath of the leader of his choice, and while the Shelleyan does the same with regard to Shelley, the Coleridgean is never tired of dwelling upon Coleridge's infirmities of character. How many preachments, for instance, have there been upon Coleridge's incapacity to finish a work of poetic art! and how many causes— all of them to Coleridge's disparagement—have been found for this infirmity of his! No one has thought it worth while to inquire whether Coleridge's habit of leaving his finest poems unfinished did not arise from that excess of artistic strength in one direction of poetic art, leading to weakness in other directions, which is seen in all artists save the very greatest.

In the art of poetry one of the chief graces is the achievement of such an artistic fusion of the sequences that they shall seem to read like one sentence. When these fused sequences become inseparable parts of a great and artistically fused whole, the result is an 'Oresteia,' a 'Divina Commedia,' a 'Hamlet,' or a 'Macbeth'. Some poets, while incapable of constructing in ever so rough a fashion a work of art of any length beyond that of a few hundred lines, are capable of fusing their verses up to that extent and bringing them to absolute perfection, as we see in the case of Keats. Nothing can be finer than the fusion of 'Hyperion.' Line for line, it may be compared with the work of the great masters. But the poetic energy necessary to the production of work like this is enormous. Keats's stock of energy was exhausted before he could finish the third book. Wordsworth's power of fusion was as great in regard to a limited number of sequences as Keats's, but much more limited as regards continuity. On the other hand, the voluble genius of Walter Scott enabled him to furnish rough and raw drafts of poetic narratives of great vigour—narratives having an artistic beginning, middle, and end—but he was apparently without the power of artistically fusing more than two or three sequences. The same may be said of Byron, whose entire body of work could not furnish a single sequence of fifty lines that is properly fused, or that is not disfigured by half a dozen slovenly verses. Shelley's 'Cenci' seems to indicate that, had he lived, he might have shown the power of realizing a complete artistic conception in a form perfectly fused throughout.

Now in criticizing Coleridge it is always necessary to remember that in this power of fusing poetic sequences he has scarcely an equal in English poetry. But in all the arts the best is the enemy of the good, and it was, we suspect, this very power of fusing and perfecting sequences that caused him to leave so much of his best work unfinished. While Scott and Byron could dash off a rounded story in diction not much above that of prose, Coleridge's fastidious attention to the poetic medium prevented him from getting beyond a comparatively small number of lines; for if it is true that unheard melodies are sweeter than those that are heard, it is equally true that to certain kinds of poets the unwritten line is greater than the written one, and a too acute consciousness of this fact when at work will paralyze a poet of Coleridge's temperament. And then, again, opium is nearly as destructive as alcohol itself to that power of concentrating all the forces of the "poetic mind" from which alone great and complete poems can spring. The fusion in Coleridge's best work is seen in a thousand ways—in the alliterations, in the elisions, in vowel composition, and, above all, in the dominance of the rhyme music. Take 'Kubla Khan,' for instance. From the first line to the last it is one and indivisible. A remarkable instance of this fusion is seen in the introduction of caves of ice in the palace described by Purchas. Purchas's words are these: —

> In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightful Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the middest thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.

Now, the poet's object being to give an imaginative landscape that should combine all that could be brought into one beautiful picture of the luxurious and the wonderful, his favourite word "paradise" was indispensable; and as, to give it its proper power, it had to be a rhyme-word, and as the only true rhymes to "paradise" that could call up a proper objective picture were "ice," "spice," and "rice," the first of these words was selected. But so true a master of fusion as Coleridge would not and could not leave the introduction of the ice caves until they were actually wanted for rhyme purposes. He introduced them earlier, in a detailed description of the palace, in order to make practical use of them afterwards.

The same fusion is apparent in 'The Ancient Mariner,' and still more apparent in 'Christabel,' where the entire poem is so fused as to show no weaknesses, either in rhyme music or in vowel composition. In order to carry on such perfect fusion as this through a poem of any length the genius of Æschylus, or Sophocles, or Dante is needed. But Coleridge's fragments are finer, from the artistic point of view, than the completed poems of any one of his contemporaries.

Coleridge's unveracity about his own poems is another favourite subject of comment among his admirers. For some reason or another the rule of construction in regard to any statement by Coleridge as to the date and origin of a poem is this: the statement is assumed to be false until it is proved to be true. No doubt Coleridge was in the habit of speaking with great looseness as to the dates of his poems. For instance, we agree with Mr. Campbell that the lovely allegory 'Time, Real and Imaginary,' attributed by Coleridge to his "schoolboy days," must have undergone great and radical revisions at the time when it first appeared in 'Sibylline Leaves.' Yet it was easy and natural for Coleridge to associate this perfect little poem, as it now stands, with his school days, when some far inferior form of it might have been composed. Indeed, the best defence of Coleridge against the impeachment of having, through vanity or from an instinct for deception, claimed for his early youth poems which from internal evidence belong manifestly to the ripest period of his artistic life, lies in the fact that his entire work shows him to have been an insatiable elaborator. His method, we think, can be best shown by referring to a fine generalization upon the technicalities of art, plastic and literary, which Rossetti made some years ago, when criticizing the 'Parables and Tales' of Dr. Gordon Hake:

The quality of finish in poetic execution is of two kinds. The first and highest is that where the work has been all mentally 'cartooned,' as it were, beforehand, by a process intensely conscious, but patient and silent, —an occult evolution of life: then follows the glory of wielding words, and we see the hand of Dante, as that of Michelangelo, —or almost as that quickening Hand which Michelangelo has dared to embody, —sweep from left to right, fiery and final. Of this order of poetic action, —the omnipotent free will of the artist's mind, —our curbed and slackening world may seem to have seen the last. It has been succeeded by another kind of "finish,"

devoted and ardent, but less building on ensured foundations than self-questioning in the very moment of action or even later: yet by such creative labour also the evening and the morning may be blent to a true day, though it be often but a fitful or an unglowing one. Not only with this second class, but even with those highest among consummate workers, productiveness must be found, at the close of life, to have been comparatively limited; though never failing, where a true master is in question, of such mass as is necessary to robust vitality.

How many English poets since Shakspeare can be brought under the first of these categories it would be difficult to say; but we believe that among the second the most notable example is Coleridge. Not, of course, that the mere excellence of a poem necessarily implies elaboration. We know from Shelley's manuscripts that he elaborated a good deal, otherwise there is nothing even in such a poem as the 'Ode to the West Wind' that might not conceivably be thrown off at a heat by a poet with such a genius as Shelley's, and with habits so temperate as his. But in Coleridge's case it is the *kind* of excellence—or rather it is the combination of opposite excellences—shown by his best work that can only be explained, if explained at all, as being the result of artistic elaboration.

There is not room here to discuss 'The Ancient Mariner,' in which the changes are numerous and in some instances, transfiguring. No doubt most readers are familiar with the various forms in which that unique poem has appeared. The changes made in several other poems of Coleridge's are also before the eye of the world. 'Youth and Age,' for instance, which seems so homogeneous, is well known to be a patchwork poem, one portion having been written at one period of the poet's life, and one at another, while the conclusion consists of lines taken from a so-called sonnet, and welded into the little poem at the end with a marvellous skill and daring, though not, perhaps, to the advantage of the poem.

With regard to 'Christabel,' though there is not much external evidence of elaboration (for the changes preserved by J.P.Collier and others are really not important), there is plenty of internal evidence that an artistic elaboration of the rarest and most intense kind was called into play. For instance, whatever was really to have been the future course of the story, the situation of unequalled terror in which the heroine is left at the end of Part the

First was intolerable. A foreshadowing of a happy ending was absolutely necessary before the second part could be entered upon. And Coleridge set himself to work to foreshadow it in what is called the "conclusion to Part the First." This conclusion is at once a recapitulation of the incidents that have gone before—a recaptitulation that is as succinct as a newspaper summary—and a prophecy as to the future. No doubt a plan such as this might have occurred to any poet. But the execution—what an exercise of all the powers of all the different kinds of poets was required for that! One of the greatest of all the difficulties of the poet's art is to write a brief summary of events that shall be poetry, and at the same time business-like, dramatic, and picturesque. Some, indeed, have affirmed that Dante alone has succeeded in making, under the conditions of poetic art, the statement, brief yet full, such as it is the function of prose to achieve. But to do this in verses that are as full of picture as any narrative poetry can possibly be, as full of drama as any dramatic poetry can possibly be, and yet in a movement whose lyrical witchery has been achieved by the most perfect alliteration, "liquification," and vowel composition—a witchery that has never been equalled in the English language—was in the power of one poet alone— Coleridge. Now that this recapitulatory statement of matters of fact must have been sketched out in a form far less lyrical and immeasurably more imperfect than we now get it—that it must have been *cartooned,* in short—is certain—certain from what we know of the movements of the human mind when dealing with language, especially with the English language, that requires so much manipulation by the poetic artist. And yet if Coleridge had been asked for the date of this marvellous conclusion to Part the First, he would naturally and inevitably have given the date of the original cartoon. The perfection born of an unwearying elaboration would seem to him to have been always there. And how much of what the editors and critics of the great poet— following blindly other presumptuous editors and critics— persist in calling his unveracity may be explained in the same way!

No doubt it may be said in answer to this that if Coleridge's habit of elaborating his work exonerates him from the charge of practising a wilful deception in giving a later date to certain poems than can be established by the historic facts of the case, this same habit of elaboration lends great improbability to his story of the

genesis of 'Kubla Khan.' And as this, we fear, cannot be gainsaid we may as well confront it at once. In a general way it is best not to "consider too curiously" the question what may have been the changes in a beautiful poem or a perfect line. It is, indeed, always a misfortune for the reader when some busy bibliographer persists in thrusting under his eyes some earlier and inferior form of some favourite line or passage; and for that reason it is in one sense fortunate that no manuscript of 'Kubla Khan' does exist [the reviewer relies on Dykes Campbell here]. Yet in this, as in all other respects, 'Kubla Khan' stands by itself as the greatest marvel of mere poetic expression in the English language save 'Christabel' — a marvel in which are combined, among other excellences, the opposite forces of the two opposite kinds of poets—those who record the emotions aroused in the poet's soul by the pageantry of nature and the world of man, and those who, entering into competition with the worker in the plastic arts, endeavour to render the pageantry in an objective picture. And the question whether 'Kubla Khan' was or was not composed in a dream has an interest of a very special kind. It touches, indeed, upon the great subject of the movements of the poetic mind when at work—a subject of the deepest interest to all critics. A few lines from the opening of the familiar fragment will make these remarks more lucid: —

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea,
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

That the first eleven lines of this extract were written without any other changes than those recorded by Leigh Hunt, the substitution of "decree" for *ordain* and "sea" for *main,* is not impossible. But it is the form the poem takes at the twelfth line—the line we have italicized—that gives the critic pause; for it is here that the real marvel of the writing begins—a marvel the effect of which is to combine the rapturous exclamatory method of one mood of the poetic mind with the simply descriptive methods of the opposite mood. Had the poem gone on in the simple indicative fashion with which it opens—had the twelfth line stood

> There was a deep romantic chasm which slanted,

or

> There yawned a deep romantic chasm which slanted,

it would not have been absolutely impossible to imagine that the poem underwent no revision, although even then it would have been difficult to think that such an amazing combination of the greatest musical triumph in the English language with the greatest pictorial triumph could have been poured out in one stream. As regards poetic expression, all things, however, were possible to Coleridge, except the feat of working a positive miracle—a miracle that should abrogate those inexorable laws by which the human mind works. But supposing there were no other changes, it is incredible that the twelfth line began with

> But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted,

—incredible on account of the elaborate and self-conscious descriptive writing that follows it.

Moreover, the ravishing music of Coleridge, like the ravishing music of all our best rhyming poets, depends largely upon his yielding to the magic of mellifluous rhymes. The richer the poet's mind, the more easily able is he to allow rhyme to act as his rudder. To the born rhymer it is far more easy to write in rhyme than to write in prose; for in prose there is nothing in the verbal medium to suggest ideas, while the associative power of the mind when the poet is in search of rhymes is constantly pulling up from the abysmal deeps of personality riches of thought and emotion which have lain there for years, and would never have come to light but for the

poet's quest of rhymes. And, as we have seen when speaking of Coleridge's power of fusion, the rhyme-demands had something to do with the course the poem took: the caves of ice, which Purchas never dreamt of, owed their existence to the demands of rhyme. In a word, this wonder of poetic art, which we are asked to believe was composed in a dream—in that condition of the mind when "monarch reason" has quitted his throne, and when the mimic fancy wakes,

> Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
> A court of cobblers or a mob of kings—
> [John Dryden; 'The Cock and the Fox', ll. 328–9]

is more full of the subtlest artistic effects, some of them being of a most self-conscious kind, than any other poem in the English language. That verses may be composed in dreams every poet knows; but the question is whether poetry in which all the forces of poetic art are carried to the highest possible pitch can be composed in that condition, even though the poet be Coleridge himself. In a dream the ends are achieved without means. That, indeed, is the fundamental difference between the dream of sleep and the waking dream of life. Coleridge's familiarity with the writings of David Hartley was so great that we might be sure there would be nothing in his statement as to the origin of the poem which would run counter to these words of Hartley's: "That dreams are, in part, deducible from the *impressions and ideas of the preceding day,* appears from the frequent recurrence of these in greater or lesser clusters, and especially of the visible ones, in our dreams. We sometimes take in ideas of longer date, in part, on account of their recency: however, in general, ideas that have not affected the mind for some days recur in dreams only from the second or third cause here assigned." Coleridge, in his preface to the poem, tells us that he "fell asleep in his chair" at the moment when he was reading Purchas's 'Pilgrimage.'

With regard to the additions to Coleridge's poems given by Mr. Campbell, these are, as we have said, absolutely valueless. The most notable contribution of this kind consists of the first two parts of 'The Three Graves.' It will be remembered that of this poem parts iii. and iv. only have been published, and that they were first printed in the *Friend* of September 21st, 1809, with an introduction in

which the verses were described as parts of a tale consisting of six parts. The beginning of the story contained in the first and second parts was then told in prose. These two opening parts have now been found, and Mr. Campbell has been able to print them from Coleridge's autograph manuscript. Of parts v. and vi. there seems to be no trace; and this is fortunate. The two parts with which the reader is familiar, although the narrative embodied in them is told with considerable power, lack all Coleridge's peculiar charm and magic. The power is of the coarse, realistic kind which is foreign to Coleridge's genius, the diction is hard and prosaic. In true poetic qualities they are scarcely above the ballads of Southey. They are, however, far superior to parts i. and ii. now given. These are barren of imagination, and full of the makeshift inversions and hackneyed locutions which make the bastard ballad of the eighteenth century the most wearisome of all reading. It is a pity that they should ever have turned up at all. The manuscript having been discovered, however, the appearance of the verses in type was inevitable, for we live in days when the reading public has been entirely demoralized by over-zealous editors.

LETTERS

1895

13. Unsigned review, entitled 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', in *Atlantic Monthly*

1895

From *Atlantic Monthly,* September, 1895, lxxvi, 397–413

In the absence of any adequate biography of Coleridge, these two volumes of his letters,[1] edited by his grandson, Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, will be eagerly welcomed. By far the greater part of these letters have never before been published, and among them is included the poet's correspondence with his wife, with Southey, and with Wordsworth. But the editor has also judiciously selected from among the letters already published such as will help to preserve a continuous narrative, thus giving the entire collection an autobiographical character. The conception was a unique one, and the result has a rare value. Coleridge is allowed to reappear before us, after the lapse of two generations, to tell the story of his strange and marvelously interesting life in his own words and in his own way. Whatever was needed to make allusions intelligible the editor has furnished in careful and ample footnotes. A difficult part of his task lay in determining which letters out of the large mass of unpublished correspondence were most important. Whether his principle of selection was a true and final one may be an open question. His sole criterion in regard to any letter, as he tells us in his preface, has been, "Is it interesting? Is it readable? …Coleridge's letters lack style. The fastidious critic who touched and retouched his exquisite lyrics, and always for the better, was at no pains to polish his letters. He writes to his friends as if he were talking to them, and he lets his periods take care of themselves." It

is quite possible that among the letters which have not yet seen the light there are some which possess a deeper significance for the lover of Coleridge, because they reveal the hidden springs of his life and his thought, than those which have a purely literary character and an interest for the general reader. However that may be, we cannot but be profoundly grateful for what has been given to us; and as to that which still remains unpublished, we are consoled by the prospect of a coming biography by the same editor, in which he will surely avail himself of all the material at his disposal.

Among the attractions of these volumes are portraits of Coleridge which have hitherto been unknown; of his brothers, James and George, the latter of whom stood in the place of a father to the poet in his early years; of his wife, also, and his children: Hartley, as a boy with a winning face, and thoughtful beyond his years; Derwent, the father of the editor; and Sara, the gifted and beautiful daughter. There is also a pencil sketch of Mrs. Wilson, the housekeeper at Greta Hall, which is an inimitable study for a human countenance. The frontispiece of the first volume represents Coleridge at the age of forty-seven, and has been followed in the bust in Westminster Abbey. There is another and most pathetic portrait of him at the age of fifty-six, which gives the weird, unearthly dreamer. But of all these portraits, the most self-revealing, the real man, as we think, is given in the frontispiece of the second volume, in which may be read as in one concentrated glance the story of his career. He himself has contributed to our knowledge of his personal appearance as a young man in one of his humorous letters to John Thelwall: "My face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed almost idiotic good nature. 'T is a mere carcase of a face; fat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of inexpression. Yet I am told that my eyes, eyebrows, and forehead are physiognomically good; but of this the deponent knoweth not. As to my shape, 't is a good shape enough, if measured; but my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence capable of energies*…. I can not breathe through my nose, so my mouth, with sensual thick lips, is almost always open."[2]

There is another humorous touch of self-portraiture in the comment which he makes upon his first name. When recommending

Southey to name his boy Robert, after himself, he remarks: "I would have done so but that, from my earliest years, I have had a feeling of dislike and disgust connected with my own Christian name, —such a vile short plumpness, such a dull abortive smartness in the first syllable, and this is harshly contrasted by the obscurity and indefmiteness of the syllabic vowel, and the feebleness of the uncovered liquid with which it ends, the wobble it makes, and struggling between a dis- and a tri-syllable, and the whole name sounding as if you were abeeceeing S.M.U.L. Altogether, it is, perhaps, the worst combination of which vowels and consonants are susceptible."

Though these letters will not greatly modify the estimate already formed of Coleridge's genius and character, they do reveal the man in an intenser light, and will serve to correct misjudgments, to create a deeper reverence for his personality and a profounder sympathy for his misfortunes. Some things which were already known are here made more clear and emphatic. He was a great sufferer from physical pain during his whole life, from his boyhood, when a student at Christ's Hospital, down to the day of his death. What Mr. Stuart said of his letters, that they were "one continued flow of complaint of ill health and of incapacity from ill health," is only confirmed by the fuller correspondence now before us. It does not diminish the reality of his sufferings to learn that an examination of his body after death revealed the cause of much of his pain to be nervous sympathy. His constitution was delicate and highly organized, and tremulous with quick and intense susceptibility.

As to domestic infelicity, Coleridge's description of his wife in a letter to Southey, now for the first time made public, accounts for much that was hitherto inexplicable. His home became impossible to him, and at the age of thirty he was practically banished from it, living for the rest of his life as if a stranger or visitor in this world, with no continuing city. Mrs. Coleridge's faults might have been virtues in some other adjustment of the marriage tie, but to her husband they were torture and the rack. "Her mind has very little that is *bad* in it; it is an innocent mind, but it is light and *unimpressible,* warm in anger, cold in sympathy, and in all disputes uniformly *projects itself forth* to recriminate, instead of turning itself inward with a silent self-questioning. Our virtues and our vices are exact antitheses. I so attentively watch my own nature

that my worst self-delusion is a complete self-knowledge so mixed with intellectual complacency that my quickness to see and readiness to acknowledge my faults is too often frustrated by the small pain which the sight of them gives me, and the consequent slowness to amend them. Mrs. C. is so stung with the thought of being in the wrong, because she never endures to look at her own mind in all its faulty parts, but shelters herself from painful self-inquiry by angry recrimination. Never, I suppose, did the stern match-maker bring together two minds so utterly contrariant in their primary and organical constitution." A threatened separation seems to have made Mrs. Coleridge serious, and, as the letter runs, "she promised to set about an alteration in her external manners and looks and language, and to fight against her inveterate habits of puny thwarting and unintermitting dyspathy.... I, on my part, promised to be more attentive to all her feelings of pride, etc., etc., and to try to correct my habits of impetuous censure."

Of course this is but one side of the story, and Mrs. Coleridge's version of what she had to endure from the difficult character of her husband can be easily supplied with no great effort of the imagination. The portrait of Mrs. Coleridge given here seems to accord with her husband's description, as does also the account of Dorothy Wordsworth, one of the keenest of women. De Quincey has remarked that Coleridge once told him that he had been forced into the marriage with Sarah Fricker by Southey, who insisted that he had gone so far with his attentions to her as to make it dishonorable to retreat. The correspondence apparently confirms this statement. One is led to conclude that Coleridge married partly on the rebound after his disappointment with Mary Evans, partly at Southey's instigation, and in part because he was then absorbed in the scheme of a Pantisocracy to be set up on the banks of the Susquehanna, and it was regarded among the friends of the project as the proper thing for each of them to secure a wife before their departure. As to Cottle's testimony that if ever a man was in love, Coleridge was in love with Sarah Fricker, it does not seem to be borne out by his correspondence with his wife, which has a certain formal character, and not only reveals less of the real inwardness of the man than any other set of his correspondence, but is keyed in a lower tone.

Another feature of Coleridge's life, the opium-eating habit, is

here traced back to an earlier period than has been generally supposed. The habit, indeed, was not confirmed until the spring of 1801, when Coleridge was twenty-nine years of age, but the first traces of it belong to his boyhood, when he suffered from rheumatism, and learned the value of "the accursed drug" as an opiate for pain. In 1795, he writes to a friend that "for the last fortnight I have been obliged to take laudanum almost every night." Nor does it appear that he ever quite overcame the habit, although, under the loving care of the Gillmans, he submitted to restraint, and opium was allowed only under careful supervision.

I

One source of the curious interest which attaches to Coleridge beyond any of his contemporaries was his abandonment of poetry for metaphysics and theology. The amount of poetic achievement was relatively small, but a few things which he has done, The Ancient Mariner, Christabel, Kubla Khan, The Pains of Sleep, — these, and some others which deserve to be associated with them, have an unparalleled beauty, which is distinctive, and of its kind very rare. His exquisite musical diction, "the magical use of words," as it has been called, gives to his poetry a certain divine appeal which slides into the soul. He was not only a poet, but the founder of a new school in English poetry. Wordsworth was great in production, and made the new principle his own; but the suggestion and advocacy of the principle belonged to Coleridge, to whom Wordsworth never failed to acknowledge his intellectual indebtedness.

Why, then, did he cease to write poetry when he had hardly reached the age of thirty? Why did he stop singing, and betake himself to delving in the barren wastes of unintelligible metaphysical speculation? Such is the problem of Coleridge's life as so many of his literary critics have conceived it. His life has seemed to them to lack unity, as if his early years were separated from his later by a deep, impassable gulf, over which brood impenetrable mists. One of his latest biographers, Mr. Traill, has ventured once more to penetrate the thickets of his philosophical speculations, but finds the task empty and vain. Carlyle also sneered at the procreations of his philosophical moods, "the

strange centaurs, spectral Puseyisms, monstrous illusory hybrids, and ecclesiastical chimeras which now roam the earth in a very lamentable manner." This has been in the main, the estimate of Coleridge's career, that his life began with the rarest promise, and ended in failure, as if he were deserving our resentment for having done so little when he might have done so much, for raising great expectations only to disappoint them. Coleridge himself also appears to sanction such a judgment, for in his Ode on Dejection, which belongs to the border-line between the two periods of his life, he laments with his own peculiar pathos the loss of his poetic power: —

> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
>   But O, each visitation
> Suspends what Nature gave me at my birth,
>   My shaping spirit of imagination.

In a letter written to Southey in 1802, in which he inclosed these lines, he adds this further comment: "As to myself, all my poetic genius (if ever I really possessed any *genius,* and it was not rather a mere general aptitude of talent and quickness in imitation) is gone, and I have been fool enough to suffer deeply in my mind regretting the loss, which I attribute to my long and exceedingly severe metaphysical investigations, and these partly to ill health and partly to private afflictions, which rendered any subjects immediately connected with feeling a source of pain and disquiet to me."

But the common estimate which gives Coleridge a high place among English poets, and yet discerns no unity in his life, dismissing his later work as having no large significance or enduring value, must be partial and inadequate. It may be true that ill health and poverty, domestic trials and the evils begotten by opium-eating, united to destroy that "natural gladness of heart" with which he was by nature so richly endowed, and thus to weaken the springs of poetic creativeness. But even this strong combination of adverse circumstances does not quite explain the abandonment of poetry and the transition to metaphysics. If the poetic fire is genuine, it has vitality and is not easily extinguished. Milton wrote Paradise Lost after he had become poor and old and

blind, and when his domestic happiness had been torn into shreds and tatters; taking refuge in poetry from the ills of life, as Coleridge fled from poetry to metaphysics. Coleridge's judgment varied as to whether he were more of a poet or philosopher. In one of his earlier letters he remarks, "I think too much for a poet;" and on Southey he also comments at the same time, "He thinks too little for a great poet." He thought that if he and Southey could have been rolled into one, it would have made an ideal combination.

When we turn to contemporary opinions about the greatness of Coleridge, it is the marvelous scope of his intellectual power which inspires such boundless admiration, rather than any poetic achievement. The familiar apostrophe of Charles Lamb, which one is never tired of quoting, has the ring of true insight into the potent attractiveness of a rarely gifted personality: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, —the dark pillar not yet turned, —Samuel Taylor Coleridge, —Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration, ...to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus or Plotinus; for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts, or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars reëchoed to the accents of the inspired Charity boy!"

It is not as a poet that Shelley describes him in his letter to Maria Gisborne, where he is enumerating the treasures to be found in London, but rather as the thinker and the sage: —

> You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure
> In the exceeding lustre, and the pure
> Intense irradiation of a mind,
> Which, with its own internal lightening blind,
> Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
> A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
> A hooded eagle among blinking owls.

Carlyle also discerned this aspect of the true greatness of Coleridge, though blind, perhaps wilfully blind, to the profound significance of his thought: "Coleridge sat on the brow of

Highgate Hill in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting toward him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there; …a sublime man who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms and revolutionary deluges with God, Freedom, Immortality still his; a king of men."

