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COLERIDGE,
LAMB AND LEIGH HUNT



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FROM THE CLOISTERS IN 1802.

The Poetry & Prose of Coleridge, Lamb & Leigh Hunt

(The Christ's Hospital Anthology)

Selected and Edited

With a Synchronous Narrative of their Lives

by

S. E. Winbolt, M.A.

With illustrations

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PREFACE

DURING a school life of eleven years at Christ's Hospital, four years of close connection with the School as an exhibitioner at Oxford, and twenty-eight years as a master both in London and at Horsham—during all this close connection of forty-three years I have never yet seen among even the senior boys anything approaching an adequate appreciation of Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt, a trio which made the school famous in the world of letters during the first third of the nineteenth century. A very little is known among Blues about the lives of the first two, but practically nothing of Leigh Hunt. Is there not a Coleridge bronze group, representing T. F. Middleton helping Coleridge and Lamb with some passage of an author, awarded year by year to the House which most distinguishes itself in the School examinations? Is there not a beautiful silver medal, also awarded annually, for the best Grecian's English Essay? And at Horsham are there not Houses named after Coleridge and Lamb? The names at any rate are kept alive. But it is almost a case of *Vox et praeterea nihil*. Of the writings of these three protagonists in English Literature, the average boy who leaves the School at the age of seventeen will probably have read *The Ancient Mariner*, some of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, possibly his essays on Christ's Hospital, and the paper on Roast Pig; and of Leigh Hunt, if anything at all, nothing more than a selection from the pages in the Autobiography referring to his school days. In the great majority of cases, on leaving school a Blue will in all probability have no more commerce with any of the three till he reaches the respectable years of late middle age, even if the claims of Mason and Wells and Arnold Bennett allow it then.

This comparative neglect should not be, though there is much to condone it. Not one of the trio wrote a novel or a story which would appeal to boys; poetry is by no means recreation for all; allusive essays, however trenchant or delicate their criticism

of men and manners and however quaint their diction, do not naturally find their way into boys' House Libraries. Still more to the point, how shall a young man easily find his way to what is best in the works of three very diffuse writers? Thirty or more volumes issued by many different publishers at many different dates would have to be handled, and the chances are great that even a diligent student would, after great pains taken, miss much of the best.

My task then is to make some slight offering for forty years indebtedness to a noble school, by putting together in one volume for the use of the older boys at school and of Old Blues and the general public, as an introduction to the complete works of these three worthies, their best pieces in prose and poetry. I have endeavoured also to do what I believe has not yet been done—to weave together the strands of the lives and works of the three, and to show to what a remarkable extent the whole lives of these schoolfellows were interdependent and coloured by early school associations and by the friendships that grew from them.

The introductory essay in this volume aims to present the facts, how they lived and produced their works; the selection from their works, arranged chronologically, will be the more readily appreciated after a perusal of the introduction. A fairly full bibliography is added as a guide to those who, having tasted, wish to partake more generously of a noble banquet.

Of the narrative and of the selection a word or two must be said. It will be obvious that the main authorities used are J. Dykes Campbell's *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, and the *Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, by Ernest Hartley Coleridge; *The Life of Charles Lamb*, by E. V. Lucas, and the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger; and the *Autobiography* of Leigh Hunt. But many other works, bibliographical and critical, have gone to the compound. Even so, with plenty of material to hand, the method I prescribed for myself of advancing year by year and interweaving the strands of the three lives, imposed on me a somewhat severe task. But though the method has its plain drawbacks, in that the tendencies of a group of years are apt to be lost sight of in the details of a year, though the facts of bibliography are at times apt to become a little congested, and the events of the lives occasionally read somewhat dry, owing to the necessity of

compression:—yet I believe it has the great and novel merit of showing these three men as developing co-evally. Moreover, the chronological method of presentment is invaluable, because it greatly enhances the significance of practically every work, whether in poetry or prose.

This is the first time these particular facts have been grouped together, and the result justifies the attempt. There is far more interaction between the works of the three than would be suspected by those who read Coleridge by himself, Lamb by himself, and Hunt by himself; and much can be learned from the attempt to keep the work of all three related to the general literary and political tendencies of the time. For instance, take one point, the year 1813. It is all to the good to be reminded that Coleridge's success with *Remorse* is coincident with Lamb's failure with "*Mr. H*——," Hunt's trial for libel on the Prince Regent, and the publication of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and that these literary happenings were coeval with the Vittoria stage of the Peninsular Campaign, and with the great German National Rising against Napoleon. Even if no direct causal connection may be traced between these items, the reminder of their connection in time is wholesome as it helps to keep our perspective tolerably accurate. Hence the occasional, if sometimes abrupt reminders in the text. I trust that bibliographical detail is not too preponderent, and that human relationships have not been unduly subordinated.

After all, books read and written form a great part of the *Vera Historia* of the lives of literary men. If somewhat close-packed, the narrative, though dealing mainly with three writers issuing from one school, gives a tolerably just conspectus of the main movements during eighty very important years of English letters.

Finally, as to the pieces selected. Anthologies are necessarily subjective things: the best of a writer is not the same for all. But a selection is most objective when there is the nearest approach to a consensus of the best critics. Of about a half, perhaps, of the pieces here presented it may fairly be said that they are the agreed *chefs d'œuvre* of the three authors. The remaining half depends upon the individual discretion of the present editor: and he may reasonably claim the indulgence of readers who do not find some of their own favourite gems.

They will be aware of the very wide range of the published writings of Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt—the first and third at least being among the most voluminous of English authors—and of the fact that many of their works are hard to come by. This half of the anthology, therefore, consists partly of what the editor, after very considerable though not exhaustive search, thinks well-wrought pieces, partly of such as felicitously show the relationship existing between the three authors or between any one of them and other outstanding figures of their time, or throw an interesting light on their lives. Unfortunately space could not be found for Hunt's autobiographical account of his school days.

Something too had to be done to illustrate the many departments of the work of each, such as poetry, letters, drama, essays, literary criticism, and philosophy. It is hoped then, that on the whole, this book contains much of the best, and that what is not the best is worthily representative or illustrative; and that in its pages, readers, Old Blues in particular, may feel that they are privileged to meet at once (as it were in one room at The Grove, Highgate) the great trio of Christ's Hospital writers, each discoursing in his most characteristic and inspired vein.

S. E. WINBOLT.

Christ's Hospital,
July, 1920.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—I desire to thank Lord Coleridge for allowing me to reproduce the Portrait of S. T. Coleridge from the Drawing by J. Dawe; Messrs. Hugh Rees for the use of the block, A Grecian in 1816, from *The Annals of Christ's Hospital*, by the Bishop of Worcester; Messrs. Allen and Unwin for the Blocks of the Lamb Medal and the Coleridge Memorial, from *Recollections of Lamb, Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt*, by Mr. Brimley Johnson; and Messrs. Macmillan, for permission to print Lamb's letter to R. Lloyd. S.E.W.

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CHAPTER I

1772—1795

Coleridge and Lamb. Preparatory Period

COLERIDGE : School and Student Life.
LAMB : School and Beginning of Clerical Work.

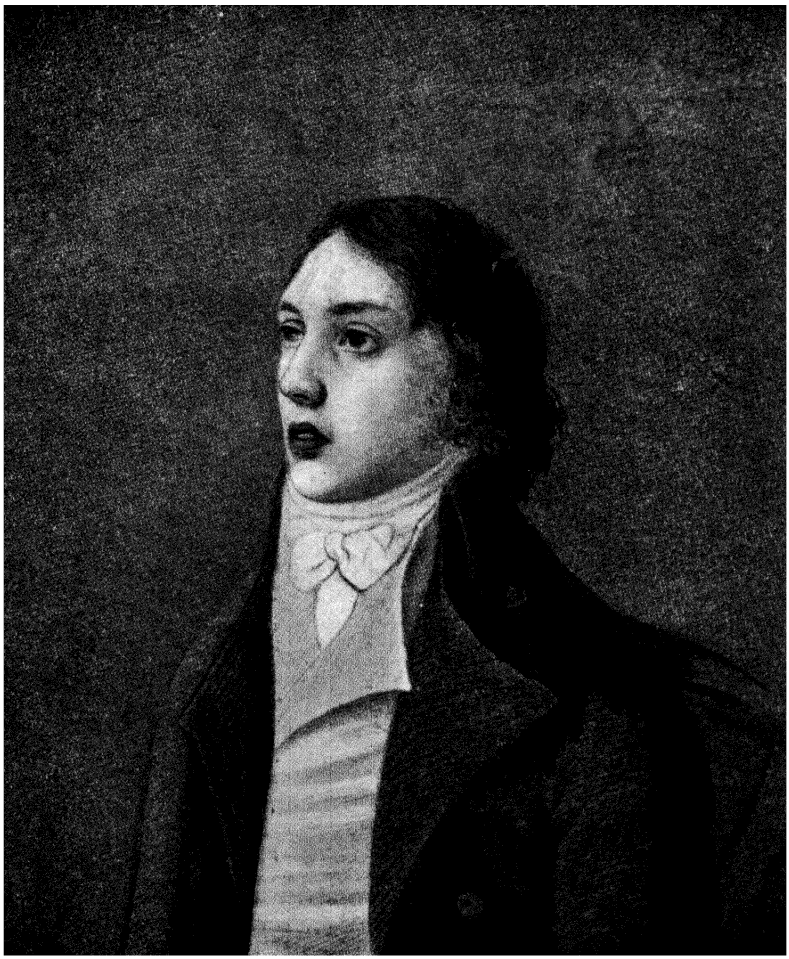
1772 SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born October 21st, 1772, Charles Lamb, February 10th, 1775, and James Henry Leigh Hunt, October 19th, 1784; the two former died in 1834, and the latter in 1859. A consideration, therefore, of the lives and writings of the three will take the reader over a span of eighty-seven years, and bring him into contact with most of the names that count in the English literature of the time, and especially in the movement called "romantic." For exactly half a century Lamb and Hunt were alive together, and for a further quarter of a century Hunt survived the other two "Old Blues," while he gradually came into his own in reputation and honour.

In the first year of Lord North's long ministry—which lasted from 1770 to 1782, and during which George III. made his ill-advised attempt to rule personally—was born William Wordsworth, and in the next year Walter Scott; the time was big with literary potentialities. Gray, who had advanced a few steps in the direction in which these two, with Coleridge, were to be pioneers, died in 1771; and then in the next year was born Coleridge in England, and F. Schlegel in Germany, a pair who were, among other achievements, to give Shakespeare back to Europe.

Samuel Taylor was the thirteenth and favourite child of the Rev. John Coleridge, Vicar of Ottery St.

Mary, in Devonshire, and Master of the Grammar School, a scholar and unpractical dreamer whose chief characteristics, physical and mental, the son seems to have inherited. For the ten years of his solitary, imaginative boyhood, prior to his entering Christ's Hospital, much of prime importance was happening in the world to influence this young, but extraordinarily precocious mind. Over the whole of these years was spread the American struggle for independence, beginning with the Boston "Tea Party," developing into a general European attack on England, and culminating in the Peace of Versailles, which conceded independence to the United States. The Industrial Revolution in England was in full swing, and the factory system was advancing by leaps and bounds. Goldsmith's last pages were written. Burke was delivering his famous speeches on American relations, Sheridan was in the plenitude of his dramatic powers, producing the *Rivals* in the same year (1775) in which Charles Lamb and Walter Savage Landor were born, and the *School for Scandal* two years later; Gibbon was writing his *Decline and Fall*, and Adam Smith his *Wealth of Nations;* Sir Joshua Reynolds published his *Discourses* in the year of the death of Rousseau and Voltaire (1778); Crabbe and Hayley were high in the poetic heavens, and Schiller produced *Die Räuber.*

To early boyhood succeeded the period of schooldays at Christ's Hospital, which both Coleridge and Lamb entered in 1782, eight years after George Dyer—a good-natured friend to whom both were to owe much—left as a Grecian. At the age of nine years and nine months Coleridge donned the blue on July 18th, spending his first six weeks in the Junior School at Hertford (now demolished to make room for an enlarged and improved Girls' School), and in September being removed to the great republic of the School in Newgate Street. He was put in Ward 11—Jefferies' Ward—a long room in Sir Christopher Wren's building over what was known as Jiff's Cloister, and in the last London days used as the



S. T. COLERIDGE IN 1798
(NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY).

Fourth Form Room. He began his career in the Under Grammar School, where Lamb, though Coleridge's junior by two years, had commenced work a few months earlier. In his long exile from his home at Ottery, to which he did not return till seven long years of school life had passed, Coleridge's " invaluable faculty of making friends " secured him a tolerably happy existence. T. F. Middleton (afterwards first Protestant Bishop of Calcutta) was his protector, and Lamb was his companion, and out of school he was at home in the houses of his uncle and of Mrs. Evans. James Boyer, the Upper Grammar Master, took an interest in him, and made him a Grecian in 1788, before he was sixteen, at which tender age he neglected games, had a *furore* for metaphysics, read Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, studied medicine, imagined he was an infidel, and ventured into the mystic penetralia of third century Neo-Platonism. He was kept down to the wholesomeness of mother earth partly by the Spartan discipline of the School, and partly by his acquaintance with the Evans family, to whom he soon became " Brother Coly." With Mary Evans he fell in love.

Lamb's school days practically coincided with the first period of the ministry of the Younger Pitt. Politics impress school boys more than is generally allowed, but there is no doubt that the master influence of these years was that of the great sombre, somewhat inexorable machine of the Christ's Hospital of the times, and of Boyer, the Upper Grammar Master. Coleridge, Lamb and Hunt have all three written very frankly and fully about their school lives, so that it is not necessary here to describe the conditions under which they were trained and which affected the whole of their subsequent lives most markedly. Lamb's *Recollections of Christ's Hospital* (1813) and *Christ's Hospital five-and thirty years ago* (1820), Coleridge's *Biographia*, and Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* between them constitute a full picture.

It is probably difficult for anyone but an old Christ's Hospital boy, and even for him unless he makes a point of tracing the influence of the school, to realise the very great extent to which these three men bore the strong stamp of Christ's Hospital all their lives. The attention once directed this way, it is quite easy to detect ever and anon in turns of their lives, or in the manner and matter of their writings, the results of school influences direct and indirect; and among these the influence of the eminently sensible training, especially in English composition, given by Boyer, is clearly traceable *passim*, more particularly in the writings of Coleridge.

During these years, in the case of Coleridge certainly, of Lamb most probably, the general literary incentives of the times were operative. Among the writings which early moulded the genius of Coleridge were those of Cowper, Bowles, Blake, Ritson and Schiller. While Coleridge was under Boyer, Cowper published his *Table Talk* and *The Task*, and generally pervaded the intellectual atmosphere by means of the school of poetry he founded. W. L. Bowles, one of this coterie, though now practically a forgotten name, roused Coleridge's enthusiasm (and Wordsworth's also) to a now almost unaccountable degree. In spite of the fact that he makes little mention of Blake, Coleridge could hardly have been untouched by the fervid imagination of *Poetical Sketches* and *Songs of Innocence*. The work of Ritson in the collection of ancient ballads and folk songs, and of Burns who published his *Scottish Dialect Poems* in 1786, appealed strongly to both Wordsworth and Coleridge; and the latter, the future translator of *Wallenstein*, was attracted by the growing reputation of Schiller. Gilbert White's *Selborne* is another book which by its new strain affected minds open to a loving story of nature's processes. Further significant facts are the death (1784) of Johnson, the last literary dictator of the Augustan school, and the birth of Byron (1788). While Lamb also felt the momentum of these forces, it is likely that

he drew most inspiration from Sheridan's great period of dramatic production: *The Rivals* and *School for Scandal* had been followed by the *Critic* in 1779.

1784 Two years had Coleridge and Lamb been at school when there was born at Southgate (October, 1784) their future schoolfellow and friend, Leigh Hunt. His father was a native of Barbados, who, after practising as a lawyer at Philadelphia, came to London and gained a reputation as a preacher. For some time he acted as tutor to a Mr. Leigh, a nephew of the Duke of Chandos; but he seems to have had little capacity for managing his money affairs—a trait inherited by his son—went through the Bankruptcy Court, and died (1809) a poor man, at the age of fifty-seven.

As youngsters, Coleridge and Lamb no doubt worshipped as heroes, and probably had the honour of fagging for, two Grecians who left in 1785, and were to "make good," each in his own line. Edward Thornton, who went to Cambridge, developed later into Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Portugal; and George Richards, who won many prizes at Oxford, became a brilliant scholar, and outlived his two juniors by three years, dying in 1837. Coleridge and Lamb were probably members together of Boyer's *Deputy Grecians'* Form in 1788. The two shared many enthusiasms, among them being Coleridge's sets of verses addressed to Mary Evans during his three-year love episode. We may imagine Middleton giving S.T.C. the benefit of his counsels in those moving times before he left school. He was to influence the young enthusiast again at Cambridge before he himself went out into the world to take up, finally, his great work at Calcutta (1814-1822).

1788 In 1788, then, Coleridge lost the companionship of Middleton, and in the next year, of Lamb. By the majority of Englishmen, and young Coleridge among them, the outbreak of the French Revolution was

1789 enthusiastically welcomed. One of his school exercises done for Boyer at this time was a poem on *The*

Destruction of the Bastille. His eighteenth was a bad year for Coleridge: he was laid up for about half of it in the school infirmary with jaundice and rheumatic fever. But his illness and even his love for Mary Evans probably did not much impede so omnivorous a reader. He was working for his scholarship at Cambridge, but he found time to feed his poetical faculty by reading Bowles's *Sonnets*, a gift book from Middleton, and his "first breath of Nature, unsophisticated by the classical tradition." The influence of Bowles on Coleridge is described in early chapters of *Biographia Literaria*, and is evident in the *Monody on Chatterton*, 1790, and in his other youthful poems from this year onward. It can hardly be doubted that he also became acquainted with two important books on Shakespeare, published in 1790,
1790 Malone's edition of Shakespeare, and his *Rise and Progress of the English Stage*. Indeed, Boyer, whose classical instruction was always linked up with modern literature, was sure to bring those books to the notice of his most promising pupil; and he in turn would naturally pass the word to Lamb, now shortly to enter the South Sea House as clerk.

In the winter of 1790-1 Coleridge lost by death his elder brother Luke and his only sister Ann, circumstances tending to increase his sympathy with Lamb, whose sister Mary, his senior by eleven years, was now subject to the fits of madness which made necessary her removal from time to time to an asylum.

On February 5th, 1791, Coleridge was entered on
1791 the books of Jesus College, Cambridge, as a Sizar; he was "discharged" from school and "preferred" to an exhibition on September 7th, and went into residence at Cambridge in November at the age of nineteen. The presumption would be that he would spend seven years there—this being the customary period for Christ's Hospital exhibitioners of those days—and ultimately enter the Church. About the same time Charles Lamb was beginning clerical work at the South Sea House, and

Leigh Hunt, at the age of seven was entering Christ's Hospital, where he was to spend the next eight years.

Leigh Hunt inherited from his father invincible animal spirits, from his mother a tendency to jaundice and melancholy. As a boy he suffered much from various illnesses, and came to school a sensitive and over-imaginative child. His mother, a devotee of poetry, used to hoard his verses in her pocket-book, and encourage him to write by showing them to friends like the Wests and the Thorntons. In his *Autobiography* Hunt sketches for us the kind of atmosphere, literary and musical, which surrounded his boyhood. "Thomson," he says, "was the favourite poet of most of us. . . . Percy's *Reliques* were preparing a nobler age both in poetry and prose." Ritson's collection of English Songs (1783) in three volumes, the last of which contained the tunes, was the type of favourite poetry, and the music in vogue was very largely borrowed from Italy. "In the world of literature and art, Goldsmith and Johnson had gone; Cowper was not yet much known; the most prominent poets were Hayley and Darwin; the most distinguished prose-writer, Gibbon. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in his decline, so was Horace Walpole. The Kembles had come up in the place of Garrick. There were excellent comic actors in the persons of Edwin, Lewis, Young, Bannister, etc. They had O'Keefe, an original humourist, to write for them. . . . Miss Burney, afterwards Madame d'Arblay, surprised the reading world with her entertaining, but somewhat vulgar novels, and Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, and a then anonymous author, Robert Bage . . . delighted liberal politicians with theirs. Mrs. Inchbald was also a successful dramatist; but her novels, which were written in a style to endure, were her chief merit." Of his school Hunt was proud. "Christ's Hospital is a nursery of tradesmen, of merchants, of naval officers, of scholars; it has provided some of the greatest ornaments of their time. . . . In point of University honours

it claims to be equal with the best." When he entered the school at the age of seven, "the names of the Grecians were Allen, Favell, Thomson, and Le Grice. . . . Charles Lamb had lately been Deputy Grecian; and Coleridge had left for the University." "The latter Hunt did not meet personally till he had been some time an inmate of Mr. Gillman's at Highgate; but he remembered Lamb revisiting the school, "with a pensive, brown, handsome and kindly face. . . . He dressed with a Quaker-like plainness."

1791 In his first two years of Cambridge life Coleridge's enthusiasm for revolutionary principles and his constant love for Mary Evans did not interfere with his serious study of the classics, and his academic career opened auspiciously. We may imagine that in those meetings in Coleridge's room, at which such old Blues as T. F. Middleton, C. V. Le Grice, and other undergraduates (already attracted by his extraordinary conversational powers) were present, new books like Cowper's *Translation of Homer*, or Roger's *Pleasures of Memory*, or Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* were subjects of lively discussion. In his first academic year, the year which saw the death of Reynolds and the birth of Shelley, Coleridge carried off the Sir W. Browne gold medal for a Greek Sapphic ode on the Slave Trade; and in the winter of 1792 he was selected by Porson as one of four to compete for the Craven Scholarship. The four were Samuel Butler, afterwards Headmaster of Shrewsbury, Keate, afterwards Headmaster of Eton, Bethell, afterwards Bishop of Bangor, and Coleridge. The final award was in favour of Butler. Meanwhile Lamb had transferred his clerical labours to a stool in the East India House, thus beginning the somewhat uncongenial labours of thirty-three years.

1792 But the long reactionary period of Pitt's ministry (1792-1801) had begun, and Coleridge was in political opposition. He "declaimed and theorised" to delighted undergraduate audiences. After the

removal of the influence of Middleton, who now "went down," his diligence and keenness for the subjects of the Schools abated. His mathematics were comparatively weak, and for this reason he began to despair of winning a fellowship. Nor did the public events of the next year (1793) tend to right the balance. The execution of Louis XVI., the Reign of Terror, and England's declaration of war against the Revolution, were events by no means calculated to produce in so enthusiastic a politician the calm necessary for severe academic studies. After spending his long vacation at his home at Ottery St. Mary, in the autumn of 1793 he left Cambridge abruptly (probably because of debts or disappointed love, or both), went to London, and on December 2nd joined the King's Regiment of Light Dragoons, under the name of Silas Tomkyn Comberbacke. A hopeless Dragoon, he was finally recognised and discharged (through the good offices of his brothers) from the army at Hounslow on April 10th, 1794, and returned to Cambridge. From this escapade he got off lightly, being "admonished" by the master, but not reported to the authorities of Christ's Hospital. Soon after, he went to Oxford on a visit to his old schoolfellow, Allen, one of whose friends was Robert Southey of Balliol. Coleridge and Southey at once became friends, and hatched the scheme of Pantisocracy (a word, doubtless, of Coleridge's coining), which was to take them to America as pioneers in a socialistic existence of equality and fraternity. According to T. Poole, the essence of the scheme was as follows. Twelve gentlemen of good education and liberal principles were to embark with twelve ladies in April, 1795, and fix themselves in some delightful part of the new back settlements of America. The labour of each man for two or three hours a day would suffice to support the Colony. The produce was to be common property. There was to be a good library, and their ample leisure was to be devoted to study, discussion, and the education of the children on a

1793

1794

settled system. The women were to be employed in taking care of the infant children and in other suitable occupations, not neglecting the cultivation of their minds. Among matters not yet determined was whether the marriage contract should be dissolved if agreeable to one or both parties. Everyone was to enjoy his own religious and political opinions, provided they did not encroach on the rules previously made. If every gentleman would provide £125, it was calculated there would be sufficient to carry the scheme into execution.* Ruminating plans of this sort, Coleridge and Southey walked into Somerset to see Burnett, and on August 18th 1794 Coleridge met for the first time Thos. Poole, who in a letter of some months later thus describes his visitor. "He speaks with much elegance and energy, and with uncommon facility, but he, as it generally happens to men of his class, feels the justice of Providence in the want of those inferior abilities which are necessary to the rational discharge of the common duties of life. His aberrations from prudence, to use his own expression, have been great; but he now promises to be as sober and rational as his most sober friends could wish. In religion, he is a Unitarian, if not a Deist; in politics a Democrat, to the utmost extent of the word."

In writing to Southey in December of this year (1794), Coleridge records a venture in authorship of his school friend, Le Grice. "Le Grice has jumbled together all the quaint stupidity he ever wrote, amounting to about thirty pages, and published it in a book about the size and dimensions of children's twopenny books. The dedication is pretty. He calls the publication *Tineum*."

At the house of Southey's mother in Bath, Coleridge, though apparently still in love with Mary Evans, became engaged to Sarah Fricker, to whose sister Edith, Southey had already become engaged. Coleridge's engagement, which surprised Southey, and was probably the result of

*See J. Dykes Campbell's summary. S. T. Coleridge, p. 33.

pique of disappointed love, was made in haste and repented of at long leisure. At the time it "seems to have been a mere detail in the preparation of carrying out the Pantisocracy." Among others pledged to the scheme at this time were, besides Coleridge and Southey, Lovell, who had married another Miss Fricker, his brother and two sisters, all the Frickers, Southey's mother, Miss Peggy, and brothers, Heath (an apothecary), G. Burnett and Robert Allen. His engagement did not prevent Coleridge from continuing his tour into Wales in company with J. Hucks, afterwards a Fellow of Catherine Hall. About one and the same time—December, 1794—he broke off his relations with Mary Evans and with Jesus College, and left Cambridge for good without taking a degree. This was also the end of official relations with Christ's Hospital. Not to Bristol, but to London and Charles Lamb he went for solace. Both were sore with troubles and disappointments, and much time they spent together in the little smoky room at the *Salutation and Cat* in Newgate Street beguiling the cares of life with poesy. Coleridge produced a series of *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* for the *Morning Chronicle*, but not a line did he write to his fiancée or Southey at Bristol, the latter of whom went off to London to look for him, and brought him back in January (1795) to renew his ardours for Sarah and Pantisocracy. But a living had to be earned, and lodging with Southey and Burnett at 48, College Street, Bristol, S.T.C. definitely started on a literary career. With Southey he began lecturing and contributing to periodicals, especially the *Morning Chronicle*, to which Lamb's first contribution, characteristically a sonnet to Mrs. Siddons, was made about the same time. *The Fall of Robespierre* (1794), a joint effort of Coleridge and Southey which was to have provided some of the sinews of war, had failed to win the approval of the play-going public. The thoughts of both were running wild on missionary schemes. Southey, it is true, was not so

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remiss as his partner, and published *Wat Tyler* about the same time as Gifford (of whom we shall hear again in connection with the literary fortunes of our trio) published his *Baviad* and *Maeviad*, and Ritson his collection of *Scottish Songs* and *Robin Hood Ballads*.

The early months of 1795 bring both Coleridge and Lamb to the end of their preparatory period. Both have begun to write, Coleridge to make his livelihood, Lamb to supplement his.

CHAPTER II

1795—1806

Coleridge's Poetical Period, Lamb's Attempts in Literature, and Hunt's Preparatory Period

COLERIDGE: Marriage and Early Public Life—Nether Stowey and Lyrical Ballads—Germany—Greta Hall and Lake Poetry—Malta, Sicily, Italy.

LAMB: Domestic Trials and Friendships—Journalism and Beginnings of Authorship.

HUNT: Schooldays, and Beginnings in Poetry and Dramatic Criticism.

1795 THE year 1795 brought three bright stars above the literary horizon, in the birth of Thomas Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, and John Keats, the two latter of whom were conjoined to some extent in their fortunes with the Coleridge group.

Some democratic lectures delivered and printed in Bristol during this year apparently produced some aristocratic excitement against Coleridge in that city. These were: *A Moral and Political Lecture*, *Conciones ad Populum*, and *The Plot Discovered*, being a protest against the Pitt and Grenville Acts for gagging Press and Platform. It was on October 4th of this year that Coleridge and Southey married at Bristol the two sisters Fricker. Coleridge married the eldest, Sarah, and went first to live at Clevedon, on the Bristol Channel, the

1795 village which readers of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* will remember as the scene of some of the poet's most pathetic reflections on his dead friend Hallam who was buried in the churchyard there. To keep himself and his wife he relied mainly on the offer of Cottle, a young Bristol printer and bookseller, to whom Lovell

had introduced him, to buy an unlimited number of verses from the poet at the fixed rate of one-and-a-half guineas per hundred lines. By the time of his marriage Southey had already lost confidence in Coleridge, and before sailing for Lisbon in November, 1795, he explicitly announced that he had done with Pantisocracy. At Clevedon, Coleridge and his wife shared a cottage with one of Sarah's sisters and Burnett; but Bristol Library was too far away, and Clevedon was abandoned for rooms on Redcliffe Hill. Meanwhile Lamb, residing with his family in poor lodgings at 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn—a site now occupied by Holy Trinity Church, Lincoln's Inn Fields—was living through dark days, and after four years of work in the India House was constrained to spend six weeks in a madhouse at Hoxton. Like Coleridge and Hunt, he clearly owed a debt to heredity.

1796 The next six years (1796-1802) are the chief period of Coleridge's and Lamb's poetical production; the two were in constant communication, and owed much to mutual encouragement and criticism. It may be said broadly that till 1797 Coleridge, the author of *Religious Musings*, wrote as a poet of the eighteenth century; while during the ensuing five years, and thereafter occasionally, the poet of the *Ancient Mariner* and the *Ode on Dejection* belongs to the nineteenth. The change was mainly due to the intimacy formed with William and Dorothy Wordsworth. It is true Coleridge and Wordsworth probably first met in 1795, and now and again in 1796, but their intimacy and friendship date from Coleridge's visit to Racedown in June, 1797.

Meanwhile Hunt was at Christ's Hospital, going through much the same experiences as his two seniors had before him; but he left early, at the age of fifteen, as a Deputy Grecian, as Lamb had done, and for much the same reason—namely, that stammering was regarded as a bar to advancement in the Church. According to Hunt, this stammering used to get him "into terrible

trouble with the master." Boyer laid down the reins of office a few months before Hunt left; and his long
1798 services to Christ's Hospital were commemorated by a picture of Speech Day painted by Stothard, and engraved by Walker: copies of the engraving are still here and there to be met with. How faithful and successful he had been in his charge is attested by the fact that by special vote he was made a governor of the Hospital, and "received the unanimous thanks of the Court for his faithful services." This was followed by a gratuity of £500. He died as Rector of Gainscolne in Essex in 1814, at the ripe age of seventy-nine. Boyer wrote no book. This short stout man with the large face and hands and "little balustrade legs" was no hero of cricket pitch or football ground; he did not pose as a school organiser, and made no public speeches as an educational politician; he led no pilgrimage of pedagogues to the classic shores of the Mediterranean. But his influence on a rising generation of writers and men of genius, as this narrative will tend to show, is difficult to over-estimate, and, whatever his share in the event may have been, it must have been a crowning satisfaction to him that the year before his resignation (1798) saw the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, a book which was the real dawn of the romantic movement in modern English literature.

But we are anticipating, and must return to 1796. Coleridge now made a valiant effort to start a periodical called *The Watchman*. This was "something between a newspaper and a magazine," which a number of Coleridge's friends, meeting in December (1795) "at the Rummer Tavern" in Bristol, had determined he should bring out. No. 1 was announced to appear on Friday, the 5th day of February (1796), price fourpence. Early in January (1796) he started on a tour of the north country to procure subscribers, a tour which he humorously describes in early pages of the *Biographia*, and from which he returned with a subscription list of nearly a

thousand names. But this weekly miscellany (the first number of which appeared nearly a month late) disappointed its subscribers, and perished from want of support at number X. (May 13th). Foreseeing the inevitable end, Thomas Poole had gathered a little money for Coleridge, and on the appearance of the last number, "its baffled proprietor was cheered by the receipt of a well-filled purse, together with a kindly and delicately worded letter." Meanwhile Cottle had paid Coleridge in advance thirty guineas for a collection of his poems. Payment in advance is a doubtful business principle, and there was some trouble in bringing up to the mark a poet who often admitted that indolence was his constitutional vice. However, in April (1796), after much vain writing for "copy," was duly published by Cottle *Poems on Various Subjects*. The volume was widely noticed and on the whole favourably received. It contained the *Monody on the Death of Chatterton* (the first version of which was written in Boyer's Liber Aureus or Write-in Book in 1790), a poem which in 1796 moved Thomas Poole and six or seven other friends to undertake to subscribe a sum of £35 or £40 to be paid annually to its author as "a trifling mark of their esteem, gratitude and affection": it also contained *Religious Musings*, written on the Christmas Eve of 1794, of which Dr. Richard Garnett writes as an "impressive piece of sonorous oratory representing Coleridge's high-water mark while he was still in the trammels of the eighteenth century." Reaching a second edition next year (1797), the book included some pieces by Lamb and Charles Lloyd, and also the *Ode to the Departing Year*, which had already been published in pamphlet form. A third edition, without the contributions of Lamb and Lloyd, was issued in 1803. It should be said that a few of the poems in the first edition were the joint work of Coleridge and Lamb. Coleridge was already well aware of Lamb's literary powers, and about this time wrote about him to Southey as "a man of

1796

1796

uncommon genius." Coleridge also made a little experiment in publishing for himself. "Having some paper at the printers' which I could employ no other way," as he writes to Poole, he selected twenty-eight sonnets to bind up with Bowles's: of these, four each were by Southey, Charles Lamb, Charles Lloyd and himself. In June Coleridge received through Dr. Beddoes a proposal to go to London as assistant editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, the leading daily paper, but the negotiations finally came to nothing. Yet another plan, that Coleridge should set up a day school at Derby and receive among other pupils the sons of a Mrs. Evans of Darley Abbey, came to nothing. But on his way home from Derby, he visited the Lloyd family at Moseley, near Birmingham, during which visit Charles Lloyd expressed a strong desire to live with Coleridge, receiving from him guidance in his philosophical and poetical studies. It was during this visit that David Hartley Coleridge was born on September 19th. In July Lamb contributed his first sonnet to the *Monthly Magazine*: but in September he was almost crushed by a family tragedy, for his sister Mary, in a fit of madness, stabbed her mother to death and had to be put away. Coleridge was instant in consolation, and we have his feeling letter of September 28th in which he writes: "I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair. . . . I charge you if by any means it be possible, come to me." By December Lamb had so far recovered from his anguish as to be able to write for the *London Magazine* a poem inscribed *To the Poet Cowper*, and this was followed by *The Grandame*, written in memory of his grandmother. This year also was published a work by another Old Blue—*Original Letters of Sir J. Falstaff*, by James White, who had been at school with Lamb, and was sharing lodgings in London with Charles Lloyd. Lamb praised the work: indeed, Southey says (and J. M. Gutch corroborates the statement) that Lamb co-operated in it with White. The

1796

1796 end of the year for Coleridge is marked by the composition of his beautiful poem on the French Revolution, *Ode on the Departing Year*, and by his removal, on the last day of 1796, from Clevedon to the cottage at the upper end of the village of Nether Stowey, which is now preserved as a national monument by the National Trust. For various reasons he had conceived an enthusiasm for agriculture, and with some acre and a half of ground—now apparently split up into three gardens—he hoped to help to keep his family by means of an occupation which would be a congenial relaxation to authorship, to live in peace, and to enjoy the company of Thomas Poole, who was managing a tannery in Stowey, a few yards back from the garden of the cottage. According to his own statement in a letter of December 12th, 1796, he was receiving about forty guineas yearly from the *Critical Review* and the new *Monthly Magazine*; which sum was to be supplemented by gardening and by what he could earn by his more permanent works. On hearing of the farming proposal, Lamb, with characteristic scepticism, asked: "And what does your worship know about farming?"

1797 The year 1797, the twenty-fifth of Coleridge's age, was his poetical *annus mirabilis*. Burke's great work was done, but Nelson was still winning brilliant naval victories for England. Gifford was busy getting through the press his *Anti-Jacobin*. At Christ's Hospital, Robert Gutch—known of course to Leigh Hunt, and the brother of the J. Matthew Gutch (also an Old Blue), who later became the proprietor of *Farley's Bristol Journal*—as a Grecian left this year for Cambridge.

Coleridge sketches for us his round of work at Stowey in a letter of February of this year: "From seven till 8.30 I work in my garden: from breakfast till 12 I read and compose, then read again, feed the pigs, poultry, etc., till 2 o'c: after dinner work again till tea: from tea till supper, review. So jogs the day and I am happy." Cottle having proposed to give him twenty guineas for

a second edition (of 500) of his poems, Coleridge made his preparations for clearing out what he thought undesirable. "The printing dragged on till March": and at the last moment he asked Cottle to print Charles Lloyd's poems at the end, after Charles Lamb's. At the request of Sheridan, he put his hand to a play
1797 for Drury Lane, and spent much of his time on it till the middle of October, when the complete MS. of *Osorio* was sent to the theatre.

But earlier in the year the Wordsworths had come definitely into his life. First he stayed with them at Racedown, near Crewkerne, and William Wordsworth at once made a strong impression. "I feel myself," writes Coleridge, "a little man by his side." Then the Wordsworths settled at Alfoxden, a house near Stowey—"All-foxen" as S.T.C. will have it—rented at £23 a year, taxes included. His new enthusiasm for Wordsworth somewhat warped his critical faculty, for he estimates Wordsworth's tragedy *The Borderers*, thus: "His drama is absolutely wonderful—there are in the piece those *profound* truths of the human heart, which I find three or four times in the *Robbers* of Schiller, and often in Shakespeare, but in Wordsworth there are no *inequalities*." Another strong influence of the time was that of Charles Lamb, who visited Stowey at the same time as the Wordsworths, and spent his week's holiday there, Friday, July 7th to Friday, July 14th. His company was appreciated equally by the Wordsworths and by the Coleridges: the visit was commemorated by the host in the beautiful poem, *This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison*. Three days later the hospitable Coleridge was entertaining "Citizen Thelwall," and drawing down upon himself—and the Wordsworths—the suspicion of the neighbourhood and the Government. Thelwall's visit it was that caused the owners of Alfoxden to refuse Wordsworth an extension of his tenancy. But for the time the intimacy of the Wordsworths and Coleridge was of the closest; and Dorothy's sympathy and obser-

vation were an invaluable influence on the work of both poets, while each of them acted strongly on the other. But though poetical plans were eagerly discussed, little money found its way into Coleridge's pockets; and things were made worse by the withdrawal from the cottage, about this time, of Charles Lloyd. This meant the cessation of the payment of £80 a year. Further disappointment was caused by the unfavourable verdict on *Osorio*, communicated at the beginning of December. It was rejected because of the obscurity of Acts III.-V. But we are anticipating. It was on November 13th that Coleridge and the two Wordsworths set out on a tour to Lynton and the Valley of Stones, intending to pay expenses by selling a joint composition for £5 to the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*. They planned as they walked, but, co-operation breaking down, Coleridge, adopting a few lines composed by Wordsworth, took the burden on his own shoulders and produced the *Ancient Mariner*. It was not sent to the *Monthly Magazine*, and it did not pay the expenses of the tour: but it was allowed to grow until the ballad was complete, and read to the Wordsworths in March of the next year. *Christabel*, Part I., was also begun at Stowey in 1797, and as certainly received touches during the Spring of 1798.

Meanwhile Lamb, "My gentle-hearted Charles," who like Coleridge was contributing to the *Monthly Magazine*, had towards the close of 1797 removed with his father to 45, Chapel Street, Pentonville. In November, Coleridge, as a somewhat bold *jeu d'esprit*, wrote to the *Monthly* an article, in which he ridiculed Lamb, Lloyd and himself. Unfortunately the joke was not taken by his two friends quite in the spirit in which it was meant; and the rupture with Lloyd was hastened.

1797

A description of Coleridge as he was at the time, written by himself to Citizen Thelwall, is vivid and true. "My face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed almost

idiotic good nature. 'Tis a mere carcase of a face, fat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of inexpression. My walk indicates indolence capable of energies—I am a literary cormorant—I do not like history—I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading—I compose very little, and I absolutely hate composition." Seldom has a man revealed himself more frankly and correctly. To this may appropriately be added Dorothy Wordsworth's first impressions. "He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. . . (He) has a wide mouth, thick lips, and very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough, black hair. But, if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey. . . . It speaks every emotion of his animated mind." It was in 1797 that Coleridge had been introduced to Poole by Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood, sons of the famous potter of that name. In December, Coleridge received a tempting offer to become candidate for the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury, to which was attached the emolument of £150 a year. But the Wedgwoods, hearing of this, were anxious to dissuade him from giving up to the ministry powers that were clearly more fitted to adorn poetry and philosophy; and they accordingly sent him a present of £100 "to relieve his immediate necessities." Coleridge, though grateful, immediately returned the cheque, and proceeded to preach at Shrewsbury on the second Sunday of 1798. Among the pleased audience 1798 was William Hazlitt, a youth of twenty, to whom the poet's discourse seemed as the music of the spheres. To Hazlitt's father, Unitarian Minister at Wem, Coleridge went to pay a short visit; and it was at the Wem Manse that he received at breakfast a letter from J. Wedgwood, offering him £150 a year if he would waive the ministry and devote himself to poetry and philosophy. "Coleridge," says Hazlitt, "seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of

his shoes." Hazlitt accompanied the poet part of the way back to Shrewsbury. The annuity for life of £150 was, wrote Josiah Wedgwood, "to be regularly paid by us, no conditions whatsoever being annexed to it. Thus your liberty will remain entire." It has never been explained why later in 1811 Josiah withdrew his half of this unconditional annuity. The other half, the £75 from Thomas Wedgwood, who had died in the meantime, was legally secured and was paid regularly until Coleridge's death.

Meanwhile the Wedgwoods had introduced Coleridge to Daniel Stuart, the proprietor and editor of the *Morning Post*, and the contribution of several poems to the paper was the result, among them the *Ode to France*, *Frost at Midnight*, and *Fears in Solitude*. During the spring and summer of 1798, the *Lyrical Ballads* also were being got together:

> "That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
> Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved,"

as Wordsworth reminds Coleridge at the end of the *Prelude*. And Coleridge in those days was a powerful rover, robust enough to walk with Hazlitt in one day the thirty-five miles from Stowey to Lynton, or even to cover a forty mile stretch. But the pain of toothache, and the depression following on his rupture with Lloyd, led Coleridge to return to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Lynton and to resort to an "anodyne," "of which," says Mr. Dykes Campbell, "Kubla Khan was the costly but delightful result." The loss of Lloyd was also the temporary loss of Lamb. There was added the further grief that the Wordsworths were compelled to leave Alfoxden, and that an intercourse so pleasurable and profitable had now to be broken off. The Wordsworths proceeded to Bristol and superintended the printing of the *Lyrical Ballads*, for the copyright of which Cottle paid thirty guineas. With this money the two authors intended to defray part of the expenses of a projected tour in Germany. Mrs.

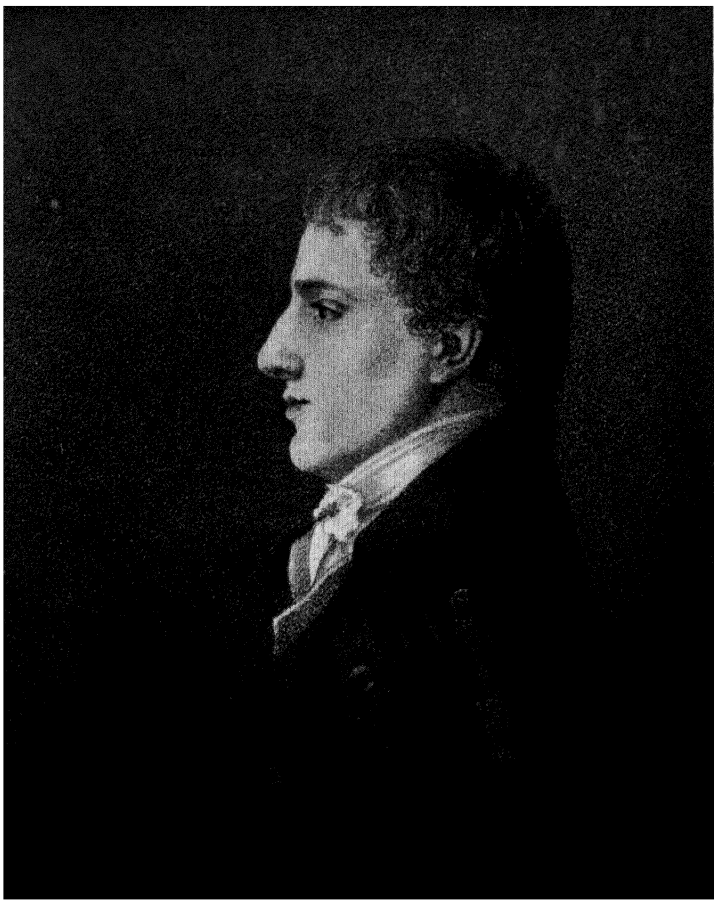
Coleridge and the two children, Hartley and Berkeley, were to remain at Stowey under the charge of Poole, and Coleridge was to be accompanied by a young Stowey man, John Chester, as well as the Wordsworths. The party left London on August 14th, and reached
1798 Hamburg, via Yarmouth, on the 19th. A few days previously had been published *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge's contributions were: *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*, *The Nightingale*, *A Conversational Poem*, *The Foster-Mother's Tale*, and *The Dungeon*. But the critics, whose state of mind is ably depicted by Mr. Hall Caine in an early chapter of *Cobwebs of Criticism*, were not yet prepared for such poetic novelty. The influence of Cowper and Burns had not yet permeated the London *litterati*. Mrs. Coleridge somewhat tartly reported by letter, "the *Lyrical Ballads* are not liked at all by any."

At Hamburg the united party spent a few days in tourist enjoyments and in holiday discussions with the poet Klopstock: and then Coleridge went off by himself to Ratzeburg to live *en pension* with a pastor and make himself familiar with the German language. Here he apparently worked as never before or since. For months, combating a strong home sickness, he tried hard to acquire a thorough knowledge of German, but his health suffered. Leaving Ratzeburg, he arrived at Göttingen on February 12th, 1799, matriculated, and attended lectures on Physiology, Natural History
1799 and the New Testament. His mind, always comprehensive in its conceptions, was full of plans: and among other activities he was busy reading and making collections for a history of the *belles lettres* in Germany, and for a life of Lessing. "For these last four months I have worked harder than, I trust in God Almighty, I shall ever have occasion to work again: this endless transcription is such a body-and-soul-wearying purgatory. I shall have bought thirty pounds' worth of books, chiefly metaphysics."

Coleridge was the centre of the little circle of Englishmen at the University, and the life and soul of an excursion they made to the Harz Mountains. In April, however, news reached him of the death at Stowey of his little son Berkeley. Home-sick and grief-stunned, he hung on in Germany till June 24th, when he left Göttingen for England, planning if possible to settle in the north of England to be near Wordsworth, "a *good* and kind man, and the only one whom in *all* things I feel my superior."

Leaving Coleridge to his home voyage, let us for a moment see what is happening in the greater world. Napoleon, consciously emulating Alexander the Great, had invaded Egypt, and was dreaming of boundless Asiatic conquests until his plans were spoilt by Nelson at the battle of the Nile. In the world of letters Landor published *Gebir*, and Schiller *Wallenstein's Lager*. Thomas Hood was born, to become associated with the Christ's Hospital fraternity some quarter of a century later by marrying a daughter of Reynolds, writing master at the school, and through literary partnership with Lamb and Hunt.

The *Lyrical Ballads* association had no doubt fixed the ambitions of Lamb and Lloyd, who in 1798 published a volume, *Blank Verse*, by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. It cannot be said that the three Christ's Hospital boys owed their first advancement in the literary republic to the favour of influential or patrician reviewers. Coleridge mounted the first rungs in despite of the critics: Lamb's book now was almost still-born because of the scant courtesy of reviewers. The *Monthly Magazine* found "the childish sorrows of Mr. Charles Lloyd and Mr. Charles Lamb . . . truly ludicrous." Lamb contributed seven poems to this volume, the best known being *The Old Familiar Faces* (with its obvious reference to Coleridge), dated January, 1798. Lamb's first independent venture was in prose—*A Tale of Rosamund Gray*, published both in Birmingham and London; and,



CHARLES LAMB IN 1798.
(NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY).

since Lloyd lived in Birmingham, it is probable that he had a hand in the business. Twenty-one years later Leigh Hunt sent a copy to Shelley, who, in acknowledging it, wrote: "What a lovely thing is his *Rosamund Gray!*" A thousand pities that its author allowed Lloyd's tattling tongue to alienate him even for a year or two from Coleridge!

From Germany Coleridge returned with such literary, philosophic, and linguistic equipment that in a few years he became the recognised interpreter of German thought in England. But for the present he was satisfied to return to Stowey, there to entertain Southey, after 1799 a reconciliation effected by Poole. During the two or three weeks of this visit the two poets put together a squib entitled *The Devil's Thoughts*. Of this we shall hear later. Meanwhile Coleridge and his wife went as guests first to George Coleridge at Ottery St. Mary, and next to the Southeys who were in lodgings at Exeter. During this latter time the two poets walked together for five days through a part of Dartmoor. Shortly after, Coleridge's passion for walking tours was again gratified when at the end of October, in company with Wordsworth and Cottle, he made a journey in the Lake country. Wordsworth's brother John, a sailor, soon replaced Cottle, and then were visited many of the places, the names of which add music to *Christabel*, Part II., *Gilsland*, and *Irthing Flood*, and *Triermaine:* and it was then that the Wordsworths determined to settle at Dove Cottage, at Grasmere. A proposal having been made by Stuart that Coleridge should come to London and write political articles for the *Morning Post*, he went there at the end of November, and took lodgings at 21, Buckingham Street, Strand, where early in December he was joined by Mrs. Coleridge and Hartley. In Germany he had no doubt found Schiller's *Wallenstein* the poetical work of the day, and formed the plan of giving it an English poetical dress. He contracted with Longmans to make a translation and in the

mornings worked continuously at it till it was completed in some six weeks. Southey's *Annual Anthology*, Vol. II., was also supplied with several poems, among them *Lewti*, *This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison*, and *The Raven*. In writing to Southey Coleridge mentions that "George Dyer has written a silly milk-and-water life of you" in *Public Characters* (1799-1800), and contributed a good poem to the *Monthly Magazine*. Among other results of the German tour he also intended to write a life of Lessing, chiefly with the idea of satisfying the Wedgwoods by the accomplishment of a definite piece of work.

We will now leave Coleridge in Buckingham Street at the end of 1799 busy with translation and political leading paragraphs, and follow for a moment the fortunes of Leigh Hunt, who had by this left Christ's Hospital. "I was fifteen when I put off my band and blue skirts for a coat and neckcloth. I was then first Deputy Grecian, and I had the honour of going out of the School in the same rank, at the same age, and for the same reason, as my friend Charles Lamb. The reason was that I hesitated in my speech. It was understood that a Grecian was bound to deliver a public speech before he left the school, and to go into the Church afterwards; and as I could do neither of these things, a Grecian I could not be." He entered for a time the office of his brother, a London solicitor, but soon transferred to the War Office, where he worked for four years.

1800 To return to Coleridge. *Piccolomini*, the first part of *Wallenstein*, was finished, to be published in the spring of 1800, while he was living at Pentonville with Lamb (now reconciled), who, indeed, had a hand in the work: for he translated Thekla's song (Act II., Scene 3), and read the proof sheets. The *Death of Wallenstein* appeared later in the same year. The *Morning Post* was the main interest for a few months, and Lamb, Wordsworth, and Southey were also occasional contributors. But it was Coleridge's

fate to be "Everything by turns, and nothing long." "I shall give up this newspaper business: it is too, too fatiguing," he writes to Southey; and again (in February), "I shall do no more for Stuart." At this time Coleridge appears to have been no bad business man in dealings with editors and publishers; and as a London agent for Southey he was indefatigable. It is certain, too, that his contributions added to the reputation of the *Morning Post* and *Courier*. "Nothing is more remarkable," writes Mr. Traill, "than their thorough workmanlike character." Stuart treated Coleridge generously, but knew his limitations, his "indolence capable of energies."

While in London, Coleridge formed a friendship with Sir Humphry Davy, in whose chemical experiments and discoveries he was genuinely interested. Indeed it is remarkable what an interest in, and grip of scientific studies he always had. His wide and deep interest in science was later evinced by his treatise on the *Theory of Life*, and his close friendship with Green, a medical man. But his view of the relative importance of humanistic and scientific studies is well expressed in a letter to Poole of March, 1801. "The more I understand of Sir Isaac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind . . . that I believe the souls of five hundred Sir Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton."

Towards the end of April Coleridge had done with journalism and London, and is found at Wordsworth's cottage at Grasmere, sending off "the last sheet of my irksome, soul-wearying labour, the translation of Schiller." From the point of view of the publisher, Longmans, the book was almost a complete failure*; from the critic's it was a success. Carlyle pronounced it to be "the best, indeed the only sufferable translation from the German, with which our literature has yet

* According to Coleridge, "Longmans lost £250 by the book, £50 of which had been paid to me."

been enriched." According to Scott, "Coleridge had made Schiller's *Wallenstein* far finer than he found it." The *Life of Lessing*, of course, never was, but always about to be written. The Coleridges now attempted to return to Stowey, but no house was procurable, and after a short stay with the Wordsworths they moved (24th July) into Greta Hall, Keswick, so as to be near Dove Cottage. The distance of twelve miles separating Grasmere and Keswick was no obstacle to a constant interchange of visits. It was now that *Christabel* Part II. was composed, but Coleridge, the bread-winner, was so enchanted with his surroundings, natural and social, that a severe fit of idleness and procrastination took him. Illness also supervened, and in his letters we have frequent hints of a bad time at Keswick—giddy head, sick stomach, swollen knees, gout, bad eyes, and sleepless nights. And yet the worse his perplexities, physical and financial, the busier he is with schemes, and the less practical the schemes. In his intervals of health he devoted himself entirely to metaphysics.

Than metaphysics, however, nothing was more alien to his friend Lamb, whose interest in the theatre, which holds the mirror up to poor old humanity, was extending. He had commenced his long series of dramatic prologues and epilogues—a form of literature which had perished since the days of Dryden—by writing an epilogue to Godwin's *Antonio*, which made a failure at Drury Lane. It was this Godwin who later became a publisher of children's books, and whose daughter was Shelley's second wife. George Dyer had introduced Lamb, now aged twenty-six, to J. Anderson, at this time editor of *Recreations*, and Lamb was contributing to this periodical when he removed his home to 16, Mitre Court Buildings, Temple. Through George Dyer, too, he joined the *Morning Chronicle*, at that time the leading Whig newspaper, and Coleridge actively encouraged him in this work. By now—eleven years after leaving school—his salary at the India House was

£100, which, even with money at its 1801 value, needed supplementing in order to keep poverty at arm's length. He seems to have written for the *Morning Post* as well as for the *Morning Chronicle*, and also for the *Albion*, which soon became defunct. He regretted—and, like Poole, was probably not a little jealous about—the loss of Coleridge, and writes: "Coleridge has left us, to go to the north on a visit to his god Wordsworth," thus expressing what Poole meant by Coleridge's "prostration" before Wordsworth.

1801 Residence in the north was telling steadily on Coleridge. Growing estrangement from his wife, rheumatic fever, pecuniary straits were added to his difficulties; and the use of brandy and laudanum during these months probably laid the real foundation of his "slavery" to opium. At the time, however, few, if any, of Coleridge's friends knew that he took opium habitually and excessively. It is probable that he first experienced laudanum at Christ's Hospital, when suffering from rheumatic fever in the infirmary there. In his published letters he first mentions his use of it on November 5th, 1796; but his occasional resort to opiates dates long before this. It is not, however, till the Spring of 1801 that Coleridge can be said to have been under the dominion of opium. The year 1801 was a kind of *intempesta nox*— a timeless night—for Coleridge. The one idea that remained insistent with him was that he must seek health by travelling abroad. In November he went to London and stayed first with Southey and then at a lodging in Covent Garden.

It was in this year that Leigh Hunt's first printed book saw the light, *Juvenilia*, poems written between the ages of twelve and sixteen—a remarkable performance. Two editions were published in the first year, and the book was—unfortunately, as Hunt says—successful everywhere, particularly in the metropolis. The critics were kind, and the "*Young Roscius*" was introduced to *litterati*, and shown about at parties. About the

same time were published Walter Scott's first poems, and Hogg's *Scottish Pastorals*. Cowper died, and Macaulay was born in the previous year, when also Ireland became joined to England in the legislative union. In 1801 Nelson put an end to the armed neutrality against England by destroying the Danish fleet at the battle of Copenhagen ; and the long Tory rule, which began with Addington's ministry and lasted for twenty years, had dawned upon England.

1802 Early in 1802 Coleridge attended, with Poole, Davy's popular lectures at the Royal Institution, but by March was back again at Greta Hall and at Dove Cottage in a sad state of body and mind. He could not resist the growing conviction that his poetical powers were prematurely withering. A very sad expression of his feelings was given in *Dejection : an Ode*, written on April 4th, and addressed to Wordsworth, and in its original form printed in the *Morning Post* of October 4th (the day of Wordsworth's marriage with Mary Hutchinson). " No sadder cry from the depths was ever uttered, even by Coleridge, none more sincere, none more musical." It was a turning-point of his life, and henceforth we have to realise that the two influences of opium and conjugal estrangement are silently operating during all his remaining years. A bright spot in the year was an unexpected visit from Charles and Mary Lamb, from August 12th to September 2nd. " Coleridge received us with all hospitality in the world—here we stayed three full weeks." In November and December Coleridge toured in South Wales with Thomas and Miss Sarah Wedgwood, and on December 23rd his daughter Sara was born. Some efforts previously made by him to make an opening for Lamb on the *Morning Post* were now successful, and Charles joined the paper as dramatic critic at a salary of two guineas a week. He soon became aware, however, that he could not write his criticisms on the night of performance, so that after six weeks' experience he resigned.

Many years after Stuart wrote: "As for good Charles Lamb, I never could make anything out of his writings." This year was published Lamb's *John Woodvil: a Tragedy*. From the age of six, when he saw his first play—Artaxerxes was the drama, and Old Drury the place—Lamb cherished an ambition to write a successful play, but he was foredoomed to failure. Poetry he had in him, and pathos, and tenderness, and his own inimitable kind of humour, but in dramatic power he was wanting. *John Woodvil* was almost still-born, and the author lost £25 by its publication. Southey wrote justly: "He is printing his play, which will please you by the exquisite beauty of its poetry, and provoke you by the exquisite silliness of its story." Kemble had refused it for performance, and as a reading play also the critics whole-heartedly condemned it.

1802

Meanwhile Leigh Hunt, whose *Juvenilia* reached a third edition this year, determined to make his way in dramatic criticism, was a zealous *habitué* of the theatre, and already writing on dramatic subjects. His first book on the theatres he published a few years later in 1807, but his first prose essays were published in the *Traveller* (afterwards incorporated with the *Globe*) over the signature of Mr. Town, Junior. Quin, the editor, was much taken with Hunt's style, which reflected his admired models, Goldsmith, Fielding, Smollett, and Voltaire. Thus began a very long literary career, of which in after years Hunt wrote: "I never in my life had any personal ambition whatever, but that of adding to the list of authors, and doing some good as a cosmopolite." The dramatic leanings of Christ's Hospital boys at this time is marked. Apart from Coleridge, Lamb and Hunt, Thomas Mitchell, who left school this year for Cambridge, became the first adequate translator and editor for English readers of the plays of Aristophanes. His racy translation, in its language happily reminiscent of the Elizabethan dramatists, and his sagacious comments distinguished by sympathy

for the position of the Greekless Englishman, have been a storehouse of subsequent translators like Hookham Frere and Benjamin Bickley Rogers. Leigh Hunt describes Mitchell as a young monitor at school who had attained his position prematurely. "He was little in person, little in face, and he had a singularly juvenile cast of features, even for one so *petit*. I rose afterwards to be next to him in the school; and from a grudge that existed between us, owing probably to a reserve which I thought pride on his part, and to an ardency which he may have considered frivolous on mine, we became friends. Circumstances parted us in after life: I became a Reformist, and he a Quarterly Reviewer; but he sent me kindly remembrances not long before he died." Such were some of the literary events of the year of the Peace of Amiens—that brief armistice in the war with France, of the birth of Victor Hugo, of the first English Factory Act, and of the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*, soon to be yet another terror to struggling young authors.

1803 The next year (1803) saw Napoleon planning his invasion of England; the publication of Campbell's poems, of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, and of Hayley's *Life of Cowper*; and the birth of E. Bulwer Lytton, whose sympathetic criticism was later to help our trio to their rightful position in the republic of letters.

Coleridge's giant intellect was now under a dark cloud, and indeed for the next thirteen years, in spite of efforts to right himself, he led an unhappy and comparatively unproductive life. So insistent was his fear of sudden death that he was induced to insure his life in favour of his family. In February, Southey's account of him is: "All other men whom I have ever known are mere children to him, and yet he is palsied by a total want of moral strength," and Southey on Coleridge is very level-headed and just. In May, Davy writes: "His will is probably less than ever commensurate with his ability." Again in his troubles he fell back on "good

Charles Lamb," who took him into his house, and saw through the press the third edition of his poems, which
1803 was published in the summer by Longmans and Rees. Returning to Greta Hall in August, Coleridge set out with William and Dorothy Wordsworth on a Scotch tour. After a fortnight he separated from his friends, professing to be very unwell, but probably finding that their companionship prevented his free indulgence in narcotics. In his solitude he walked to Glencoe, on to Cullen, back to Inverness, and thence by the moors to Perth, doing " 263 miles in eight days, in the hope of forcing the disease into the extremities, and so strong am I, that I would undertake at the present time to walk fifty miles a day for a week together. In short while I am in possession of my will and reason, I can keep the fiend at arm's length ; but with the night my horrors commence." On October 3rd he tells these night-horrors to Poole, adding a poetical version afterwards incorporated (ll. 18-32) in *The Pains of Sleep* (published 1816). At the same time he sent to Sir George Beaumont a copy of the first draft of the *Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni*, plagiarised largely from a poem addressed to Klopstock by Frederica Brun. The actual experience described in the poem is that of a Scafell walk imposed on the versification of the German original. He had now determined to seek a change of climate and go to Malta. But the evil was not to be eluded, and the visit turned out to be a mistake.

> Nam comes atra premit sequiturque fugacem—
> —Patriae quis exsul
> Se quoque fugit ?

1804 By the middle of February next year, he was in London quarters, with John Tobin, the dramatist, at Barnard's Inn, and had definitely brought to an end his Lake period. Having lived nominally ten years in the Lake district, he was in reality absent half of the time. Four only of his great poems take their colouring from the scenery of Westmorland : *Christabel*, Part II., *Dejection*,

The Picture, and *Hymn before Sunrise*. After he was turned forty he never saw Grasmere and Keswick again. Yet he had revelled in the scenery: "There is no place in our island," he writes, "which really equals the Vale of Keswick, including Borrowdale, Newlands, and Bassenthwaite." But in later life, like Lamb, he was content to live in or near London.

His doings in London comprise a sitting to Northcote for his portrait, a stay with Beaumont, a dinner with
1804 John Rickman (secretary to Speaker Abbot) probably on Lamb's introduction, and a quarrel with Godwin. Then ahoy! for Malta, whither he was invited by Mr. Stoddart, on April 9th. As to ways and means, these were provided by a loan of £100 from Wordsworth and a gift of the same amount from Beaumont. "Mrs. Coleridge was left free of debt, and with liberty to draw the full amount of the Wedgwood annuity of £150. Out of the annuity had to come £20 for Mrs. Fricker, and taxes amounting to about £15." The voyage in the *Speedwell* from Portsmouth to Malta, including five days at Gibraltar, took forty days. Gibraltar Coleridge admirably describes in a letter to Stuart of April 21st, or perhaps even more admirably in his diary; and to Valetta, where he landed on May 18th, he does equal justice. From May onward till September of the next year (1805) he acted first as private secretary to Vice-Admiral Sir Alex. Ball, the then governor, and afterwards as Public Secretary to the Island. But the heat was too much for his health, and apparently from this time till 1806 his surrender to opium was complete.
1804 Restlessness drove him to Sicily in August, and he remained at Syracuse till the beginning of November, and then returned to Malta.

Lamb was writing for the *Morning Post*, when Thomas Barnes, another Christ's Hospital boy, left as a Grecian to proceed to Cambridge. Barnes later became editor and co-proprietor of the *Times*; and during Hunt's imprisonment in 1813-14 took his place as dramatic

critic of the *Examiner*. He died in 1841, his relationship with the three having evidently been very close. Hunt has a lively account of him at the end of the fourth chapter of his *Autobiography*. "He was very handsome when young, with a profile of Grecian regularity; and was famous amongst us for a certain dispassionate humour, for his admiration of the works of Fielding, and for his delight, nevertheless, in pushing a narrative to its utmost, and drawing upon his stores of fancy for intensifying it. . . . Barnes wrote elegant Latin verse, a classical English style, and might assuredly have made himself a name in wit and literature, had he cared much for any thing beyond his glass of wine and his Fielding. He left money to found a Barnes scholarship at Cambridge." But to return to Lamb. At this juncture his good nature redounded to his advantage. Godwin, taking for the venture the publishing name of Thomas Hodgkins, conceived the idea of publishing a copperplate series of children's toy books; and Lamb, chiefly to aid a friend,

1805 undertook to write the first volume. This was *The King and Queen of Hearts*, a book in itself of no literary value, but interesting as the beginning of Lamb's efforts to amuse the young. How deep was his affection and tender his feeling for children cannot escape the notice of any true Elian; many are the flashes both in his prose and poetry that reveal it, but especially the Elia Essay on *Dream Children*.

In January, 1805, Coleridge was appointed acting Public Secretary of Malta at a salary of £600 a year, until a Mr. Chapman should arrive. When he arrived in September, Coleridge quitted Malta for Rome, intending to return for the winter to Naples, where in

1806 fact, he heard the news of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar. He arrived again in Rome in January (1806) and remained there till May 18th. While there he made the acquaintance of Baron von Humboldt and Ludwig Tieck, and struck up a friendship with Washington Allston, the American painter, who

eventually painted his picture at Bristol in 1814. Associating much with the best artists, he gained an insight into the fine arts which he describes in a letter addressed to Samuel Rogers, the banker poet, in 1815. He left Rome to avoid falling into the hands of Napoleon, who, according to Coleridge, bore him a profound grudge for the tone of his articles in the *Morning Post.* He managed to embark at Leghorn on an American ship, and arrived off Portsmouth on August 11th.

CHAPTER III

1806—1824

Coleridge's Fall and Recovery. Elia Makes Good: Hunt's Hard Work and Hard Experiences

COLERIDGE: Homeless—Public Lectures—*The Friend*—Journalist, Lecturer, and Playwright—Bristol and Calne—Highgate and Recovery, New Life and Friends.
LAMB: London Sociality—Critic—Essayist.
HUNT: *The Examiner*—Poetry—Imprisonment—Byron and Italy.

1806 THE year 1806 was that in which both Pitt and Fox died, the resolution condemning the slave trade was passed, and The Berlin Decrees were issued against Great Britain. For Coleridge it was the beginning of a shiftless, wandering, miserable life. There being by now an utter want of sympathy between him and his wife, he dared not go home. His first lodging was naturally with Lamb, until he settled down in a room at the *Courier* Office in the Strand, as assistant to Stuart and his editor, Street. By December the separation of Coleridge from his wife was mutually agreed upon, and Coleridge, bringing with him Hartley (in his eleventh year), joined Wordsworth at a farmhouse at Colehorton. There is little doubt that Coleridge had been mistakenly mated, and that the separation should have taken place earlier; the essence of the difficulty was, as was seen by Dorothy Wordsworth, the attitude of Mrs. Coleridge: the thought of separation wounded her pride.

1807 Till May of the next year Coleridge was in sole charge of his eldest son. In January Wordsworth recited to Coleridge the *Prelude*, which so impressed him

that he at once wrote the poem *To a Gentleman, composed on the night of his recitation of a poem*, addressed to Wordsworth, and beginning :

" O Friend ! O Teacher ! God's great gift to me ! "

Poole seems to have tried to make some kind of reconciliation between Coleridge and his wife during a visit to Stowey in May. When Mrs. Coleridge left for Bristol in July, it was on the understanding that the whole family should return to Greta Hall. It was shortly after this that Coleridge fell in at Bridgewater with De Quincey, who was impressed by his eloquent dissertation and his profound expression of cheerless despondency. On returning to Bristol De Quincey anonymously, through Cottle, made Coleridge a present of the sum of three hundred pounds, professedly accepted as an unconditional loan. From September to November Coleridge was in Bristol staying with the Morgans, talking much about religion, no longer from the standpoint of a Unitarian, but of a fully-developed Trinitarian. In this connection we are brought for a moment into relation with Coleridge's old school friend and Mentor, T. F. Middleton. Southey writes to W. Taylor (July, 1808): "Had Middleton been now at Norwich, it is possible that you might have seen Coleridge there, for M. called upon him in London. It has been his humour for some time past to think, or rather to call, the Trinity a philosophical and most important Truth, and he is very much delighted with Middleton's work on the subject." From Bristol Coleridge returned to his *Courier* quarters in London, where, in the intervals of assisting with the newspaper, he was preparing lectures on Shakespeare to be given at the Royal Institution. At least a dozen lectures were delivered in the first six months of 1808, but little remains recorded of them. (They are not included in T. Ashe's *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*). In the *Edinburgh Review* (July, 1808) was printed Coleridge's review of his friend Clarkson's *History of the*

1808

Abolition of the Slave Trade, and shortly after the reviewer paid a visit to the author and his wife at Bury St. Edmunds. The latter was a devoted friend, under whose influence for the time he gave up the abuse of laudanum. From Bury he went to join Wordsworth at Grasmere.

To return to Charles Lamb. He had had to swallow another grievous disappointment. In the winter of 1805, he had been busy writing a farce, having taken lodgings away from his home to avoid his "*nocturnal*, alias *knock-eternal visitors*." In June of the next year (1806), "Mr. H." was accepted at Drury Lane. But his triumph was short-lived. When it was produced on December 10th, the prologue went well, but eventually the play was hopelessly damned, and one night was the length of its run. The title part was played by R. W. Elliston, an actor and lessee of Drury Lane, whose memory is kept green both by Lamb's *Reminiscences of Elliston* (1831), and by Leigh Hunt in an excellent Dramatic Essay of 1807, and in a notice of his death in the *Tatler* of July 10th, 1831. However, at Philadelphia, where it was printed, in 1813, and again in 1825, audiences gave a different verdict, and "Mr. H." was a great success. In a letter to Wordsworth Lamb says: "Dear Wordsworth, 'Mr. H.' came out last night and failed. I had many fears: the subject was not substantial enough; . . . you will see the Prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a Prologue. It was attempted to be encored."

The following notice of the first performance of Lamb's farce is taken from *Monthly Literary Recreations* (December, 1806), and is quoted by Mr. Dobell in *Sidelights on Charles Lamb*.

"'Mr. H.,' an Entertainment in two acts.

"This piece met with the fate which it most justly merited: it was *condemned*. A prologue full of real humour and wit, excellently well delivered by Mr. Elliston, made us hope better things, and we confess that

for the next two or three scenes our curiosity was excited, and the first act, owing to the exertions of Mr. Elliston and Miss Mellon, went off tolerably smooth, until the last scene. In the second half, Mr. H., the hero of the piece, who had before concealed his name on account of its disgusting vulgarity, blunders it out himself, and the appellation of *Hogsflesh* is made known, and immediately a string of the most stale puns and proverbs are let loose upon it. Here all the interest vanished, the audience were disgusted, and the farce went on to its very conclusion almost unheard, amid the contending clamours of Silence! Hear! hear! and Off! Off! Off! The piece was, however, given out for a second representation, but was afterwards withdrawn by the author."

1807 Next year (1807) Wordsworth issued a volume of poems, and Byron his *Hours of Idleness*. Lamb, as a consolation from his recent failure, scored a distinct success with *Tales from Shakespeare. Si parva licet componere magnis*, while Europe was being solemnly divided (at the Treaty of Tilsit) between France and Russia, Lamb and his sister Mary were rejoicing over the reception accorded to their simple tales.

Mrs. Godwin had given the commission to Mary Lamb, and of the twenty tales she wrote fourteen, Charles the remaining six. This was the first bright gleam of encouragement that fell across Lamb's literary career: a second edition was published two years later. *Faulkener: a Tragedy*, by Godwin, had a Prologue, and *Time's a Tell-Tale*, by Henry Siddons, an Epilogue by Lamb. "Prologues and Epilogues will be his death," writes Mary to Sarah Stoddart in October of this year.

Leigh Hunt was at least as busy with the theatre, at the age of twenty-three publishing *Critical Essays on the performances in the London Theatres*. The author's own mature estimate of this volume is given at the end of Chapter VII. of the *Autobiography* and is quoted in this book (pp. 357-362).

It may fairly be claimed that Leigh Hunt was the first English dramatic critic, but his working interest in the drama was not continuous throughout his life. He began his theatre-going directly after leaving Christ's Hospital, and with the *aplomb* of youth no doubt stepped in where angels might have feared to tread. But a steady application to theatrical criticism pursued on definite principles and free from venality, soon gave him a grip of his subject and a high standing as a critic. His two theatrical periods were from 1805 to 1813 and from 1830-1832. During the former he was theatrical critic of *The News*, 1805 to 1807, and of the *Examiner*, 1808 to 1813 : during the latter he wrote for the *Tatler*, his own paper, September, 1830 till February, 1832. The *Critical Essays* of 1807 are a kind of *résumé* of what he had written in the *News*. For these two periods he is a unique spokesman for the English stage. His merit is that on the whole he was impartial, and set himself to see theatrical matters from several points of view, the merits of the actors, of the dramatists, of the managers, and to try to bring the literary side of theatrical craftsmanship up to the level of the mimetic side. His defect is that during his earlier period, at any rate, he was too much *l'intransigeant*, and too persistent and virulent in his attacks. From about 1807 to 1813 he was undoubtedly the greatest dramatic critic of the day ; and Charles Mathews was only typical of practically all actors and theatre-goers when he expressed his high opinion of Hunt's " sound criticism of dramatic talent and his superior mode of writing upon the subject."

Towards the close of the year he joined his brother John, who was a printer, in the establishment of *The Examiner*, the first number of which appeared in January, 1808. Leigh Hunt occupied the editorial chair. It was an outspoken radical journal, and soon came into collision with the Government, at the time in the hands of the Portland Tory Ministry. A part of his task, that relating to theatrical criticism, philosophy, and the *Belles*

Lettres, Hunt found congenial; but the political side of the work was against the grain. "In politics, from old family associations, I soon got interested as a man, though I never could love them as a writer. The main aims of *The Examiner* were reform in Parliament, liberality of opinion in general, and "fusion of literary taste into all subjects whatsoever. It began with being of no party; but reform soon gave it one." For a short period before and after the setting up of *The Examiner*, Hunt was a Clerk in the War Office, owing his appointment to Addington, the Prime Minister. He admits he was "a bad clerk," and that he resigned to forestall a suggestion to quit.

1808 Scott was now publishing his *Marmion* with its strains of lofty patriotism; Fichte was rousing his country with his equally patriotic *Addresses to the German Nation*; Coleridge, his great powers in almost total eclipse, was drifting away from his home and many of his best friends. Lamb, faithful to the drama in some form, offered his countrymen the ripe fruit of some twelve years of patient and loving study, *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*. In this long task, commissioned by Longmans, he had the backing of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth. It is an epoch-making book in that Lamb was virtually the re-discoverer of the old English dramatists. It was re-issued by Moxon in 1835. At the time, though an excellent and original book, it received scant notice in the reviews, and sold slowly—the fate, after all, of many a work of the highest merit. There was more money in the *Adventures of Ulysses*, Lamb's third volume in Godwin's *Juvenile Library*. The story was professedly from Chapman's *Homer*, which, like Burton's *Anatomy*, was one of the favourite books of Lamb, as of Keats; but Mr. B. Dobell gives good reasons for supposing that Fenelon was as much the source as Chapman. In December (1808) was published *Mrs. Leicester's School*, containing three stories by Charles, and six by Mary Lamb. Of the immortality of this book

Coleridge was almost sure, and Landor was quite enthusiastic about it: and, indeed, many critics considered it a perfect work. Coleridge wrote: "The time will come when this little volume of my dear and well-nigh oldest friend, Mary Lamb, will be not only enjoyed, but acknowledged as a rich jewel in the treasury of our permanent English literature." One need not say it has hardly realised these high hopes.

1809 Next year (1809)—that of Corunna, Wagram, Talavera, and Wellington's retreat to Torres Vedras and of the birth of Tennyson—was not to improve much the position of Coleridge. A break with the Wordsworths, which was to last for two years, a coolness with Poole, and the unjustifiable withdrawal by Joseph Wedgwood of his share of the annuity, left him in very low water, materially and morally. Toward the end of 1808, with Grasmere as headquarters, he issued a prospectus—one of the most ample of even Coleridge's prospectuses—of a new periodical, *The Friend*. It ran for a few numbers into 1810, and then died, at No. 27. Issued originally in twenty-eight parts, *The Friend* appeared in a first complete edition in 1812, was re-issued in the second to sixth editions between 1818 and 1863, and printed in Bohn's edition in 1865. Originally announced for the first Saturday in January, almost of course it did not appear to date. The printing and publishing were entrusted to Mr. John Brown of Penrith, who, not having type enough, had to draw upon Coleridge for £38 to buy more. Poole, Stuart, Montagu, and Clarkson advanced money for the stamped paper (the stamp on each number was 3½d.). Eventually No. 1 appeared on June 1st. Succeeding numbers came out very irregularly; subscribers complained that the contents were dull. Coleridge replied by attempting to enliven its pages: he printed his *Satyrane's Letters*, and called on Wordsworth for contributions in prose and verse. And so, produced by fits and starts, *The Friend* gradually flickered out.

Christopher North calls *The Friend* "that singular storehouse of scattered genius." This is a just description, and many are the authors who have drawn infinite riches of reflection from *The Friend*, with or without acknowledgment. According to Coleridge's prospectus it was to contain "essays, the principal purpose of which is to assist the mind in the formation for itself of sound, and therefore permanent and universal principles in regard to investigation, perception and retention of truth, in what direction soever it may be pursued," but pre-eminently with reference to politics, morals and religion. Those who desire a conspectus of its contents will find one in the edition of H. N. Coleridge (1863), pp. 15-20.

In November, 1809, Wordsworth's *Essays on the Convention of Cintra* appeared, the second of which contains much of the work of S.T.C., and between December 7th, 1809 and January 20th, 1810, Coleridge contributed eight letters to the *Courier* "On the Spaniards," with the purpose of rousing British sympathy with the Spaniards in their struggle against Napoleon. Wordsworth's sonnets on this subject prove that his feelings also were stirred. The greater part of the summer Coleridge was at Greta Hall.

1809 After removing to 4, Inner Temple Lane, Lamb published in June (1809) *Poetry for Children*, the commission for which came from the Godwins. Charles wrote a third of the poems, and his sister Mary the remainder. As to Leigh Hunt, with a competence as editor of *The Examiner*, he married Marianne Kent after a long courtship. "The bride was the reverse of handsome, and without accomplishments; but she had a pretty figure, beautiful black hair which reached down to her knees, magnificent eyes and a very unusual natural turn for plastic arts. She was an active and thrifty housewife, until the curious malady with which she was seized totally undermined her strength. She was almost a life-long invalid. After accompanying her husband to

prison and bearing him a child there, she set out with him, though in a sad state of health owing to hemorrhage of the lungs,on his eventful journey to Italy. Apparently past cure, she lingered on marvellously, and died at the beginning of 1857, " the partner of my life for more than half a century."

In 1809 there left Christ's Hospital another Grecian who was to leave a mark on scholarship—James Scholefield*, editor of Euripides, Aeschylus, and other Greek classics.

The period 1810 to 1820 was that of the Regency of George, Prince of Wales, George III. being now permanently insane. When the Regent threw over his " Whig " friends and kept the Tories in office, the political atmosphere was not prejudicial to Coleridge, but Lamb and Hunt were in opposition, especially the latter.

1810 It was in 1810, the year in which the first poems of Shelley were published, that Coleridge left Greta Hall and the lakes, travelling in a chaise with Basil Montagu and his wife, and arriving at Montagu's residence in Frith Street, Soho, on October 26th. After this, for some considerable time (November 1810-1816), his chief residence was with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan at Portland Place, Hammersmith. The cause of Coleridge's sudden departure from Montagu's house was the indiscreet blurting out by his host of a warning given him by Wordsworth that some of Coleridge's habits would make him an inconvenient inmate. Coleridge was heart-broken at Wordsworth's treatment, and there was a break in their relationship for a year and eight months, when a reconciliation was effected by Crabb Robinson, who having met Coleridge at Lamb's in November, thenceforth devoted himself, like a second Boswell, to recording in his diary† the gist of Coleridge's discourses. A description of Coleridge at this time is

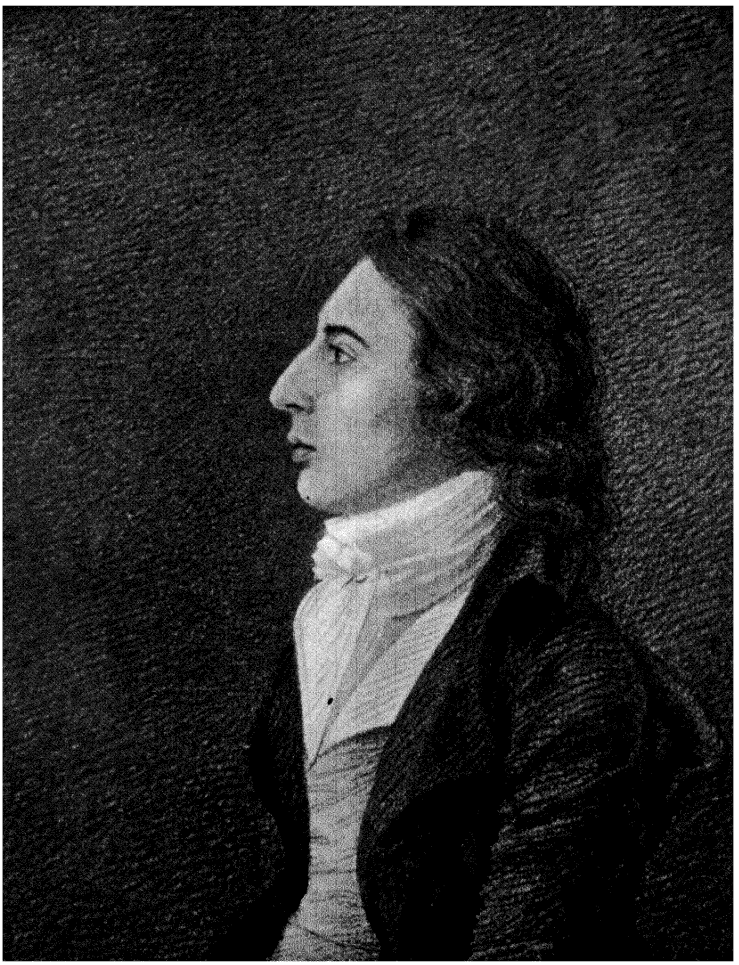
* He died in 1853, at the age of 63. A *Memoir* was written by his widow (Seeley, Jackson, 1855).

† *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of H. C. Robinson.* 3rd edition, in 2 vols. 1872.

given in a letter of Lamb's to Miss Wordsworth: "Coleridge has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his clock has not struck yet; meantime he pours down goblet after goblet." His state of will is best described in Hazlitt's saying that he was capable of doing anything which did not present itself as a duty. From May, 1811, the year of Thackeray's birth, Coleridge worked fairly steadily for some months as a sub-editor and contributor of the *Courier*; but an article on the Duke of York, printed on July 12th, nearly brought his engagement to an end. He went on with the paper till the end of September. Once more he turned lecturer, and delivered a brilliant course on Shakespeare and Milton and the Principles of Poetry before the London Philosophical Institution, Byron being an enthusiastic member of the audience. The Diary of H. Crabb Robinson records some impressions of these lectures, which were seventeen in all (November 18th, 1811, to January 27th, 1812). Of one of them he says: "It was very desultory again, at first; but when about half-way through he bethought himself of Shakespeare: and though he forgot at last what we had been four times in succession to hear, viz., Romeo and Juliet as lovers, yet he treated beautifully of *The Tempest*." Mr. Dykes Campbell says of these lectures that "Coleridge's audiences probably heard the finest literary criticism which has ever been given in English." In Society Coleridge was for the time being a sort of rage. From London he went back to Greta Hall, remaining with Mrs. Coleridge for a few weeks, but seeing nothing of the Wordsworths. This was his last visit to the Lake country. It was Southey and other friends who were for some time to care for Mrs. Coleridge and the children, and it was through their good offices that Hartley was sent to Oxford.

1811

Lamb was still busy with the *Juvenile Library*, to which in 1811 he contributed two volumes, *Prince Dorus* and *Beauty and the Beast*. The brothers Hunt started



ROBERT SOUTHEY IN 1798.
(National Portrait Gallery).

the *Reflector*, with Leigh Hunt as editor. He zealously beat up contributors among "Old Blues," so that, among others, Lamb, Dyer, Barnes, Mitchell, and Scholefield wrote in it. Among Lamb's papers may be mentioned his *Farewell to Tobacco*. As star actors to the stage, Lamb had a distinct *penchant* for bidding pathetic farewells to tobacco and wine: but he made no real progress in divorcing either. Writing to Manning in December, 1815, he says; "This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised." Together they constituted his weakness: Coleridge had a worse enthralment. As to Leigh Hunt, his weak spot—inherited as we have said from his father—was monetary matters. He was ready as a borrower, but not in repayment. Dickens's sketch of him in the Harold Skimpole of *Bleak House* is probably, on this side at least of his character, an understatement of the truth. In his *Autobiography* Hunt writes that he reached the age of fifteen in the Grammar School of Christ's Hospital without knowing his multiplication table, "Nor do I know it to this day . . . the fault was not my fault at the time . . . and great is the mischief which it has done me." In spite of this failing, however, he was a loveable man, with qualities which served to win the friendship of such various men as Lamb, Shelley, Byron, Carlyle and Dickens. And certainly no one could accuse him of slackness in his profession: he read and wrote morning, noon and night, and few pens have in a lifetime produced so much of a high standard. *The Reflector* stopped after the fourth number for want of funds, but the curious will find much fine gold in the pages of this forgotten magazine.

1812 England was now at war with America over questions of trade, and the murder of Perceval was followed by the long Liverpool Ministry till 1827. It was the year of Napoleon's fruitless and disastrous Russian campaign, and of Salamanca in the Spanish

peninsula. The publication of Byron's *Childe Harold*, Cantos 1 and 2, was an event of magnitude in the literary world, as were also the births of Robert Browning and Charles Dickens.

Lamb seems to have written nothing but a few epigrams on the Prince Regent, printed in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. Coleridge is represented by his contributions to *Omniana* (or *Horae Otiosiores*) two volumes containing selections from the commonplace books of Southey and Coleridge. A large proportion of this work—no less than forty-five articles—was the work of the latter: forty-three of them were printed in his *Literary Remains* (1836).

Incidentally it may be noticed that Coleridge, on the other side in politics, had a poor opinion of the political sentiments of the *Examiner* on such subjects as the discontent of the poor and the death of Perceval. A new series of lectures at Willis's Rooms was given by S.T.C. in May and June, "On the Drama of the Greek, French, English and Spanish stage, chiefly with reference to the works of Shakespeare." Wordsworth attended one of the lectures—a sign of the newly-effected reconciliation. This course was followed by another in 1813 on the *Belles Lettres*, delivered at the Surrey Institution. Robinson says, "It was a repetition of former lectures, and dull"; but at the concluding lecture Coleridge was "received with three rounds of applause on entering the room, and everybody applauded at the close."

1813 The year 1813 opened more auspiciously for Coleridge though it was with *réchauffé* of old work. The play, *Osorio*, written in his best year (1797), was now remodelled under the significant title of *Remorse*, and through Byron's influence successfully produced at Drury Lane on January 23rd. Well received, it ran for twenty nights, Coleridge's share of the takings being £400. The Prologue was of course written by Lamb; the *Times* said it was "*abominable*." In printed form three editions were sold within a few weeks, the author

taking two-thirds of the profits. *Remorse* was praised in Hunt's *Examiner* in a notice probably by Hazlitt. S.T.C.'s account, however, is that the *Examiner* was "forced to affect admiration of the Tragedy," but fell back on "affected simplicity and meanness of thought and diction." In his own opinion the best qualities of the play are the simplicity and unity of the plot, and the variety of the metres; of the defects, evident enough to modern readers, he says nothing. However, the success of the play served to cheer its author; though a new rupture of his friendship with Wordsworth, due to his non-acceptance of an invitation to visit the north, soon proved fatal to his peace of mind and general well-being. Lasting till the spring of 1815, it deprived him of his chief solace and support with the result that he sank lower than ever before. He was probably living with the Morgans till September, 1813. Meanwhile his old associate, Southey, who had just written his *Life of Nelson*, was promoted to the Laureateship.

In the Autumn (1813) Coleridge lectured on Shakespeare and Milton at Bristol, but it was with great difficulty that he was got to keep his engagements. He was much under the influence of opium, and his will power, though not his intellectual faculties, was impotent. Regular work would have been the nearest approach to a cure, but his will was too feeble to make any plan. During those years of melancholy exile one is tempted to wonder how it is that Coleridge produced as much as he did. The explanation may be given in these sentences. He was a man of very exceptional powers, and fully realised it: he knew he ought to make use of his talents. In spite of his disclaimer, he was ambitious of fame. He was always in want of money. These three facts were the stimulus which goaded his weak will to production: once the will was moved, his intellect never failed him. We must admit, too, that he was a man of singular frankness about himself—his failings and his merits. It seems probable that this very frankness and his modest

self-reproaches, which should in part at least be put to his credit, did him undue injury. His own phrase about his "distracting manifoldness" is capped by Southey's "ebullient schematism," and even Leigh Hunt is unnecessarily severe when, in summing up Coleridge's life-work, he says, "he ended in satisfying nobody and concluding nothing." Lord Lytton's is the truer estimate: "the vast effect which the genius of Coleridge has exercised on our age."

Meanwhile his friends, Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley, Lamb and Hunt, were particularly vocal. In June, 1813, Lamb published *Recollections of Christ's Hospital* in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and in the supplement to the annual volume another article on the same subject. Afterwards the two papers were combined in one essay, published in 1818 in his Works, Vol. II. This was reissued in 1835, the year after his death, by "Old Blues," in testimony of their respect for the author. "Mr. H.," as has already been said, was produced in Philadelphia, and was given at a Gaiety Theatre Matinee as recently as 1885. In the September number of *The Philanthropist*, whose assistant editor was James Mill (the father of John Stuart Mill) appeared *Confessions of a Drunkard*. *The Quarterly* in 1822 did not miss the opportunity of saying that the *Confessions* were autobiographical.

During these months Leigh Hunt had been tried for Libel on the Prince Regent, whom he had called, in the *Examiner*, "a corpulent Adonis of fifty." Both he and his brother were fined £500 each, and were condemned to two years' imprisonment in separate gaols. The *Examiner* episode is related by Hunt at length in the *Autobiography* (chapters XI.-XIII.). The gist of it is that the Government had for some time been trying to find a handle against the journal. First came the Hogan prosecution. Major Hogan, whose promotion in the army had been unjustly deferred, ventured to put his case in a personal interview before the Duke of York, as

Commander-in-Chief, who vouchsafed no reply. Hereupon Hogan stated his case in a pamphlet for publication. Two days after his first advertisement, an anonymous letter was left, through the agency of a lady, at his lodging, telling him that secrecy would benefit him with the royal family, and hoping that "the enclosed"—notes for £500—would prevent the publication of his intended pamphlet. Hogan declined these overtures, and instantly announced that the money would be returned. *The Examiner* commented on these disclosures and the government initiated a prosecution, which was unexpectedly turned aside by a Colonel Wardle, a member of Parliament, who moved an investigation of the case by Parliament, with the result that the prosecution was dropped. A second prosecution followed before the year was out, because the *Examiner* had printed, in an article entitled "Change of Ministry," the sentence: "Of all monarchs since the Revolution, the successor of George III. will have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular." This sentence, with the previous one, was quoted by the *Morning Chronicle*, which also was prosecuted, its editor's trial coming on before Leigh Hunt's. With Ellenborough for Judge, the *Chronicle* was acquitted, and the case against the *Examiner* fell to the ground. The government failed yet a third time on a second army charge, the subject being military flogging. An article on the absurdity and cruelty of this punishment having appeared in the *Stamford News*, its most striking passages were copied in the *Examiner*. The latter journal was acquitted, while the former was found guilty. In its fourth attack, however, the Government "got home." At a public dinner on St. Patrick's Day, the chairman, Lord Moira, made an allusion to the Prince Regent, and Mr. Sheridan, who supported the Prince, was saluted by angry shouts of "Change the subject!" The *Morning Post*, the Court organ, having commented upon this occurrence in a strain of unqualified admiration and flattery

of the Prince, the *Examiner* replied, analysing the facts, and substituting truth for adulation. The offending passage was as follows: "What person, unacquainted with the true state of the case, would imagine, in reading these astounding eulogies, that this 'Glory of the People' was the subject of millions of shrugs and reproaches! —that this 'Protector of the arts' had named a wretched foreigner his historical painter, in disparagement or in ignorance of the merits of his own countrymen!—that this 'Maecenas of the age' patronised not a single deserving writer!—that this 'Breather of eloquence' could not say a few decent extempore words, if we are to judge, at least, from what he said to his regiment on its embarkation for Portugal!—that this 'Conqueror of hearts' was the disappointer of hopes!—that this 'Exciter of Desire' [Bravo! Messieurs of the *Post*]—this 'Adonis in loveliness' was a corpulent man of fifty — in short, this *delightful*, *blissful*, *wise*, *pleasurable*, *honourable*, *virtuous*, *true* and *immortal* prince, was a violater of his word, a libertine overhead and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country, or the respect of posterity!" After the conviction an attempt was made to bribe Hunt and his brother in respect both of the imprisonment and the fine, but both overtures were rejected. The story of his imprisonment, begun on February 3rd, 1813, is told in a moving narrative in Chapter XIV. of the *Autobiography*. He had a big room and a little garden: was visited by Thomas Moore, Byron, William Hazlitt, and such "Old Blue" friends as Lamb, Pitman, Mitchell, and Barnes, and corresponded with his "friend of friends, Shelley," and Bentham: and his eldest daughter was born there. On February 3rd, 1815, he regained his freedom, and went to live near his brother in Edgware Road.

1814 In 1814 appeared Scott's *Waverley* and Wordsworth's *Excursion*. By its author's request, the

latter was reviewed by Lamb in the *Quarterly*, but his old enemy Gifford, the editor, tampered with the article to such an extent that the father could scarcely recognise his own off-spring: as the result of Gifford's manipulation "the article was made to damn the *Excursion* with faint praise." In hot anger Lamb wrote to Wordsworth: "Of this review the whole complexion is gone. . . . How are *you* served, and the labour of years turned into contempt by scoundrels. . . . But I could not but protest against your taking this thing as mine. . . . If they catch me in their camps again, let them spitchcock me." Yet another Epilogue came from his pen—to a comedy performed at Covent Garden, entitled *Debtor and Creditor*. His lines were spoken by Mr. Liston. He also contributed to *The Champion*, a London weekly, which two years later was purchased by Citizen Thelwall, whom we have met at Stowey as a social revolutionary friend of Coleridge and Lamb. From his prison Leigh Hunt issued *The Feast of Poets*, dedicating it to Thomas Mitchell, his old Deputy Grecian friend at Christ's Hospital. This work drew down on to Hunt's head much personal hostility: as he wrote, "it caused the most serious mischief to my fortunes." Originally contributed to the short-lived *Reflector*, the poem represents Apollo as giving to the poets a dinner, at which many verse-makers present themselves, only to be rejected. "I made almost every living poet and poetaster my enemy."

Political events were moving fast: the war with America was ended by the Treaty of Ghent, Wellington invaded France, and Louis XVIII. was restored after Napoleon's abdication on April 4th.

In September (1814) Coleridge left the hospitable roof of Josiah Wade at Bristol, and joined the Morgans at Ashley, near Box, and, now, completely orthodox, planned to write a defence of the Articles of the Church. He also managed to contribute a series of essays on the Fine Arts, the matter of which was no doubt collected during

his stay in Rome, to Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, now under the proprietorship of John Matthew Gutch, who had been at Christ's Hospital with Coleridge and Lamb. On these Essays (to be found in *Miscellanies Aesthetic and Literary*), written " to help Allston," Coleridge himself seems to have set a high value. In November he removed to Calne, whither the Morgans accompanied him. While there, he had the satisfaction of seeing a travelling company act *Remorse*. He apparently set about writing a preface to his poems, which gradually grew into a literary autobiography. On August 10th of next year (1815) the first instalment of the *Biographia Literaria* and a second of the poems were sent to Hood for the printer, Morgan having written to Coleridge's dictation, and—what is more—kept him to his task. Hood passed on the copy to Gutch who had undertaken the printing, but at the end of 1816 little further progress had been made. It was in the Easter vacation of 1815 that Coleridge was visited at Calne by his son Hartley, who had been taken to Oxford by the Wordsworths.

1815

From the Surrey gaol a few months after the Battle of Waterloo Hunt sent forth the *Descent of Liberty*, dedicated to another Old Blue, Thomas Barnes, who was about two years senior to Hunt. Byron, then one of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre, continued to visit Hunt during this year in Edgware Road, and Wordsworth also came. The solemnity of the latter apparently prevented a full understanding between the two: there are, says Hunt, " good-humoured warrants for smiling which lie deeper even than Mr. Wordsworth's thoughts for tears." In the Spring of next year (1816) Hunt, once more residing at Hampstead (in the Vale of Health) for the benefit of the air, published his best poetical work, *The Story of Rimini*, written to some extent in imitation of Dryden. In his *Autobiography* he afterwards wrote: " Nor had I discovered in what the subtler spirit of poetry consisted when I wrote

1816

the *Story of Rimini*. . . . It was written in my first manner . . . I must take leave, however, to regard it as a true picture, painted after a certain mode." Bulwer frankly admired many passages of the poem, and wrote in *The New Monthly* (1833): "The public were surprised and delighted by the appearance of *The Story of Rimini*. . . . It was the finest inspiration of Italian poetry yet heard in modern English literature." Another critic, G. L. Craik, calls it, "Mr. Hunt's ablest production in verse." Its chief merits are a singularly familiar and fanciful tone, and a variety of cadence in reaction against the monotony of Pope. It set the fashion of breaking up heroic couplets into freer modulation. Of course the Tory critics denounced it. Another poetical event of the year was the publication of Shelley's *Alastor*. It is at this period that Shelley, who was born in 1792, and was therefore eight years his junior, comes into the life of Hunt. The two met for the first time during the early days of the *Examiner*, before the Regent Prosecution, when Shelley brought a manuscript to Mr. Roland Hunter, the publisher, who sent him to seek advice from Hunt. It was after the marriage of Shelley with his first wife that Hunt accepted for the *Examiner* the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. Shelley and his wife, after the birth of two children, separated by mutual consent. While he was living at Bath, news came that his wife had destroyed herself. This was a heavy blow: he was torn with remorse. It was not in a light spirit that he then married the daughter of Godwin, author of *Political Justice*, and lived at Great Marlow, where he wrote the *Revolt of Islam*, and where Hunt and his family visited him. Hunt was deeply indebted pecuniarily to the young poet, who on one occasion made him a present of £1,400 to extricate him from a debt. Shelley often went to visit Hunt at Hampstead, sometimes to stay for several days, as with a very intimate and loved friend. It was at Hunt's house there that Shelley and Keats became known to each

other, and the latter was actually living with Hunt at the time (1818) when *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Hyperion* appeared under the name of Keats, and *Foliage* and the *Indicator* essays under that of Hunt. Not the least of Hunt's titles to remembrance is his fostering of the genius of Keats, whom as Shelley writes in *Adonais*: "he taught, soothed, loved, honoured." To Hunt Keats dedicated his first book of poems, and Shelley *The Cenci*, as to a man pre-eminently "gentle, honourable, innocent, brave."

At the age of forty-four Coleridge was now soon to return almost to his normal productivity. While he was at Calne, opium seems to have regained the upper hand, and acting under medical advice, he parted from the faithful Morgan, and went to London, carrying with him the MS. of *Zapolya*, the fruit of work at Calne in the winter of 1815-1816, which the manager of Covent Garden declined, but which it was hoped Byron would get accepted for Drury Lane. His "arrival at Highgate marked a turning-point in his life, the importance of which is only to be measured by the fact that it proved to be the last."

In order the better to break the opium habit, Coleridge now placed himself in charge of Mr. Gillman and his wife at the Grove, Highgate. To use Lamb's phrase, he was certainly "an archangel a little damaged." Writing to Gillman before his arrival at Highgate, he says: "No sixty hours have yet passed without my having taken laudanum." From now onward during the last eighteen years of his life (1816-1834), he gradually threw off to a large and increasing extent the opium habit; and as he became happier and more master of himself, his extraordinary powers in some degree came back to him. A new fruitful industry produced good work. "Friendship and lovingkindness," writes E. Hartley Coleridge, "followed Coleridge all the days of his life." Poole, Southey, Lamb, the Wordsworths, the Morgans, and now James and Anne Gillman. "Their patience must have

been inexhaustible, their loyalty unimpeachable, their love indestructible. Such friendship is rare and beautiful, and merits a most honourable remembrance."

1816 Coleridge began his new life by publishing in June the fragment of *Kubla Khan*, and *Christabel*, the first of which had been written in 1797, and the second in 1800. Even now *Christabel was unfinished*, but Murray published it on the recommendation of Byron, and it had a large sale. The author received £70 for the copyright of *Christabel*, and £20 for the use of *Kubla Khan*, Coleridge recovering the copyright. Though the reviewers, as usual, condemned *Christabel*, public taste was changing under the literary influence of the last generation. The *Edinburgh's* attack is judged on internal evidence to be the work of Hazlitt. Lamb regarded the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* as Coleridge's best productions in verse. Leigh Hunt calls *Christabel* an "exquisite poem," and wonders that Hazlitt could see nothing to admire in it.

1817 To 1817 belongs the publication of *Zapolya, a* Christmas tale in the form of a drama. "The form of the following dramatic poem," says the preface, "is in humble imitation of the *Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare." There is an interval of twenty years between the first and second parts, the second consisting of four acts. The second part was accepted by the Drury Lane management for performance during the next season, "provided certain alterations were made and some songs added." But Coleridge was too discouraged to make the alterations, and in place of *Zapolya* was produced Maturin's *Bertram*, "the butterfly," says Mr. T. J. Wise, "which Coleridge broke on the wheel in *Biographia Literaria*." But Rest Fenner, the publisher, made a success of *Zapolya*, at least 2,000 copies being sold. It is interesting to note that in this year Coleridge speaks of the *Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, *The Destiny of Nations*, and the *Ode to the Departing Year* as his best poems to date, an estimate from which few modern critics would dissent. It was in

June that Coleridge renewed in London his acquaintance with Ludwig Tieck, whom he met again at the house of Joseph Henry Green, a rising young surgeon and anatomist, who, desirous of mastering German philosophy, went to Berlin on Tieck's advice. On his return he began that intimacy "which proved the chief stimulus and the chief comfort of the last seventeen years of Coleridge's life," and influenced profoundly the whole of his own subsequent career. For years it was Green's custom to spend two afternoons a week at Highgate, and as amanuensis and *collaborateur* he helped to lay the foundation of Coleridge's intended Magnum Opus in philosophy. After the death of Coleridge—who appointed Green his literary executor—Green published two volumes entitled *Spiritual Philosophy*, founded on the teaching of S. T. Coleridge. To the seer of Highgate he was a friend indeed. The two gave each other mutual encouragement in the study of German Philosophy, especially of Kant; and we find Coleridge in December (1817) writing of Kant to Green in this strain: "I cannot conceive the liberal pursuit or profession in which the service derived from a patient study of his works would not be incalculably great, both as cathartic, tonic, and directly nutritious." Among other friends of this time should be mentioned the Right Hon. J. Hookham Frere, the distinguished translator of Aristophanes.

Lamb, who had now removed to 20, Great Russell Street, Covent Garden, was a regular visitor at Highgate. If at this time he ever looked in at Christ's Hospital, as he assuredly would do, he would have made the acquaintance of William Trollope, who left this year as a Grecian, and was to produce in later years what was for many years—until the Rev. E. H. Pearce (now the Bishop of Worcester) wrote his *Annals of Christ's Hospital*—the standard history of the School. Three literary items of 1817 are worthy of note: Hazlitt, an excellent critic, though often, as his treatment of *Christabel* proves, a splenetic and jealous man, published his *Characters of*

Shakespeare's Plays; Keats his *Poems*; and Blackwood established his Magazine. Coleridge published two other books: *Sibylline Leaves*, including the whole of the poems written between 1719 and 1817; and the *Biographia Literaria*, a land-mark, so far as England is concerned, in reasoned literary criticism. The latter book was savagely reviewed by Hazlitt in the *Edinburgh* for August, 1817," and in October *Blackwood* followed on the same lines. In connection with these two books for once we find Coleridge regretting his dealings with an Old Blue. Gutch, of Bristol, " merely to serve an old schoolfellow," had offered to print the books, but Coleridge complains of both bad printing and extortionate charges. Of the *Biographia* three editions had appeared by 1865, and recently it has been reprinted in the *Everyman Library* (1906), and by the *Clarendon Press* (1907). On the political side the *Statesman's Manual, a Lay Sermon*, (1816), was followed by another *Lay Sermon*, which reached a third edition in 1852. Finally, an *Essay on the Science of Method*, which was finished in December, 1817, was printed in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* in January, 1818. This was a general introduction to the *Encyclopædia*, and has often been reprinted. As the result of a chance meeting on the sea-shore at Littlehampton in the Autumn of 1817, Coleridge made a friend of Cary, the translator of Dante. His kindly criticism of, and interest in the work had the effect of immediately increasing the sale, and securing for it the position of an English classic. The Highgate *régime* certainly was having good effect on Coleridge's industry and influence. And to crown all, Wordsworth, who came to London at the close of 1817, was again on terms of intimacy, and the two old friends often forgathered, although Wordsworth was far from pleased with Coleridge's fine criticism of his work in the *Biographia*.

1818 In 1818 Hunt published *Foliage: Poems Original and Translated*, and practically synchronous with this book was the issue of *The Works of Charles Lamb*, in

two volumes, printed for C. and J. Ollier. When two years previously Lamb offered a collected edition of his works to John Murray, on Gifford's advice it was declined. One prose article only was specially written for the volume—*On the Poetical Works of George Wither.* The origin of this was an edition of Wither's poems printed by Matthew Gutch, who had sent Lamb an interleaved copy in 1810. The *Works* was dedicated to Coleridge in words full of feeling expressing the author's indebtedness and regret that their close association came to be broken. "My friend Lloyd and myself came into our first battle (authorship is a kind of warfare) under cover of the great Ajax. . . . You first kindled in me if not the power, yet the love of poetry and beauty and kindliness."

From 1818 to 1820 Lamb contributed from time to time to Leigh Hunt's *Examiner.* Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818) and *Lectures on the Comic Writers* (1819) seem to be the forerunners of slighter works published by Hunt some years later: *Imagination and Fancy*, and *Wit and Humour.* It seems likely that Lamb's *Specimens* suggested in the same way Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets.*

Coleridge was still busy and full of plans. He issued a *Prospectus of a Course of Lectures* on the old poets and dramatists. It contains a syllabus of the course, a notification of the time and place of delivery of the proposed lectures, and the terms of subscription, *i.e.*, two guineas for a single ticket for the course, three for a gentleman and a lady—each single lecture five shillings. But neither time nor place had much meaning for Coleridge except as abstractions of metaphysics. This was followed by a prospectus of a course of lectures at the "Crown and Anchor" on "Philosophy and Shakespeare, from Thales and Pythagoras to present times." The Shakespearian part comprised the six plays—*Tempest, Richard II., Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello*, and *Lear.* The two courses were delivered concurrently in the winter of 1818-19. Coleridge also published two political pamphlets, *Remarks*

on Objections to Sir R. Peel's Bill, and *The Grounds of Sir R. Peel's Bill*, and a new edition of *The Friend*, "dedicated in testimony of high respect and grateful affection to Mr. and Mrs. Gillman." This edition is available in *Bohn's Standard Library*. In this year he made the acquaintance of Thomas Allsop, a young and devoted admirer. Many friendly letters were exchanged, published soon after the death of Coleridge by Allsop, which form our main authority for the details of the poet's life between 1820 and 1826. Allsop was unfailing in his kindness, and Coleridge treated him as a son to whom he could pour out his mind unreservedly.

Meanwhile Charles Lamb was in love. The first symptom in his writing was a critique of Miss Kelly's acting at Bath, in a letter to J. M. Gutch, printed in January, 1819 in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, and reprinted in February in the *Examiner* with an introductory note by Hunt. (In the June *Examiner* also appeared a sonnet *Work*, of which Lamb seems to have been not a little proud.) The crisis of his love affair came in July when he proposed marriage to Fanny Kelly, who was then twenty-nine; her suitor was forty-four, drawing a salary of £600 a year. The lady declined, and survived till 1882. Lamb took his fate like a man, and the two were on excellent terms a few years after: indeed in November Lamb indites a sonnet to Miss Kelly in the *Morning Chronicle*. She was the original of Lamb's story of *Barbara S——*, though, *more Eliano*, the details are changed, and the note at the end mentioning Mrs. Crawford is meant to mislead. It is certain that he loved her with the same ardour with which he hated "that cobbler Gifford," upon whom he fell in an *Examiner* sonnet (October), *St. Crispin to Mr. Gifford*, while the editor also attacked him for his treatment of Shelley in the *Quarterly*. Gifford, it appears, had been apprenticed as a boy to a cobbler. Among his offences were gratuitous references to Lamb as "a poor maniac," and as "this unfortunate creature." The quarrel was never healed.

1819

Hunt followed up *Foliage* with *Hero and Leander* and *Bacchus and Ariadne*, and Keats published *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, owing much to Hunt's encouragement and poetical example. Hunt was also busy editing *The Indicator*, sixty-six issues of which were published between October 13th, 1819, and March 21st, 1821. The title of this journal is a reference to the *Cucullus Indicator* or Bee Cuckoo of Linnæus. In it Hunt wrote some of the most delicate and subtle of his criticism. Among the best known papers are those on *Sleep*, *Coaches and Horses*, *The Deaths of Little Children*, *Fair Revenge* and *A Now*, one or two of the passages in which were contributed by Keats. Both Hazlitt and Lamb were much pleased with the *Indicator*. The common sailor in *Seamen on Shore* was drawn from "the son of my nurse at school."

Financially, 1819 was a bad year for Coleridge. Poor already, he was hard hit by the bankruptcy of the publisher Rest Fenner: "all the profits from the sale of my writings I have lost," he writes to Allsop, who compensated him by a gift of money, accepted—as in the case of De Quincey's gift—as a loan. Mr. Blackwood called at Highgate to solicit contributions to his magazine, which eighteen months previously had grossly outraged him. Poverty notwithstanding, Coleridge shrank from the connection, though Lamb a little later wrote to him: "Why should you refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine, passes my poor comprehension—but, as Strap says, 'you know best.'" But no contribution except the sonnet *Fancy in Nubibus* appeared for seventeen months. It was in April of this year that Coleridge met Keats in a Highgate Lane. The two walked two miles together. "In these two miles," says Keats, "he broached a thousand things. . . . . He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate." The invitation was not accepted.

1820 The year 1820 is remarkable for the amount of first-class literature it produced. For example,

we find E. L. Bulwer (Lord Lytton) publishing *Ishmael*; Keats his *Lamia, Isabella, Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Hyperion*; Shelley his *Prometheus Unbound*; Scott *Ivanhoe, The Monastry*, and *The Abbott*; Leigh Hunt *Amyntas, a Tale of the Woods* (from Tasso); and Lamb his first *Elia* Essay in the *London Magazine*. One of Lamb's fellow clerks at the India House was Field, whose brother (Hunt's friend), Barron Field, wrote a book of poems, *The First Fruits of Australian Poetry*. This was reviewed by Lamb (January) in the *Examiner*, while on July 19th, in the *New Times*, he reviewed Keat's *Lamia*. To the same journal in August he contributed an appreciation of Mr. Kean's *Hamlet*. Nor was he inclined to allow George IV. (who had succeeded to the throne after the death of George III. on January 29th) to go scot free. His attack took the form of two verse contributions to the *Champion*, one of them a sonnet entitled *The Godlike*. Another sonnet, *To my Friend the Indicator* was printed in the *Indicator* with a prefatory note by Hunt. But the fact that Lamb began to contribute to the *London Magazine* was the most important matter of these months, because it was through this medium that he really began to win fame. Its editor was John Scott, a most capable Aberdonian. Money, it is true, came slowly: but the name of Charles Lamb over an essay now began to have a definite value in the estimation of the reading public. *Recollections of the South Sea House* appeared in August, signed "Elia." Lamb, it will be remembered, was a clerk there for a short time in 1791-2, and his elder brother John was still employed there. The September number had a sonnet by Lamb, *To the Author of Poems published under the name of Barry Cornwall*. The author was Bryan Walter Procter, who in late life published a volume of Lamb reminiscences; his daughter was the poetess, Adelaide Anne Procter. Lamb's pen contributed to the October number some verses, *The Ape*, and the essay, *Oxford in the Vacation:* to the November number, *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago*. This

essay *Blackwood* attacked, describing it as the "impertinences of a Cockney scribbler." In December appeared *The Two Races of Men.*

Coleridge had sustained a severe shock, his son Hartley having been deprived of his fellowship at Oriel College on the ground, mainly, of intemperance. He saw his son developing all too surely "some of his own morbid weaknesses—procrastination, shrinking from the performance of duties which are surrounded by painful associations." It was the tragedy of Ibsen's *Ghosts* unfolding itself. Under stress of this new grief he gave way to an extra consumption of laudanum. Further, he was in straits for money. Many schemes, but very little production, marked the next few years, though in 1821 a stay of nearly two months at Ramsgate in company with the Gillmans greatly improved his health. It was here that the Cowden Clarkes introduced themselves to him as friends of Lamb, "and straightway he discoursed to them on the spot for an hour and half." During these two years J. H. Green was a kind of combined amanuensis and philosophy pupil.

1821

1821 The year 1821 found Lamb in the full tide of journalistic prosperity contributing to *The Indicator*, *Holiday Children*, *Valentine's Day*, *Old Maids*, and *Mrs. B.*; and to the *London Magazine* (now sold to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey of Fleet Street, and edited by John Taylor, with Tom Hood as sub-editor for some time) an essay every month during the year. These included *New Year's Eve*, *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist*, *My Relations*, *Mackery End in Hertfordshire*, *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*, *Grace before Meat*, and *My First Play*. At a later date, Hunt, wishing to give his readers a sample of Lamb's characteristic excellences, selects the essays on *Hogarth*, *King Lear*, *London Streets*, *Whist Playing*, *Grace before Meat*, and the *Letters*.

Coleridge meantime was on the whole benefiting by the *régime* of the last five years, and was now no longer

the slave, at any rate, of opium. He held a small class in philosophy at Highgate. He was there visited at the end of 1822 and the beginning of 1823 by Mrs. Coleridge and their daughter Sara, with whom Henry Nelson Coleridge—afterwards the favourite nephew who edited *Specimens of Coleridge's Table Talk*—promptly fell in love, to marry her some seven years later. The intimacy of uncle and nephew led to the happy reconciliation of the former with the other members of his family. It was about this time that Edward Irving and others began to resort to Highgate to listen to the discourse of Coleridge, although it was not before 1824 that the "Highgate Thursday evenings" became a regular institution.

1822-3

It was in 1821 that De Quincey published the *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, and Hazlitt his *Dramatic Literature of the Reign of Elizabeth*. Poor Keats died, and vanished from the literary circle where he had been a loved favourite. Leigh Hunt, who had been his poetical foster-father, published in the *Examiner* a series of sketches of living poets—Bowles, Byron, Campbell, and Coleridge—and *The Months*. On November 10th he sailed with his wife and seven children for Italy, to join Byron and Shelley. The unfortunate Hunt's life was not travelling on a smooth path. Ill-health, emphasised by imprisonment, an invalid wife—and now a disastrous voyage to Italy and failure in the object for which he and his underwent so much. Embarking in the Thames on a small brig of 120 tons, with nine men for crew, he and his family, nine souls in all, had the cabin to themselves. The ship made heavy weather in the Thames estuary, and had to put in at Ramsgate and wait three weeks for better weather. Not until December 11th could she sail again, and then it was to meet the worst of the terrible winter of 1821. She had much ado to make Plymouth, where Hunt stayed till the summer, to sail again in another vessel on May 13th, 1822. He has left a strikingly vivid account of this voyage,

1822

containing some of the best of his writing. He arrived at Genoa in June, and on the 28th of the month sailed for Leghorn, where he and his family landed on July 1st. Seven and a half months from London to Leghorn!

We have seen Hunt brought into relation with Lord Byron during and after his imprisonment. At Harrow Byron had read Hunt's poems and, as he himself puts it, they had been one of his incentives to write verse, as Bowles's sonnets had been to Coleridge. Later, being desirous of making Hunt's acquaintance, he got the poet Thomas Moore to arrange an introduction. Hunt had now voyaged to Italy in order to assist Byron and Shelley in founding the *Liberal*. He went to see Byron at Monte Nero (near Leghorn) and returned to Leghorn, where Shelley came to visit him from his country house (Villa Magna) at Lerici, his town abode (as also Lord Byron's) being at Pisa. From Leghorn Shelley accompanied Hunt to Pisa to see him comfortably settled in the ground-floor of Byron's house, the Casa Lanfranchi, on the bank of the Arno. A few days afterwards, Shelley set out on his return to Lerici, intending to go there from Leghorn by sea. A week later news was brought to Pisa that his body had been washed ashore near Via Reggio. Keat's last volume—Hunt's copy—was "found open in the jacket pocket." All three occupants of the boat were drowned, Shelley, his friend, Captain Williams, and seaman Charles Vivian. In the presence of Byron, Hunt, and Trelawney, Shelley's cremated remains were interred at Rome in the Protestant burial ground, where Keats had been buried, and where since then have been interred Trelawny himself (1886), John Addington Symonds (1893), and R. M. Ballantyne (1894). (It is sad to think that this cemetery was allowed to pass into German hands, but as the result of the great European War it has no doubt reverted to the possession of our Italian allies.) After remaining three months at Pisa, Byron and Hunt went to Genoa where they received the first number of their new quarterly, *The Liberal*, in

which appeared Shelley's translation of the *May Day Night* from Goethe. At Genoa Byron lived in the Casa Saluzzi, while Hunt was housed in Mrs. Shelley's Casa Negrotto at Albano, a neighbouring village, where Landor and his family had recently had a house. Byron and Hunt now saw less of each other. They were still on good terms, but "the cordiality did not increase." The fact is, Byron's interest in the *Liberal* had cooled, and after the issue of four numbers it ceased. Among Byron's contributions was the *Vision of Judgment*, "the best satire since the days of Pope," Leigh Hunt claims, and certainly holding a place in the forefront of its author's works. Hazlitt also contributed essays: but Hunt, though he was ill during most of this time, wrote about half of the publication. When Byron left Italy for Greece, the partnership was at an end. In
1823 the summer of 1823, Mrs. Shelley having gone to England, Hunt left Genoa, where a son had been born, for Florence, and lived mainly at Maiano, about two miles from the city on the Fiesolan Hills. At the time Charles Armitage Brown, the friend of Keats, and "the best commentator on Shakespeare's sonnets," was staying near Maiano: and at Florence, Hunt made the acquaintance of Landor. While here, Hunt was busy with an English translation of *Redi's Bacco a Toscana*, with articles for the *Examiner*, under the title of the *Wishing Cap* (containing the rudiments of what afterwards became *The Town*), and with parts of the volume, *Men, Women, and Books*, and, finally, with the first form of *The Religion of the Heart*. From Maiano, where on the whole he had spent "a very disconsolate time," he set
1825 out for England on September 10th, 1825, travelling by *vettura* to Calais, and by steamer to London, where he arrived on October 14th, after a journey of thirty-four days, in time at least contrasting favourably with the outward journey. He now settled down to steady, but not very lucrative work at Highgate in the near neighbourhood of Coleridge.