Of the pupils of Coleridge to whom Carlyle refers as among the younger inquiring men with whom he had "a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character," there were two who deeply stirred the current of religious thought in the Church of England, both of whom dedicated to Coleridge, as their master, the first fruits of their labors. Archdeacon Hare, one of the authors of the Guesses at Truth, calls him "the Christian philosopher, who through dark and winding ways of speculation was led to the light, …whose writings have helped to discern the sacred concord and unity of human and divine truth." The late Rev. F.D.Maurice felt so strongly the personal tie which bound him to Coleridge that "he could not bear to think of him chiefly as a writer of books, nor did he feel that he could do justice to his poems as works of art, on account of their intensely painful reality."[3]

The impression which Coleridge's poetry made upon De Quincey, when still a young man, transcended the effect of ordinary poetry, and became "an absolute revelation of untrodden worlds, teeming with power and beauty, as yet unsuspected among men." It was the desire to know the man who had written such poetry which arrested and enthralled De Quincey; and under the same spell Southey and Wordsworth and many others of less note had succumbed. He had a wonderful gift of drawing to himself devoted friends whom he inspired with supreme confidence in his power. There was something in the man even more interesting than what he wrote, while in his writings it is the personal revelation which is often more valuable than the thought. It is this which gives unity to all the varied manifestations of his genius. De Quincey studied him, analyzed and dissected him, in the conviction that he surpassed Milton in the richness and variety of his intellectual endowment. He was a poet, a journalist and politician, a literary critic, an extensive and brilliant scholar, a metaphysician and philosopher, a theologian, and was the wonder

of his age for his gift of conversation. And in all these lines he excelled. “Had the poet in him,” says Mr. Traill, “survived until years had ‘brought the philosophic mind,’ he would doubtless have done for the human spirit in its purely isolated self-communings what Wordsworth did for it in its communion with nature.” He appeared for a short time in the pulpit, and “had he chosen to remain faithful to this new employment,” says the same writer, “he might have rivaled the reputation of the greatest preacher of the time.” “Assuredly,” said De Quincey, “Coleridge deserved beyond all other men that were ever connected with the press to be regarded with distinction.... Nowhere does there lie such a bed of pearls confounded with the rubbish and purgaments of ages as in the political papers of Coleridge.” As a philosopher he was the most suggestive of thinkers, and though he left no system, perhaps *because* he left none, he has profoundly influenced the direction of all subsequent philosophical thought on its ideal and transcendental side. And as a theologian there has been no one in the English Church since the days of Wycliffe whose thought marks a more vital and far-reaching influence. Carlyle, in one of his atrabilious moods, disparaged his conversation, but the Table Talk remains to tell what it was like, one of the few most interesting, most stimulating books that have been written.

II

It is not, then, as a poet that Coleridge must be primarily or exclusively regarded. We understand him better if we think of him as a Dr. Johnson of the nineteenth century, but living in an ampler ether and breathing a diviner air. When he turned from poetry to philosophy, there was no contradiction in the unity of his experience; he was only coming to the clearer recognition of himself. While his mind was thus maturing, he discerned that he was not so entirely at one with Wordsworth as he had taken for granted when together they sent forth their Lyrical Ballads with its new theory of poetry. It was Wordsworth’s mission to interpret nature to man. But Coleridge had now begun to doubt whether it were true, as Wordsworth believed, that the inspiration to interpret the outer world came from its direct study or observation. He began to differ from Wordsworth in his idea of the nature of the human

imagination. "O Wordsworth!" —so ran the Ode on Dejection in its original form, —

> O Wordsworth! we receive but what we give;
> And in our life alone does nature live:
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud.

> It were a vain endeavor,
> Though I should gaze forever
> On that green light that lingers in the west:
> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life whose fountains are within.

In turning away from poetry as the sole vehicle of his expression, Coleridge was not narrowing his sphere, but rather enlarging it, nor was he abandoning the principle which had inspired his poetry. When conversing with Wordsworth about the essential nature of the poetic, two things had been urged as not incompatible, —"the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of the imagination." But what was this imagination which, like moonlight or sunset, invested with an unwonted glow and as if supernatural effect all common objects and familiar scenes? Whatever it was that Coleridge understood by imagination, it was this that constituted the thread of unity in his multifarious intellectual life or spiritual experience. When he made the transition to philosophy, he was obeying the stronger impulse, extending the application of the imagination as he conceived it till it included the whole range of human interest.

It is one of the curiosities of literature to be found in the Biographia Literaria that although the book seems to have been written in order to lead up to the definition of the imagination, yet when it comes to the vital issue the writer declines the task, unless in very brief and, except to the already initiated, unintelligible form. For that chapter which is entitled Imagination he makes elaborate preparation, announcing it beforehand in the preceding chapter, and warning off the reader who is not capable of appreciating it when it

shall be reached. But when he comes to write the chapter, he inserts an anonymous letter, —it may have been written by himself to himself, —in which he is advised not to undertake to treat the subject of the imagination at length, but to reserve it for his great unpublished work, his *magnum opus,* on the Logos, or Communicative Intellect in Man and Deity. This pseudo-anonymous advice he thinks fit to follow, and the great chapter which was to have been written is reduced to these few words, without further comment: "The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The secondary imagination I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, yet as still identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in degree and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or when this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead."

Among the many projected books of Coleridge which never got themselves written, there is one which towers above all the rest. He refers to it in several places in these letters before us, the subject always the same, but the title varying with his changing moods; as when he was in great physical suffering or depression, it was to be called Consolations and Comforts from the Exercise and Right Application of the Reason, the Imagination, the Moral Feelings, "addressed especially to those in sickness, adversity, or distress of mind from speculative gloom;" again, it should be known to the world as Logosophia; or again, Christianity Considered as Philosophy, and the only Philosophy. His letters bear abundant witness, as do his other works, to the greater importance which he attached to this project than to his poetry or his criticism: to complete it was the supreme desire of his life; he prays to be spared until it is done. Sometimes he almost ventures to allude to it as if it were already finished, and might be contemplated as his greatest achievement. Perhaps this latter mood had grounds as sufficient for its justification as his less confident moods. The magnum opus was in reality his life's lesson; those scattered hints in his writings and conversation, which, when put together, do not indeed form a system, but are animated and unified by one common sentiment.

He could not have told, for it was beyond the power of the human mind to formulate it clearly, the fullness of the motive which inspired him. But if we may dare point to the difference by which he is still distinguished from other poets or literary critics, from philosophers or theologians, it is in regarding all life, all literature and institutions, all thought, and all religion as a divine revelation; and the imagination, about which he talked so largely and so vaguely, was simply the power of sight which discerns the world and human life in their higher aspects as they exist in the mind of God, —

> The vision and the faculty divine.
> [Wordsworth, *The Excursion,* Book I, l. 79]

Or in his own words: "They only can acquire the philosophic imagination who know and feel that the potential works in them as the actual works on them.... The organs of sense are framed for a corresponding world of sense, and we have it; all the organs of Spirit are framed for a correspondent world of spirit, though the latter organs are not developed in all alike."

The peculiar quality which distinguishes Coleridge's thought, though it may be called transcendental, was not originally borrowed from Kant or from German philosophy. If its source may be traced, it goes back to a remote origin, those ancient writers of the Neoplatonist school, Jamblichus and Plotinus, passages from whose works Charles Lamb represents Coleridge as declaiming while yet at Christ's Hospital. Coleridge himself tells us that at the age of fifteen he had translated the hymns of Synesius, who was at once a Neoplatonist and a Christian bishop. In a letter to Thelwall, written in 1796, when he was twenty-four years of age, he incloses a five-guinea note, with a request that his friend will send him from London the following books which he has seen advertised in catalogues: Jamblichus, Proclus, Porphyrius, Plotini Opera a Ficino, Juliani Opera; in a word, almost the whole body of Neoplatonic literature. The revival of the Neoplatonic conception of the world and its reimportation into English thought is primarily owing to Coleridge, though others had facilitated the process before him. But he made it possible, and even popular, by his poetry and by the principle which lay beneath the poetry, —the effort "to

transfer from our inward nature a human interest and semblance of truth to characters supernatural and romantic."

It was for this reason that Carlyle may have thought he detected an affinity between Coleridge's influence and those spectral Puseyisms, as he called them, which his soul abhorred. Newman also had given Coleridge a place among the forerunners of the Oxford movement, for he too, at an early age, had caught something in the air which was akin to Coleridge's motive; as when, speaking of angels, he could say, "Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God."

But the difference between Coleridge and Newman was far greater than the resemblance. Newman and his friends trembled for a moment in the balance, when it was uncertain whether they would follow the spirit and method of Coleridge or turn back to the Latin fathers as their guides. For Neoplatonism was associated in its origin with a declining civilization, and with a dying world which was hurling its anathema upon the whole creation. Coleridge had been impressed with the Neoplatonic doctrine of revelation, but he had refused its alliance with the old heathen conception of the world as evil. He saw a new creation resplendent with supernatural beauty, when the idea of a living communion with the divine was associated with a living, growing world, upon which was brooding the divine approval and benediction.

The Neoplatonic conception of life finds one of its best expositions in a poem by Coleridge entitled The Destiny of Nations: —

> For what is Freedom but the unfettered use
> Of all the powers which God for use has given?
> But chiefly this, him first, him last to view
> Through meaner powers and secondary things
> Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
> For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
> Symbolical, one mighty alphabet,
> For infant minds; and we in this low world
> Placed with our backs to bright reality,
> That we may learn with young unwounded ken
> The substance from its shadow.

About the time when this poem was written, in the years 1796–98, when the poetic power of Coleridge was at its height, we have also from his notebook a similar utterance of his Neoplatonic creed: "Certainly, there are strange things in the other world, and so there are in all the steps to it; and a little glimpse of heaven, —a moment's conversing with an angel, —any ray of God, any communication from the spirit of comfort which God gives to his servants in strange and unknown manners, are infinitely far from illusions. We shall understand them when we feel them, and when in new and strange needs we shall be refreshed by them."

Such was the creed with which Coleridge stimulated the genius of Wordsworth in their early acquaintance and communion, which also dates from these memorable years. Each of these men gave something to the other which was sorely needed: Wordsworth calmed and steadied the impulses of Coleridge, who was too much carried away with his tumultuous vitality, till he was in danger of losing his self-possession; while Coleridge gave to Wordsworth the encouragement of sympathy and admiration, the courage which was alone needed to place him on his feet, with full confidence in his powers. But if we would weigh the relative indebtedness of these great souls to each other, to Coleridge belongs the credit and the immortal honor of having suggested the doctrine which was the motive of Wordsworth's poetry and his own. It was he who became the founder of the Lake School of Poetry, as it is called, whose principle was in such sharp contrast with that which underlay the classical poetry of the last century, —the Neoplatonic doctrine that outward nature is a radiation from a divine life, that supernatural communion is mediated by unearthly powers, that human thought corresponds to some eternal reality. What Coleridge had taught, under this inspiration of Hellenic and Egyptian mysticism combined, appears in Wordsworth's poetry in a more restrained and sober form, taking on its most exquisite expression in his Ode to Immortality. As years went by, Wordsworth dropped his own original theory, according to which poetry was to consist in rustic scenes and ordinary events clothed in the plain language of common life; devoting his powers of description, in which he far surpassed Coleridge, to a delineation of the feelings which nature, and nature always as it is revealed in its surpassing loveliness in the Lake Country, inspires in an unworldly soul. A contemporary criticism of Wordsworth's poetry

in Blackwood's Magazine for December, 1818, enforces this aspect of its teaching as its most distinctive characteristic: "The reverential awe and the far-extended sympathy with which he looks upon the whole system of existing things, and the silent moral connections which he supposes to exist among them, are visible throughout all his writings. He tunes his mind to nature with a feeling of religious obligation; and where others behold only beautiful colors making their appearance according to optical laws, or feel pleasant sensations resulting from a pure atmosphere or from the odoriferous exhalations of herbage, or enjoy the pleasure of measuring an extended prospect as an amusement for the eye, this poet, whether justly or not, thinks he traces something more in the spectacle than the mere reflection of his own feelings painted upon external objects by means of the association of ideas."

As for Coleridge, his deepest interest was in humanity, and not in nature. He was destined to react from his earlier mood, to turn away from Plotinus, his first master, in proportion as the problem of human evil and suffering was forced upon his attention. He led Wordsworth back to the Lake Country, where for a few years they remained together in harmonious and loving association. That Coleridge could abandon such exquisite scenery, and bury himself in the crowded city, never again returning to Keswick or Grasmere even for a visit, after his final departure in 1810, reveals the essential difference between the men, and discloses the mission of Coleridge more clearly. Poetry was but an incident in his career. The effort which it required was a pressure from without which he could not endure. It hurt him, in his poetic moods, to feel that he was writing for money and must make haste. He hints also at "the limited sphere of mental activity in the artist." So far as he continued to write poetry, it was for the purpose of inward relief. When the charge of egotism was alleged against him, he replied, "It is not egotism when in order to relieve my heart, I sing my own sorrows; but it is a law of my nature. He who labors under a strong feeling is compelled to seek sympathy, and the poet's feelings are always strong."

III

The autobiography, the history of a soul, which is found in Coleridge's poetry was continued in other and many devious forms, but the thread of unity binds them together in an organic whole. His life stands for a spiritual process, in which was reproduced the intellectual and moral and religious experience of humanity on a vaster scale than by any other in this modern day. He explored the wide ocean of human thought, sounding it to its depth, and to this end his life ministered in all its strange and sad vicissitudes.

The different phases of Coleridge's life have been summarized by Mr. Dykes Campbell, one of his latest biographers, in these beautiful words: "A brief dawn of unsurpassed promise and achievement; 'a trouble' as of 'clouds and weeping rain;' then a long summer evening's work, done by the setting sun's pathetic light. Such was Coleridge's day, the afterglow of which is still in the sky." But if there is any fault to be found with this enumeration, it is in not recognizing the positive value of the second period in Coleridge's life as having a high redeeming quality. This has been also the common judgment: that from the time when the opium habit was established, about 1802, the intervening years until the residence at Highgate began, in 1816, were for the most part unproductive and unprofitable. And yet it was during these years, when the natural indolence of his constitution was augmented by frequent and long-continued illness and by the influence of opium, that he really accomplished the greater part of the work of his life. To this period we owe most of the material contained in the two volumes of The Friend; the three volumes of Essays on his own Times, which include his articles for the Morning Post and the Courier; the Biographia Literaria, which was written and got ready for the press, though not published till later; the lectures, also, on Shakespeare, and other critical studies in literature which make him the founder of the higher English literary criticism, a department in which he has never been surpassed. During these dark, unhappy years he carried on his philosophical studies, especially of Kant and Schelling; he was engaged in that wide, discursive process of reading which laid at his feet the intellectual and spiritual treasures of the world. And of course, beyond and above all this, he was always brooding at

his leisure over the mystery and the phenomena of human life, in himself or in the world; threading the labyrinths of his own thought, where he was at liberty to wander at his will. On the whole, it would seem as if the biographers of Coleridge had erred in depreciating the value of these melancholy years. In the evening of his life, which set in so early after he went to Highgate, he produced but one important book, his Aids to Reflection, unless we add that small but most significant treatise, The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit. We do not wonder that Coleridge himself should have protested against the sentence which did him such great injustice: "By what I *have* effected am I to be judged by my fellow-men; what I could have done is a question for my own conscience."

The story of Coleridge's career reads like a series of detachments from all the ordinary ties and relationships of life. The opium habit may have had much to do with evils that befell him, but there was some deeper hidden cause, whose action was only intensified by opium, which of itself alone explains the strange and sad vicissitudes, the failure, the poverty, the disappointments, the humiliations beneath which he groaned, but through all of which he carried his higher integrity unharmed. This deeper cause, oftentimes lying beneath his consciousness, acting indirectly, but never losing its potency, was his passion for freedom, individual freedom as well as national and ecclesiastical. It was this passionate love of freedom which in his early years appeared in his visionary scheme for an ideal community on the Susquehanna, where men should be delivered from the gross burdens of life and the responsibility of earning a livelihood. This same mood created his intense and burning enthusiasm for the French Revolution, a devotion to the emancipation of humanity in which he surpassed his most advanced contemporaries. He abandoned these dreams of his youth, and from being a revolutionist became an ardent anti-Jacobin; but the love of freedom still burned unquenched, the most powerful motive of his being. Even duty, whenever it presented itself as an external obligation, interfering with his inward impulse or inclination, became for him an impossibility. It was not altogether his natural indolence or the natural infirmity of a weak will to which were owing his many sins of omission. He could not act unless his inner being coincided with the demand of external order. For this reason,

mainly, though other causes combined with it, he was detached, but also set free from relationships and from dependence on every tie which hampered the working of the spirit within him. Bitter agony, the tears of repentance, mortification of heart, attended the process, as he broke away or was forced away from family and friends, from reputation, while yet in his inmost soul he was acquitted of any guilt or stain upon his higher manhood.

Coleridge never ceased to struggle against his natural infirmities. The correspondence reveals anew the heroic efforts he made to support his family. But he was never quite adequately equipped for the practical side of life; he had no capacity for affairs; and added to this was that strange difficulty that it seemed to paralyze his powers when he attempted to curb his spirit in the harness and turn out poetry for a money compensation. As we read the letters of the early years, we forecast the end to which he was drifting. The struggle with poverty and anxiety, with depression and hopelessness, with ill health, also, which began when he was so young, could not be maintained for long without some catastrophe. At the age of twenty-three he had married a girl who, like himself, was penniless, when he had no other prospect of support than Cottle's promise to pay liberally for all the poetry he would write. If it was well-nigh impossible for him to write when money was in contemplation, how hopeless was the task when he had already received the money in advance! Not only was there his own support and that of his growing family to be provided for, but he seems to have been under a pledge to contribute to the support of his wife's relations. The unequal struggle went on for six years or more before he confessed defeat. More than most men Coleridge would seem to have needed the support and consolation of the family. Like Schleiermacher, like Wesley, he was greatly dependent on the friendship of women. He was a devoted father, proud of his children, and his description of their looks and ways deserves a high place in the literature of children. In this respect he reminds us of Luther, who has immortalized his children by the profound interest and sympathy with which he entered into their youthful lives.

If Coleridge had been willing—or able, perhaps we should say—to work regularly even for a few hours a day, there would have been no lack of an adequate income. In one of his letters to

Poole, March, 1800, he writes: "If I had the least love of money I could make almost sure of £2000 a year, for Stuart has offered me half shares in the two papers, the Morning Post and the Courier, if I could devote myself with him to them—but I told him I would not give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios for two thousand times two thousand pounds; in short, that beyond £250 a year I consider money as a real evil—at which he stared." This was written at a moment when Coleridge was in the greatest stress of his efforts to maintain his family. He may not describe correctly the offer of Stuart, for the latter was a man of business, and knew the weakness of his friend. But Stuart did say, later in life, when speaking of Coleridge, that if they were both young, and Coleridge were only willing to work regularly, there was nothing he would not have given for the aid which Coleridge could render, and that he could have made his fortune. The man, however, who could have accepted Stuart's offer was not the Coleridge we know; nor if he had done so should we have had the Coleridge whom, despite his failures, we revere and love.

As to his separation from his wife, and what seemed like the desertion of his family, we are no longer called upon to express any moral indignation. There was in it something of the nature of fate. It is plain enough that after the opium habit had gained the mastery, he could not with any self-respect continue to reside at Greta Hall. There he met with the tears, the reproaches, possibly even the contempt of his alienated wife. It was better also for his children, if they were to retain their reverence for their father, that he should be away. The constant presence of Southey in his even and mechanical activity, or of Wordsworth in his economical, well-regulated life and smug prosperity, was a source of bitterness and torture to one who, with the consciousness of genius and of vast unexpended powers, was yet unable to apply them in order to gain his daily bread. We can see now what they were not able then to make allowance for: that his ill health was no fancied complaint; that he fell under the influence of opium, when, under the guidance of a wise physician, he might have been recovered to some extent, at least, from his physical infirmities. At any rate, there has been no lack of moral condemnation for his offense, either on his own part or on that of his friends. For the wrong of which he may have been guilty he paid the penalty to the utmost farthing.

In extenuation of Southey's attitude, much, of course, may be said. The responsibility of Coleridge's family fell upon him at a time when he was sufficiently burdened with his own anxieties and labors. It does not diminish the value of his kindness or the nobility of his behavior that we have learned that he was reimbursed for his expenses on this account, or that Mrs. Coleridge rendered indispensable services in his household. But while Southey did his duty, the spirit in which it was done was cold and ungracious. He recognized no mission with which Coleridge might still be charged, which he was still executing amid physical suffering as well as the agonies of a stricken conscience. He saw only the weakness, the failure, and the wrong. He became indignant, so that he could not trust himself to speak, when he thought of Coleridge's long-continued absence from his home, of the silence which he maintained as to his whereabouts or doings, of the letters sent to him which he did not answer, and which, it was afterwards learned, he did not even read. Southey refused to believe that physical pain was the motive in resorting to opium, but rather attributed the evil habit to the luxury of self-indulgence. When reports came to him of the fascination and the spell which Coleridge was exercising in such extraordinary degree, of how his wonderful gift of conversation was winning him renown in the higher circles of London society, he uttered his doleful prophecy: "What will become of Coleridge himself? He may continue to find men who will give him board and lodging for the sake of his conversation, but who will pay his other expenses? I cannot but apprehend some shameful and dreadful end to this deplorable course."

It was a memorable event in the higher walks of the intellectual life, in that year of the divine grace 1797, when Coleridge and Wordsworth met; and very beautiful, too, had been the friendship of the two poets, in which Dorothy Wordsworth had also entered as an equal partner. But now Wordsworth had lost faith in his friend, and had spoken words which, to be sure, had gained in their mischief-making power by repetition, but words which he would not retract or recall, for they contained his deep conviction. As for Coleridge and how he felt, there was no man living whom he so honored and loved as Wordsworth. Whether those lines in Christabel, which he quotes from himself in one of his letters as "the best and sweetest lines I ever wrote," referred originally to

Southey or not, they are equally applicable to his broken friendship with Wordsworth: —

> And to be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.
>
> ⋆ ⋆ ⋆
>
> Each spake words of high disdain
> And insult to his heart's best brother:
> They parted, —ne'er to meet again!
> But never either found another
> To free the hollow heart from paining, —
> They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
> A dreary sea now flows between;
> But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
> Shall wholly do away, I ween,
> The marks of that which once hath been!

It is one of the remarks of Renan [Ernest Renan (1823–92), French philosopher and orientalist], which indicates his insight into the workings of life, that if a man set up to be a reformer of the world in any one department of human interest, he must at least be conservative of the world's traditions in all other respects. It was because Coleridge failed to fulfill this condition that he was called upon to pay a heavier fine for his attempt to teach the world than is exacted from most of its teachers. It fell to his lot to endure obloquy and ostracism, the personal malice of those who influenced the average popular opinion. The Edinburgh Review, under the editorship of Jeffrey, pursued him for years with its rancorous criticism, while its rival, the great Quarterly, treated him with indifference or with silent contempt. On account of his early sympathies with the French Revolution, which had inspired his earlier poetry, he was suspected, when the reaction had set in, of being a dangerous character who was undermining the foundations of the social order. He was denounced as a pantheist, a word which covered a bottomless, nameless fear and hatred. In philosophy, as in theology, he was condemned as an innovator, overthrowing the accepted

principles of Locke with a vague, confusing transcendentalism which led no one knew whither; and in literature he was defying the canons of taste and criticism upon which rested all that was great and dear in English poetry. Add to all this his reputation for utter shiftlessness of character; the lack of dependence to be put on his engagements or promises; his willingness to take money or to solicit loans; the name of an opium-eater who was wasting his powers in idle dreaming, or spending them in the meaningless flow of conversation; above all, the abandonment of his family to the charity of the world.

One thing more was needed to complete his humiliation: that he should be wounded in his intellectual pride. When the invitation came to him from Mr. Murray, the publisher, to furnish a translation of Faust, he resented the slight which the offer might seem to carry. "Some one or other of my partial friends," he writes in reply, "has induced you to consider me as the man most likely to execute the work adequately; those excepted, of course, whose higher powers (established by the solid and satisfactory ordeals of the wide and rapid sale of their works) it might seem profanation to employ in any other manner than in the development of their own organization." As a piece of satire nothing could be better. But it has always been a source of regret that, in this instance, Coleridge did not swallow his pride, and attempt a task which no one could have performed so well. His reproduction of the poem might have been, as in the case of his Wallenstein, no mere servile translation, but an improved conception, with an original quality breathed into it by an imagination in no degree inferior to that of its great author. But again, he was sorely wounded by what he calls the "insolence" of another of Mr. Murray's proposals "that he would publish an edition of my poems, on the condition that a gentleman in his confidence—Mr. Milman! I understand" (Henry Hart Milman, who became the distinguished historian and dean of St. Paul's) —"was to select and make such omissions and corrections as should be thought advisable." These things left their impression upon his personal appearance. In his old age, he gave one, says Carlyle, "the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy laden, half vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment.... The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration;

confused pain looked mildly from them as in a kind of mild astonishment."

During his lifetime Coleridge was suspected of plagiarism, and after he was dead the charge was alleged against him with indignant severity; as though, in addition to his other failures, he had been deceiving the English people, who, in their ignorance of German philosophy and literature, had naïvely supposed that at least his thought was his own. "A gross literary pirate, whose plunderings were only limited by his ignorance," was the vindictive accusation made by the late Sir William Hamilton, who for a brief moment posed as a sort of oracle, on the ground of his supposed learning. The charge has now been practically disproved. Coleridge did indeed freely appropriate the thought of others, as well as suggestions and materials of thought, but his acknowledgment was in most cases ample enough to cover his indebtedness. If there were things which he did not acknowledge, yet he always placed the thought which he received from others in new combinations, and, above all, he impressed upon it the stamp of his peculiar genius, so that what passed through his mind came forth again with a distinctive quality of his own. As has been well said, what he took he repaid again with interest. In the words of Mr. Brandl, who has made an admirable study of Coleridge's literary work, "no one who conscientiously weighs his expressions will call him a plagiarist." De Quincey, who was the first to detect what seemed like petty pilfering, was amazed that Coleridge should borrow, when he was already rich in himself beyond all estimate; "when he could spin daily and at all hours, for mere amusement of his own activities and from the loom of his own magical brain, theories more gorgeous by far and supported by a pomp and luxury of images such as Schelling—no, nor any German that ever breathed, not John Paul could have emulated in his dreams."