While Hunt was immersed in his early disappointment in Italy, Lamb and his sister were also paying a visit abroad, staying with the Kenneys at Versailles. The *London Magazine* kept his pen fully employed: and Messrs. Taylor and Hessey published in 1823 a volume of *Elia* Essays that had appeared in the magazine. It had a very moderate success, a fact which was probably largely due to a disparaging reference made by Southey, who wrote of the "Elia volume," "it wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original." In consequence of this, in October, 1823, Lamb wrote an open letter in the *London Magazine* to Robert Southey, Esq., expressing his resentment at the *Quarterly's* attitude toward him for many years. Southey bore no malice; and in 1830 he defended Lamb as "a veteran in the lists of fame." With the exception of August—when Lamb was presumably making holiday—every month this year produced an *Elia* Essay in the *London Magazine*. In the course of the year, his forty-ninth, Lamb had removed to Colebrooke Row, Islington. George Dyer, loved by Coleridge as much as by Lamb, visited him there, and on leaving, walked, in his absent-minded way, into the New River. He was extricated, put to bed, and dosed so effectively with brandy by Mary Lamb, that he fell sick. These circumstances are the groundwork of the December essay, *Amicus Redivivus*. Leigh Hunt returned to the charge against William Gifford in Ultra-Crepidarius, "a stick cut for Mr. Gifford's special use."

1823

In the Autumn (1823) Coleridge's smouldering poetical faculty awoke for a moment into flame, when he dated (September 10th) the first draft of the beautiful *Youth and Age*; but the embers died down again directly, and the theologian displaced the poet. Most of his time was given to the study of the Scottish Archbishop Leighton, and the result was "the most popular of all Coleridge's prose works," *Aids to Reflection*, which immediately won the most favourable opinions from

personages so different as the Bishop of London and Blanco White.

1824 Next year died Byron; he had been, for a time, the friend of Hunt, and had done much for Coleridge, whose powers as a poet and as a talker he sincerely admired. "How wonderfully he talked!" And Hunt records that this was the impression of everybody who listened to Coleridge. It was from this year onward that Coleridge held those famous evening conversaziones from 5.30 to 11 p.m. at the Gillmans', among many visitors of note being Julius Hare, John Sterling and Thomas Carlyle. One of Coleridge's most receptive listeners was Edward Irving, who published this winter a Missionary Society sermon and dedicated it to Coleridge. Lamb, writing to Hunt, says: "I have got acquainted with Irving, the Scotch preacher. He is a humble disciple at the foot of Gamaliel S.T.C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S.T.C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of Faith, Christianity, and Christian Church from him than from all the men he ever conversed with!" Partly because he was tired of writing for it, and partly because the *London Magazine* was not keeping up its standard, Lamb began to lose interest in it, and wrote that it must do without him for a time. Accordingly there followed a six months' interval, after which came the Elia essay, *Captain Jackson*, the original of which was at Christ's Hospital with Lamb. Like many other of the essays, it was a faked biography, for, when writing, Lamb constantly had his tongue in his cheek, and loved nothing better than a mystifying hoax.

Here we may find place for a word about George Dyer. His friendship was shared by both Coleridge and Lamb. Lamb hits him off as "that common dispenser of benevolence." In what esteem the former held him is shown by a letter of about this time. "My dear, long-known, and long-loved friend . . . my dear brother under many titles—brother Blue, brother

Grecian, brother Cantab, brother Poet." He was born in 1755, survived both his Blue friends, and died in 1841. He was the author of a *History of the University of Cambridge*. After his University career he started as a Baptist Minister, but gave up this calling for that of a man of letters, settling in London 1792. He was intimate with Southey to whose *Annual Anthology* (1799 and 1800) he contributed *The Show, an English Eclogue*, and other poems. "His poetry was a constant source of amused delight to Lamb and Coleridge." The *Life and Letters of John Rickman*, by Orlo Williams (Constable, 1911) contains fresh matter on George Dyer; and here and there could be found information enough to make a very interesting monograph.

CHAPTER IV

1824-1834

Coleridge : The Seer of Highgate. Lamb's Literary leisure. Struggles of Hunt as poet and journalist.

COLERIDGE : Philosopher and Divine—The End.
LAMB : Emancipation—Hone and Moxon—The End.
HUNT : Poetry and Journalism—Dramatic Criticism— *The Indicator.*

1824 By the end of 1824 *The London Magazine* was on its last legs, and Colburn with his *New Monthly Magazine* was pushing other such periodicals out of the market. Accordingly, in January, 1825, Lamb made
1825 his first contribution to the *New Monthly*, an article on the impending cessation of State Lotteries in England, entitled *The Illustrious Defunct.* Christ's Hospital boys were employed in the city to draw the tickets from the drums, and there are still occasionally to be met with copies of an old print picturing two of them, standing on a dais at the end of a Hall, so employed. In the same number of the *New Monthly* began a series of papers by Hunt, under the title of *The Family Journal*, by Harry Honeycomb. The *New Monthly* had a prosperous career, surviving till 1875. March was a critical
1825 month for Lamb : he retired from the East India House after a service of thirty-three years, at the age of fifty, with a pension of £450. He had many friends connected with his business life, which no doubt was not all drudgery ; but he was very glad to dismount from his high office stool. "The desk enters into my soul," he wrote. But not lightly does one sever old ties, and he had a nervous breakdown not long after his

retirement. In May, the *Monthly* had the Elia Essay, *The Superannuated Man*, which is a thinly disguised presentment of his own experience: and in August he contributed his last essay to the *London*, through which he had attained to honest fame. This was *Imperfect Dramatic Illusions*. Henceforth he wrote for the *New Monthly*, *Popular Fallacies* appearing in 1826. Before leaving 1825, we should record Lamb's connection with Hone's *Everyday Book*, a threepenny weekly published on Saturdays by William Hone. Lamb contributed to ten numbers, among his papers being one on *Captain Starkey* and *The Months* (probably suggested by Leigh Hunt's book of this title published in 1821). To Hone Lamb wrote some quatrains which were printed in the *London Magazine* (May, 1825). "But," says Mr. J. C. Thomson, "Lamb did an unpopular thing in thus commending Hone, who had made many enemies by his outspokenness, and was in chronic impecuniosity." Hone showed his gratitude for Lamb's help in the *Everyday Book* by dedicating the first two completed volumes to him and his sister Mary. We cannot forbear to quote here some verses addressed to Lamb at this time of his emancipation from "that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood," by "Barry Cornwall" (B. W. Procter).

TO CHARLES LAMB

(*Written over a flask of Sherris*)

Dear Lamb, I drink to thee,—to *thee*
Married to sweet Liberty!

What! old friend, and *art* thou freed
From the bondage of the pen?
Free from care and toil indeed—
Free to wander amongst men
When and howsoe'er thou wilt,—
All thy drops of labour spilt
On those huge and figured pages,
Which will sleep unclasped for ages,

Little knowing who did wield
The quill that traversed their white field ?
Come, another mighty health !
Thou hast earn'd thy sum of wealth,
Countless ease,—immortal leisure,—
Days—and nights of boundless pleasure,
Checquer'd by no dream of pain,
Such as hangs on clerklike brain
Like a nightmare, and doth press
The happy soul from happiness.

Oh ! happy thou,—whose all of time
(Day, and eve, and morning prime)
Is fill'd with talk on pleasant themes,—
Or visions quaint, which come in dreams
Such as panther'd Bacchus rules,
When his rod is on " the schools,"
Mixing wisdom with their wine ;—
Or perhaps thy wit so fine
Strayeth in some elder book,
Whereon our modern Solons look
With severe ungifted eyes,
Wondering what thou seest to prize.
Happy thou, whose skill can take
Pleasure at each turn and slake
Thy thirst by every fountain brink,
Where less wise men would pause to shrink.
Sometimes 'mid stately avenues
With Cowley thou or Marvel's muse
Dost walk,—or Gray, by Eton towers,
Or Pope, in Hampton's chestnut bowers,—
Or Walton, by his loved Lea stream :—
Or,—dost thou with our Milton dream
Of Eden, and the Apocalypse,
And hear the words from his great lips ?

Speak !—In what grove or hazel shade
For " musing Meditation made,"
Dost wander,—or on Penshurst lawn,
Where Sydney's fame had time to dawn
And die, ere yet the hate of men
Could envy at his perfect pen ?
Or, dost thou in some London street,
With voices fill'd and thronging feet,
Loiter, with mien 'twixt grave and gay—

Or take, along some pathway sweet,
Thy calm suburban way ?—
Happy beyond that man of Ross,
Whom mere content could ne'er engross,
Art *thou*,—with hope,—health,—" learned leisure,"
Friends—books—thy thoughts—an endless pleasure !
—Yet—yet—(for when was pleasure made
Sunshine all without a shade ?)
Thou, perhaps, as now thou rovest
Through the busy scenes thou lovest
With an idler's careless look,
Turning some moth-piercéd book,
Feel'st a sharp and sudden woe
For visions vanished long ago !—
And then thou think'st how time has fled
Over thy unsilver'd head,
Snatching many a fellow mind
Away, and leaving—what—behind ?—
Nought, alas, save joy and pain
Mingled ever, like a strain
Of music where the discords vie
With the truer harmony.
So perhaps with thee the vein
Is sullied ever,—so the chain
On habits and affections old,
Like a weight of solid gold,
Presseth on thy gentle breast,
Till sorrow rob thee of thy rest.

—Ay : So it is. Ev'n *I* (whose lot
The fairy Love so long forgot)
Seated beside this Sherris wine,
And near to books and shapes divine,
Which poets and the painters past
Have wrought in lines that aye shall last,
Ev'n I, with Shakespeare's self beside me
And One, whose tender talk can guide me
Through fears, and pains, and troublous themes,—
Whose smile doth fall upon my dreams
Like sunshine on a stormy sea,—
Want *something*,—when I think of *thee !*

We left Leigh Hunt settled at Highgate after his return from Italy. Apparently the tide of affairs was still against him, and in consequence he suffered in mind,

body, and estate. His chief venture at this time was a periodical, *The Companion*, in which essays of the *Indicator* type were diversified by criticisms on the theatres, authors, and public events; but it lasted only six months. From Highgate he removed to Epsom, and there wrote the latter part of *Sir Ralph Esher*, a fictitious autobiography of a gentleman of the court of Charles II., which was published anonymously, and—according to the wishes of the publisher—in the form of a novel. He found this a trying task, as the writing of prose fiction made him the prey of nervous excitement, though his versification, he states, was done with the greatest composure. From Epsom he migrated to Old Brompton, where he had for landlord his friend, Charles Knight.

On the incorporation of the Royal Society of Literature under George IV., Coleridge was elected one of the ten
1825 Royal Associates, with an annuity of a hundred guineas from the King's Privy Purse. In May he read before the Society a paper on the Prometheus of Aeschylus, an essay intended to be "preparatory to a series of disquisitions respecting Egyptian and sacerdotal theology, and in contrast with the mysteries of ancient Greece." It was published in the Society's Transactions in 1834. This (1825) was the year of Huxley's birth, of the publication of Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*, and of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*. This latter work (the genesis of which has already been mentioned), to judge by the number of editions published—ten between 1825 and 1884—is one of the most widely read of Coleridge's prose works, *The Biographia* being its only serious rival. It was intended to help "in the formation of a manly character on the several grounds of prudence, morality and religion." It is illustrated from old divines, especially Archbishop Leighton, and was issued by Lamb's publishers, Taylor and Hessey. While Julius Hare thought that the book crowned its author as "the true sovereign of modern English thought," and younger men like F. D. Maurice and John Sterling felt that to it they "owed

even their own selves," and theologians joined the chorus of approval, " the reviewers were almost silent, and the sale was slow." Superficial readers may complain that the *Aids* is unintelligible. This is emphatically not the case. Always a great stickler for definition of words and their use within proper limits, for " precise and steadfast terms," always apprehensive of the fact that a vague use of terms is a main cause of false criticism, Coleridge in this book uses words uniformly with astonishing precision. The difficulty is not the use of words, but rather that the author makes large demands, not only upon the attention, but also upon the thinking and reflective powers. Among other points made in this book is the great and valuable distinction between the Reason and the Understanding. To all who will face the labour of thinking, the *Aids* must have a deep and enduring interest: " it is a work of great and permanent value to any Christian community."

Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, which appeared at this time, sketched Coleridge in one of its chapters as one " tantalised by useless remorses, haunted by vain imaginings, his lips idly moving, but his heart for ever still." As might be expected from Hazlitt, whose style was apt to master him, this language is more picturesque than just. Carlyle's sketch of Coleridge at this time, which is to be found in the *Life of John Sterling*, contains the following passage: " 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 towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls engaged there." In a letter to his brother John Carlyle (June 24th, 1824), the Chelsea sage, whose strong words are not to be taken too seriously, but discounted largely by dyspepsia and by jealousy of his one " rival in monologue," has the following on " the Kantian Metaphysician and Quondam Lake Poet "—" He is a kind good soul, full of religion and affection, and poetry, and animal magnetism. His cardinal sin is that he wants

will. He has no resolution. He shrinks from pain or labour in any of its shapes. . . . He cannot speak, he can only tal-k (so he names it). Hence I found him unprofitable, even tedious. . . . I reckon him a man of great and useless genius, a strange, not at all a great man."

1826 There is a pleasant glimpse in 1826 of the Coleridge-Lamb intercourse, intermittent as it was. In the summer Coleridge visited the Lambs at their Islington Cottage, and met Thomas Hood, who brought the *Progress of Cant* and some other drawings with him. In the evening Coleridge walked alone the three or four miles back to Highgate, after the friends had taken affectionate leave, "as if they had been boys." The account of this evening given by S.Y. in the *Monthly Repository* for 1835 is well worth quotation. "Coleridge, on the evening in question, spoke of death with fear; not from the dread of punishment, not from the shrinking from physical pain, but he said he had a horror lest, after the attempt to 'shuffle off this mortal coil,' he should yet 'be thrown back upon himself.' Charles Lamb kept silence, and looked sceptical; and, after a pause, said suddenly, 'One of the things that made me question the particular inspiration they ascribed to Jesus Christ was His ignorance of the character of Judas Iscariot. Why did not He and His disciples kick him out for a rascal instead of receiving him as a disciple?' Coleridge smiled very quietly, and then spoke of some person (name forgotten) who had been making a comparison between himself and Wordsworth as to their religious faith. 'They said, although I was an atheist we were upon a par, for that Wordsworth's Christianity was very like Coleridge's Atheism; and Coleridge's Atheism was very like Wordsworth's Christianity.' After some time he moved round the room to read the different engravings that hung upon the walls. One over the mantelpiece especially interested his fancy. There were only two figures in the picture, both women. One was of a lofty, com-

manding stature, with a high, intellectual brow, and of an abbess-like deportment. She was standing in grave majesty, with the finger uplifted, in the act of monition to a young girl beside her. The face was in profile and somewhat severe in its expression, but this was relieved by the richness and grace of the draperies in which she was profusely enveloped. The girl was in the earliest and freshest spring of youth, lovely and bright, and with a somewhat careless and inconsiderate air, and she seemed but half inclined to heed the sage advice of her elder companion. She held in her hand a rose, with which she was toying, and had she been alive you would have expected momentarily to see it taken between the taper fingers and scattered in wilful profusion. Coleridge uttered an expression of admiration, and then, as if talking to himself, apostrophised in some such words as these: 'There she stands, with the world all before her: to her it is as a fairy dream, a vision of unmingled joy, to her it is as is that lovely flower, which woos her by its bright hue and fragrant perfume. Poor child! must thou too be reminded of the thorns that lurk beneath? Turn thee to thy monitress: she bids thee clasp not too closely pleasures that lure but to wound thee. Look into her eloquent eyes; listen to her pleading voice; her words are words of wisdom; garner them up in thy heart; and when the evil days come, the days in which thou shalt say "I find no pleasure in them," remember her as thus she stood, and, with up-pointing finger, bade thee think of the delights of heaven—that heaven which is ever ready to receive the returning wanderer to its rest.'

"He next spoke of the effect of different sounds upon his sensations; said, of all the pains the sense of hearing ever brought to him, that of the effect made by a dog belonging to some German conjurer was the greatest. The man pretended that the dog would answer, 'Ich bedanke mein Herr,' when anything was given to it; and the effort and contortion made by the dog to produce the required sound, proved that the scourge of some

similar punishment had been applied to effect it. In contrast to this was the homage he rendered to the speaking voice of Mrs. Jordan, on which he expatiated in such rapturous terms as if he had been indebted to it for a sixth sense. He said that it was the exquisite witchery of her tone that suggested an idea in his *Remorse*, that if Lucifer had had permission to retain his angel voice, hell would have been hell no longer. In the course of the evening the talented editor of the *Comic Annual* made his appearance. He was then known only by his Hogarthian caricature of *The Progress of Cant*, upon which Coleridge complimented him. After some time he introduced many of his etchings, which were then unknown to the world, and they were the means of exciting in Coleridge the first genuine hearty laugh I had seen. If one had not admired entirely, it would have been enough to have made him envy. Laugh after laugh followed as the square tablets (trump cards in the pack of the genius of caricature) were laid upon the table, and a merry game it was for all. The effect was not a little increased by the extreme quietude of their master, who stood by without uttering a word, except with the corners of his mouth, where the rich fund of humour which had furnished the treat we were enjoying was speaking more intelligibly than any words. He went, and the time went, and the supper went; and at last it was time for Coleridge to go too, for he had the walk to Highgate all before him. His friend begged earnestly that he might walk with him, but without avail. There was an affectionate parting as if they had been boys rather than men, and it seemed to concentrate their lives into that minute. It recalled the meetings and partings of other days; the wanderings by the lake; and many minglings in social union; a whole host of recollections seemed to crowd around and enclose them in a magic circle. Coleridge lingered on the threshold as if he were leaving what had been a part of his heart's home for many years; and again he who had been his

companion in many a mountain ramble, many a stroll 'in dale, forest and mead, by pavéd fountain and by rushy brook, and on the beachéd margent of the sea,' would fain have kept up the old companionship even though it was night, and the way had no such temptations. Another grasp of the hand, and a kiss of affection on Mary's cheek, and he was gone. I never saw him again; and Charles Lamb and his sister but once since; and that was a few months ago in the street. He had aged considerably, but it scarcely excited melancholy, for Mary was with him like a good guardian angel. They had that same country-air freshness about them; they looked unlike everything around; there was an elderly respectability about them; not the modern upstart prig of a word, but the *genuine old china, old plate, bright, black mahogany air, which is now almost departed.* I watched them earnestly; with a vague feeling that it was something I should never see again; and so it has happened. He has followed his friend, and in time his sister will follow him; and thus goes the world. The wise and the good, those we have looked up to from our childhood as something too high for our reach, like the stars above us, whose bright history we seek in vain to know, vanish from our sight, and leave us in darkness—no, not in darkness—their works have *not* followed them; they live and breathe, and infuse new life and breath into those who come after them; and many more are rising to fill their places, and the world is daily becoming purer and holier through their influence. Peace and a benediction upon their memories!"

In the spring of this year H. N. Coleridge published a record of his travels in 1825-6 in *Six Months in the West Indies*, some of the vivacities of which seem to have displeased his uncle. "I fear," says Mr. J. D. Campbell, "that Coleridge was making things hard for the lovers," who, however, were eventually married at Keswick in September, 1829. The bridegroom was a man of parts. Born in 1798, he was the fifth son of Col. James Coleridge.

He practised as a Chancery Barrister, and spent the later years of his life in re-editing the literary section of his uncle's unpublished MSS., proving himself to be a very good editor. He died in 1843. Towards the close of the year Lamb removed to Enfield.

1827 In 1827 Mr. Gillman and Mr. Jameson superintended the collection of an edition of Coleridge's poems, published in three volumes in 1828, by Pickering. A much-revised edition appeared in 1829, "the last on which Coleridge was able to bestow personal care and attention." The edition of 1834 was arranged mainly at the discretion of H. N. Coleridge. A few poems were written in 1827, and among them (in February) *Work Without Hope*, in which are the lines on Winter, recalling by their happy personification the *Autumn* of Virgil or Keats.

> "And Winter, slumbering in the open air,
> Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
> And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
> Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing."

1826 To return to Lamb. In 1826 his *Popular Fallacies* series appeared in the numbers January to June, and September, after which date his connection with the *New Monthly* ceased except for a poem in June, 1827. In a letter to Wordsworth in September (1826) he writes: "I have at last broke the bonds of business a second time, never to put 'em on again. . . . I find I can live without the necessity of writing, tho' last year I fretted myself to a fever with the hauntings of being starved." This year died Gifford, the old enemy of

1827 Lamb and Hunt and their friends. In 1827 Lamb moved farther out of town to Enfield Chase, though he managed most days to get to the British Museum, to make extracts from the Garrick plays, which he contributed week by week to Hone's *Table Book*. This task he set himself as a continuation of his *Specimens*, published in 1808. His friend and Hunt's, Tom Hood, published his *Poems*: and, Navarino having been fought,

Greece was free, three years after the death of Byron, who worked so fervently to that end.

1828 The year 1828 was the first of the Peel-Wellington ministry of old Tories. Two journals which have since become famous, the *Athenæum* and the *Spectator*, were established, and Leigh Hunt produced a work which in many respects was ill-judged and gave much offence—*Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*. To Byron he makes the *amende honorable* in the *Autobiography* (beginning of chapter XIX.): "I am sorry I ever wrote a syllable respecting Lord Byron which might have been spared."

Scott's Journal for April 22nd records that the novelist met at a dinner party at Sotheby's "that extraordinary man Coleridge," who, after eating a good dinner, harangued the party mainly on the *Iliad*, which he considered a collection of poems by different authors. In fact, Coleridge was a Wolfian, though he had never read Wolf. Twice subsequently in *Table Talk* Coleridge reverts to his theory. John Sterling, then aged twenty-two, began his real intimacy with Coleridge in this year; but while Maurice and Kingsley remained faithful to Coleridge, Sterling later rejected him for Carlyle, who became his second Gamaiel. After the publication of his *Poetical and Dramatic Works*, Coleridge went across to Germany with Wordsworth and his daughter Dora on a tour up the Rhine Valley, which lasted the whole of July and the first fortnight of August. While they were staying near Bonn, the combined attraction of Wordsworth and Coleridge brought Niebuhr, Becker, Augustus Schlegel and many others to the house of their hostess. Coleridge, looking like a "dissenting minister," in black coat with shorts and silk stockings, and "starchless neck-cloth tied in a limp bow," naturally had most of the talk, first in somewhat unintelligible German, and afterwards, at the request of Schlegel, who understood English, in his native tongue. He greatly enjoyed and benefited by this tour, and on his return spent a pleasant week in October with the Lambs at Enfield Chase.

At Philadelphia, which seems to have a partiality for Lamb's work, there was published a pirated edition of the Elia Essays. *Blackwood* (December) gives us a reminder of Lamb's life-long ambition to write a successful play. It published *The Wife's Trial*, a play which had been written in 1827 and sent to Kemble at Covent Garden, but not accepted. "I made it . . . in the green lanes about Enfield." It now brought £20 to Lamb's pocket, as he informed Procter. Hunt's friend Bulwer published *Pelham* in this year.

1829 In 1829 died F. Schlegel, Coleridge's rival and fellow-worker in Shakespearian criticism: and Landor, another of Hunt's literary friends, published the second series of *Imaginary Conversations*. While Peel was carrying Catholic Emancipation in Ireland to a triumphant issue, Lamb, living with the Westwoods at Enfield Chase, was returning more particularly to poetry as a solace. His lines *On the death of an Infant*, were printed by T. Hood in the *Gem*, and another poem in *Blackwood*. Hood was by now making his mark, and in

1830 1830 established his *Comic Annual*, which ran for twelve years. Hazlitt, a man of capricious temper, the literary antithesis of Leigh Hunt, but supreme in his day as critic, died in 1829, within a few months of the the publication of two books which still make their appeal to the British public—Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, and Cobbett's *Rural Rides*. Moxon the poet had just been set up as a publisher by the banker-poet, Samuel Rogers. Friendly with Lamb, in 1833 he married Lamb's adopted daughter, Emma Isola. As his first venture, and as a kind of sample of the workmanship of the volumes he intended to produce, Moxon published a collection of *Album Verses* by Lamb. The critics clamoured condemnation, but Lamb was unmoved. "I am too old a militant for that. How noble, tho', in R.S. to come forward for an old friend who has treated him so unworthily." Southey had published in the *Times*, under

the editorship of Barnes, a poem to *Charles Lamb*, concluding with the lines :

> " I ween, old friend, thou art not worst bestéd
> When, with a maudlin eye and drunken aim,
> Dulness hath thrown a *Jerdan* at thy head."

This was Southey's reply to *Jerdan*, editor of the *Literary Gazette*, who could not but " marvel at the egotism which has preserved, and the conceit which has published ; " and his recantation to Lamb for the offending *Quarterly* article. The *Times* also published, among other contributions by Lamb, a review of an edition of *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which the memoir of Bunyan was written by Southey. *Blackwood* also published a farce which Lamb had written five years before, *The Pawnbroker's Daughter*. Apparently it had been submitted to Charles Mathews at the Adelphi Theatre and declined.

1830 In the summer of 1829 Coleridge had a long illness, and in the next May, Lamb reports in a letter that Coleridge " has had some severe attack," of which Coleridge himself later wrote to Thomas Poole that it had " brought him to the brink of the grave." With the letter to Poole was sent a presentation copy of *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, the last of Coleridge's works to be printed during his lifetime. It " procured for Coleridge," writes Mr. Campbell, " the name of high churchman and Tory, and it is this work which has often been credited with giving the first impulse to the influences which, a few years later, brought about the Oxford Movement." It reached a fourth edition in 1852. At the death of George IV. (June 26th, 1830) the pensions of the Royal Associates lapsed. Coleridge's annuity was not renewed, but a sum of £300 was ultimately handed to him by the Treasury. To 1830 also belongs the first publication under Coleridge's name of a poem, *The Devil's Walk*, which has a peculiar history. It was issued earlier in the year under the name of Professor Porson ; but in its first form it was contributed to the *Morning Post* of September 6th, 1779.

"The Squib," says Mr. T. J. Wise, "became immediately popular. For some reason . . . the authorship became attributed to Porson, who refrained personally from taking any step to rectify the error. The poem was the joint work of Coleridge and Southey." Writing to Southey under date December 9th, 1779, Coleridge says: "Our *Devils Thoughts* have been admired far and wide, most enthusiastically admired." That it was popular is proved by the many parodies and imitations which appeared. Of these Lamb's *Satan in Search of a Wife* (1831) was the most important. Lamb's title is obviously borrowed from Hannah More's *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* (1809).] Beyond this may be mentioned Shelley's *The Devil's Walk, a Ballad* (1812), and Byron's *The Devil's Drive*, admittedly taken from "Porson's *Devil's Walk*." One may still occasionally meet with a series of six illustrative plates published soon after *The Devil's Walk*.

1831

In 1832, the year of the great Reform Act (June 4th) which put the middle classes of this country in power, the work of Scott was done; and Coleridge and Lamb were soon to follow. While B. W. Procter published *English Songs*, and Bulwer *Eugene Aram*, Lamb worked intermittently for the *Athenæum*. Hunt published his *Poetical Works*, for which a very handsome list of subscribers of all shades of opinion appeared in the *Times*, no doubt by favour of Barnes, to whom the *Descent of Liberty* had been dedicated in 1815. Writing next year Bulwer said "those who have never read Mr. Hunt's poetry we beseech, for their own sakes, now to read it." There were re-issues of Hunt's poetry in 1844 and 1846.

1832

Next year (1833) Lamb, now aged about fifty-seven, removed to Bay Cottage, Church Street, Edmonton. He kept up his new connection with the *Athenæum*; wrote a sonnet for the *Times* to Samuel Rogers, and both prologue and epilogue to *The Wife*, a play by Sheridan Knowles, and published *Last Essays of*

1833

Elia with Moxon. Thomas Carlyle published *Sartor Resartus*, Tennyson a volume of *Poems*, and Coleridge, now apparently past writing himself, had the satisfaction of seeing the issue of his *Poems* by his son Hartley. His health recovered sufficiently for him to visit Cambridge in June, for the third meeting of the British Association. Of the persons he met there he was most interested in Mr. Faraday and Mr. Thirlwall; and in Thirlwall's rooms at Trinity he talked freely, specimens of his Conversations being afterwards (1836) recorded by his friend and old schoolfellow, C. V. Le Grice. In this year he was visited by Harriet Martineau and R. W. Emerson. Of her interview, the former wrote in her *Autobiography*: "I am glad to have seen his weird face and heard his dreamy voice; and my notion of possession, prophecy, of involuntary speech from involuntary brain action, has been clearer since." Emerson, visiting Europe as a young man of thirty, unhappily aired his Unitarianism in the presence of the Orthodox champion, and his visit was a failure.

1834 On July 25th, 1834, Coleridge died in Mr. Gillman's house, at the age of sixty-two, and was buried in Highgate churchyard. "Mr. Green," writes his daughter Sara, "who had been so long the partner of his literary labours, was with him at the last, and to him on the last evening of his life he repeated a certain part of his religious philosophy, which he was especially anxious to have accurately recorded." The death of his friend was a fatal blow to Lamb: it preyed upon his mind. For the last six months of his life he brooded over the sad event, and would constantly murmur, "Coleridge is dead." His own death released him at Edmonton on December 27th, at the age of fifty-nine years and eleven months.

The following is Wainewright's account in the *London Magazine* of Lamb's last days.

"His death was somewhat sudden; yet he was not without wormy forebodings. Some of them he expressed,

as you may recollect, Dear Proprietor, at your hospitable table, the——of last——. I accompanied him home at rather an early hour in the morning, and being benignantly invited to enter, I entered. His smoking materials were ready on the table. I cannot smoke, therefore during the exhaustion of a pipe, I soothed my nerves with a single tumbler of * * * and water. He recurred several times to his sensation of approaching death, not gloomily—but as of a retirement from business, a pleasant journey to a sunnier climate. The serene solemnity of his voice overcame me; the tears poured thick from their well-heads; I tried to rally myself and him: but my throat swelled and stopped my words.

"His pipe had gone out; he held it to the flame of the candle, but in vain.

"It was empty! His mind had been wandering. He smiled placidly, and knocked out the ashes. 'Even so silently,' said he, 'may my fiery spark steal from its vehicle of ashes and clay!'

"I felt oppressed. Many things had contributed largely to break and daunt my once elastic spirits. I rose to go: he shook me by the hand: neither of us spoke: with that I went my way—*and I saw him no more.*

"How much is lost to this miserable world, which knew him not while it possessed him! I knew him—I, who am left to weep,—Heu! Eliam! Vale!"

And so passed away the man of "almost immaterial legs," with his "head worthy of Aristotle," and eyes brown, kindly, quick, observant, the man of the "sweet smile, with a touch of sadness in it,"—and his place knew him no more.

CHAPTER V

1834—1859

Hunt alone. Success at last

A Successful play—A pension—*Imagination and Fancy*, and other popular Books—*Autobiography*—The End.

1834 While living at Chelsea, Leigh Hunt was busy with a variety of literary work. From time to time contributing to the *Edinburgh* and *Westminster Reviews*, he produced a good deal of *The Town*, wrote the poem *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, the *Legend of Florence*, and some other plays, and tried to continue the *Monthly Repository*. About this time he became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle, whom he sums up admirably in the *Autobiography* (chapter XXIV.). Perhaps his chief effort at this time was the establishment in 1834 of the *London Journal*, which ran for about two years. "Our object," says Hunt characteristically, "was to put more sunshine into the feelings of our countrymen, more goodwill and good humour, a greater habit of being pleased with one another and with everything." It was a miscellany of essays, criticisms, and passages from books, but it was "of too æsthetical a nature for cheap readers in these days." Landor contributed to its passages, and Hunt himself published in it *Blue-Stocking Revels* or *The Feast of the Violets*. The play *A Legend of Florence* was written in six weeks, only to be declined by the principal theatrical manager of the time. In February, 1840, however, it made a success at Covent Garden, and its performance was twice witnessed by Queen Victoria, who some years later had it performed at Windsor Castle. Among other plays written at Chelsea was *Lovers'*


Leigh Hunt

Amazements, which was succesfully performed in 1858, a year before its author's death.

The break-up of the Christ's Hospital trio by the death of the two closer of the three friends, took place three years before the accession of Queen Victoria, while Dickens was writing *Sketches by Boz* and Bulwer his *Last Days of Pompeii*. Hunt was left with perhaps the best of his work yet to do, to survive the others by twenty-two years, live well into the Victorian era, read Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and die in 1859.

The last piece from Lamb's hand to be published was a short album piece, *On the Death of Coleridge*, printed in the *New Monthly* in February, 1835. In this year, according to a custom then prevalent, a book of specimens of Coleridge's *Table Talk* was prepared by Henry Nelson Coleridge, and published in two volumes by John Murray. The contents are arranged chronologically, beginning with December, 1822, and ending with a talk of July 10th, 1834, a fortnight prior to the speaker's death. He concludes: "I own I wish life and strength had been spared to me to complete my Philosophy. For, as God hears me, the originating, continuing, and sustaining wish and design in my heart were to exhort the glory of His name; and, which is the same thing in other words, to promote the improvement of mankind. But *visum aliter Deo*, and His will be done." Six editions of *Table Talk* were published by 1884. It is a book which beginners in Coleridge will do well to ponder: it sums up admirably many of the thoughts which the master had most at heart, and the sanity and depth of most of its criticisms are indisputable.

1835

For completeness' sake it would be well here to notice in order the posthumous publications of Coleridge's works. Moxon published (1836) in two volumes a collection of his *Letters and Conversations*, which reached a third edition in 1864. *Literary remains in Prose and Verse* were collected and edited by H. N. Coleridge, and issued in four volumes between 1836 and 1839. The

same hand edited from the author's MS. *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* (Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures), which, first issued by Pickering, reached a fourth edition in 1863. The same publisher, with Mrs. H. N. Coleridge as editor, issued *Notes and Lectures upon Shakspere and other English Poets* in 1849. This book consists largely of matter obtained from T. Payne Collier's transcripts of the lectures, and from Crabb Robinson's Diary. The lectures were delivered in 1811-12, 1813-14, and 1818. *Osorio* (later *Remorse*), as originally written in 1797, was published in 1873. Finally Mr. Heinemann published in two volumes (1895) *Letters of Coleridge*. These were edited by the grandson of the poet, *Ernest Hartley Coleridge, the majority of the letters appearing then for the first time. This may be regarded as a definitive edition of the *Letters*, and no more moving volume of letters was ever penned. A similar edition of Coleridge's poetry is *The Complete Poetical Works* (1912), also edited by E. H. Coleridge in two volumes, the first containing the Poems, the second the Dramatic Works. It is published by the Clarendon Press. A complete collected edition of Coleridge's Prose Works has yet to be produced.

The part of Lamb's writings on which, along with the Essays, his fame mainly rests—his *Letters*—had yet to be given to the public, who already to some extent knew and loved the Elia Essays. *The Letters of Charles Lamb*—the first of many collections—was admirably edited by T. Noon Talfourd in 1837, so that a treasure of English literature was brought to the light of day at the beginning of the reign of Victoria and the life of Swinburne.

1837

In these days, when England was being shaken by the agitation for the People's Charter, and when Ainsworth and Bulwer were writing novels like *Jack Shepherd* and *Money*, Leigh Hunt was editing the *Monthly Repository*, and falling back on his Italian experiences and reading,

*Died March, 1920.

and writing his play, *A Legend of Florence*, which, as has been said, was successfully produced in 1840, with Charles Mathews and Miss Tree in the cast.

1840 In this year (1840)—which carries the mind boldly forward into modern literature as the birth year of Thomas Hardy—Henry Sumner Maine left Christ's Hospital for Pembroke College, Cambridge, entering on the great legal career which was to give us, among other epoch-making books, his *Ancient Law*. With him also left Hugo D. Harper, who was to make his mark as Headmaster of Sherborne School between 1851 and 1877. He was two years senior at school to an even greater Headmaster, Wm. Haig Brown, who made the new Charterhouse School at Godalming, and, as the result of this experience, was mainly instrumental in transplanting Christ's Hospital from Newgate Street to Horsham, in Sussex. He died in 1907.

1841 In the next year (1841), when the Free Trade agitation was beginning under Cobden, died Thomas Barnes, after a long and successful administration of the *Times* newspaper. Carlyle was now producing of his best, *Hero Worship* and *Past and Present*; Hood's *Song of the Shirt* will always remain a label of this period of England's industrial development; and on the death of Southey, close associate of Coleridge and Lamb, Wordsworth, the best friend and mentor of both, became Poet Laureate.

Lamb, whose literary work it must always be remembered was a *πάρεργον*, and who managed to supply the needs of his sister and himself by his work at the India House, never received any endowment. Coleridge, who well knew the difficulty of earning a livelihood by the pen, and who was constitutionally incapable of devoting himself either to an ordinary career or to authorship, accepted the monetary aid of the Wedgwoods, and later an annuity as a Royal Associate. Leigh Hunt also now received monetary help. But his case was very different from that of Coleridge. If any man ever

laboured hard in his calling, it was Hunt. From the age of about twenty onwards he was the professional man of letters. Morning, noon and night, year in and year out, he read and wrote; and few authors have produced so much of so high a level with so slender a monetary reward. But the day of wealthy authorship had not yet dawned. After the publication (1844) of a new
1844 edition of his *Poetical Works* (containing many new poems such as *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, and reprinted in 1846), a pension of £120 a year was munificently offered him by Sir Percy Shelley, and accepted. Twice also during Melbourne's administration he had received a grant—£200 on each occasion—from the Royal Bounty Fund. Three years later (1847) he received a pension from the Crown of £200 a year, so that his remaining years, after his perpetual money troubles, were made comparatively easy. To cap the grant of a pension, a theatrical benefit was arranged by Charles Dickens and others, both at Birmingham and Liverpool, the address being written by Talfourd and Sir E. Bulwer. These tokens of public approval must have come as a very welcome relief to the long series of journalistic failures he had sustained. After removing from Chelsea he lived at Kennington, and wrote *The Palfrey*, *Imagination and Fancy*, *Wit and Humour*, *Stories from the Italian Poets*, *A Jar of Honey*, the remainder of *The Town*, and the greater part of the *Autobiography*.

If it were possible to select one work as specially characteristic of so voluminous an author, probably *Imagination and Fancy* would be that work. This was
1845 published in 1845, and re-issued in 1846 and 1852: its companion volume *Wit and Humour* appeared in 1846. The suggestion for the two books seems to have come from Hazlitt's lectures of 1818 and 1819. Of *Imagination and Fancy* the author writes in his preface: "The book is intended for all lovers of poetry and the sister arts—and most especially for the youngest and the oldest." For intelligent boys and girls of the age of

fifteen and onward there could be no better introduction to the critical reading of English poetry. In 1860 a writer in the *North British Review* well says: "After Coleridge there is no critic to whom the young student of poetry has so much reason to be grateful as to Leigh Hunt." This is true, and it is high praise of the two old schoolfellows, one of whom sat at the feet of Boyer, and the other inherited—though it is true he sometimes belittled them—Boyer's traditions of instruction in English.

Hood died in 1845, and his collected *Poems* were published next year, the year of the marriage of Robert
1846 and Elizabeth Browning, of the Repeal of the Corn Laws by Peel, and of the publication of Hunt's *Stories from the Italian Poets*. Another favourite book by Hunt was published next year—*Men, Women and*
1847 *Books*. On May 20th died Mary Lamb, having survived her brother (who had provided her with an annuity) by thirteen years. From Hunt's pen *A Jar of Honey from Mt. Hybla*—a discursive and interesting book about Sicily—followed in 1848, the year of European revolutions, and also *The Town*, a London lover's account of the thousand moving associations which exist in its quarters, streets, and buildings for an imaginative man.

1848 In the two years 1847 and 1848 the output of Christ's Hospital included C. E. Searle, who in 1880 was elected Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and D'Arcy Thompson, who, after an experience of school teaching in Edinburgh, became Professor of Greek at Galway, one of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland established by Peel in 1845. His *Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster* is a sympathetic, original, and eloquent survey of the work of a schoolmaster, and is not likely to be forgotten. In the world of English letters these were the times of the publication of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Tennyson's *Princess*, Matthew Arnold's *Poems*,
1849 Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*, and Ruskin's *Seven Lamps*. Hartley Coleridge died

in 1849, having survived his father by only fifteen years.

1850 And now with the year 1850 we reach a great poetical divide. Full of years and honours died Wordsworth at the age of eighty, and Tennyson assumed the Laureate's mantle, especially distinguished as the author of *In Memoriam* published this year. A youth of sixteen when the nineteenth century opened, Leigh Hunt had had ample experience of men and letters during the first half of the century, and was therefore fully justified in publishing his *Autobiography*, which sheds an interesting light on much of the literature of the period. This most frank and companionable of books made its appearance in three volumes, and was revised and edited with an introduction by his eldest son, Thornton Leigh Hunt. It was followed next year by *Table Talk*.

1857 The publication of Dickens's *Bleak House*, with the character of Harold Skimpole drawn largely from Hunt, was begun in 1852 and completed in 1853, when were published Kingsley's *Hypatia* and Hunt's *Religion of the Heart*. The shadow of the Crimean War did

1853 not militate against the production by Kingsley of *Westward Ho* (1855) or of the *Old Court Suburb*, and *Stories in Verse* by Hunt—the two last books from his pen. He lived to read Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*; but whether he made acquaintance with Barnes's *Huomely Rhymes*, or Darwin's *Origin of Species*, or Eliot's *Adam Bede*, or Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*—all books which may fairly be classed as modern—is doubtful, for his health was now rapidly declining. On August 29th, 1859—in the same

1859 year as Macaulay and De Quincey—he died at Putney, and was buried at Kensal Green.

His was a unique figure. "His whole existence and his habit of mind was essentially literary," says Thornton Hunt. In the earlier half of his life his house had been noted for the tasteful ease of its conversation and recreation, music usually forming a staple in both the talk and the diversion. B. W. Procter in *Recollections of Men of*

Letters (1877) mentions the evenings at his house. "Hunt never gave dinners, but his suppers of cold meat and salad were cheerful and pleasant; sometimes the cheerfulness (after a 'wassail bowl') soared into noisy merriment. I remember one Christmas or New Year's evening, when we sat there till two or three o'clock in the morning, and when the jokes and stories and imitations so overcame me that I was nearly falling off my chair with laughter. This was mainly owing to the comic imitations of Coulson, who was usually so grave a man. We used to refer to him as an encyclopædia, so perpetually, indeed, that Hunt always spoke of him as 'The Admirable Coulson.' This *vis comica* left him for the most part in later life, when he became a distinguished lawyer." Hunt attracted many visitors by his personal qualities and the kindness of his heart. As life wore on, his tendency to seclude himself in his study grew upon him. His outlook on things was chiefly through the window of books. Disagreeable charges made against him were mainly due to his early disregard of appearances: and yet "the mastering trait in his character was conscientiousness, which was carried to extremes." His avowed doctrine, which finds frequent expression in his works, was the cultivation of cheerfulness—no mean merit in a man: for as R. L. Stevenson well remarks, "Gentleness and cheerfulness are the perfect virtues." Life and animation were *the* characteristics of Hunt as a man. For a personal description of him to whom can we more safely go than to his son? "He was rather tall, as straight as an arrow, and looked slenderer than he really was. His hair was black and shining, and slightly inclined to wave: his head was high, his forehead straight and white, his eyes black and sparkling, his general complexion dark. There was in his whole carriage and manner an extraordinary degree of life."

Coleridge and Lamb had been voluminous correspondents, and their letters, more especially, of course, those of Lamb, are still excellent reading. It was due

to Hunt also that his correspondence should be published,
1862 and this was done under the editorship of Thornton Hunt, in two volumes, in 1862.

And here the story of the life and works of the three literary Blue-Coat boys closes; but two echoes from the past should be recorded. In 1882 died Miss Kelly, and in 1891 Mrs. Moxon, whom, as Emma Isola, Lamb had adopted as his daughter.

CHAPTER VI

1794—1862

Appreciations of Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt

For a period of sixty-eight years, from the first published work of Coleridge to the last of Leigh Hunt, the three writers who are the subject of this memoir were among the protagonists in the greatest pageant that English literature has yet known. All three held high places in the goodly company of authors of the epoch, and did yeoman's service in moulding and pleasing the thought and literary taste of the British public. To see where they stand, we should recall in one sentence the great names among whom they rightly rank. These are: Southey, Burke, More, Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, Jane Austen, Campbell, Tennyson, De Quincey, Hood, Marryat, Ainsworth, the Brownings, Dickens, Carlyle, Lytton, D'Israeli, Macaulay, Ruskin, J. S. Mill, C. Brontë, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, C. Kinglsey, Landor, A. Trollope, Charles Reade, George Eliot, and Matthew Arnold. Between them the three made notable contributions to philosophy, poetry, literary criticism, drama, essay writing, and letter writing. Consider only the department of the drama. The joint contributions of Coleridge, Lamb and Hunt is surpassed by the work of no three men: Coleridge as interpreter of Shakespeare, Lamb of pre-Shakespearian dramatists, and Hunt of contemporary stage-craft, are each in his own line, unique. Of the three Coleridge was, beyond doubt, the giant. Mr. Dykes Campbell's brief summary of Coleridge's life and work is happily phrased and eminently

just. He claims that Coleridge's fall is less wonderful than his recovery. His day consisted of a brief dawn of unsurpassed promise, " a trouble as of clouds and weeping rain," and then a long summer evening's work. Its after-glow is still in the sky. Men and women loved him, honoured him, and followed him : this power of attraction is itself conclusive proof of very rare qualities. His gifts were very exceptional, and enabled him in a few working years to interpret German philosophy to English audiences, to write three or four poems unique for imagination and expression, and to base Church of England theology and literary criticism on sound foundations. As Richard Garnett says : " Coleridge is undoubtedly the greatest critic that Britain has yet produced, not as a scholiast, but in the far higher capacity of a man of insight." Lamb, too, though a *litterateur* only in after-business hours, filled a niche in English letters which no one else could fill. Had he been a whole-time writer it is doubtful whether he would have done better. His genius, as he himself admits, was discursive, and was dependent on his work-a-day experience and even on the calamities of his early life. Hunt, in poetry or prose, was not an original genius in the sense of being a great inventor ; but he was second to none in putting before his audience the best of what he found in his phenomenal travels in the wide world of literature. He covered an extensive field in his appreciations, and it is on a combination of bulk and quality that his fame should rest. With Coleridge and Lamb it is different : one can point in the one case to the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* and the *Biographia Literaria*, and say, " Here is Coleridge condensed " ; and the same of Lamb's *Elia Essays* and his *Letters*. One cannot do this in the case of Leigh Hunt, and the result is that his hold on modern readers is more precarious. He was a good poet, but it is difficult now to find on sale a copy of his poems : and it is in selections from his journalistic work—first-rate work of its class—that he is to-day mostly read.

There is in some quarters to-dav a readiness to decry Leigh Hunt. Tradition has much to do with this attitude. In his day he suffered much from the fact that, at any rate between 1815 and 1830, he was a victim of the literary ruffianism of the Tory press, more especially the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*. He was not the only writer who felt it: Southey complains of "that sort of bitterness (in criticism) which tends directly to wound a man in his feelings, and injure him in his fame and fortune." Something of his rightful position is assigned to him by Gerald Massey in *The North British Review*. "This beautiful poet, this exquisite critic and essayist, this most amiable, accomplished and high-minded man, was denounced, not merely as an ignorant democrat—but as the most hateful, contemptible, nay, loathsome of men." It is not necessary here to quote further the high praise of men of the stamp of Macaulay, Thackeray, and J. R. Lowell; but one sentence from Lord Lytton may be added. "Something not to be replaced would be struck out of the gentler literature of our century, could the mind of Leigh Hunt cease to speak to us in a book."

It will be well here to append a few criticisms of the works of Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, as each appeared as a writer to the other two, selecting only such as appear just to-day; and then a few estimates by other critics.

Of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* Lamb wrote to Southey: "I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. . . . I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

> 'A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware—'

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings—*The Ancient Mariner* plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem *Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, which is yet one of the finest written." Of Coleridge personally,

he said to Crabb Robinson : " He is a fine fellow, in spite of all his faults and weaknesses." Of Coleridge the talker, Lamb writes to Barton (1823) : " I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore—half the poetry of England castellated and clustered in Gloster Place ! It was a delightful even ! Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk, had all the talk, and let 'em talk as silly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb, while Apollo lectured, on his and their fine art." Leigh Hunt's opinions of Coleridge are given in *Imagination and Fancy* and in his *Autobiography*. In the former he wrote : " The truth is, that both his politics and theosophy were at the mercy of a discursive genius, intellectually bold but educationally timid, which, anxious, or rather willing, to bring conviction and speculation together, meeting all points as it went, and throwing the subtlest glancing lights on many, ended in satisfying nobody, and concluding nothing. . . . (He was the finest dreamer, the most eloquent talker, and the most original thinker of his day ; but for want of complexional energy, did nothing with all the vast *prose* part of his mind but help the Germans give a subtler tone to criticism, and sow a few valuable seeds of thought in minds worthy to receive them. . . . His poetry is another matter. It is so beautiful, and was so quietly content with its beauty, making no call on the critics, and receiving hardly any notice, that people are but now beginning to awake to a full sense of its merits. Of pure poetry, strictly so called, that is to say, consisting of nothing but its essential self, without conventional and perishing helps, he was the greatest master of his time. . . . Coleridge, though a born poet, was in his style and general musical feeling the disciple partly of Spenser, and partly of the fine old English ballad-writers in the collection of Bishop Percy." In the latter work he says : " Spenser himself might have gone to Highgate to hear him talk,

and thank him for his *Ancient Mariner*." Of the former part of this estimate we have already said that it does less than justice to the wide and deep influence of Coleridge's prose writings.)

Lamb's poetical powers and talents were highly esteemed by Coleridge. Some verses written by Coleridge to Lamb in 1796 may be quoted :

> " Dear Charles ! whilst yet thou wast a babe, I ween
> That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount
> Hight Castalie : and (sureties of thy faith)
> That Pity and Simplicity stood by,
> And promised for thee, that thou shouldst renounce
> The world's low cares and lying vanities,
> Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
> And washed and sanctified to Poesy."

Later, in a letter to Godwin, Coleridge writes : " He (Lamb) has an affectionate heart, a mind *sui generis* ; his taste acts so as to appear like the unmechanic simplicity of an instinct—in brief he is worth a hundred men of mere talent." In a highly characteristic conversation, reported in the *Monthly Repository* in 1835, Coleridge said : " Charles Lamb has more totality and individuality of character than any man I know, or have ever known in all my life. In most men we distinguish between the different powers of their intellect as one being predominant over the other. The genius of Wordsworth is greater than his talent, though considerable. The talent of Southey is greater than his genius, though respectable : and so on. But in Charles Lamb it is altogether one ; his genius is talent, and his talent is genius, and his heart is whole and as one as his head. The wild words that come from him sometimes on religious subjects would shock you from the mouth of any other man, but from him they seem mere flashes of fireworks. If an argument seem to his reason not fully true, he bursts out in that odd desecrating way : yet his will, the inward man, is, I well know, profoundly religious. Watch him, when alone, and you will find him with either a Bible,

or an old divine, or an old English poet; in such is his pleasure."

Of this sketch Mr. Bertram Dobell says: "The value of this notice consists, of course, in its quotation of Coleridge's character of Lamb. I do not think that any editor of either Lamb or Coleridge has ever before reproduced it. It is needless for me to dwell upon the interest of the passage, which is honourable alike to the poet and the essayist. It sums up, as only Coleridge could have done, the essential and distinguishing qualities of its subject, and does it in a way with which Lamb himself would have been delighted. Coleridge, as we know, did not always succeed in keeping his utterances about Lamb entirely free from a suspicion of patronising indulgence; but in these words, which were probably spoken not long before his death, we find nothing but unstinted praise and cordial appreciation of his life-long friend. Saving the one regrettable misunderstanding between them, there is little in the history of English men of letters which is so beautiful as the mutual affection which existed between these two, who, in their personal characters, and in the nature of their genius, were so unlike, but who were, nevertheless, bound together by the strongest links of love and friendship. Not as a poet, not as a dramatist, but first as an essay-writer and second as a letter-writer Lamb will live. How slowly he matured and how slowly he found his vogue with the public: how definitely assured is his place in English letters. To take things tranquilly and quaintly . . . was the very essence of his character. . . . He was a keen observer of life, of things that were personal, local, that had come in his way for years; it was from these that he derived his happiest inspirations. Old associations were the backbone of the *Essays of Elia*." This is well said by Mr. Dircks: "With Lamb we love to know the details of his everyday life, where he walked, whom he entertained with cold mutton and stout, to whom he wrote, with whom he lost his patience, and how much he made by his

essays or lost by his plays. And knowing all this and much more, we revel the more in his quaint and human writings." Leigh Hunt may also be quoted from verses written to Lamb in the *Examiner*.

> "O thou, whom old Homer would call, were he living,
> Home-lover, thought-feeder, abundant-joke-giving;
> Whose charity springs from deep knowledge, nor swerves
> Into mere self-reflections, or scornful reserves;
> In short, who wert made for two centuries ago,
> When Shakespeare drew men, and to write was to know."

Perhaps his best prose utterance on his friend was in the *London Journal* in 1835. "Mr. Lamb was a humanist, in the most universal sense of the term. His imagination was not great, and he also wanted sufficient vigour of impulse to render his poetry as good as his prose; but, as a prose-writer, and within the wide circuit of humanity, no man ever took a more complete range than he. He had felt, thought and suffered so much, that he literally had intolerance for nothing, and never seemed to have it, but when he supposed the sympathies of men, who might have known better, to be imperfect. He was a wit and observer of the first order, as far as the world around him was concerned, and society in its existing state: for as to anything theoretical or transcendental, no man ever had less care for it, or less power. . . . He was only at his ease in the old arms of humanity; and she loved and comforted him like one of her wisest, though weakest children. His life had experienced great and peculiar sorrows; but he kept up a balance between those and his consolations, by the goodness of his heart and the ever-willing sociality of his humour."

An admirable contrast of the characters of Coleridge and Lamb as they appeared to the writer in 1825 was contributed to the *Monthly Repository* for 1835. "The character of Charles Lamb's person was in total contrast to that of Coleridge. His strongly-marked, deeply-lined face, furrowed more by feeling than age, like an engraving by Blake, where every line told its separate story, or like

a finely chiselled head done by some master in marble, where every touch of the chisel marked some new attribute. Yet withal there was so much sweetness and playfulness lurking about the corners of the mouth, that it gave to the face the extraordinary character of flexible granite. His figure was small even to spareness. It was as if the soul within, in its constant restless activity, had worn the body to its smallest possibility of existence. There was an equal amount of difference in his conversation from that of Coleridge as there was in his person. It was not an uninterrupted flow, but a periodical production of sentences, short, telling, full of wit, philosophy, at times slightly caustic, though that is too strong a word for satire which was of the most good-natured kind. There was another essential point of difference. In Coleridge might be detected a certain consciousness of being listened to, and at times an evident getting up of phrases, a habit almost impossible to be avoided in a practised conversationalist. In Charles Lamb there was a perfect absence of this ; all that he said was choice in its humour, true in its philosophy ; but the racy freshness that was like an atmosphere of country air about it, was better than all ; the perfect simplicity, absence of all conceit, child-like enjoyment of his own wit, and the sweetness and benevolence that played about the rugged face, gave to it a charm in no way inferior to the poetical enjoyment derived from the more popular conversation of his friend. Another difference might be observed : that Coleridge's metaphysics seemed based in the study of his own individual nature more than the nature of others, while Charles Lamb seemed not for a moment to rest on self, but to throw his whole soul into the nature of circumstances and things around him. These differences served only to heighten the enjoyment of witnessing the long-enduring genuine friendship existing between the two—the three (for why should 'Mary' be excluded ?)—wrought out of mingling sympathies and felicitous varieties. In Charles Lamb,

as in Coleridge, at times there was a melancholy in the face which partook of the nature of his individual character. It was not dissatisfaction; it was not gloom: but it seemed to say that he had had more affection, more gushing tenderness of feeling, than he had met with objects on whom to expend it."

Leigh Hunt is unfortunately not estimated in any published work by Coleridge or Lamb. He was considerably the junior of both, was little acquainted personally with Coleridge, and politically in a different camp; and even of Lamb, with whom his literary dealings were fairly extensive, he was not a very intimate friend. In 1812, a conversation between Lamb and Hunt is reported in which Lamb "praised Hunt's remarks on Fuseli (a praise H. seemed to relish)." Crabb Robinson the same year writes of Hunt as "an enthusiast, very well-intentioned. He talked on the theatre, and showed on such points great superiority over the others." "The others" included Charles Lamb, Barron Field, and Thomas Barnes. It is obvious that Lamb was very well disposed to Hunt, for when Hunt was in prison he was one of his most frequent visitors, "going to comfort him in all weathers, hail or sunshine, in daylight or darkness, even in the dreadful frost and snow of the beginning of 1814." Mr. E. V. Lucas ventures the opinion that "Hunt was not at the time, if ever, a very intimate friend, comparable with Coleridge or Manning." From the contemporaries of Coleridge and Lamb it is hard to elicit much as to Hunt, mainly, one may assume, because his strong political opinions made him unpopular. Lamb, however, was a staunch supporter of Hunt. We find the latter at Lamb's famous Thursday evenings at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, admirably described (though with some anachronisms) by Talfourd. Hunt is represented as discussing philosophical subjects with Charles Lloyd in a corner of the room, while Lamb, Godwin, Burney, Crabb Robinson, and others are serious over the whist tables. To "the severe logic of the melancholy reasoner"

(Lloyd), we have opposed " its graceful evasion by tricksome fantasy of the joyous poet " (Hunt). Hazlitt says that Hunt's conversation is " like champagne," and Procter notes that the meeting of Lamb and Hunt was liable to produce a bout of repartee. The Hunts, the Lambs, and the Novellos used to entertain each other's friends in rotation, " the only refreshment, by mutual agreement, being bread and cheese and celery, and beer." Crabb Robinson disliked Hunt. In 1818, his diary entry referring to Hunt is : " He, tho' a man I very much dislike, did not displease me this evening. He has improved in manliness and healthfulness, since I saw him last some years ago. There was a glee about him which evinced high spirits, if not perfect health, and I envied his vivacity. He imitated Hazlitt capitally, Wordsworth not so well.—Hunt, who did not sympathise with Talfourd, opposed him playfully, and that I liked him for." In his *Letter to Southey* Lamb deliberately risked unpopularity by defending Hazlitt and Hunt against Southey's strictures. Westwood's recollection of Hunt's place in the wit-combats of giants at Enfield, is : " parcel, genial, parcel democratic, with as much rabid politics on his lips as honey from Mount Hybla." While Lamb was alive, Hunt did not come to his own. It was justly observed by Mr. Lucas—if the remark is limited to the life-time of Lamb and Hazlitt—that " It was Leigh Hunt's fate never as a writer to be quite good enough : with Hazlitt on one side and Lamb on the other, there was no actual need for much of his work." It is true that several essays by Hunt might be taken for Lamb's work, and there are several papers about which it is still doubtful to which of the two writers they belong. In the writing of his prose works Hunt was often indebted to either Lamb or Hazlitt for ideas. But Mr. Lucas is equally right when he asserts that : " Within his limits, on his own ground, he could say exquisite things, full of profound discernment and sympathy. Not until Walter Pater's essay in 1889 was Lamb so delicately and tenderly treated again : "

and in another place, " It is Leigh Hunt's special gift to find excellence in good men and good books. As a constructive critic he may not have been of the first rank, but as an understanding appreciator, a finger-post to beauty, he has had no superior."



THE LAMB MEDAL.

Selections

from

The Writings of

COLERIDGE,

LAMB and

LEIGH HUNT

SELECTIONS

LAMB, 1796

To SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

DEAR COLERIDGE.—Make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life; so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me if I had it.

When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor, Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em; a guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the work. The extracts from it in the *Monthly Review*, and the short passages in your *Watchman*, seem to me much superior to anything in his partnership account with Lovell. Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were nobler lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from *Religious Musings;* but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that paper: it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of "dissonant mood" to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the *Evidences of Religion.* There is need of multiplying such books a hundredfold in this philosophical age, to *prevent* converts to atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards.

Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy living with his mother, a widow lady. He will, of course, initiate him quickly in "whatsoever things are honest, lovely, and of good report." He has cut Miss Hunt completely: the poor girl is very ill on the occasion; but he laughs at it, and justifies himself by saying, "she does not see me laugh." Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol. My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse, at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was; and many a vagary my imagination played

with me, enough to make a volume, if all were told. My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you. I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which, if I finish, I publish. White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from *Vortigern*) "Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow," etc.; a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw. Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

The Sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry; but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals.

TO MY SISTER

If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind
And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well
And waters clear of Reason; and for me,
Let this my verse the poor atonement be—
My verse, which thou to praise wert e'er inclined
Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
No blemish. Thou to me didst ever show
Kindest affection; and would'st oft-times lend
An ear to the desponding love-sick lay,
Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C——, I conclude.

Yours sincerely, LAMB.

Your *Conciones ad Populum* are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

Write when convenient—not as a task, for there is nothing in this letter to answer.

We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C., not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

My civic and poetic compliments to Southey, if at Bristol. Why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards!—the small minnow, I!

REFLECTIONS ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT (*i.e.* CLEVEDON)

Sermoni propriora.—Hor.

Low was our pretty Cot: our tallest Rose
Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
The Sea's faint murmur. In the open air
Our Myrtles blossom'd; and across the porch
Thick Jasmins twined: the little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call
The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
Then eyed our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And sigh'd, and said, it was a Blesséd Place.
And we *were* blesséd. Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings) in whisper'd tones
I've said to my Belovéd, "Such, sweet Girl!
The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
When the Soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd,
And the Heart listens!"

But the time, when first
From that low Dell, steep up the stony Mount
I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
Oh! what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-brow'd,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And seats, and lawns, the Abbey and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire;
The Channel *there*, the Islands and white sails,
Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean—
It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
Had built him there a Temple: the whole World
Seem'd *imag'd* in its vast circumference:

No *wish* profan'd my overwhelméd heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury,—to be!
Ah! quiet Dell! dear Cot, and Mount sublime!
I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use?
Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:
And he that works me good with unmov'd face,
Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
My benefactor, not my brother man!
Yet even this, this cold beneficence
Praise, praise it, O my Soul! oft as thou scann'st
The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
Who sigh for Wretchedness, yet shun the Wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies!
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
Rests the tir'd mind, and, waking, loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot!
Thy Jasmin and thy window-peeping Rose,
And Myrtles fearless of the mild sea air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes—sweet Abode!
Ah! —had none greater! and that all had such!
It might be so—but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father! Let Thy Kingdom come!

LAMB, 1796

THE GRANDAME

Written in memory of his grandmother, Mary Field, housekeep at "Blakesmoor in H——shire."

ON the green hill top,
Hard by the house of prayer, a modest roof,
And not distinguish'd from its neighbour-barn,
Save by a slender-tapering length of spire,
The Grandame sleeps. A plain stone barely tells
The name and date to the chance passenger.

For lowly born was she, and long had'eat,
Well-earn'd, the bread of service:—hers was else
A mountain spirit, one that entertain'd
Scorn of base action, deed dishonourable,
Or aught unseemly. I remember well
Her reverend image; I remember, too,
With what a zeal she served her master's house;
And how the prattling tongue of garrulous age
Delighted to recount the oft-told tale
Or anecdote domestic. Wise she was,
And wondrous skill'd in genealogies,
And could in apt and voluble terms discourse
Of births, of titles, and alliances;
Of marriages, and intermarriages;
Relationship remote, or near of kin;
Of friends offended, family disgraced—
Maiden high-born, but wayward, disobeying
Parental strict injunction, and regardless
Of unmix'd blood, and ancestry remote,
Stooping to wed with one of low degree.
But these are not thy praises; and I wrong
Thy honour'd memory, recording chiefly
Things light or trivial. Better 'twere to tell,
How with a nobler zeal, and warmer love,
She served her *heavenly Master*. I have seen
That reverend form bent down with age and pain,
And rankling malady. Yet not for this
Ceased she to praise her Maker, or withdrew
Her trust in him, her faith, an humble hope—
So meekly had she learn'd to bear her cross—
For she had studied patience in the school
Of Christ; much comfort she had thence derived,
And was a follower of the NAZARENE.

COLERIDGE, 1797

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON

Written at Nether Stowey, and addressed to Charles Lamb, of the India House, London.

WELL, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,

Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge; —that branchless ash,
Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
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! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hungered after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my Friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil thē Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaz
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watched

Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above,
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it! deeming, its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had crossed the mighty orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
Flew creeking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

COLERIDGE, 1797

KUBLA KHAN

Written in a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Lynton.

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!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from 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.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
" By thy long grey beard and glittering eye!
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
" There was a ship," quoth he.
" Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

" The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong.
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a sound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the Mariner's hollo!

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A Speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun
Like restless gossameres?

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye.
And thy skinny hand, so brown,"—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone, on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea.
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked at me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

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.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blesséd ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan worked the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

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.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow."

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

" But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ? "

SECOND VOICE

" Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him."

FIRST VOICE

" But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ? "

SECOND VOICE

" The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated."

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

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 countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly was it strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light :

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer :
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?"

"Strange by my faith!" the Hermit said—
"And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along:
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!"
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit ;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
" Ha ! ha ! " quoth he, " full plain I see.
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

" O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man ! "
The Hermit crossed his brow.
" Say quick," quoth he, " I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ? "

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land,
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

COLERIDGE, 1797

CHRISTABEL

Written at Stowey

PART THE FIRST

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She makes her answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothéd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, sne nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beside the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary, mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee,"
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.
And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, So let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st 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."

The Conclusion to Part The First

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jaggéd shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned 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.

With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tarn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

COLERIDGE, 1798

FRANCE: AN ODE

"In unison with the feelings of every friend to Liberty and foe to Oppression."—*Morning Post.*

I

YE clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
Ye Ocean-waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws!
Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
Have made a solemn music of the wind!
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, whereso'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!
With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,
Live fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
The Monarchs marched in evil day,
And Britain join'd the dire array;
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
Though many friendships, many youthful loves
Had swoln the patriot emotion
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves;
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
And shame too long delay'd and vain retreat!
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame;
But blessed the pæans of delivered France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright;
When France her front deep-scarred and gory
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;
When, insupportably advancing,
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's ramp;
While timid looks of fury glancing,
Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
Then I reproached my fears that would not flee;
"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore

In the low huts of them that toil and groan!
And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be free,
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own."

IV

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams!
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt
Where Peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

V

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou not swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in form of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,

And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on they subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.

LAMB, 1798

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

TO ROBERT LLOYD

R. Lloyd was a younger brother of Lamb's friend, Charles Lloyd, of Birmingham. Both brothers lived with Lamb in London, about 1799.

October, 1798.

MY DEAR ROBERT—Mary is better, and I trust that she will yet be restored to me. I am in good spirits, so do not be anxious about me. I hope you get reconciled to your situation. The worst in it is that you have no *friend* to talk to—but wait in patience, and you will in good time make friends. The having a friend is not indispensably necessary to virtue or happiness. Religion removes those barriers of sentiment which partition us from the disinterested love of our brethren—we are commanded to love our enemies, to do good to those that hate us; how much more is it our duty then to cultivate a forbearance and complacence towards those who only differ from us in dispositions and ways of thinking? There is always, without very unusual care there must always be, something of Self in friendship; we love our friend because he is like ourselves; can consequences altogether unmix'd and pure be reasonably expected from such a source—do not even the publicans and sinners the same? Say, that you love a friend for his moral qualities, is it not rather because those qualities resemble what you fancy your own? This, then, is not without danger. The only true cement of a valuable friendship, the only thing that even makes it not sinful, is when two friends propose to become mutually of benefit to each other in a moral or religious way. But even this friendship is perpetually liable to the mixture of something not pure; we love our friend, because he is *ours*—so we do our money, our wit, our knowledge, our virtue; and wherever this sense of APPROPRIATION and PROPERTY enters, so much is to be subtracted from the value of that friendship or that virtue. Our duties are to do good, expecting nothing again; to bear with contrary dispositions; to be candid and forgiving, not to crave and long after a communication of sentiment and feeling, but rather to avoid dwelling upon those feelings, however good, because they are our own. A man may be intemperate and selfish who indulges in *good feelings* for the mere pleasure they give him. I do not wish to deter you from making a friend, a true friend, and such a friendship, where the parties are not blind to each other's faults, is very useful and valuable. I perceive a tendency in you to this error, Robert. I know you have chosen to take up an high opinion of my moral worth, but I say it before God, and I do not

lie, you are mistaken in me. I could not bear to lay open all my failings to you, for the sentiment of shame would be too pungent. Let this be as an example to you, Robert; friends fall off, friends mistake us, they change, they grow unlike us, they go away, they die; but God is everlasting and incapable of change, and to Him we may look with cheerful, unpresumptuous hope, while we discharge the duties of life in situations more untowardly than yours. You complain of the impossibility of improving yourself, but be assured that opportunity of improvement lies more in the mind than the situation. Humble yourself before God, cast out the selfish principle, wait, in patience, do good in every way you can to all sorts of people, never be easy to neglect a duty tho' a small one. Praise God for all, and see His hand in all things, and He will in time raise you up *many friends*—or be Himself instead an unchanging friend. God bless you.

C. LAMB.

COLERIDGE, 1799

LOVE

Written "either during or shortly after" a visit to the Hutchinsons at Sockburn, a farm-house on the Tees.

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the arméd man,
The statue of the arméd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the ling'ring light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a weak embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

COLERIDGE, 1802

DEJECTION: AN ODE

"A storehouse of splendid poetry, set to wild and changeful music. . . . The closest self-revelation almost ever written."

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

WELL! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green;
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lakes of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
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.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And we would aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For Hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed.
What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely House, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,



S. T. COLERIDGE.

FROM A DRAWING FROM THE LIFE BY J. DAWE, 1812

May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

COLERIDGE, 1802

INSCRIPTION FOR A FOUNTAIN ON A HEATH

"Touches the edge of Fairyland."

THIS Sycamore, oft musical with bees,—
Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long unharmed
May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone
Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a Fairy's Page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the Fount.
Here twilight is and coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here! Here rest! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees!

AN AMBITIOUS GENTLEMAN

FROM JOHN WOODVIL

John Woodvil (*alone*).—Now Universal England getteth drunk
For joy, that Charles, her monarch, is restored:
And she, that sometime wore a saintly mask,
The stale-grown vizor from her face doth pluck,
And weareth now a suit of morris bells,
With which she jingling goes through all her towns and villages.
The baffled factions in their houses skulk;
The commonwealthsman, and state machinist,
The cropt fanatic, and fifth-monarchy-man,
Who heareth of these visionaries now?
They and their dreams have ended. Fools do sing,
Where good men yield God thanks; but politic spirits,
Who live by observation, note these changes
Of the popular mind, and thereby serve their ends.
Then why not I? What's Charles to me, or Oliver,
But as my own advancement hangs on one of them?
I to myself am chief.—I know,
Some shallow mouths cry out, that I am smit
With the gauds and show of state, the point of place,
And trick of precedence, the ducks, and nods
Which weak minds pay to rank. 'Tis not to sit
In place of worship at the royal masques,
Their pastimes, plays, and Whitehall banquetings,
For none of these,
Nor yet to be seen whispering with some great one,
Do I affect the favours of the court.
I would be great, for greatness hath great *power*,
And that's the fruit I reach at.—
Great spirits ask great play room. Who could sit,
With these prophetic swellings in my breast,
That prick and goad me on, and never cease,
To the fortunes something tells me I was born to?
Who, with such monitors within to stir him,
Would sit him down, with lazy arms across,
A unit, a thing without a name in the state,
A something to be govern'd, not to govern,
A fishing, hawking, hunting, country gentleman?

[*Exit.*

SOLILOQUY OF JOHN WOODVIL

FROM ACT V

JOHN WOODVIL (*dressing*).

John. How beautiful (*handling his mourning*)
And comely do these mourning garments show!
Sure grief hath set his sacred impress here,
To claim the world's respect! they note so feelingly
By outward types the serious man within.—
Alas! what part or portion can I claim
In all the decencies of virtuous sorrow,
Which other mourners use? as namely,
This black attire, abstraction from society,
Good thoughts, and frequent sighs, and seldom smiles,
A cleaving sadness native to the brow,
All sweet condolements of like-grievéd friends,
(That steal away the sense of loss almost)
Men's pity, and good offices
Which enemies themselves do for us then,
Putting their hostile disposition off,
As we put off our high thoughts and proud looks.
[*Pauses, and observes the pictures.*
These pictures must be taken down:
The portraitures of our most ancient family
For nigh three hundred years! How have I listen'd,
To hear Sir Walter, with an old man's pride,
Holding me in his arms, a prating boy,
And pointing to the pictures where they hung,
Repeat by course their worthy histories,
(As Hugh de Widville, Walter, first of the name,
And Anne the handsome, Stephen, and famous John:
Telling me, I must be his famous John).
But that was in old times.
Now, no more
Must I grow proud upon our house's pride.
I rather, I, by most unheard-of crimes,
Have backward tainted all their noble blood,
Rased out the memory of an ancient family,
And quite reversed the honours of our house.
Who now shall sit and tell us anecdotes?
The secret history of his own times,
And fashions of the World when he was young:

How England slept out three-and-twenty years,
While Carr and Villiers ruled the baby king:
The costly fancies of the pedant's reign,
Balls, feastings, huntings, shows in allegory,
And Beauties of the court of James the First.

LAMB, 1803

HESTER

Hester Savory—a young Quakeress.

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call:—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet fore-warning?

LAMB, 1805

A FAREWELL TO TOBACCO

MAY the Babylonish curse
Straight confound my stammering verse,
If I can a passage see
In this word-perplexity,
Or a fit expression find,
Or a language to my mind,
(Still the praise is wide or scant)
To take leave of thee, GREAT PLANT!
Or in any terms relate
Half my love, or half my hate:
For I hate, yet love, thee so,
That, whichever thing I show,
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrain'd hyperbole,
And the passion to proceed
More from a mistress than a weed.

Sooty retainer to the vine,
Bacchus' black servant, negro fine
Sorcerer, that mak'st us dote upon
Thy begrimed complexion,
And, for thy pernicious sake,
More and greater oaths to break
Than reclaiméd lovers take
'Gainst women: thou thy siege dost lay
Much too in the female way,
While thou suck'st the lab'ring breath
Faster than kisses or than death.

Thou in such a cloud dost bind us,
That our worst foes cannot find us,
And ill fortune, that would thwart us,
Shoots at rovers, shooting at us;
While each man, through thy height'ning steam,
Does like a smoking Etna seem,
And all about us does express
(Fancy and wit in richest dress)
A Sicilian fruitfulness.

Thou through such a mist dost show us
That our best friends do not know us,
And for those allowéd features,
Due to reasonable creatures.
Liken'st us to fell Chimeras,
Monsters that, who see us, fear us;
Worse than Cerberus or Geryon,
Or, who first loved a cloud, Ixion.

Bacchus we know, and we allow
His tipsy rites. But what art thou,
That but by reflex canst show
What his deity can do,
As the false Egyptian spell
Aped the true Hebrew miracle?
Some few vapours thou may'st raise,
The weak brain may serve to amaze.
But to the reins and nobler heart
Canst nor life nor heat impart.

Brother of Bacchus, later born,
The old world was sure folorn
Wanting thee, that aidest more
The god's victories than before
All his panthers, and the brawls
Of his piping Bacchanals.
These, as stale, we disallow,
Or judge of *thee* meant: only thou
His true Indian conquest art;
And, for ivy round his dart,
The reformed god now weaves
A finer thyrsus of thy leaves.

Scent to match thy rich perfume
Chemic art did ne'er presume
Through her quaint alembic strain,
None so sov'reign to the brain.
Nature, that did in thee excel,
Framed again no second smell.
Roses, violets, but toys
For the smaller sort of boys,
Or for greener damsels meant ;
Thou art the only manly scent.
Stinking'st of the stinking kind,
Filth of the mouth and fog of the mind,
Africa, that brags her foison,
Breeds no such prodigious poison,
Henbane, nightshade, both together,
Hemlock, aconite—

Nay, rather,
Plant divine, of rarest virtue ;
Blisters on the tongue would hurt you.
'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee ;
None e'er prosper'd who defamed thee ;
Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplex'd lovers use,
At a need, when, in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike ;
And, instead of Dearest Miss,
Jewel, Honey, Sweetheart, Bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her Cockatrice and Siren,
Basilisk, and all that's evil,
Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,
Ethiop, Wench, and Blackamoor,
Monkey, Ape, and twenty more ;
Friendly Trait'ress, loving Foe,
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not.

Or, as men, constrain'd to part
With what's nearest to their heart,
While their sorrow's at the height,
Lose discrimination quite,
And their hasty wrath let fall,
To appease their frantic gall,
On the darling thing whatever,
Whence they feel it death to sever,
Though it be, as they, perforce,
Guiltless of the sad divorce.

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,
Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave thee.
For thy sake, TOBACCO, I
Would do anything but die,
And but seek to extend my days
Long enough to sing thy praise.
But, as she, who once hath been
A king's consort, is a queen
Ever after, nor will bate
Any title of her state,
Though a widow, or divorced,
So I, from thy converse forced,
The old name and style retain,
A right Katherine of Spain ;
And a seat, too, 'mongst the joys
Of the blest Tobacco Boys ;
Where, though I, by sour physician,
Am debarr'd the full fruition
Of thy favours, I may catch
Some collateral sweets, and snatch
Sidelong odours, that give life
Like glances from a neighbour's wife ;
And still live in the by-places
And the suburbs of thy graces ;
And in thy borders take delight,
An ūnconquer'd Canaanite.

To THOMAS MANNING

16, Mitre Court Buildings,
Saturday, February 24, 1805.

DEAR MANNING,—I have been very unwell since I saw you: a sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, had thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived, with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that "orders (to wit, for brawn) from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed," etc. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumpets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dish-washers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—"you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;" so brawn, you must taste it ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongue and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*) compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, I as illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a

corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his inuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu. I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp, the barber, of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chestnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair: just to remember him by. Gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens;* that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours, C. LAMB.

To WILLIAM HAZLITT

November 10th, 1805.

DEAR HAZLITT,—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss, you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communications, but which, seated about our fireside at night (the winter hands of pork have begun), gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife; for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a Queen of the May, with green streamers: a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about Monkey, which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an

edict issued, that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace; these, and such like hows, were in my head to tell you; but who can write? Also how Manning is come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty: I have now for ever!—the small head, the long eye,—that sort of peering curve, —the wicked Italian mischief; the stick-at-nothing, Herodias's daughter kind of grace. You understand me? But you disappoint me in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way. For instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. D. has chosen to illustrate the story of Samson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Delilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs "which, of a nation armed, contained the strength." I don't remember he *says* black; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's; in curl and quantity, resembling Mrs. P—'s; his limbs rather stout,—about such a man as my brother or Rickman,—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so long as Dubois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact; for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy.

"Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall, (I was prejudiced against him before,) looking just as a hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learnt from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologise, and we are to dine there the first fine

Sunday! Strange perverseness. I never went while you stayed here, and now I go to find *you*. What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the comic "Oh! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the *American Farmer*. I daresay it is not so good as he fancies; but a book's a book." I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109, Russell Street, this evening. I wish your brother would not drink. 'Tis a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nicknamed the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, etc.—and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the state, makes answer:—

> "Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?
> So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it."

N.B.—I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russell Street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until Parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search, and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love; and Mary especially.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

HUNT, 1807

CRITICAL ESSAYS ON THE DRAMA

TRAGEDY

THE drama is the most perfect imitation of human life; by means of the stage it represents man in all his varieties of mind, his expressions of manner, and his power of action, and is the first of moralities because it teaches us in the most impressive way the knowledge of ourselves. When its lighter species, which professes to satirise, forsakes this imitation for caricature, it becomes farce, whether it still be denominated comedy, as we say the comedies of Reynolds, or whether it be called opera, as

we say the operas of Cherry and Cobb: the actors in these pieces must act unnaturally or they will do nothing, but in real comedy they will act naturally for the same reason. In the graver kind of drama, however, their imitation of life is perfect, not as it copies real and simple manners, but as it accords with our habitual ideas of human character; those who have produced the general idea that tragedy and comedy are equally direct imitations of human life, have mistaken their habitual for their experimental knowledge. The loftier persons of tragedy require an elevation of language and manner which they never use in real life. Heroes and sages speak like other men, they use their action as carelessly and their looks as indifferently, and are not distinguished from their fellow-mortals by their personal, but by their mental character; but the popular conception of a great man delights in dignifying his external habits, not only because great men are rarely seen, and therefore acquire dignity from concealment, but because we conclude that they who excel us so highly in important points can have nothing unimportant about them. We can hardly persuade ourselves, for instance, Shakespeare ever disputed in a club, or that Milton was fond of smoking: the ideas of greatness and insignificance associate with difficulty, and as extreme associations are seldom formed but by minds of peculiar fancy and vigorous thought, it is evident they will be rarely entertained by the majority of the world. A tragic hero, who called for his follower or his horse, would in real life call for him as easily and carelessly as any other man, but in tragedy such a carelessness would become ludicrous: the loftiness of his character must be universal. An artist who would paint the battles of Frederic of Prussia in a series of pictures, would study to maintain this important character throughout; he would not represent the chief sitting on horseback in a slovenly manner and taking snuff, though the snuff-box no doubt was of much importance at those times to his majesty, who, as Pope says of Prince Eugene, was as great a taker of snuff as of towns. So great a violence of contrast would become caricature in painting, and in tragedy it would degenerate into burlesque. Tragedy is an imitation of life in passions; it is comedy only which imitates both passions and habits.

A tragic actor, then, is to be estimated, not as he always copies nature, but as he satisfies the general opinion of life and manners. He must neither on the one hand debase his dignity by too natural a simplicity of manner, nor on the other give it a ridiculous elevation by pompousness and bombast. He cannot draw much of his knowledge from real life, because the loftier passions are rarely exhibited in the common intercourse of

mankind; but nevertheless he should not indulge himself in novelties of invention, because the hearts of his audience will be able to judge where their experience has no power. Much study should strengthen his judgment, since he must perfectly understand before he can feel his author and teach others to feel. Where there is strong and natural genius, judgment will usually follow in the develpoment of great passions, but it may fail in the minute proprieties of the stage; where there is not a strong natural genius, the contrary will be generally found. For the common actions of great characters he must study the matter of the stage, for their passions nothing but nature.

Mr. Kemble

Mr. Kemble is a peculiar instance of almost all these essentials to good acting, and at the same time an example how much they may be injured by an indiscriminate application of study. His conceptions of character are strong, where the characters themselves are strong, his attention to passions is fixed by large objects, he cannot sufficiently study the minute where minuteness is important, though, as I shall hereafter explain, he can give importance to minutenesses that mean nothing. He appears to submit everything to his judgment, and exhibits little of the enthusiasm of genius. The grander emotions are his chief study; he attaches a kind of loftiness to every sensation that he indulges, and thus conceives with much force the more majestic passions, at the same time that he is raised above the pathetic passions, which carry always with them an air of weakness and humility.

For the expression of the loftier emotions no actor is gifted by nature with greater external means. His figure, though not elegant, is manly and dignified, his features are strongly marked with what is called the Roman character, and his head altogether is the heroic head of the antiquary and the artist. This tragic form assumes excellently well the gait of royalty, the vigorous majesty of the warrior, and the profound gravity of the sage: but its seriousness is unbending; his countenance seems to despise the gaiety it labours to assume, and its comic expression is comic because it is singularly wretched. Of the passion of love he can express nothing; the reason is obvious; love from its dependent nature must always, unless associated with some other passion, betray an expression of tender feebleness, and such an expression is unknown to Mr. Kemble's countenance. The attempt of Mrs. Inchbald to make Mr. Kemble a lover is more honourable to her partiality for the friend than to her affection for just criticism. She says that he can paint love more vigorously

than any other man, though he cannot love *moderately*; in her opinion, "sighs, soft complainings, a plaintive voice, and tender looks bespeak mere moderation; Mr. Kemble," she continues, "must be struck to the heart's core, or not at all: he must be wounded to the soul with grief, despair, or madness." But this is mistaking the associated passion for its companion. What a lover he is who can neither speak softly nor look tenderly! No man, according to this idea, can express a perfect love, that is, a love opposed to *mere moderation*, unless he is struck with grief, or desperate, or mad: but by such an association of outragous passions, the expression of the individual one will not be a perfect, because it is not a simple expression: the actor who cannot express an individual passion without the assistance of others can no more be said to be master of that passion than a singer can be called a master of his art who cannot sing without an accompaniment.

It is in characters that are occupied with themselves and with their own importance, it is in the systematic and exquisite revenge of Zanga, in the indignant jealousy of Othello, and in the desperate ambition of King John, that Mr. Kemble is the actor. There is always something sublime in the sudden completion of great objects, and perhaps there is not a sublimer action on the stage than the stride of Mr. Kemble as Zanga, over the body of his victim, and his majestic exultation of revenge.

But if he succeeds in the prouder passions, his diligence of study has given him no less success in the expression of impressive seriousness.

The character of Penruddock in *The Wheel of Fortune* is his greatest performance, and I believe it to be a perfect one. It is admirable, not because the tenderness of his love, as Mrs. Inchbald tells us, "appears beneath the roughest manners," but because the very defect which hurts his style of acting, that studious and important preciseness, which is affectation in all his other characters, contributes to the strength, to the nature of Penruddock. Those who can discern any peculiar expression of tenderness under the roughness of Mr. Kemble's acting mistake their feelings for their observation: it is the tenderness the character is supposed to feel, not what he actually exhibits, it is the tenderness of the author not of the actor, which they discern: if there are one or two phases of tenderness uttered by the stern recluse, they have a pathetic effect, not because they are expressed with peculiar tenderness by the actor, but because a soft emotion so unexpected in one of his appearance produces a strong effect from the strength of contrast. To give a man imaginary praise is to give him real

dispraise. Mr. Kemble himself would never think of valuing his own performance for its tenderness of expression; he would value it, and with justice, for its severity of expression, for its display of external philosophy, and for its contempt of everything that can no longer amuse.

Wherever this air of self-importance or abstraction is required, Mr. Kemble is excellent. It is no small praise to say of an actor that he excels in soliloquies: these solitary discourses require great judgment because the speaker has no assistance from others, and because the audience, always awake to action, is inclined during a soliloquy to seek repose in inattention. Indeed to gain the attention of an audience is always in some degree to gain their applause, and this applause must cheerfully be given to Mr. Kemble, who by his busy air and impressive manner always attaches importance to a speech of whatever interest or length. To this excellence in particular, and to the general action of the stage, he contributes by an exact knowledge of every stage artifice, local and temporal; and I could not but admire the judicious contrivance by which he added a considerable interest to his first appearance in the season of 1805. The curtain rose and discovered a study; it was adorned with the most natural literary disorder possible; the grave actor appeared writing at a table with open books here and there about him; the globes, the library, the furniture, everything had its use, and no doubt its effect, for an audience, though perhaps insensibly, is always pleased with a natural scene. Of another necessary stage artifice, which is called *bye-play*, and which beguiles the intervals of action by an air of perpetual occupation, he is a perfect master; he never stands feebly inactive, waiting for his turn to speak; he is never out of his place, he attends to everything passing on the stage at once, nor does he indulge himself in those complacent stares at the audience which occupy inferior actors.

This attention to the minute, however, is often employed needlessly; he has made it a study hardly less important than that of the passions, and hence arises the great fault of his acting, a laborious and almost universal preciseness. Some of the instances of this fault are so ludicrous that a person who had not seen him would scarcely credit the relation. He sometimes turns from one object to another with so cautious a circumflexion of head, that he is no doubt very often pitied by the audience for having a stiff neck. His words now and then follow one another so slowly, and his face all the while assumes so methodical an expression, that he seems reckoning how many lines he has learnt by heart. I have known him make an eternal groan upon

the interjection *Oh*: as if he were determined to show that his misery had not affected his lungs; and to represent an energetical address he has kept so continual a jerking and nodding of the head, that at last, if he represented anything at all, it could be nothing but Saint Vitus's dance. By this study of nonentities it would appear that he never pulls out his handkerchief without a design upon the audience, that he has as much thought in making a step as making a speech, in short that his very finger is eloquent and that nothing means something. But all this neither delights nor deceives the audience: of an assembly collected together to enjoy a rational entertainment, the majority will always be displeased with what is irrational, though they may be unable to describe their sensations critically: irrationalities amuse in farce only. An audience when judging the common imitations of life have merely to say, " Is it like ourselves ? "

Perhaps there is not a greater instance of the ill effects one bad habit like this can produce, than in Mr. Kemble's delivery. No actor in his declamation pleases more at some times or more offends at others. His voice is hollow and monotonous from the malformation, as it is said, of his organs of utterance: its weakness cannot command a variety of sound sufficiently powerful for all occasions, nor is its natural extent melodious or pleasing. But a voice naturally monotonous must be distinguished from a monotony of delivery; the latter neglects emphasis and expression, the former, though it will not always obtain, may always attempt both. No player, perhaps, understands his author better, and such a knowledge will easily impart itself to others: his declamation therefore is confident and exact, he is at all times carefully distinct, and his general delivery is marked, expressive, and even powerful: the art with which he supplies the natural weakness of his voice by an energy and significancy of utterance is truly admirable. But the same affectation, which indulges itself in an indiscriminate importance of manner, the same ambition of originality where originality is least wanted, characterises Mr. Kemble's pronunciation, it has induced him to defy all orthoepy, and to allow no accent but what pleases his caprice or his love of innovation. To be novel for the mere sake of novelty belongs neither to genius nor to judgment. Mr. Kemble insists that the word *rode* should be *rod*, *beard* is metamorphosed into *bird*; he never *pierces* the heart, but *purses* it, and *virtue* and *merchant* become in the dialect of the kitchen *varchue* and *marchant*. The strong syllable *er* appears to be an abomination, and is never allowed utterance. Pope says

To err is human, to forgive divine,—

but Mr. Kemble will not consent to this. He says

To air is human,—

making the moralist say that it is the nature of man to dry his clean shirt or to take a walk. *Thy* is changed into *thĕ*, probably because the sound of *my* is sometimes contracted into *mĕ*; but mutabilities of pronunciation in one word never argue for them in another; people are not accustomed to say, such a man has a *wrĕ* neck, or that it is very *drĕ* weather. Dr. Johnson, who had an antipathy to the pronunciation *wĭnd*, and wished to call it *wīnd*, attacked the custom by a ludicrous assemblage and mispronunciation of other words, in which the letter *i* is naturally long, and said with much critical gravity—"I have a mind to find why you call that wĭnd." But this pleasantry did not change the pronunciation in general converse. Let us see how Mr. Kemble would improve the following lines: we will put his improvement after the original, since the beauty of the contrast will be greater:

> Virtue, thy happy wisdom's known
> In making what we wish our own;
> Nay, e'en to wish what wishes thee,
> Imparts the blest reality:
> For since the soul that pierces mine,
> Sweet Myra's soul, is full of thine,
> In my breast too thy spirit stirs,
> Since all my soul is full of her's!

Mr. Kemble's improvement:

> *Varchue, the* happy wisdom's known
> In making what we wish our own;
> Nay, e'en to wish what wishes thee,
> Imparts the best reality:
> For since the soul that *purses* mine,
> Sweet Myra's soul, is full of thine,
> In my breast too thy spirit *stares*,
> Since all my soul is full of *hairs!*

This is very amusing, but there is no rule for pronunciation but custom; as customs change, actors may change; but no individual should alter what he has no reason for altering, or what has either a bad effect or none at all when altered. There have been several attempts to vary the mode of spelling now in use; the latest innovation was practised by Ritson, a man of curious and happy research into old English literature, and one who might have boasted a better originality than that of making his words unintelligible. Nobody has adopted a single one of these innovations, first because it is painful to depart from old rules and habits, and secondly, because it is still more painful to depart from them without a cause. For the same reasons, nobody will adopt Mr. Kemble's pronunciations; and if he were to carry his dialect into private life, he would be either pitied or laughed at.

But why place his ambition where there are no hopes of original praise? I could mispronounce much better than he when I was a mere infant.

Upon the whole, Mr. Kemble appears to be an actor of correct rather than quick conception, of studious rather than universal or equal judgment, of powers some naturally defective but admirably improved, and others excellent by nature but still more so by art; in short of a genius more compulsive of respect than attractive of delight. He does not present one the idea of a man who grasps with the force of genius, but of one who overcomes by the toil of attention. He never rises and sinks as in the enthusiasm of the moment; his ascension though grand is careful, and when he sinks it is with preparation and dignity. There are actors who may occasionally please more, but not one who is paid a more universal or profound attention.

Mrs. Siddons

To write a criticism on Mrs. Siddons is to write a panegyric, and a panegyric of a very peculiar sort, for the praise will be true. Like her elder brother she has a marked and noble countenance, and a figure more dignified than graceful, and she is like him in all his good qualities, but not any of his bad ones. If Mr. Kemble studiously meditates a step or an attitude in the midst of passion, Mrs. Siddons never thinks about either, and therefore is always natural, because on an occasion of great feeling it is the passions, should influence the actions. Attitudes are not to be studied, as old Havard used to study them, between six looking-glasses: feel the passions, and the action will follow. I know it has been denied that actors sympathise with the feelings they represent, and among other critics Dr. Johnson is supposed to have denied it. The Doctor was accustomed to talk very loudly at a play upon divers subjects, even when his friend Garrick was electrifying the house with his most wonderful scenes, and the worst of it was that he usually sat in one of the stage boxes; the actor remonstrated with him one night after the representation, and complained that the talking "disturbed his feelings." "Pshaw! David," replied the critic, "Punch has no feelings." But the Doctor was fond of saying his good things as well as lesser geniuses, and to say a good thing is not always to say a true one, or one that is intended to be true. To call his friend a puppet, to give so contemptuous an appellation to a man whose powers he was at other times happy to respect, and whose death he lamented as having "eclipsed the gaiety of nations," must be considered

as a familiar pleasantry rather than a betrayed opinion. The best way to solve the difficulty is to apply to an actor himself, but as I am not in the way of such an application, I think the complaint made by Garrick will do as well, since he talks of his feelings as the means necessary to his performance. It appears to me that the countenance cannot express a single passion perfectly, unless the passion is first felt. It is easy to grin representations of joy, and to pull down the muscles of the countenance as an imitation of sorrow, but a keen observer of human nature and its effects will easily detect the cheat. There are nerves and muscles requisite to expression, that will not answer the will on common occasions; but to represent a passion with truth, every nerve and muscle should be in its proper action, or the representation becomes weak and confused, melancholy is mistaken for grief, and pleasure for delight. It is from this feebleness of emotion so many dull actors endeavour to supply passion with vehemence of action and voice, as jugglers are talkative and bustling to beguile scrutiny. I have somewhere heard that Mrs. Siddons has talked of the real agitation which the performance of some of her characters has made her feel.

To see the bewildered melancholy of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, or the widow's mute stare of perfected misery by the corpse of the gamester Beverley, two of the sublimest pieces of acting on the English stage, would argue this point better than a thousand critics. Mrs. Siddons has the air of never being the actress; she seems unconscious that there is a motley crowd called a pit waiting to applaud her, or that there are a dozen fiddlers waiting for her exit. This is always one of the marks of a great actor. The player who amuses himself by looking at the audience for admiration may be assured he never gets any. It is in acting as in conferring obligations: one should have the air of doing nothing for a return.

If Mrs. Siddons has not every single requisite to a perfect tragedian, it is the amatory pathetic. In the despair of Belvidera, for instance, she rises to sublimity, but in the tenderness of Belvidera she preserves too stately and self-subdued an air. She can overpower, astonish, afflict, but she cannot win; her majestic presence and commanding features seem to disregard love, as a trifle to which they cannot descend. But it does follow that a tragedian unable to sink into the softness of the tender passion is the more to be respected for his undeviating dignity and spirit: it does not follow that he has a loftier genius. Love, though humble, never moves our contempt; on the contrary, it adds new interest to a character at other times dignified. In real life the greatest heroes and sages have acquired an extra-

ordinary charm from their union of wisdom and tenderness, of conquest and gallant submission: and as we doubly admire the wise Plato for his amatory effusions, and the chivalrous spirit of Henry the Great for the tenderness of his love, so on the stage, the tragedian who unites the hero and the lover, that is, who can display either character as it is required, is the more admirable genius. Besides, the figure of Mrs. Siddons is now too large and too matronly to represent youth; we hope that by the next season she will have given up the performance of characters suited neither to her age nor her abilities.

After this one defect, I have in vain considered and reconsidered all the tragedies in which I have seen her, to find the shadow of another. She unites with her noble conceptions of nature every advantage of art, every knowledge of stage property and effect. This knowledge, however, she displays not with the pompous minuteness of Mr. Kemble, but with that natural carelessness which shows it to be the result of genius rather than grave study. If there is a gesture in the midst, or an attitude in the interval of action, it is the result of the impassioned moment: one can hardly imagine there has been any such thing as a rehearsal for powers so natural or so spirited. Of the force of such mere action I recollect a sublime instance displayed by Mrs. Siddons in the inspired tragedy of *The Grecian Daughter*. This heroine has obtained for her aged and imprisoned father some unexpected assistance from the guard Philotas; transported with gratitude, but having nothing from the poet to give expression to her feelings, she starts with extended arms and casts herself in mute prostration at his feet. I shall never forget the glow which rushed to my cheeks at this sublime action.

These are the effects Mr. Kemble should study, and not the clap-provoking frivolities of ending every speech with an energetic dash of the fist, or of running off the stage after a vehement declamation, as if the actor was in haste to get his pint of wine. If the brother and sister are compared, the palm both of genius and of judgment must undoubtedly be given to Mrs. Siddons. I question whether she understands her authors so intimately, but she gives double effect to their important passages, and their unimportant ones are allowed to sink into their proper mediocrity: where everything is raised into significance, the significance is destroyed. If an artist would study the expression of the passions, let him lay by the pictures of Le Brun, and copy the looks of Mrs. Siddons.

PARENTAL RECOLLECTIONS

From *Poetry for Children*, "Picked out by an old Batchelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many." By Charles and Mary Lamb.

A CHILD'S a plaything for an hour;
  Its pretty tricks we try
For that or for a longer space;
  Then tire, and lay it by.

But I knew one that to itself
  All seasons could control;
That would have mocked the sense of pain
  Out of a grievéd soul.

Thou straggler into loving arms,
  Young climber up of knees,
When I forget thy thousand ways
  Then life and all shall cease.

LAMB, 1810

ON THE GENIUS AND CHARACTER OF HOGARTH

First printed in Hunt's. *Reflector*, No. 3, 1810; reprinted in *Works*, 1818.

ONE of the earliest and noblest enjoyments I had when a boy, was in the contemplation of those capital prints by Hogarth, the *Harlot's* and *Rake's Progresses*, which, along with some others, hung upon the walls of a great hall in an old-fashioned house in ——shire, and seemed the solitary tenants (with myself) of that antiquated and life-deserted apartment.

Recollection of the manner in which those prints used to affect me has often made me wonder, when I have heard Hogarth described as a mere comic painter, as one of those whose chief ambition was to *raise a laugh*. To deny that there are throughout the prints which I have mentioned circumstances introduced of a laughable tendency, would be to run counter to the common notions of mankind; but to suppose that in their *ruling character* they appeal chiefly to the risable faculty, and not first and foremost to the very heart of man, its best and most serious feelings, would be to mistake no less grossly their aim and purpose. A set of severer Satires (for they are not so much Comedies, which

they have been likened to, as they are strong and masculine Satires) less mingled with anything of mere fun, were never written upon paper, or graven upon copper. They resemble Juvenal, or the satiric touches in *Timon of Athens*.

I was pleased with the reply of a gentleman, who being asked which book he esteemed most in his library, answered,—"Shakspeare": being asked which he esteemed next best, replied, "Hogarth." His graphic representations are indeed books: they have the teeming, fruitful, suggestive meaning of *words*. Other pictures we look at,—his prints we read.

In pursuance of this parallel, I have sometimes entertained myself with comparing the *Timon of Athens* of Shakspeare (which I have just mentioned) and Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* together. The story, the moral, in both is nearly the same. The wild course of riot and extravagance, ending in the one with driving the Prodigal from the society of men into the solitude of the deserts, and in the other with conducting the Rake through his several stages of dissipation into the still more complete desolations of the mad-house, in the play and in the picture, are described with almost equal force and nature. The levee of the Rake, which forms the subject of the second plate in the series, is almost a transcript of Timon's levee in the opening scene of that play. We find a dedicating poet, and other similar characters, in both.

The concluding scene in the *Rake's Progress* is perhaps superior to the last scenes of *Timon*. If we seek for something of kindred excellence in poetry, it must be in the scenes of Lear's beginning madness, where the King and the Fool and the Tom-o'-Bedlam conspire to produce such a medley of mirth checked by misery, and misery rebuked by mirth; where the society of those "strange bed-fellows" which misfortunes have brought Lear acquainted with, so finely sets forth the destitute state of the monarch; while the lunatic bans of the one, and the disjointed sayings and wild but pregnant allusions of the other, so wonderfully sympathise with that confusion, which they seem to assist in the production of, in the senses of that "child-changed father."

In the scene in Bedlam, which terminates the *Rake's Progress*, we find the same assortment of the ludicrous with the terrible. Here is desperate madness, the overturning of originally strong thinking faculties, at which we shudder, as we contemplate the duration and pressure of affliction which it must have asked to destroy such a building;—and here is the gradual hurtless lapse into idiocy, of faculties, which at their best of times never having been strong, we look upon the consummation of their decay with no more of pity than is consistent with a smile. The mad tailor, the poor driveller that has gone out of his wits (and truly he appears to have had no great journey to go to get past their confines) for

the love of *Charming Betty Careless*,—these half-laughable, scarce-pitiable objects, take off from the horror which the principal figure would of itself raise, at the same time that they assist the feeling of the scene by contributing to the general notion of its subject :—

> " Madness, thou chaos of the brain,
> What art, that pleasure giv'st and pain ?
> Tyranny of Fancy's reign !
> Mechanic Fancy, that can build
> Vast labyrinths and mazes wild,
> With rule disjointed, shapeless measure,
> Filled with horror, fill'd with pleasure !
> Shapes of horror, that would even
> Cast doubts of mercy upon heaven ;
> Shapes of pleasure that but seem,
> Would split the shaking sides of Spleen."*

Is it carrying the spirit of comparison to excess to remark, that in the poor kneeling, weeping female who accompanies her seducer in his sad decay, there is something analogous to Kent, or Caius, as he delights rather to be called, in *Lear*,—the noblest pattern of virtue which even Shakespeare has conceived,—who follows his royal master in banishment, that had pronounced *his* banishment, and, forgetful at once of his wrongs and dignities, taking on himself the disguise of a menial, retains his fidelity to the figure, his loyalty to the carcass, the shadow, the shell and empty husk of Lear ?

In the perusal of a book, or of a picture, much of the impression which we receive depends upon the habit of mind which we bring with us to such perusal. The same circumstance may make one person laugh, which shall render another very serious ; or in the same person the first impression may be corrected by after-thought. The misemployed incongruous characters at the *Harlot's Funeral*, on a superficial inspection, provoke to laughter ; but when we have sacrificed the first emotion to levity, a very different frame of mind succeeds, or the painter has lost half his purpose. I never look at that wonderful assemblage of depraved beings, who, without a grain of reverence or pity in their perverted minds, are performing the sacred exteriors of duty to the relics of their departed partner in folly, but I am as much moved to sympathy from the very want of it in them, as I should be by the finest representation of a virtuous death-bed surrounded by real mourners, pious children, weeping friends,—perhaps more by the very contrast. What reflections does it not awake, of the dreadful heartless state in which the creature (a female too) must have lived, who in death wants the accompaniment of one genuine

tear. That wretch who is removing the lid of the coffin to gaze upon the corpse with a face which indicates a perfect negation of all goodness or womanhood—the hypocrite parson and his demure partner—all the fiendish group—to a thoughtful mind present a moral emblem more affecting than if the poor friendless carcass had been depicted as thrown out to the woods, where wolves had assisted at its obsequies, itself furnishing forth its own funeral banquet.

It is easy to laugh at such incongruities as are met together in this picture,—incongruous objects being of the very essence of laughter,—but surely the laugh is far different in its kind from that thoughtless species to which we are moved by mere farce and grotesque. We laugh when Ferdinand Count Fathom, at the first sight of the white cliffs of Britain, feels his heart yearn with filial fondness towards the land of his progenitors, which he is coming to fleece and plunder,—we smile at the exquisite irony of the passage,—but if we are not led on by such passages to some more salutary feeling than laughter, we are very negligent perusers of them in book or picture.

It is the fashion with those who cry up the great Historical School in this country, at the head of which Sir Joshua Reynolds is placed, to exclude Hogarth from that school, as an artist of an inferior and vulgar class. Those persons seem to me to confound the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist. The quantity of thought which Hogarth crowds into every picture would alone *unvulgarise* every subject which he might choose. Let us take the lowest of his subjects, the print called *Gin Lane*. Here is plenty of poverty and low stuff to disgust upon a superficial view; and accordingly a cold spectator feels himself immediately disgusted and repelled. I have seen many turn away from it, not being able to bear it. The same persons would perhaps have looked with great complacency upon Poussin's celebrated picture of the Plague of Athens. Disease and Death and bewildering Terror, in *Athenian garments*, are endurable, and come, as the delicate critics express it, within the "limits of pleasurable sensation." But the scenes of their own St. Giles's, delineated by their own countryman, are too shocking to think of. Yet if we could abstract our minds from the fascinating colours of the picture, and forget the coarse execution (in some respects) of the print, intended as it was to be a cheap plate, accessable to the poorer sort of people, for whose instruction it was done, I think we could have no hesitation in conferring the palm of superior genius upon Hogarth, comparing this work of his with Poussin's picture. There is more of imagination in it—that power which draws all things to one,—which makes things animate and inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects,

and their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect. Everything in the print, to use a vulgar expression, *tells*. Every part is full of " strange images of death." It is perfectly amazing and astounding to look at. Not only the two prominent figures, the woman and the half dead man, which are as terrible as anything which Michael Angelo ever drew, but everything else in the print, contributes to bewilder and stupify,—the very house, as I heard a friend of mine express it, tumbling all about in various directions, seem drunk—seem absolutely reeling from the effect of that diabolical spirit of frenzy which goes forth over the whole composition. To show the poetical and almost prophetical conception in the artist, one little circumstance may serve. Not content with the dying and dead figures, which he has strewed in profusion over the proper scene of the action, he shows you what (of a kindred nature) is passing beyond it. Close by the shell, in which, by the direction of the parish beadle, a man is depositing his wife, is an old wall, which, partaking of the universal decay around it, is tumbling to pieces. Through a gap in this wall are seen three figures, which appear to make a part in some funeral procession which is passing by on the other side of the wall, out of the sphere of the composition. This extending of the interest beyond the bounds of the subject could only have been conceived by a great genius. Shakspeare in his description of the painting of the Trojan War, in his *Tarquin and Lucrece*, has introduced a similar device, where the painter made a part stand for the whole :—

> " For much imaginary work was there,
> Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
> That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
> Grip'd in an armèd hand ; himself behind
> Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind :
> A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
> Stood for the whole to be imaginèd."

This he well calls *imaginary work*, where the spectator must meet the artist in his conceptions half way ; and it is peculiar to the confidence of high genius alone to trust so much to spectators or readers. Lesser artists show everything distinct and full, as they require an object to be made out to themselves before they can comprehend it.

When I think of the power displayed in this (I will not hesitate to say) sublime print, it seems to me the extreme narrowness of system alone, and of that rage for classification, by which, in matters of taste at least, we are perpetually perplexing instead of arranging, our ideas, that would make us concede to the work of Poussin above mentioned, and deny to this of Hogarth, the name of a grand serious composition.

We are for ever deceiving ourselves with names and theories. We call one man a great historical painter, because he has taken for his subjects kings or great men, or transactions over which time has thrown a grandeur. We term another the painter of common life, and set him down in our minds for an artist of an inferior class, without reflecting whether the quantity of thought shown by the latter may not much more than level the distinction which their mere choice of subjects may seem to place between them; or whether, in fact, from that very common life a great artist may not extract as deep an interest as another man from that which we are pleased to call history.

I entertain the highest respect for the talents and virtues of Reynolds, but I do not like that his reputation should overshadow and stifle the merits of such a man as Hogarth, nor that to mere names and classifications we should be content to sacrifice one of the greatest ornaments of England.

I would ask the most enthusiastic admirer of Reynolds, whether in the countenances of his *Staring* and *Grinning Despair*, which he has given us for the faces of Ugolino and dying Beaufort, there be anything comparable to the expression which Hogarth has put into the face of his broken-down rake in the last plate but one of the *Rake's Progress*, where a letter from the manager is brought to him to say that his play "will not do"? Here all is easy, natural, undistorted, but withal what a mass of woe is here accumulated!—the long history of a mis-spent life is compressed into the countenance as plainly as the series of plates before had told it; here is no attempt at Gorgonian looks, which are to freeze the beholder—no grinning at the antique bed-posts—no face-making, or consciousness of the presence of spectators in or out of the picture, but grief kept to a man's self, a face retiring from notice with the shame which great anguish sometimes brings with it,—a final leave taken of hope,—the coming on of vacancy and stupefaction,—a beginning alienation of mind looking like tranquillity. Here is matter for the mind of the beholder to feed on for the hour together,—matter to feed and fertilise the mind. It is too real to admit one thought about the power of the artist who did it. When we compare the expression in subjects which so fairly admit of comparison, and find the superiority so clearly to remain with Hogarth, shall the mere contemptible difference of the scene of it being laid, in the one case, in our Fleet or King's Bench Prison, and, in the other, in the State Prison of Pisa, or the bed-room of a cardinal,—or that the subject of the one has never been authenticated, and the other is matter of history,—so weigh down the real points of the comparison, as to induce us to rank the artist who had chosen the one scene or subject (though confessedly inferior in

that which constitutes the soul of his art) in a class from which we exclude the better genius (who has happened to make a choice of the other) with something like disgrace ?

The Boys under Demoniacal Possession of Raphael and Domenichino, by what law of classification are we bound to assign them to belong to the great style in painting, and to degrade into an inferior class the Rake of Hogarth when he is the Madman in the Bedlam scene ? I am sure he is far more impressive than either. It is a face which no one that has seen can easily forget. There is the stretch of human suffering to the utmost endurance, severe bodily pain brought on by strong mental agony, the frightful obstinate laugh of madness,—yet all so unforced and natural, that those who never were witness to madness in real life, think they see nothing but what is familiar to them in this face. Here are no tricks of distortion, nothing but the natural face of agony. This is high tragic painting, and we might as well deny to Shakspeare the honours of a great tragedian because he has interwoven scenes of mirth with the serious business of his plays, as refuse to Hogarth the same praise for the two concluding scenes of the *Rake's Progress*, because of the Comic Lunatics which he has thrown into the one, of the Alchemist that he has introduced in the other, who is paddling in the coals of his furnace, keeping alive the flames of vain hope within the very walls of the prison to which the vanity has conducted him, which have taught the darker lesson of extinguished hope to the desponding figure who is the principal person of the scene.

It is the force of these kindly admixtures which assimilates the senses of Hogarth and of Shakspeare to the drama of real life, where no such thing as pure tragedy is to be found ; but merriment and infelicity ponderous crime and feather-light vanity, like twi-formed births, disagreeing complexions of one intertexture, perpetually unite to show forth motley spectacles to the world. Then it is that the poet or painter shows his art, when in the selection of these comic adjuncts he chooses such circumstances as shall relieve, contrast with, or fall into, without forming a violent opposition to his principal object. Who sees not that the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*, the Fool in *Lear*, have a kind of correspondency to, and fall in with, the subjects which they seem to interrupt ; while the comic stuff in *Venice Preserved*, and the doggrel nonsense of the Cook and his poisoning associates in the *Rollo* of Beaumont and Fletcher, are pure, irrelevant, impertinent discords,—as bad as the quarrelling dog and cat under the table of the *Lord and the Disciples at Emmaus* of Titian ?

Not to tire the reader with perpetual reference to prints which he may not be fortunate enough to possess, it may be sufficient to remark that the same tragic cast of expression and incident,

blended in some instances with a greater alloy of comedy, characterises his other great work, the *Marriage Alamode*, as well as those less elaborate exertions of his genius, the prints called *Industry* and *Idleness*, the *Distrest Poet*, etc., forming, with the *Harlot's* and *Rake's Progresses*, the most considerable, if not the largest class of his productions,—enough surely to rescue Hogarth from the imputation of being a mere buffoon, or one whose general aim was only to *shake the sides*.

There remains a very numerous class of his performances, the object of which must be confessed to be principally comic. But in all of them will be found something to distinguish them from the droll productions of Bunbury and others. They have the difference, that we do not merely laugh at, we are led into long trains of reflection by them. In this respect they resemble the characters of Chaucer's *Pilgrims*, which have strokes of humour in them enough to designate them for the most part as comic, but our strongest feeling still is wonder at the comprehensiveness of genius which could crowd, as poet and painter have done, into one small canvas so many diverse yet co-operating materials.

The faces of Hogarth have not a mere momentary interest, as in caricatures, or those grotesque physiognomies which we sometimes catch a glance of in the street, and, struck with their whimsicality, wish for a pencil and the power to sketch them down; and forget them again as rapidly,—but they are permanent abiding ideas. Not the sports of nature, but her necessary eternal classes. We feel that we cannot part with any of them, lest a link should be broken.

It is worthy of observation, that he has seldom drawn a mean or insignificant countenance. Hogarth's mind was eminently reflective; and, as it has been well observed of Shakspeare, that he has transfused his own poetical character into the persons of his drama (they are all more or less *poets*), Hogarth has impressed a thinking character upon the persons of his canvas. This remark must not be taken universally. The exquisite idiotism of the little gentleman in the bag and sword beating his drum, in the print of the *Enraged Musician*, would of itself rise up against so sweeping an assertion. But I think it will be found to be true of the generality of his countenances. The knife-grinder and Jew flute-player in the plate just mentioned, may serve as instances instead of a thousand. They have intense thinking faces, though the purpose to which they are subservient by no means required it; but indeed it seems as if it were painful to Hogarth to contemplate mere vacancy or insignificance.

This reflection of the artist's own intellect for the faces of his characters, is one reason why the works of Hogarth, so much more than those of any other artist, are objects of meditation. Our

intellectual natures love the mirror which gives them back their own likenesses. The mental eye will not bend long with delight upon vacancy.

Another line of eternal separation between Hogarth and the common painters of droll or burlesque subjects, with whom he is often confounded, is the sense of beauty, which in the most unpromising objects seems never wholly to have deserted him. "Hogarth himself," says Mr. Coleridge,* "from whom I have borrowed this observation," speaking of a scene which took place at Ratzeburg, "never drew a more ludicrous distortion both of attitude and physiognomy, than this effect occasioned: nor was there wanting beside it one of those beautiful female faces which the same Hogarth, *in whom the satirist never extinguished that love of beauty which belonged to him as a poet,* so often and so gladly introduces as the central figure in a crowd of humourous deformities, which figure (such is the power of true genius) neither acts nor is meant to act as a contrast; but diffuses through all and over each of the group a spirit of reconciliation and human kindness: and even when the attention is no longer consciously directed to the cause of this feeling, still blends its tenderness with our laughter: and *thus prevents the instructive merriment at the whims of nature, or the foibles or humours of our fellow-men, from degenerating into the heart-poison of contempt or hatred.*" To the beautiful females in Hogarth, which Mr. C. has pointed out, might be added the frequent introduction of children (which Hogarth seems to have taken a particular delight in) into his pieces. They have a singular effect in giving tranquility and a portion of their own innocence to the subject. The baby riding in its mother's lap in the *March to Finchley* (its careless innocent face placed directly behind the intriguing time-furrowed countenance of the treason-plotting French Priest), perfectly sobers the whole of that tumultous scene. The boy mourner winding up his top with so much unpretending insensibility in the plate of the *Harlot's Funeral* (the only thing in that assembly that is not a hypocrite) quiets and soothes the mind that has been disturbed at the sight of so much depraved man and woman kind.

It is a secret well known to the professors of the art and mystery of criticism, to insist upon what they do not find in a man's works, and to pass over in silence what they do. That Hogarth did not draw the naked figure so well as Michael Angelo might be allowed, especially as "examples of the naked," as Mr. Barry acknowledges, "rarely (he might almost have said never) occur in his subjects"; and that his figures under their draperies do not discover all the fine graces of an Antinoüs or an Apollo, may be conceded likewise; perhaps it was more suitable to his

* *The Friend*, No. XVI.

purpose to represent the average forms of mankind in the mediocrity (as Mr. Burke expresses it) of the age in which he lived; but that his figures in general, and in his best subjects, are so glaringly incorrect as is here insinuated, I dare trust my own eye so far as positively to deny the fact. And there is one part of the figure in which Hogarth is allowed to have excelled, which these foreigners seem to have overlooked, or perhaps calculating from its proportion to the whole (a seventh or an eighth, I forget which) deemed it of trifling importance; I mean the human face; a small part, reckoned by geographical inches, in the map of man's body, but here it is that the painter of expression must condense the wonders of his skill, even at the expense of neglecting the "jonctures and other difficulties of drawing in the limbs," which it must be a cold eye that, in the interest so strongly demanded by Hogarth's countenances, has leisure to survey and censure.

"The line of art pursued by my very ingenious predecessor and brother Academician, Mr. Penny."

The first impression caused in me by reading this passage was an eager desire to know who this Mr. Penny was. This great surpasser of Hogarth in the "delicacy of his relish," and the "line which he pursued," where is he, what are his works, what has he to show? In vain I tried to recollect, till by happily putting the question to a friend who is more conversant in the works of the illustrious obscure than myself, I learnt that he was the painter of a *Death of Wolfe* which missed the prize the year that the celebrated picture of West on the same subject obtained it; that he also made a picture of the *Marquis of Granby relieving a Sick Soldier*; moreover, that he was the inventor of two pictures of *Suspended and Restored Animation*, which I now remember to have seen in the Exhibition some years since, and the prints from which are still extant in good men's houses. This then, I suppose, is the line of subjects in which Mr. Penny was so much superior to Hogarth. I confess I am not of that opinion. The relieving of poverty by the purse, and the restoring a young man to his parents by using the methods prescribed by the Humane Society, are doubtless very amiable subjects, pretty things to teach the first rudiments of humanity; they amount to about as much instruction as the stories of good boys that give away their custards to poor beggar-boys in children's books. But good God! is this *milk for babes* to be set up in opposition to Hogarth's moral scenes, his *strong meat for men?* As well might we prefer the fulsome verses upon their own goodness to which the gentlemen of the Literary Fund annually sit still with such shameless patience to listen, to the satires of Juvenal and Persius;

because the former are full of tender images of Worth relieved by Charity, and Charity stretching out her hand to rescue sinking Genius, and the theme of the latter is men's crimes and follies with their black consequences—forgetful meanwhile of those strains of moral pathos, those sublime heart-touches, which these poets (in *them* chiefly showing themselves poets) are perpetually darting across the otherwise appalling gloom of their subject—consolatory remembrancers, when their pictures of guilty mankind have made us even to despair for our species, that there is such a thing as virtue and moral dignity in the world, that her unquenchable spark is not utterly out—refreshing admonitions, to which we turn for shelter from the too great heat and asperity of the general satire.

And is there nothing analogous to this in Hogarth ?—nothing which " attempts and reaches the heart " ?—no aim beyond that of " shaking the sides " ?—If the kneeling ministering female in the last scene of the *Rake's Progress*, the Bedlam scene, of which I have spoken before, and have dared almost to parallel it with the most absolute idea of Virtue which Shakspeare has left us, be not enough to disprove the assertion ; if the sad endings of the Harlot and the Rake, the passionate heart-bleeding entreaties for forgiveness which the adulterous wife is pouring forth to her assassinated and dying lord in the last scene but one of the *Marriage A la mode*,—if these be not things to touch the heart, and dispose the mind to a meditative tenderness ; is there nothing sweetly conciliatory in the mild patient face and gesture with which the wife seems to allay and ventilate the feverish irritated feelings of her poor poverty-distracted mate (the true copy of the *genus irritabile*) in the print of the Distrest Poet ? or if an image of maternal love be required, where shall we find a sublimer view of it than in that aged woman in *Industry and Idleness* (Plate V) who is clinging with the fondness of hope not quite extinguished to her brutal vice-hardened child, whom she is accompanying to the ship which is to bear him away from his native soil, of which he has been adjudged unworthy : in whose shocking face every trace of the human countenance seems obliterated, and a brute beast's to be left instead, shocking and repulsive to all but her who watched over it in its cradle before it was so sadly altered, and feels it must belong to her while a pulse by the vindictive laws of his country shall be suffered to continue to beat in it. Compared with such things, what is Mr. Penny's " knowledge of the figure and academical skill which Hogarth wanted " ?