Such, then, were the obstacles against which Coleridge's reputation had to struggle. But there was, after all, a certain divine purpose and consistency in his career, when he was set free from business of every kind, from occupation or profession, from family ties, detached also from his best friends, with hardly even a reputation to sustain; for he was also set free to fulfill his mission to the world in pure, disinterested love, with nothing to lose or gain. Dr. Arnold of Rugby, who was his warm eulogist,

also thought that "his mind was a little diseased by the want of a profession, and the consequent unsteadiness of his mind and purposes; it always seemed to me that the very power of contemplation becomes impaired or diverted, when it is made the main employment of life." There may be truth in the remark, but, on the other hand, whether justly or not, those who are identified with a profession upon which they are dependent for support do not escape the suspicion of interested motives, as in the widespread conviction of the last century that priests and law-givers created systems of jurisprudence or religion for economical reasons, for the benefit of the few instead of the well-being of the many. From that suspicion Coleridge is exonerated. He was set free to speak out his thought to the world, without fear or favor. It is this which gives to his writings an element of sincerity and power, which was indeed dearly purchased, but was well worth the sacrifice it cost. He became a revelation of the native content of the human soul. He was like some visitant to this earth from another sphere, reading its meaning as no one of its denizens could do. He looked upon it with a keen, impartial eye, noting in the picture it presents a beauty hitherto undiscerned, so that he might

> add the gleam,
> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the poet's dream.
> [Wordsworth. 'Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle...', ll. 14–16]

It is a peculiarity of these letters of Coleridge that they are as fresh as if they had been written yesterday, so that as we read we can hardly realize that one hundred years have gone by since his rich and exuberant life was finding its first expression. We can also understand better, by their perusal, the impression which he left upon all who came in contact with him, the unbounded admiration and affection which, without any effort, he evoked. We can understand better the rapture into which he threw his friends by his presence and conversation; how Lamb could say of him that "the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons;" how his friend Thomas Poole, one of the most sensible of men, could say that "God never

made a creature more divinely endowed;" or Allston, an American artist who painted his portrait when they were together in Rome, that "in his high poetic mood his countenance was quite beyond the painter's art; it was indeed 'spirit made visible.'" While we may not be able to formulate the secret of his fascination, or explain how he should have risen to fame when only a youth, while his achievement was still so slight, yet some things about him are more clearly evident than they were. In the first place, the world did not lose when he turned from poetry to prose. And in the second place, it was not the opium habit, melancholy as were its effects, which prevented him from giving the complete and permanent form to his thought which the world expected, and perhaps had a right to demand. The misfortune of his intellectual life was in the circumstance that much of his best thought, his rich learning, his deepest inspiration and conviction, should have found its vent in conversation rather than in letters. It may have been that he needed the stimulus of a visible present audience and its immediate response in order to the freedom of the mysterious genius which dwelt within him; or it may have been that in conversation he found the pathway which offered least resistance to his powers, hampered as they were by indolence and weakness of the will. His unexampled power as a talker was exerted while still a student at Cambridge, it was growing through all the years of his misery and depression, and at last it came to its perfection when he took refuge at Highgate. Every man who thinks and observes must needs have some form of utterance, and for this end conversation has its advantages. Its defect as a mode of expression is that it takes the edge of novelty from thought, so that what has been said in speech must afterwards appear as a feebler reminiscence should it be put in writing, and it also deters one from the labor of formal composition. But no estimate of Coleridge is complete which does not allow for the thought and impulse communicated to the world, of which the traces no longer exist except in the testimony of those who sat at his feet to hear, and came away to record the impression. Coleridge took this view of his life when he was charged with dreaming it away to no purpose: "Would that the criterion of a scholar's utility were the number and moral value of the truths which he has been the means of throwing into the general circulation; of the number and value of the minds whom

by his conversation and letters, he has excited into activity and supplied with the germs of their aftergrowth!"

Coleridge died at Highgate in 1834, at the age of sixty-two. During the hours of the last night of his life, when the power of articulation was almost gone, he was dictating to his friend Mr. Greene a passage for his magnum opus, that mysterious work of which he spoke so often, but which it is now believed had taken form only in his imagination. When Southey heard of his death, he was writing to a friend. "It is just forty years since I became acquainted with Coleridge; he had long been dead to me, but his decease has naturally wakened up old recollections.... All who were of his blood were in the highest degree proud of his reputation, but this was their only feeling concerning him." The voice of Wordsworth broke as he read the news, but he recovered himself, and repeated the remark that "he was the most wonderful man he had ever known." Charles Lamb, who survived his friend only a few months, went about saying to himself, "Coleridge is dead." He alone of the many friends gave the deeper expression of the mood of the hour: "His great and dear spirit haunts me; never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died in more passionately than when he lived. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel."

In 1885 the long-delayed recognition was accorded him, when his bust was placed in the shrine of England's greatest dead, the abbey church of Westminster. Since then three biographies have been written of him, to which are now added these autobiographical volumes of his correspondence: intimations, it may be, that now at last his name and reputation are emerging from the shadows of unmerited obloquy; that he is to be judged on his own merits and by the work which he accomplished; that the failures of his life are to be forgotten in grateful commemoration of the good, the beautiful, and the true which it was his mission to reveal to the world.

A few sentences are here taken at random from his letters which deserve a place in his Table Talk: "It is among the feeblenesses of our nature that we are often, to a certain degree, acted on by stories, gravely asserted, of which we do yet most religiously disbelieve every syllable; nay, which perhaps we know to be false." "It is as much my nature to evolve the fact from the law as that of a practical man to deduce the law from the fact." "I find it wise and human to

believe, even on slight evidence, opinions the contrary to which cannot be proved, and which promote our happiness without hampering our intellect." "Men of genius have, indeed, as an essential of their composition, great sensibility; but they have likewise great confidence in their own powers." "Deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and all truth is a species of revelation."

And this is a sentence which gives the concentrated essence of the life of Coleridge: "I once had the presumption to address this advice to an actor on the London stage: 'Think in order that you may be able to observe! Observe in order that you may have the materials to think upon! And, thirdly, keep awake ever the habit of instantly embodying and realizing the results of the two; but always think!'"

NOTES

1 *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge. In two volumes. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1895.

2 The Rev. Leapidge Smith, in the Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, 1870, gives a different impression: "In person he was a tall, dark, handsome young man, with long, black, flowing hair; eyes not merely dark, but black and keenly penetrating; a fine forehead; a deep-toned, harmonious voice; a manner never to be forgotten, full of life, vivacity, and kindness; dignified in person; and, added to all these, exhibiting the elements of his future greatness." (Quoted in Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, i. 181.)

3 It is interesting to note, as showing the theological influence of Coleridge in America, that the late Horace Bushnell, who may be said to rank next after Jonathan Edwards as a profound religious thinker, acknowledged his indebtedness to Coleridge as greater than that which he owed to any other human teacher.

Another distinguished American theologian who defended the philosophy and theology of Coleridge was the late Dr. William G.T. Shedd, professor in Union Theological Seminary. See his essay on Coleridge as a Philosopher and Theologian, first published as an introduction to Harper's edition of Coleridge's Works, and reprinted in Shedd, Literary Essays, New York, 1878.

SUPPLEMENT TO VOLUME 1

The reviews published during Coleridge's lifetime that have been identified since the appearance of Volume 1 do not alter our sense of his reputation materially, but several of them seem likely to have been known to him and perhaps to have influenced his sense of the way he had been received by the public. The account given by the *English Review* (No. 13) of *Poems on Various Subjects* with its disapproval of Coleridge's compound epithets and obscurity may be added to the comments of the *Analytical Review* (Vol. 1, No. 13) as part of the critical reaction to which Coleridge referred at the beginning of *Biographia Literaria*. His acquaintance with the review seems likely in part because his complaint of a plagiarism by Samuel Rogers, to which the *English Review* objected, is retracted in his second edition the following year (*Poetical Works,* ii, 1147). More curious is the possibility that the remarks in the *Scourge and Satirist* review of *Christabel* (No. 26) about the irritability of authors and about the virtues of Charles Maturin's *Bertram* may have been a factor in Coleridge's discussion of the 'Supposed irritability of men of Genius' in Chapter 2 of *Biographia Literaria* and of his 'Critique of *Bertram'* in Chapter 23. The suggestion in Charles Lamb's review in the *Times* (No. 22) of 'Christabel' that the poem would be better left unfinished is sympathetic and anticipates modern taste; the speculation at the end of the *London Magazine* analysis of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' that the poem may be viewed as an allegory is, by contrast, wholly facetious.

POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

1796

14. Unsigned notice in *English Review*

1796

From *English Review,* August, 1796, xxviii, 172–5

The poems of Mr. Coleridge are sufficiently miscellaneous. Love, religion, liberty, equality, &c. &c. are all to be met with in this small volume; and though the cast of the author's mind seems to lead him to woo in preference the grave and plaintive muse, yet does he not reject her gayer sister [quotes ll. 1–22 of 'Effusion 32, to a Young Ass' (*PW,* i, 74–5)]:

> For much I fear that *he* lives, ev'n as *she*

is a very indifferent line: besides, the sense seems to demand *but* instead of *for*. The following line,

> How *askingly* its footsteps t'ward me bend?

has more than *German* harshness in it.

Mr. Coleridge is neither deficient in imagination nor in poetical expression, but there is a want of correctness and polish discernible throughout the publication; and his poetical furor sometimes leads him to the confines of absurdity. He is fond of coining new words, and much too profuse of compound epithets.

In an epistle to his wife, after having painted the gloominess of his thoughts in her absence, he tells her that *now* more gay and consoling ideas take possession of his mind. The way he has expressed this is in the true spirit of poetry:

> But Fancy now more gayly sings;
> Or if awhile she droop her wings,
>   As skylarks mid the corn,

> On summer fields she grounds her breast:
> Th'oblivious poppy o'er her nest
> Nods, till returning morn.

The personification of Fancy here, and the simile of the skylark, are happily imagined. One more passage we shall lay before our readers from the same epistle, as a favourable specimen both of the genius, tenderness, and humanity, of the writer:

> When stormy Midnight howling round
> Beats on our roof with clatt'ring round,
> To me your arms you'll stretch:
> Great God! you'll say—to us so kind,
> O shelter from this loud bleak wind
> The houseless, friendless wretch!
>
> The tears that tremble down your cheek,
> Shall bathe my kisses chaste and meek
> In Pity's dew divine;
> And from your heart the sighs that steal
> Shall make your rising bosom feel
> The answ'ring swell of mine!

The chief faults of Mr. Coleridge are, frequent obscurity (especially when he wishes to reach the higher regions of poetry), and a Della Crusca affectation, where passion and sentiment are drowned in description. We have already mentioned his verging on the confines of absurdity: does not the following, among many similar passages, warrant our remark?

> But Love, who heard the *silence* of my thoughts.

Compound epithets, when judiciously, and not too profusely employed, are one of the most powerful engines of poetry; but our author cloys us with *sweets* of this kind. We have just turned up to p. 115, where, in the space of nine lines, we have 'storm-vex'd flame—black soul-jaundic'd fit—sad gloom-pamper'd man—uncouth monster-leap—and tempest-shatter'd bark.' But, not contented with *compounding* words, Mr. Coleridge ventures somewhat beyond the privilege allowed to young poets in the *coinage* of them. To enumerate all his novelties of this kind is not necessary; but the following, if we mistake not, come from *his mint: 'unshuddered, unaghasted, unclimbing, imbrothelled,'* &c. Every author may, no

doubt, claim the privilege of introducing new words; but this privilege should be exercised with caution and judgment. We leave it with the reader to determine, whether this rule has been scrupulously followed by the present writer.

We agree with Mr. Coleridge in thinking that there is no 'striking similarity between the lines in his XXXVIth Effusion and those of which they are said to be a palpable imitation,' in 'The Pleasures of Memory;' but we do not agree with him when he says, 'it may be proper to remark, that the tale of *Florio* in the Pleasures of Memory, is to be found in Lochleven, a poem of great merit, by Michael Bruce. — In Mr. Rogers's poem the names are *Florio* and *Julia,* in the Lochleven, *Lomond* and *Levina*—and *this is all the difference*.' On the contrary, the only similarity is the death of Julia and Levina, who are both drowned: all the other circumstances of each story are entirely different. By the bye, we have every reason to believe, that the story of Lomond and Levina, in Lochleven, is the production of the late ingenious Mr. Logan, the first editor of Bruce's poems. This is not the place to assign our reasons for our belief.

One thing more we shall just mention before we have done with these ' Poems on various Subjects.' When a writer publishes miscellaneous verses, he of course presents himself before the public in a variety of humours; and the sensible and candid reader will, as he peruses each production, allow for the impulse of the moment in which it was written: yet still there are contrasts so strikingly opposite, discords so very unharmonious, that no sensible reader can pardon, and no decent author should attempt. The four ludicrously obscene lines page 123 give rise to this reflection. They should not have appeared in the same publication with Mr. Coleridge's mystical '*Religious Musings*.'

It is hardly worth mentioning, that Mr. Coleridge is the most violent leveller we have met with, even in this age of levelling. Instead of an equal *division* of property, our poet spurns at all property; and, drunk with the waters of Helicon, sings with rapture of the unspeakable joys of life in the UNDIVIDED *vale!*

ODE ON THE DEPARTING YEAR

1796

15. Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor*

1797

From *Monthly Visitor,* February, 1797, i, 188–90

We know that adversity is the parent of magnanimity; and when we read that this Ode was written "amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow," we are almost inclined to believe, that it is the happiest season for the exertions of genius.

The opening of this Ode is solemnly beautiful:

> Spirit, who sweepest the wild harp of Time,
> It is most hard, with an untroubled tear
> Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
> Yet, mine eye, fixt on Heaven's unchanged clime,
> Long had I listen'd, free from mortal fear,
> With inward stillness, and a bowed mind:
> When lo! far onwards, waving on the wind,
> I saw the skirts of the DEPARTING YEAR!
> Starting from my silent sadness,
> Then, with no unholy madness,
> Ere yet the entered cloud forbade my sight,
> I rais'd th' impetuous song, and solemnized his flight.

Of the death of the Empress of Russia:

> I mark'd Ambition, in his war-array:
> I hear'd the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
> 'Ah! whither does the Northern Conqueress stay!
> Groans not her Chariot o'er its onward way?'
> Fly, mailed Monarch, fly!
> Stunn'd by Death's 'twice mortal' mace
> No more on MURDER'S lurid face

Th' insatiate hag shall glote with drunken eye!
Manes of th' unnumbered slain!
Ye that gasp'd on Warsaw's plain!
Ye that erst at ISMAIL'S tower,
When human Ruin choak'd the streams,
Fell, in Conquest's glutted hour,
'Mid women's shrieks, and infants' screams;
Whose shrieks, whose screams were vain to stir
Loud-laughing, red-eye'd Massacre!
Spirits of th' uncoffin'd slain,
Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,
Oft at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow dwelling!
Th' exterminating fiend is fled—
(Foul her life, and dark her doom!)
Mighty army of the dead,
Dance, like death-fires, round her tomb!
Then, with prophetic song, relate
Each some scepter'd murderer's fate!

The poet having forcibly depicted the woe-fraught judgment pronounced by Heaven on his offending country, thus describes his sensations:

The voice had ceas'd, the phantoms fled,
Yet still I gasp'd, and reel'd with dread.
And ever, when the dream of night
Renews the vision to my sight,
Cold sweat-damps gather on my limbs,
My ears throb hot, my eye-balls start,
My brain with horrid tumult swims,
Wild is the tempest of my heart:
And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of death!

In this agony, he addresses his countrymen:

O, doom'd to fall, enslav'd and vile,
O Albion! O my mother isle!
Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers;
Thy grassy uplands gentle swells
Echo to the bleat of flocks:
(Those grassy hills, those glitt'ring dells

Proudly ramparted with rocks)
And Ocean, 'mid his uproar wild,
Speaks safety to his Island-child,

Disclaim'd of Heaven! mad Av'rice at thy side,
At coward distance, yet with kindling pride—
Safe, 'mid thy herds and corn-fields, thou hast stood,
And join'd the yell of Famine and of Blood.
Away, my gentle soul away!
In vain, in vain the birds of warning sing—
And hark! I hear the famin'd brood of prey
Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!
Away, my soul away!
I, unpartaking of the evil thing,
With daily prayer, and daily toil,
Soliciting my scant and blameless soil,
Have wail'd my country with a loud lament.
Now, I re-center my immortal mind
In the long sabbath of high self-content;
Cleans'd from the fleshly passions that bedim
God's image—Sister of the Seraphim.

We trust it is no dispraise to Mr. Coleridge, that he appears to have drank from that fount of poetic inspiration—the BIBLE. Thus, the tendrils of his fertile imagination having vegetated on the banks of immortality, he is strengthened for those bold and superior flights which distinguish him from the mass of his contemporaries. Amongst the numerous excellencies of this Ode, we are particularly struck with the following similie, in Epode II.

And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of Death!

In the same Epode—

And Ocean, 'mid his uproar wild,
Speaks safety to his Island-child.

The epithet "Island-child," as applied to Albion, is singularly sweet and impressive. As a Poet, we rank Mr. Coleridge in the first class: as a Politician (though from the esteem which we bear to his talents, we could wish him less violent) it is not our place to censure him.

POEMS, SECOND EDITION

1797

16. Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor*

1797

From *Monthly Visitor,* August, 1797, ii, 169–80

In our Review of February last, we had occasion to notice an "Ode on the departing Year." We are now presented with that ode in another way, and assembled with the former productions of its author. As the selection of which we speak, presents us with the full characteristics of Coleridge's muse, we find it necessary to enlarge our remarks.

A sweet dedicatory poem to the Rev. George Coleridge, of Ottery St. Mary, Devon, is thus concluded:

> These various songs,
> Which I have fram'd, in many a various mood,
> Accept my BROTHER! and (for some perchance
> Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
> If aught of error, or intemperate truth,
> Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper age
> Will calm it down, and let thy love forgive it!

We do certainly approve the sentiment of these lines and the exercise of that sentiment, as exemplified in some parts of the volume before us; but we wish that Mr. Coleridge had confined himself to the correction of errors in judgment. Judgment and imagination require a general difference of treatment. The understanding is mostly improved by correction, the fancy seldom. We have neither place or inclination to enumerate all the *imaginary* improvements which the poet has thought proper to make; while, as a confirmation of our strictures, we exhibit the following statement:

ODE ON THE DEPARTING YEAR—*First Edit.*

> Now, I re-center my immortal mind
> In the long sabbath of high self-content;
> Cleans'd from the fleshly passions that bedim
> God's image—sister of the Seraphim.

The same ode as *now* printed:

> Now I re-center my immortal mind,
> In the deep sabbath of blest self-content;
> Cleans'd from the fears and anguish that bedim
> God's image—sister of the Seraphim.

Surely it will be unnecessary to tell a poetical reader, that the original and beautiful conclusion of this ode is here entirely lost. A poet who has the credit of inspiration, may speak the language of his heart, without heeding the coldness of restraint, though that coldness were opposed to his conduct.

But the poet has omitted as well as altered; and we wish we could say for the better. The possessors of his first volume will not thank him for this; and the purchasers of his second volume must become the possessors of his first. We have always thought this conduct in an author every way unjust, and we take this opportunity of saying what we have long thought.

Specimens of the Work.

[quotes ll. 64–87 and 276–322 of 'Religious Musings', including Coleridge's footnote to l. 315 (*PW,* i, 111–12 and 119–21); 'The Kiss' (*PW,* i, 63–4); and 'Sonnet to a Friend…' (*PW,* i, 154)]

Of Coleridge's descriptive powers, this poem will sufficiently speak:

[quotes 'Composed at Clevedon, Somersetshire' —'The Eolian Harp' —, including Coleridge's footnote to l. 60 (*PW,* i, 100–2); the quotation is followed by comments on the contributions made to the volume by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb, with illustrative quotations]

There is, in the muse of Coleridge, an originality at once grand and affecting. He feels whatever he writes, and he writes whatever he feels. That roughness which would deform a common poet, is in him

symmetry and proportion. We do not look for evenness and exactitude, in the old grandeur of the gothic: this would be no indication of strength; and strength is the beauty of greatness. Coleridge seems to labour for utterance; and when he can no longer retain silence, he shapes the language to himself, because our language is not shaped to him. Hence the obscurity of some of his phrases to those who have no poetical idea. But, whatever imperfection may by some minds be adjudged to him on this account, they are unanimous in their admiration of his pathetic poetry: and they are alive to his descriptive powers. In a poet of such various, yet uniform excellence, it would be tedious to seek for defects. His defects, call them as you will, are the defects of genius and intelligence.

"If any man," says Coleridge, "expect from my poems the same easiness of style which he admires in a drinking song, for him I have not written." This passage is worthy of its writer: we wish we could think so of what follows. —"I expect," continues Mr. C. "neither profit or general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own 'exceeding great reward:' it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." A divine tribute to poetry! and we are sorry to object to any part of it.

That Mr. Coleridge does not expect "profit" from his poems, at the same time that it reflects disgrace on the age in which we live, it reflects credit on *his* temper and judgment. Fame, however, is different to profit. And what is a poet without fame? Where is the fuel of his genius; and the sympathy that enlivens his heart; if sensibility be not awakened by his writings, and if fame be indifferent to his claims? A vain man will be pleased with flattery; but it does not become a great man to talk lightly of fame.

CHARLES LLOYD,

Whose poems come next under consideration, is evidently of the Coleridgean school, though of a genius something softer than his master. There is much simplicity, sweetness, and promise in the poetry of Lloyd. What we have said of Mr. Lloyd will partly apply to his friend

CHARLES LAMB:

The pieces which this gentleman has contributed to the collection under review, entitle him to considerable praise. It will be seen that he has a nearer resemblance to Coleridge than that which appears in Mr. Lloyd. He is strong and harmonious; but he is not so affecting as the last writer.

When we spoke of the Coleridgean school, we meant not to give birth to lightness and triviality: our intention had no such bent. We observed a resemblance in the manner, and in the sentiments of this triumvirate: a resemblance too close for chance. Mr. Coleridge, for instance, is very fond of the rhyme *ess* or *ness;* as distress, happiness, &c. &c. and his friends have been very prodigal in this way. We meet with "*quietness*" without end, in the poems before us, especially in those by Mr. Lloyd; and there is, sometimes, both in him and Mr. Lamb, a turgescence of style not very remote from affectation.

FEARS IN SOLITUDE

1798

17. Unsigned review in *Monthly Visitor*

1798

From *Monthly Visitor,* December, 1798, v, 417–20

The Public are already acquainted with the prolific and eccentric genius of Mr. Coleridge, whose strains have been listened to on former occasions with approbation. This publication will not diminish the fame which he has already obtained.

On the *Alarm of the Invasion* we find the following beautiful lines: —

[quotes ll. 129–232, beginning at 'Spare us yet awhile' (*PW,* i, 260–2)]

18. Unsigned review in *Monthly Mirror*

1799

From *Monthly Mirror,* January, 1799, vii, 36–7

The political sentiments of Mr. Coleridge are well known; he is no friend to the present system of government. Lately he was an advocate for the French, but their recent conduct has effected an alteration in his opinions.

O France! that mockest heaven, adult'rous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils!

Thus it is he apostrophizes the *great nation,* that once was the subject of his extravagant eulogy.

His opinion of England is not more favourable.

> We have offended, O my countrymen!
> We have offended very grievously,
> And have been tyrannous.
>
> ★ ★ ★
>
> Therefore evil days
> Are coming on us, O my countrymen!

If he had been a *prophet,* as well as a poet (as, with the ancients, the characters were blended) we should now be groaning under the retributive inflictions of providence. The author's *Fears* are, perhaps, not highly honourable to his feelings as a Briton, nor very complimentary to the national character.

19. Review, initialled 'λ' in *New London Review*

1799

From *New London Review,* January, 1799, i, 98–100

Mr. Coleridge sits quietly down, "on a green and silent spot, amid the hills!" and imagines all the dreadful circumstances he can couple with the idea of invasion. He hears "the thunder and the shout, and all the crash of onset; and, considering the *menace* of the French as an actual *event;* his *fears* produce the present very dolorous lamentation; but FALSIS *terroribus implet* [Horace, *Epistles,* 2.2 l. 212: 'with false fears fills (my heart)']; instead of "*Englishwomen dragging their flight, fainting beneath the burden of their babes, that, but yesterday, laugh'd at the breast!*" "*The vaunts and Menaces of the enemy have passed like the gust, that roar'd and died away on the distant tree, which heard, and only heard.*"

The *Ode to France,* is a revocation of the author's sentiments of French liberty:

> Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive these dreams!
> I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
> From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent.
> I hear *thy groans upon her blood-stain'd streams!*
> Heroes, that for your peaceful country perish'd;
> And ye, that fleeing *spot the mountain snows*
> *With bleeding wounds;* forgive me, that I cherish'd
> One thought, that ever bless'd your cruel foes!

We do not exactly comprehend the meaning of the passages we have distinguished by italics; but there are many affectations of this kind. In the stanza immediately preceding, the author thus speaks of the success of the French arms against the allies:

> When France, her front deep-scar'd and gory,
> Conceal'd with clust'ring wreaths of glory;
> When *insupportably advancing,*
> Her *arm made mock'ry* of the *warrior's ramp,*
> While, timid looks of fury glancing,
> Domestic treason, *crush'd beneath her fatal stamp,*
> Writh'd, like a wounded dragon in his gore.

Insupportably advancing, is a quaintness borrowed from Milton; and to common readers it must be unintelligible. But it had been well, if Mr. Coleridge had borrowed nothing more: he has run away with the entire passage from the Agonistes, where he found the phrase he has here so strangely and outrageously applied. Before we quote the lines of Milton, we may observe, that Mr. Coleridge is a close imitator of the peculiarities of the illustrious bard. We must not deny, at the same time, that he has caught some portion of his poetical genius. The measure of this ode resembles also the rhimed parts of the chorus of Agonistes:

> But safest he who stood aloof,
> When *insupportably* his foot *advanc'd,*
> In *scorn* of their proud arms and warlike tools,
> Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
> Fled from his lion *ramp,* old *warriors* turn'd
> Their plated backs under his heel;
> Or *grov'ling* soil'd their crested helmets in the *dust*.

And a few lines higher, Milton has this expression: "*made arms ridiculous*."

No comment is necessary to stigmatise the grossness of a plagiarism like this.

The third poem is a transcript of some reflections induced by the extreme silence of midnight, during a frost. The thoughts are beautifully simple and poetical; but, here, again, we meet with obscurities that perplex and irritate the mind. Regretting that he has been educated in a *city,* and referring to his infant, who sleeps quietly by his side, he says,

> —Thou, my babe, shalt wander *like a breeze,*
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountain, and *beneath the clouds,*
> *Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores*
> *And mountain crags;* So shalt thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who, from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all, and *all things in himself*.
> Great universal teacher! he shall mould
> Thy spirit, and *by giving make it ask*.

Affecting the loftiness, and the *manner* of Milton, Mr. Coleridge thus often bewilders himself in a maze of phraseology, half poetry, half nonsense, which we must confess we have not sufficient sagacity to penetrate. Mr. Coleridge is, nevertheless, a poet, and with proper care, he may be recognized in that capacity by posterity.

LYRICAL BALLADS

1798

20. Unsigned review in *Naval Chronicle*

1799

From the September and October editions, 1799, ii, 328–30 and 418–20. The *Naval Chronicle* devoted a section of each issue to 'Naval Literature', made up of reviews of writings about the sea with excerpts from them.

The author of these admirable Poems informs us in the advertisement, that the majority of them were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of Society is adapted to the purposes of Poetry.