With respect to what follows concerning another gentleman, with the congratulations to him on his escape out of the regions of " humour and caricature," in which it appears he was in danger

of travelling side by side with Hogarth, I can only congratulate my country, that Mrs. Hogarth knew *her* province better than, by disturbing her husband at his palette, to divert him from that universality of subject, which has stamped him perhaps, next to Shakspeare, the most inventive genius which this island has produced, into the "amiable pursuit of beautiful nature," *i.e.*, copying ad infinitum the individual charms and graces of Mrs. H.

"Hogarth's method of exposing meanness, deformity and vice, paddling in whatever is ridiculous, faulty and vicious."

A person unacquainted with the works thus stigmatised would be apt to imagine that in Hogarth there was nothing else to be found but subjects of the coarsest and most repulsive nature. That his imagination was naturally unsweet, and that he delighted in raking into every species of moral filth. That he preyed upon sore places only, and took a pleasure in exposing the unsound and rotten parts of human nature:—whereas, with the exception of some of the plates of the *Harlot's Progress*, which are harder in their character than any of the rest of his productions, (the *Stages of Cruelty* I omit as mere worthless caricatures, foreign to his general habits, the offspring of his fancy in some wayward humour,) there is scarce one of his pieces where vice is most strongly satirised, in which some figure is not introduced upon which the moral eye may rest satisfied; a face that indicates goodness, or perhaps mere good-humouredness and carelessness of mind (negation of evil) only, yet enough to give a relaxation to the frowning brow of Satire, and keep the general air from tainting. Take the mild, supplicating posture of patient Poverty in the poor woman that is persuading the pawnbroker to accept her clothes in pledge, in the plate of *Gin Lane*, for an instance. A little does it, a little of the *good* nature overpowers a world of bad. One cordial honest laugh of a Tom Jones absolutely clears the atmosphere that was reeking with the black putrifying breathings of a hypocrite Blifil. One homely expostulating shrug from Strap warms the whole air which the suggestions of a gentlemanly ingratitude from his friend Random had begun to freeze. One "Lord bless us!" of Parson Adams upon the wickedness of the times, exorcises and purges off the mass of iniquity which the world-knowledge of even a Fielding could cull out and rake together. But of the severer class of Hogarth's performances, enough, I trust, has been said to show that they do not merely shock and repulse; that there is in them the "scorn of vice" and the "pity" too; something to touch the heart, and keep alive the sense of moral beauty; the "lacrymæ rerum," and the sorrowing by which the heart is made better. If they be bad

things then is satire and tragedy a bad thing; let us proclaim at once an age of gold, and sink the existence of vice and misery in our speculations: let us

> " —— wink, and shut our apprehensions up
> From common sense of what men were and are: "

let us *make believe* with the children, that every body is good and happy; and, with Dr. Swift, write panegyrics upon the world.

But that larger half of Hogarth's works, which were painted more for entertainment than instruction (though such was the suggestiveness of his mind that there is always something to be learnt from them), his humourous scenes,—are they such as merely to disgust and set us against our species?

The confident assertions of such a man as I consider the late Mr. Barry to have been, have that weight of authority in them which staggers at first hearing, even a long preconceived opinion. When I read his pathetic admonition concerning the shortness of life, and how much better the little leisure of it were laid out upon " that species of art which is employed about the amiable and the admirable; " and Hogarth's " method," proscribed as a " dangerous or worthless pursuit," I began to think there was something in it; that I might have been indulging all my life a passion for the works of this artist, to the utter prejudice of my taste and moral sense; but my first convictions gradually returned, a world of good-natured English faces came up one by one to my recollection, and a glance at the matchless *Election Entertainment*, which I have the happiness to have hanging up in my parlour, subverted Mr. Barry's whole theory in an instant.

In that inimitable print (which in my judgment as far exceeds the more known and celebrated *March to Finchley*, as the best comedy exceeds the best farce that ever was written), let a person look till he be saturated, and when he has done wondering at the inventiveness of genius which could bring so many characters (more than thirty distinct classes of face) into a room and set them down at table together, or otherwise dispose them about, in so natural a manner, engage them in so many easy sets and occupations yet all partaking of the spirit of the occasion which brought them together, so that we feel that nothing but an election time could have assembled them; having no central figure or principal group (for the hero of the piece, the Candidate, is properly set aside in the levelling indistinction of the day, one must look for him to find him), nothing to detain the eye from passing from part to part, where every part is alike instinct with life,—for here are no furniture-faces, no figures brought in to fill up the scene like stage choruses, but all dramatis personæ: when he shall have done wondering at all these faces so strongly charactered, yet finished with the accuracy of the finest miniature;

when he shall have done admiring the numberless appendages of the scene, those gratuitous doles which rich genius flings into the heap when it has already done enough, the over-measure which it delights in giving, as if it felt its stores were exhaustless; the dumb rhetoric of the scenery—for tables, and chairs, and joint-stools in Hogarth are living and significant things; the witticisms that are expressed by words, (all artists but Hogarth have failed when they have endeavoured to combine two mediums of expression, and have introduced words into their pictures,) and the unwritten numberless little allusive pleasantries that are scattered about; the work that is going on in the scene, and beyond it, as is made visible to the "eye of mind," by the mob which chokes up the doorway, and the sword that has forced an entrance before its master; when he shall have sufficiently admired this wealth of genius, let him fairly say what is the *result* left on his mind. Is it an impression of the vileness and worthlessness of his species? or is it not the general feeling which remains, after the individual faces have ceased to act sensibly on his mind, a *kindly one in favour of his species?* was not the general air of the scene wholesome? did it do the heart hurt to be among it? Something of a riotous spirit to be sure is there, some worldly-mindedness in some of the faces, a Doddingtonian smoothness which does not promise any superfluous degree of sincerity in the fine gentleman who has been the occasion of calling so much good company together; but is not the general cast of expression in the faces of the good sort? do they not seem cut out of the *good old rock*, substantial English honesty? would one fear treachery among characters of their expression? or shall we call their honest mirth and seldom-returning relaxation by the hard names of vice and profligacy? That poor country fellow, that is grasping his staff (which, from that difficulty of feeling themselves at home which poor men experience at a feast, he has never parted with since he came into the room), and is enjoying with a relish that seems to fit all the capacities of his soul the slender joke, which that facetious wag his neighbour is practising upon the gouty gentleman, whose eyes the effort to suppress pain has made as round as rings—does it shock the "dignity of human nature" to look at that man, and to sympathise with him in the seldom-heard joke which has unbent his care-worn, hard-working visage, and drawn iron smiles from it? or with that full-hearted cobbler, who is honouring with the grasp of an honest fist the unused palm of that annoyed patrician, whom the licence of the time has seated next him?

I can see nothing "dangerous" in the contemplation of such scenes as this, or the *Enraged Musician*, or the *Southwark Fair*, or twenty other pleasant prints which come crowding in upon

my recollection, in which the restless activities, the diversified bents and humours, the blameless peculiarities of men, as they deserve to be called, rather than their "vices and follies," are held up in a laughable point of view. All laughter is not of a dangerous or soul-hardening tendency. There is the petrifying sneer of a demon which excludes and kills Love, and there is the cordial laughter of a man which implies and cherishes it. What heart was ever made the worse by joining in a hearty laugh at the simplicities of Sir Hugh Evans or Parson Adams, where a sense of the ridiculous mutually kindles and is kindled by a perception of the amiable? That tumultous harmony of singers that are roaring out the words, "The world shall bow to the Assyrian throne," from the opera of *Judith*, in the third plate of the series called the *Four Groups of Heads;* which the quick eye of Hogarth must have struck off in the very infancy of the rage for sacred oratorios in this country, while "Music yet was young"; when we have done smiling at the deafening distortions, which these tearers of devotion to rags and tatters, these takers of heaven by storm, in their boisterous mimicry of the occupation of angels, are making,—what unkindly impression is left behind, or what more of harsh or contemptuous feeling, than when we quietly leave Uncle Toby and Mr. Shandy riding their hobby-horses about the room? The conceited, long-backed Sign-painter, that with all the self-applause of a Raphael or Correggio (the twist of body which his conceit has thrown him into has something of the Correggiesque in it), is contemplating the picture of a bottle, which he is drawing from an actual bottle that hangs beside him, in the print of *Beer Street*,—while we smile at the enormity of the self-delusion, can we help loving the good-humour and self-complacency of the fellow? would we willingly wake him from his dream?

I say not that all the ridiculous subjects of Hogarth have, necessarily, something in them to make us like them; some are indifferent to us, some in their natures repulsive, and only made interesting by the wonderful skill and truth to nature in the painter; but I contend that there is in most of them that sprinkling of the better nature, which, like holy water, chases away and disperses the contagion of the bad. They have this in them, besides, that they bring us acquainted with the every-day human face,—they give us skill to detect those gradations of sense and virtue (which escape the careless or fastidious observer) in the countenances of the world about us; and prevent that disgust at common life, that *tædium quotidianarum formarum*, which an unrestricted passion for ideal forms and beauties is in danger of producing. In this, as in many other things, they are analogous to the best novels of Smollett or Fielding.

SHAKSPEARE'S TREATMENT OF LOVE

THE individual has by this time learned the greatest and best lesson of the human mind—that in ourselves we are imperfect; and another truth, of the next, if not of equal, importance—that there exists a possibility of uniting two beings, each identified in their nature, but distinguished in their separate qualities, so that each should retain what distinguishes them, and at the same time each acquire the qualities of that being which is contra-distinguished. This is perhaps the most beautiful part of our nature: the man loses not his manly character: he does not become less brave or less resolved to go through fire and water, if necessary, for the object of his affections: rather say, that he becomes far more brave and resolute. He then feels the beginnings of his moral nature: he then is sensible of its imperfection, and of its perfectibility. All the grand and sublime thoughts of an improved state of being then dawn upon him: he can acquire the patience of woman, which in him is fortitude: the beauty and susceptibility of the female character in him becomes a desire to display all that is noble and dignified. In short, the only true resemblance to a couple thus united is the pure blue sky of heaven: the female unites the beautiful with the sublime, and the male the sublime with the beautiful.

Throughout the whole of his plays Shakspeare has evidently looked at the subject of love in this dignified light: he has conceived it not only with moral grandeur, but with philosophical penetration. The mind of man searches for something which shall add to his perfection—which shall assist him; and he also yearns to lend his aid in completing the moral nature of another. Thoughts like these will occupy many of his serious moments: imagination will accumulate on imagination, until at last some object attracts his attention, and to this object the whole weight and impulse of his feelings will be directed.

Who shall say this is not love? Here is system, but it is founded upon nature: here are associations; here are strong feelings, natural to us as men, and they are directed and finally attached to one object:—who shall say this is not love? Assuredly not the being who is the subject of these sensations. If it be not love, it is only known that it is not by Him Who knows all things. Shakspeare has therefore described Romeo as in love in the first instance with Rosaline, and so completely does he fancy himself in love that he declares, before he has seen Juliet,

> "When the devout religion of mine eye
> Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
> And these, who often drown'd could never die,
> Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars.
> One fairer than my love? the all-seeing sun
> Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun."

This is in answer to Benvolio, who has asked Romeo to compare the supposed beauty of Rosaline to the actual beauty of other ladies; and in this full feeling of confidence Romeo is brought to Capulet as it were by accident; he sees Juliet, instantly becomes the heretic he has just before declared impossible, and then commences that completeness of attachment which forms the whole subject of the tragedy.

Surely Shakspeare, the poet, the philosopher, who combined truth with beauty and beauty with truth, never dreamed that he could interest his auditory in favour of Romeo, by representing him as a mere weathercock, blown round by every woman's breath who, having seen one, became the victim of melancholy, eating his own heart, concentrating all his hopes and fears in her, and yet in an instant, changing and falling madly in love with another. Shakspeare must have meant something more than this, for this was the way to make people despise, instead of admiring his hero. Romeo tells us what was Shakspeare's purpose: he shows us that he had looked at Rosaline with a different feeling from that with which he had looked at Juliet. Rosaline was the object to which his over-full heart had attached itself in the first instance; our imperfect nature, in proportion as our ideas are vivid, seeks after something in which those ideas may be realised.

So with the indiscreet friendships sometimes formed by men of genius: they are conscious of their own weakness, and are ready to believe others stronger than themselves, when, in truth, they are weaker; they have formed an ideal in their own minds, and they want to see it realised; they require more than shadowy thought. Their own sense of imperfection makes it impossible for them to fasten their attachment upon themselves, and hence the humility of men of true genius: in, perhaps, the first man they meet, they only see what is good; they have no sense of his deficiencies, and their friendship becomes so strong, that they almost fall down and worship one in every respect greatly their inferior.

What is true of friendship is true of love, with a person of ardent feelings and warm imagination. What took place in the mind of Romeo was merely natural; it is accordant with every day's experience. Amid such various events, such shifting scenes, such changing personages, we are often mistaken, and discover that he or she was not what we hoped and expected: we find that the individual first chosen will not complete our imperfection; we may have suffered unnecessary pangs, and have indulged idly-directed hopes, and then a being may arise before us, who has more resemblance to the ideal we have formed. We know that we loved the earlier object with ardour and purity, but it was not what we feel for the later object. Our own mind

tells us, that in the first instance we merely yearned after an object, but in the last instance we know that we have found that object, and that it corresponds with the idea we had previously formed.

LAMB, 1812

ON THE TRAGEDIES OF SHAKSPEARE

CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR FITNESS FOR STAGE-REPRESENTATION.

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TAKING a turn the other day in the Abbey, I was struck with the affected attitude of a figure, which I do not remember to have seen before, and which upon examination proved to be the whole length of the celebrated Mr. Garrick. Though I would not go so far with some good Catholics abroad as to shut players altogether out of consecrated ground, yet I own I was not a little scandalised at the introduction of theatrical airs and gestures into a place set apart to remind us of the saddest realities. Going nearer, I found inscribed under this harlequin figure the following lines: —

> "To paint fair nature by divine command,
> Her magic pencil in his flowing hand,
> A Shakspeare rose; then, to expand his fame
> Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
> Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew,
> The Actor's genius bade them breathe anew;
> Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay,
> Immortal Garrick called them back to day:
> And still Eternity with power sublime
> Shall mark the mortal hour of hoary Time,
> Shakspeare and Garrick like twin-stars shall shine,
> And earth irradiate with a beam divine."

It would be an insult to my readers' understandings to attempt anything like a criticism on this farrago of false thoughts and nonsense. But the reflection it led me into was a kind of wonder, how, from the days of the actor here celebrated to our own, it should have been the fashion to compliment every performer in his turn, that has had the luck to please the Town in any of the great characters of Shakspeare, with the notion of possessing a *mind congenial with the poet's*: how people should come thus unaccountably to confound the power of originating poetical images and conceptions with the faculty of being able to read or recite the same when put into words; or what connection that absolute mastery over the heart and soul of man, which a great

dramatic poet possesses, has with those low tricks upon the eye and ear, which a player by observing a few general effects, which some common passion, as grief, anger, &c., usually has upon the gestures and exterior, can so easily compass. To know the internal workings and movements of a great mind, of an Othello or a Hamlet for instance, the *when* and the *why* and the *how far* they should be moved; to what pitch a passion is becoming; to give the reins and to pull in the curb exactly at the moment when the drawing in or the slackening is most graceful; seems to demand a reach of intellect of a vastly different extent from that which is employed upon the bare imitation of the signs of these passions in the countenance or gesture, which signs are usually observed to be most lively and emphatic in the weaker sort of minds, and which signs can after all but indicate some passion, as I said before, anger, or grief, generally; but of the motives and grounds of the passion, wherein it differs from the same passion in low and vulgar natures, of these the actor can give no more idea by his face or gesture than the eye (without a metaphor) can speak, or the muscles utter intelligible sounds. But such is the instantaneous nature of the impressions which we take in at the eye and ear at a play-house, compared with the slow apprehension oftentimes of the understanding in reading, that we are apt not only to sink the play-writer in the consideration which we pay to the actor, but even to identify in our minds, in a perverse manner, the actor with the character which he represents. It is difficult for a frequent play-goer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from the person and voice of Mr. K. We speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs. S. Nor is this confusion incidental alone to unlettered persons, who, not possessing the advantage of reading, are necessarily dependent upon the stage player for all the pleasure which they can receive from the drama, and to whom the very idea of *what an author is* cannot be made comprehensible without some pain and perplexity of mind: the error is one from which persons otherwise not meanly lettered, find it almost impossible to extricate themselves.

Never let me be so ungrateful as to forget the very high degree of satisfaction which I received some years back from seeing for the first time a tragedy of Shakspeare performed, in which those two great performers sustained the principal parts. It seemed to embody and realise conceptions which had hitherto assumed no distinct shape. But dearly do we pay all our life after for this juvenile pleasure, this sense of distinctness. When the novelty is past, we find to our cost that instead of realising an idea, we have only materialised and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance.

How cruelly this operates upon the mind, to have its free conceptions thus cramped and pressed down to the measure of a strait-lacing actuality, may be judged from that delightful sensation of freshness, with which we turn to those plays of Shakspeare which have escaped being performed, and to those passages in the acting plays of the same writer which have hapily been left out in the performance. How far the very custom of hearing anything *spouted*, withers and blows upon a fine passage, may be seen in those speeches from Henry the Fifth, &c., which are current in the mouths of schoolboys, from their being to be found in *Enfield's Speaker*, and such kind of books! I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning "To be or not to be," or to tell whether it be good, bad or indifferent, it has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanly from its living place and principle of continuity in the play, till it is become to me a perfect dead member.

It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakspeare are less calculated for performance on a stage, than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguishing excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do.

The glory of the scenic art is to personate passion, and the turns of passion; and the more coarse and palpable the passion is, the more hold upon the eyes and ears of the spectators the performer obviously possesses. For this reason, scolding scenes, scenes where two persons talk themselves into a fit of fury, and then in a surprising manner talk themselves out of it again, have always been the most popular upon our stage. And the reason is plain, because the spectators are here most palpably appealed to, they are the proper judges in this war of words, they are the legitimate ring that should be formed round such "intellectual prize-fighters." Talking is the direct object of the imitation here. But in all the best dramas, and in Shakspeare above all, how obvious it is, that the form of *speaking*, whether it be in soliloquy or dialogue, is only a medium, and often a highly artificial one, for putting the reader or spectator into possession of that knowledge of the inner structure and workings of mind in a character, which he could otherwise never have arrived at *in that form of composition* by any gift short of intuition. We do here as we do with novels written in the *epistolary form*. How many improprieties, perfect solecisms in letter-writing, do we put up with in Clarissa, and other books, for the sake of the delight which that form upon the whole gives us!

But the practice of stage representation reduces everything to a controversy of elocution. Every character, from the boisterous blasphemings of Bajazet to the shrinking timidity of womanhood, must play the orator. The love dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night! the more intimate and sacred sweetness of nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives, all those delicacies which are so delightful in the reading, as when we read of those youthful dalliances in Paradise—

> "As beseem'd
> Fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league,
> Alone;"

by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord, come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love!

The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflections beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle for conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself—what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as the public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense; they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to *words* for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once! I say not that it is the fault of the actor so to do; he must pronounce them *ore rotundo;* he must accompany them with his eye; he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone or gesture, or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his*

appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it. And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet!

It is true that there is no other mode of conveying a vast quantity of thought and feeling to a great portion of the audience, who otherwise would never learn it for themselves by reading, and the intellectual acquisition gained this way, may, for aught I know, be inestimable; but I am not arguing that Hamlet should not be acted, but how much Hamlet is made another thing by being acted. I have heard much of the wonders which Garrick performed in this part; but as I never saw him, I must have leave to doubt whether the representation of such a character came within the province of his art. Those who tell me of him, speak of his eye, of the magic of his eye, and of his commanding voice: physical properties, vastly desirable in an actor, and without which he can never insinuate meaning into an auditory—but what have they to do with Hamlet; what have they to do with intellect? In fact, the things aimed at in theatrical representation, are to arrest the spectator's eye upon the form and the gesture, and so to gain a more favourable hearing to what is spoken; it is not what the character is, but how he looks: not what he says, but how he speaks it. I see no reason to think that if the play of Hamlet were written over again by some such writer as Banks or Lillo, retaining the process of the story, but totally omitting all the poetry of it, all the divine features of Shakspeare, his stupendous intellect; and only taking care to give us enough of passionate dialogue, which Banks and Lillo were never at a loss to furnish; I see not how the effect could be much different upon an audience, nor how the actor has it in his power to represent Shakspeare to us differently from his representation of Banks or Lillo. Hamlet would still be a youthful accomplished Prince, and must be gracefully personated: he might be puzzled in his mind, wavering in his conduct, seemingly cruel to Ophelia; he might see a ghost, and start at it, and address it kindly when he found it to be his father: all this in the poorest and most homely language of the servilest creeper after nature that ever consulted the palate of an audience; without troubling Shakspeare for the matter: and I see not but there would be room for all the power which an actor has, to display itself. All the passions and changes of passion might remain: for those are much less difficult to write or act than is thought; it is a trick easy to be attained, it is but rising or falling a note or two in the voice, a whisper with a significant foreboding look to announce its approach, and so contagious the counterfeit appearance of any emotion is, that let the words be what they will, the look and tone shall carry it off and make it pass for deep skill in the passions.

It is common for people to talk of Shakspeare's plays being *so natural:* that everybody can understand him. They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us. You shall hear the same person say that George Barnwell is very natural, and Othello is very natural, that they are both very deep; and to them they are the same kind of thing. At the one they sit and shed tears, because a good sort of young man is tempted by a naughty woman to commit a trifling *peccadillo*, the murder of an uncle or so, that is all, and so comes to an untimely end, which is *so moving:* and at the other, because a blackamoor in a fit of jealousy kills his innocent white wife; and the odds are that ninety-nine out of a hundred would willingly behold the same catastrophe happen to both the heroes, and have the rope more due to Othello than to Barnwell. For the texture of Othello's mind, the inward construction marvellously laid open with all its strengths and weaknesses, its heroic confidences and its human misgivings, its agonies of hate springing from the depths of love, they see no more than the spectators at a cheaper rate, who pay their pennies a-piece to look through the man's telescope in Leicester fields, see into the inward plot and topography of the moon. Some dim thing or other they see: they see an actor personating a passion of grief, or anger, for instance, and they recognise it as a copy of the usual external effects of such passions; or at least as being true to *that symbol of the emotion which passes current at the theatre for it*, for it is often no more than that; but of the grounds of passion, its correspondence to a great or heroic nature, which is the only worthy object of tragedy, that common auditors know anything of this, or can have any such notions dinned into them by the mere strength of an actor's lungs,—that apprehensions foreign to them should be thus infused into them by storm, I can neither believe, nor understand how it can be possible.

We talk of Shakspeare's admirable observation of life, when we should feel, that not from a petty inquisition into those cheap and every-day characters which surrounded him, as they surround us, but from his own mind, which was, to borrow a phrase of Ben Jonson's, the very "sphere of humanity," he fetched those images of virtue and of knowledge, of which every one of us recognising a part, think we comprehend in our natures the whole; and oftentimes mistake the powers which he positively creates in us, for nothing more than indigenous faculties of our own minds, which only waited the application of corresponding virtues in him to return a full and clear echo of the same.

To return to Hamlet.—Among the distinguishing features of that wonderful character, one of the most interesting (yet

painful) is that soreness of mind which makes him treat the intrusions of Polonius with harshness, and that asperity which he puts on in his interviews with Ophelia. These tokens of an unhinged mind (if they be not mixed in the latter case with a profound artifice of love, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that loving intercourse, which can no longer find a place amidst business so serious as that which he has to do) are parts of his character, which to reconcile with our admiration of Hamlet, the most patient consideration of his situation is no more than necessary; they are what we *forgive afterwards*, and explain by the whole of his character, but *at the time* they are harsh and unpleasant. Yet such is the actor's necessity of giving strong blows to the audience, that I have never seen a player in this character, who did not exaggerate and strain to the utmost these ambiguous features, these temporary deformities in the character. They make him express a vulgar scorn at Polonius which utterly degrades his gentility, and which no explanation can render palatable; they make him show contempt, and curl up the nose at Ophelia's father,—contempt in its very grossest and most hateful form; but they get applause by it: it is natural, people say; that is, the words are scornful, and the actor expresses scorn, and that they can judge of; but why so much scorn, and of that sort, they never think of asking.

So to Ophelia.—All the Hamlets that I have ever seen, rant and rave at her as if she had committed some great crime, and the audience are highly pleased, because the words of the part are satirical, and they are enforced by the strongest expression of satirical indignation of which the face and voice are capable. But then, whether Hamlet is likely to put on such brutal appearances to a lady whom he loved so dearly, is never thought on. The truth is, that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of *supererogatory love* (if I may venture to use the expression) which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the mind cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved party to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of a temporary alienation; but it is not alienation, it is a distraction purely, and so it always makes itself to be felt by that object: it is not anger, but grief assuming the appearance of anger,—love awkwardly counterfeiting hate, as sweet countenances when they turn to frown; but such sternness and fierce disgust as Hamlet is made to show, is not counterfeit, but the real face of absolute aversion,—of irreconcilable alienation. It may be said he puts on the madman; but then he should only so far put on this counterfeit lunacy as his own real distraction will give

him leave; that is, incompletely, imperfectly; not in that confirmed, practised way, like a master of his art, or as Dame Quickly would say, "like one of those harlotry players."

I mean no disrespect to any actor, but the sort of pleasure which Shakspeare's plays give in the acting seems to me not at all to differ from that which the audience receive from those of other writers; and they, being in themselves essentially so different from all others, I must conclude that there is something in the nature of acting, which levels all distinctions. And, in fact, who does not speak indifferently of the Gamester and of Macbeth as fine stage performances, and praise the Mrs. Beverley in the same way as Lady Macbeth of Mrs. S.? Belvidera, and Calista, and Isabella, and Euphrasia, are they less liked than Imogen, or than Juliet, or than Desdemona? Are they not spoken of and remembered in the same way? Is not the female performer as great (as they call it) in one as in the other? Did not Garrick shine, and was he not ambitious of shining, in every drawling tragedy that his wretched day produced,—the productions of the Hills, and the Murphys, and the Browns,—and shall he have that honour to dwell in our minds for ever as an inseparable concomitant with Shakspeare? A kindred mind! O who can read that affecting sonnet of Shakspeare which alludes to his profession as a player:—

> "Oh for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmless deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public custom breeds—
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."—

Or that other confession:—

> "Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to thy view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear--"

Who can read these instances of jealous self-watchfulness in our sweet Shakspeare, and dream of any congenialty between him and one that, by every tradition of him, appears to have been as mere a player as ever existed; to have had his mind tainted with the lowest players' vices,—envy and jealousy, and miserable cravings after applause; one who in the exercise of his profession was jealous even of the women-performers that stood in his way; a manager full of managerial tricks and stratagems and finesse; that any resemblance should be dreamed of between him and Shakspeare,—Shakspeare who, in the plenitude and consciousness of his own powers, could with that noble modesty, which we can neither imitate nor appreciate, express himself thus of his own sense of his own defects:—

" Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possest;
Desiring *this man's art, and that man's scope.*"

I am almost disposed to deny to Garrick the merit of being an admirer of Shakspeare. A true lover of his excellences he certainly was not; for would any true lover of them have admitted into his matchless scenes such ribald trash as Tate and Cibber, and the rest of them, that

" With their darkness durst affront his light,"

have foisted into the acting plays of Shakspeare? I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakspeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in Richard the Third, in which Richard tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, " if she survivies this she is immortal." Yet I doubt not he delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety of emphasis as any of the genuine parts: and for acting, it is as well calculated as any. But we have seen the part of Richard lately produce great fame to an actor by his manner of playing it, and it lets us into the secret of acting, and of popular judgments of Shakspeare derived from acting. Not one of the spectators who have witnessed Mr. C.'s exertions in that part, but has come away with a proper conviction that Richard is a very wicked man, and kills little children in their beds, with something like the pleasure which the giants and ogres in children's books are represented to have taken in that practice; moreover, that he is very close and shrewd, and devilish cunning, for you could see that by his eye.

But is, in fact, this the impression we have in reading the Richard of Shakspeare? Do we feel anything like disgust, as we do at that butcher-like representation of him that passes for him on the stage? A horror at his crimes blends with the effect which we feel, but how is it qualified, how is it carried off, by the rich intellect which he displays, his resources, his wit, his buoyant spirits, his vast knowledge and insight into characters, the poetry of his part,—not an atom of all which is made perceivable in Mr. C.'s way of acting it. Nothing but his crimes, his actions, is visible; they are prominent and staring; the murderer stands out, but where is the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity,—the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard?

The truth is, the characters of Shakspeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap these moral fences. Barnwell is a wretched murderer;

there is a certain fitness between his neck and the rope ; he is the legitimate heir to the gallows ; nobody who thinks at all can think of any alleviating circumstances in his case to make him a fit object of mercy. Or to take an instance from the higher tragedy, what else but a mere assassin is Glenalvon ? Do we think of anything but of the crime which he commits, and the rack which he deserves ? That is all which we really think about him. Whereas in corresponding characters in Shakspeare, so little do the actions comparatively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness, solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively everything, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time until the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan, when we no longer read in a book, when we have given up that vantage ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive as I have witnessed it in Mr. K.'s performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence : it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has anything to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughter on a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real element than any actor can be to represent Lear ; they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures ! The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual : the explosion of his passions are terrible as a volcano ; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on ; even as he

himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms: in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its power, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them, that "they themselves are old?" What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living matryrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage. But how many dramatic personages are there in Shakspeare, which though more tractable and feasible (if I may so speak) than Lear, yet from some circumstance, some adjunct to their character, are improper to be shown to our bodily eye! Othello for instance. Nothing can be more soothing, more flattering to the nobler parts of our natures, than to read of a young Venetian lady of the highest extraction, through the force of love and from a sense of merit in him whom she loved, laying aside every consideration of kindred, and country, and colour, and wedding with a *coal-black Moor*—(for such he is represented, in the imperfect state of knowledge respecting foreign countries in those days, compared with our own, or in compliance with popular notions, though the Moors are now well enough to be known by many shades less unworthy of a white woman's fancy)—it is the perfect triumph of virtue over accidents, of the imagination over the senses. She sees Othello's colour in his mind. But upon the stage, when the imagination is no longer the ruling faculty,

but we are left to our poor unassisted senses, I appeal to every one that has seen Othello played, whether he did not, on the contrary, sink Othello's mind in his colour; whether he did not find something extremely revolting in the courtship and wedded caresses of Othello and Desdemona; and whether the actual sight of the thing did not over-weigh all that beautiful compromise which we make in reading;—and the reason it should do so is obvious, because there is just so much reality presented to our senses as to give a perception of disagreement, with not enough of belief in the internal motives—all that which is unseen,—to overpower and reconcile the first and obvious prejudices. What we see upon a stage is body and bodily action; what we are conscious of in reading is almost exclusively the mind, and its movements; and this I think may sufficiently account for the very different sort of delight with which the same play so often affects us in the reading and the seeing.

It requires little reflection to perceive, that if those characters in Shakspeare which are within the precincts of nature, have yet something in them which appeals too exclusively to the imagination, to admit of their being made objects to the senses without suffering a change and a diminution,—that still stronger the objection must lie against representing another line of characters, which Shakspeare has introduced to give a wildness and a supernatural elevation to his scenes, as if to remove them still farther from that assimilation to common life in which their excellence is vulgarly supposed to consist. When we read the incantations of those terrible beings the Witches in Macbeth, though some of the ingredients of their hellish composition savour of the grotesque, yet is the effect upon us other than the most serious and appalling that can be imagined? Do we not feel spell-bound as Macbeth was? Can any mirth accompany a sense of their presence? We might as well laugh under a consciousness of the principle of Evil himself being truly and really present with us. But attempt to bring these things on to a stage, and you turn them instantly into so many old women, that men and children are to laugh at. Contrary to the old saying, that "seeing is believing," the sight actually destroys the faith; and the mirth in which we indulge at their expense, when we see these creatures upon a stage, seems to be a sort of indemnification which we make to ourselves for the terror which they put us in when reading made them an object of belief,—when we surrendered up our reason to the poet, as children to their nurses and their elders; and we laugh at our fears as children, who thought they saw something in the dark, triumph when the bringing in of a candle discovers the vanity of their fears. For this exposure of supernatural agents upon a stage is truly bringing in a candle to expose their own delusiveness.

It is the solitary taper and the book that generates a faith in these terrors: a ghost by chandelier light, and in good company, deceives no spectators,—a ghost that can be measured by the eye, and his human dimensions made out at leisure. The sight of a well-lighted house, and a well-dresssed audience, shall arm the most nervous child against any apprehensions: as Tom Brown says of the impenetrable skin of Achilles with his impenetrable armour over it, "Bully Dawson would have fought the devil with such advantages."

Much has been said, and deservedly, in reprobation of the vile mixture which Dryden has thrown into the Tempest: doubtless without some such vicious alloy, the impure ears of that age would never have sate out to hear so much innocence of love as is contained in the sweet courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda. But is the Tempest of Shakspeare at all a subject for stage representation? It is one thing to read of an enchanter, and to believe the wondrous tale while we are reading it; but to have a conjuror brought before us in his conjuring-gown, with his spirits about him, which none but himself and some hundred of favoured spectators before the curtain are supposed to see, involves such a quantity of the *hateful incredible*, that all our reverence for the author cannot hinder us from perceiving such gross attempts upon the senses to be in the highest degree childish and inefficient. Spirits and fairies cannot be represented, they cannot even be painted,—they can only be believed. But the elaborate and anxious provision of scenery, which the luxury of the age demands, in these cases works a quite contrary effect to what is intended. That which in comedy, or plays of familiar life, adds so much to the life of the imitation, in plays which appeal to the higher faculties positively destroys the illusion which it is introduced to aid. A parlour or a drawing-room,—a library opening into a garden—a garden with an alcove in it,—a street, or the piazza of Covent-garden, does well enough in a scene; we are content to give as much credit to it as it demands; or rather, we think little about it,—it is little more than reading at the top of a page, "Scene, a garden;" we do not imagine ourselves there, but we readily admit the imitation of familiar objects. But to think by the help of painted trees and caverns, which we know to be painted, to transport our minds to Prospero, and his island and his lonely cell; or by the aid of a fiddle dexterously thrown in, in an interval of speaking, to make us believe that we hear those super-natural noises of which the isle was full: the Orrery Lecturer at the Haymarket might as well hope, by his musical glasses cleverly stationed out of sight behind his apparatus, to make us believe that we do indeed hear the crystal spheres ring out that chime, which if it were to enwrap our fancy long, Milton thinks,

> "Time would run back and fetch the age of gold,
> And speckled Vanity
> Would sicken soon and die,
> And leprous Sin would melt from earthly mould;
> Yea, Hell itself would pass away,
> And leave its dolorous mansions to the peering day."

The garden of Eden, with our first parents in it, is not more impossible to be shown on a stage, than the Enchanted isle, with its no less interesting and innocent first settlers.

The subject of Scenery is closely connected with that of the Dresses, which are so anxiously attended to on our stage. I remember the last time I saw Macbeth played, the discrepancy I felt at the changes of garment which he varied, the shiftings and re-shiftings, like a Romish priest at mass. The luxury of stage-improvements, and the importunity of the public eye, require this. The coronation robe of the Scottish monarch was fairly a counterpart to that which our King wears when he goes to the Parliament-house, just so full and cumbersome, and set out with ermine and pearls. And if things must be represented, I see not what to find fault with in this. But in reading, what robe are we conscious of? Some dim images of royalty—a crown and sceptre may float before our eyes, but who shall describe the fashion of it? Do we see in our mind's eye what Webb or any robe-maker could pattern? This is the inevitable consequence of imitating everything, to make all things natural. Whereas the reading of a tragedy is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness.

Perhaps it would be no bad similitude, to liken the pleasure which we take in seeing one of these fine plays acted, compared with that quiet delight which we find in the reading of it, to the different feelings to which a reviewer, and a man that is not a reviewer, reads a fine poem. The accursed critical habit—the being called upon to judge and pronounce, must make it quite a different thing to the former. In seeing these plays acted, we are affected just as judges. When Hamlet compares the two pictures of Gertrude's first and second husband, who wants to see the pictures? But in the acting a miniature must be lugged out; which we know not to be the picture, but only to show how finely a miniature may be represented. This showing of everything levels all things: it makes tricks, bows and curtseys of importance. Mrs. S. never got more fame by anything than by the manner in which she dismisses the guest in the banquet-scene in Macbeth:

it is as much remembered as any of her thrilling tones and impressive looks. But does such a trifle as this enter into the imaginations of the readers of that wild and wonderful scene? Does not the mind dismiss the feasters as rapidly as it can? Does it care about the gracefulness of the doing it? But by acting, and judging of acting, all these non-essentials are raised into an importance injurious to the main interest of the play.

I have confined my observations to the tragic parts of Shakspeare. It would be no very difficult task to extend the inquiry to his comedies: and to show why Falstaff, Shallow, Sir Hugh Evans, and the rest, are equally incompatible with stage representations. The length to which this Essay has run will make it, I am afraid, sufficiently distasteful to the Amateurs of the Theatre, without going any deeper into the subject at present.

HUNT, 1814

THE STORY OF RIMINI;

OR, FRUITS OF A PARENT'S FALSEHOOD

CANTO I

ARGUMENT.—*Giovanni Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, has won by his victories the hand of the Princess Francesca, daughter of the reigning Count of Ravenna; and is expected, with a gorgeous procession, to come and marry her. She has never yet seen him. The procession arrives, and is described.*

'TIS morn, and never did a lovelier day
Salute Ravenna from its leafy bay:
For a warm eve, and gentle rains at night,
Have left a sparkling welcome for the light,
And April, with his white hands wet with flowers,
Dazzles the bride-maids, looking from the towers:
Green vineyards and fair orchards, far and near,
Glitter with drops; and heaven is sapphire clear,
And the lark rings it, and the pine-trees glow,
And odours from the citrons come and go,
And all the landscape—earth, and sky, and sea—
Breathes like a bright-eyed face, that laughs out openly.

'Tis nature, full of spirits, wak'd and lov'd.
E'en sloth, to-day, goes quick and unreprov'd;
For where's the living soul, priest, minstrel, clown,
Merchant, or lord, that speeds not to the town?
Hence happy faces, striking through the green
Of leafy roads, at every turn are seen;
And the far ships, lifting their sails of white
Like joyful hands, come up with scatter'd light;
Come gleaming up—true to the wish'd-for day—
And chase the whistling brine, and swirl into the bay.

And well may all the world come crowding there,
If peace returning, and processions rare,
And, to crown all, a marriage in the spring
Can set men's hearts and fancies on the wing;
For, on this beauteous day, Ravenna's pride—
The daughter of their prince—becomes a bride;
A bride to ransom an exhausted land;
And he, whose victories have obtain'd her hand,
Has taken with the dawn—so flies report—
His promis'd journey to the expecting court,
With hasting pomp, and squires of high degree,
The bold Giovanni, Lord of Rimini.

The road, that way, is lined with anxious eyes,
And false announcements and fresh laughters rise.
The horseman hastens through the jeering crowd,
And finds no horse within the gates allow'd;
And who shall tell the drive there, and the din?
The bells, the drums, the crowds yet squeezing in
The shouts, from mere exuberance of delight,
And mothers with their babes in sore affright,
And armed bands making important way,
Gallant and grave, the lords of holiday;
Minstrels, and friars, and beggars many a one
That pray, and roll their blind eyes in the sun,
And all the buzzing throngs, that hang like bees
On roofs, and walls, and tops of garden trees?
With tap'stries bright the windows overflow,
By lovely faces brought, that come and go,
Till by their work the charmers take their seats,
Themselves the sweetest pictures in the streets,
In colours, by light awnings beautified;
Some re-adjusting tresses newly tied,
Some turning a trim waist, or o'er the flow
Of crimson cloths hanging a hand of snow:

Smiling and laughing some, and some serene,
But all with flowers, and all with garlands green,
And most in fluttering talk, impatient for the scene.

At length the approaching trumpets, with a start
On the smooth wind, come dancing to the heart;
The crowd are mute; and, from the southern wall,
A lordly blast gives welcome to the call.
Then comes the crush; and all who best can strive
In shuffling struggle, tow'rds the palace drive,
Where, baluster'd and broad, of marble fair,
Its portico commands the public square:
For there Count Guido is to hold his state,
With his fair daughter, seated o'er the gate.
But far too well the square has been supplied;
And, after a rude heave from side to side,
With angry faces turn'd and nothing gain'd,
The order, first found easiest, is maintain'd,
Leaving the pathways only for the crowd,
The space within for the procession proud.

For in this manner is the square set out:—
The sides, path-deep, are crowded round about,
And fac'd with guards, who keep the horse-way clear;
And, round a fountain in the midst, appear—
Seated with knights and ladies, in discourse—
Rare Tuscan wits and warbling troubadours,
Whom Guido (for he lov'd the Muse's race)
Has set there to adorn his public place.
The seats with boughs are shaded from above
Of bays and roses,—trees of wit and love;
And in the midst, fresh whistling through the scene,
The lightsome fountain starts from out the green,
Clear and compact; till, at its height o'errun,
It shakes its loosening silver in the sun.

There, with the wits and beauties, you may see,
As in some nest of faëry poetry,
Some of the chiefs, the noblest in the land,—
Hugo, and Borso of the Liberal Hand,
And Gino, and Ridolfo, and the flower
Of jousters, Everard of the Sylvan Tower;
And Felix the Fine Arm, and him who well
Repaid the Black-Band robbers, Lionel;
With more that have pluck'd beards of Turk and Greek,
And made the close Venetian lower his sails and speak.

There, too, in thickest of the bright-eyed throng,
Stands a young father of Italian song—
Guy Cavalcanti, of a knightly race;
The poet looks out in his earnest face:
He with the pheasant's plume—there—bending now
Something he speaks around him with a bow,
And all the listening looks, with nods and flushes,
Break round him into smiles and grateful blushes.

Another start of trumpets, with reply;
And o'er the gate a crimson canopy
Opens to right and left its flowing shade,
And Guido issues with the princely maid,
And sits;—the courtiers fall on either side;
But every look is fixed upon the bride,
Who seems all thought at first, and hardly hears
The enormous shout that springs as she appears;
Till, as she views the countless gaze below,
And faces that with grateful homage glow,
A home to leave and husband yet to see
Are mix'd with thoughts of lofty charity:
And hard it is, she thinks, to have no will;
But not to bless these thousands, harder still.
With that a keen and quivering sense of tears
Scarce moves her sweet, proud lip, and disappears;
A smile is underneath, and breaks away,
And round she looks and breathes, as best befits the day

What need I tell of cheeks, and lips, and eyes,
The locks that fall, and bosom's balmy rise?
Beauty's whole soul is hers, though shadow'd still
With anxious thought, and doubtful maiden will;
A lip for endless love, should all prove just;
An eye that can withdraw into as deep distrust.

While thus with earnest looks the people gaze,
Another shout the neighbouring quarters raise:
The train are in the town, and gathering near
With noise of cavalry, and trumpets clear,
A princely music, unbedinn'd with drums;
The mighty brass seems opening as it comes;
And now it fills, and now it shakes the air,
And now it bursts into the sounding square;
At which the crowd with such a shout rejoice,
Each thinks he's deafen'd with his neighbour's voice.
Then with a long-drawn breath the clangours die,

The palace trumpets give a last reply,
And clustering hoofs succeed, with stately stir
Of snortings proud and clinking furniture,—
The most majestic sound of human will:
Nought else is heard sometime, the people are so still.

First come the trumpeters, clad all in white,
Except the breast, which wears a scutcheon bright.
By four and four they ride, on horses grey;
And as they sit along their easy way,
To the steed's motion yielding as they go,
Each plants his trumpet on his saddle-bow.

The heralds next appear, in vests attir'd
Of stiffening gold with radiant colours fir'd;
And then the pursuivants who wait on these,
All dress'd in painted richness to the knees:
Each rides a dappled horse, and bears a shield,
Charg'd with three heads upon a golden field.*

Twelve ranks of squires come after, twelve in one,
With forked pennons lifted in the sun,
Which tell, as they look backward in the wind,
The bearings of the knights that ride behind.
Their horses are deep bay; and every squire
His master's colour shows in his attire.

These past, and at a lordly distance, come
The knights themselves, and fill the quickening hum—
The flower of Rimini. Apart they ride,
Two in a rank, their falchions by their side,
But otherwise unarm'd, and clad in hues
Such as their ladies had been pleas'd to chuse,
Bridal and gay,—orange, and pink, and white,—
All but the scarlet cloak for every knight;
Which thrown apart, and hanging loose behind,
Rests on the horse, and ruffles in the wind.
The horses, black and glossy every one,
Supply a further stately unison—
A solemn constancy of martial show;
Their frothy bits keep wrangling as they go.
The bridles red, and saddle-cloths of white,
Match well the blackness with its glossy light,
While the rich horse-cloths, mantling half the steed,
Are some of them all thick with golden thread;

Others have spots, on grounds of different hue—
As burning stars upon a cloth of blue ;
Or heart's-ease purple with a velvet light,
Rich from the glary yellow, thickening bright ;
Or silver roses in carnation sewn,
Or flowers in heaps, or colours pure alone :
But all go sweeping back, and seem to dress
The forward march with loitering stateliness.

The crowd, with difference of delight, admire
Horseman and horse, the motion and the attire.
Some watch the rider's looks as they go by,
Their self-possess'd though pleas'd observancy ;
And some their skill admire, and careless heed,
Or body curving to the rearing steed,
Or patting hand that best persuades the check,
And makes the quarrel up with a proud neck.
Others are bent upon the horses most,—
Their shape, their breed, the glory of their host :
The small bright head, free nostrils, fetlocks clean,
The branching veins ridging the glossy lean,
The start and snatch, as if they felt the comb,
With mouths that fling about the creamy foam,—
The snorting turbulence, the nod, the champing,
The shift, the tossing, and the fiery tramping.

And now the Princess, pale and with fix'd eye,
Perceives the last of those precursors nigh,
Each rank uncovering as they pass in state,
Both to the courtly fountain and the gate ;
And then a second interval succeeds
Of stately length, and then a troop of steeds
Milk-white and azure-draped, Arabian bred,
Each by a blooming boy lightsomely led.
In every limb is seen their faultless race,
A fire well-temper'd, and a free left grace :
Slender their spotless shapes, and greet the sight
With freshness after all those colours bright ;
And as with easy pitch their steps they bear,
Their yielding heads have half a loving air.
These for a princely present are divin'd,
And shew the giver is not far behind.

The talk increases now, and now advance,
Space after space, with many a sprightly prance,
The pages of the court, in rows of three ;
Of white and crimson in their livery.

Space after space, and still the train appear;
A fervid whisper fills the general ear—
"Ah—yes—no! 'tis not he, but 'tis the squires
Who go before him when his pomp requires."
And now his huntsman shows the lessening train.
Now the squire-carver, and the chamberlain;
And now his banner comes, and now his shield,
Borne by the squire that waits him to the field;
And then an interval,—a lordly space;—
A pin-drop silence strikes o'er all the place.
The Princess, from a distance, scarcely knows
Which way to look; her colour comes and goes,
And, with an impulse like a piteous plea,
She lays her hand upon her father's knee,
Who looks upon her with a labour'd smile,
Gathering it up into his own the while,
When some one's voice, as if it knew not how
To check itself, exclaims, "The Prince! now, now!"
And on a milk-white courser, like the air,
A glorious figure springs into the square:—
Up, with a burst of thunder, goes the shout,
And rolls the trembling walls and peopled roofs about.

Never was nobler finish of fair sight,—
'Twas like the coming of a shape of light;
And many a lovely gazer, with a start,
Felt the quick pleasure smite across her heart.
The Princess, who at first could scarcely see,
Though looking still that way from dignity,
Gathers new courage as the praise goes round,
And bends her eyes to learn what they have found
And see—his horse obeys the check unseen,
And, with an air 'twixt ardent and serene,
Letting a fall of curls about his brow,
He takes, to all, his cap off with a bow.
Then for another, and a deafening shout,
And scarfs are wav'd, and flowers come pouring out,
And, shaken by the noise, the reeling air
Sweeps with a giddy whirl among the fair,
And whisks their garments and their shining hair.

With busy interchange of wonder glows
The crowd, and loves his bravery as he goes;
But on his shape the gentler sight attends,
Moves as he passes, as he bends him bends,—
Watches his air, his gesture, and his face,

And thinks it never saw such manly grace,
So fine are his bare throat, and curls of black,—
So lightsomely dropt in, his lordly back,—
His thigh so fitted for the tilt or dance,
So heap'd with strength, and turn'd with elegance;
But, above all, so meaning in his look,
As easy to be read as open book;
And such true gallantry the sex descries
In the grave thanks within his cordial eyes.
His haughty steed, who seems by turns to be
Vex'd and made proud by that cool mastery,
Shakes at his bit, and rolls his eyes with care,
Reaching with stately step at the fine air;
And now and then, sideling his restless pace,
Drops with his hinder legs, and shifts his place,
And feels through all his frame a fiery thrill;
The princely rider on his back sits still,
And looks where'er he likes, and sways him at his will.

Surprise, relief, a joy scarce understood—
Something, in truth, of very gratitude,
And fifty feelings undefin'd and new,
Dart through the bride, and flush her faded hue.
"Could I but once," she thinks, "securely place
A trust for the contents on such a case—
On such a mind, now seemingly beheld—
This chance of mine were hardly one compell'd."
And see! the stranger looking with delight
Tow'rds the sweet fountain with its circle bright,
And bending, as he looks, with frequent thanks,
Beckons a follower to him from the ranks,
And loos'ning, as he speaks, from its light hold,
A princely jewel with its chain of gold,
Sends it, in token he had lov'd him long,
To the young master of Italian song.
The poet starts, and with a lowly grace
Bending his lifted eyes and blushing face,
Looks after his new friend, who scarcely gone
In the wide turning, bows, and passes on.

This is sufficient for the destin'd bride:
She took an interest first, but now a pride;
And as the Prince comes riding to the place,
Baring his head, and raising his fine face,
She meets his full obeisance with an eye
Of self-permission and sweet gravity:
He looks with touch'd respect, and gazes, and goes by.

THE STORY OF RIMINI;

A Garden (from Canto III)

The Prince had will'd, however, that his wife
Should lead, till his return, a closer life.
She therefore disappear'd: not pleas'd, not proud
To have her judgment still no voice allow'd;
Not without many a gentle hope repress'd,
And tears; yet conscious that retreat was best.
Besides, she lov'd the place to which she went—
A bower, a nest, in which her grief had spent
Its calmest time: and as it was her last
As well as sweetest, and the fate comes fast
That is to fill it with a dreadful cry,
And make its walls ghastly to passers by
I'll hold the gentle reader for a space
Ling'ring with piteous wonder in the place.

A noble range it was, of many a rood,
Wall'd and tree-girt, and ending in a wood.
A small sweet house o'erlook'd it from a nest
Of pines:—all wood and garden was the rest,
Lawn, and green lane, and covert:—and it had
A winding stream about it, clear and glad,
With here and there a swan, the creature born
To be the only graceful shape of scorn.
The flower-beds all were liberal of delight:
Roses in heaps were there, both red and white,
Lilies angelical, and gorgeous glooms
Of wall-flowers, and blue hyacinths, and blooms
Hanging thick clusters from light boughs; in short,
All the sweet cups to which the bees resort,
With plots of grass, and leafier walks between
Of red geraniums, and of jessamine,
And orange, whose warm leaves so finely suit,
And look as if they shade a golden fruit;
And midst the flow'rs, turf'd round beneath a shade,
Of darksome pines, a babbling fountain play'd,
And 'twixt their shafts you saw the water bright,
Which through the tops glimmer'd with show'ring light.
So now you stood to think what odours best
Made the air happy in that lovely nest;
And now you went beside the flowers, with eyes
Earnest as bees, restless as butterflies;
And then turn'd off into a shadier walk
Close and continuous, fit for lover's talk;

And then pursued the stream, and as you trod
Onward and onward o'er the velvet sod,
Felt on your face an air, watery and sweet,
And a new sense in your soft-lighting feet.
At last you enter'd shades indeed, the wood,
Broken with glens and pits, and glades far-view'd,
Through which the distant palace now and then
Look'd lordly forth with many-window'd ken;
A land of trees,—which reaching round about
In shady blessing stretch'd their old arms out;
With spots of sunny openings, and with nooks
To lie and read in, sloping into brooks,
Where at her drink you startled the slim deer,
Retreating lightly with a lovely fear.
And all about, the birds kept leafy house,
And sung and darted in and out the boughs;
And all about, a lovely sky of blue
Clearly was felt, or down the leaves laugh'd through;
And here and there, in every part, were seats,
Some in the open walks, some in retreats,—
With bowering leaves o'erhead, to which the eye
Look'd up half sweetly and half awfully,—
Places of nestling green, for poets made,
Where, when the sunshine struck a yellow shade,
The rugged trunks, to inward peeping sight,
Throng'd in dark pillars up the gold green light.

But 'twixt the wood and flowery walks, half-way,
And form'd of both, the loveliest portion lay,—
A spot, that struck you like enchanted ground:—
It was a shallow dell, set in a mound
Of sloping orchards,—fig, and almond trees,
Cherry and pine, with some few cypresses;
Down by whose roots, descending darkly still,
(You saw it not, but heard) there gush'd a rill,
Whose low sweet talking seem'd as if it said
Something eternal to that happy shade.
The ground within was lawn, with fruits and flowers
Heap'd towards the centre, half of citron bowers;
And in the middle of those golden trees,
Half seen amidst the globy oranges,
Lurk'd a rare summer-house, a lovely sight,—
Small, marble, well-proportion'd, creamy white,
Its top with vine-leaves sprinkled,—but no more,—
And a young bay-tree either side the door.

The door was to the wood, forward and square,
The rest was domed at top, and circular;
And through the dome the only light came in,
Ting'd as it enter'd by the vine-leaves thin.

It was a beauteous piece of ancient skill,
Spar'd from the rage of war, and perfect still;
By some suppos'd the work of fairy hands,—
Fam'd for luxurious taste, and choice of lands,
Alcina or Morgana,—who from fights
And errant fame inveigled amorous knights,
And liv'd with them in a long round of blisses,
Feasts, concerts, baths, and bower-enshaded kisses.
But 'twas a temple, as its sculpture told,
Built to the Nymphs that haunted there of old;
For o'er the door was carv'd a sacrifice
By girls and shepherds brought, with reverend eyes,
Of sylvan drinks and foods, simple and sweet,
And goats with struggling horns and planted feet;
And round about, ran, on a line with this,
In like relief, a world of pagan bliss,
That shew'd, in various scenes, the nymphs themselves;
Some by the water-side, on bowery shelves
Leaning at will,—some in the stream at play,—
Some pelting the young Fauns with buds of May,—
Or half-asleep pretending not to see
The latter in the brakes come creepingly,
While from their careless urns, lying aside,
In the long grass, the straggling waters glide.
Never, be sure, before or since was seen
A summer-house so fine in such a nest of green.

Ah, happy place! balm of regrets and fears,
E'en when thy very loveliness drew tears!
The time is coming, when to hear thee nam'd
Will be to make Love, Guilt, Revenge's self asham'd.

CANTO IV

But other thoughts, on other wings than theirs,
Came bringing them, ere long, their own despairs.
The spiteful fop I spoke of, he that set
His eyes at work to pay his anger's debt,—

This idiot, prying into a neighb'ring tower,
Had watch'd the lover to the lady's bower.
And flew to make a madman of her lord,
Just then encamp'd with loss, a shame his soul abhorr'd.

Pale first, then red, his eyes upon the stretch,
Then deadly white the husband heard the wretch,
Who in soft terms, almost with lurking smile,
Ran on, expressing his " regret " the while.
The husband, prince, cripple, and brother heard ;
Then seem'd astonish'd at the man ; then stirred
His tongue, but could not speak ; then dash'd aside
His chair as he arose, and loudly cried,
" Liar and madman ! thou art he was seen
Risking the fangs which thou hast rush'd between.
Regorge the filth in thy detested throat."—
And at the work, with his huge fist he smote
Like iron on the place, then seiz'd him all,
And dash'd in swoon against the bleeding wall.

'Twas dusk :—he summon'd an old chieftain stern,
Giving him charge of all till his return,
And with one servant got a horse and rode
All night, until he reach'd a lone abode
Not far from the green bower. Next day at noon,
Through a bye-way, free to himself alone,
Alone he rode, yet ever in disguise,
His hat pull'd over his assassin eyes,
And coming through the wood, there left his horse,
Then down amid the fruit-trees, half by force,
Made way ; and by the summer house's door,
Which he found shut, paus'd till a doubt was o'er.
Paus'd, and gave ear. There was a low sweet voice :—
The door was one that open'd without noise ;
And opening it, he look'd within, and saw,
Nought hearing, nought suspecting, not in awe
Of one created thing in earth or skies,
The lovers, interchanging words and sighs,
Lost in the heaven of one another's eyes.
" To thee it was my father wedded me,"
Francesca said :—" I never lov'd but thee.
" The rest was ever but an ugly dream."—
" Damn'd be the soul that says it," cried a scream.
Horror is in the room,—shrieks,—roaring cries.
Parryings of feeble palms,—blindly shut eyes :—
What, without arms, avail'd grief, strength, despair ;

Or what the two poor hands put forth in prayer?
Hot is the dagger from the brother's heart,
Deep in the wife's :—dead both and dash'd apart.
Mighty the murderer felt as there they lay;
Mighty, for one huge moment, o'er his prey;
Then, like a drunken man, he rode away.

To tell what horror smote the people's ears,
The questionings, the amaze, the many tears,
The secret household thoughts, the public awe,
And how those ran back shrieking, that first saw
The beauteous bodies lying in the place,
Bloody and dead in midst of all their grace,
Would keep too long the hideous deed in sight;—
Back was the slayer in his camp that night;
And fell next day with such a desperate sword
Upon the rebel army at a ford,
As sent the red news rolling to the sea,
And steadied his wild nerves with victory.
At court as usual then he re-appear'd,
Fierce, but self-centred, willing to be fear'd;
Nor, saving once at a lone chamber-door,
Utter'd he word of those now seen no more,
Nor dull'd his dress, nor shunn'd the being seen,
But look'd, talk'd, reign'd, as they had never been.

Nevertheless, his shame and misery still,
Only less great than his enormous will,
Darken'd his heart; and in the cloud there hung,
Like some small haunting knell for ever rung,
Words which contain'd a dawning mystery,
" It was to thee my father wedded me."
The silence of his pride at length he broke,
With handmaid then, and then with priest he spoke,
And, sham'd beyond all former shame, yet rais'd
From Jealousy's worst hell, his fancy gaz'd
On the new scene that made his wrath less wild—
The sire ensnaring his devoted child.
Him foremost he beheld in all the past,
And him he now ordain'd to gather all at last.

One dull day, therefore, from the palace-gate,
A blast of trumpets blew, like voice of fate,
And all in sable clad forth came again
A remnant of the former sprightly train,
With churchmen intermixt; and closing all,
Was a blind hearse, hung with an ermined pall,

And bearing on its top, together set,
A prince's and princess's coronet.
Simply they came along, amidst the sighs
And tears of those who look'd with wondering eyes:
Nor bell they had, nor choristers in white,
Nor stopped, as most expected, within sight;
But pass'd the streets, the gates, the last abode,
And tow'rds Ravenna held their silent road.

Before it left, the Prince had sent swift word
To the old Count of all that had occurr'd:
" And though I shall not " (so concluded he)
Otherwise touch thine age's misery,
Yet as I would that both one grave should hide,
Which must and shall not be, where I reside,
'Tis fit, though all have something to deplore,
That he who join'd them first, should keep to part no more."

The wretched father, who, when he had read
This letter, felt it wither his grey head,
And ever since had pac'd about his room,
Trembling, and seized as with approaching doom,
Had given such orders as he well could frame
To meet devoutly whatsoever came;
And, as the news immediately took flight,
Few in Ravenna slept throughout that night,
But talk'd the business over, and review'd
All that they knew of her, the fair and good;
And so with wond'ring sorrow, the next day,
Waited till they should see that sad array.