The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere, which consists of seven ballads, is written in the Style, as well as in the Spirit, of our early poets. —The argument is as follows:

> How a Ship having passed The Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of The Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner The Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

To an accurate observer, Superstition will generally be seen more or less prevalent in our character: it is the Weed of a religious Mind; and thought it must ever wither before the clear light of reason, yet so great is our predeliction for supernatural agency, that whatever has a tendency to the marvellous is readily received and liberally encouraged.

The *Lyrical Ballads* powerfully awaken this too prevailing passion, and possess a very uncommon, and singular degree of

merit. We trust the author will ere long gratify the public with his name, since he promises to rank amongst the first of our poets; not only for the various harmony of Rhythm, but also for the bold efforts of a mind that has dared to think for itself, —yet pourtrays with diffidence its own original impressions in quaint but simple language. We have selected the first and fourth parts of The Ancyent Marinere:

[quotes ll. 1–82 and, in the October issue, ll. 224–91 (*PW,* i, 187–9 and 196–8)]

REMORSE

1813

21. Unsigned review in *Country Magazine*

1813

From *Country Magazine,* April, 1813, i, 184–8

A tragedy written in these days having a great run on the stage, and being read with avidity in the closet, is a thing so novel as to interest the attention.

In the preface, Mr. COLERIDGE tells us it was written so long ago as 1797, and then presented to one of the London Theatres, (to which is not stated,) and treated, as well as the author himself, with the utmost indifference if not contempt. But "there is a tide in the affairs of men" —since that period Mr. COLERIDGE has become popular as a literary character and a poet: the case, therefore, is quite altered; the public now look at his productions with predispositions in their favour; hence beauties, previously undiscovered, are strikingly perceived, and attention being occupied with them, the imperfections and deformities are overlooked.

From the fate of Mr. COLERIDGE and his tragedy, an inference is deducible of some practical importance. —An author should not despair of ultimate success, yielding up his efforts as altogether unavailing, because their first fruits have been rejected as worthless: for it should be remembered, that time and circumstances may so operate on public taste, that these very fruits shall become in high estimation, as possessing delicious juices, and exquisite flavour.

Subsequently to the time when this Tragedy was rejected, its Author has acquired reputation by the publication of some poetry, and of a periodical work, 'The Friend.' To this should be added, that he has lately acquired considerable reputation as a Critic on the Drama, by lectures on Shakspeare's Plays delivered to crowded

Auditories in London. This would strongly operate in predisposing to a favourable reception in that city, of a Play written by him: and to its being admired in the provincial Theatres it was amply sufficient that it had been performed in London with 'unbounded applause.' Considering the matter in this light, our surprise is lessened at the success of a piece not assisted in attraction by the aid either of splendid scenery or quadruped actors; and but slightly by stage trick and sorcery. Notwithstanding its merit, (and we grant it possessed of much,) we believe its success must have been incalculably less than it has been, but for the adventitious aids alluded to, since it is destitute of the almost indispensible requisites to public favour just specified. Its beauties are of that class which can be better perceived in the closet than from the stage—consisting in philosophical allusion, deep reflection, apt figure, and correct, and highly expressive diction, more than in highly-wrought delineation of character, display of passion, or the disclosure of striking events involved in the tale.

Of the plot we proceed to give a slight sketch, and shall subjoin a few extracts, as a specimen of the production.

[Summarizes the plot.]

For critical remark on the plot, we have not room. In our opinion its interest is not above mediocrity; and we conjecture "The Remorse" will not long remain a favourite on the stage. But as a composition for the closet, it will be read with delight by those competent to a perception of its beauties. To illustrate the proposition contained in the following quotation, seems to be the author's scope in this production.

P. 2.

Zul. REMORSE is as the heart in which it grows:
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison-tree, that pierced to the inmost
Weeps only tears of poison!

We select the following as favourable specimens, and as strongly exemplifying Mr. COLERIDGE'S peculiarities of manner.

[quotes ll. 18–51, Act I, Scene ii (*PW,* ii, 824–5); ll. 1–16, Act III, Scene i (*PW,* ii, 847–8); ll. 94–114, Act III, Scene ii (*PW,* ii, 855);

ll. 1–24, Act IV, Scene iii (*PW,* ii, 868); ll. 1–35, Act V, Scene i (*PW,* ii, 871–2); ll. 106–36, Act V, Scene i (*PW*, ii, 874–5)]

What pity that a pen, so capable of great achievement, should not be more frequently exercised. We hope the merited success of this Piece, will rouse our Author to the exertion of his mighty energies in fresh attempts.

CHRISTABEL, KUBLA KHAN, A VISION; THE PAINS OF SLEEP

1816

22. Charles Lamb? in *The Times*

1816

From *The Times,* 20 May, 1816. This unsigned review has been attributed to Lamb (David V.Erdman, *Texas Studies in English,* xxxvii–1958–53–60, and Lewis M.Schwartz, *Studies in Romanticism,* ix–1970–114–24).

It is not often that we venture to notice the poetical compositions of the day: they have their appropriate sphere of criticism, which, indeed, is for the most part very debatable: but when a work appears of indisputable originality, forming almost a class by itself—attractive no less by its beauty than by its singularity, we may be pardoned for deviating a little from our customary track. The publication of *Christabel* cannot be an indifferent circumstance to any true lover of poetry; and its publication in its present imperfect state may not improbably give an additional zest to public curiosity. Like the "half-told" tale of Cambuscan, it might excite a wish to call up him who left it thus abrupt, even if he had quitted this earthly scene: but the poet lives. He tells us, that his poetic powers, which had been for some years "in a state of suspended animation", have very lately revived. The two parts, therefore, which he presents to us, may, beside their intrinsic merits, be thought valuable with reference to the three others yet to come, and which, he says, he hopes to embody in verse in the course of the present year. We own we scarcely venture to indulge such an expectation. It is well known to many of Mr. Coleridge's friends, that Christabel, as it now stands, has remained, with scarcely the variation of a line, ever since the year 1800, a singular monument of genius—shall we add, of indolence, or of those

wayward negligences by which genius is often characterized? Mr. Coleridge will, therefore, excuse us if, without at all adverting to any possible additions which his tale may or may not hereafter receive, we confine our remarks altogether to its present form. For our own part, indeed, we know not whether the fragmental beauty that it now possesses can be advantageously exchanged for the wholeness of a finished narrative. In its present form it lays irresistible hold of the imagination. It interests, if we may so speak, more by what it leaves untold, than even by what it tells. We should, in all probability think less of Chaucer's "wondrous horse of brass", if we possessed an exact catalogue of his aerial journeys; and in like manner, if we hereafter learn more of the birth, parentage, and education of Lady Geraldine, though we may respect or detest her more, we shall certainly not look on her with the same thought-suspending awe.

Hitherto we have been speaking of this poem as if it were well known to our readers, which we have no doubt, if it be not already the case, will soon be so. We shall, however, now proceed to give some slight account of it. The story is, like a dream of lovely forms, mixed with strange and indescribable terrors. The scene, the personages, are those of old, romantic superstition; but we feel intimate with them, as if they were of our own day, and of our own neighbourhood. It is impossible not to suppose that we have known "sweet Christabel", from the time when she was "a fairy thing, with red round cheeks", till she had grown up, through all the engaging prettinesses of childhood and budding charms of youth, to be the pure and dignified creature which we find her at the opening of the poem. The scene is laid, at midnight, in the yet leafless wood, a furlong from the castle-gate of the rich baron Sir Leoline, whose daughter, "the lovely Lady Christabel", has come, in consequence of a vow, to pray, at the old oak tree, "for the weal of her lover, that's far away". In the midst of her orisons she is suddenly alarmed by a moaning near her, which turns out to be the complaint of the Lady Geraldine, who had been carried off by warriors and brought to this wild wood, where they had left her with intent quickly to return. Geraldine's story easily obtains credence from the unsuspecting Christabel, who conducts her privately to a chamber in the castle. There the mild and beautiful Geraldine seems transformed in language and appearance to a foul sorceress, contending with the spirit of Christabel's departed mother for the mastery over her

daughter; but Christabel's lips are sealed by a spell. What she knows she cannot utter; and scarcely can she herself believe that she knows it. On the return of morning, Geraldine, in all her pristine beauty, accompanies her innocent but perplexed hostess to the presence-room of the baron, who is soon delighted to learn that she is the daughter of his once-loved friend, Lord Rowland De Vaux of Triermaine.

We shall not pursue the distresses of Christabel, the mysterious warnings of Bracy the bard, the assumed sorrow of Geraldine, or the indignation of Sir Leoline at his daughter's seemingly causeless jealousy—what we have principally to remark, with respect to the tale, is, that wild, and romantic, and visionary as it is, it has a truth of its own, which seizes on and masters the imagination; from the beginning to the end. In this respect we know of nothing so like it, in modern composition, as Burns's *Tam o' Shanter*. In both instances, the preternatural occurrences are not merely surprising—they possess a peculiar interest, as befalling individuals, for whom our affections have, from other causes, been kindled. True it is, that the partiality which we feel for the drunken rustic is totally different, in kind, from that which we indulge for the noble virgin. It is, however, (speaking from our own feelings) much the same in degree. In the one case, to borrow the powerful language of a poetical critic, "the poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset, that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence— selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality": yet are "these various elements of humanity blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits"; and "the poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, unveils, with exquisite skill, the finer ties of imagination and feeling", by which they are linked to the human heart [Wordsworth; see *Robert Burns: The Critical Heritage* (1974), 286]. The elements of our sensibility, to all that concerns fair Christabel, are of a purer texture: they are not formally announced in a set description; but they accompany and mark her every movement throughout the piece—*Incessu*

patuit Dea [Virgil, *Aeneid,* Book I, l.405: "in her step she was revealed as a goddess"]. She is the support of her noble father's declining age—sanctified by the blessing of her departed mother—the beloved of a valorous and absent knight—the delight and admiration of an inspired bard—she is a being made up of tenderness, affection, sweetness, piety! There is a fine discrimination, in the descriptions of Christabel and Geraldine, between the lovely and the merely beautiful. There is a moral sensitiveness about Christabel which none but a true poet could seize. It would be difficult to find a more delicate touch of this kind, in any writer, than her anxious exclamation, when in passing the hall with Geraldine a gleam bursts from the dying embers.

Next in point of merit to the power which Mr. Coleridge has displayed in interesting us by the moral beauty of his heroine, comes the skill with which he has wrought up the feelings and fictions of superstition into shape. The witch-like Geraldine lying down by the side of Christabel, and uttering the spell over her, makes the reader thrill with undefinable horror.

Another striking excellence of this poem is its *picturesqueness,* by which we mean a quality, not indeed essential to poetry, (for the most sublime poets often soar far above it), but one which powerfully affects every reader, by placing, as it were, before his eyes a distinct picture of the events narrated, with all their appendages of sight and sound—the dim forest—the massive castle-gate—the angry moan of the sleeping mastiff bitch—the sudden flash of the dying embers—the echoing hall—the carved chamber, with its curiously elegant lamp—in short, all that enriches and adorns this tale, with a luxuriance of imagination seldom equalled. Of the higher requisites of poetry, extracts will seldom enable a person to form an adequate judgment: but descriptive passages may often be selected from a poem without much injury to their effect. We shall, therefore, indulge ourselves in extracting the two following pictures, leaving it to the painter to determine whether they would not furnish most exquisite subjects for his art:

It was a lovely sight to see
The Lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak-tree.
        Amid the jagged shadows

Of mossy, leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To pay her gentle vows:
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resign'd to bliss or bale—
Her face! —oh, call it fair, not pale—
And both blue eyes, more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear

———

— — Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes—
With blushing cheek, and courtesy fine,
She turn'd her from Sir Leoline,
Softly gath'ring up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast—

We break off here, because the transition from this graceful picture to the "look of dull and treacherous hate" which she casts askance on Christabel, falls not within the sphere of the painter's art; inasmuch as time, which is a necessary element of all change, defies the descriptive power of the pencil; and, consequently, the picture of the lady's shrunken, serpent eye, would convey no idea of those large bright orbs which had just before formed so striking a feature in Geraldine's countenance.

We had intended to notice, at some length, the peculiar richness and variety which the metre of this poem displays; but time will not allow us to enter fully into this topic. With great apparent irregularity, there are no harsh transitions, no real deviations from that sense of aptitude and proportion which is the basis of all the pleasures of rhythm. Mr. Coleridge, however, is wrong in calling the principle of scanning by accents, rather than by syllables, a new one. At this time of day new principles of composition would be rather to be suspected than desired. The truth is, that our oldest ballad-writers were guided by no other principle. It exists in the genius of our language, and owes its efficacy to habits which have originated in a very remote antiquity, and grown up with every one of us from infancy. This, indeed, is a point with which the readers of the poem

have little concern. Whatever may be their opinion of Mr. Coleridge's theory, they will not deny him the praise of very high practical excellence; and they will not be much inclined to ask whether they are affected by accents or syllables, while they enjoy the gratification of perusing and reperusing so sweet a poem as Christabel.

23. Unsigned review in *Champion*

1816

From *Champion,* 26 May, 1816, 166–7

Mr. Coleridge's Poem is at present the standing enigma which puzzles the curiosity of literary circles. What is it all about? What is the idea? Is *Lady Geraldine* a sorceress? or a vampire? or a man? or what is she, or he, or it? These are questions which we have alternately heard and put; but to which not even those who have thought the subject worth more pains than ourselves, have been so fortunate as to hit upon a satisfactory answer. One friend suggests that the whole is a mere hoax—a silly problem without a solution, —and reminds us that "true no-meaning puzzles more than wit." Another thinks it is the result of a wager on the digestive capabilities of the public taste: —and a third declares, that the poem has just the same effect on his temper as if a man were to salute him in the street with a box on the ear, and walk away. Certain it is, that the verses are wrought up in a maze of impenetrable mystery, which to some persons appears the legitimate and successful means of giving it a sort of preternatural horror, —but which is deemed by others as nothing more or less than the evasive and unsatisfactory resource of conceited negligence and perverseness.

The story of the Poem—(for an entire poem we must consider it till we see the three additional parts which the Poet hopes to "embody in verse, in the course of the present year,") —is this.

Christabel, the daughter of the rich Sir *Leoline,* is praying "beneath a huge oak tree," by moonlight, in a wood, near her father's castle; when a damsel, drest in white silk, and "beautiful exceedingly," who has been run away with by five warriors, and left on that spot, asks her protection. *Christabel* takes her home to the castle; and, not to disturb the family, gives her half of her own bed. —Before they retire to rest, she also furnishes the stranger with a cup of cordial wine. They lie down together, and *Geraldine*—for that is the guest's name—takes *Christabel* in her arms, and mutters a sort of obscure spell over her; —they then fall asleep. In the morning *Christabel* introduces the lady to *Sir Leoline,* who is astonished to find, from her own account, that she is the daughter of a former friend of his, with whom he had quarrelled, *Lord Roland de Vaux of Triermaine*. The Baron orders *Bracy,* the bard, to go to *Lord Roland* and apprise him of the residence of his daughter. The Bard requests a day's delay, in consequence of his having seen a vision of a dove fluttering on the ground in the wood, with a bright green snake coiled round its neck. The Baron addresses *Geraldine,* who turns away from him with "courtesy fine," and, gathering up her train, folds her arms across her chest, "couches her head upon her breast," and looks askance at *Christabel,* —"with something of malice, and more of dread," and with "her large bright eyes" shrunk up to the size of a serpent's. *Christabel* stumbles in a dizzy trance, and shudders aloud with a hissing sound, and *Geraldine's* eyes again become large and bright, —though the effect of their spell makes *Christabel* unconsciously imitate the serpent look which *Geraldine* had assumed. *Sir Leoline's* daughter falls at her father's feet, and begs that this woman may be sent away; at which request the Baron is enraged, and dispatches *Bracy* on his errand.

This is literally the story of *Christabel!* —from which our readers will judge, whether there is not more than common ground for the conjectures we have mentioned, as to the author's intention in publishing it. —What may have been his design, is not, however, of any great consequence, and is not very likely to be known; —but that the Poem is one of the most trifling, inconclusive, unsatisfactory performances, that was ever read, will, we venture to say, be the opinion of nine-tenths, we will not say of the world, but of the attentive readers of poetry—reserving one tenth for that coterie of ardent admirers, which every poet is ablt to gather round him, and who either adore in what he does, the evidence of what

he can do, —or who, from exclusive study and strong habits of admiration of his writings, have acquired a sort of factitious taste for his worst absurdities and errors. These persons may admire the whole of Mr. Coleridge's Poem, and probably most warmly its most objectionable parts. —They may discover, —(though God knows, we cannot), —a great deal of undefmable sublimity in such passages as these: —

> Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
> Hath a toothless *mastiff bitch;*
> From the kennel beneath the rock,
> She makes answer to the clock—
> Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour,
> Ever, and aye, moonshine or shower,
> Sixteen short howls, not overloud,
> Some says she sees my Lady's shroud! —

or of graceful simplicity in these lines: —

> So free from danger, free from fear,
> They cross'd the court—right glad they were,
> And Christabel devoutly cried
> To the Lady by her side; —
> Praise we the virgin all divine,
> Who hath preserved thee from thy distress:
> Alas! alas! (said Geraldine),
> I cannot speak for weariness;
> So free from danger, free from fear,
> They cross'd the Court: right glad they were.

To Persons who, on the principle that fiction should be as opposite to fact as possible, think a splice of unintelligibility by no means a fault in a Poem, —the obscurity and undiscoverable drift of the story, may appear a means of heightening its sublimity: but Mr. Coleridge is not in truth entitled to this indulgence. The principle of producing effect by means of obscurity, is very admissible, and has been advantageously used by the greatest Poets in the subordinate and incidental points and circumstances in the progress of a story: —but here the line must be drawn, and the licence must never be applied to the main thread of the narrative. It must not be made an

excuse for the utter absence of perspicuity and connexion in the main fable, or of definiteness in the characters, the passions, and the situations. The abuse of talents and the abuse of poetical principles, appear to us to have been, if not Mr. Coleridge's chief object, certainly his chief effect in this Poem. We know not what term to apply to his style and versification. —To say they are slovenly and irregular, gives but a feeble idea of the abrupt variety of indolent experiments, which he presses into the service—from the imitation of birds, —"tu-whit, tu-whoo," —to the most prosaic baldness of conversational phraseology. His verse professedly runs on accents instead of feet—so that there is scarcely any variety of ballad metre that comes within the limits of four, accents, which he has not introduced; —and to keep pace with the accents in long lines, we are sometimes obliged to gallop along, like choristers in a long verse in the Psalms. —In diction, in numbers, in thought, in short in every thing appertaining to the Poem, Mr. Coleridge's licentiousness out-Herods Herod. Assuredly we are far from wishing to see our poetry again subjugated to those inexorable canons of propriety which, like every species of despotism effectually repress the transcendant efforts of genius. We do not want our Poets servilely to imitate Addison or Pope. But the opposite extreme, which appears to be the besetting sin of the poetry of the day, is not less to be guarded against. —In our zeal for natural feeling and natural expression we should be cautious how we admit under these denominations every crude, and puerile familiarity which perverse, or indolent, or weak writers may palm upon us under the sanction of that much perverted word "*nature*." —There is no greater mistake than to suppose that every thing that is in nature may be booked into Poetry: —much of what is *natural* in language and in sentiment, is essentially flat, ordinary, and prosaic. There are weeds as well as flowers—a poet must exercise some selection, some discrimination; —and as there are situations, and many, in all poems, where the elevation of sentiment, or imagery, which by some is thought to be the only proper distinction of poetry from prose, cannot be introduced, the poet loses a very allowable means of ornament, if he restricts himself here to the dry phraseology of ordinary nature. —Milton, Chaucer, Fletcher bear us out in what we advance.

Amidst all its incongruities, and eccentricities, and its grotesque horrors, so like Monk Lewis's nightmare productions, *Christabel* undoubtedly contains some few beautiful passages

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing, to itself—
A fairy thing, with red round cheeks,
That always finds and never seeks, —
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness, p. 47.

Kubla Khan is a fragment of a poem which our author composed—*in his sleep!!!* —*"The Pains of Sleep"* is a vivid picture of those dark horrors which sometimes scourge the mind in the moments of bodily inaction.

Mr. Coleridge is evidently a man of no ordinary poetical powers. The present volume bears evidence of them—and so much the more is our regret, that his life should be divided between seasons of enervating indolence, and the hasty composition of fragments in which there is so much more to forgive than to admire.

24. Review, initialled T.O., in *Farrago*

1816

From *Farrago,* 17 June, 1816, No. 1, 3–16. The identity of the correspondent, T.O., is unknown. The full title of the journal is *Farrago; or, the Lucubrations of Counsellor Bickerton, Esquire*.

To Counsellor Bickerton, Esq.

Sir,

In consequence of your hint relative to criticism on new and popular works, I enclose you a Critique on Mr. Coleridge's last

Poem. Should it meet with your approbation, I hope it may be honoured with a place in your "Farrago."

T.O.

Oxford, June 14, 1816.

Christabel—Kubla Khan—the Pains of Sleep—by S.T.Coleridge, Esq. pp. 64. London, 1816.

Concerning the merits of Mr. Coleridge the readers of poetry have been much divided: the praise of original genius has been denied to him by none; but many are disposed to reduce that praise to a very limited compass. —Now to state our own opinion of Mr. C.; he has always appeared to us as possessing a more than common share of wild and creative talent; but as marvellously deficient in what alone can render that talent universally attractive and popular—a sound and critical judgment. Under these impressions we took up the Poem which forms the subject of this article, and on perusing it received a stronger conviction from every page, that we had rightly appreciated the merits of the Author. It will be recollected that Lord Byron in his Notes to the "Siege of Corinth" bestowed a very high compliment on the then unpublished poem of "Christabel." Such flattering notice coming from so celebrated a quarter, naturally excited great expectations among the literary world. The admirers of Mr. Coleridge's former works looked exultingly forward to that auspicious day which should greet the publication of the renowned Manuscript. But when that day did at last arrive, and the paper-knife had been applied to the first pages beyond the Preface, how mournfully was expectation disappointed. The first pages, instead of the beauty so celebrated by Lord Byron, exhibited nothing but a continued farrago of childishness and discord. As the perusal continued, a few flickering gleams of genius enlightened the dreary path, till at length even these were no more perceptible through the increasing darkness which overshadowed the conclusion. The world was at length too well convinced of the satirical talents of Lord Byron, and discovered, too late, that when he praised the originality, beauty, and wildness of the unpublished "Christabel," he was only repeating the experiment which he had tried in his own "Siege of

Corinth," namely, to discover the exact measure of stupidity which the sanction of a name could induce the readers of poetry to admire.

"Christabel" is confessedly an unfinished poem; —we shall not, therefore, in its present state, enter into any discussion of the merits of its plot. —It will be sufficient to give the outline of it. The scene opens in the middle of the night; —Christabel, the daughter of "Sir Leoline rich," has, in consequence of sundry dreams of her lover which had annoyed her on the preceding night, strayed into the wood adjacent to her father's castle. She is here praying in silence under a "huge oak tree," when a sudden noise alarms her. She starts up in dismay, and steals gently to the other side of the tree, and there beholds

[quotes ll. 58–68—beginning at 'a damsel bright' —(*PW,* i, 217–18)]

Christabel, after invoking the protection of heaven, asks this unknown damsel her name and story. The stranger replies—

[quotes ll. 79–103 (*PW,* i, 218–19)]

They reach the chamber of Christabel, after much exertion on her part to sustain the sinking spirits of Geraldine. Christabel accidentally mentions the name of her mother, when—

[quotes ll. 207–34 (*PW,* i, 222–3)]

Christabel disrobes herself first accordingly, and

Lies down in her loveliness.

She cannot however refrain from watching the motions of Geraldine. She accordingly raises herself on her elbow and looks towards the stranger. —

[quotes ll. 245–78 (*PW,* i, 224–5)]

This finishes the first part; —we have, however, in what is termed a "conclusion to part the first," some farther intelligence of the proceedings of the night. —

[quotes ll. 292–310 (*PW,* i, 225–6)]

Christabel

[quotes l. 312 (*PW*, i, 226)]

and "sheds" —

[quotes l. 316 (*PW*, i, 226)]

and then, —

[quotes ll. 319–31 (*PW*, i, 226)]

Part the second commences with a most ludicrous scene.

[quotes ll. 332–59 (*PW*, i, 227)]

The peal arouses Geraldine, who—

> —nothing doubting of her spell,
> Awakens the lady Christabel.

After praying that—

> —He who on the cross did groan,
> Might wash away her sins unknown,

Christabel accompanies the lady Geraldine to her father, Sir beautiful passage in the whole book. —

[quotes ll. 403–26 (PW, i, 228–9)]

The Baron determines to send Geraldine back to the mansion of her father, and salutes her with a warm embrace, when, —

[quotes ll. 451–62—beginning at 'a vision' —(*PW*, i, 230)]

The vision however speedily passes away, and Sir Leoline calls to one of his attendants, named Bracy, and entrusts to him the errand of proceeding to Lord Roland's castle, and inviting him to come with all his retinue to conduct his daughter home. Bracy replies, —

[quotes ll. 523–63 (*PW*, i, 232)]

The Baron, however, hears him with an incredulous smile, and says some words of encouragement to Geraldine; when, —

[quotes ll. 574–612 (*PW*, i, 233–4)]

When this fearful trance was dissipated, Christabel entreated her father, by the soul of her deceased mother, to send Geraldine

immediately away. The mighty spell, however, overpowers her, and she can speak but a few words. Sir Leoline is much enraged to find—

> —all his hospitality
> To th'insulted daughter of his friend
> By more than woman's jealousy,
> Brought thus to a disgraceful end—

He regards Bracy with a stern look, and, after reprimanding his delay,

> Leads forth the lady Geraldine. —

To correspond, we presume, with the former part, we have a "conclusion to part the second;" in which if our readers can discover a single particle of either sense or poetry, they will be more fortunate than we have been. —

[quotes ll. 656–77 (*PW,* i, 235–6)]

As we before stated, we shall refrain from all comment on the plot, until the succeeding parts be published; which Mr. Coleridge hopes to accomplish in the course of the present year. We have been so free in our quotations, that we cannot afford much more room for the discussion of the present article. A few words, however, we may be permitted to say. We have accused Mr. Coleridge of a total want of judgment. In no poem was this essential requisite so completely forgotten. Would judgment have advised the publication of such passages as the following? —

[quotes ll. 1–13 (*PW,* 215–16)]

And again, —

[quotes ll. 43–52 (*PW,* i, 217)]

We are aware that our decision may appear harsh to many; but we must positively assert, that on no occasion has Mr. Coleridge appeared in so degraded and degenerate a light as in the present publication. The quotations which we have given, we selected as being most illustrative of the story; they are decidedly not the worst passages in the Poem.

We have likewise asserted that Mr. Coleridge was possessed of a

considerable share of original and creative talent; and we received a strong conviction of this fact from the "Christabel." One of the passages which we have above quoted exemplifies our assertion, and we could produce six or seven others of nearly the same length, of equal merit. But these few beauties which are scattered "in the dry desart of a thousand lines," are surely not sufficient to compensate for the childish and unmeaning spirit which pervades the other parts of the Poem.