The days were then at close of autumn,—still,
A little rainy, and, towards nightfall, chill;
But now there was a moaning air abroad;
And ever and anon, over the road,
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,
Whose trunks, wet, bare, and cold, seem'd ill at ease.
The people, who, from reverence, kept at home,
Listen'd till afternoon to hear them come;
And hour on hour went by, and nought was heard
But some chance horseman, or the wind that stirr'd,
Till tow'rds the vesper hour; and then, 'twas said,
Some heard a voice, which seem'd as if it read;
And others said, that they could hear a sound
Of many horses trampling the moist ground.
Still nothing came:—till on a sudden, just

As the wind open'd in a rising gust,
A voice of chaunting rose, and, as it spread,
They plainly heard the anthem for the dead.
It was the choristers, who went to meet
The train, and now were entering the first street.
Then turn'd aside that city, young and old,
And in their lifted hands the gushing sorrow roll'd.

Many a gentle spirit ill could bear
To keep the window, when the train drew near;
And all felt double tenderness to see
The hearse approaching, slow and steadily,
In which those two in senseless coldness lay,
Who, not two brief years since,—it seem'd a day,—
Had left their walls, lovely in form and mind;
In sunny manhood he,—she honour'd, fair, and kind.

COLERIDGE, 1815

SONG

'The lovely songs in Zapolya." Sung by Glycine in *Zapolya*, Act II., Scene 2.

A SUNNY shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted:
And poised therein a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sunk, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: "Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms they make no delay:
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!

To WORDSWORTH

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

1815.

DEAR WORDSWORTH,—The more I read of your last two volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The "Night Piece," to which you refer me, I meant fully to have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with the fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated (by the way, I must look out V.B. for you). So I meant to mention "Yarrow Visited," with that stanza, "But thou that didst appear so fair;" than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry; —yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the last two: this is all fine, except perhaps that *that* of "studious ease and generous cares" has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale" is a charming counterpart to "Poor Susan," with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the "Old Thief and the Boy by his side," which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; "Susan" stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; "bright volumes of vapour," etc. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her "a poor outcast" seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders, is a mystery. I can't say positively now,—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that "Light-hearted boys, I

will build up a Giant with you." It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their notion when I go out a maying. (*N.B.*) I don't often go out a *maying*;—*must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly* is divine; the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial, in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering. What's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos—when I first opened upon the just mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, "*What is good for a bootless bene?*" To which, with infinite presence of mind (as the jest-book has it) she answered, "a shoeless pea." It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I made. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr. Johnson, of the "Man in the Strand," and those from "The Babes in the Wood." I was thinking, whether taking your own glorious lines—

> "And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,"

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering them to—

> "And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,"

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that "White Doe" you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest, i.e.* printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is "Peter Bell." But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement, without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly

* In "The Force of Prayer."

Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil ?

My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted ; that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it ?) querulousness about it ; yet, hang it ! now I remember better, there is not : it is calm, melancholy, and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245 ; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading " No thoroughfare ! " Robinson's is entire : I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, etc. I think I could say something about him myself ; but, Lord bless me ! these " merchants and their spicy drugs," which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius ! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I " engross " when I should " pen " a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilisation, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and getting a knowledge of the face of the globe ; and rotting the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks ! *Vale.*

Yours, dear W., and all yours, C. LAMB.

LAMB, 1815

To ROBERT SOUTHEY

London, May 6th, 1815.

DEAR SOUTHEY,—I have received from Longman a copy of *Roderick*, with the Author's Compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way ; the *Excursion*, Wordsworth's two last vols., and now *Roderick*, have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and

with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. *Kehama* is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in *Roderick:* my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against Omnipotence, such disturbances of faith to the centre; the more potent, the more painful the spell. Jove, and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter.—I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of *Kehama*, not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling; but *Roderick* is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the *Joan of Arc*. It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than *Madoc*. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well-known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, etc.) does not give me pleasures unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like the *crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it; no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on first and second readings, perhaps are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of the Palayos family first discovered—his being made king—" For acclamation one form must serve *more solemn for the breach of old observances.*" Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

> " Towards the troop he spread his arms,
> As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
> And carried to all spirits *with the act*
> Its affluent inspiration."

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous atitude can nowhere be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's *Julian*. I have not read it for some time. I think it must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use ; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again : but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em—one of the serpent penance—is serious enough, now I think on't. Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a reappearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whilere.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

The next present I look for is the *White Doe*.

Have you seen Mat. Betham's *Lay of Marie* ? I think it very delicately pretty as set sentiment, etc.

R. Southey, Esq.,
Keswick, near Penrith,
Cumberland.

HUNT, 1816

MAHMOUD

THERE came a man, making his hasty moan
Before the Sultan Mahmoud on his throne,
And crying out—" My sorrow is my right,
And I *will* see the Sultan, and to-night."
" Sorrow," said Mahmoud, " is a reverend thing :
I recognise its right, as king with king ;

Speak on." " A fiend has got into my house,"
Exclaimed the staring man, " and tortures us :
One of thine officers ;—he comes, the abhorr'd,
And takes possession of my house, my board,
My bed :—I have two daughters and a wife
And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with life."

" Is he there now ? " said Mahmoud.—" No ;—he left
The house when I did, of my wits bereft ;
And laugh'd me down the street, because I vow'd
I'd bring the prince himself to lay him in his shroud
I'm mad with want—I'm mad with misery,
And oh thou Sultan Mahmoud, God cries out for thee ! "

The Sultan comforted the man, and said,
" Go home, and I will send thee wine and bread,"
(For he was poor) " and other comforts. Go ;
And, should the wretch return, let Sultan Mahmoud know."

In three days' time, with haggard eyes and beard,
And shaken voice, the suitor re-appear'd,
And said, " He's come."—Mahmoud said not a word,
But rose and took four slaves, each with a sword,
And went with the vex'd man. They reach the place,
And hear a voice, and see a woman's face,
That to the window flutter'd in affright :
" Go in," said Mahmoud, " and put out the light ;
But tell the females first to leave the room ;
And when the drunkard follows them, we come."

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark !
A table falls, the window is struck dark :
Forth rush the breathless women ; and behind
With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
In vain : the sabres soon cut short the strife,
And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody life.

" Now *light* the light," the Sultan cried aloud.
'Twas done ; he took it in his hand, and bow'd
Over the corpse and look'd upon the face ;
Then turn'd, and knelt, and to the throne of grace
Put up a prayer, and from his lips there crept
Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the beholders wait,
Then bring him at his call both wine and meat;
And when he had refresh'd his noble heart
He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amaz'd, all mildness now, and tears,
Fell at the Sultan's feet with many prayers,
And begged him to vouchsafe to tell his slave
The reason first of that command he gave
About the light; then, when he saw the face,
Why he knelt down; and, lastly, how it was
That fare so poor as his detain'd him in the place.

The Sultan said, with a benignant eye,
"Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
I could not rid me of a dread, that one
By whom such daring villanies were done
Must be some lord of mine,—aye, e'en, perhaps, a son.
Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but fear'd
A father's heart, in case the worst appear'd:
For this I had the light put out; but when
I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
I knelt and thank'd the sovereign Arbiter,
Whose work I had perform'd through pain and fear,
And then I rose and was refresh'd with food,
The first time since thy voice had marr'd my solitude."

HUNT, 1816

ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight of his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision rais'd its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, " The names of those who love the Lord."
" And is mine one ? " said Abou. " Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still ; and said, " I pray thee then,
" Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

LAMB, 1817

LETTER ON BEHALF OF COLERIDGE

To J. PAYNE COLLIER

The Garden of England, 10th December, 1817.

DEAR J. P. C.—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge, and I know that you and your family attended his Lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health, and worse mind, and unless something is done to lighten his heart, he will soon be reduced to his extremities ; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can, but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life ; but a new course of lectures on Shakspere and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one), but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and India-pendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many vols. foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindu mythology, and for the purpose I am once more enduring Southey's curse (of Kehama). To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so ; and there are particular reasons just now (and have been any time for the last twenty years) why he should succeed. He will do so, with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately, and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,

C. LAMB.

DEFINITION OF POETRY

POETRY is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre. The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement, or communication of truth: the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure. This definition is useful, but as it would include novels and other works of fiction, which yet we do not call poems, there must be some additional character by which poetry is not only divided from opposites, but likewise distinguished from disparate, though similar, modes of composition. Now how is this to be effected? In animated prose, the beauties of nature, and the passions and accidents of human nature, are often expressed in that natural language which the contemplation of them would suggest to a pure and benevolent mind; yet still neither we nor the writers call such a work a poem, though no work could deserve that name which did not include all this, together with something else. What is this? It is that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition:—and in order to understand this, we must combine a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated by the poet, consequent on a more than common sensibility, with a more than ordinary activity of the mind in respect to the fancy and the imagination. Hence is produced a more vivid reflection of the truth of nature and of the human heart, united with a constant activity modifying and correcting these truths by that sort of pleasurable emotion, which the exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree; but which can only be felt in perfection under the full play of those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed. This is the state which permits the production of a highly pleasurable whole, of which each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure; and hence arises the definition, which I trust is now intelligible, that poetry, or rather a poem, is a species of composition, opposed to science, as having intellectual pleasure for its object, and as attaining its end by the use of language natural to us in a state of excitement,—but distinguished from other species of composition, not excluded by the former criterion, by permitting a pleasure from the whole consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts;—and the perfection of which is to communicate from each part the greatest immediate pleasure compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole. This, of course, will vary with the different modes of poetry;—

* Cf. *Biog. Lit.* chap. xiv.

and that splendour of particular lines, which would be worthy of admiration in an impassioned elegy, or a short indignant satire, would be a blemish and proof of vile taste in a tragedy or an epic poem.

It is remarkable, by the way, that Milton in three incidental words has implied all which for the purposes of more distinct apprehension, which at first must be slow-paced in order to be distinct, I have endeavoured to develop in a precise and strictly adequate definition. Speaking of poetry, he says, as in a parenthesis, "which is simple, sensuous, passionate." How awful is the power of words!—fearful often in their consequences when merely felt, not understood: but most awful when both felt and understood!—Had these three words only been properly understood by, and present in the minds of, general readers, not only almost a library of false poetry would have been either precluded or still-born, but, what is of more consequence, works truly excellent and capable of enlarging the understanding, warming and purifying the heart, and placing in the centre of the whole being the germs of noble and manlike actions, would have been the common diet of the intellect instead. For the first condition, simplicity,—while, on the one hand, it distinguishes poetry from the arduous processes of science, labouring towards an end not yet arrived at, and supposes a smooth and finished road, on which the reader is to walk onward easily, with streams murmuring by his side, and trees and flowers and human dwellings to make his journey as delightful as the object of it is desirable, instead of having to toil with the pioneers and painfully make the road on which others are to travel,—precludes, on the other hand, every affectation and morbid peculiarity;—the second condition, sensuousness, insures that framework of objectivity, that definiteness and articulation of imagery, and that modification of the images themselves, without which poetry becomes flattened into mere didactics of practice, or evaporated into a hazy, unthoughtful, day-dreaming; and the third condition, passion, provides that neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the *passio vera* of humanity shall warm and animate both.

To return, however, to the previous definition, this most general and distinctive character of a poem originates in the poetic genius itself; and though it comprises whatever can with any propriety be called a poem (unless that word be a mere lazy synonyme for a composition in metre), it yet becomes a just, and not merely discriminative, but full and adequate, definition of poetry in its highest and most peculiar sense, only so far as the distinction still results from the poetic genius, which sustains and modifies the emotions, thoughts, and vivid representations of the poem by the energy without effort of the poet's own mind,—by

the spontaneous activity of his imagination and fancy, and by whatever else with these reveals itself in the balancing and reconciling of opposite or discordant qualities, sameness with difference, a sense of novelty and freshness with old or customary objects, a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order, self-possession and judgment with enthusiasm and vehement feeling,— and which, while it blends and harmonises the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter, and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the images, passions, characters, and incidents of the poem :—

> " Doubtless, this could not be, but that she turns
> Bodies to *spirit* by sublimation strange,
> As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
> As we our food into our nature change !
>
> " From their gross matter she abstracts *their* forms,
> And draws a kind of quintessence from things,
> Which to her proper nature she transforms,
> To bear them light on her celestial wings !
>
> " *Thus* doth she, when from *individual states*
> She doth abstract the universal kinds,
> *Which then reclothed in diverse names and fates*
> *Steal access thro' our senses to our minds.*"
>
> (SIR JOHN DAVIES, adapted.)

COLERIDGE, 1817

COLERIDGE'S EARLY LITERARY TRAINING

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

Motives to the present work—Reception of the Author's first publication—Discipline of his taste at school—Effect of contemporary writers on youthful minds—Bowles's Sonnets—Comparison between the poets before and since Pope.

IT has been my lot to have my name introduced both in conversation, and in print, more frequently than I find it easy to explain, whether I consider the fewness, unimportance, and limited circulation of my writings, or the retirement and distance, in which I have lived, both from the literary and political world. Most often it has been connected with some charge which I could not acknowledge, or some principle which I had never entertained. Nevertheless, had I had no other motive or incitement, the reader would not have been troubled with this exculpation. What my additional purposes were, will be seen in the following pages. It will be found, that the least of



what I have written concerns myself personally. I have used the narration chiefly for the purpose of giving a continuity to the work, in part for the sake of the miscellaneous reflections suggested to me by particular events, but still more as introductory to a statement of my principles in Politics, Religion, and Philosophy, and an application of the rules, deduced from philosophical principles, to poetry and criticism. But of the objects which I proposed to myself, it was not the least important to effect, as far as possible, a settlement of the long continued controversy concerning the true nature of poetic diction; and at the same time to define with the utmost impartiality the real poetic character of the poet, by whose writings this controversy was first kindled, and has been since fuelled and fanned.

In the spring of 1796, when I had but little passed the verge of manhood, I published a small volume of juvenile poems. They were received with a degree of favour, which, young as I was, I well know was bestowed on them not so much for any positive merit, as because they were considered buds of hope, and promises of better works to come. The critics of that day, the most flattering, equally with the severest, concurred in objecting to them obscurity, a general turgidness of diction, and a profusion of new-coined double epithets. The first is the fault which a writer is the least able to detect in his own compositions; and my mind was not then sufficiently disciplined to receive the authority of others, as a substitute for my own conviction. Satisfied that the thoughts, such as they were, could not have been expressed otherwise, or at least more perspicuously, I forgot to inquire, whether the thoughts themselves did not demand a degree of attention unsuitable to the nature and objects of poetry. This remark, however, applies chiefly, though not exclusively, to the Religious Musings. The remainder of the charge I admitted to its full extent, and not without sincere acknowledgments both to my private and public censors for their friendly admonitions. In the after editions, I pruned the double epithets with no sparing hand, and used my best efforts to tame the swell and glitter both of thought and diction; though in truth, these parasite plants of youthful poetry had insinuated themselves into my longer poems with such intricacy of union, that I was often obliged to omit disentangling the weed, from the fear of snapping the flower. From that period to the date of the present work I have published nothing, with my name, which could by any possibility have come before the board of anonymous criticism. Even the three or four poems, printed with the works of a friend, as far as they were censured at all, were charged with the same or similar defects (though I am persuaded not with equal justice),—with an excess of ornament, in addition to strained and elaborate

diction. I must be permitted to add, that, even at the early period of my juvenile poems, I saw and admitted the superiority of an austerer and more natural style, with an insight not less clear, than I at present possess. My judgment was stronger than were my powers of realising its dictates; and the faults of my language, though indeed partly owing to a wrong choice of subjects, and the desire of giving a poetic colouring to abstract and metaphysical truths, in which a new world then seemed to open upon me, did yet, in part likewise, originate in unfeigned diffidence of my own comparative talent.—During several years of my youth and early manhood, I reverenced those who had re-introduced the manly simplicity of the Greek, and of our own elder poets, with such enthusiasm as made the hope seem presumptuous of writing successfully in the same style. Perhaps a similar process has happened to others; but my earliest poems were marked by an ease and simplicity, which I have studied, perhaps with inferior success, to impress on my later compositions.

At School (Christ's Hospital), I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time a very severe master, the Reverend James Bowyer.* He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil, and again of Virgil to Ovid. He habituated me to compare Lucretius (in such extracts as I then read), Terence, and above all the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the, so called, silver and brazen ages; but with even those of the Augustan æra: and on grounds of plain sense and universal logic to see and assert the superiority of the former in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons: and they were the lessons too, which required most time and trouble to *bring up*, so as to escape his censure. I learned from him, that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonymes to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text.

In our own English compositions (at least for the last three years of our school education), he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the

*The right spelling is Boyer.

same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words. *Lute, harp,* and *lyre, Muse, Muses,* and *inspirations, Pegasus, Parnassus,* and *Hippocrene* were all an abomination to him. In fancy I can almost hear him now, exclaiming "Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, Muse? Your nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring? Oh aye! the cloister-pump, I suppose!" Nay, certain introductions, similes, and examples, were placed by name on a list of interdiction. Among the similes, there was, I remember, that of the manchineel fruit, as suiting equally well with too many subjects; in which, however, it yielded the palm at once to the example of Alexander and Clytus, which was equally good and apt, whatever might be the theme. Was it ambition? Alexander and Clytus!—Flattery? Alexander and Clytus!—anger—drunkenness—pride—friendship—ingratitude—late repentance? Still, still Alexander and Clytus! At length, the praises of agriculture having been exemplified in the sagacious observation that, had Alexander been holding the plough, he would not have run his friend Clytus through with a spear, this tried, and serviceable old friend was banished, by public edict in *sæcula sæculorum.* I have sometimes ventured to think, that a list of this kind, or an *index expurgatorius* of certain well-known and ever returning phrases, both introductory, and transitional, including a large assortment of modest egoisms, and flattering illeisms, and the like, might be hung up in our Law-courts, and both Houses of Parliament, with great advantage to the public, as an important saving of national time, an incalculable relief to his Majesty's ministers, but above all, as insuring the thanks of country attornies, and their clients, who have private bills to carry through the House.

Be this as it may, there was one custom of our master's, which I cannot pass over in silence, because I think it imitable and worthy of imitation. He would often permit our exercises, under some pretext of want of time, to accumulate, till each lad had four or five to be looked over. Then placing the whole number abreast on his desk, he would ask the writer, why this or that sentence might not have found as appropriate a place under this or that other thesis: and if no satisfying answer could be returned, and two faults of the same kind were found in one exercise, the irrevocable verdict followed, the exercise was torn up, and another on the same subject to be produced, in addition to the tasks of the day. The reader will, I trust, excuse this tribute of recollection to a man, whose severities, even now, not seldom furnish the dreams, by which the blind fancy would fain interpret to the mind the painful sensations of distempered sleep; but neither lessen nor dim the deep sense of my moral and intellectual obligations. He sent us to

the University excellent Latin and Greek scholars, and tolerable Hebraists. Yet our classical knowledge was the least of the good gifts, which we derived from his zealous and conscientious tutorage. He is now gone to his final reward, full of years, and full of honours, even of those honours, which were dearest to his heart, as gratefully bestowed by that school, and still binding him to the interests of that school in which he had been himself educated, and to which during his whole life he was a dedicated thing.

From causes, which this is not the place to investigate, no models of past times, however perfect, can have the same vivid effect on the youthful mind, as the productions of contemporary genius. The discipline, my mind had undergone, *Ne falleretur rotundo sono et versuum cursu, cincinnis, et floribus; sed ut inspiceret quidnam subesset, quæ sedes, quod firmamentum, quis fundus verbis; an figuræ essent mera ornatura et orationis fucus; vel sanguinis e materiæ ipsius corde effluentis rubor quidam nativus et incalescentia genuina*:—removed all obstacles to the appreciation of excellence in style without diminishing my delight. That I was thus prepared for the perusal of Mr. Bowles's sonnets and earlier poems, at once increased their influence, and my enthusiasm. The great works of past ages seem to a young man things of another race, in respect to which his faculties must remain passive and submiss, even as to the stars and mountains. But the writings of a contemporary, perhaps not many years older than himself, surrounded by the same circumstances, and disciplined by the same manners, possess a reality for him, and inspire an actual friendship as of a man for a man. His very admiration is the wind which fans and feeds his hope. The poems themselves assume the properties of flesh and blood. To recite, to extol, to contend for them is but the payment of a debt due to one, who exists to receive it.

There are indeed modes of teaching which have produced, and are producing, youths of a very different stamp; modes of teaching, in comparison with which we have been called on to despise our great public schools, and universities,

> in whose halls are hung
> Armoury of the invincible knights of old—

modes, by which children are to be metamorphosed into prodigies. And prodigies with a vengeance have I known thus produced;—prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness, arrogance, and infidelity! Instead of storing the memory, during the period when the memory is the predominant faculty, with facts for the after exercise of the judgment; and instead of awakening by the noblest models the fond and unmixed love and admiration, which is the natural and

graceful temper of early youth; these nurslings of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and decide; to suspect all but their own and their lecturer's wisdom; and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt, but their own contemptible arrogance;—boy graduates in all the technicals, and in all the dirty passions and impudence of anonymous criticism. To such dispositions alone can the admonition of Pliny be requisite, *Neque enim debet operibus ejus obesse, quod vivit. An si inter cos, quos nunquam vidimus, floruisset, non solum libros ejus, verum etiam imagines conquireremus, ejusdem nunc honor præsentis, et gratia quasi satietate languescet? At hoc pravum, malignumque est, non admirari hominem admiratione dignissimum, quia videre, complecti, nec laudare tantum, verum etiam amare contingit.*

I had just entered on my seventeenth year, when the sonnets of Mr. Bowles, twenty in number, and just then published in a quarto pamphlet, were first made known and presented to me, by a schoolfellow who had quitted us for the University, and who, during the whole time that he was in our first form (or in our school language a Grecian), had been my patron and protector. I refer to Dr. Middleton, the truly learned, and every way excellent Bishop of Calcutta:

> qui *laudibus amplis*
> *Ingenium celebrare meum, calamumque solebat,*
> *Calcar agens animo validum. Non omnia terræ*
> *Obruta: vivit amor, vivit dolor; ora negatur*
> Dulcia *conspicere; at fieri et meminisse relictum est.*

It was a double pleasure to me, and still remains a tender recollection, that I should have received from a friend so revered the first knowledge of a poet, by whose works, year after year, I was was so enthusiastically delighted and inspired. My earliest acquaintances will not have forgotten the undisciplined eagerness and impetuous zeal, with which I laboured to make proselytes, not only of my companions, but of all with whom I conversed, of whatever rank, and in whatever place. As my school finances did not permit me to purchase copies, I made, within less than a year and a half, more than forty transcriptions, as the best presents I could offer to those who had in any way won my regard. And with almost equal delight did I receive the three or four following publications of the same author.

Though I have seen and known enough of mankind to be well aware, that I shall perhaps stand alone in my creed, and that it will be well if I subject myself to no worse charge than that of singularity; I am not therefore deterred from avowing, that I regard, and ever have regarded the obligations of intellect among the most sacred of the claims of gratitude. A valuable thought, or a particular train of thoughts, gives me additional pleasure, when

I can safely refer and attribute it to the conversation or correspondence of another. My obligations to Mr. Bowles were indeed important, and for radical good. At a very premature age, ever before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History, and particular facts, lost all interest in my mind. Poetry —(though for a school-boy of that age, I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which, I may venture to say, without reference to my age, were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound, good sense of my old master was at all pleased with),—poetry, itself, yea, novels and romances, became insipid to me. In my friendless wanderings on our *leave-days* (for I was an orphan, and had scarcely any connections in London), highly was I delighted, if any passenger, especially if he were dressed in black, would enter into conversation with me. For I soon found the means of directing it to my favourite subjects

> Of providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate,
> Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute,
> And found no end in wandering mazes lost.

This preposterous pursuit was, beyond doubt, injurious both to my natural powers, and to the progress of my education. It would perhaps have been destructive, had it been continued; but from this I was auspiciously withdrawn, partly indeed by an accidental introduction to an amiable family, chiefly, however, by the genial influence of a style of poetry, so tender and yet so manly, so natural and real, and yet so dignified and harmonious, as the sonnets and other early poems of Mr. Bowles. Well would it have been for me, perhaps, had I never relapsed into the same mental disease; if I had continued to pluck the flower and reap the harvest from the cultivated surface, instead of delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines of metaphysic lore. And if in after time I have sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches, which exercised the strength and subtlety of the understanding without awakening the feelings of the heart; still there was a long and blessed interval, during which my natural faculties were allowed to expand, and my original tendencies to develop themselves;—my fancy, and the love of nature, and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds.

The second advantage, which I owe to my early perusal, and admiration of these poems (to which let me add, though known to me at a somewhat later period, the Lewesdon Hill of Mr. Crowe), bears more immediately on my present subject. Among those

with whom I conversed, there were, of course, very many who had formed their taste, and their notions of poetry, from the writings of Pope and his followers; or to speak more generally, in that school of French poetry, condensed and invigorated by English understanding, which had predominated from the last century. I was not blind to the merits of this school, yet, as from inexperience of the world, and consequent want of sympathy with the general subjects of these poems, they gave me little pleasure, I doubtless undervalued the kind, and with the presumption of youth withheld from its masters the legitimate name of poets. I saw that the excellence of this kind consisted in just and acute observations on men and manners in an artificial state of society, as its matter and substance; and in the logic of wit, conveyed in smooth and strong epigrammatic couplets, as its form: that even when the subject was addressed to the fancy, or the intellect, as in the Rape of the Lock, or the Essay on Man; nay, when it was a consecutive narration, as in that astonishing product of matchless talent and ingenuity Pope's Translation of the Iliad; still a point was looked for at the end of each second line, and the whole was, as it were, a *sorites*, or, if I may exchange a logical for a grammatical metaphor, a conjunction disjunctive, of epigrams. Meantime the matter and diction seemed to me characterised not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry. On this last point I had occasion to render my own thoughts gradually more and more plain to myself, by frequent amicable disputes concerning Darwin's Botanic Garden, which, for some years, was greatly extolled, not only by the reading public in general, but even by those, whose genius and natural robustness of understanding enabled them afterwards to act foremost in dissipating these "painted mists" that occasionally rise from the marshes at the foot of Parnassus. During my first Cambridge vacation, I assisted a friend in a contribution for a literary society in Devonshire; and in this I remember to have compared Darwin's work to the Russian palace of ice, glittering, cold and transitory. In the same essay too, I assigned sundry reasons, chiefly drawn from a comparison of passages in the Latin poets with the original Greek, from which they were borrowed, for the preference of Collin's odes to those of Gray; and of the simile in Shakespeare:

> How like a younger or a prodigal,
> The scarfed bark puts from her native bay
> Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
> How like the prodigal doth she return,
> With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
> Lean, rent. and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!
>
> *Merchant of Venice.* Act II., Scene 6.

to the imitation in the Bard:

> Fairlaughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows
> While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
> In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
> Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm;
> Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
> That hush'd in grim repose, expects it's evening prey,

(in which, by the bye, the words "realm" and "sway" are rhymes dearly purchased)—I preferred the original on the ground, that in the imitation it depended wholly on the compositor's putting, or not putting, a small capital, both in this, and in many other passages of the same poet, whether the words should be personifications, or mere abstractions. I mention this, because, in referring various lines in Gray to their original in Shakespeare and Milton, and in the clear perception how completely all the propriety was lost in the transfer, I was, at that early period, led to a conjecture, which many years afterwards was recalled to me from the same thought having been started in conversation, but far more ably, and developed more fully, by Mr. Wordsworth; —namely, that this style of poetry, which I have characterised above, as translations of prose thoughts into poetic language, had been kept up by, if it did not wholly arise from, the custom of writing Latin verses, and the great importance attached to these exercises, in our public schools. Whatever might have been the case in the fifteenth century, when the use of the Latin tongue was so general among learned men, that Erasmus is said to have forgotten his native language; yet in the present day it is not to be supposed, that a youth can think in Latin, or that he can have any other reliance on the force or fitness of his phrases, but the authority of the writer from whom he has adopted them. Consequently he must first prepare his thoughts, and then pick out, from Virgil, Horace, Ovid, or perhaps more compendiously from his Gradus, halves and quarters of lines, in which to embody them.

I never object to a certain degree of disputatiousness in a young man from the age of seventeen to that of four or five and twenty, provided I find him always arguing on one side of the question. The controversies, occasioned by my unfeigned zeal for the honour of a favourite contemporary, then known to me only by his works, were of great advantage in the formation and establishment of my taste and critical opinions. In my defence of the lines running into each other, instead of closing at each couplet; and of natural language, neither bookish, nor vulgar, neither redolent of the lamp, nor of the kennel, such as *I will remember thee;* instead of the same thought tricked up in the rag-fair finery of,

> ———thy image on her wing
> Before my fancy's eye shall memory bring.—

I had continually to adduce the metre and diction of the Greek poets, from Homer to Theocritus inclusively; and still more of our elder English poets, from Chaucer to Milton. Nor was this all. But as it was my constant reply to authorities brought against me from later poets of great name, that no authority could avail in opposition to Truth, Nature, Logic, and the Laws of universal Grammar; actuated too by my former passion for metaphysical investigations; I laboured at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance. Accordingly to the faculty or source, from which the pleasure given by any poem or passage was derived, I estimated the merit of such poem or passage. As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms deeming them to comprise the conditions and *criteria* of poetic style;—first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry; secondly, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction. Be it however observed, that I excluded from the list of worthy feelings, the pleasure derived from mere novelty in the reader, and the desire of exciting wonderment at his powers in the author. Oftentimes since then, in perusing French tragedies, I have fancied two marks of admiration at the end of each line, as hieroglyphics of the author's own admiration at his own cleverness. Our genuine admiration of a great poet is a continuous undercurrent of feeling! it is everywhere present, but seldom anywhere as a separate excitement. I was wont boldly to affirm that it would be scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the Pyramids with the bare hand, than to alter a word, or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare (in their most important works at least) without making the poet say something else, or something worse, than he does say. One great distinction, I appeared to myself to see plainly between even the characteristic faults of our elder poets, and the false beauty of the moderns. In the former, from Donne to Cowley, we find the most fantastic out-of-the-way thoughts, but in the most pure and genuine mother English, in the latter the most obvious thoughts, in language the most fantastic and arbitrary. Our faulty elder poets sacrificed the passion and passionate flow of poetry to the subtleties of intellect and to the stars of wit; the moderns to the glare and glitter of a perpetual, yet broken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather to an amphibious something, made up, half of image, and half of abstract meaning. The one sacrificed the

heart to the head; the other both heart and head to point and drapery.

The reader must make himself acquainted with the general style of composition that was at that time deemed poetry, in order to understand and account for the effect produced on me by the Sonnets, the Monody at Matlock, and the Hope, of Mr. Bowles; for it is peculiar to original genius to become less and less striking, in proportion to its success in improving the taste and judgment of its contemporaries. The poems of West, indeed, had the merit of chaste and manly diction; but they were cold, and, if I may so express it, only dead-coloured; while in the best of Warton's there is a stiffness, which too often gives them the appearance of imitations from the Greek. Whatever relation, therefore, of cause or impulse Percy's collection of Ballads may bear to the most popular poems of the present day; yet in a more sustained and elevated style, of the then living poets, Cowper and Bowles were, to the best of my knowledge, the first who combined natural thoughts with natural diction; the first who reconciled the heart with the head.

It is true, as I have before mentioned, that from diffidence in my own powers, I for a short time adopted a laborious and florid diction, which I myself deemed, if not absolutely vicious, yet of very inferior worth. Gradually, however, my practice conformed to my better judgment; and the compositions of my twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth years—(for example, the shorter blank verse poems, the lines, which now form the middle and conclusion of the poem entitled the Destiny of Nations, and the tragedy of Remorse)—are not more below my present ideal in respect of the general tissue of the style than those of the latest date. Their faults were at least a remnant of the former leaven, and among the many who have done me the honour of putting my poems in the same class with those of my betters, the one or two, who have pretended to bring examples of affected simplicity from my volume, have been able to adduce but one instance, and that out of a copy of verses half ludicrous, half splenetic, which I intended, and had myself characterised, as *sermoni propiora*.

Every reform, however necessary, will by weak minds be carried to an excess, which will itself need reforming. The reader will excuse me for noticing, that I myself was the first to expose *risu honesto* the three sins of poetry, one or the other of which is the most likely to beset a young writer. So long ago as the publication of the second number of the Monthly Magazine, under the name of Nehemiah Higginbottom, I contributed three sonnets, the first of which had for its object to excite a good-natured laugh at the spirit of doleful egotism, and at the recurrence of favourite phrases, with the double defect of being at once trite

and licentious;—the second was on low creeping language and thoughts, under the pretence of simplicity; the third, the phrases of which were borrowed entirely from my own poems, on the indiscriminate use of elaborate and swelling language and imagery. The reader will find then in the note* below, and will I trust regard

SONNET I

Pensive at eve, on the hard world I mused,
And my poor heart was sad; so at the Moon
I gazed, and sighed, and sighed; for ah how soon
Eve saddens into night! mine eyes perused
With tearful vacancy the dampy grass
That wept and glitter'd in the paly ray:
And I did pause me on my lonely way
And mused me on the wretched ones that pass
O'er the bleak heath of sorrow. But alas!
Most of myself I thought! when it befel,
That the soothe spirit of the breezy wood
Breath'd in mine ear: "All this is very well,
But much of one thing, is for no thing good."
Oh my poor heart's inexplicable swell!

SONNET II

Oh I do love thee, meek Simplicity!
For of thy lays the lulling simpleness
Goes to my heart, and soothes each small distress,
Distress tho' small, yet haply great to me.
'Tis true on Lady Fortune's gentlest pad
I amble on; and yet I know not why
So sad I am! but should a friend and I
Frown, pout and part, then I am very sad.
And then with sonnets and with sympathy
My dreamy bosom's mystic woes I pall;
Now of my false friend plaining plaintively,
Now raving at mankind in general;
But whether sad or fierce, 'tis simple all,
All very simple, meek Simplicity!

SONNET III

And this reft house is that, the which he built,
Lamented Jack! and here his malt he pil'd,
Cautious in vain! these rats, that squeak so wild,
Squeak not unconscious of their father's guilt.
Did he not see her gleaming thro' the glade!
Belike 'twas she, the maiden all forlorn.
What tho' she milk no cow with crumpled horn,
Yet, aye she haunts the dale where erst she stray'd:
And aye, beside her stalks her amorous knight!
Still on his thighs their wonted brogues are worn.
And thro' those brogues, still tatter'd and betorn,
His hindward charms gleam an unearthly white.
Ah! thus thro' broken clouds at night's high noon
Peeps in fair fragments forth the full-orb'd harvest moon!

them as reprinted for biographical purposes alone, and not for their poetic merits. So general at that time, and so decided was the opinion concerning the characteristic vices of my style, that a celebrated physician (now, alas! no more) speaking of me in other respects with his usual kindness, to a gentleman, who was about to meet me at a dinner party, could not however resist giving him a hint not to mention *The house that Jack built* in my presence, for "that I was as sore as a boil about that sonnet"; he not knowing that I was myself the author of it.

COLERIDGE, 1817

THE MERITS OF WORDSWORTH'S POETRY

To these defects which, as appears by the extracts, are only occasional, I may oppose, with far less fear of encountering the dissent of any candid and intelligent reader, the following (for the most part correspondent) excellencies. First, an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically; in short, a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. Of how high value I deem this, and how particularly estimable I hold the example at the present day, has been already stated: and in part, too, the reasons on which I ground both the moral and intellectual importance of habituating ourselves to a strict accuracy of expression. It is noticeable, how limited an acquaintance with the master-pieces of art will suffice to form a correct and even a sensitive taste, where none but master-pieces have been seen and admired; while on the other hand, the most correct notions, and the widest acquaintance with the works of excellence of all ages and countries, will not perfectly secure us against the contagious familiarity with the far more numerous offspring of tastelessness or of a perverted taste. If this be the case, as it notoriously is, with the arts of music and painting, much more difficult will it be, to avoid the infection of multiplied and daily examples in the practice of an art, which uses words, and words only, as its instruments. In poetry, in which every line, every phrase, may pass the ordeal of deliberation and deliberate choice, it is possible, and barely possible, to attain that *ultimatum* which I have ventured to propose as the infallible test of a blameless style; namely: its *untranslatableness* in words of the same language without injury to the meaning. Be it observed, however, that I include in the *meaning* of a word not only its correspondent object, but likewise all the associations which it recalls. For



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH IN 1798.
(National Portrait Gallery).

language is framed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it. In poetry it *is* practicable to preserve the diction uncorrupted by the affectations and misappropriations, which promiscuous authorship, and reading not promiscuous only because it is disproportionately most conversant with the compositions of the day, have rendered general. Yet even to the poet, composing in his own province, it is an arduous work: and as the result and pledge of a watchful good sense of fine and luminous distinction, and of complete self-possession, may justly claim all the honour which belongs to an attainment equally difficult and valuable, and the more valuable for being rare. It is at *all* times the proper food of the understanding; but in an age of corrupt eloquence it is both food and antidote.

In prose I doubt whether it be even possible to preserve our style wholly unalloyed by the vicious phraseology which meets us everywhere, from the sermon to the newspaper, from the harangue of the legislator to the speech from the convivial chair, announcing a *toast* or sentiment. Our chains rattle, even while we are complaining of them. The poems of Boetius rise high in our estimation when we compare them with those of his contemporaries, as Sidonius Apollinaris, and others. They might even be referred to a purer age, but that the prose, in which they are set, as jewels in a crown of lead or iron, betrays the true age of the writer. Much however may be effected by education. I believe not only from grounds of reason, but from having in great measure assured myself of the fact by actual though limited experience, that, to a youth led from his first boyhood to investigate the meaning of every word and the reason of its choice and position, logic presents itself as an old acquaintance under new names.

On some future occasion, more especially demanding such disquisition, I shall attempt to prove the close connection between veracity and habits of mental accuracy; the beneficial after-effects of verbal precision in the preclusion of fanaticism, which masters the feelings more especially by indistinct watch-words, and to display the advantages which language alone, at least which language with incomparably greater ease and certainty than any other means, presents to the instructor of impressing modes of intellectual energy so constantly, so imperceptibly, and as it were by such elements and atoms, as to secure in due time the formation of a second nature. When we reflect, that the cultivation of the judgment is a positive command of the moral law, since the reason can give the *principle* alone, and the conscience bears witness only to the *motive*, while the application and effects must depend on the judgment: when we consider,

that the greater part of our success and comfort in life depends on distinguishing the similar from the same, that which is peculiar in each thing from that which it has in common with others, so as still to select the most probable, instead of the merely possible or positively unfit, we shall learn to value earnestly and with a practical seriousness a mean, already prepared for us by nature and society, of teaching the young mind to think well and wisely by the same unremembered process and with the same never forgotten results, as those by which it is taught to speak and converse. Now how much warmer the interest is, how much more genial the feelings of reality and practicability, and thence how much stronger the impulses to imitation are, which a *contemporary* writer, and especially a contemporary *poet*, excites in youth and commencing manhood, has been treated of in the earlier pages of these sketches. I have only to add, that all the praise which is due to the exertion of such influence for a purpose so important, joined with that which must be claimed for the infrequency of the same excellence in the same perfection, belongs in full right to Mr. Wordsworth. I am far, however, from denying that we have poets whose *general* style possesses the same excellence, as Mr. Moore, Lord Byron, Mr. Bowles, and, in all his later and more important works, our laurel-honouring Laureate. But there are none, in whose works I do not appear to myself to find *more* exceptions, than in those of Wordsworth. Quotations or specimens would be here wholly out of place and must be left for the critic who doubts and would invalidate the justice of this eulogy so applied.

The second characteristic excellence of Mr. Wordsworth's work is: a correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments,—won, not from books; but—from the poet's own meditative observation. They are *fresh* and have the dew upon them. His muse, at least when in her strength of wing, and when she hovers aloft in her proper element,

> Makes audible a linkéd lay of truth,
> Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
> Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!

Even throughout his smaller poems there is scarcely one which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection.

See page 25, vol. II.: or the two following passages in one of his humblest compositions.

> "O Reader! had you in your mind
> Such stores as silent thought can bring,
> O gentle Reader! you would find
> A tale in every thing;"

and

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oftener left *me* mourning;"

or in a still higher strain the six beautiful quatrains, page 134

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The Blackbird in the summer trees,
The Lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please.
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free!

But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there is one, who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved;"

or the sonnet on Buonaparte, page 202, vol. II.; or finally (for a volume would scarce suffice to exhaust the instances), the last stanza of the poem on the withered Celandine, vol. II., p. 312.

"To be a Prodigal's Favorite—then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not."

Both in respect of this and of the former excellence, Mr. Wordsworth strikingly resembles Samuel Daniel, one of the golden writers of our golden Elizabethan age, now most causelessly neglected: Samuel Daniel, whose diction bears no mark of time, no distinction of age which has been, and as long as our language shall last, will be so far the language of the to-day and for ever, as that it is more intelligible to us, than the transitory fashions of our own particular age. A similar praise is due to his sentiments. No frequency of perusal can deprive them of their

freshness. For though they are brought into the full day-light of every reader's comprehension; yet are they drawn up from depths which few in any age are privileged to visit, into which few in any age have courage or inclination to descend. If Mr. Wordsworth is not equally with Daniel alike intelligible to all readers of average understanding in all passages of his works, the comparative difficulty does not arise from the greater impurity of the ore, but from the nature and uses of the metal. A poem is not necessarily obscure, because it does not aim to be popular. It is enough, if a work be perspicuous to those for whom it is written, and

"Fit audience find, though few."

To the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" the poet might have prefixed the lines which Dante addresses to one of his own Canzoni

"Canzone, i' credo, che saranno radi
Color, che tua ragione intendan bene,
Tanto lor sei faticoso ed alto."

"O lyric song, there will be few, I think,
Who may thy import understand aright:
Thou art for *them* so arduous and so high."

But the ode was intended for such readers only as had been accustomed to watch the flux and reflux of their inmost nature, to venture at times into the twilight realms of consciousness, and to feel a deep interest in modes of inmost being, to which they know that the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien, but which yet can not be conveyed, save in symbols of time and space. For such readers the sense is sufficiently plain, and they will be as little disposed to charge Mr. Wordsworth with believing the Platonic pre-existence in the ordinary interpretation of the words, as I am to believe, that Plato himself meant or taught it.

Πολλά μοι ὑπ' ἀγκῶ-
νος ὠκέα βέλη
ἔνδον ἐντὶ φαρέτρας
φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς
δὲ τὸ πὰν ἑρμηνέων
χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολ-
λὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ.
μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι
παγγλωσσίᾳ, κόρακες ὥς,
ἄκραντα γαρύετον
Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.

Third (and wherein he soars far above Daniel) the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction, of which I need not here give specimens, having anticipated them in a preceding page.

This beauty, and as eminently characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, his rudest assailants have felt themselves compelled to acknowledged and admire.

Fourth: the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. Like a green field reflected in a calm and perfectly transparent lake, the image is distinguished from the reality only by its greater softness and lustre. Like the moisture or the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its objects; but on the contrary brings out many a vein and many a tint, which escapes the eye of common observation, thus raising to the rank of gems what had been often kicked away by the hurrying foot of the traveller on the dusty high road of custom.

Let me refer to the whole description of skating, vol. I., page 42 to 47, especially to the lines

> "So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
> And not a voice was idle: with the din
> Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
> The leafless trees and every icy crag
> Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
> Into the tumult sent an alien sound
> Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
> Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
> The orange sky of evening died away."

Or to the poem on THE GREEN LINNET, vol. I., page 244. What can be more accurate yet more lovely than the two concluding stanzas?

> "Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
> That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
> Behold him perched in ecstasies,
> Yet seeming still to hover;
> There! where the flutter of his wings
> Upon his back and body flings
> Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
> That cover him all over.
>
> While thus before my eyes he gleams,
> A Brother of the Leaves he seems;
> When in a moment forth he teems
> His little song in gushes:
> As if it pleased him to disdain
> And mock the Form which he did feign
> While he was dancing with the train
> Of Leaves among the bushes."

Or the description of the blue-cap, and of the noontide silence, page 284; or the poem to the cuckoo, page 299; or, lastly, though I might multiply the references to ten times the number, to the poem, so completely Wordsworth's, commencing

Fifth: a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or co-mate (*spectator haud particeps*), but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. The superscription and the image of the Creator still remain legible to him under the dark lines, with which guilt or calamity had cancelled or cross-barred it. Here the Man and the Poet lose and find themselves in each other, the one as glorified, the latter as substantiated. In this mild and philosophic pathos, Wordsworth appears to me without a compeer. Such as he *is*: so he *writes*. See vol. I. page 134 to 136, or that most affecting composition, THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —— OF ——, page 165 to 168, which no mother, and, if I may judge by my own experience, no parent can read without a tear. Or turn to that genuine lyric, in the former edition, entitled, THE MAD MOTHER, page 174 to 178, of which I cannot refrain from quoting two of the stanzas, both of them for their pathos, and the former for the fine transition in the two concluding lines of the stanza, so expressive of that deranged state, in which, from the increased sensibility, the sufferer's attention is abruptly drawn off by every trifle, and in the same instant plucked back again by the one despotic thought, bringing home with it, by the blending, *fusing* power of Imagination and Passion, the alien object to which it had been so abruptly diverted, no longer an alien but an ally and an inmate.

"Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips, I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest:
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree!
It comes to cool my babe and me."

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be."

Last, and pre-eminently, I challenge for this poet the gift of Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of *fancy*, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of pre-determined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed his fancy seldom displays itself as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed to all thoughts and to all objects—

> "——————————add the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

I shall select a few examples as most obviously manifesting this faculty; but if I should ever be fortunate enough to render my analysis of Imagination, its origin and characters, thoroughly intelligible to the reader, he will scarcely open on a page of this poet's works without recognising, more or less, the presence and the influences of this faculty.

From the poem on the YEW TREES, vol. I. page 303, 304.

> "But worthier still of note
> Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
> Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks!—and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
> Not uninformed with phantasy, and looks
> That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
> Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
> By sheddings from the pinal umbrage tinged
> Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
> Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
> With unrejoicing berries—ghostly shapes
> May meet at noontide; FEAR and trembling HOPE,
> SILENCE and FORESIGHT; DEATH, the Skeleton,
> And TIME, the Shadow; there to celebrate,
> As in a natural temple scattered o'er
> With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
> United worship; or in mute repose
> To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
> Murmuring from Glazamara's inmost caves."

The effect of the old man's figure in the poem of RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE, vol. II. page 33.

> "While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
> The Old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
> In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
> About the weary moors continually,
> Wandering about alone and silently."

Or the 8th, 9th, 19th, 26th, 31st, and 33rd, in the collection of miscellaneous sonnets—the sonnet on the subjugation of Switzerland, page 210, or the last ode, from which I especially select the two following stanzas or paragraphs, page 349 to 350.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy;
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy!
The Youth who daily further from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

And page 352 to 354 of the same ode.

"O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benedictions: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:-
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised!
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us—cherish—and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence; truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man or Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy.

Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither,—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

And since it would be unfair to conclude with an extract, which, though highly characteristic, must yet, from the nature of the thoughts and the subject, be interesting or perhaps intelligible, to but a limited number of readers; I will add, from the poet's last published work, a passage equally Wordsworthian; of the beauty of which, and of the imaginative power displayed therein, there can be but one opinion, and one feeling. See White Doe, page 5.

"Fast the church-yard fills;—anon
Look again and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard;—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sun-rise now of zeal;
And faith and hope are in their prime
In great Eliza's golden time."

"A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the church-yard ground—
And right across the verdant sod,
Towards the very house of God;
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven!
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away—

A glittering ship that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain."
* * * * * * *
"What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Is through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath."

The following analogy will, I am apprehensive, appear dim and fantastic, but in reading Bartram's Travels I could not help transcribing the following lines as a sort of allegory, or connected simile and metaphor of Wordsworth's intellect and genius.—"The soil is a deep, rich, dark mould, on a deep stratum of tenacious clay; and that on a foundation of rocks, which often break through both strata, lifting their backs above the surface. The trees which chiefly grow here are the gigantic, black oak; magnolia grandi-flora; fraximus excelsior; platane; and a few stately tulip trees." What Mr. Wordsworth *will* produce, it is not for me to prophesy: but I could pronounce with the liveliest convictions what he is capable of producing. It is the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC POEM.

The preceding criticism will not, I am aware, avail to overcome the prejudices of those, who have made it a business to attack and ridicule Mr. Wordsworth's compositions.

Truth and prudence might be imaged as concentric circles. The poet may perhaps have passed beyond the latter, but he has confined himself far within the bounds of the former, in designating these critics, as "too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him;***men of palsied imaginations, in whose minds all healthy action is languid;*** who, therefore, feed as the many direct them, or with the many are greedy after vicious provocatives."

So much for the detractors from Wordsworth's merits. On the other hand, much as I might wish for their fuller sympathy, I dare not flatter myself, that the freedom with which I have declared my opinions concerning both his theory and his defects, most of which are more or less connected with his theory, either as cause or effect, will be satisfactory or pleasing to *all* the poet's admirers and advocates. More indiscriminate than mine their admiration may be: deeper and more sincere it cannot be. But I have advanced no opinion either for praise or censure, other than

as texts introductory to the reasons which compel me to form it. Above all, I was fully convinced that such a criticism was not only wanted; but that, if executed with adequate ability, it must conduce, in no mean degree, to Mr. Wordsworth's *reputation*. His *fame* belongs to another age, and can neither be accelerated nor retarded. How small the proportion of the defects are to the beauties, I have repeatedly declared; and that no one of them originates in deficiency of poetic genius. Had they been more and greater, I should still, as a friend to his literary character in the present age, consider an analytic display of them as *pure gain*; if only it removed, as surely to all reflecting minds even the foregoing analysis must have removed, the strange mistake, so slightly grounded, yet so widely and industriously propagated, of Mr. Wordsworth's turn for *simplicity!* I am not half as much irritated by hearing his enemies abuse him for vulgarity of style, subject, and conception, as I am disgusted with the gilded side of the same meaning, as displayed by some affected admirers, with whom he is, forsooth, a "sweet, simple poet!" and *so* natural, that little master Charles and his younger sister are *so* charmed with them, that they play at "Goody Blake," or at "Johnny and Betty Foy!"

COLERIDGE, 1817

FANCY AND IMAGINATION

REPEATED meditations led me first to suspect—(and a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects matured my conjecture into full conviction,)—that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely differing faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more opposite translation of the Greek φαντασία than the Latin *imaginatio;* but it is equally true that in all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize those words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German, and which the same cause, joined with accidents of translation from original works of different countries, occasion in mixed languages like our own. The first and most important point to be proved is, that two conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and—

this done—to appropriate that word exclusively to the one meaning, and the synonyme, should there be one, to the other. But if, (as will be often the case in the arts and sciences,)—no synonyme exists, we must either invent or borrow a word. In the present instance the appropriation has already begun and been legitimated in the derivative adjective: Milton had a highly *imaginative*, Cowley a very *fanciful* mind. If, therefore, I should succeed in establishing the actual existence of two faculties generally different the nomenclature would be at once determined. To the faculty by which I had characterised Milton, we should confine the term "imagination"; while the other would be contra-distinguished as "fancy." Now were it once fully ascertained, that this division is no less grounded in nature than that of *delirium* from *mania*, or Otway's

Lutes, laurels, seas of milk and ships of amber,

from Shakespeare's

What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements; the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not but derive some additional and important light. It would in its immediate effects furnish a torch of guidance to the philosophical critic; and ultimately to the poet himself. In energetic minds, truth soon changes by domestication into power: and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influencive in the production. To admire on principle, is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

LAMB, 1818

DEDICATION OF LAMB'S WORKS

TO S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,—You will smile to see the slender labours of your friend designated by the title of *Works*; but such was the wish of the gentlemen who have kindly undertaken the trouble of collecting them, and from their judgment could be no appeal.

It would be a kind of disloyalty to offer to any one but yourself a volume containing the *early pieces*, which were first published among your poems, and were fairly derivatives from you and them. My friend Lloyd and myself came into our first battle (authorship

is a sort of warfare) under cover of the greater Ajax. How this association, which shall always be a dear and proud recollection to me, came to be broken,—who snapped the three-fold cord,—whether yourself (but I know that was not the case) grew ashamed of your former companions,—or whether (which is by much the more probable) some ungracious bookseller was author of the separation,—I cannot tell;—but wanting the support of your friendly elm (I speak for myself), my vine has, since that time, put forth few or no fruits; the sap (if ever it had any) has become, in a manner, dried up and extinct; and you will find your old associate, in his second volume, dwindled into prose and *criticism*.

Am I right in assuming this as the cause? or is it that, as years come upon us (except with some more healthy-happy spirits), Life itself loses much of its Poetry for us? we transcribe but what we read in the great volume of Nature; and, as the characters grow dim, we turn off, and look another way. You yourself write no Christabels, nor Ancient Mariners, now.

Some of the Sonnets, which shall be carelessly turned over by the general reader, may happily awaken in you remembrances, which I should be sorry should be ever totally extinct—the memory

"Of summer days and of delightful years—"

even so far back as to those old suppers at our old ********** Inn,—when life was fresh, and topics exhaustless,—and you first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty and kindliness.—

"What words have I heard
Spoke at the mermaid!"

The world has given you many a shrewd nip and gird since that time, but either my eyes have grown dimmer, or my old friend is the same who stood before me three-and-twenty years ago—his hair a little confessing the hand of time, but still shrouding the same capacious brain,—his heart not altered, scarcely where it "alteration finds."

One piece, Coleridge, I have ventured to publish in its original form, though I have heard you complain of a certain over-imitation of the antique in the style. If I could see any way of getting rid of the objection, without re-writing it entirely, I would make some sacrifices. But when I wrote John Woodvil, I never proposed to myself any distinct deviation from common English. I had been newly initiated in the writings of our elder dramatists: Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, were then, a first love; and from what I was so freshly conversant in, what wonder if my language imperceptibly took a tinge? The very time which I had chosen for my story, that which immediately followed the

Restoration, seemed to require, in an English play, that the English should be of rather an older cast than that of the precise year in which it happened to be written. I wish it had not some faults, which I can less vindicate than the language.

I remain, My dear Coleridge, Yours,

With unabated esteem, C. LAMB.

LAMB, 1818

To MISS KELLY

First printed in *Works*, 1818, and reprinted in Hunt's *Examiner*, 12th July, 1819.

YOU are not, Kelly, of the common strain,
That stoop their pride and female honour down
To please that many-headed beast *the town*,
And vend their lavish smiles and tricks for gain;
By fortune thrown amid the actor's train,
You keep your native dignity of thought;
The plaudits that attend you come unsought,
As tributes due unto your natural vein.
Your tears have passion in them, and a grace
Of genuine freshness, which our hearts avow;
Your smiles are winds whose ways we cannot trace,
That vanish and return we know not how—
And please the better from a pensive face,
A thoughtful eye, and a reflecting brow.

HUNT, 1818

To T. L. H.

Six years old, during a Sickness.

SLEEP breathes at last from out thee,
My little, patient boy;
And balmy rest about thee
Smooths off the day's annoy.
I sit me down, and think
Of all thy winning ways;
Yet almost wish, with sudden shrink,
That I had less to praise.

Thy sidelong pillowed meekness,
Thy thanks to all that aid,
Thy heart, in pain and weakness,
Of fancied faults afraid;
The little trembling hand
That wipes thy quiet tears,
These, these are things that may demand
Dread memories for years.

Sorrows I've had, severe ones,
I will not think of now;
And calmly 'midst my dear ones
Have wasted with dry brow;
But when thy fingers press
And pat my stooping head,
I cannot bear the gentleness,—
The tears are in their bed.

Ah, first-born of thy mother,
When life and hope were new,
Kind playmate of thy brother,
Thy sister, father too;
My light, where'er I go,
My bird, when prison-bound,
My hand in hand companion,—no,
My prayers shall hold thee round.

To say "He has departed"—
"His voice"—"his face"—is gone;
To feel impatient-hearted,
Yet feel we must bear on;
Ah, I could not endure
To whisper of such woe,
Unless I felt this sleep ensure
That it will not be so.

Yes, still he's fix'd, and sleeping!
This silence too the while—
It's very hush and creeping
Seem whispering us a smile:
Something divine and dim
Seems going by one's ear,
Like parting wings of Seraphim,
Who say, "We've finished here."

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS

IT seems to me that his (Shakespeare's) plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage;—"God said, Let there be light, and there was *light;*"—not there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star, compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakespeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favourite, and soften down the point in her which Shakespeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakespeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon: for although it was natural that Hamlet,—a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation,—should express himself satirically,—yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakespeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool: but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw: but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice :—he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness ; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel. Let the morality of Shakespeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding, age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakespeare : —even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind ; he neither excites, nor flatters, passion, in order to degrade the subject of it ; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakespeare vice never walks as in twilight : nothing is purposely out of its place ;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate ; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers ; the plot is a mere canvas and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedick and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the " Much Ado About Nothing " all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other, less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action ;—take away Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain ? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character ; in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main spring of the plot of this play ; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the groundwork of the plot. Hence Shakespeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or

other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition, — names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself, the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard, that Shakespeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in " Lear," and yet everything will remain ; so the first and second scenes in the " Merchant of Venice." Indeed, it is universally true.

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakespeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's " Willow," and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in " As You Like It." But the whole of the " Midsummer Night's Dream " is one continued specimen of the dramatised lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of Hotspur ;—

> " Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart ;
> I had rather be a kitten and cry—mew," &c.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimer ;—

> " I understand thy looks : that pretty Welsh
> Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens,
> I am too perfect in," &c.
>
> *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act III., Scene 1.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader ;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakespeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say ; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right ; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakespeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character ;—passion in Shakespeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakespeare followed the main

march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakespeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

HUNT, 1818

SONG OF THE FLOWERS

WE are the sweet Flowers,
Born of sunny showers,
Think, whene'er you see us, what our beauty saith:
Utterance mute and bright
Of some unknown delight,
We fill the air with pleasure, by our simple breath:
All who see us, love us;
We befit all places;
Unto sorrow we give smiles; and unto graces, graces.

Mark our ways, how noiseless
All, and sweetly voiceless,
Though the March winds pipe to make our passage clear;
Not a whisper tells
Where our small seed dwells,
Nor is known the moment green, when our tips appear.
We thread the earth in silence,
In silence build our bowers,
And leaf by leaf in silence shew, till we laugh atop, sweet Flowers!

The dear lumpish baby,
Humming with the May-bee,
Hails us with his bright stare, stumbling through the grass;
The honey-dropping moon,
On a night in June,
Kisses our pale pathway leaves, that felt the bridegroom pass.
Age, the wither'd clinger,
On us mutely gazes,
And wraps the thought of his last bed in his childhood's daisies.

See, and scorn all duller
Taste, how heav'n loves colour,
How great Nature, clearly, joys in red and green;
What sweet thoughts she thinks
Of violets and pinks,

And a thousand flushing hues, made solely to be seen ;
See her whitest lilies
Chill the silver showers,
And what a red mouth has her rose, the woman of the flowers !

Uselessness divinest
Of a use the finest
Painteth us, the teachers of the end of use ;
Travellers weary-eyed
Bless us far and wide ;
Unto sick and prison'd thoughts we give sudden truce ;
Not a poor town window
Loves its sickliest planting,
But its wall speaks loftier truth than Babylon's whole vaunting.

Sage are yet the uses
Mix'd with our sweet juices,
Whether man or may-fly profit of the balm ;
As fair fingers heal'd
Knights from the olden field,
We hold cups of mightiest force to give the wildest calm.
E'en the terror Poison
Hath its plea for blooming ;
Life it gives to reverent lips, though death to the presuming.

And oh ! our sweet soul-taker,
That thief the honey-maker,
What a house hath he, by the thymy glen !
In his talking rooms
How the feasting fumes,
Till his gold cups overflow to the mouths of men !
The butterflies come aping
Those fine thieves of ours,
And flutter round our rifled tops, like tickled flowers with flowers.

See those tops, how beauteous !
What fair service duteous
Round some idol waits, as on their lord the Nine ?
Elfin court 'twould seem ;
And taught perchance that dream,
Which the old Greek mountain dreamt upon nights divine.
To expound such wonder
Human speech avails not ;
Yet there dies no poorest weed, that such a glory exhales not.

Think of all these treasures,
Matchless works and pleasures,
Every one a marvel, more than thought can say;
Then think in what bright show'rs
We thicken fields and bowers,
And with what heaps of sweetness half stifle wanton May
Think of the mossy forests
By the bee-birds haunted,
And all those Amazonian plains, lone lying as enchanted.