Mr. Coleridge is a poet, and a poet of considerable worth; but let him recollect that the diamond must be polished before it is perfectly beautiful. Let him divest himself of his attachment to that worn-out, and at best, insipid species of composition usually termed the "ballad style;" —let him not disdain, from an affected notion of originality, to follow the steps of the great Poets who have gone before him; and we have no doubt that the name of Coleridge may yet be transmitted to posterity. The soil is not sterile, it is only badly cultivated.

Of the two other Poems which compose the volume, we do not think it necessary to give any detailed account. Suffice it to say, that they neither rise much above, nor sink much beneath, the longer Composition. We do not think them calculated to remove any of the objections which we have made to Mr. Coleridge as a poet.

25. Unsigned review in *Augustan Review*

1816

From *Augustan Review, July,* 1816, iii, 14–24.

D'Herbelot relates, that the celebrated Al-Farabi was commanded by Seifeddoulat to sing one of his own compositions before him and his courtiers, who valued themselves not a little on their critical skill; that this command being obeyed, the auditors were thrown into violent fits of laughter, and presently into a deep sleep. Whether the

Vision of Kubla Khan was the soporific employed on that memorable occasion, the learned Orientalist does not inform us. We know, however, that in the perusal of it, and of the two other things bound up with it, we experienced the effects which the production of Al-Farabi is reported to have wrought; and, from that experience, we are led to the conclusion, that the said production could not well have been more extravagant, more affected and childish, than are these of Mr. Coleridge.

It is unpleasant to have to pronounce a sentence which some may think severe, while others, who only echo the judgement of Lord Byron instead of using their own, will pretend to think so. We are confident that the expectations excited by the noble poet's praises of Christabel, will be disappointed: and, although those who admired the unintelligible sublimities, the mysticism and the methodism of Mr. Coleridge's former writings, may continue to admire many kindred beauties in the poems before us; yet more rational readers, who deplored those errors and absurdities, while they reverenced the genius that made even faults splendid, will perceive and lament the absence of those efforts of the Muse beneath whose steps flowers used to spring up.

Few of our readers can need to be informed, that Mr. Coleridge is one of those poets whose opinion it is, that the lakes and mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland are the *avia Pieridum loca* [unfrequented places of the Muses], which those "Syren daughters of Dame Memory" almost exclusively delight to haunt. In spite of its errors, many of the principles of the school of Poetry to which we allude, are most enchanting. Their enthusiastic reverence of Nature, —their lofty admiration of Virtue, —their ardent love of Liberty, —and a constant aspiring after a purer state of existence, —something, in short, finer, more ethereal, and more animating than the dry bones which surround us in this valley of tears, —all these are captivating to a warm imagination: and we cannot help thinking that the success of the new school would have been almost complete, had not its founders carried their affectation of simplicity so far as to really render themselves ridiculous. We do not stand up for monotonous pomp and cumbrous dignity; but we do think that Mr. Wordsworth, and his brethren of the Lakes, have most egregiously erred in mistaking the vulgarisms of the Dalesmen, and the stammering of their children, for the songs of the Muses. —We hasten to give some account of Mr. Coleridge, who has some

characteristics distinct from those of the other members of the confraternity.

In the words of old Purchas, his genius "delights more in by-wayes than high-waves, in things above nature than in things merely natural." He has some of the spirit of Spenser, and is not without a portion of the romantic tenderness of Collins. He professes himself to be of the school of the *divine Spenser;* and he certainly possesses a similar talent for embodying abstract ideas with felicity; while he has the same grand fault of making us wind through the mazes of his allegories and similes till we are nearly exhausted. His poetry is made up, in its best parts, of abstractions, adorned with the gorgeous colours of his imagination, and usually expressed in harmonious language. He is apt, however, to make his pictures too gaudy: they want shadows—and, by their excess of brilliancy, the eye is fatigued, and the images rendered indistinct. The melody of his verse, too, often degenerates into a monotonous and affected pompousness: at the same time that the wretchedness of the matter forms a strange contrast with the stateliness of the rhyme. —These, we repeat, are peculiarities in Mr. Coleridge's poetry.

His *peculiar* graces and defects may be clearly traced to the same source—his study of the old writers. He has drunk copiously of that *well of English undefiled,* which they made to flow. In both his prose and verse, the lofty march, the glorious though confused imagery of these giants in intellect, are apparent. He has not, indeed, escaped the contamination of their faults of style; —a style which, with all its beauties, is always obscure, elaborate, and debased by conceits. We do not mean to say that Mr. Coleridge has *copied* their style; but only that his genius is of the same order with theirs, and that, through the study of their writings, his productions seem identified with them.[1] These remarks apply more particularly to his prose, which, in some of the papers in the Friend, is equal to other men's poetry. In indignant and pathetic eloquence, we do not remember any thing superior to the story of MARIA; —a story which will exist in the memory of many readers, when all other traces of the book shall have faded.

Mr. Coleridge's poetry has more of *ideality* about it than that of any other living author (we borrow this term from Doctors Gall and Spurzheim, no expressive one of English coinage being at hand); it has more of that highly-wrought metaphorical language, by the use

of which Shakspeare and Spenser have presented such delightful and vivid pictures to the imagination. These pictures seem to have been produced at once and without effort. The conception, too, is almost always embodied in the most FORTUNATE WORDS; and, so far is their love of this quality carried, that the commonest thoughts and objects are arrayed in them. Shakspeare speaks of enjoying "*the* HONEY-HEAVY DEW *of slumber,*" —and Spenser of a tree "SPREADING A GLADSOME GLEAM *upon the hills*."[2] Who ever read these, and similar passages in the works of their authors, without an intense feeling of delight? But we are venturing too near inchanted ground; and must retrace our steps, in order to proceed to our proper purpose.

Christabel is in the *manner* of Walter Scott and Lord Byron; that is to say, it resembles the productions of these authors in its general structure, while the foundation and embellishments are decidedly in the Lakish taste. The absurdity, by the way, of attempting to support the bold and massive entablatures of the former artists, upon the slender and grotesque columns of the architects of the Lakes, must be evident.

The story (in which the persons resemble the indistinct and obscure figures in a confused dream, more than any earthly beings) is, as far as we profess to understand it, as follows: —A certain young lady, called Christabel, disturbed by dreams, leaves her bed in the middle of a cold April night, and goes forth to pray for her lover under an old oak-tree, a furlong from the castle-gate. Why she chooses this spot, we are not informed; but the fantastical personages of these authors have no doubt good reasons for their unreasonable actions, though we ordinary mortals cannot possibly guess at them. While engaged in her devotion, she hears a moaning near her; and, with more courage than we could have expected in a young lady frightened by dreams, she steals round to the other side of the oak, and discovers there a beautiful lady, richly attired. — This lady, in a most incoherent story, relates that her name is Geraldine, and that she has been carried from her father's castle by five warriors, of whose names, persons, motives, and intentions, she is totally ignorant. Christabel charitably makes the lady an offer of sharing her bed, and assures her of the protection of her father, Sir Leoline. She accepts the offer, and they steal home to the castle, "cautiously creeping up the stairs," lest they should awaken the Baron, who seems to be rather a testy old gentleman. They

reach the chamber of Christabel, who retires to rest. But "so many thoughts pass to and fro" in her mind, that she cannot sleep: and she views the transformation of Geraldine into a sorceress, who lies down by her side, and mutters over her a fascinating spell. In the morning they arise; but Christabel remains disturbed by the charm of the sorceress, who has resumed her original form. When they enter the hall, Sir Leoline discovers in Geraldine the daughter of Sir Roland de Vaux, who had been his friend in youth, and is sorely displeased by the jealousies of Christabel, who still remembers, with shuddering sensations, the adventure of the former night. Here the narrative breaks off. It is proposed by the author to finish it in the course of the present year.

The poem opens with the following lines, which introduce an interesting personage, who, as far as we remember, is entirely new to poetry:

[quotes ll. 1–15 (*PW,* i, 215–16)]

Here is a spring-landscape, which we think is worthy of Mr. Wordsworth, in some of his *"diviner moods:"* —

[quotes ll. 43–52 (*PW,* i, 217)]

Can any thing be more truly simple and infantine than the passage which describes the entrance of Christabel and Geraldine into the castle? Mr. Coleridge's own "Ideot Boy" could not have made his conjectures about the howling of the old toothless mastiff-bitch, with a more natural lisp?

[quotes ll. 129–53 (*PW,* i, 220–1)]

Then we have an imitation of some of those parts of Lord Byron's poetry which describe an utter *desolation of mind*—intended, we doubt not, to be very original and energetic, but which appears to us to be the vilest jargon we ever had the misfortune to read:

[quotes ll. 408–26 (*PW,* i, 229)]

After telling us, that the legitimate mode of expressing love is "in words of imminent bitterness," the poem concludes with these verses, which appear to us a good deal like the ravings of insanity—

[quotes ll. 666–77 (*PW,* i, 235–6)]

We will now point out what appear to us to be beauties in this production; and we regret that there are many fine things which cannot be extracted, being closely connected with the grossest absurdities. The tares and the wheat grow up together so, that the eradication of the one would be the destruction of the other.

This first thing that strikes us as very good is, the description of the magnificent Gothic chamber with its decorations:

[quotes ll. 175–84 (*PW*, i, 222)]

The manner in which the transformation of the sorceress is told, is excellent; and the obscurity in which the author has left the passage, has a powerful effect on the imagination:

[quotes ll. 245–54 (*PW*, i, 224)]

But the exquisite picture of Christabel is perhaps the finest thing in the collection; and reminds us, in attitude and expression, of some of the inimitable saintly figures of Guido Rheni and Dominichino:

[quotes ll. 279–91 (*PW*, i, 225)]

We give, too, the awakening of Christabel from her inchanted dream:

[quotes ll. 311–18 (*PW*, i, 226)]

The idea in the following passage is highly poetical, and is expressed by the author with considerable felicity, though too minutely:

[quotes ll. 583–8 and 597–612 (*PW*, i, 233–4)]

The idea of the character of Christabel is altogether very lovely, though there is nothing original or striking about it.

Kubla Khan is prefaced by the following extraordinary relation:

[quotes ll. 1–34 of the preface (*PW*, i, 295–6)]

We have chosen to make Mr. Coleridge tell his own story for two reasons—first, because he relates it much better than we could have done; and next, because such is the general opinion of the maliciousness of Reviewers, that those who had not actually read it in the author's own words, might have supposed it (so singular is the fact) to be a gratuitous ill-natured supposition of our own.

It is said of Milton, that often when he awoke from a night's repose, he would write down to the amount of twenty or thirty

verses, inspired during the night. But, this, it seems, is nothing to the liberality of Mr. Coleridge's muse, who, in the short space of three hours, brought, not a train of poetical ideas, to be afterwards embodied in appropriate verse, but a corps of well-appointed able-bodied lines, ready, without further training or discipline, for the service of Messrs. Bulmer and Co., Cleveland-Row. Mr. C. tells us, that the few lines (about fifty) which the intrusions of the man of business left him, "are published rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed poetic merits." But it was poetry, and not psychology, which the public were likely to expect from him; and his vision, with all its concomitants and consequences, might have been suppressed without any public detriment. There seems to be no great harm in dreaming while one sleeps; but an author really should not thus dream while he is awake, and writing too.

The lines in this *psychological curiosity,* descriptive of the palace and garden of Kubla Khan, although somewhat in the style of the "Song by a Person of Quality" [Swift's parody, 'Flutt'ring spread thy purple pinions'], have much of Oriental richness and harmony.

[quotes ll. 10–30 (*PW,* i, 297–8)]

The last poem in the volume is called "The Pains of Sleep." We do not pretend to know its meaning; we doubt, indeed, whether it has any. And we appeal to our mystical readers if there be any thing more delightfully incomprehensible in Jacob Behmen, or more outrageously fanatical in the most irrational article in the Methodist Magazine.

[quotes ll. 1–27 (*PW,* i, 389–90)]

There is a great deal more of this night-mare stuff; and the author, after informing us that such punishments are justly due to bad men, concludes with this emphatic sentence:

Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed, p. 64.

From the ample extracts we have given, our readers will perceive that there is some fine poetry in this volume, although disfigured by

many instances of feebleness and foolishness. We might mention the oracular sayings of Sir Leoline, the author's mysterious commentary, and the Baron's hysterical raving and weeping: but we apprehend that our readers have had enough of such a treat. Besides all this, the poems are lavishly embellished with notes of interrogation and admiration—contain an incalculable number of affected words—exhibit a constant repetition of the line, when the author intends to be eminently forcible—and are full of exclamations about Mary Mother, Jesu, the Virgin all divine, O sorrow and shame! &c. &c.

If any of Mr. Coleridge's readers should think that we have been too severe on him, let them consider that his sins are not involuntary, but committed in defiance common sense as well as of criticism. We believe, however, that all those who are not bigoted admirers of the Lakers, will assent to the general correctness of the opinion of these poems which we have ventured to express; and will continue to do so, till they shall learn to look upon babyism and silliness as nature and simplicity, the extravagance of Bedlam as originality, and to mistake the contortions and ravings of Pythia for her inspirations.

NOTES

1 By the OLD WRITERS, we must be understood to mean, not only the early poets, but Hooker, Chillingworth, Taylor, Henry More, and the constellation of the authors which appeared about that time.
2 Visions of Bellay, Verse IV.

26. Unsigned review in *Scourge and Satirist*

1816

From *Scourge and Satirist,* July, 1816, xii, 60–72

Within the last few years, a conspiracy has been formed to revolutionize the whole system of English poetry; to undermine the foundations of taste and common sense, and to establish a general confederation against the authority of legitimate criticism. A system of extensive and reciprocal puffing has promoted the object of the club, and Byron, Coleridge, Campbell, Southey, Scott, and Wordsworth, have manfully supported the reputation of themselves and of each other, by mutual eulogies. Mr. Coleridge comes forth beneath the panoply of Lord Byron, while poor Leigh Hunt, too happy to "scramble over the bounds of birth and education, and fidget himself into the stout-heartedness of being familiar with a lord," exclaims, in the simplicity of his heart, "you see what *you have brought yourself to* by praising my verses." Certainly, Mr. Hunt! to miserable degradation; to be a pandar to the false pretensions of scribblers of nauseous doggrel, of an individual who possesses the same feeling of poetic beauty that a blind man enjoys of colours, and mistakes the prattle of a pert and conceited boy for the language of simplicity inspired by genius. We verily believe that human talent, employed in framing a burlesque of all that is delicate in thought, beautiful in diction, and harmonious in versification, could not, by any efforts, have produced a more ludicrous example of the bathos than Hunt's Rimini. How enthusiastic then, in the cause of bad taste, and of their own peculiarities, must be the feeling of the members of the conspiracy, when their leader condescends to lend his name to an individual, whose verses are beneath the level of the lowest scribbler that ever obtruded his effusions on the public notice. Mr. Coleridge can feel, in the privacy of his closet, but little gratification from the eulogies of a nobleman who approves the verses of Leigh Hunt, and permits that unfortunate poetaster to

select him as the patron of his effusions. Yet we cannot conscientiously accuse Mr. Coleridge of outrageous modesty, or reprehensible humility. His preface, when compared with his performance, is one of the most singular examples of egotistic simplicity that has ever been recorded in the history of human vanity; and when examined in connection with the verses that succeed it, presents a deplorable instance of human imbecility.

"The first part of the following poem was written in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-eight, at Stowey in Cornwall. The second part after my return from Germany in the year eighteen hundred *(mark, reader! how elaborate he is with respect to dates: he rejects the numerals!)* at Keswick, in Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the *wholeness* no less than the liveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come in the course of the present year.

"It is probable that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare, at present, expect, &c."

Who would not suppose, from this pompous and laboured intimation, that the interval of nineteen years had been spent partly in the composition of some great and national work, and partly in the lassitude occasioned by the magnitude of the undertaking. The Paradise Lost of Milton, occupied only eight years of his existence; the Jerusalem of Tasso was composed in one fourth of the time stated by Mr. Coleridge. An epic, at least, or some great and noble work, might reasonably have been expected, from the labour of three years, in which he was so much exhausted as to sink into a state of suspended animation, and from the reflection of sixteen years on the vision, which had so long been present to his mind in such *lively wholeness*. After the lapse of that period, with so distinct a perception of his object, and after all the struggles that he records with such ludicrous solemnity—what has he produced? a puerile, irregular, feeble poem, abounding in affected sentiment, puerile imagery, harshness of versification, and imbecility of thought. A more lamentable misconception of all the requisites of poetry was never presented to the world. In the

opinion of Mr. Coleridge to be absurd, is to be original; he mistakes the unintelligible for the sublime, and the disgusting for the terrible. Childishness is substituted for simplicity, and the affectation of obtrusive and ostentatious sensibility for the real and genuine sympathy of nature. He blubbers, instead of weeping, and his epithets of endearment, instead of breathing the accents of manly tenderness, are those of the nurse, when she wishes to sooth her babe to sleep by some ancient lullaby. His diction is corrupt, his construction involved and ungrammatic, his verses inharmonious, and his fable at once disgusting and absurd.

It might have been concluded that in an æra of highly polished civilization, with so many models of established excellence in their view, and amidst the general diffusion of literary taste, a concurrence of circumstances so propitious would have obtained a decided influence over the metrical style of contemporary poets: that individuals so enviably gifted with the higher powers of the mind would have determined to keep pace with the age in which they lived, by studious compliance with the laws of fastidious criticism: that endowed with no mean portion of the genius which inspired the early masters of the art, they would have endeavoured to excel them in the graces of composition; in consistency of character, in harmony of verse, in the construction of the fable, and in the sustained but simple eloquence of diction. But with a degree of perverseness almost unaccountable, they voluntarily relinquish the advantages they might so easily and yet so nobly obtain over their predecessors, and adopt a process the very reverse which would be taught by reason or by nature. They glory in the invention of a tame, insipid, or unintelligible story. Quaintness of description, extravagance of imagery, and the interspersion of quaint phraseology, or miserable doggrel amidst passages of exquisite harmony, propriety, and sweetness, and the continual alternation of thoughts that breathe and words that burn with the prattle of the nursery: —*these* are the splendid triumphs over grammar, propriety and common-sense, to which they gladly sacrifice the legitimate praise of their contemporaries, and the hope of immortality.

The poem of Christabel opens with the screaming of an owl, the crowing of a cock, and the howling of a mastiff.

[quotes ll. 1–13 (*PW,* i, 215–16)]

If this be the language, or imagery of genuine poetry, then Homer, Milton, Spencer, Pope, and Cowper were unworthy of that enthusiasm which their immortal productions have commanded through successive generations. The expression of the owlish cry, by, tu-whit—tu-whoo, would disgrace the lowest vamper of a farce, that ever supplied Mr. Elliston with materials for the Circus melodramas. The exactness of the distinction too, by which the mastiff is made to howl shortly, and not over loudly, presents a curious contrast to the want of precision in more important passages. The same affectation of precision is observable in the lines immediately succeeding those which we have quoted.

"Is the night chilly and dark?" enquires the author, and the question having been framed for the introduction of the reply is answered by himself. —

> The night is chilly, but *not* dark:

A most important distinction! It chances to be April, and this circumstance is expressed by the following periphrasis.

> 'Tis a month before the month of May,
> And the spring comes slowly up this way.

Describing the last leaf of a tree, which has escaped the inclemency of the spring, he calls it the

> One red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can.

As two parts only of Christabel are yet published, it is impossible to communicate to our readers any correct idea of the fable. Its interest, however, if we rightly understand the author's language, is intended to depend upon the undressing of Lady Geraldine in the presence of Christabel.

> Her silken robe and inner vest,
> Dropt to her feet, and, full in view,
> Behold her bosom and *half her side!*
> A side to dream of, not to tell,
> And she is to sleep by Christabel.

Christabel, however, is a lady of courage, and notwithstanding the appearance of this miraculous lady with half a side, she went quietly to bed. Geraldine then "took two paces and a stride" (*how accurate!*)

> And laid down by the maiden's side,
> And in her arms the maid she took,
>   Ah wel-a-day!
> And with low voice and doleful look,
>   These words did say!
>
> ★ ★ ★
>
> —Vainly thou warrest,
> For this is alone in
> Thy power to declare,
> That in the dim forest
> Thou heardest a low moaning,
> And found'st a bright lady surpassingly fair,
> And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
> To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

These lines have surely a closer resemblance to the effusions of Sternhold and Hopkins, or of Joanna Southcott's poetical disciples, than to the composition of the worshippers on Parnassus.

The usual puerility and affectation of Mr. Coleridge are displayed in one of the most laboured passages of the second part. Bracy, a bard or minstrel in the mansion of Sir Leoline, the father of Christabel, "sees in his sleep" a gentle dove which Sir Leoline has called by his daughter's name. He dreams that the bird flutters in distress and utters fearful moans. He endeavours to discover the cause of its agony, and

> To search out what there might be found.

He finds—

> A bright green snake
> Coiled around its wings and neck,
> Green as the herbs on which it couched,
> Close by the dove its head it crouched,
> And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
> Swelling its neck as she swelled hers.

Geraldine, who listens to Bracy's story, is suddenly transformed into the resemblance of a snake.

> Softly gathering up her train,
> That o'er her right arm fell again;
> She folded her arms across her chest,
> And couched her head upon her breast,
> And looked askance at Christabel,
> Jesu! Maria! Shield her well.
> A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
> And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head;
> Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
> And with somewhat of malice and more of dread,
> At Christabel she looked askance.
> One moment and the sight was fled!
> But Christabel in dizzy trance,
> Stumbling on the unsteady ground,
> *Shuddered aloud with a hissing sound*
> And Geraldine again turned round.

If such be the effusions of Mr. Coleridge's waking faculties, what must be expected from the fragment of *Kubla Khan,* a production conceived, arranged, and finished in his sleep. He informs us that in the summer of the year 1797, being then in ill health, he had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair, at the moment when he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's Pilgrimage. "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed with a wall." Mr. Coleridge continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has "the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two or three hundred lines: if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things,* with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions without any sensation or consciousness of effort." On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this eventful and

ever to be lamented moment, he was unfortunately called out by a person on business *(business, indeed! when poetry is in the way)* and this person detained him above an hour. On his return to his room he found to his no small surprize and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purpose of the vision, yet with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the reflections on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, "but, alas! without the restoration of the latter." The account above given is but a poor excuse for obtruding on the public a hasty and unintelligible performance, which atones by no striking and pre-eminent beauty for its imperfection as a fragment. If Mr. Coleridge have neither the talent, the industry, nor the inclination to finish his performances, and to render them consistent and interesting in a connected fable, he should confine them to his escrutoire till he acquires the energy and the determination to please, which can alone excuse his repeated appeals to the notice of the public. By publishing his hasty and imperfect fragments, he evidently implies that their excellence, trifling as they are, is sufficient to atone for the absence of arrangement, of an interesting and consistent fable, and the sustained portraiture of well drawn characters acting and thinking in their appropriate spheres and with their appropriate peculiarities through a long series of trials and vicissitudes. As it is, these fragments display neither fable, incident, nor character, and the diction, the metre, and the imagery, possess no excellence that will atone for these defects. Yet that we may not be accused by Mr. Coleridge of doing wilful injustice to him merits, we shall insert his own apology for writing as he lists.

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round checks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight,
As fills a father's eyes with light,
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast,
Upon his heart that he at last,
Must needs express his love's excess,
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force *together,*
Thoughts *so all unlike each other:*

To mutter and smack a broken charm
To dally with wrong that does no harm,
Perhaps 'tis tender too, and pretty,
    At each wild word to feel within
A sweet revival of love and pity.
    And what if in a world of sin
(Oh sorrow and shame if this be true!)
    Such giddiness of heart and brain
    Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

The querulous sensibility of Mr. Coleridge, and of many of his brethren, presents an additional proof that the *genus irritabile vatum,* retain even in this philosophical and cultivated age their wonted misanthropy and impatience of temper. Yet it might at first sight be supposed by those who are engaged in the bustle of business, exposed to the dangers of war, or involved in the mazes of political intrigue, that the habits and pursuits of a gentleman author are peculiarly favourable to content of mind, and to the repose of all the afflicting passions. What, indeed, on a superficial view, can raise the admiration and envy of the brave and the busy higher than the contemplation of individuals who receive the laurels of honor without being exposed to hazards, or to personal inconvenience; who rise to eminence without danger, and almost without exertion; and in solitude and comparative idleness, receive those rewards which are seldom attained by the rest of the human race without the most arduous exertions, and at the risk of life.

If any one has been deceived by these two plausible delusions into a belief that such gentlemen as Messrs. Coleridge and Rogers are the happiest of mankind, let him peruse the restless and impatient tone with which the author of Christabel records his own suspence of animation, and appeals to the good-nature of the public. He has found that the profession (if we may so express it) of a gentleman author, like all others, when tried, fails to yield that satisfaction, or that happiness which it promises. Those who pursue it find unexpected obstacles present themselves to sight, and no sooner are they conquered than new ones rise to view, which become the precursor of others: like many of those who at first set forward with enthusiasm, grow tired of their journey, and descend from the eminence they have in part attained, disappointed in their hopes, and wearied by their labour. Of those

who have entered the republic of literature with the hope of admiration, or even the expectation of moderate praise, few have had their hopes gratified or fulfilled by ultimate success. The irritability always attending on poetical genius, produces a morbid sentiment of despondency in the most successful of these literary adventures; and the slightest censure of contemporary criticism, effaces the exulting sentiments occasioned by legitimate eulogy. He who ventures into the lists of learning has undertaken an enterprize of which the reward depends upon the caprices of mankind; and the minds and feelings of the votaries of the muse are so unfortunately constituted that they are always more sensitively alive to censure than to praise. The merit of a book is to some men but a cause for its author being attacked: every effect of opposition and every artifice of cunning is used by his enemies to decrease the estimation of that man, whose excellence has rendered him worthy of their envy, and every principle of false criticism is employed to censure that work which cannot be rivalled. He who hopes by his labours to transmit his name to posterity, must expect the commendation of the literary world to bear no proportion to its censure. It may be doubted whether if Milton had been able to foresee with what obstinacy of argument, and perseverance of repetition, even by those who professed to honor him, he would have been branded with the titles of a promoter of rebellion and an abettor of sedition, he would have thought these reproaches sufficiently compensated for by a crown of Parnassian laurels; and whether if Johnson could have prophecied the malignant hostility of recent critics, he would not have resigned all claim to the title of lexicographer, and on his pittance of fourpence halfpenny a day, to waste his life in solitary penury, unknown to the learned, unreverenced by the good. The very officiousness, however, and austerity of criticism, should be regarded by such men as Mr. Coleridge as the strongest stimulus to the cultivation of poetical taste and to the most strenuous mental exertion. If the most elaborate excellence, and the most arduous efforts will not secure the poet from attack, what hope of mercy can he expect who produces after the lapse of nineteen years, a fragment of forty-eight widely printed pages, absurdly designed and feebly executed. His ascription of his negligence to rage and pain, can only excite a smile in the friends by whom his talents and virtues are most respected and admired. Of all men in existence, he

has least experienced the vicissitudes of life, and had the least temptation to indulgence in the violent passages. The pangs of jealousy, the lust of gain, the bitterness of revenge, have never, we are convinced, agitated his bosom, or invaded his peaceful habitation. Yet in the midst innumerable blessings, he exhibits a morbid sensibility of mind, and a determination to be unhappy, at once distressing and ridiculous. The singular mixture of piety and wilful misery presented in the last three pages of this singular pamphlet, exhibits a striking but lamentable picture of Mr. Coleridge's feelings, and shall conclude our criticism.