Trees themselves are ours;
Fruits are born of flowers;
Peach and roughest nut were blossoms in the spring.
Th lusty bee knows well
The news, and comes pell-mell,
And dances in the bloomy thicks with darksome antheming.
Beneath the very burthen
Of planet-pressing ocean
We wash our smiling cheeks in peace, a thought for meek devotion.

Tears of Phœbus,—missings
Of Cytherea's kissings,
Have in us been found, and wise men find them still:
Drooping grace unfurls
Still Hyacinthus' curls,
And Narcissus loves himself in the selfish rill;
Thy red lip, Adonis,
Still is wet with morning;
And the step that bled for thee, the rosy briar adorning.

Oh, true things are fables,
Fit for sagest tables,
And the flowers are true things, yet no fables they;
Fables were not more
Bright, nor lov'd of yore,
Yet they grew not, like the flow'rs, by every old pathway.
Grossest hand can test us;
Fools may prize us never;
Yet we rise, and rise, and rise, marvels sweet for ever.

Who shall say that flowers
Dress not heaven's own bowers?
Who its love, without them, can fancy,—or sweet floor?
Who shall even dare
To say we sprang not there,

And came down not that Love might bring one piece of heaven
the more ?
Oh pray believe that angels
From those blue dominions
Brought us in their white laps down, 'twixt their golden
pinions.

HUNT, 1818

SONNETS

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

Hunt proposed to Keats that they should compose, "then and there and to time," a sonnet each on the grasshopper and the cricket. See Keats's "The poetry of earth is never dead."

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;

Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

HUNT, 1818

ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR

IT lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs its thin outer threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honour'd pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
Perhaps he press'd it once, or underneath
Round his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-eyed,
And saw, in fancy, Adam and his bride
With their rich locks, or his own Delphic wreath.

There seems a love in hair, though it be dead.
It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread
Of our frail plant,—a blossom from the tree
Surviving the proud trunk ; —as though it said
Patience and Gentleness is Power. In me
Behold affectionate eternity.

HUNT, 1818

QUIET EVENINGS

TO THOMAS BARNES, ESQ.

Written from Hampstead.

DEAR Barnes, whose native taste, solid and clear,
The throng of life has strengthen'd without harm,
You know the rural feeling, and the charm
That stillness has for a world-fretted ear :
'Tis now deep whispering all about me here
With thousand tiny hushings, like a swarm
Of atom bees, or fairies in alarm,
Or noise of numerous bliss from distant sphere.

This charm our evening hours duly restore,—
Nought heard through all our little, lull'd abode,
Save the crisp fire, or leaf of book turn'd o'er,
Or watch-dog, or the ring of frosty road.
Wants there no other sound then ?—Yes, one more,—
The voice of friendly visiting, long owed.

HUNT, 1818

OUR COTTAGE

SOME few of us, children and grown, possess
A cottage, far remov'd. 'Tis in a glade,
Where the sun harbours ; and one side of it
Listen to bees, another to a brook.
Lovers, that have just parted for the night,
Dream of such spots, when they have said their pray'rs,—
Or some tir'd parent, holding by the hand
A child, and walking tow'rds the setting sun.

No news comes here ; no scandal ; no routine
Of morning visit ; not a postman's knock,—
That double thrust of the long staff of care.
We are as distant from the world, in spirit
If not in place, as though in Crusoe's isle,
And please ourselves with being ignorant
Ev'n of the country some five miles beyond.
Our wood's our world, with some few hills and dales,
And many an alley, green, with poppies edg'd
And flowery brakes, where sails the long blue fly,
Whom we pronounce a fairy ; and 'twould go
Hard with us to be certain he's not one,
Such willing children are we of the possible.
Hence all our walks have names ; some of the Fairies,
And some of Nymphs (where the brook makes a bath
In a green chamber, and the turf's half violets),
And some of Grim Old Men that live alone,
And may not be seen safely. Pan has one
Down in a beech-dell ; and Apollo another,
Where sunset in the trees makes strawy fires.

You might suppose the place pick'd out of books.
The nightingales, in the cold blooms, are there
Fullest of heart, hushing our open'd windows ;
The cuckoo ripest in the warméd thicks.
Autumn, the princely season, purple-rob'd
And liberal-handed, brings no gloom to us,
But, rich in its own self, gives us rich hope
Of winter time ; and when the winter comes,
We burn old wood, and read old books that wall
Our biggest room, and take our heartiest walks
On the good, hard, glad ground ; or when it rains
And the rich dells are mire, make much and long
Of a small bin we have of good old wine ;
And talk of, perhaps entertain, some friend,
Whom, old or young, we gift with the same grace
Of ancient epithet ; for love is time
With us ; youth old as love, and age as young ;
And stars, affections, hopes, roll all alike
Immortal rounds, in heaven when not on earth.
Therefore the very youngest of us all
Do we call old,— " old Vincent," or " old Jule,"
Or " old Jacintha ; " and they count us young,
And at a very playfellow time of life,
As in good truth we are : witness the nuts
We seek, to pelt with, in thy trampled leaves,

November ; and the merry Christmas ring,
Hot-fac'd and loud with too much fire and food,—
The rare excess, loving the generous gods.
" Old Mary,' and " old Percy," and " old Henry,"
Also there are, with more beyond their teens ;
But these are reverend youngsters, married now,
And ride no longer to our cottage nest
On that unbridled horse, their father's knee.

Custom itself is an old friend with us ;
Though change we make a friend, too, if it come
To better custom : nay, to bury him,
Provided soul be gone, and it be done
Rev'rently and kindly ; and we then install
His son, or set a new one in his place ;
For all good honest customs, from all lands,
Find welcome here,—seats built up in old elms
From France ; and evening dances on the green ;
And servants (home's inhabiting strangers) turn'd
To zealous friends ; and gipsy meals, whose smoke
Warms houseless glades ; and the good bout Chinese
At pen and ink, in rhyming summer bow'rs,
Temper'd with pleasant penalties of wine.
The villagers love us ; and on Sabbath-days
(Such luck is ours, and round harmonious life)
In an old, ivied church (which God preserve,
And make a mark for ever of the love
That by mild acquiescence bears all change
And keeps all better'd good !) no priest like ours
Utters such Christian lore, so final sweet,
So fit for audience in those flowery dells.
Not a young heart feels strange, nor old misgives :
You scarcely can help thinking, that the sound
Must pierce with sweetness to the very graves.

But mark—not the whole week do we pass thus,—
No, nor whole day. Heav'n, for ease' sake, forbid !
Half of the day (and half of that might serve,
Were all the world active and just as we)
Is mix'd with the great throng, playing its part
Of toil and pain ; we could not relish else
Our absolute comfort ; nay, should almost fear
Heav'n counted us not worthy to partake
The common load with its great hopes for all,
But held us flimsy triflers—gnats i' the sun—
Made but for play, and so to die, unheaven'd.

Oh, hard we work, and carefully we think,
And much we suffer! but the line being drawn
'Twixt work and our earth's heav'n, well do we draw it,
Sudden, and sharp, and sweet; and in an instant
Are borne away, like knights to fairy isles,
And close our gates behind us on the world.

" And where (cries some one) is this blesséd spot
May I behold it? May I gain admittance? "

Yes, *with a thought;—as we do.*
" Woe is me!
Then no such place exists! "
None such to us,
Except in thought; but *that*—
" Is true as fiction? "

Aye, true as tears or smiles that fiction makes,
Waking the ready heaven in men's eyes;—
True as effect to cause;—true as the hours
You spend in joy while sitting at a play.
Is there no truth in those? Or was your heart
Happier before you went there? Oh, if rich
In what you deem life's only solid goods,
Think what unjoyous blanks ev'n those would be,
Were fancy's light smitten from out your world,
With all its colourings of your prides, your gains,
Your very toys and tea-cups,—nothing left
But what *you* touch, and not what *touches you.*
The wise are often rich in little else,
The rich, if wise, count it their gold of gold.
Say, is it not so, thou who art both rich
In the world's eye, and wise in solitude's,—
Stoneleigh's poetic lord, whose gentle name
No echo granted at the font to mine,
I trust, shall have made ruder. What would'st care
O Leigh, for all the wooden matter-o'-fact
Of all thine oaks, depriv'd of what thy muse
Can do to wake their old oracular breath,
Or whisper, with their patriarch locks, of heaven?
Lo! Southwood Smith, physician of mankind,
Bringer of light and air to the rich poor
Of the next age:—he, when in real woods
He rests the mildest energy alive,
Scorns not these fancied ones, but hails and loves
A vision of the dawn of his own world.

Horace Smith lo! rare compound, skill'd alike
In worldly gain and its unworldliest use:
He prospers in the throng, makes fact his slave,
Then leads a life with fiction and good deeds.
Lo! Bulwer, genius in the thick of fame,
With smiles of thrones, and echoes from the Rhine,
He too extends his grounds to Fairy-land,
And while his neighbours think they see him looking
Hard at themselves, is in Armorica,
Feasting with lovers in enchanted bowers.
Lo! Jeffrey the fine wit, the judge revered,
The man belov'd, what spirit invokes he
To make his hasty moments of repose
Richest and farthest off?—The Muse of Keats,
One of the inmost dwellers in the core
Of the old woods, when Nymphs and Graces liv'd,—
Where still they live, to eyes, like theirs, divine.

Fancy's the wealth of wealth, the toiler's hope,
The poor man's piecer-out; the art of Nature,
Painting her landscapes twice; the spirit of fact,
As matter is the body; the pure gift
Of heaven to poet and to child; which he
Who retains most in manhood, being a man
In all things fitting else, is most a man;
Because he wants no human faculty,
Nor loses one sweet taste of the sweet world.

COLERIDGE, 1818

"COMMONPLACES"

From *The Friend*, Essay 15.

BUT how shall I avert the scorn of those critics who laugh at the oldness of my topics, evil and good, necessity and arbitrement, immortality and the ultimate aim? By what shall I regain *their* favour: My themes must be new: a French constitution; a balloon; a change of ministry; a fresh batch of kings on the Continent, or of peers in our happier island; or who had the best of it of two parliamentary gladiators, and whose speech, on the subject of Europe bleeding at a thousand wounds, or our own country struggling for herself and all human nature, was cheered by the greatest number of "*laughs*," "*loud laughs*," and "*very loud laughs:*" (which, carefully marked by italics, form most conspicuous and strange parentheses in the newspaper reports).

Or if I must be philosophical, the last chemical discoveries, provided I do not trouble my reader with the principle which gives them their highest interest, and the character of intellectual grandeur to the discoverer; or the last shower of stones, and that they were supposed, by certain philosophers, to have been projected from some volcano in the moon, taking care, however, not to add any of the cramp reasons for this opinion! Something new, however, it must be, quite new and quite out of themselves! for whatever is within them, whatever is deep within them, must be as old as the first dawn of human reason. But to find no contradiction in the union of old and new, to contemplate the Ancient of Days with feelings as fresh as if they then sprang forth at His own fiat, this characterises the minds that feel the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it! To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood, to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years has rendered familiar,

> **With sun and moon and stars throughout the year,**
> **And man and woman——**

this is the character and privilege of genius, and one of the marks which distinguish genius from talent. And so to represent familiar objects as to awaken the minds of others to a like freshness of sensation concerning them (that constant accompaniment of mental, no less than of bodily, convalescence)—to the same modest questioning of a self-discovered and intelligent ignorance, which, like the deep and massy foundations of a Roman bridge, forms half of the whole structure (*prudens interrogatio dimidium scientiæ*, says Lord Bacon)—this is the prime merit of genius, and its most unequivocal mode of manifestation. Who has not, a thousand times, seen it snow upon water? Who has not seen it with a new feeling, since he has read Burns's comparison of sensual pleasure to

> **the snowfall in the river,**
> **A moment white—then melts for ever!**

In philosophy, equally as in poetry, genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues the stalest and most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Extremes meet—a proverb, by-the-by, to collect and explain all the instances and exemplifications of which, would constitute and exhaust all philosophy. Truths, of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as so true that they lose all the powers of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors.

But as the class of critics, whose contempt I have anticipated, commonly consider themselves as men of the world, instead of hazarding additional sneers by appealing to the authorities of *recluse* philosophers (for such, in spite of all history, the men who have distinguished themselves by profound thought, are generally deemed, from Plato and Aristotle to Cicero, and from Bacon to Berkeley), I will refer them to the darling of the polished court of Augustus, to the man, whose works have been in all ages deemed the models of good sense, and are still the pocket-companion of those who pride themselves on uniting the scholar with the gentleman. This accomplished man of the world has given us an account of the subjects of conversation between himself and the illustrious statesman who governed, and the brightest luminaries who then adorned the empire of the civilised world :

> *Sermo oritur non de villis domibusve alienis,*
> *Nec male, necne, Lepos saltet. Sed quod magis ad nos*
> *Pertinet, et nescire malum est, agitamus : utrumne*
> *Divitiis homines, an sint virtute beati ?*
> *Et quæ sit natura boni ? summumque quid ejus ?*
> *Horat. Serm. II.*, 6. 71.

HUNT, 1820

SLEEP

From the *Indicator*.

THIS is an article for the reader to think of, when he or she is warm in bed, a little before he goes to sleep, the clothes at his ear, and the wind moaning in some distant crevice.

" Blessings," exclaimed Sancho, " on him that first invented sleep ! It wraps a man all round like a cloak." It is a delicious moment certainly,—that of being well nestled in bed,—and feeling that you should drop gently to sleep. The good is to come, not past : the limbs have been just tired enough to render the remaining in one posture delightful ; the labour of the day is done. A gentle failure of the perceptions comes creeping over one :—the spirit of consciousness disengages itself more and more, with slow and hushing degrees, like a mother detaching her hand from that of her sleeping child ;—the mind seems to have a balmy lid closing over it, like the eye ;—'tis closing ;—'tis more closing ; —'tis closed. The mysterious spirit has gone to take its airy rounds.

It is said that sleep is best before midnight : and Nature herself, with her darkness and chilling dews, informs us so. There is another reason for going to bed betimes : for it is universally acknowledged that lying late in the morning is a great

shortener of life. At least it is never found in company with longevity. It also tends to make people corpulent. But these matters belong rather to the subject of early rising, than that of sleep.

Sleep at a late hour in the morning is not half so pleasant as the more timely one. It is sometimes, however, excusable, especially to a watchful or over-worked head; neither can we deny the seducing merits of "t'other doze,"—the pleasing wilfulness of nestling in a new posture, when you know you ought to be up, like the rest of the house. But then you cut up the day and your sleep the next night.

In the course of the day, few people think of sleeping, except after dinner; and then it is often rather a hovering and nodding on the borders of sleep, than a sleep itself. This is a privilege allowable, we think, to none but the old, or the sickly, or the very tired and careworn; and it should be well understood, before it is exercised in company. To escape into slumber from an argument; or to take it as an affair of course, only between you and your biliary duct; or to assent with involuntary nods to all that you have just been disputing, is not so well: much less, to sit nodding and tottering beside a lady; or to be in danger of dropping your head into the fruit-plate or your host's face; or of waking up and saying "Just so" to the bark of a dog, or "Yes, madam," to the black at your elbow.

Careworn people, however, might refresh themselves oftener with day-sleep than they do; if their bodily state is such as to dispose them to it. It is a mistake to suppose that all care is wakeful. People sometimes sleep, as well as wake, by reason of their sorrow. The difference seems to depend upon the nature of their temperament; though in the *most* excessive cases, sleep is perhaps Nature's never-failing remedy, as swooning is upon the rack. A person with jaundice in his blood shall lie down and go to sleep at noon-day, when another of a different complexion shall find his eyes as uncloseable as a statue's, though he has had no sleep for nights together. Without meaning to lessen the dignity of suffering, which has quite enough to do with its waking hours, it is this that may often account for the profound sleeps enjoyed the night before hazardous battles, executions, and other demands upon an over-excited spirit.

The most complete and healthy sleep that can be taken in the day, is in summer-time, out in a field. There is perhaps no solitary sensation so exquisite as that of slumbering on the grass or hay, shaded from the hot sun by a tree, with the consciousness of a fresh but light air running through the wide atmosphere, and the sky stretching far overhead upon all sides. Earth, and heaven, and a placid humanity, seem to have the creation to themselves.

There is nothing between the slumberer and the naked and glad innocence of Nature.

Next to this, but at a long interval, the most relishing snatch of slumber out of bed is the one which a tired person takes before he retires for the night, while lingering in his sitting-room. The consciousness of being very sleepy and of having the power to go to bed immediately, gives great zest to the unwillingness to move. Sometimes he sits nodding in his chair; but the sudden and leaden jerks of the head to which a state of great sleepiness renders him liable, are generally too painful for so luxurious a moment; and he gets into a more legitimate posture, sitting sideways with his head on the chair-back, or throwing his legs up at once on another chair, and half reclining. It is curious, however, to find how long an inconvenient posture will be borne for the sake of this foretaste of repose. The worst of it is, that on going to bed the charm sometimes vanishes; perhaps from the colder temperature of the chamber; for a fireside is a great opiate.

Speaking of the painful positions into which a sleepy lounger will get himself, it is amusing to think of the more fantastic attitudes that so often take place in bed. If we could add anything to the numberless things that have been said about sleep by the poets, it would be upon this point. Sleep never shows himself a greater leveller. A man in his waking moments may look as proud and self-possessed as he pleases. He may walk proudly, he may sit proudly, he may eat his dinner proudly; he may shave himself with an air of infinite superiority; in a word, he may show himself grand and absurd upon the most trifling occasions. But sleep plays the petrifying magican. He arrests the proudest lord as well as the humblest clown in the most ridiculous postures: so that if you could draw a grandee from his bed without waking him, no limb-twisting fool in a pantomime should create wilder laughter. The toy with the string between its legs is hardly a posture-master more extravagant. Imagine a despot lifted up to the gaze of his valets, with his eyes shut, his mouth open, his left hand under his right ear, his other twisted and hanging helplessly before him like an idiot's, one knee lifted up, and the other leg stretched out, or both knees huddled up together; what a scarecrow to lodge majestic power in!

But sleep is kindly, even in his tricks; and the poets have treated him with proper reverence. According to the ancient mythologists, he had even one of the Graces to wife. He had a thousand sons, of whom the chief were Morpheus, or the Shaper; Icelos, or the Likely; Phantasus, the Fancy; and Phobetor, the Terror. His dwelling some writers place in a dull and darkling

part of the earth; others, with greater compliment, in heaven; and others, with another kind of propriety, by the sea-shore. There is a good description of it in Ovid; but in these abstracted tasks of poetry the moderns outvie the ancients; and there is nobody who has built his bower for him so finely as Spenser. Archimago in the first book of the *Faerie Queene* (Canto 1, st. 39) sends a little spirit down to Morpheus to fetch him a dream.

> He, making speedy way through spersed ayre,
> And through the world of waters, wide and deepe,
> To Morpheus' house doth hastily repaire.
> Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
> And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,
> His dwelling is. There, Tethys his wet bed
> Doth ever wash; and Cynthia still doth steepe
> In silver dew his ever-drouping hed,
> Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.
>
> And more to lulle him in his slumber soft
> A trickling streame from high rocke tumbling downe,
> And ever-drizzling raine upon the loft,
> Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the soune
> Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoune.
> No other noise, nor people's troublous cryes,
> As still are wont to annoy the walléd towne,
> Might there be heard, but carelesse Quiet lyes,
> Wrapt in eternall silence, farre from enimyes.

Chaucer has drawn the cave of the same god with greater simplicity; but nothing can have a more deep and sullen effect than his cliffs and cold-running waters. It seems as real as an actual solitude, or some quaint old picture in a book of travels in Tartary. He is telling the story of Ceyx and Alcyone in the poem called his Dream. Juno tells a messenger to go to Morpheus and "bid him creep into the body" of the drowned king, to let his wife know the fatal event by his apparition.

> This messenger tooke leave, and went
> Upon his way; and never he stent
> Till he came to the dark valley,
> That stant betweene rockes twey.
> There never yet grew corne, ne gras,
> Ne tree, ne nought that aught was,
> Beast, ne man, ne naught else;
> Save that there were a few wells
> Came running fro the cliffs adowne,
> That made a deadly sleeping soune,
> And runnen downe right by a cave,
> That was under a rocky grave,
> Amid the valley, wonder-deepe.
> There these goddis lay asleepe,
> Morpheus and Eclympasteire,
> That was the god of Sleepis heire,
> That slept and did none other worke.

Where the credentials of this new son and heir, Eclympasteire, are to be found, we know not; but he acts very much, it must be allowed, like an heir presumptive, in sleeping, and doing "none other work."

We dare not trust ourselves with many quotations upon sleep from the poets; they are so numerous as well as beautiful. We must content ourselves with mentioning that our two most favourite passages are one in the *Philoctetes** of Sophocles, admirable for its contrast to a scene of terrible agony, which it closes; and the other the following address in Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy of *Valentinian*, the hero of which is also a sufferer under bodily torment. He is in a chair, slumbering; and these most exquisite lines are gently sung with music.

> Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
> Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
> On this afflicted prince. Fall like a cloud
> In gentle showers: give nothing that is loud
> Or painful to his slumbers: easy, light,
> And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
> Pass by his troubled senses: sing his pain
> Like hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain.
> Into this prince, gently, oh gently slide;
> And kiss him into slumbers, like a bride.

How earnest and prayer-like are these pauses! How lightly sprinkled, and yet how deeply settling, like rain, the fancy! How quiet, affectionate, and perfect the conclusion!

Sleep is most graceful in an infant; soundest, in one who has been tired in the open air; completest, to the seaman after a hard voyage; most welcome, to the mind haunted with one idea; most touching to look at, in the parent that has wept; lightest, in the playful child; proudest, in the bride adored.

HUNT, 1820

COACHES

From the *Indicator*. A favourite of Charles Lamb.

ACCORDING to the opinion commonly entertained respecting an author's want of ready money, it may be allowed us to say that we retain from childhood a considerable notion of "a ride in a coach." Nor do we hesitate to confess that by coach we especially mean a hired one; from the equivocal rank of the post-chaise, down to that despised old castaway, the hackney.

It is true that the carriage, as it is indifferently called (as if nothing less genteel could carry any one) is a more decided thing

* ll. 821-822.

than the chaise ; it may be swifter even than the mail, leaves the stage at a still greater distance in every respect, and (forgetting what it may come to itself) darts by the poor old lumbering hackney with immeasurable contempt. It rolls with a prouder ease than any other vehicle. It is full of cushions and comfort ; elegantly coloured inside and out ; rich, yet neat ; light and rapid, yet substantial. The horses seem proud to draw it. The fat and fair-wigged coachman " lends his sounding lash," his arm only in action and that little, his body well set with its own weight. The footman, in the pride of his nonchalance, holding by the straps behind, and glancing down sideways betwixt his cocked hat and neckcloth, stands swinging from east to west upon his springy toes. The horses rush along amidst their glancing harness. Spotted dogs leap about them, barking with a princely superfluity of noise. The hammercloth trembles through all its fringe. The paint flashes in the sun. We, contemptuous of everything less convenient, bow backwards and forwards with a certain indifferent air of gentility, infinitely predominant. Suddenly, with a happy mixture of turbulence and truth, the carriage dashes up by the curb-stone to the very point desired, and stops with a lordly wilfulness of decision. The coachman looks as if nothing had happened. The footman is down in an instant ; the knocker reverberates into the farthest corner of the house ; doors both carriage and house, are open ; we descend, casting a matter-of-course eye at the bystanders ; and the moment we touch the pavement, the vehicle, as if conscious of what it has carried, and relieved from the weight of our importance, recovers from its sidelong inclination with a jerk, tossing and panting, as it were, for very breath, like the proud heads of the horses.

All this, it must be owned, is very pretty ; but it is also gouty and superfluous. It is too convenient,—too exacting,—too exclusive. We must get too much for it, and lose too much by it. Its plenty, as Ovid says, makes us poor. We neither have it in the republic of letters, nor would desire it in any less jacobinical state. Horses, as many as you please, provided men have enough to eat : hired coaches, a reasonable number :—but health and good humour at all events.

Gigs and curricles are things less objectionable, because they cannot be so relied upon as substitutes for exercise. Our taste in them, we must confess, is not genuine. How shall we own it ? We like to be driven, instead of drive ;—to read or look about us, instead of keeping watch on a horse's head. We have no relish even for vehicles of this description, that are not safe. Danger is a good thing for giving a fillip to a man's ideas ; but even danger, to us, must come recommended by something useful. We have no ambition to have TANDEM written on our tombstone.

The prettiest of these vehicles is undoubtedly the curricle, which is also the safest. There is something worth looking at in the pair of horses, with that sparkling pole of steel laid across them. It is like a bar of music, comprising their harmonious course. But to us even gigs are but a sort of unsuccessful run at gentility. The driver to all intents and purposes, had better be on the horse. Horseback is the noblest way of being carried in the world. It is cheaper than any other constant mode of riding; it is common to all ranks; and it is manly, graceful, and healthy. The handsomest mixture of danger with dignity, in the shape of a carriage, was the tall phaeton with its yellow wings. We remember looking up to it with respect in our childhood, partly for its own loftiness, partly for its name, and partly perhaps for the figure it makes in the prints to novels of that period. The most gallant figure which mere modern driving ever cut, was in the person of a late Duke of Hamilton; of whom we have read or heard somewhere, that he used to dash round the streets of Rome, with his horses panting, and his hounds barking about his phaeton, to the equal fright and admiration of the Masters of the world, who were accustomed to witness nothing higher than a lumbering old coach or a cardinal on a mule.

A post-chaise involves the idea of travelling, which in the company of those we love is home in motion. The smooth running along the road, the fresh air, the variety of scene, the leafy roads, the bursting prospects, the clatter through a town, the gaping gaze of a village, the hearty appetite, the leisure (your chaise waiting only upon your own movements), even the little contradictions to home comfort, and the expedients upon which they set us, all put the animal spirits at work and throw a novelty over the road of life. If anything could grind us young again, it would be the wheels of a post-chaise. The only monotonous sight is the perpetual up-and-down movement of the postilion, who, we wish exceedingly, could take a chair. His occasional retreat to the bar, which occupies the place of a box, and his affecting to sit upon it, only reminds us of its exquisite want of accommodation. But some have given the bar, lately, a surreptitious squeeze in the middle; and flattened it a little into something obliquely resembling an inconvenient seat.

If we are to believe the merry Columbus of Down-Hall, calashes, now almost obsolete for any purpose, used to be hired for travelling occasions a hundred years back; but he preferred a chariot; and neither was good. But see how pleasantly good-humour rides over its inconveniences.

> Then answered 'Squire Morley, "Pray get a calash,
> That in summer may burn, and in winter may splash;
> I love dirt and dust; and 'tis always my pleasure
> To take with me much of the soil that I measure."

But Matthew thought better; for Matthew thought right,
And hired a chariot so trim and so tight,
That extremes both of winter and summer might pass,
For one window was canvas, the other was glass.

"Draw up," quoth friend Matthew; "Pull down," quoth friend John,
"We shall be both hotter and colder anon."
Thus, talking and scolding, they forward did speed;
And Ralpho paced by under Newman the Swede.

Into an old inn did this equipage roll,
At a town they called Hodson, the sign of the Bull;
Near a nymph with an urn that divides the highway,
And into a puddle throws mother of tea.

"Come here, my sweet landlady, pray how d'ye do?
Where is Cicely so cleanly, and Prudence, and Sue?
And where is the widow that dwelt here below?
And the hostler that sung about eight years ago?

And where is your sister, so mild and so dear,
Whose voice to her maids like a trumpet was clear?"
"By my troth," she replies, "you grow younger, I think:
And pray, sir, what wine does the gentleman drink?

Why now let me die, sir, or live upon trust,
If I know to which question to answer you first:
Why things, since I saw you, most strangely have varied,
The hostler is hanged, and the widow is married.

And Prue left a child for the parish to nurse,
And Cicely went off with a gentleman's purse;
And as to my sister, so mild and so dear,
She has lain in the churchyard full many a year."

"Well; peace to her ashes! What signifies grief?
She roasted red veal, and she powdered lean beef:
Full nicely she knew to cook up a fine dish;
Nor tough were her pullets, and tender her fish."

PRIOR.

This quotation reminds us of a little poem by the same author, entitled "The Secretary," which, as it is short, and runs upon chaise-wheels, and seems to have slipped the notice it deserves, we will do ourselves the pleasure of extracting also. It was written when he was Secretary of Embassy at the Hague, where he seems to have edified the Dutch with his insisting upon enjoying himself. The astonishment with which the good Hollander and his wife look up to him as he rides, and the touch of yawning dialect at the end, are extremely pleasant.

While with labour assiduous due pleasure I mix,
And in one day atone for the business of six,
In a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my Horace, a nymph on my right

No memoirs to compose, and no post-boy to move,
That on Sunday may hinder the softness of love;
For her, neither visits, nor parties at tea,
Nor the long-winded cant of a dull refugee:
This night and the next shall be hers, shall be mine,
To good or ill-fortune the third we resign:
Thus scorning the world and superior to fate,
I drive on my car in processional state.
So with Phia through Athens Pisistratus rode;
Men thought her Minerva, and him a new god.
But why should I stories of Athens rehearse,
Where people knew love, and were partial to verse?
Since none can with justice my pleasures oppose,
In Holland half drowned in interest and prose?
By Greece and past ages what need I be tried,
When the Hague and the present are both on my side?
And is it enough for the joys of the day,
To think what Anacreon or Sappho would say?
When good Vandergoes, and his provident *vrow*,
As they gaze on my triumph, do freely allow,
That, search all the province, you'll find no man *dar* is
So blest as the *Englishen Heer Secretar'* is.

If Prior had been living now, he would have found the want of travelling accommodation flourishing most in a country, for whose graver wants we have to answer, without having her wit to help us. There is a story told of an Irish post-chaise, the occupier of which, without quitting it, had to take to his heels. It was going down hill, as fast as wind and the impossibility of stopping could make it, when the foot passengers observed a couple of legs underneath, emulating, with all their might, the rapidity of the wheels. The bottom had come out; and the gentleman was obliged to run for his life.

We must relate another anecdote of an Irish post-chaise, merely to show the natural tendencies of the people to be lawless in self-defence. A friend of ours who was travelling among them, used to have this proposition put to him by the postilion, whenever he approached a turnpike. "Plase your honour, will I drive at the pike?" The pike hung loosely across the road. Luckily, the rider happened to be of as lawless a turn for justice as the driver, so the answer was always a cordial one—"Oh, yes—drive at the pike." The pike made way accordingly; and in a minute or two, the gate people were heard and seen, screaming in vain after the illegal charioteers.

Fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus.
VIRGIL.

The driver's borne beyond their swearing,
And the post-chaise is hard of hearing.

As to following them, nobody in Ireland thinks of moving too much, legal or illegal.

The pleasure to be had in a Mail coach is not so much at one's command as that in a post-chaise. There is generally too little room in it, and too much hurry out of it. The company must not lounge over their breakfast, even if they are all agreed. It is an understood thing, that they are bound to be uncomfortably punctual. They must get in at seven o'clock, though they are all going upon business they do not like or care about, or will have to wait till nine before they can do anything. Some persons know how to manage this haste, and breakfast and dine in the cracking of a whip. They stick with their fork, they joint, they sliver, they bolt. Legs and wings vanish before them, like a dragon's before a knight-errant. But if one is not a clergyman or a regular jolly fellow, one has no chance this way. To be diffident or polite, is fatal. It is a merit eagerly acknowledged, and as quickly set aside. At last you begin upon a leg, and are called off. A very troublesome degree of science is necessary for being well settled in the coach. We remember travelling in our youth, upon the north road, with an orthodox elderly gentleman of very venerable peruke, who talked much with a grave-looking young man about universities, and won our inexperienced heart with a notion that he was deep in Horace and Virgil. He was much deeper in his wig. Towards evening, as he seemed restless, we asked with much diffidence whether a change even for the worse might not relieve him; for we were riding backwards, and thought that all elderly people dislike that way. He insinuated the very objection; so we recoiled from asking him again. In a minute or two, however, he insisted that we were uneasy ourselves, and that he must relieve us for our own sake. We protested as filially as possible against this; but at last, out of mere shame of disputing the point with so benevolent an elder, we changed seats with him. After an interval of bland meditation, we found the evening sun full in our face. His new comfort set him dozing; and every now and then he jerked his wig in our eyes, till we had the pleasure to see him take out a night-cap and look extremely ghastly.—The same person, and his serious young companion, tricked us out of a good bed we happened to get at the inn.

The greatest peculiarity attending a Mail-coach arises from its travelling at night. The gradual decline of talk, the incipient snore, the rustling and alteration of legs and night caps, the cessation of other noises on the road, the sound of the wind or rain, of the moist circuit of the wheels, and of the time-beating tread of the horses,—all dispose the traveller, who cannot sleep, to a double sense of the little that is left him to observe. The coach stops, the door opens; a rush of cold air announces at once the demands and merits of the guard, who is taking his leave, and is anxious to remember us. The door is clapped to again; the

sound of everything outside becomes dim ; and voices are heard knocking up the people of the inn, and answered by issuing yawns and excuses. Wooden shoes clog heavily about. The horses' mouths are heard swilling up the water out of tubs. All is still again ; and someone in the coach takes a long breath. The driver mounts, and we resume our way. It happens that we can sleep anywhere except in a mail-coach ; so that we hate to see a prudent warm old fellow, who has been eating our fowls and intercepting our toast, put on his night-cap in order to settle himself until morning. We rejoice in the digs that his neighbour's elbow gives him, and hail the long-legged traveller that sits opposite. A passenger of our wakeful description must try to content himself with listening to the sounds above-mentioned ; or thinking of his friends ; or turning verses, as Sir Richard Blackmore did, " to the rumbling of his coach's wheels."

The Stage-coach is a very great and unpretending accommodation. It is a cheap substitute, notwithstanding all its eighteen-penny and two and sixpenny temptations, for keeping a carriage or a horse ; and we really think, in spite of its gossiping, is no mean help to village liberality; for its passengers are so mixed, so often varied, so little yet so much together, so compelled to accommodate, so willing to pass a short time pleasantly, and so liable to the criticism of strangers, that it is hard if they do not get a habit of speaking or even thinking more kindly of one another, than if they mingled less often or under other circumstances. The old and infirm are treated with reverence ; the ailing sympathised with ; the healthy congratulated ; the rich not distinguished ; the poor well met ; the young, with their faces conscious of pride, patronised and allowed to be extra. Even the fiery, nay the fat, learn to bear with each other : and if some high-thoughted persons will talk now and then of their great acquaintances, or their preference of a carriage, there is an instinct which tells the rest that they would not make such appeals to their good opinion, if they valued it so little as might be supposed. Stoppings and dust are not pleasant ; but the latter may be had on much grander occasions ; and if anyone is so unlucky as never to keep another stopping himself, he must be content with the superiority of his virtue. The mail or stage-coachman, upon the whole, is no inhuman mass of great coat, gruffness, civility, and old boots. The latter is the politer, from the smaller range of acquaintance, and his necessity for preserving them. His face is red, and his voice rough, by the same process of drink and catarrh. He has a silver watch with a steel chain, and plenty of loose silver in his pocket mixed with half-pence. He serves the houses he goes by for a clock. He takes a glass at every ale-house, for thirst, when it is dry, and for warmth when it is wet. He

likes to show the judicious reach of his whip, by twigging a dog or goose on the road, or children that get in the way. His tenderness to descending old ladies is particular. He touches his hat to Mrs. Smith. He gives the "young woman" a ride; and lends her his box-coat in the rain. His liberality in imparting his knowledge to any one that has the good fortune to ride on the box with him is a happy mixture of deference, conscious possession, and familiarity. His information chiefly lies in the occupancy of houses on the road, prize-fighters, Bow-street runners, and accidents. He concludes that you know Dick Sams, or Old Joey; and proceeds to relate some of the stories that relish his pot and tobacco in the evening. If any of the four-in-hand gentry go by, he shakes his head, and thinks they might find something better to do. His contempt for them is founded on modesty. He tells you that his off-hand horse is as pretty a goer as ever was, but that Kitty—"Yeah now there, Kitty—can't you be still?—Kitty's a devil, sir,—for all you wouldn't think it." He knows the boys on the road admire him, and gives the horses an indifferent lash with his whip as they go by. If you wish to know what rain and dust can do, you should look at his old hat. There is an indescribably placid and paternal look in the position of his corduroy knees and old top-boots on the foot-board, with their pointed toes and never cleaned soles. His beau ideal of appearance is a frock-coat with mother-o'-pearl buttons, a striped yellow waistcoat, and a flower in his mouth.

> But all our praises why for Charles and Robert?
> Rise, honest Mews, and sing the classic Bobart.

Is the quadrijugal virtue of that learned person still extant? That Olympic and Baccalaureated charioteer?—That best-educated and most erudite of coachmen, of whom Dominie Sampson is alone worthy to speak?—That singular punning and driving commentary on the *Sunt quos curriculo Collegisse*,—in short, the worthy and agreeable Mr. Bobart, Batchelor of Arts, who drove the Oxford stage some years ago, capped verses and the front of his hat with equal dexterity, and read Horace over his brandy and water of an evening? We once had the pleasure of being beaten by him in that capital art, he having brought up against us an unusual number of those cross-armed letters, as puzzling to verse-cappers, as iron-cats unto cavalry, ycleped X's; which said warfare he was pleased to call to mind in after-times unto divers of our comrades. The modest and natural greatness with which he used to say "Yait" to his horses, and then turn round with his rosy gills, and an eye like a fish, and give out the required verse, can never pass away from us, as long as verses or horses run.

On the Hackney-coach we cannot make as short work, as many persons like to make of it in reality. Perhaps indeed it is partly a sense of the contempt it undergoes, which induces us to endeavour to make the best of it. But it has its merits, as we shall show presently. In the account of its demerits, we have been anticipated by a new, and we are sorry to say a very good poetess, of the name of Lucy V—— L——, who has favoured us with a sight of a manuscript poem, in which they are related with great nicety and sensitiveness.

READER.—What, sir, sorry to say that a lady is a good poetess?

INDICATOR.—Only inasmuch, madam, as the lady gives such authority to the anti-social view of this subject, and will not agree with us as to the beatitude of the Hackney-coach.—But hold:—upon turning to the manuscript again, we find that the objections are put into the mouth of a Dandy Courtier. This makes a great difference. The Hackney resumes all which it had lost in the good graces of the fair authoress. The only wonder is, how the Courtier could talk so well. Here is the passage:—

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks
(Of pastry he got store within the Palace),
With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
Incognito upon his errand sallies,
His smelling-bottle ready for the allies;
He pass'd the hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
Vowing he'd have them sent on board the gallies:
Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
Therefore he called a coach, and bade it drive amain.

"I'll pull the string," said he, and further said,
"Polluted Jarvey! Ah! thou filthy hack!
Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,
Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,
Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack;
And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter;
Whose glass once up can never be got back,
Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
That 'tis of vile no-use to travel in a litter.

"Thou inconvenience! thou hungry crop
For all corn! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,
And fiddle-faddle standest while you go;
I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
Unto some Lazar-house thou journeyest,
And in the evening tak'st a double row
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

> "By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
> An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge;
> Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
> Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,
> School'd in a beckon, learnéd in a nudge;
> A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare;
> Quiet and plodding thou dost bear no grudge
> To whisking Tilburies, or Phaetons rare,
> Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare."
>
> Philosophising thus, he pull'd the check,
> And bade the coachman wheel to such a street,
> Who turning much his body, more his neck,
> Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet.

The tact here is so nice, of all the infirmities which are but too likely to beset our poor old friend, that we should only spoil it to say more. To pass then to the merits.

One of the greatest helps to a sense of merit in other things is a consciousness of one's own wants. Do you despise a hackney-coach? Get tired; get old; get young again. Lay down your own carriage, or make it less uneasily too easy. Have to stand up half an hour, out of a storm, under a gateway. Be ill, and wish to visit a friend who is worse. Fall in love, and want to sit next your mistress. Or if all this will not do, fall in a cellar.

Ben Jonson, in a fit of indignation at the niggardliness of James the First, exclaimed, "He despises me, I suppose, because I live in an alley:—tell him his soul lives in an alley." We think we see a hackney-coach moved out of its ordinary patience, and hear it say, "You there, who sit looking so scornfully at me out of your carriage, you are yourself the thing you take me for. Your understanding is a hackney coach. It is lumbering, rickety, and at a stand. When it moves, it is drawn by things like itself. It is at once the most stationary and most servile of commonplaces. And when a good thing is put into it, it does not know it."

But it is difficult to imagine a hackney-coach under so irritable an aspect. It is Hogarth, we think, who has drawn a set of hats or wigs with countenances of their own. We have noticed the same thing in the faces of houses; and it sometimes gets in one's way in a landscape-painting, with the outlines of the massy trees. A friend tells us, that the hackney-coach has its countenance, with gesticulation besides: and now he has pointed it out we can easily fancy it. Some of them looked chucked under the chin, some nodding, some coming at you sideways. We shall never find it easy, however, to fancy the irritable aspect above-mentioned. A hackney-coach always appeared to us the most quiescent of movables. Its horses and it, slumbering on a stand, are an emblem of all the patience in creation, animate and inanimate.

The submission with which the coach takes every variety of the weather, dust, rain, and wind, never moving but when some eddying blast makes its old body seem to shiver, is only surpassed by the vital patience of the horses. Can anything better illustrate the poet's line about

Years that bring the philosophic mind,

than the still-hung head, the dim indifferent eye, the dragged and blunt-cornered mouth, and the gaunt imbecility of body dropping its weight on three tired legs in order to give repose to the lame one? When it has blinkers on, they seem to be shutting up its eyes for death, like the windows of a house. Fatigue and the habit of suffering have become as natural to the creature as the bit to its mouth. Once in half-an-hour it moves the position of its leg, or shakes its drooping old ears. The whip makes it go, more from habit than from pain. Its coat has become almost callous to minor stings. The blind and staggering fly in autumn might come to die against its cheek.

Of a pair of hackney-coach horses, one so much resembles the other, that it seems unnecessary for them to compare notes. They have that within which is beyond the comparative. They no longer bend their heads towards each other, as they go. They stand together as if unconscious of one another's company, but they are not. An old horse misses his companion like an old man. The presence of an associate, who has gone through pain and suffering with us, need not say anything. It is talk, and memory, and everything. Something of this it may be to our old friends in harness. What are they thinking of, while they stand motionless in the rain? Do they remember? Do they dream? Do they still, unperplexed as their old blood is by too many foods, receive a pleasure from the elements; a dull refreshment from the air and sun? Have they yet a palate for the hay which they pull so feebly? or for the rarer grain, which induces them to perform their only voluntary gesture of any vivacity, and toss up the bags that are fastened on their mouths, to get at its shallow feast?

If the old horse were gifted with memory (and who shall say he is not, in one thing as well as another?) it might be at once the most melancholy and pleasantest feeling he has; for the commonest hack has very likely been a hunter or racer; has had his days of lustre and enjoyment; has darted along the course, and scoured the pasture; has carried his master proudly, or his lady gently; has pranced, has galloped, has neighed aloud, has dared, has forded, has spurned at mastery, has graced it and made it proud, has rejoiced the eye, has been crowded to as an actor, has

been all instinct with life and quickness, has had its very fear admired as courage, and been sat upon by valour as its chosen seat.

His ears up prick'd; his braided hanging mane
Upon his compassed crest now stands on end;
His nostrils drink the air; and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send;
His eye, which scornfully glistens like fire,
Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometimes he trots as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty, and modest pride;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who would say, lo! thus my strength is tried;
And thus I do to captivate the eye
Of the fair breeder that is standing by.

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
His flattering holla, or his *Stand, I say?*
What cares he now for curb, or pricking spur?
For rich caparisons, or trappings gay?
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportioned steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed;
So did this horse excel a common one,
In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide;
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide;
Look what a horse should have, he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Alas! his only riders now are the rain and a sordid harness! The least utterance of the wretchedest voice makes him stop and become a fixture. His loves were in existence at the time the old sign, fifty miles hence, was first painted. His nostrils drink nothing but what they cannot help,—the water out of an old tub. Not all the hounds in the world could make his ears attain any eminence. His mane is scratchy and lax; his shape an anatomy: his name a mockery. The same great poet who wrote the triumphal verses for him and his loves, has written their living epitaph:—

The poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hide and hips;
The gum down roping from their pale dead eyes;
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal bit
Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless.
King Henry V., Act IV.

There is a song called "The High-mettled Racer," describing the progress of a favourite horse's life, from its time of vigour and glory down to its furnishing food for the dogs. It is not as good as Shakespeare; but it will do, to those who are half as kind as he. We defy anybody to read that song, or be in the habit of singing it or hearing it sung, and treat horses as they are sometimes treated. So much good may an author do, who is in earnest, and does not go a pedantic way to work. We will not say that Plutarch's good-natured observation about taking care of one's old horse did more for that class of retired servants than all the graver lessons of philosophy. For it is philosophy which first sets people thinking; and then some of them put it in a more popular shape. But we will venture to say, that Plutarch's observation saved many a steed of antiquity a superfluous thump; and in this respect, the author of "The High-mettled Racer" (Mr. Dibdin, we believe,—no mean man, after all, in his way) may stand by the side of the illustrious biographer. Next to ancient causes, to the inevitable progress of events and to the practical part of Christianity (which persons, the most accused of irreligion, have preserved like a glorious infant, through ages of blood and fire) the kindliness of modern philosophy is more immediately owing to the great national writers of Europe, in whose schools we have all been children:—to Voltaire in France, and Shakespeare in England. Shakespeare in his time, obliquely, pleaded the cause of the Jew, and got him set on a common level with humanity. The Jew has since been not only allowed to be human, but some have undertaken to show him as "the best good Christian though he knows it not." We shall not dispute the title with him, nor with the other worshippers of Mammon, who force him to the same shrine. We allow, as things go in that quarter, that the Jew is as great a Christian as his neighbour, and his neighbour as great a Jew as he. There is neither love nor money lost between them. But at all events, the Jew is a man; and with Shakespeare's assistance, the time has arrived when we can afford to acknowledge the horse for a fellow creature and treat him as one. We may say for him, upon precisely the same grounds and to the same purpose, as Shakespeare said for the Israelite, "Hath not a horse organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?" Oh, but some are always at hand to cry out, it would be effeminate to think too much of these things! —Alas! we have no notion of asking the gentlemen to think too much of anything. If they will think at all, it will be a great gain. As to effeminacy (if we must use that ungallant and partial word, for want of a better) it is cruelty that is effeminate. It is

selfishness that is effeminate. Anything is effeminate, which would get an excitement, or save a proper and manly trouble, at the undue expense of another. How does the case stand then between those who ill-treat their horses and those who spare them?

To return to the coach. Imagine a fine coach and pair, which are standing at the door of a house, in all the pride of their sleek strength and beauty, converted into what they may both really become, a hackney and its old shamblers. Such is one of the meditations of the philosophic eighteen-penny rider. A hackney-coach has often the arms of nobility on it. As we are going to get into it, we catch a glimpse of the faded lustre of an earl's or marquis's coronet, and think how many light or proud hearts have ascended those now rickety steps. In this coach perhaps an elderly lady once rode to her wedding, a blooming and blushing girl. Her mother and sister were on each side of her; the bridegroom opposite in a blossom-coloured coat. They talk of everything in the world, of which they are not thinking. The sister was never prouder of her. The mother with difficulty represses her own pride and tears. The bride, thinking he is looking at her, casts down her eyes, pensive in her joy. The bridegroom is at once the proudest, and the humblest, and the happiest man in the world.—For our parts, we sit in a corner, and are in love with the sister. We dream she is going to speak to us in answer to some indifferent questions, when a hoarse voice comes in at the front window and says, "Whereabouts, sir?"

And grief has consecrated thee, thou reverend dilapidation, as well as joy! Thou hast carried unwilling, as well as willing hearts; hearts, that have thought the slowest of thy paces too fast; faces, that have sat back in a corner of thee, to hide their tears from the very thought of being seen. In thee, the destitute have been taken to the poor-house, and the wounded and sick to the hospital; and many an arm has been round many an insensible waist. Into thee, the friend or the lover has hurried, in a passion of tears, to lament his loss. In thee, he has hastened to console the dying or the wretched. In thee, the father or mother, or the older kinswoman, more patient in her years, has taken the little child to the grave, like a human jewel that must be parted with.

But joy appears in thee again, like the look-in of the sunshine. If the lover has gone in thee unwillingly, he has also gone willingly. How many friends hast thou not carried to merry meetings! How many young parties to the play! How many children, whose faces thou hast turned in an instant from the extremity of lachrymose weariness to that of staring delight! Thou hast contained as many different passions in thee as a human heart: and for the sake of the human heart, old body, thou art venerable.

Thou shalt be as respectable as a reduced old gentleman, whose very slovenliness is pathetic. Thou shalt be made gay, as he is over a younger and richer table, and thou shalt be still more touching for the gaiety.

We wish the hackney-coachman were as interesting a machine as either his coach or horses: but it must be owned, that of all the driving species, he is the least agreeable specimen. This is partly to be attributed to the life which has most probably put him into his situation; partly to his want of outside passengers to cultivate his gentility; and partly, to the disputable nature of his fare, which always leads him to be lying and cheating. The waterman of the stand, who beats him if possible in sordidness of appearance, is more respectable. He is less of a vagabond and cannot cheat you. Nor is the hackney-coachman only disagreeable in himself, but like Falstaff reversed, the cause of disagreeableness in others; for he sets people upon disputing with him in pettiness and ill-temper. He induces the mercenary to be violent, and the violent to seem mercenary. A man whom you took for a pleasant laughing fellow, shall all of a sudden put on an irritable look of calculation, and vow that he will be charged with a constable rather than pay the sixpence. Even fair woman shall waive her all-conquering softness, and sound a shrill trumpet in reprobation of the extortionate charioteer, who, if she were a man, she says, she would expose. Being a woman, then, let her not expose herself. Oh—but it is intolerable to be so imposed upon! Let the lady then get a pocket-book, if she must, with the hackney-coach fares in it; or a pain in the legs, rather than the temper; or above all, let her get wiser, and have an understanding that can dispense with the good opinion of hackney-coachmen. Does she think that her rosy lips were made to grow pale about two and sixpence? or that the expression of them will ever be like her cousin Fanny's, if she goes on?

The stage-coachman likes the boys on the road, because he knows they admire him. The hackney-coachman knows that they cannot admire him, and that they can get up behind his coach; which makes him very savage. The cry of "cut behind" from the malicious urchins on the pavement wounds at once his self-love and his interest. He would not mind over-loading his master's horses for another sixpence; but to do it for nothing is what shocks his humanity. He hates the boy for imposing upon him, and the boys for reminding him that he has been imposed upon; and he would willingly twinge the cheeks of all nine. The cut of his whip over the coach is very malignant. He has a constant eye to the road behind him. He has also an eye to what may be left in the coach. He will undertake to search the straw

what he may get above his fare, according to your manners or company; and knows how much to ask, for driving faster or slower than usual. He does not like wet weather so much as people suppose; for he says it rots both his horses and harness, and he takes parties out of town when the weather in fine; which produces good payments in a lump. Lovers, late supper-eaters, and girls going home from boarding-school, are his best pay. He has a rascally air of remonstrance, when you dispute half the overcharge; and according to the temper he is in, begs you to consider his bread, hopes you will not make such a fuss about a trifle, or tells you you may take his number, or sit in the coach all night.

LADY: There, sir!

INDICATOR (looking all about him). Where, ma'am?

LADY: The coachman, sir!

INDICATOR: Oh, pray, madam, don't trouble yourself. Leave the gentleman alone with him. Do you continue to be delightful at a little distance.

A great number of ludicrous adventures must have taken place in which hackney-coaches were concerned. The story of the celebrated harlequin, Lunn, who secretly pitched himself out of one into a tavern window, and when the coachman was about to submit to the loss of his fare, astonished him by calling out again from the inside, is too well known for repetition. There is one of Swift, not perhaps so common. He was going, one dark evening, to dine with some great man, and was accompanied with some other clergymen, to whom he gave their cue. They were all in their canonicals. When they arrived at the house, the coachman opens the door, and lets down the steps. Down steps the Dean, very reverendly in his black robes: after him comes another personage, equally black and dignified: then another: then a fourth. The coachman, who recollects taking up no greater number, is about to put up the steps, when another clergyman descends. After giving way to this other, he proceeds with great confidence to toss them up, when lo! another comes. Well; there cannot, he thinks, be well more than six. He is mistaken. Down comes a seventh; then an eighth; then a ninth, all with decent intervals, the coach in the meantime rocking as if it were giving birth to so many demons. The coachman can conclude no less. He cries out, "The Devil! the Devil!" and is preparing to run away, when they all burst into laughter at the success of their joke. They had gone round as they descended, and got in at the other door.

We remember in our boyhood an edifying comment on the proverb of "all is not gold that glistens." The spectacle made such an impression upon us, that we recollect the very spot, which

was at the corner of a road in the way from Westminster to Kennington, near a stone-mason's. It was a severe winter; and we were out on a holiday, thinking perhaps of the gallant hardships to which the ancient soldiers used to accustom themselves, when we suddenly beheld a group of hackney-coachmen, not, as Spenser says of his witch,

Busy, as *seemed*, about some wicked gin,

but pledging each other in what appeared to us to be little glasses of cold water. What temperance! thought we. What extraordinary and noble content! What more than Roman simplicity! There are a set of poor Englishmen, of the homeliest order, in the very depth of winter, quenching their patient and honourable thirst, with modicums of cold water. O true virtue and courage! O sight worthy of the Timoleons and Epaminondases! We know not how long we remained in this error; but the first time we recognised the white devil for what it was,—the first time we saw through the crystal purity of its appearance,—was a great blow to us. We did not then know what the drinkers went through; and this reminds us that we have omitted one great redemption of the hackney-coachman's character,—his being at the mercy of all sorts of chances and weathers. Other drivers have their settled hours and pay. He only is at the mercy of every call and every casualty; he only is dragged, without notice, like the damned in Milton, into the extremities of wet and cold, from his ale-house fire to the freezing rain; he only must go anywhere, at what hour, and to whatever place you choose, his old rheumatic limbs shaking under his weight of rags, and the snow and sleet beating into his puckered face, through streets which the wind scours like a channel.

HUNT, 1820

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

From the *Indicator*.

A GRECIAN philosopher, being asked why he wept for the death of his son, since the sorrow was in vain, replied, "I weep on that very account." And his answer became his wisdom. It is only for sophists to pretend that we, whose eyes contain the fountains of tears, need never give away to them. It would be unwise not to do so on some occasions. Sorrow unlocks them in her balmy moods. The first bursts may be bitter and overwhelming; but

the soil, on which they pour, would be the worse without them. They refresh the fever of the soul,—the dry misery, which parches the countenance into furrows, and renders us liable to our most terrible "flesh-quakes."

There are sorrows, it is true, so great, that to give them some of the ordinary vents is to run a hazard of being overthrown. These we must rather strengthen ourselves to resist; or bow quietly and drily down in order to let them pass over us, as the traveller does the wind of the desert. But where we feel that tears would relieve us, it is false philosophy to deny ourselves at least that first refreshment; and it is always false consolation to tell people that because they cannot help a thing, they are not to mind it. The true way is, to let them grapple with the unavoidable sorrow, and try to win it into gentleness by a reasonable yielding. There are griefs so gentle in their very nature, that it would be worse than false heroism to refuse them a tear. Of this kind are the deaths of infants. Particular circumstances may render it more or less advisable to indulge in grief for the loss of a little child; but in general, parents should be no more advised to repress their first tears on such an occasion, than to repress their smiles towards a child surviving, or to indulge in any other sympathy. It is an appeal to the same gentle tenderness; and such appeals are never made in vain. The end of them is an acquittal from the harsher bonds of affliction,—from the tying down of the spirit to one melancholy idea.

It is the nature of tears of this kind, however strongly they may gush forth, to run into quiet waters at last. We cannot easily, for the whole course of our lives, think with pain of any good and kind person whom we have lost. It is the divine nature of their qualities to conquer pain and death itself; to turn the memory of them into pleasure; to survive with a placid aspect in our imaginations. We are writing, at this moment, just opposite a spot which contains the grave of one inexpressibly dear to us. We see from our window the trees about it, and the church-spire. The green-fields lie around. The clouds are travelling over head, alternately taking away the sunshine and restoring it. The vernal winds, piping of the flowery summer-time, are nevertheless calling to mind the far distant and dangerous ocean, which the heart that lies in that grave had many reasons to think of. And yet the sight of this spot does not give us pain. So far from it, it is the existence of that grave which doubles every charm of the spot; which links the pleasures of our childhood and manhood together; which puts a hushing tenderness in the winds, and a patient joy upon the landscape; which seems to unite heaven and earth, mortality and immortality, the grass of the tomb and the grass of the green field, and gives a more maternal aspect to the whole

kindness of nature. It does not hinder gaiety itself. Happiness was what its tenant, through all her troubles, would have diffused. To diffuse happiness, and to enjoy it, is not only carrying on her wishes, but realising her hopes; and gaiety, freed from its only pollutions, malignity and want of sympathy, is but a child playing about the knees of its mother.

The remembered innocence and endearments of a child stand us in stead of virtues that have died older. Children have not exercised the voluntary offices of friendship; they have not chosen to be kind and good to us; nor stood by us, from conscious will, in the hour of adversity. But they have shared their pleasures and pains with us as well as they could: the interchange of good offices between us has, of necessity, been less mingled with the troubles of the world; the sorrow arising from their death is the only one which we can associate with their memories. These are happy thoughts that cannot die. Our loss may render them pensive; but they will not always be painful. It is a part of the benignity of Nature, that pain does not survive like pleasure, at any time; much less where the cause of it is an innocent one. The smile will remain reflected by memory; as the moon reflects the light upon us, when the sun has gone into heaven.

When writers like ourselves quarrel with earthly pain (we mean writers of the same intentions, without implying, of course, anything about abilities or otherwise), they are misunderstood if they are supposed to quarrel with pains of every sort. This would be idle and effeminate. They do not pretend, indeed, that humanity might not wish, if it could, to be entirely free from pain; for it endeavours at all times to turn pain into pleasure, or at least to set off the one with the other; to make the former a zest, and the latter a refreshment. The most unaffected dignity of suffering does this; and if wise, acknowledges it. The greatest benevolence towards others, the most unselfish relish of their pleasures, even at its own expense, does but look to increasing the general stock of happiness, though content, if it could, to have its identity swallowed up in that splendid contemplation. We are far from meaning that this is to be called selfishness. We are far indeed from thinking so, or of so confounding words. But neither is it to be called pain, when most unselfish; if disinterestedness be truly understood. The pain that is in it softens into pleasure, as the darker hue of the rainbow melts into the brighter. Yet even if a harsher line is to be drawn between the pain and pleasure, of the most unselfish mind (and ill health, for instance, may draw it), we should not quarrel with it, if it contributed to the general mass of comfort, and were of a nature which general kindliness could not avoid. Made as we are, there are certain

pains, without which it would be difficult to conceive certain great and overbalancing pleasures. We may conceive it possible for beings to be made entirely happy; but in our composition, something of pain seems to be a necessary ingredient, in order that the materials may turn to as fine account as possible; though our clay, in the course of ages and experience, may be refined more and more. We may get rid of the worst earth, though not of earth itself.

Now the liability to the loss of children,—or rather what renders us sensible of it, the occasional loss itself,—seems to be one of these necessary bitters thrown into the cup of humanity. We do not mean that everybody must lose one of his children, in order to enjoy the rest; or that every individual loss afflicts us in the same proportion. We allude to the deaths of infants in general. These might be as few as we could render them. But if none at all ever took place, we should regard every little child as a man or woman secured; and it will easily be conceived, what a world of endearing cares and hopes this security would endanger. The very idea of infancy would lose its continuity with us. Girls and boys would be future men and women, not present children. They would have attained their full growth in our imaginations, and might as well have been men and women at once. On the other hand, those who have lost an infant are never, as it were, without an infant child. They are the only persons who, in one sense, retain it always; and they furnish their neighbours with the same idea.* The other children grow up to manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the changes of mortality. This one alone is rendered an immortal child. Death has arrested it with his kindly harshness, and blessed it into an eternal image of youth and innocence.

Of such as these are the pleasantest shapes that visit our fancy and our hopes. They are the ever-smiling emblems of joy; the prettiest pages that wait upon imagination. Lastly, "Of these are the kingdom of heaven." Wherever there is a province of that benevolent and all-accessible empire, whether on earth or elsewhere, such are the gentle spirits that must inhabit it. To such simplicity, or the resemblance of it, must they come. Such must be the ready confidence of their hearts, and creativeness of their fancy. And so ignorant must they be of the "knowledge of good and evil," losing their discernment of that self-created trouble, by enjoying the garden before them, and not being ashamed of what is kindly and innocent.