[quotes 'The Pains of Sleep' (*PW,* i, 389–91)]

On the obscurity, affectation, and puerility which pervade this apology for a poem, comment is unnecessary. But the obscurity of meaning, so conspicuous in an effusion of fifty lines, cannot be forgiven, as the author seems to expect, in consideration of his virtuous habits and amiable temper. Respect is due to the opinion of the public and to the principles of common honesty; and we are afraid that the purchasers of Christabel, announced, as it has been, under the sanction of Lord Byron, will despise the petty meanness which could obtrude such trash on the literary market, at a price more than ten times commensurate with its merit. A ballad is a ballad, whether it proceeds from the Albemarle or the Grub-street manufactory: and some other proofs of superior value than elegance of type and expanse of margin, should have atoned to that numerous class whose attachment to poetry surpasses their pecuniary means, for the expence into which they are so unwarily seduced. The price of new works, however destitute of excellence, and however brief and scanty in their contents, has become an alarming and increasing evil. On an occasion like that of the publication of Bertram the enormity of its price might be forgiven in gratitude for the gratification received; but no such apology can be admitted for the sum affixed to the lame and impotent attempts of the author of Christabel. We do not blame Mr. Murray for this imposition upon the public purse, for we have no doubt that the remuneration to Mr. Coleridge was such as to justify his pecuniary demand. But that he should be so far deceived with respect to the merit of the work, and that he should not detect the negligence, the vanity, and the feebleness of the writer, who thus obtruded on his notice a paltry collection of incoherent fragments, certainly excites

our wonder and regret. We hope, however, that Mr. Coleridge, stimulated by his present liberality may exert himself to redeem the loss which must inevitably attend the present speculation; and should he not be able entirely to recover his "suspended animation," we shall heartily rejoice to find that another nineteen years is necessary to the abortion of his next poetical offspring.

27. Unsigned review in *British Lady's Magazine*

1816

From *British Lady's Magazine,* October, 1816, iv, 248–51

If our readers sympathise with ourselves, they will peruse these eccentric productions with some admiration of the singular power of genius, qualified by a lurking perception of the ridiculous and the affected, which it is impossible entirely to overcome. In truth, the children of Apollo have become so fantastical in their choice of subject, and so devious in their mode of treating it, we begin to wonder, in the words of Addison, where the "regular confusion will end." With the most determined resolution to be grave and gentlemanly, as Master Stephen [in *Every Man in His Humour,* Act I, Scene iii] says, we think our readers will be tempted to smile at the following opening of "Christabel:" —

[quotes ll. 1–22 (*PW,* i, 215–16)]

Some years ago a commencement like this would have tempted us to lift up our eyes and hands with amazement, and with some apprehension for the brains of the author; but use, like misery, as Trinculo observed, when he crept under "the moon-calf's gaberdine," "reconciles a man to strange—" [*The Tempest,* Act II, Scene ii]. But no matter; the world is determined to like these vagaries, and, as in the present instance, when genius consecrates whimsicality, we are left, as to decision, in the dilemma of Prince

Volscius, with one boot on and the other off [in Buckingham's *The Rehearsal,* Act III, Scene ii]; that is, we admire too much to condemn unequivocally, and our overwhelming feeling of folly is checked by a sense of undeniable merit. It is just so with respect to "Christabel," which is an old woman's story of fairyism, witchcraft, or demonism, (we cannot determine the point, for it is not ended,) that leads us on, we hardly know how, through a most revolting, because affected, style of narrative, until the absurdity is lost in the interest and curiosity. Let us in our own way tell this tale, that our readers may at least judge of its matter of fact.

Be it known, then, that the "lovely Lady Christabel," the daughter of "Sir Leoline, the baron rich," goes out into the wood to pray at midnight for the weal of her lover, "that's far away," and discovers a lady, drest in a silken robe of white, fainting, in great disorder, beneath an oak. She naturally inquires into her piteous case; when the beauteous stranger replies—

[quotes ll. 79–103 (*PW,* i, 219)]

Christabel, of course, offers her hand and the aid of her father's mansion; and, as the castle is all in sleep and silence, leads her protegée to a small gate in the midst of the large one, which she opens by a key in her possession. Here we begin to smell a rat: at this gate the lady faints, "belike through pain," and Christabel is obliged to lift her in. As they pass the hall, in which the brands were dying, a tongue of flame shoots out at the appearance of the stranger, and the mastiff bitch howls. Arrived at Christabel's chamber, the following dialogue takes place—

[quotes ll. 190–219 (*PW,* i, 222–3)]

The strange lady then requests fair Christabel to go first, as she must pray before she joins her. Christabel obeys:

[quotes ll. 239–78 and 302–10 (*PW,* i, 223–5 and 226)]

Christabel, however, smiles and weeps in her sleep, and is apparently comforted by a vision of the guardian spirit of her mother. The next morning Geraldine is introduced to Sir Leoline, and calls herself the daughter of his former friend, Lord Roland of Tryermaine. Sir Leoline is in raptures, as an hospitable baron should be; and, as Christabel is spell-bound to silence, proclaims a tournament, and orders Bracy, his bard, to proceed to Lord Roland,

to inform him of his daughter's safety. Bracy, however, has dreamt of a dove and a snake, and wishes to postpone the journey.

[quotes ll. 564–96 (*PW,* i, 233)]

Christabel, though necessarily silent, wishes her father to send Geraldine home; at which seeming inhospitality, Sir Leoline falls into an outrageous passion: and thus the fragment ends, which Mr. Coleridge began in 1797, continued in 1800, and (God willing) will end in the course of the present year. —We are wrong; the passion of Sir Leoline does not absolutely end the fragment: to each canto is appended a distinct something, termed a conclusion, and the conclusion to canto the second is contained in the following passage, which we hand over to the ladies as a riddle: to us it seems the purest strain of nonsense we ever encountered, but possibly other heads may be more successful.

[quotes ll. 656–77 (*PW,* i, 235–6)]

Such is "Christabel;" and, without denying the existence of some skill and pathos in the poet, it is quite evident that its interest depends entirely on the superstitious tendency of our nature towards the marvellous, and that the same story in prose would excite exactly the same sensations. The time has been when old nurses had many such; reason has banished them from the nursery, but they have fallen to rise in the pages of our bards, who sometimes anger us, as Glendower did Hotspur,

> —with skimble skamble stuff,
> That puts us from our faith.

Yet, after all, there is genius in *"Christabel,"* and this vexes us the more; we cannot bear to see talent thrown away to make poetry a dream, both in language and matter, to the exclusion of every theme which deals in existing passions and sympathies, as if this "goodly frame, the earth," and the "quintessence of dust" which, occupies it, were exhausted, and nothing remained but the worlds of worn-out superstition. —Fie on it.

"Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream," Mr. Coleridge describes as the real production of sleep: it is wild and fanciful. "The Pains of Sleep" is a rhapsody, which forcibly describes the horrors of the night to a person afflicted with the nightmare; for such we deem the

foundation of the troubles described by Mr. Coleridge, when they fall upon such a man as himself.

> Such griefs with such men we'll agree;
> But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?
> To be beloved is all I need,
> And whom I love, I love indeed.

When will this end?

28. Unsigned review in *Academic*

1821

From *Academic,* 15 September, 1821, 339–41

Among Mr. Coleridge's poems there is one entitled "Somewhat childish, but very natural." By a slight alteration, its title might be made quite characteristic of the whole volume—"always childish, but seldom natural." Indeed, Mr. Coleridge is far the most faulty of the Lake Poets; as his writings are even more prolific of the prejudices and affectations peculiar to that school, than those of Wordsworth or Southey. These gentlemen and their disciples seem to be copying the example of some of our modern philosophers—they would have us relapse into a state of barbarism, by way of attaining to perfection. They prefer the uncouth diction and gross conceptions of the humblest ballad to all the sublimity of Homer and grace of Virgil; and when they have laboriously raked up low manners and low language from the very kennel of society, they invite us to admire their picture, because forsooth it is strictly adherent to nature. In short, they mistake simpleness for simplicity, without being aware that the chief characteristic of poetry (considered only as an *imitative* art) is not so much to copy the precise appearance of all things which are, as to select and concentrate their most prominent beauties in their most attractive associations. All this arises rather from want of taste and judgment

than of fancy, invention, or any other requisite for poetic excellence; and (perhaps with the single exception of Mr. Coleridge) they have all many happy passages in their writings, which prove in spite of themselves the fallacy of their own principles. But the practice of Mr. Coleridge is commonly in perfect unison with his theory; and he seldom deviates from systematic childishness, unless to bewilder himself and reader in metaphysical mysticism. His poetry, like his philosophy, is high German all over; and he seems to "conceive of it but a drunken dream, reckless, careless, and heedless of past, present, and to come."

The poem of Christabel, which stands first in the present volume, outdoes even his former productions in extravagance and absurdity. If it had been furnished, like his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," with marginal annotations, to explain the incidents and fill up the vacancies of the poem, we might have attempted to extract the substance of its story; but for want of these, we must be satisfied with copying a few of the opening lines, as a specimen of the whole.

[quotes ll. 1–15 (*PW,* i, 215–16)]

There is but one good passage in the poem; and it is but fair to give it, as a rarity:

[quotes ll. 408–26 (*PW,* i, 229)]

Mr. Coleridge says that "the metre of Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables." But it will ever be a secret to all but himself, how the two following lines, for example, may be accentuated so as to have the same regular metre;

Ah, well-a-day. p. 18.
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity, p. 19.

The next poem, "Kubla Khan," is published as a *psycological* curiosity. Its history is curious indeed: Mr. Coleridge tells us that he had fallen into a profound sleep, in which he continued for about three hours; during which time he believes that he composed from two to three hundred lines. "On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately" —or rather

fortunately called out by a person on business, and forgot the rest of his vision. The third and last poem, “The Pains of Sleep,” details some other of his dreams. They are a favourite subject with him, and he always treats it in his best manner. Indeed all his works seem to have been composed in a sort of day-dream; and in this he has the advantage over his readers, who must exert themselves to keep awake.

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

1817

29. Unsigned review in *Literary Gazette*

1817

Literary Gazette, 9 August, 1817, 83–5. This review has been attributed speculatively (in *The Romantics Reviewed,* Part A, ii, 592) to the poet and clergyman George Croly (1780–1860), a regular contributor to the journal.

Self-Biography is a difficult task. It bespeaks a sort of egotism in the writer, which arrays against him the egotism of every reader. A.B. who would like to do the same thing, is surprised that C.D. should fancy himself of sufficient importance to interest the public in his life or opinions. A consciousness of this natural principle no doubt induced the observant Mr. Beloe (see review of the Sexagenarian in our last Number) to adopt the too prophetic frame of his work, and convey himself to the world in the unchallenging third person, instead of the bolder I, chosen by Mr. Coleridge. But since the mode of executing the design is of greater consequence to the author than to us, we shall not discuss it at length: —the matter of such productions is after all more worthy of consideration than their manner, and we care little whether it is related by I or HE.

It is painful to remark in these volumes, very cogent reasons against their having been published under any form. There are indications of so close an approach to that state of mind which has been said to be nearly allied to great wit, that the author's friends would have done well to persuade him to withhold them from notoriety, at least for some time. Nat Lee never produced so extraordinary a mixture of talent and infirmity; and our sensorium was so impressed by some connection of ideas, that ever and anon

while perusing the most singular aberrations of Mr. C.'s genius, we caught ourselves exclaiming

> Rise, Jupiter, and snuff the moon!
> [reported of Lee in Bedlam in Theophilus Cibber, *The Lives of the Poets of Britain and Ireland* (1753), ii, 230]

The fact seems to be that the author is labouring under an overwhelming degree of morbid excitement, which though it cannot destroy the talent so perceptible in these pages, nor reduce the writer to the class of common men, does yet so powerfully affect his perceptions as to degrade him far below his own level, and impart that to his work which cannot be rationally considered without very unpleasant emotions. There is indeed none of that discretion in blotting, which has been deemed the highest praise of the greatest authors: we wish most heartily there had.

These sketches set out with an account of the writer's education, and state that his poetical ambition was first kindled by Bowles's sonnets, upon which a warm panegyric is pronounced. At the age of fifteen, we learn, he bewildered his understanding by addicting himself to the study of the most abstruse metaphysics and theology; a pursuit which appears to have had but too visible an effect in tinging all the future operations of a strong, sensitive, and original mind.

With the curious intermixture of the amusing and the absurd, we have in this part of the work some entertaining anecdotes introduced among the subtle disquisitions, and as our critical course may be as irregular as the text before us, we shall without apology insert a few of them in this place. The following is an instance of the manner in which Latin verses are sometimes *capped* at College.

In the Nutricia of Politian there occurs this line,
"Pura coloratos interstrepit unda lapillos."
Casting my eye on a University prize-poem, I met this line,
"Lactea purpureos interstrepit unda lapillos."

Now look out in the GRADUS for *Purus,* and you find as the first synonime, *lacteus,* for *coloratus,* and the first synonime is *purpureus*. I mention this by way of elucidating one of the most ordinary processes in the *ferrumination* of these Centos.

A ludicrous instance of a verse made up half of image and half of abstract meaning is given from "the poem of a young Tradesman."

> No more will I endure love's pleasing pain,
> Or round my *heart's leg* tie his galling chain.

Elsewhere we have a whimsical couplet from Smart to a Welch Squire, who had promised him a hare.

> Tell me, thou son of Great Cadwallader!
> Hast sent the hare? or hast thou swallow'd her.

The next story is one we would gladly suppress for the honour of our tribe: but fiat justitia, even though a Reviewer should be wounded. Authors have a fair right to a fling in return for the buffets they endure.

[quotes the long footnote on Francis Jeffrey in Chapter 3]

Leaving Mr. Jeffrey to answer, as we doubt not he will, this charge of having violated the sacred rights of hospitality and amicable correspondence, we pursue the tenour of our way along with the aggrieved Mr. Coleridge, who asserts (page 38) that "of all trades, literature at present demands the least talent or information; and of all modes of literature, the manufacturing of poems.[1] The difference indeed between these and the works of genius, is not less than between an egg and an egg-shell; yet at a distance they both look alike." In his opinion, of course, his own brood preduce the eggs and our other bards the shells; and a long dissertation follows to prove it so. Far be it from us to question Miss Baillie's *Leda-ous* powers, nor those of any of the other swans of the Lakes; but we are unwilling to give up to utter contempt the harmonious *shells* of the Scotts, and Byrons; Moores, and Campbells. The incubations of the former have produced beauties which we are among the foremost to acknowledge in that

> —brood as numerous hatch'd from th' eggs that soon
> Bursting with kindly rapture, forth disclosed
> Their callow young—
> [*Paradise Lost,* Book VII, ll. 418–20]

Yet still we think that in claiming so much for themselves, the

spokesmen of the New School should show a little less asperity in their judgment upon others, nor treat all those who differ from them so cavalierly as Messrs. Wordsworth and Coleridge. In a drama of this kind there may be more than one true Demetrius [cf. Fletcher, *The Humorous Lieutenant,* Act IV, Scene viii].

While we cannot refrain from censuring the self-complacency of these writers, contrasted as it is with excessive harshness towards others; we at the same time entirely subscribe to the just eulogium upon Mr. Southey, contained in the third chapter. After reading this honourable tribute to a friend, and the candid picture of himself drawn by the author, (pages 46 and 47) we felt quite astonished that in prose as in poetry, the same individual could contrive to make us like and dislike him so extremely at the same moment. We pass the next chapter, a defence of Mr. Wordsworth's style—there is a good deal of truth in the remarks, some just criticism, and much admiration to which we could not assent. Hence to the end of the volume, there is such a rhapsody of incomprehensible stuff, such a flux of the profound reasoning of folly, about the productive Logos (a separate treatise on which is kindly promised)—the Mystics of Germany—Behmen—Kant, whose disciple Mr. Coleridge professes himself to be—Schelling— pantheism—metaphysics; —such a medley of incoherent jargon occupying a full third of the volume, that pity extorts the quotation:

> No more. Where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise.
> [Gray, 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of
> Eton College' ll. 99–100]

Will it be believed, that this mass of absurdity, after all, breaks off as a fragment, without leading to a single conclusion, or being in the slightest degree interwoven with the other matter: that after raving through a hundred pages, the author inserts a letter from a friend, very truly telling him, that to print it would be an abuse of public sense, and accordingly his, like

> The story of the bear and fiddle,
> Begins, but breaks off in the middle.

Before dismissing this volume, however, we will copy a very curious

circumstance related in it, which is quite new to us, and, if equally so to others, of considerable interest to the literary world.

In consulting the excellent commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Parva Naturalia of Aristotle, I was struck at once with its close resemblance to Hume's Essay on Association. The main thoughts were the same in both, the *order* of the thoughts was the same, and even the illustrations differed only by Hume's occasional substitution of more modern examples. I mentioned the circumstance to several of my acquaintances, who admitted the closeness of the resemblance, and that it seemed too great to be explained by mere coincidence; but they thought it improbable that Hume should have held the pages of the angelic Doctor worth turning over. But, some time after, Mr. Payne, of the King's Mews, showed Sir James Mackintosh some odd volumes of St. Thomas Aquinas, partly perhaps from having heard that Sir James (then Mr.) Mackintosh had, in his lectures, passed a high encomium on this canonized philosopher, but chiefly from the fact, that the volumes had belonged to Mr. Hume, and had here and there marginal marks and notes of reference in his own hand writing. Among these volumes was that which contains the *Parva Naturalia,* in the old Latin version, swathed and swaddled in the commentary aforementioned! —p. 104.

The second volume contains a long account of the Lyrical ballads published in conjunction with Wordsworth, and a further essay in praise of that school of poetry. It next falls foul of the Reviewers, and calls upon them to justify their verdicts (often so fatal to authors) by quotations—a practice which is not enforced by example as well as precedent, for Mr. Coleridge himself (page 164) gives an opinion and adds, "Quotations or specimens would here be wholly out of place." —What privilege does he possess more than any reviewer to pronounce ex cathedra! Through this part of the work are scattered some accurate observations on poetical composition, mingled with others which appear to us to be, at least, of very doubtful correctness. It concludes with the republication of some letters from the Continent, and a very bitter critique upon the tragedy of Bertram. This is really astonishing from the same pen which so warmly deprecates the severity of criticism exercised towards its own productions.

However we acknowledge its justice, we cannot afford to follow entirely the advice to the Reviewers, by copying at length the parts

on which we found the sentiments we have delivered: but we will so far justify our verdict, both in praise and blame, as to refer to page 184, where we are nastily told, in a description of sea nausea, that "Momus might have discovered an easier way to see a man's inside, than by placing a window in his breast. He needed only to have taken a salt-water trip in a packet-boat:" — to page 200, for a sweet contrast, "Over what place, thought I, does the moon hang to *your* eye, my dearest friend? To me it hung over the left bank of the Elbe. Close above the moon was a huge volume of deep black cloud, while a very thin fillet crossed the middle of the orb, as narrow, and thin, and black as a ribbon of crape. The long trembling road of moonlight, which lay on the water, and reached to the stern of our vessel, glimmered dimly and obscurely." —And again, page 202, "An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches, in flat countries, with spire steeples, which, as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars; and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sun-set, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heavenward." At page 241, narrating an interview with Klopstock, it is said, "He told us that his first ode was fifty years older than his last. I considered him as the venerable father of German poetry; as a good man; as a Christian; seventy-four years old; with legs enormously swoln: yet active, lively, cheerful, and kind and communicative." Klopstock began the Messiah when he was seventeen, and devoted three entire years to the plan without composing a single line. He wrote the three first cantos in measured prose; but, dissatisfied with this, changed his manner and composed in hexameters.

We are glad that these passages incline the balance in favour of Mr. Coleridge. One volume expunged, —the other would be highly instructive and entertaining; but, as there are two, we must repeat our astonishment that the extremes of what is agreeable and disgusting can be so intimately blended by the same mind.

NOTE

1 We fancy this observation is addressed to the poets who do not reside in Cumberland: those who do, together with their friends and imitators, are fowls of another feather, or it would be impossible to reconcile this passage with the following, within ten pages of it.

"There is no profession on earth which requires an attention so early, so long, or so unintermitting as that of poetry, and indeed as that of literary composition in general, if it be such as at all satisfies the demands both of taste and of sound logic. How difficult and delicate a task even the mere mechanism of verse is, may be conjectured from the failure of those who have attempted poetry late in life."

The two classes deserve two Canons, and Mr. C. displays the difference between meum and tuum!

SIBYLLINE LEAVES

1817

30. Unsigned review in [Gold's] *London Magazine*

1820 ii, 70–4

From *London Magazine, July,* 1820, ii, 70–4

Mr. Coleridge is a man of great and original powers; a heterogeneous compound of imagination and bombast, feeling and affectation. His Sybilline Leaves, which were first published collectively in the year 1817, and which from some unexpected occurrences we were prevented from noticing in our earliest Numbers, evince ample proofs of the truth of our statement. Like the singular poem of Christabel, they possess an unusual quantity of sublimity, tinged with an equally liberal portion of the burlesque. In the midst of some delightful passages, when our minds are entranced with delight, and our imaginations swallowed up in wonder, a ludicrous image flits across the singularly organized brain of the author; and when committed to paper, has the effect of extending our risible muscles to somewhat unusual dimensions. The "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which is the first and greatest poem in the collection, teems with such combined instances of sublimity and burlesque. The author, however, appears to have been aware of its general obscurity, and has accordingly resorted to a very praise-worthy expedient, we mean that of prefixing marginal annotations, to buoy us up, like life-boats, and prevent us from sinking in the bottomless abyss of the Bathos. For instance, the first note gravely informs us, that there is an Ancient Mariner, who "meeteth three gallants bidden to a wedding feast, and detaineth one." The one detained is of course excessively angry; but all to no purpose, for the obstreperous

mariner holds him with "his *skinny* hand" —(that word skinny, by the bye, is delightfully expressive) —and tells him that "there was a ship;" and in addition to this piece of information, begins a long-winded narrative of his past adventures, to which the bridegroom is constrained to listen like "a three years' child;" and, as we conclude, was equally attentive. And here we cannot refrain from bestowing our tribute of commiseration on the wedding guest, particularly as we ourselves are inclined to turn a deaf ear to long stories; but when they open with such a wonderful piece of intelligence as the following, we are absolutely ravished: —

> The sun came up upon the left,
> Out of the sea came he.

And, as might naturally be expected, "went down" again. This information, however, original as it undoubtedly is, is by no means sufficient to satisfy the wedding guest; and when he sees the merry minstrelsy "nodding their heads," as they pace into the hall, he well nigh faints. But the inexorable mariner still continues his persecutions, and observes that his ship was driven by a storm towards the North Pole; and that there "came both mist and snow;" the natural consequence of which was, "that it grew wondrous cold;" and that among other pleasant sights,

> The ice was here, the ice was there,
> The ice was all around,
> It crack'd and growled, and roar'd and howled,
> Like noises in a *swound;*

and that an albatross, which turns out to be the cleverest fellow in the whole poem, indeed almost as sensible as the "toothless mastiff bitch" in Christabel, came through the fog, and was maliciously and despitefully shot by the "Ancient Mariner"; and here endeth the first part. In order to impress the truth on our minds, the poet again takes the trouble of informing us that the sun came out of the sea; imagining, no doubt, that we should otherwise suppose that he came out of the frying-pan; and continues by observing, that

> The bloody sun at noon
> Right up above the mast did stand,
> No bigger than the moon.

And then, in a sly marginal annotation, hints that "the albatross begins to be avenged," by taking away the voices of the whole ship's crew, to whom we are now introduced, in the following pithy and pathetic couplet: —

> *We* could not speak, no more than if
> *We* had been choaked with *soot*.

There is something so charmingly familiar in the last word, that it comes home to every one's mind; and the whole corps of blacksmiths, scavengers, and chimney-sweepers, may thank Mr. Coleridge, for so kindly humbling himself to the lowliness of their intellect. To add to the distress of the "Ancient Mariner," he discovers, on feeling whether the frill of his shirt is whole or not, that the cursed Albatross is hung round his neck, a graceful substitute no doubt for a rope; and that "there is something in the sky." This something afterwards turns out to be a skeleton ship; commander, one Mrs. Night-Mair-life-in-death, "who thicks man's blood with cold." On this marvellous occasion, the bard is delivered of his first-born joke; and slily observes of the frigate and its inmates, "like vessel like crew." When the naked hulk comes alongside, Mr. and Mrs. Life-in-death are discovered playing at dice; a somewhat familiar occupation for ghosts: while the wind picturesquely "whistles through the bones" of the two gamblers; "the sun's rim dips; the stars rush out" and the dark, like the giant in his seven league boots, "comes on at a stride." Accordingly, when it has become sufficiently dark for the purpose, the ancient mariner and his crew "look sideways up;" and as it appears they can see, like cats in the dark, discover that the steersman's face is white: immediately,

> With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
> They dropp'd down one by one.

And their souls (comical dogs) shot by him, with the Albatross, "like the whiz of a cross-bow." On seeing this, the Mariner "falls a crying;" and shortly afterwards, by a natural transition, falls a praying; the effect of which is the instantaneous release of his neck from the Albatross. And here we are introduced to some new acquaintances, of whom, however, the bard speaks slightingly, inasmuch as he calls them "silly buckets," which happened to be

lying conveniently on the deck at the time the rain fell, and are thus specified: —

> The silly buckets on the deck,
> That had so long remained,
> I dreamt that they were filled with dew,
> And when I woke—it rain'd.
>
> My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
> My garments all were dank;
> Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
> *And still my body drank*.

We can easily credit the statement contained in the last line; and imagine, that to the effects of the drinking, the poetical curiosity before us was principally owing. The Mariner and his ship now move on; when suddenly the "dead men gave a groan;" and not content with this, says the old fellow—

> The body of my brother's son,
> Stood by me knee to knee;
> The body and I pulled at one rope,
> But he said nought to me.

The wedding guest now becomes perfectly petrified; but the Mariner desires him to hold his tongue, and observes, that himself and his jolly crew moved onwards, while the sails made a pleasant noise till noon, probably till about two o'clock in the day. And here we cannot help admiring the classical ingenuity of the poet; Longinus, we believe, has somewhere observed, that in the composition of a poem, all parts should be strictly subservient to each other. On this good old principle, Mr. Coleridge builds his claims to judgment, and seems determined, that as every part of his ballad is marvellous, the sails shall not escape the contagion; and accordingly sets them to sing a tune, like the musical snuffboxes in our good friend Hamlet's shop. When the sails had finished their glee, the exact time of which is thus pithily specified, "The sails at noon left off their tune," the vessel took the fitting opportunity of making a dead halt. In a minute or two, however,

> She 'gan stir
> With a short uneasy motion,
> Backwards and forwards half her length
> With a short uneasy motion.

Whether by the exquisite repetition of the short uneasy motion, Mr. Coleridge means to insinuate that the ship had taken a strong dose of physic, &c. (to use a vulgar expression) was *taken short* in consequence, we profess ourselves incompetent to ascertain: certain, however, it is, that we cannot in justice say of the short uneasy motion, "decies repetita placebit" [Horace, *Ars poetica* l. 365: 'it will please if repeated ten times'.] The vessel, however, soon recovers from her disorder; and, "like a pawing horse let go" (quere, of what?) and knocks down the unfortunate Mariner. On recovering from the effects of the cross-buttóck, he hears two spirits engaged in friendly *chit-chat,* one of whom simply asks,

> What makes that ship drive on so fast,
> What is the ocean doing?

Upon which the other, who seems as wise as her companion, replies, that "the ocean hath no blast;" from which we draw the somewhat startling inference, that as the ship sailed without wind, it must of necessity have been worked by steam. And here the Mariner takes leave of his good friends the spirits; and to his great delight discovers, as we are properly informed in another marginal annotation, his native country; his glee whereat breaks forth in these precise terms: —

> Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
> The light-house top I see?
> Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
> Is this mine own country?

He is evidently right in his conjecture; for it seems that it is not only his kirk and his hill, but even his light-house top; and to add, if possible, to his joy, "a pilot and a pilot's boy," accompanied by a "hermit good," as steersman, row up to his vessel; and after divers prodigies, consent to take the "Ancient Mariner" on board their funny. When once safely seated, he naturally waxes devout; at which the pilot takes fright in these words—

> The pilot shrieked,
> And fell down in a fit.

The pilot's boy, however, who turns out to be a very facetious fellow, indulges himself in sundry smart jokes and witticisms, one of which

is so exquisite, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of repeating it.

> The pilot's boy,
> Who now doth crazy go,
> *Laugh'd loud and long,* and all the while
> *His eyes went to and fro:*
> 'Hah! hah!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
> *The Devil knows how to row.'*

We had been previously informed that the Devil was a clever fellow; and are happy to add the art of rowing to the list of his other qualifications. We consider Mr. Coleridge's authority on such mystical points as convincing, and make no doubt of the truth of the statement. To return to our subject: so expert is Beelzebub in his new accomplishment, that he quickly brings them all to land; and the hermit (poor fellow) on stepping out of the funny, discovers that he can scarcely stand, which means, that he was seized with the cramp from remaining so long in the boat. At last he recovers, and administers the shrive to his companion; who goes home, and probably marries, and lives very happy afterwards. And here the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" concludes, equally no doubt to the delight of ourselves and our readers. The moral to be extracted from it is apposite, and well worthy the attention of sportsmen. The Ancient Mariner, it seems, is fond of shooting; and not content with the range of his own country, sails to the North Pole, in order to shoot albatrosses: the spirit of the ocean flies into a stout passion at this impudence of the poacher; and finding that he has no license, immediately proceeds to summary chastisement, by hanging the dead albatross round the neck of the Ancient Mariner; metaphorically insinuating, that if he did it again, he should be hung at the Old Bailey. Viewed in this light, as an allegory, divested of all poetical attractions, the ballad certainly merits particular attention. It is evidently a friend to the game laws, as appears in the punishment apportioned to the transgression of the offender; and though in some instances it "passeth all understanding," and soars far beyond the ken of us sober-minded big-wigged critics, the cause it advocates is laudable, and the execution demands the warmest acknowledgment of every snipe-shooter and grouse-killer in the three kingdoms.

(To be continued.) [No continuation appeared.]

ZAPOLYA

1817

31. Unsigned review in *Literary Gazette*

1817

From *Literary Gazette,* 15 November, 1817, 307–8. Attributed speculatively (in *The Romantics Reviewed,* Part A, ii, 595) to George Croly.

A walnut-tree the more it is beaten produces the more fruit, and a spaniel mends its manners materially upon castigation: the appearance of the present publication, so speedily after his Biographia Literaria, and Sibylline Leaves, shews that Mr. Coleridge resembles the walnut-tree, for he fructifies as it were in requital of the belabouring of the critics: as we proceed we shall discover that he also resembles our canine exemplar, and improves under the lash.

Zapolya is an imitation of the Winter's Tale of Shakespeare; the first part being called a prelude instead of an act, so as to approximate the ancient Æschylian model, and reconcile the unity of time in each of two pieces, which could not be reconciled in one, where an interval of twenty years occurs. A *Christmas Tale* is in other respects as near a *Winter's Tale* in its dramatic plan as may be. The characters in the prelude are

Emerick, usurping King of Illyria.
Raab Kiuprili, an Illyrian Chieftain.
Casimir, son of Kiuprili.
Chef Ragozzi, military commander.
Zapolya, Queen of Illyria.

Kiuprili returning from a triumphant campaign at the summons of King Andreas, finds him dying of poison, his Queen Zapolya treated as a lunatic, and access debarred to her as well as to the King, and

Emerick seating himself upon the throne; having corrupted or deceived the mass of the people, and among the rest Casimir. Kiuprili indignantly brands his son Casimir as a traitor, defies the usurper, and produces a patent from Andreas, appointing Zapolya, Emerick, and himself, co-regents of the kingdom and guardians of the infant heir; he is seized however by the guard, led by his secret friend Ragozzi, whom Emerick supposes he has gained over, but who remains faithful to his patron and commander. Ragozzi favours his flight, and in following him secures also the escape of the Queen and her child.

Perhaps it may be as well to dismiss the literary merits of the prelude with this account of its plot. There is a great disregard to rhythm, but as the author has set up a standard for his own construction of versification, we shall not try him by another which he does not acknowledge. Suffice it to say, that, to our ears, many of the liberties taken seem to destroy every thing like poetry, and to render the lines prosaic and feeble. There is also a strange coinage of new words. We have "to infamize," a verb; and "to *voice* her claims," as another innovation upon that part of speech; and that the nouns may not complain of being omitted in this *enrichment* of our language, it is set down that malignant planets "shall shoot their *blastments* on the land." We hope *the fancy* will not lay hold of this sonorous substantive; it looks as if it would suit that scientific corps to admiration. We cannot pretend to admire the subjoined argument of Emerick for seizing the crown; the concluding minutiæ savour of the bathos, and would only be apt, were Dr. Slop the writer, to close the true *liberal* cant of the preceding passages.

Conscience, good my Lord,
Is but the pulse of reason. Is it conscience,
That a free nation should be handed down,
Like the dull clods beneath our feet, by chance
And the blind law of lineage? That, whether infant,
Or man matur'd, a wise man or an idiot,
Hero or natural coward, shall have guidance
Of a free people's destiny, should fall out
In the mere lottery of a reckless nature,
Where few the prizes, and the blanks are countless?
Or haply, that a nation's fate should hang
On the bald accident of a midwife's handling
The unclosed sutures of an infant's skull?

But to counterbalance these offences, there are several passages of great beauty and effect: we cite our proofs. When Kiuprili is refused, and cannot gain access to his dying master, he exclaims,

> Must I, hag-ridden, pant as in a dream?
> Or, like an eagle, whose strong wings press up
> Against a coiling serpent's folds, can I
> Strike but for mockery, and with restless beak
> Gore my own breast?

The following is also a fine and animated address in endeavouring to reclaim the revolters to their loyalty and duty, at which they murmur.

> Have I for this
> Bled for your safety, conquered for your honour
> Was it for this, Illyrians! that I forded
> Your thaw-swoln torrents, when the shouldering ice
> Fought with the foe, and stained its jagged points
> With gore from wounds, I felt not? Did the blast
> Beat on this body, frost-and-famine-numb'd,
> *Till my hard flesh distinguished not itself*
> *From the insensate mail, its fellow warrior!*

Zapolya's description of an incident attending her flight from the palace is also powerfully affecting:

> When the loud clamor rose, and all the palace
> Emptied itself— (they sought my life, Ragozzi!)
> Like a swift shadow gliding, I made way
> To the deserted chamber of my lord. —
> *(Then to the infant.)*
> And thou didst kiss thy father's lifeless lips,
> And in thy helpless hand, sweet slumberer!
> Still clasp'st the signet of thy royalty.
> As I removed the seal, the heavy arm
> Dropt from the couch aslant, and the stiff finger
> Seemed pointing at my feet. Provident Heaven!
> Lo! I was standing on the secret door,
> Which, through a long descent where all sound perishes,
> Led out beyond the palace.

Such passages as these redeem a multitude of errors; but we proceed

to part second, which is meanly called "Usurpation ended, or *she comes again,*" and has these additional characters:

Old Bathory, a mountaineer.
Bethlen Bathory, the young Prince Andreas, supposed his son.
Lord Rudolph, a courtier, but friend to the Queen's party.
Laska, steward to Casimir, betrothed to Glycine.
Pestalutz, an assassin, employed by Emerick.
Lady Sarolta, wife of Casimir.
Glycine, orphan daughter of Ragozzi.

Between the Queen's flight, and the civil war which immediately ensued, leaving Emerick the victor, twenty years are supposed to have elapsed. The story of the second part is rather long than complicated. Bethlen, for defending the maidens of his mountains from the rudeness of Casimir's servants, is falsely accused by them to Sarolta in her lord's absence; but she discovers their conspiracy, and dismisses them. In the investigation of the charge the mystery of Bethlen's birth is touched upon, and he learns that he will attain its developement in a haunted forest. Here he finds his mother and Kiuprili almost famished, —the evil spirits who have terrified the surrounding country. Where they have been for twenty years is not explained, but they have recently come to the wood, directed by some præternatural dreams. Glycine, the handmaid of Sarolta, who, though betrothed to Laska, loves Bethlen, follows him, and becomes also a denizen of the cavern in the wood. Meanwhile the usurper returns, and by the aid of Laska attempts the honour of Sarolta, (the characters of Emerick, Sarolta, and Casimir, being here the Edgar, Elfrida, and Ethelwold of our old English history dramatized), but Bethlen, who has been sent back by his mother, on some idle mission for a particular sword, encounters the ravisher in the lady's chamber, and disarms him. Casimir, whose suspicions have been excited, comes home unexpectedly, but apropos; and the usurper and he mutually lay snares for each other's death on the morrow. The morrow arrives, and with it much hunting, and thunder, and mysticism, and running in and out, and plotting and killing; involution inexplicable and unnatural, which ends to our great comfort, because the play ends with it, in the death of the tyrant, the reconciliation of Kiuprili, and Casimir, the marriage of Bethlen, now king Andreas, and Glycine, and the recognition of Zapolya by the joyful Illyrians.

Of the second part we cannot, in justice, speak so favourably as

of the first, which seems to have been struck off in a heat with many happy conceptions, while its successor is more cold, laboured, metaphysical, and uninteresting. Many of the thoughts are far-fetched; the pseudo-humorous scenes rather dull; Glycine's simplicity absolute silliness; and Kiuprili and Zapolya's inspirations occasionally absolute raving. Nor can our industry detect as numerous redeeming beauties as a set-off to this account. We will except, however, the following new and exquisite image of Hope.

> Hope draws towards itself
> The flame with which it kindles; —

and the following picture, which (addressing Sarolta,) Bethlen draws to himself, on hearing that he was found an infant beside a wounded mother—

> Eyes fair as thine
> Have gazed on me with tears of love and anguish,
> Which these eyes saw not, or beheld unconscious;
> And tones of anxious fondness, passionate prayers
> Have been talk'd to me! But this tongue ne'er sooth'd
> A mother's ear, lisping a mother's name!
> O! at how dear a price have I been lov'd,
> And no love could return!

It will not, we think, be denied, that some of our quotations bear the true stamp of poetic feeling and genius; that they must leaven the mass of mere common-place, and weigh against those cherished abstractions which are scarce rational. And we rejoice to find that fewer lapses of this kind occur in Zapolya than in the later preceding publications from the same hand: in other words, that the proportion of the good sense to *the flighty* predominates. The metaphysical spirit gets less frequently into the brain, and we are spared the "singularly wild" beauties of Christabel, though there is often hard straining after other sorts of poetic beauties, which refuse to be won: for example; here is a poor conceit for a sublime comparison:

> Blest spirits of my parents,
> Ye hover o'er me now! Ye shine upon me!
> And, like a flower that coils forth from a ruin,
> I feel and seek the light, I cannot see!

Now, this is *not like* a flower, not even a *sensitive* plant! The next is

in parts little less absurd, though, there is grandeur about it altogether, and a noble touch of nature at the conclusion.

> *Bethlen*. What else can I remember, but a mother
> Mangled and left to perish?
> *Sarolta*. Hush,   Glycine!
> It is the ground-swell of a teeming instinct:
> Let it but lift itself to air and sunshine,
> And it will find a mirror in the waters,
> It now makes boil above it. Check him not!
> *Bethlen*. O that I were diffused among the waters
> That pierce into the secret depth of Earth,
> And find their way in darkness! Would that I
> Could spread myself upon the homeless winds!
> And I would seek her! *for she is not dead*!
> *She can not die!* O pardon, Gracious lady!
> *You were about to say, that he returned—*
> *Sarolta. Deep love,* the *Godlike in us, still believes*
> *Its object as immortal as itself!*
> *Bethlen*. And found her still—
> *Sarolta*.   Alas! he did return
> But she—
> Had been borne off—

There is a strange mixture in the above. The miserable metaphor of the groundswell, pushed to its utmost limit, and finding mirrors in sunshine, may well be contrasted with the admirable impatient expression of hope in the son, and Sarolta's fine explication of the principle in the lines we have put in italics. We had noted several passages to illustrate such blame as we have unwillingly attached to the execution of this dramatic poem; but considering it upon the whole as a production evincing high talent, and gladly observing the great predominancy of merits over those defects which we feared would never be eradicated from this gentleman's writings, we refrain from the disagreeable task of copying them. One will suffice: —a girl shooting an assassin with an arrow is thus hyperbolically and incomprehensibly described.

> 'Twas as a vision blazoned on a cloud
> By lightning, shaped into a passionate scheme
> Of life and death!

The last line are sad doggrel, and the first of two songs equally silly, ex. gr.

A sunny shaft did I behold,
    From sky to earth it slanted;
And poised there on a bird so bold —
    Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
    Within the shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his break of gold,
    All else of Amethyst!

And thus he sung: "Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true,
    Sweet month of May,
    We must away;
        Far, far away!
        To day! to day!

Having fairly laid before our readers specimens of the excellent and the indifferent in this production, we shall only add, that if they do not, upon these extracts, we think they will, upon the attentive perusal of the work itself, agree with us, that it affords strong presumption of the author's devoting his powers to a less objectionable system than he has hitherto pursued, and is calculated to make those critics pause, who have been unqualified in their condemnation of his poetical attempts, by clearly proving the existence of genius, which may be misdirected, but cannot be denied.

32. Unsigned review in *Champion*

1817

From *Champion,* 16 November, 1817, 365–8. It is suggested plausibly (in *The Romantics Reviewed,* Part A, i, 274) that the reviewer was Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795–1854), already a published poet, one of Charles Lamb's friends, and later a successful dramatist and a judge. On the other hand Talfourd's appreciation of both Coleridge and his poetry seems much more positive in his attested reminiscences (for which see *Coleridge the Talker,* 350–4 and 463–4).

How glorious is our old Drama! —how eternal a monument has old English genius built up! enough in all conscience for one nation, when other nations are blank; except perhaps in the *Dramatis Personae,* a fit of compliments or curses, or of sentiment. What can this country expect more? —more it will not have. The ages of romance are fled, gone for ever, we are

> Sitting by the shores of old romance
> [Wordsworth, 'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags', l. 38]

never again to spread a sail over its waters—strange fancies we may see, and carping imaginations: but never more will Poet look into these regions as a little child, and tell of them with a child's simplicity. No more will Poet sing,

> Lithinith and lestinith, and
> Holdith still your tongue,
> And ye shall learn strange talking
> Of Gamilyn the yonge.
> [the pseudo-Chaucerian 'Cook's Tale of Gamelyn', ll. 337–40]

no Juliet will any more yearn from her window, saying

> O for a Falconer's voice
> To lure this tassel gentle back again!
> [*Romeo and Juliet,* Act II, Scene ii, ll. 158–9]

for

> Metaphor is dead—and hath not left his peer.
> [Adaptation of Milton, "Lycidas", l. 9]

Yet should there not be an echo of the old thunder in these days? we think over all things in the drama shape of re-birth—*Manfred* is full of fine things, but we do not feel the poem—*Fazio* is well [Byron's *Manfred* (1817) and Henry Hart Milman's *Fazio* (1815)]. *John Woodvill* is excellent; most particularly in the delicacy of its characters. It is a spice of the antique, and of course is full of poetry and wit. This very unassuming Tragedy we believe has few readers, and therefore we cannot resist treating ours with a few lines from it. [Quotes Charles Lamb, *John Woodvill* (1818), Act II, Scene ii, the dialogue between Margaret and Simon, beginning 'In the name of

the boy God' and ending at 'How fair all things of earth, how fair they be!']

After having looked through Zapolya, we were insensibly led into these few remarks and quotations—which have created a state of feeling, not at all favourable to the Poem. We could not look in vain for poetry—but the mystery is, how the Author of the following passage, could be content to write whole pages of dulness.

> O she was innocent!
> And to be innocent is nature's wisdom!
> The fledge dove knows the prowlers of the air,
> Fear'd soon as seen, and flutters back to shelter.
> And the young steed recoils upon its haunches,
> The never yet seen adder's hiss first heard.
> O surer than suspicion's hundred eyes,
> Is that fine sense, which to the pure in heart,
> By mere oppugnancy of their own goodness,
> Reveals the approach of evil.

There is but one explanation—he *can* write thus: but he has been time immemorial an admirer of Bowles's sonnets: a sort of Della Cruscan spell has ever tied the tips of his wings together: —it has damn'd him with the most vile epithets: —such as "self-expected", "tyrant-quelling", and made him personify everlastingly, Memory, Destruction, Contemplation, Blasphemy, &c. without hearing any thing like the 'Warder of the Brain' [*Macbeth,* Act I, Scene vii, l. 65], or a "fiery-wheel'd throne" [Milton, "Il Penseroso", l. 51]. A genuine admirer of Mr. Coleridge's Poetry could never take up his books without cursing the hour in which he took to Bowles' Sonnets. Such a misfortune should not have befallen Mr. Coleridge—as a writer who would wish to please: for where he ought to be admired there are few to wonder at, and fewer to feel with him; —very few to whom images present themselves in the genuine sibylline attitude. We meet with but one here and there who is able to enter fully into his fantastic thought region; or be intense over his phantom-illustrations. He seems as enamoured of a serpent's coil, as of a nightingale; and would think it no small delight to be eye-bound, for a short season, by a rattle-snake: unless he might prefer the idea of a mountain setting out from the Galaxy on New Year's Day, for the express purpose of crushing him at Whitsuntide.

His nicety in these particulars is unrivalled. It may be that the best way of ascertaining the particular powers of poets, is, if possible, to follow their different graspings at things, less in keeping and taste, than what are at length adopted. For instance, we can imagine in what a different manner the idea of death operated on the minds of Shakspeare and Milton. With the latter it was a positive deadly power; with the former a mere absence of life: Milton began with death, and from it thought into the varieties of life; — Shakspeare looked at the grass, the flowers, and feminine beauty, and sighed because he could not hide from himself that all would end in death. Look at the lamentation of the one over Lycidas, and of the other over Fidele [*Cymbeline,* Act IV, Scene ii, ll. 197–242]. Milton, who like Wordsworth, set himself, in early youth, a great task, had acquired a restless habit of mind, a continual breathlessness after the savorical essences: he read for them—he thought for them—he dreamt of them—and established himself among them in such a way, that (except, certainly, a high moment of religion), he seldom experienced an unmixed pathos of time, and place, and individuality. Therefore, in Lycidas, he strays after all sorts of beauty: his grief is

> Breaking the silence of the seas,
> Amongst the farthest Hebrides
> [Wordsworth, ‘The Solitary Reaper’, ll. 15–16]

But Shakespeare, a child of the moment, living only in the present, has no combinations from the distance. He finds the “prettiest daisied plot”, and does not lift his eyes from it. His reflections are merely, that all things must die; and this presses so heavily on him, that the delicious burial is, as it is. Now Mr. Coleridge is the greatest puzzle for this kind of unravelment that has ever lived: we are completely at a loss on enquiring how and why he writes thus and thus. It were to be wished that some acute critic would point out the probable differences in temper and taste, between the authors of *Laodamia* [Wordsworth’s] and *Kubla Khan*. It would bring us a step or two towards Mr. Coleridge, and make us more at home in *Zapolya*. This drama the author says is in humble imitation of the *Winter’s Tale*. Here is a rebel usurping it over his king and brother, killing him and driving his sister-in-law, with her infant, out into the woods; where she remains till all is cleared up. *Kiuprili,* a household

patriot, one of those virtuous souls we meet with in many a melodrame, after having braved the usurper—been put under lock and key; —and escaped by means of his young friend *Ragozzi,* and a mule,

> One that can shoot a precipice like a bird,

exiles himself with the queen into a dreary forest, —where they become the terror of all the country round. —But it is needless to sketch out the story: —for the reader may come at the main part directly, from these last lines of *Zapolya's* speech to her infant at the end of the prelude.

> —And thou snatched hence
> Poor friendless fugitive! with a mother's wailing,
> Offspring of royal Andreas, shalt return
> With trump and timbrel clang, and popular shout,
> In triumph to the palace of thy fathers!

Emerick, the usurper, is, like most other usurpers in plays, —a man who in real life would be laughed at and made a butt of. There is an innocent pretty she-orphan, who says of her good mistress.

> As far back as I wot of,
> All her commands were gracious sweet requests,
> How could it be then, but that her requests
> Must needs have sounded to me as commands.

Then there is young master *Laska,* who is in for a commodity of cowardice and *malvolioism:* we have seen such a fellow in the shape of LISTON [John Liston (1776–1846), comic actor] in many a gothic chamber. Then there is old *Bathory,* a mountaineer, and *Bethlen Bathory,* who turns out to be young *Prince Andreas*. Aye! but how did his mother lose him? What a question, good Sir! Are you to come at all this criss-cross romance in plain prose, and moreover for some tenpenny matter! There are besides *Pestalutz,* an assassin, —*Casimir,* son of *Kiuprili,* and the lady and wife; and one *Lord Rudolph*. Now all these several and singular, should make us feel their views and dispositions; should let us know whether they hate or love, &c. —in real earnest: —but they do not. The queen's grief has not touch'd us; nor do we admire old *Kiuprili*

for all his patriotism and exile: and furthermore, we hold that *Glycine* would fall in love with a prince in disguise, if he fell in her way. We will let the chief characters give specimens of their abilities.

SCENE, —A wooded park and mountains
Enter Zapolya, with an infant in her arms.
Zapo. Hush! dear one! hush! My trembling arm disturbs *thee*!
Thou, the protector of the helpless! thou,
The widow's husband and the orphan's father,
Direct my steps! Ah whither? O send down
Thy Angel to a houseless babe and mother
Driven forth into the cruel wilderness!
Hush, sweet one! Thou art no Hagar's offspring: thou art
The rightful heir of an anointed King!
What sounds are those? It is the vesper chaunt
Of labouring men returning to their home!
Their Queen has no home! Hear me, heavenly father!
And let this darkness—
Be as the shadow of thy outspread wings,
To hide and shield us! Start'st thou in thy slumbers?
Thou canst not dream of savage Emerick. Hush!
Betray not thy poor mother! for if they seize thee
I shall grow mad indeed, and they'll believe
Thy wicked uncle's lie.

Kiuprili does not utter many more sensible morcels than this —

O most of all, most miserable nation,
For whom the imperial power, enormous bubble!
Is blown and kept aloft, or burst and shatter'd
By the bribed breath of lewd soldiery.

Bethlen speaks to Lady Sarolta, about this mother and his infancy, as follows—

—Eyes fair as thine
Have gazed on me with tears of love and anguish,
Which these eyes saw not, or beheld unconscious:
And tones of anxious fondness, passionate prayers
Have been talk'd to me! but this tongue ne'er soothed
A mother's ear, lisping a mother's name!

Lady Sarolta is very poetical: to one she says—

Thy fancied heaven, dear girl, like that above thee,
In its mere self a cold, drear, colorless void,
Seen from below, and in the large, becomes
The bright blue ether, and the seat of gods!

to another, —

I oft have passed your cottage, and still praised
Its beauty, and that trim orchard plot, whose blossoms
The gusts of April shower'd aslant its thatch

The following are two very characteristic parts, —

The Queen to her infant.
—Thou did'st kiss thy father's lifeless lips,
And in thy helpless hand sweet slumberer!
Still clasp'st the signet of thy royalty.
As I removed the seal, the heavy arm
Dropt from the couch aslant, and the stiff finger
Seemed pointing at my feet. Provident Heaven!
So, I was standing on the secret door—

Bethlen exclaims, —

O that I were diffused among the waters
That pierce into the secret depths of earth,
And find their way in darkness! Would that I
Could spread myself upon the homeless winds! —

There occur two songs—neither of them very good.

However "when all is done", this *Christmas Tale* will not do from Mr. Coleridge. It is the old story of legitimacy worked up for the use of Schools. We care not though how many of the same kind he gives us, providing always they contain as much of his old sublimity as this does. The passage about innocence already quoted, would, we have no doubt, call an old manuscript play into print without much else to recommend it. It is his cant, and not his poetry, that we object to. —and we are sorry to see the former increases as fast as the latter dies away.

We have no doubt, however, that there are some who fondle his elfin luxuries; and for that reason he is a poet. His genius takes to the elements in a ghostly way, and engenders a shadowy result. The first faint thoughts of other men, are more distinct than his, when

achieved in writing. His mode of coming at things is not to be understood: we cannot trace his fancy a voyaging; or if we could, we should never guess of what colour "the vaporous drop profound" [*Macbeth,* Act III, Scene v, l. 24] would be, when condensed by his imagination. Can we thus follow other men's "spiriting"? —Yes. We know the temper of Shakespeare's soul when he sighed—

> Ye Nymphs called Naiads of the wandering brooks,
> With your sedge crowns and ever harmless looks
> [*The Tempest,* Act IV, Scene i, ll. 128–9]

We can analyze Wordsworth's mood when he says to the small celandine

> — —the thrifty cottager,
> Who stirs little out of doors,
> Joys to see thee near her home
> ["To the Small Celandine", ll. 37–9]

This sort of poetry comes into our hearts by the same path, that the authors went seeking for it. It is quite another thing with Mr. Coleridge; we know how beautiful his sketches are, without having any real human sensibility in us convinced. It is a pleasant thing to discover any favorite haunt of a writer: one of Mr, Coleridge's may be seen by these two pictures—the one from *Christabel,* the last from *Zapolya*. The ceiling of Christabel's chamber was

> — —all made out of the carver's brain;
> The lamp by two fold silver chains,
> Hung dangling by an angels feet.

In the *Christmas Tale* we find—

> Ascend yon flight of stairs!
> Midway the corridor a silver lamp
> Hangs o'er the entrance of Sarolta's chamber,
> And facing it, the low arch'd oratory.

Addenda and corrigenda to volume 1

No. 27 should have been attributed to Charles Burney, Jr. (1757–1817), the journalist, rather than to his father.

No. 28 is attributed to John Stoddart (1773–1856) in Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (1957–65), i, 505n. He was personally acquainted with Coleridge.

No. 36(b) is attributed to Walter Scott in Edgar Johnson, Sir *Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (1970), i, 310.

No. 39 is attributed to William Hazlitt in P.P.Howe, ed., *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* (1930–4), xviii, 463.

No. 58 is attributed to Henry Crabb Robinson in Oskar Wellens, 'Henry Crabb Robinson, Reviewer of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron in the *Critical Review:* Some New Attributions', *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities,* lxxxiv (1981), 101.

No. 83 is attributed to George Croly in *The Romantics Reviewed,* Part A, ii, 589.

No. 108 is said to be probably by the author and inventor Isaac Taylor (1787–1865) in John Colmer, ed., *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (*Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* —1969—x), xxxvn. Taylor was a regular contributor to the *Eclectic Review*.

Select bibliography

The following books provide further information concerning the reception of Coleridge's writings during the period.

Allen, Peter, *The Cambridge Apostles: The Early Years,* Cambridge 1978.

Ashton, Rosemary, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of English Thought. 1800–1860,* Cambridge 1980.

Duffy, John J. (ed.), *Coleridge's American Disciples: The Selected Correspondence of James Marsh,* Amherst, Mass. 1973.

Harding, Anthony John, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word,* Kingston and Montreal 1985.

Haven, Richard and Josephine, and Maurianne Adams (eds), *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Scholarship…1793–1899,* Boston, Mass. 1976.

Prickett, Stephen, *Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church,* Cambridge 1976.

Reiman, Donald H. (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers,* New York and London 1972, 7 vols. (in two parts of 2 and 5 vols. respectively).

Sanders, Charles Richard, *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement,* Durham, North Carolina 1942.

Index

Academic 281–3
Adams, Maurianne, *see* Richard Haven
Addison, Joseph 254, 278
Aeschylus 17, 146, 189, 191, 297
Aldrovandus 147
Al-Farabi 260
Alfred, King 101
Allen, Peter 312
Allsop, Thomas 5, 153
Allston, Washington 222
Analytical Review 225
Ancaster, Earl of 10
Annual Register 156
Anstey, John 11, 22
Antaeus 147
Aquinas, Thomas 288
Archimedes 11
Aristotle 2, 34, 74, 288
Armour, Richard W. xi
Arnold, Matthew 14, 16, 141–5
Arnold, Thomas 168, 172, 221
Ashton, Rosemary 312
Athanasius, St 63
Athenaeum 13, 17, 23, 134–40, 187–97
Atlantic Monthly 19, 198–224
Augustan Review 260–7

Bacon, Francis 55, 62, 67, 88, 136
Baillie, Joanna 286
Bancroft, Richard 106
Barth, J.Robert 23
Beaumont, Gustave de 115
Becket, Thomas à 91
Behmen, Jakob 76, 266, 287
Beloe, William 284
Bentham, Jeremy 7–8, 37, 67–70, 76, 77, 92, 100, 104, 105
Blackstone, Sir William 101
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 3, 11, 20, 22, 116, 212
Boehme, Jakob, *see* Jacob Behmen
Bonner, Edmund 106
Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne 143
Boswell, James 4
Boulger, James D. 23
Bowles, William Lisle 285, 305
Brae, A.E. 13, 14
Brandl, Alois 220
British Critic 4, 20
British Lady's Magazine 278–81
British Magazine 11, 22
Brontës 188
Brooke, Stopford 23
Brown, John 79
Bruce, Michael 2
Brun, Frederika 10
Buckingham, George Villiers, Duke of 278
Burke, Edmund 176, 183
Burney, Charles, Jr 311
Burns, Robert 176–7, 248
Bushnell, Horace 224
Byron, George Gordon, Lord 46, 145, 189, 256, 263, 268, 277, 286, 304

Campbell, James Dykes 187, 191, 196, 197, 213
Campbell, Thomas 48, 268, 286
Canning, George 41
Cardan, Jerome 147

Carlyle, Thomas 156, 158, 168, 173–4, 203, 204–5, 206, 210, 219
Chalmers, Thomas 101, 161
Champion 251–5, 303–10
Chapman, George 148
Charles I 106
Charles II 106, 160
Chateaubriand, Vicomte François-René 144
Chatterton, Thomas 177
Chaucer, Geoffrey 246, 247, 254
Chillingworth, William 267
Cibber, Theophilus 285
Coleridge, Derwent 14, 118, 132–3, 199
Coleridge, Ernest Hartley xi, 18– 19, 198, 224
Coleridge, George 199
Coleridge, Hartley 156, 181–2, 199
Coleridge, Henry Nelson xi, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 32, 33, 34, 119
Coleridge, James 199
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor: his ambitions unrealized 160, 202–3, 208–9, 216, 223; his conversational powers 29–32; as a critic 9–10, 48–53, 70, 123–4, 155, 157, 175, 185, 198, 213, 243–4; his family 6, 13, 14; his fragmentariness 63, 74, 90, 134–5; at Highgate 27; his manuscript remains 6; memorial to 23; his metrical qualities 46–8, 151–4, 250–1, 254, 282, 298; his musicality 47–8; his opium addiction 5–6, 11, 15, 19, 49, 65–6, 159, 190, 202; his originality 3; his plagiarism 10–13, 15, 22, 46–7, 49, 53, 220, 239–40; as a poet 16–18, 120–1, 145–56, 175–86, 187–97, 211, 213, 227–9; his political inconsistency 11, 60; as a political thinker 38–44, 101–9, 123, 185, 229, 232, 238; his prose, improved reputation of 1–2, 8, 15–16; as a religious thinker 8–9, 15–16, 37–8, 96–101, 110–13, 120–1, 124–6; his reputation as a man 1–2, 5–6, 9, 14–15, 18–19, 21, 27–9, 43–5, 48, 53–4, 158, 180, 189, 191–2, 193–4, 215–17, 225; as a thinker 7–8, 13, 16, 18, 19, 63–4, 67–118, 121–2, 128–9, 142, 144; his will 6, 21 Works: *Aids to Reflection* 7, 8, 9, 15, 33, 66, 77, 117, 124–6, 160, 165–8, 174, 214; 'Ancient Mariner' *see* 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'; *Anima Poetae* 19; *Biographia Literaria* 7, 9, 10, 11–12, 20, 22, 33, 47, 49, 66, 117, 123–4, 207–8, 213, 225, 284–90, 297; 'Christabel' 3, 16, 46–7, 47–8, 121, 148, 149, 150, 174, 181, 191, 192–3, 194, 202, 218, 225, 246–51, 251–5, 256–60, 263–5, 269–73, 274–5, 277, 278–80, 282, 291, 292, 301, 310; *Christabel; Kubla Khan* 246–83; *Church and State see On the Constitution; Collected Letters* 21; 'Composed at Clevedon' 234; *Confessions* 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 168–72, 214; 'Consolations and Comforts' 208; 'Dejection: an Ode' 4, 16, 121, 151, 203, 207; 'Destiny of Nations' 210–11; 'Discourse upon Logic' 134; *Dramatic*

Works 23; 'Effusion XXXVI' 229; 'The Eolian Harp' 181, 234; *Essays on His Times* 7, 213; *Fears in Solitude* 237–40; 'Fears in Solitude' 152, 178, 184–5; 'Fire, Famine and Slaughter 43–4, 152; *First Lay Sermon see Statesman's Manual;* 'France: an Ode' 10, 16, 130, 151, 239; *The Friend* 7, 39, 43, 66, 117, 121, 197, 213, 243, 262; 'Frost at Midnight' 153, 182, 240; The Garden of Boccaccio' 153, 181; 'Glycine's Song' 16, 151, 302–3; *Hints towards…Theory of Life* 13, 134–40; 'Homeric Hexameters' 12; 'Hymn to Chamouni' 10; 'Hymn to the Earth' 153; juvenile poems 120; 'The Kiss' 234; 'Kubla Khan' 3, 16, 17, 48, 148, 149, 174, 190, 202, 255, 260–1, 265–6, 273–4, 280, 282–3, 306; *Lay Sermons* 7, 44, 66, 186; lectures on Shakespeare 49, 213, 243–4; *Lectures* (CC) 23; *Letters* (1895) 18–19, 198–224; 'Lewti' 147; 'Lines in the Manner of Spenser' 228; 'Lines to a Young Ass' *see* 'To a Young Ass'; 'Lines at Shurton Bars' 227; *Literary Remains* 7, 12, 21, 22, 117, 118, 154, 155, 'Love' 147; Lyrical Ballads 241–2; 'magnum opus' 208; *Marginalia* 22; The Nightingale' 153, 182–3; notebooks 1, 19; *Notes, Theological* 7; *Notes on English Divines* 7; *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* 7, 12, 13; *Ode on the Departing Year* 230–2, 233; 'Ode to Tranquillity' 156; odes 39; *On the Constitution* 7, 15, 66, 116, 117, 126–7, 172–3, 174; 'On the science…of logic 134; 'opus maximum' 1; 'Osorio' *see Remorse;* The Pains of Sleep' 202, 255, 260, 266, 280–1, 283; *Poems* (1797) 233–6; *Poems* (1831) 3; *Poems on Various Subjects* 225, 227–9; *Poetical Works* (1834) 2; *Poetical Works* (1885) 23; *Poetical Works* (1893) 17, 187–97; *Poetical Works* (1912) 225; 'Religious Musings' 147, 229, 234; *Remorse* 151, 179–80, 243–5; 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' 3, 4, 10, 16, 46, 121, 148–9, 150, 152, 174, 191, 192, 202, 225, 241–2, 282, 291–6; *Second Lay Sermon* 117; *Seven Lectures* 13–14; *Sibylline Leaves* 48, 191,
291–6, 297; 'Something Childish' 281; 'Sonnet to a Friend' 234; *The Statesman's Manual* 126, 174; *Table Talk* 5, 6–7, 11, 20, 21, 22, 27–55, 66, 153, 206, 223–4; *Theory of Life* see *Hints towards;* 'This Lime-tree Bower' 179; 'Three Graves' 196–7; 'Time Real and Imaginary' 147, 191; 'To the Rev. George Coleridge' 233; 'To a Young Ass' 147, 183, 186, 227; 'To a Cataract' 12; 'Work without Hope' 29, 153; 'Youth and Age' 153, 192; *Zapolya* 16, 151, 181, 297–303

Coleridge, Sara, Mrs 180, 182, 199, 200–2, 215

Coleridge, Sara, the younger 12, 14, 199
Collier, John Payne 13–14, 22, 192
Collins, William 262
Colmer, John 311
Condillac, Etienne de 78
Constantine, emperor 87
Cottle, Joseph 5–6, 65–6, 153, 201, 215
Country Magazine 243–5
Courier 213, 216
Cowling 188
Cowper, William 161, 176–7, 271
Crabbe, George 177
Critical Review 311
Croly, George 284–90, 297–303,

'D' 63–4
D'Alembert, Jean le Rond 88
D'Herbelot, Barthelémy 260
Dante 17, 146, 150, 189, 191, 193
Davy, Sir Humphry 124
De Quincey, Thomas 10–11, 22, 159, 201, 205, 206, 220
Delille, Jacques, Abbé 143–4
Delolme, Jean Louis 101
Dioscurides 180
Domenichino 265
Donne, William Bodham 21
Dowden, Edward 18, 175–86
Du Bartas, Guillaume de Sallust, Sieur 143
Dublin University Magazine 5, 9, 11, 20, 21, 22
Duffy, John J. 312
Dyer, George 188

Eclectic Review 5, 6, 21, 65–6, 311
Edinburgh Review 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 20, 21, 23, 27–55, 55–62, 144, 218
Edwards, Jonathan 224
Elliston, Robert 271
English Review 9, 21, 22, 225, 227–9
Erdman, David V. 246
Evans, Mary 201
Examiner 22

Faraday, Michael 124
Farrago 255–60
Ferrier, James Frederick 11, 12
Ficino, Marsilio 209
Fletcher, Giles 254, 287
Foakes, R.A. 22
Forster, John 161
Fortnightly Review 18, 156–74, 175–86
Fraser's Magazine 3, 20, 21, 22, 134
Frend, William 188
Fricker, Sara, *see* Sara Coleridge, Mrs
Fruman, Norman 22

Galileo 93
Gall, Franz Joseph 262
Gardiner, Stephen 106
Geoffroy, Julien-Louis 144
Gillman, Anne 202
Gillman, James 7, 13, 21, 66, 117, 134, 141, 202
Gillman, James, Jr 134, 135
Gisborne, Maria 204
Gladstone, William Ewart 99, 100
Godwin, William 176
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang 17, 46–7, 143, 146, 150–1, 168, 219
Gray, Thomas 287
Green, Joseph Henry 6, 12, 13, 14, 74, 174, 223
Griggs, Earl Leslie 21
Guizot, François 116

Hake, Gordon 191
Hall, Samuel Carter 22
Hamilton, Sir William 220
Hammond, John 188
Harding, Anthony John 23, 312
Hare, Julius 11, 118, 157, 205
Harrington, James 39
Hartley, David 76, 79, 176, 196
Haven, Josephine, *see* Richard Haven
Haven, Richard xi, 21, 22, 27, 134, 312
Hazlitt, William 2, 4–5, 149, 311
Helvétius, Claude-Adrien 81
Heraud, John Abraham 13, 20, 21, 22, 134–40
Herder, Johann Gottfried 88
Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) 91
Hill, Alan G. 22
Hobbes, Thomas 62
Homer 52, 204, 270, 281
Hooker, Richard 157, 160–1, 172, 267
Hopkins, John 272
Horace 238, 295
Howe, P.P. 311
Howes, Raymond F. xi
Hugo, Victor 17, 146, 150
Hume, David 75, 129, 288
Hunt, Leigh 195, 268
Hutchinson, Thomas 20

Iamblichus 204, 209
Ingleby, C.M. 14
Inglis, Sir Robert 99
Irving, Edward 33

Jamblichus *see* Iamblichus
Jeffrey, Francis 21, 55–62, 144, 218, 286
Johnson, Edgar 311
Johnson, Samuel 19, 206, 276
Jonson, Ben 278
Joubert, Joseph 14, 16, 141–5
Journal des Débats 144
Julian, emperor 209

Kant, Immanuel 63, 74, 209, 213, 287
Keats, John 148, 151, 152, 189
Kemble, John 54
Kepler, Johann 34, 70
Klopstock, Friedrich Gottlob 289
Knox, John 91
'?' 238–40

Lamb, Charles 158, 204, 221–2, 223, 225, 234, 236, 246–51, 303, 304–5
Latimer, Hugh 91
Lavoisier, Antoine Laurent 70
Lee, Henry 134
Lee, Nathaniel 285
Leighton, Robert, Archbishop 160–1, 164
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 12
Lewis, Matthew Gregory 254
Listen, John 307
Literary Gazette 284–90, 297–303
Lloyd, Charles 234, 235
Locke, John 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 93, 218–19
Lockhart, John Gibson 21
Logan, John 229
London and Westminster Review 7, 21, 63–4, 66–118
London Magazine 225, 291–6
Longinus 2, 294
Louis Philippe, King 143
Luther, Martin 37, 87, 112, 131, 215

Maass, Johann Gebhard Ehrenreich 12
Mackintosh, Sir James 45–6, 55–62, 288

Macpherson, James 177
Malthus, Thomas Robert 60
Marsh, James 8, 174
Mathews, Charles 54
Maturin, Charles 225, 277, 288
Maurice, Frederick Denison 9, 66, 117, 118–33, 157, 205
Merivale, John Herman 5, 7, 20, 22, 27–55
Michelangelo 17, 146, 191
Michelet, Jules 88
Mill, James 115
Mill, John Stuart 7–8, 9, 21, 66–118, 157
Millman, Henry Hart 219, 304
Milner, Joseph 171
Milton, John 10, 17, 27, 39, 143–4, 146, 150, 204, 205, 239–40, 254, 266, 269, 271, 276, 286, 304, 305, 306
Molé, Louis-Mathieu 143
Molière 143
Monthly Mirror 237–8
Monthly Review 5, 9–10, 21, 22
Monthly Visitor 230–2, 237
Moore, Thomas 286
Moorman, Mary 311
More, Henry 160–1, 267
Morning Post 39, 117, 156, 213, 216
Moses 110
Murray, John 219, 277

Napoléon 144
National Review 141–5
Naval Chronicle 241–2
Necker de Saussure, Albertine 30
New London Review 238–40
Newman, John, Cardinal 157, 210
Newton, Sir Isaac 34
Newton, John 161
Nichols, W.L. 186
North American Review 3, 4, 13, 20
Notes and Queries 13

O., T. 255–60
Ossian see James Macpherson

Paley, William 94
Palmer, William 21
Parkinson, John 179
Pascal, Blaise 36
Paul, St 93, 110, 167
Payne, Thomas 288
Peel, Sir Robert 96, 99
Person of Quality *see* Jonathan Swift
Pindar 204
Pitt, William, the younger 43, 106, 176, 184
Plato 34, 53
Plotinus 204, 209, 212
Poole, Thomas 184, 216, 222
Pope, Alexander 181, 254, 271
Porson, Richard 51
Prickett, Stephen 312
Priestley, Joseph 70, 79
Proclus 209
pseudo-Athanasius 112
Ptolemy 70
Purchas, Samuel 190, 196, 262, 273
Pythagoras 10

Quarterly Review 6, 21, 218

Rabelais, François 34, 55
Racine, Louis 143
Radcliffe, Ann 177
Reid, Thomas 74, 78, 79
Reiman, Donald H. xi, 312
Rémusat, Charles de 141, 143
Renan, Ernest 218
Reni, Guido 265

Revue des deux mondes 141
Richter, Jean Paul 220
Rigg, James H. 174
Robespierre, Maximilien 72
Robinson, Henry Crabb 311
Robson, J.M. 21
Roden, Robert Jocelyn, Earl of 96
Rogers, Samuel 225, 229, 275
Romaine, William 161
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel 18, 175– 6, 183, 191
Rossettis, the 188
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 72, 126
Russell, Lord John 103

Sainte-Beuve, Charles-Augustin 143
Saintsbury, George 2, 20
Sanders, Charles Richard 21, 312
Sandford, Mrs 186
Schelling F.W.J. 10, 11, 12, 47, 213, 220, 287
Schiller, Johann Christoph Friedrich 12, 219
Schlegel, August Wilhelm von 11
Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst 215
Schwartz, Lewis M. 246
Scott, Sir Walter 46, 189, 263, 268, 286, 311
Scourge and Satirist 225, 268–78
Shakespeare 3, 11, 17, 49–52, 146, 150–1, 152, 153, 181, 184, 188, 189, 192, 263, 278, 297, 304, 305, 306, 310
Shedd, William G.T. 224
Shelley, Percy Bysshe 2, 6, 17, 20, 63, 64, 149, 150, 151, 188, 189, 192, 204
Shelvocke, George 10
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley 180
Sidney, Algernon 39
Smart, Christopher 286
Smith, Adam 100
Smith, John 160–1
Smith, Leapidge 224
Socrates 53
Sophocles 191
Sortain, Joseph 20
Southcott, Joanna 272
Southey, Robert 2, 46, 147, 197, 198, 200, 201, 203, 204, 205, 216, 217, 218, 223, 268, 281, 287
Spectator 19, 23
Spenser, Edmund 262, 263, 267, 271
Spurzheim 262
Staël, Anne-Louise-Germaine, Mme de 30
Stanhope, Earl 183
Sterling, John 118, 157
Sternhold, Thomas 272
Steuart, Sir James 67
Stewart, Dugald 78, 79
Stoddart, Sir John 134, 311
Stolberg, Friedrich Leopold 12
Stothard, Thomas 181
Stuart, Daniel 200, 216
Swedenborg, Emmanuel 17, 76
Swift, Jonathan 55, 266
Swinburne, Algernon Charles 16–18, 145–56, 175
Sydney, *see* Algernon Sidney
Synesius 209

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine 10, 22
Talfourd, Thomas Noon 303–10
Tasso, Torquato 269
Taylor, Isaac 311
Taylor, Jeremy 36–7, 157, 267
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord 145
Tennysons, the 188
Thelwall, John 39, 199, 209
Thirlwall, Connop 168
Times, The 225, 246–51

Traill, H.D. 156, 157, 174, 172, 203, 206
Tulloch, John 9, 15, 156–74
Tycho Brahe 70

Virgil 27, 249, 281
Voltaire 87

Waterer, Clarence 19
Waterston, Robert Cassie 20, 21
Watson, Seth Benjamin 13, 134
Wellens, Oskar 311
Wesley, John 215
Westminster Review 19, 23
Whately, Richard 168
Whitgift, John 106
Wilberforce, William 161
Wilson, John 11, 20
Wilson, Mrs 199
Wordsworth, Dorothy 201, 217
Wordsworth, William 2, 3, 17, 19, 22, 46, 63, 64, 145, 152, 156, 158–9, 174, 177, 179, 180, 182, 183, 189, 198, 202, 205, 206–7, 209, 211–12, 216, 217–18, 221, 223, 248, 261, 264, 268, 281, 287, 288, 304, 306, 310
Wycliffe, John 206

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE SERIES

GENERAL EDITOR: B.C.SOUTHAM

ADDISON AND STEELE	Edward A.Bloom and Lillian D.Bloom
MATTHEW ARNOLD: THE POETRY	Carl Dawson
MATTHEW ARNOLD: PROSE WRITINGS	Carl Dawson and John Pfordresher
W.H.AUDEN	John Haffenden
JANE AUSTEN 1811–1870	B.C.Southam
JANE AUSTEN 1870–1940	B.C.Southam
SAMUEL BECKETT	L.Graver and R.Federman
ARNOLD BENNETT	James Hepburn
WILLIAM BLAKE	G.E.Bentley Jr
THE BRONTES	Miriam Allott
BROWNING	Boyd Litzinger and Donald Smalley
ROBERT BURNS	Donald A.Low
BYRON	Andrew Rutherford
THOMAS CARLYLE	Jules Paul Seigel
CHAUCER 1385–1837	Derek Brewer
CHAUCER 1837–1933	Derek Brewer
CHEKHOV	Victor Emeljanow
CLARE	Mark Storey
CLOUGH	Michael Thorpe
COLERIDGE 1794–1834	J.R. de J.Jackson
WILKIE COLLINS	Norman Page
WILLIAM CONGREVE	Alexander Lindsay and Howard Erskine-Hill
CONRAD	Norman Sherry
FENIMORE COOPER	George Dekker and John P. McWilliams
CRABBE	Arthur Pollard
STEPHEN CRANE	Richard M.Weatherford
DANTE	Michael Caesar
DEFOE	Pat Rogers
DICKENS	Philip Collins
JOHN DONNE	A.J.Smith
DOS PASSOS	Barry Maine
DRYDEN	James and Helen Kinsley

COLERIDGE

GEORGE ELIOT David Carroll
T.S.ELIOT Michael Grant
WILLIAM FAULKNER John Bassett
HENRY FIELDING Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood
FORD MADOX FORD Frank MacShane
E.M.FORSTER Philip Gardner
ELIZABETH GASKELL Angus Easson
GEORGIAN POETRY 1911–1922 Timothy Rogers
GISSING Pierre Coustillas and Colin Partridge
GOLDSMITH G.S.Rousseau
THOMAS HARDY R.G.Cox
HAWTHORNE J.Donald Crowley
HEMINGWAY Jeffrey Meyers
GEORGE HERBERT C.A.Patrides
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS Gerald Roberts
ALDOUS HUXLEY Donald Watt
IBSEN Michael Egan
HENRY JAMES Roger Gard
BEN JONSON 1599–1798 D.H.Craig
JOHNSON James T.Boulton
JAMES JOYCE 1907–1927 Robert H.Deming
JAMES JOYCE 1928–1941 Robert H.Deming
KEATS G.M.Matthews
KIPLING Roger Lancelyn Green
D.H.LAWRENCE R.P.Draper
MALORY Marylyn Parins
MARLOWE Millar MacLure
ANDREW MARVELL Elizabeth Story Donno
MASSINGER Martin Garrett
W.SOMERSET MAUGHAM Anthony Curtis and John Whitehead
MELVILLE Watson G.Branch
MEREDITH Ioan Williams
MILTON 1628–1731 John T.Shawcross
MILTON 1732–1801 John T.Shawcross
WILLIAM MORRIS Peter Faulkner
NABOKOV Norman Page
GEORGE ORWELL Jeffrey Meyers
WALTER PATER R.M.Seiler
SYLVIA PLATH Linda Wagner-Martin
EDGAR ALLAN POE Ian Waler
POPE John Barnard
EZRA POUND Eric Homberger
MARCEL PROUST Leighton Hodson
ROCHESTER David Farley-Hills
RUSKIN J.L.Bradley

SCOTT	John O.Hayden
SHAKESPEARE 1623–1692	Brian Vickers
SHAKESPEARE 1693–1733	Brian Vickers
SHAKESPEARE 1733–1752	Brian Vickers
SHAKESPEARE 1753–1765	Brian Vickers
SHAKESPEARE 1765–1774	Brian Vickers
SHAKESPEARE 1774–1801	Brian Vickers
SHAW	T.F.Evans
SHELLEY	James E.Barcus
SKELTON	Anthony S.G.Edwards
TOBIAS SMOLLETT	Lionel Kelly
ROBERT SOUTHEY	Lionel Madden
SPENSER	R.M.Cummings
STERNE	Alan B.Howes
WALLACE STEVENS	Charles Doyle
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON	Paul Maixner
SWIFT	Kathleen Williams
SWINBURNE	Clyde K.Hyder
TENNYSON	John D.Jump
THACKERAY	Geoffrey Tilloston and Donald Hawes
TOLSTOY	A.V.Knowles
ANTHONY TROLLOPE	Donald Smalley
MARK TWAIN	Frederick Anderson
HORACE WALPOLE	Peter Sabor
EVELYN WAUGH	Martin Stannard
WEBSTER	Don D.Moore
H.G.WELLS	Patrick Parrinder
WALT WHITMAN	Milton Hindus
OSCAR WILDE	Karl Beckson
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS	Charles Doyle
VIRGINIA WOOLF	Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin
WYATT	Patricia Thomson
W.B.YEATS	A.Norman Jeffares