* "I sighed," says old Captain Bolton, "when I envied you the two bonnie children; but I sigh not now to call either the monk or the soldier mine own."—*Monastery*, Vol. iii., p. 341.

A NOW. OF A HOT DAY

[From the *Indicator*]

Now the rosy- (and lazy-) fingered Aurora, issuing from her saffron house, calls up the moist vapours to surround her, and goes veiled with them as long as she can; till Phoebus, coming forth in his power, looks everything out of the sky, and holds sharp uninterrupted empire from his throne of beams. Now the mower begins to make his sweeping cuts more slowly, and resorts oftener to the beer. Now the carter sleeps a-top of his load of hay, or plods with double slouch of shoulder, looking out with eyes winking under his shading hat, and with a hitch upward of one side of his mouth. Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage door watches the coaches that go by, with her hand held up over her sunny forehead. Now labourers look well resting in their white shirts at the doors of rural alehouses. Now an elm is fine there, with a seat under it; and horses drink out of the trough, stretching their yearning necks with loosened collars and the traveller calls for his glass of ale, having been without one for more than ten minutes; and his horse stands wincing at the flies, giving sharp shivers of his skin, and moving to and fro his ineffectual docked tail; and now Miss Betty Wilson, the host's daughter, comes streaming forth in a flowered gown and earrings, carrying with four of her beautiful fingers the foaming glass, for which, after the traveller has drank it, she receives with an indifferent eye, looking another way, the lawful twopence: that is to say, unless the traveller, nodding his ruddy face, pays some gallant compliment to her before he drinks, such as "I'd rather kiss you, my dear, than the tumbler,"—or "I'll wait for you, my love, if you'll marry me"; upon which, if the man is good-looking and the lady in good-humour, she smiles and bites her lips, and says, "Ah, men can talk fast enough": upon which the old stage-coachman, who is buckling something near her, before he sets off, says in a hoarse voice, "So can women too for that matter," and John Boots grins through his ragged red locks, and dotes on the repartee all the day after. Now grasshoppers "fry," as Dryden says. Now cattle stand in water, and ducks are envied. Now boots and shoes, and trees by the roadside, are thick with dust; and dogs, rolling in it, after issuing out of the water, into which they have been thrown to fetch sticks, come scattering horror among the legs of the spectators. Now a fellow who finds he has three miles further to go in a pair of tight shoes is in a pretty situation. Now rooms with the sun upon them become intolerable; and the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school. Now men with powdered heads (especially if thick)

envy those that are unpowdered, and stop to wipe them up hill, with countenances that seem to expostulate with destiny. Now boys assemble round the village pump with a ladle to it, and delight to make a forbidden splash and get wet through the shoes. Now also they make suckers of leather, and bathe all day long in rivers and ponds, and follow the fish into their cool corners, and say millions of "My eyes!" at "tittlebats." Now the bee, as he hums along, seems to be talking heavily of the heat. Now doors and brick walls are burning to the hand; and a walled lane, with dust and broken bottles in it, near a brick-field, is a thing not to be thought of. Now a green lane, on the contrary, thick-set with hedgerow elms, and having the noise of a brook "rumbling in pebble-stones," is one of the pleasantest things in the world. Now youths and damsels walk through hay-fields, by chance: and the latter say, "Ha' done then, William"; and the overseer in the next field calls out to "let thic thear hay thear bide"; and the girls persist, merely to plague "such a frumpish old fellow."

Now, in town, gossips talk more than ever to one another, in rooms, in doorways, and out of window, always beginning the conversation with saying that the heat is overpowering. Now blinds are let down, and doors thrown open, and flannel waistcoats left off, and cold meat preferred to hot, and wonder expressed why tea continues so refreshing, and people delight to sliver lettuces into bowls, and apprentices water doorways with tin-canisters that lay several atoms of dust. Now the water-cart, jumbling along the middle of the street, and jolting the showers out of its box of water, really does something. Now boys delight to have a water-pipe let out, and see it bubbling away in a tall and frothy volume. Now fruiterers' shops and dairies look pleasant, and ices are the only things to those who can get them. Now ladies loiter in baths; and people make presents of flowers; and wine is put into ice; and the after-dinner lounger recreates his head with applications of perfumed water out of long-necked bottles. Now the lounger, who cannot resist riding his new horse, feels his boots burn him. Now buck-skins are not the lawn of Cos. Now jockeys, walking in great-coats to lose flesh, curse inwardly. Now five fat people in a stage coach hate the sixth fat one who is coming in, and think he has no right to be so large. Now clerks in offices do nothing, but drink soda-water and spruce-beer and read the newspaper. Now the old clothes man drops his solitary cry more deeply into the areas on the hot and forsaken side of the street: and bakers look vicious; and cooks are aggravated; and the steam of a tavern kitchen catches hold of one like the breath of Tartarus. Now delicate skins are beset with gnats; and boys make their sleeping companion start up,

with playing a burning-glass on his hand; and blacksmiths are super-carbonated; and cobblers in their stalls almost feel a wish to be transplanted; and butter is too easy to spread; and the dragoons wonder whether the Romans liked their helmets; and old ladies, with their lappets unpinned, walk along in a state of dilapidation; and the servant-maids are afraid they look vulgarly hot; and the author, who has a plate of strawberries brought him, finds that he has come to the end of his writing.

We cannot conclude this article, however, without returning thanks, both on our own account and on that of our numerous predecessors who have left so large a debt of gratitude unpaid, to this very useful and ready monosyllable—"Now." We are sure that there is not a didactic poet, ancient or modern, who, if he possessed a decent share of candour, would not be happy to own his acknowledgments to that masterly conjunction, which possesses the very essence of wit, for it has the talent of bringing the most remote things together. And its generosity is in due proportion to its talent, for it always is most profuse of its aid where it is most wanted.

We must enjoy a pleasant passage with the reader on the subject of this "eternal Now" in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *The Woman Hater*.—Upon turning to it, we perceive that our illustrious particle does not make quite so great a figure as we imagined; but the whole passage is in so analagous a taste, and affords such an agreeable specimen of the wit and humour with which fine poets could rally the commonplaces of their art, that we cannot help proceeding with it. Lazarello, a foolish table-hunter, has requested an introduction to the Duke of Milan, who has had a fine lamprey presented him. Before the introduction takes place, he finds that the Duke has given the fish away; so that his wish to be known to him goes with it; and part of the drollery of the passage arises from his uneasiness at being detained by the consequences of his own request, and his fear lest he should be too late for the lamprey elsewhere.

COUNT (*aside to the Duke*). Let me entreat your Grace to stay a little,
To know a gentleman, to whom yourself
Is much beholding. He hath made the sport
For your whole court these eight years, on my knowledge.

DUKE. His name?

COUNT. Lazarello.

DUKE. I heard of him this morning:—which is he?

COUNT (*aside to Laz.*). Lazarello, pluck up thy spirits. Thy fortune is now raising. The Duke calls for thee, and thou shalt be acquainted with him.

LAZ. He's going away, and I must of necessity stay here upon business.

COUNT. 'Tis all one: thou shalt know him first.

LAZ. Stay a little. If he should offer to take me with him, and by that means I should lose that I seek for! But if he should, I will not go with him.

COUNT. Lazarello, the Duke stays. Wilt thou lose this opportunity?

LAZ. How must I speak to him?

COUNT. T'was well thought of. You must not talk to him as you do to an ordinary man, honest plain sense; but you must wind about him. For example, if he should ask you what o'clock it is, you must not say, "If it please your Grace, 'tis nine";—but thus: "Thrice three o'clock, so please my sovereign":—or thus:—

"Look how many Muses there doth dwell
Upon the sweet banks of the learned well,
And just so many strokes the clock hath struck";

and so forth. And you must now and then enter into a description.

LAZ. I hope I shall do it.

COUNT. Come.—May it please your Grace to take note of a gentleman, well seen, deeply read, and thoroughly grounded in the hidden knowledge of all sallets and pot-herbs whatsoever?

DUKE. I shall desire to know him more inwardly.

LAZ. I kiss the ox-hide of your Grace's foot.

COUNT (*aside to Laz.*). Very well.—Will your Grace question him a little?

DUKE. How old are you?

LAZ. Full eight and twenty several almanacs
Have been compiled, all for several years
Since first I drew this breath. Four prenticeships
Have I most truly served in this world:
And eight and twenty times hath Phœbus' car
Run out his yearly course, since——

DUKE. I understand you, sir.

LUCIO. How like an ignorant poet he talks!

DUKE. You are eight-and-twenty years old! What time of the day do you hold it to be?

LAZ. About the time that mortals whet their knives
On thresholds, on their shoe-soles, and on stairs.
Now bread is grating, and the testy cook
Hath much to do now: now the tables all—

DUKE. 'Tis almost dinner-time?

LAZ. Your Grace doth apprehend me very rightly.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO

London Magazine, November

"The impertinences of a Cockney Scribbler."—BLACKWOOD.

IN Mr. Lamb's "Works" published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school, such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning, while we were battening upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our *crug*—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of "extraordinary bread and butter," from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant (we had three banyan to four meat days in the week)—was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our *half-pickled* Sundays, or *quite fresh* boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with destestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth——our scanty mutton scrags on Fridays—and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion)—he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the

unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon as being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those *whole-day-leaves*, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes:—How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us, and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them!—How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards night-fall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless—shivering at cold windows of print shops, to extract a little amusement; haply, as a last resort, in the hopes of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our

individual faces should be as well-known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower—to whose levée, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission.

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or worse tyranny of the monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and *waked for the purpose*, in the coldest winter nights—and this not once, but night after night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the power to hinder.—The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow, and, under the cruelest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless summer nights, fevered with the season, and the day's sports.

There was one H——, who, I learned in after days, was seen expiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered—at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts,—some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting contributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the *ward*, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own counsel—but, foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables—waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L's admired Perry.

Under the same *facile* administration, can L. have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These things were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings "by Verrio and others," with which it is "hung round and adorned." But the sight of sleek well-fed blue-coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our mind with idle portraiture.

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to *gags*, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, *unsalted*, are detestable. A *gag-eater* in our time was equivalent to a *goule*, and held in equal detestation. —— suffered under the imputation:

. . . . 'Twas said
He ate strange flesh.

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments, you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his schoolfellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for the purpose, to enter a large worn-out building,

such as there exist specimens of in Chancery Lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism, with open door, and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter, before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of ——, an honest couple come to decay,—whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds!—The governors on this occasion, much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family of ——, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to ——, I believe, would not be lost upon his auditory.—I had left school then, but I well remember——. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself as he had done by the old folks.

I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the punishment for the first offence.—As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who *might not speak to him*:—or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude:—and here he was shut up by himself *of nights*, out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him

to.* This was the penalty for the second offence. Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree ?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn *auto da fé*, arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late " watchet-weeds " carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket, resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frighted features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this disguisement he was brought into the hall (*L.'s favourite state-room*), where awaited him the whole number of his schoolfellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more ; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last time ; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion ; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors ; two of whom, by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these *Ultima Supplicia ;* not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his *San Benito*, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him on the outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had plenty of exercise and recreation *after* school hours ; and, for myself, I must confess, that I was never happier than *in* them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room ; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the

* One or two instances of lunacy, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with.—This fancy of dungeons for children was a sprout of Howard's brain ; for which (saving the reverence due to Holy Paul) methinks I could willingly spit upon his statue.

Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master; but the Rev. Matthew Feilde presided over that portion of the apartment of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Feilde never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will—holding it "like a dancer." It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often staid away whole days from us; and when he came, it made no difference to us—he had his private room to retire to, the short time he staid, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to "insolent Greece or haughty Rome," that passed current among us—Peter Wilkins—the Adventures of the Hon. Captain Robert Boyle—the Fortunate Blue-coat Boy—and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic and scientific operations; making little sun-dials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses, called *cat-cradles:* or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game "French and English," and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Feilde belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the *gentleman*, the *scholar*, and the *Christian;* but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levée, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education; and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether

displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would some times, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with Sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys, "how neat and fresh the twigs looked." While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry.* His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Feilde comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a "playing holiday."

Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the *Ululantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a rabid pedant. His English style was crampt to barbarism. His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those periodical flights) were grating as scrannel pipes.†—He would laugh—ay, and heartily—but then it must be at Flaccus's quibble about *Rex*—— or at the *tristis severitas in vultu*, or *inspicere in patinas*, of Terence—thin jests, which at their first broaching could hardly have had *vis* enough to move a Roman muscle.—He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer.—J.B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a "Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?"—Nothing

* Cowley.

† In this and everything B. was the antipodes of his coadjutor. While the former was digging his brains for crude anthems, worth a pignut, F. would be recreating his gentlemanly fancy in the more flowery walks of the Muses. A little dramatic effusion of his, under the name of Vertumnus and Pomona, is not yet forgotten by the chroniclers of that sort of literature. It was accepted by Garrick, but the town did not give it their sanction.—B. used to say of it, in a way of half compliment, half-ironv. that it was *too classical for representation*.

was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the school-room, from his inner recess, or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out "'Od's my life, sirrah" (his favourite adjuration), "I have a great mind to whip you," then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context) drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil's Litany, with the expletory yell—"*and I* WILL *too*"—In his gentler moods, when the *rabidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time; a paragraph and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand—when droll squinting W——, having been caught putting the inside of the master's desk to a use for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great simplicity averred, that *he did not know that the thing had been forewarned*. This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the *oral* or *declaratory*, struck so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted) that remission was unavoidable.

L. has given credit to B.'s great merits as an instructor. Coleridge, in his Literary Life, has pronounced a more intelligible and ample encomium on them. The author of the *Country Spectator* doubts not to compare him with the ablest teachers of antiquity. Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C.—when he heard that his old master was on his death-bed: "Poor J.B.!—may all his faults be forgiven; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no *bottoms* to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

Under him were many good and sound scholars bred.—First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens, kindest of boys and men, since Co-grammar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr. T——e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the anti-socialities of their predecessors!—You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder, which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm-in-arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toil-some duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it convenient to retire, the other was not long in discovering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant,

as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the *Cicero De Amicitiâ*, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate!—Co-Grecian with S. was Th——, who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th—— was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks.—Thomas Fanshaw Middleton followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic; and is author (besides the *Country Spectator*) of a Treatise on the Greek Article, against Sharpe.—M. is said to bear his mitre high in India, where the *regni novitas* (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions, and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at School, though firm, were mild and unassuming.—Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the Aboriginal Britons, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems; a pale, studious Grecian.—Then followed poor S——, ill-fated M——! of these the Muse is silent.

> Finding some of Edward's race
> Unhappy, pass their annals by.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring 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 intranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), 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 re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*—Many were the "wit-combats" (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller), between him and C. V. Le G——, "which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war; Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all times, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile, and still more cordial laugh, with which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognition of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material,

and, peradventure practical one, of thine own. Extinct are those smiles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the *Nireus formosus* of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "*bl*——," for a gentler greeting—"*bless thy handsome face!*"

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia—the junior Le G—— and F——; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense of neglect—ill capable of enduring the slights poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning—exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca:—Le G——, sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured; F——, dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted, with something of the old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr——, the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T——, mildest of Missionaries—and both my good friends still—close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.

HUNT, 1820

ODE TO THE GOLDEN AGE

SUNG BY A CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS IN TASSO'S AMYNTAS

It is to be borne in mind, that the opinions expressed in this famous ode of Tasso's, are only so expressed on the supposition of their compatibility with a state of innocence.

O LOVELY age of gold!
Not that the rivers roll'd
With milk, or that the woods wept honey-dew;
Not that the ready ground
Produc'd without a wound,
Or the mild serpent had no tooth that slew;
Not that a cloudless blue
For ever was in sight,
Or that the heaven which burns,
And now is cold by turns,
Look'd out in glad and everlasting light;
No, nor that even the insolent ships from far
Brought war to no new lands, nor riches worse than war.

But solely that that vain
And breath-invented pain,
That idol of mistake, that worshipped cheat,
That Honour,—since so call'd
By vulgar minds appall'd,
Play'd not the tyrant with our nature yet.
It had not come to fret
The sweet and happy fold
Of gentle human-kind;
Nor did its hard law bind
Souls nurs'd in freedom; but that law of gold,
That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted,
Which Nature's own hand wrote—What pleases, is permitted

Then among streams and flowers,
The little winged Powers
Went singing carols without torch or bow;
The nymphs and shepherds sat
Mingling with innocent chat
Sports and low whispers; and with whispers low,
Kisses that would not go.
The maid, her childhood o'er,
Kept not her bloom uneyed,
Which now a veil must hide,
Nor the crisp apples which her bosom bore;
And oftentimes, in river or in lake,
The lover and his love their merry bath would take.

'Twas thou, thou, Honour, first
That didst deny our thirst
Its drink, and on the fount thy covering set;
Thou bad'st kind eyes withdraw
Into constrainéd awe,
And keep the secret for their tears to wet;
Thou gathered'st in a net
The tresses from the air,
And mad'st the sports and plays
Turn all to sudden ways,
And putt'st on speech a rein, in steps a care.
Thy work it is,—thou shade that wilt not move,
That what was once the gift, is now the theft of Love.

Our sorrows and our pains,
These are thy nobler gains.
But oh, thou Love's and Nature's masterer,
Thou conqueror of the crown'd,
What dost thou on this ground,

Too small a circle for thy mighty sphere ?
Go, and make slumber dear
To the renown'd and high ;
We here, a lowly race,
Can live without thy grace,
After the use of mild antiquity.
Go, let us love ; since years
No truce allow, and life soon disappears ;
Go, let us love ; the daylight dies, is born :
But unto us the light
Dies once for all, and sleep brings on eternal night.

LAMB, 1820

EPITAPH ON A DOG

From the Latin of Vincent Bourne, a Master in Westminster School, who published his Latin Verse in 1721.—*Indicator*, May 3rd, 1820.

POOR Irus' faithful wolf-dog here I lie,
That wont to tend my old blind master's steps,
His guide and guard ; nor, while my service lasted,
Had he occasion for that staff, with which
He now goes picking out his path in fear
Over the highways and crossings, but would plant,
Safe in the conduct of my friendly string,
A firm foot forward still, till he had reach'd
His poor seat on some stone, nigh where the tide
Of passers-by in thickest confluence flow'd :
To whom with loud and passionate laments
From morn to eve his dark estate he wail'd.
Nor wail'd to all in vain : some here and there,
The well-disposed and good, their pennies gave.
I meantime at his feet obsequious slept ;
Not all-asleep in sleep, but heart and ear
Prick'd up at his least motion, to receive
At his kind hand my customary crumbs,
And common portion in his feast of scraps ;
Or when night warn'd us homeward, tired and spent
With our long day and tedious beggary.
These were my manners, this my way of life,
Till age and slow disease me overtook,
And sever'd from my sightless master's side.
But lest the grace of so good deeds should die,

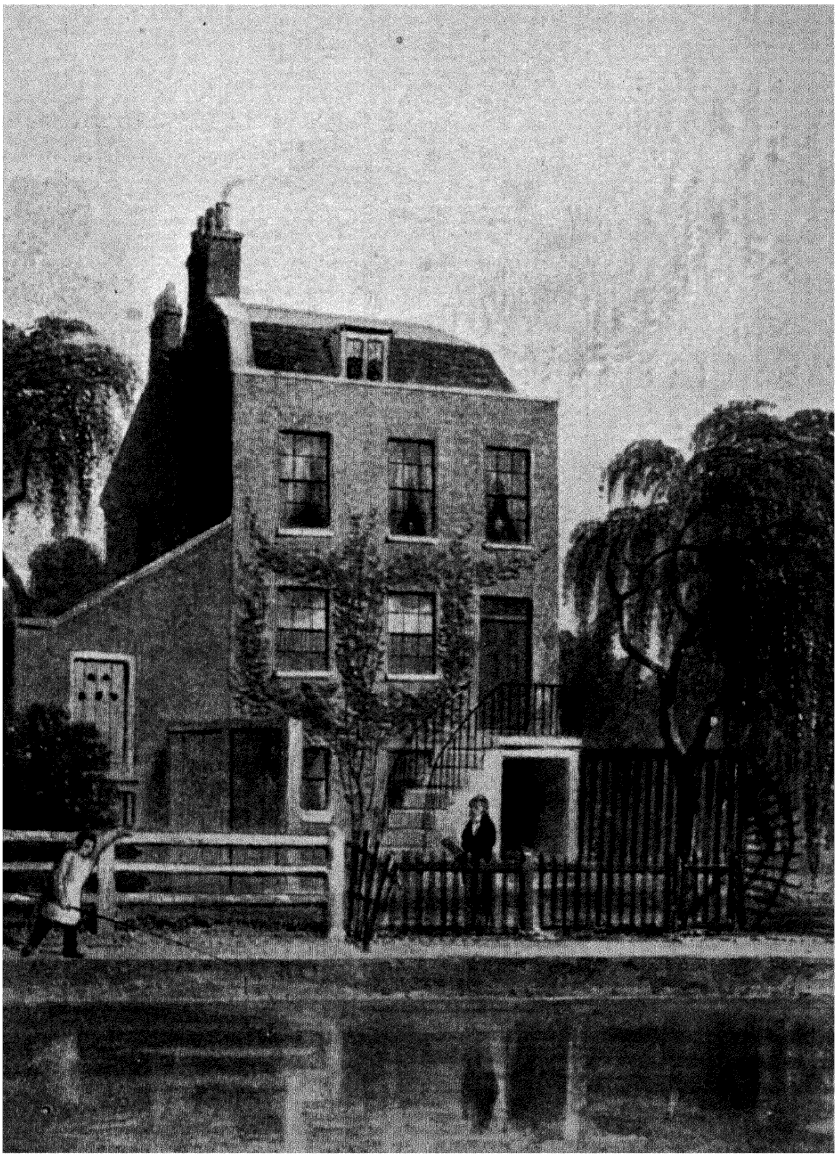
Through tract of years in mute oblivion lost,
This slender tomb of turf hath Irus rear'd,
Cheap monument of no ungrudging hand,
And with short verse inscribed it, to attest,
In long and lasting union to attest,
The virtues of the Beggar and his Dog.

LAMB, 1821 ("Lamb's Golden Year")

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

July: *London Magazine*

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as "with a difference." We are generally in harmony, with occassional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale of adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship, please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite



COLEBROOK COTTAGE. LAMB'S HOUSE AT ISLINGTON.

of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers —leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition or steadiness of conviction I set out with, I am sure always, in the long-run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it, but I can answer for it that it makes (if the worst comes to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress she is the truest comforter; but in the teasing accidents and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End, or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the country, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and, for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End—kindred or strange folk—we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from St. Albans, we arrived at the spot of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farm-house, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollections, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that* which I had conjured up so many times instead of it!

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the "heart of June," and I could say with the poet,

> But thou, that didst appear so fair
> To fond imagination,
> Dost rival in the light of day
> Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections—and she traversed every outpost of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house

had stood (house and birds were alike flown)—with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all—more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred and of cousinship was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us.—I had almost forgotten him—but B.F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing.—With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also—how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own—and to the astoundment of B.F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there,—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a

friendly warmth,—when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge—as I have been her care in foolish manhood since—in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

LAMB, 1821

MY FIRST PLAY

December: *London Magazine*

AT the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seemed to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the corner of Featherstone-Buildings, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretentions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to and visited by Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge. From either of these connections it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order from the then Drury Lane theatre at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versâ*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicised, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignifiacnt to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and, moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my alotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again!—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, "Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play;"—chase *pro* chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—

yet to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy!—The orchestra lights at length rose, those "fair Auroras!" Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old, and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia.—It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Georgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams.—Harlequin's invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend bedlams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the Lady of the Manor, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomine, called Lun's Ghost—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud—the father of a line of Harlequins—transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patchwork, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the Way of the World. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge; for I remember the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story.—The clownery and pantaloonery of these pantomines have clean passed out of my head. I believe I no more laughed at them, than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape, and grin, in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781-2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all play-going was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theatre. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At the first period I knew nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

Was nourished, I could not tell how—

I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone!—The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, to present a "royal ghost,"—but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow-men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell—which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelvemonths—had wrought in me.—Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in Isabella. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theatre became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

LAMB, 1822

DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERIE

January; *London Magazine*

"Probably the most perfect of all the essays in both subject and form."

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the

other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"

how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great silky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up with their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me

upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain ;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed ; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death ; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me ; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb.—Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n ; and as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was ; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech ; " We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing ; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethé millions of ages before we have existence, and a name "—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

TO MR. COLERIDGE

Containing the germ of the *Dissertation*.

"DEAR C.,—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well—they are interesting creatures at a certain age—what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no cursed complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part O.... could play in the business. I never knew him to give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, wigeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars or brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child—my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, —but thereabouts; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and and in the coxcombry of taught-charity, I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me; the sum it was to her; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake; the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been

masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

"But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

"Yours (short of pig) to command in everything.

"C.L."

LAMB, 1822

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

September: *London Magazine*

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally, the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which, kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which it had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A

premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted —*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord!" with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a

little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision, and when the court was dismissed went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed that, if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbledehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble—the mild forerunner or *præludium of* a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make one ambrosian result or common substance.

Behold him while he is "doing"—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars.—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

> Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care—

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coalheaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach

of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton-chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all round. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friends' pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of the day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as

one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but, before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present!—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

YOUTH AND AGE

"Composed with a perfect sweetness and sadness."

VERSE, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!

When I was young?—Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly *then* it flashed along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—

It cannot be that Thou art gone:
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To *make believe*, that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL IN 1902. GRECIANS' CLOISTER AND CHRIST CHURCH.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismist;
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

COLERIDGE, 1825

WORK WITHOUT HOPE

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks 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 lips unbrightened, 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.

COLERIDGE, 1825

MYSTICISM

From *Aids to Reflection.*

Antinōus.——"What do you call Mysticism? And do you use the word in a good or bad sense?"

Nōus.—"In the latter only; as far, at least, as we are now concerned with it. When a man refers to *inward feelings* and *experiences*, of which mankind at large are not conscious, as evidences of the truth of any opinion—such a man I call a Mystic: and the grounding of any theory or belief on accidents and

anomalies of individual sensations or fancies, and the use of peculiar terms invented, or perverted from their ordinary significations, for the purpose of expressing these *idiosyncrasies* and pretended facts of interior consciousness, I name Mysticism. Where the error consists simply in the Mystic's attaching to these anomalies of his individual temperament the character of *reality*, and in receiving them as permanent truths, having a subsistence in the Divine Mind, though revealed to himself alone; but entertains this persuasion without demanding or expecting the same faith in his neighbours—I should regard it as a species of enthusiasm, always indeed to be deprecated, but yet capable of co-existing with many excellent qualities both of head and heart. But when the Mystic by ambition or still meaner passions, or (as sometimes is the case) by an uneasy and self-doubting state of mind which seeks confirmation in outward sympathy, is led to impose his faith, as a duty, on mankind generally: and when with such views he asserts that the same experiences would be vouchsafed, the same truths revealed, to *every man* but for his secret wickedness and unholy will—such a Mystic is a Fanatic, and in certain states of the public mind a dangerous member of society. And most so in those ages and countries in which Fanatics of elder standing are allowed to persecute the fresh competitor. For under these predicaments, Mysticism, though originating in the singularities of an individual nature, and therefore essentially anomalous, is nevertheless highly *contagious*. It is apt to collect a swarm and cluster *circum fana*, around the new *fane*: and therefore merits the name of Fanaticism, or as the Germans say, *Schwärmerey*, that is, *swarm-making*."

We will return to the harmless species—the enthusiastic Mystics;—a species that may again be subdivided into two ranks. And it will not be other than germane to the subject, if I endeavour to describe them in a sort of allegory, or parable. Let us imagine a poor pilgrim benighted in a wilderness or desert, and pursuing his way in the starless dark with a lantern in his hand. Chance or his happy genius leads him to an Oasis or natural Garden, such as in the creations of my youthful fancy I supposed Enos* the Child

* Will the reader forgive me if I attempt at once to illustrate and relieve the subject by annexing the first stanza of the poem composed in the same year in which I wrote the Ancient Mariner and the first book of Christabel?

" Encinctur'd with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely boy was plucking fruits
In a moonlight wilderness.
The moon was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,

of Cain to have found. And here, hungry and thirsty, the way-wearied man rests at a fountain; and the taper of his lantern throws its light on an overshadowing tree, a boss of snow-white blossoms, through which the green and growing fruits peeped, and the ripe golden fruitage glowed. Deep, vivid, and faithful are the impressions, which the lovely Imagery comprised within the scanty circle of light makes and leaves on his memory! But scarcely has he eaten of the fruits and drunk of the fountain, ere scared by the roar and howl from the desert he hurries forward: and as he passes with hasty steps through grove and glade, shadows and imperfect beholdings and vivid fragments of things distinctly seen blend with the past and present shapings of his brain. Fancy modifies sight. His dreams transfer their forms to real objects; and these lend a substance and an *outness* to his dreams. Apparitions greet him; and when at a distance from this enchanted land, and on a different track, the dawn of day discloses to him a caravan, a troop of his fellow-men, his memory which is itself half fancy, is interpolated afresh by every attempt to recall, connect, and *piece out* his recollections. His narration is received as a madman's tale. He shrinks from the rude laugh and contemptuous sneer, and retires into himself. Yet the craving for sympathy, strong in proportion to the intensity of his convictions, impels him to unbosom himself to abstract auditors; and the poor Quietest becomes a Penman, and, all too poorly stocked for the winter's trade, he borrows his phrases and figures from the only writings to which he has had access, the sacred books of his religion. And thus I shadow out the enthusiast Mystic of the first sort; at the head of which stands the illuminated Teutonic theosopher and shoemaker, honest Jacob Behmen, born near Gorlitz, in Upper Lusatia, in the 17th of our Elizabeth's reign, who died in the 22nd of her successor's.

Te delineate a Mystic of the second and higher order, we need only endow our pilgrim with equal gifts of nature, but these developed and displayed by all the aids and arts of education and favourable fortune. *He* is on his way to the Mecca of his ancestral and national faith, with a well-guarded and numerous procession of merchants and fellow-pilgrims, on the established

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Hanging in the shadowy air
Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more belov'd than day.
But who that beauteous boy beguil'd,
That beauteous boy to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild—
Has he no friend, no loving mother near?"

Wanderings of Cain.

track. At the close of day the caravan has halted: the full moon rises on the desert: and he strays forth alone, out of sight but to no unsafe distance; and chance leads *him* too, to the same oasis or Islet of Verdure on the Sea of Sand. He wanders at leisure in its maze of beauty and sweetness, and thrids his ways through the odorous and flowering thickets into open spots of greenery, and discovers statues and memorial characters, grottos, and refreshing caves. But the moonshine, the imaginative poesy of nature, spreads its soft shadowy charm over all, conceals distances, and magnifies heights, and modifies relations: and fills up vacuities with its own whiteness, counterfeiting substance; and where the dense shadows lie, makes solidity imitate hollowness; and gives to all objects a tender visionary hue and softening. Interpret the moonlight and the shadows as the peculiar genius and sensibility of the individual's own spirit: and here you have the other sort: a Mystic, an Enthusiast of a nobler breed—a Fenelon. But the residentiary, or the frequent visitor of the favoured spot, who has scanned its beauties by steady day-light, and mastered its true proportions and lineaments, he will discover that both pilgrims have indeed been there. *He* will know, that the delightful dream, which the latter tells, is a dream of truth; and that even in the bewildered tale of the former there is truth mingled with the dream.

COLERIDGE, 1825

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO "AIDS TO REFLECTION"

AN Author has these points to settle: to what sort his work belongs, for what description of readers it is intended, and the specific end, or object which it is to answer. There is indeed a preliminary question respecting the end which the writer himself has in view, whether the number of purchasers, or the benefit of the readers. But this may be safely passed by; since where the book itself or the known principles of the writer do not supersede the question, there will seldom be sufficient strength of character for good or for evil, to afford much chance of its being either distinctly put or fairly answered.

I shall proceed therefore to state as briefly as possible the intentions of the present volume in reference to the three first-mentioned points, viz. *What?* For *Whom?* and *For* what?

I. WHAT? The answer is contained in the title-page. It belongs to the class of *didactic* works. Consequently, those who neither wish instruction for themselves, nor assistance in instructing others, have no interest in its contents. *Sis sus, sis Divus, sum caltha, et non tibi spiro.*

II. FOR WHOM? *Generally*, for as many in all classes as wish for aid in disciplining their minds to habits of reflection—for all who, desirous of building up a manly character in the light of distinct consciousness, are content to study the principles of moral architecture on the several grounds of prudence, morality, and religion. And lastly, for all who feel an interest in the Position I have undertaken to defend—this, namely, that the CHRISTIAN FAITH (*in which I include every article of belief and doctrine professed by the first Reformers in common*)* IS THE PERFECTION OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE,—an interest sufficiently strong to insure a patient attention to the arguments brought in its support.

But if I am to mention any particular class or description of readers, that were prominent in my thought during the composition of the volume, my reply must be; that it was *especially* designed for the studious Young at the close of their education or on their first entrance into the duties of manhood and the rights of self-government. And of these, again, in thought and wish, I destined the work (the latter and larger portion, at least) yet more particularly to Students intended for the Ministry; *first*, as in duty bound, to the members of our two Universities; *secondly* (but only in respect of this mental precedency *second*), to all alike of whatever name, who have dedicated their future lives to the cultivation of their races, as Pastors, Preachers, Missionaries, or Instructors of Youth.

III. FOR WHAT? The worth of an author is estimated by the ends, the attainment of which he proposed to himself by the particular work; while the value of the work depends on its fitness, as the Means. The objects of the present volume are the following, arranged in the order of their comparative importance.

1. To direct the reader's attention to the value of the Science of Words, their use and abuse and the incalculable advantages attached to the habit of using them appropriately, and with a distinct knowledge of their primary, derivative, and metaphorical senses. And in furtherance of this Object I have neglected no occasion of enforcing the maxim, that to expose a sophism and to detect the equivocal or double meaning of a word is, in the great majority of cases, one and the same thing.

* This parenthesis was in editions one to three, but was dropped out of the fourth.

Horne Tooke entitled his celebrated work, Ἔπεα πτερόεντα Winged Words: or Language, not only the *Vehicle* of Though but the *Wheels*. With my convictions and views, for ἔπεα should substitute λόγοι, that is, Words *select* and *determinate* and for πτερόεντα ζῶοντες, that is, *living* Words. The *Wheel* of the Intellect I admit them to be; but such as Ezekiel beheld in *the visions of God* as he sate among the captives by the river o Chebar. *Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, the wheels went, and thither was their Spirit to go: for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels also.*

2. To establish the *distinct* characters of Prudence, Morality and Religion: and to impress the conviction, that though the second requires the first, and the third contains and supposes both the former; yet still the Moral Goodness is other and more than Prudence, or the Principle of Expediency and Religion more and higher than Morality. For this distinction the better schools even of Pagan Philosophy contended.

3. To substantiate and set forth at large the momentous distinction between Reason and Understanding. Whatever is achievable by the Understanding for the purposes of worldly interest, private or public, has in the present age been pursued with an activity and a success beyond all former experience, and to an extent which equally demands my admiration and excites my wonder. But, likewise it is, and long has been, my conviction that in no age since the first dawning of Science and Philosophy in this island have the truths, interests, and studies that especially belong to the Reason, contemplative or practical, sunk into such utter neglect, not to say contempt, as during the last century. It is therefore one main object of this volume to establish the position, that whoever transfers to the Understanding the primacy due to the Reason, loses the one and spoils the other.

4. To exhibit a full and consistent Scheme of the Christian Dispensation, and more largely of all the *peculiar* doctrines of the Christain Faith; and to answer all the objections to the same which do not originate in a corrupt Will rather than an erring Judgment; and to do this in a manner intelligible for all who possessing the ordinary advantages of education, do in good earnest desire to form their religious creed in the light of their own convictions, and to have a reason for the faith which they profess. There are indeed Mysteries, in evidence of which no reasons can be brought. But it has been my endeavour to show, that the true solution of this problem is that these Mysteries *are* Reason, Reason in its highest form of Self-affirmation.

Such are the special Objects of these " Aids to Reflection." Concerning the general character of the work, let me be permitted to add the few following sentences. St. Augustine, in one of his sermons, discoursing on a high point of theology, tells his auditors—*Sic accipite, ut mereamini intelligere. Fides enim debet præcedere intellectum, ut si intellectus fidei præmium.* Now without a certain portion of gratuitious and (as it were) *experimentative* faith in the writer, a reader will scarcely give that degree of continued attention, without which no *didactic* work worth reading can be read to any wise or profitable purpose. In *this* sense, therefore, and to *this* extent, *every* author, who is competent to the office he has undertaken, may without arrogance repeat St. Augustine's words in his own right, and advance a similar claim on similar grounds. But I venture no further than to imitate the sentiment at a humble distance, by avowing my belief that he who seeks *instruction* in the following pages, will not fail to find *entertainment* likewise; but that whoever seeks entertainment only will find neither.

READER!—You have been bred in a land abounding with men, able in arts, learning, and knowledges manifold, this man in one, this in another, few in many, none in all. But there is one art, of which every man should be master, the art of REFLECTION. If you are not a *thinking* man, to what purpose are you a *man* at all? In like manner, there is one knowledge, which it is every man's interest and duty to acquire, namely, SELF-KNOWLEDGE: or to what end was man alone, of all animals, endued by the Creator with the faculty of *self-consciousness?* Truly, said the Pagan moralist, *e cælo descendit,* Γνῶθι σεαυτόν.

But you are likewise born in a CHRISTIAN land: and Revelation has provided for you new subjects for reflection, and new treasures of knowledge, never to be unlocked by him who remains self-ignorant. Self-knowledge is the key to this casket; and by reflection alone can it be obtained. Reflect on your own thoughts, actions, circumstances, and—which will be of especial aid to you, in forming a *habit* of reflection,—accustom yourself to reflect on the words you use, hear, or read, their birth, derivation and history. For if words are not THINGS, they are LIVING POWERS, by which the things of most importance to mankind are actuated, combined, and humanised. Finally, by reflection you may draw from the fleeting facts of your worldly trade, art, or profession, a science permanent as your immortal soul; and make even these subsidiary and preparative to the reception of spiritual truth, " doing as the dyers do, who having first dipt their silks in colours of less value, then give them the last tincture of crimson in grain."

To WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

"I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer for £10,000 a year." To MISS HUTCHINSON.

Colebrook Cottage, April 6, 1825.

DEAR WORDSWORTH—I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety; £441, *i.e.* £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, etc.

I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.* to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys; their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery, after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep as sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned twenty miles; to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play-days; mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent!

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant

parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorbed all interest; in fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Indeed this last winter I was jaded out—winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob—and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me.

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's "Missionary Orations" to S. T. C. Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet among his own people, "That is a reason for doing it," was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the "Church," which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter!

C. LAMB.

LAMB, 1825

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

May: *London Magazine.*

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. VIRGIL.

A Clerk I was in London gay.—O'KEEFE.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release

or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my

captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner—the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life—when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between

surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned—overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty year's confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have all his time to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forgo their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If time were troublesome I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

> ————that's born, and has his years come to him,
> In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only Time, which a man can properly call his own—that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may

be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death :—

> ————'Twas but just now he went away;
> I have not since had time to shed a tear;
> And yet the distance does the same appear
> As if he had been a thousand years from me.
> Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since ; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk ; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——l take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all ? or was I a coward simply ? Well, it is too late to repent ; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly ! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly ! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services !—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants ; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of the sun's light ; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern

fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural for me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at 11 o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an

invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is a Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer ******, clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera-*Opus operatum est.* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

LAMB, 1831

ANGEL HELP

THIS rare tablet doth include
Poverty with Sanctitude.
Past midnight this poor maid hath spun,
And yet the work is not half done,
Which must supply from earnings scant
A feeble bed-rid parent's want.
Her sleep-charged eyes exemption ask,
And Holy hands take up the task;
Unseen the rock and spindle ply,
And do her earthly drudgery.
Sleep, saintly poor one! sleep, sleep on;
And, waking, find thy labours done.
Perchance she knows it by her dreams;
Her eye hath caught the golden gleams,
Angelic presence testifying,
That round her everywhere are flying;

Ostents from which she may presume,
That much of heaven is in the room.
Skirting her own bright hair they run,
And to the sunny add more sun:
Now on that aged face they fix,
Streaming from the Crucifix;
The flesh-clogg'd spirit disabusing,
Death-disarming sleeps infusing,
Prelibations, foretastes high,
And equal thoughts to live or die.
Gardener bright from Eden's bower,
Tend with care that lily flower;
To its leaves and root infuse
Heaven's sunshine, Heaven's dews.
'Tis a type, and 'tis a pledge,
Of a crowning privilege,
Careful as that lily flower,
This Maid must keep her precious dower:
Live a sainted Maid, or die
Martyr to virginity.

LAMB, 1832

To MR. COLERIDGE

"Coleridge, now in declining health, seems to have feared, from a long intermission of Lamb's visits to Highgate, that there was some estrangement between them, and to have written to Lamb under that fear. The following note shows how much he was mistaken."—TALFOURD.

April 14th, 1832.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,—Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you. But I have been wofully neglectful of you, so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence; and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gilmans when I come.

Yours, *semper idem*, C.L.

If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and maybe a wrong prophet of your bodings!—here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer showers.

My direction is simply, Enfield.

EUTHANASIA

July 10th.

I AM dying, but without expectation of a speedy release. Is it not strange that very recently by-gone images, and scenes of early life, have stolen into my mind, like breezes blown from the spice-islands of Youth and Hope—those two realities of this phantom world! I do not add Love,—for what is Love but Youth and Hope embracing, and so seen as *one?* I say *realities;* for reality is a thing of degrees, from the Iliad to a dream; καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστι. Yet, in a strict sense, reality is not predicable at all of aught below Heaven. "Es enim *in cælis,* Pater noster, qui tu vere *es!*" Hooker wished to live to finish his Ecclesiastical Polity;—so I own I wish life and strength had been spared to me to complete my Philosophy. For, as God hears me, the originating, continuing, and sustaining wish and design in my heart was to exalt the glory of His name; and, which is the same thing in other words, to promote the improvement of mankind. But *visum aliter Deo,* and His will be done.

LAMB, 1834

LAMB'S LAST LETTER

To MRS. DYER

Dec. 22nd, 1834.

DEAR MRS. DYER,—I am very uneasy about a *Book* which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went out to fetch from Miss Buffam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called Phillip's Theatrum Poetarum; but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world. Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church-Street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

[Lamb died five days later.]

COLERIDGE

Imagination and Fancy.

COLERIDGE lived in the most extraordinary and agitated period of modern history; and to a certain extent he was so mixed up with its controversies, that he was at one time taken for nothing but an apostate republican, and at another for a dreaming theosophist. The truth is, that both his politics and theosophy were at the mercy of a discursive genius, intellectually bold but educationally timid, which, anxious, or rather willing, to bring conviction and speculation together, mooting all points as it went, and throwing the subtlest glancing lights on many, ended in satisfying nobody, and concluding nothing. Charles Lamb said of him, that he had "the art of making the unintelligible appear intelligible." He was the finest dreamer, the most eloquent talker, and the most original thinker of his day; but for want of complexional energy, did nothing with all the vast *prose* part of his mind but help the Germans to give a subtler tone to criticism, and sow a few valuable seeds of thought in minds worthy to receive them. Nine-tenths of his theology would apply equally well to their own creeds in the mouths of a Brahmin or a Mussulman.

His poetry is another matter. It is so beautiful, and was so quietly content with its beauty, making no call on the critics, and receiving hardly any notice, that people are but now beginning to awake to a full sense of its merits. Of pure poetry, strictly so called, that is to say, consisting of nothing but its essential self, without conventional and perishing helps, he was the greatest master of his time. If you could see it in a phial, like a distillation of roses (taking it, I mean, at its best), it would be found without a speck. The poet is happy with so good a gift, and the reader is "happy in his happiness." Yet so little, sometimes, are a man's contemporaries and personal acquaintances able or disposed to estimate him properly, that while Coleridge, unlike Shakespeare, lavished praises on his poetic friends, he had all the merit of the generosity to himself; and even Hazlitt, owing perhaps to causes of political alienation, could see nothing to admire in the exquisite poem of *Christabel*, but the description of the quarrel between the friends! After speaking, too, of the *Ancient Mariner* as the only one of his poems that he could point out to any one as giving an adequate idea of his great natural powers, he adds, "It is High German, however, and in it he seems to conceive of poetry but as a drunken dream, reckless, careless, and heedless of past, present, and to come." This is said of a poem, with which fault has been found for the exceeding conscientiousness of its moral. O ye critics, the best of ye, what havoc does



THE COLERIDGE MEMORIAL.

LAMB COLERIDGE MIDDLETON

personal difference play with your judgments! It was not Mr. Hazlitt's only or most unwarrantable censure; or one which friendship found hardest to forgive. But peace, and honour too, be with his memory! If he was a splenetic and sometimes jealous man, he was a disinterested politician and an admirable critic; and lucky were those whose natures gave them the right and the power to pardon him.

Coleridge, though a born poet, was in his style and general musical feeling the disciple partly of Spenser, and partly of the fine old English ballad-writers in the collection of Bishop Percy. But if he could not improve on them in some things, how he did in others, especially in the art of being thoroughly musical! Of all our writers of the briefer narrative poetry, Coleridge is the finest since Chaucer; and assuredly he is the sweetest of all our poets. Waller's music is but a court-flourish in comparison; and though Beaumont and Fletcher, Collins, Gray, Keats, Shelley, and others, have several as sweet passages, and Spenser is in a certain sense musical throughout, yet no man has written whole poems, of equal length, so perfect in the sentiment of music, so varied with it, and yet leaving on the ear so unbroken and single an effect.

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.

That is but one note of music ever sweet, yet never cloying.

HUNT, 1850

WORDSWORTH

Autobiography.

MR. WORDSWORTH, whom Mr. Hazlitt designated as one that would have had the wide circle of his humanities made still wider, and a good deal more pleasant, by dividing a little more of his time between his lakes in Westmoreland and the hotels of the metropolis, had a dignified manner, with a deep and roughish but not unpleasing voice, and an exalted mode of speaking. He had a habit of keeping his left hand in the bosom of his waistcoat; and in this attitude, except when he turned round to take one of the subjects of his criticism from the shelves (for his contemporaries were there also), he sat dealing forth his eloquent but hardly catholic judgments. In his "father's house" there were not "many mansions." He was as sceptical on the merits of all kinds of poetry but one, as Richardson was on those of the novels of Fielding.

Under the study in which my visitor and I were sitting was an archway, leading to a nursery-ground; a cart happened to go through it while I was inquiring whether he would take any refreshment; and he uttered, in so lofty a voice, the words, "Anything which is *going forward*," that I felt inclined to ask him whether he would take a piece of the cart. Lamb would certainly have done it. But this was a levity which would neither have been so proper on my part, after so short an acquaintance, nor very intelligible, perhaps, in any sense of the word, to the serious poet. There are good-humoured warrants for smiling, which lie deeper even than Mr. Wordsworth's thoughts for tears.

I did not see this distinguished person again till thirty years afterwards; when, I should venture to say, his manner was greatly superior to what it was in the former instance; indeed, quite natural and noble, with a cheerful air of animal as well as spiritual confidence; a gallant bearing, curiously reminding me of the Duke of Wellington, as I saw him walking some eighteen years ago by a lady's side, with no unbecoming oblivion of his time of life. I observed, also, that the poet no longer committed himself in scornful criticisms, or, indeed, in any criticisms whatever, at least as far as I knew. He had found out that he could, at least, afford to be silent. Indeed, he spoke very little of anything. The conversation turned upon Milton, and I fancied I had opened a subject that would have "brought him out," by remarking, that the most diabolical thing in all *Paradise Lost* was a feeling attributed to the angels. "Aye!" said Mr. Wordsworth, and inquired what it was. I said it was the passage in which the angels, when they observed Satan journeying through the empyrean, let down a set of steps out of heaven, on purpose to add to his misery—to his despair of ever being able to re-ascend them; they being angels in a state of bliss, and he a fallen spirit doomed to eternal punishment. The passage is as follows:—

> Each stair was meant mysteriously, nor stood
> There always, but, drawn up, to heaven sometimes
> Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd
> Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
> Who after came from earth sailing arriv'd
> Wafted by angels, or flew o'er the lake
> Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
> The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
> The fiend by easy ascent, *or aggravate*
> *His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss.*

Mr. Wordsworth pondered, and said nothing. I thought to myself, what pity for the poor devil would not good Uncle Toby have expressed! Into what indignation would not Burns have exploded! What knowledge of themselves would not have been

forced upon those same coxcombical and malignant angels by Fielding or Shakespeare!

Walter Scott said that the eyes of Burns were the finest he ever saw. I cannot say the same of Mr. Wordsworth's; that is, not in the sense of the beautiful, or even of the profound. But certainly I never beheld eyes that looked so inspired or supernatural. They were like fires half-burning, half smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixture of regard, and seated at the further end of two caverns. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes. The finest eyes, in every sense of the word, which I have ever seen in a man's head (and I have seen many fine ones) are those of Thomas Carlyle.

HUNT, 1850

CARLYLE

Autobiography.

HERE, I became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle, one of the kindest and best, as well as most eloquent of men; though in his zeal for what is best he sometimes thinks it incumbent on him to take not the kindest tone, and in his eloquent demands of some hearty uncompromising creed on our parts, he does not quite set the example of telling us the amount of his own. Mr. Carlyle sees that there is a good deal of rough work in the operations of Nature: he seems to think himself bound to consider a good deal of it devilish, after the old Covenanter fashion, in order that he may find something angelical in giving it the proper quantity of vituperation and blows; and he calls upon us to prove our energies and our benevolence by acting the part of the wind rather than the sun, of warring rather than peace-making, of frightening and forcing rather than conciliating and persuading. Others regard this view of the one thing needful, however strikingly set forth, as an old and obsolete story, fit only to be finally done with, and not worth the repetition of the old series of reactions, even for the sake of those analogies with the physical economy of the world, which, in the impulse which Nature herself gives us towards progression, we are not bound to suppose everlastingly applicable to its moral and spiritual development. If mankind are destined never to arrive at years of discretion, the admonition is equally well-founded and unnecessary; for the old strifes will be continued at all events, the admonition (at best) being a part of them. And even then, I should say that the world is still a fine, rich, strenuous, beautiful, and desirable thing, always excepting the poverty that starves, and one or two other evils which on no

account must we consent to suppose irremediable. But if the case be otherwise, if the hopes which Nature herself has put into our hearts be something better than incitements to hopeless action, merely for the action's sake, and this beautiful planet be destined to work itself into such a condition as we feel to be the only fit condition for that beauty, then, I say, with every possible respect for my admirable friend, who can never speak but he is worth hearing, that the tale which he condescends to tell is no better than our old nursery figment of the *Black Man and the Coal-hole*, and that the growing desire of mankind for the cessation of bitterness, and for the prevalence of the sweets of gentleness and persuasion, is an evidence that the time has arrived for dropping the thorns and husks of the old sourness and austerity, and showing ourselves worthy of " the goods the gods provide us."

Mr. Carlyle's antipathy to " shams " is highly estimable and salutary. I wish Heaven may prosper his denouncements of them, wherever they exist. But the danger of the habit of denouncing—of looking at things from the antipathetic instead of the sympathetic side—is, that a man gets such a love for the pleasure and exaltation of fault-finding, as tempts him, in spite of himself, to make what he finds ; till at length he is himself charged with being a " sham " ; that is to say, a pretender to perceptions and virtues which he does not prove, or at best a willing confounder of what differs from modes and appearances of his own, with violations of intrinsical wisdom and goodness. Upon this principle of judgment, Nature herself and the universe might be found fault with ; and the sun and the stars denounced for appearing no bigger than they do, or for not confining the measure of their operation to that of the taper we read by. Mr. Carlyle adopted a peculiar semi-German style, from the desire of putting thoughts on his paper instead of words, and perhaps of saving himself some trouble in the process. I feel certain that he does it from no other motive ; and I am sure he has a right to help himself to every diminution of trouble, seeing how many thoughts and feelings he undergoes. He also strikes an additional blow with the peculiarity, rouses men's attention by it, and helps his rare and powerful understanding to produce double its effect. It would be hard not to dispense with a few verbs and nominative cases, in consideration of so great a result. Yet, if we were to judge him by one of his own summary processes, and deny him the benefit of his notions of what is expedient and advisable, how could he exculpate this style, in which he denounces so many " shams," of being itself a sham ? of being affected, unnecessary, and ostentatious ? a jargon got up to confound pretension with performance, and reproduce endless German talk under the guise of novelty ?

Thus much in behalf of us dulcet signors of philanthropy, and conceders of good intention, whom Mr. Carlyle is always girding at, and who beg leave to say that they have not confined their lives to words, any more than the utterers of words more potential, but have had their "actions" too, and their sufferings, and even their thoughts, and have seen the faces of the gods of wonder and melancholy; albeit they end with believing them to be phantoms (however useful) of bad health, and think nothing finally potential but gentleness and persuasion.

• It has been well said, that love money as people may, there is generally something which they love better: some whim, or hobby-horse; some enjoyment or recreation; some personal, or political, or poetical predilection; some good opinion of this or that class of men; some club of one's fellows, or dictum of one's own;—with a thousand other *somes* and probabilities. I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere; and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life, which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to repute, and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle.

HUNT, 1850

LEIGH HUNT'S ACCOUNT OF HIS ESSAYS IN THEATRICAL CRITICISM

Autobiography.

MY brother John, at the beginning of the year 1805, set up a paper, called *The News*, and I went to live with him in Brydges Street, and write the theatricals in it.

It was the custom at that time for editors of papers to be intimate with actors and dramatists. They were often proprietors as well as editors; and, in that case, it was not expected that they should escape the usual intercourse, or wish to do so. It was thought a feather in the cap of all parties; and with their feathers they tickled one another. The newspaper man had consequence in the green-room, and plenty of tickets for his friends; and he dined at amusing tables. The dramatist secured a good-natured critique in his journal, sometimes got it written himself, or, according to Mr. Reynolds, was even himself the

author of it. The actor, if he was of any evidence, stood upon the same ground of reciprocity; and not to know a pretty actress would have been want of the knowing in general. Upon new performers, and upon writers not yet introduced, a journalist was more impartial; and sometimes, where the proprietor was in one interest more than another, or for some personal reason grew offended with an actor, or set of actors, a criticism would occasionally be hostile, and even severe. An editor, too, would now and then suggest to his employer the policy of exercising a freer authority, and obtain influence enough with him to show symptoms of it. I believe Bell's editor, who was more clever, was also more impartial than most critics; though the publisher of the *British Theatre*, and patron of the *Della Cruscans*, must have been hampered with literary intimacies. The best chance for an editor, who wished to have anything like an opinion of his own, was the appearance of a rival newspaper with a strong theatrical connection. Influence was here threatened with diminution. It was to be held up on other grounds; and the critic was permitted to find out that a bad play was not good, or an actress's petticoat of the lawful dimensions.

Puffing and plenty of tickets were, however, the system of the day. It was an interchange of amenities over the dinner table; a flattery of power on the one side, and puns on the other; and what the public took for a criticism on a play was a draft upon the box-office, or reminiscences of last Thursday's salmon and lobster-sauce. The custom was to write as short and as favourable a paragraph on the new piece as could be; to say that Bannister was "excellent" and Mrs. Jordan "charming"; to notice the "crowded house," or invent it, if necessary; and to conclude by observing that "the whole went off with *éclat*." For the rest, it was a critical religion in those times to admire Mr. Kemble; and at the period in question Master Betty had appeared, and been hugged to the hearts of the town as the young Roscius.

We saw that independence in theatrical criticism would be a great novelty. We announced it, and nobody believed us; we stuck to it, and the town believed everything we said. The proprietors of *The News*, of whom I knew so little that I cannot recollect with certainty any one of them, very handsomely left me to myself. My retired and scholastic habits kept me so; and the pride of success confirmed my independence with regard to others. I was then in my twentieth year, an early age at that time for a writer. The usual exaggeration of report made me younger than I was: and after being a "young Roscius" political, I was now looked upon as one critical. To know an actor personally appeared to me a vice not to be thought of; and I would as lief have taken poison as accepted a ticket from the theatres.

Good God! To think of the grand opinion I had of myself in those days, and what little reason I had for it! Not to accept the tickets was very proper, considering that I bestowed more blame than praise. There was also more good-nature than I supposed in not allowing myself to know any actors; but the vanity of my position had greater weight with me than anything else, and I must have proved it to discerning eyes by the small quantity of information I brought to my task, and the ostentation with which I produced it. I knew almost as little of the drama as young Roscius himself. Luckily, I had the advantage of him in knowing how unfit *he* was for his office; and, probably, he thought me as much so, though he could not have argued upon it; for I was in the minority respecting his merits, and the balance was then trembling on the beam; *The News*, I believe, hastened the settlement of the question. I wish with all my heart we had let him alone, and he had got a little more money. However, he obtained enough to create him a provision for life. His position, which appeared so brilliant at first, had a remarkable cruelty in it. Most men begin life with struggles, and have their vanity sufficiently knocked about the head and shoulders to make their kinder fortunes the more welcome. Mr. Betty had his sugar first and his physic afterwards. He began life with a double childhood, with a new and extraordinary felicity added to the natural enjoyments of his age; and he lived to see it speedily come to nothing, and to be taken for an ordinary person. I am told that he acquiesces in his fate, and agrees that the town were mistaken. If so, he is no ordinary person still, and has as much right to our respect for his good sense, as he is declared on all hands to deserve it for his amiableness. I have an anecdote of him to both purposes, which exhibits him in a very agreeable light. Hazlitt happened to be at a party where Mr. Betty was present; and in coming away, when they were all putting on their great-coats, the critic thought fit to compliment the dethroned favourite of the town by telling him that he recollected him in old times, and had been "much pleased with him." Betty looked at his memorialist, as much as to say, "You don't tell me so!" and then starting into a tragical attitude, exclaimed, "Oh, memory! memory!"

I was right about Master Betty, and I am sorry for it; though the town was in fault, not he. I think I was right also about Kemble; but I have no regret upon that score. He flourished long enough after my attack on his majestic dryness and deliberate nothings; and Kean would have taken the public by storm whether they had been prepared for him or not: —

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

Kemble faded before him like a tragedy ghost. I never denied the

merits which that actor possessed. He had the look of a Roman; made a very good ideal, though not a very real, Coriolanus, for his pride was not sufficiently blunt and unaffected; and in parts that suited his natural deficiency, such as Penruddock and the Abbé de l'Epée, would have been altogether admirable and interesting if you could have forgotten that their sensibility, in his hands, was not so much repressed, as wanting. He was no more to be compared to his sister than stone is to flesh and blood. There was much of the pedagogue in him. He made a fuss about trifles; was inflexible on a pedantic reading; in short, was rather a teacher of elocution than an actor, and not a good teacher on that account. There was a merit in his idealism as far as it went. He had, at least, faith in something classical and scholastic, and he made the town partake of it; but it was all on the surface—a hollow trophy; and I am persuaded that he had no idea in his head but of a stage Roman, and the dignity he added to his profession.

But if I was right about Kemble whose admirers I plagued enough, I was not equally so about the living dramatists whom I plagued more. I laid all the deficiences of the modern drama to their account, and treated them like a parcel of mischievous boys of whom I was the schoolmaster and whipper-in. I forgot that it was I who was the boy, and that they knew twenty times more of the world than I did. Not that I mean to say their comedies were excellent, or that my commonplaces about the superior merits of Congreve and Sheridan were not well founded; but there was more talent in their "five act farce" than I supposed; and I mistook, in a great measure, the defect of the age—its dearth of dramatic character—for that of the writers who were to draw upon it. It is true a great wit, by a laborious process, and the help of his acquirements, might extract a play or two from it, as was Sheridan's own case; but there was a great deal of imitation even in Sheridan, and he was fain to help himself to a little originality out of the characters of his less formalised countrymen, his own included.

It is remarkable that the three most amusing dramatists of the last age, Sheridan, Goldsmith, and O'Keefe, were all Irishmen, and all had characters of their own. Sheridan, after all, was Swift's Sheridan come to life again in the person of his grandson, with the oratory of Thomas Sheridan, the father, superadded and brought to bear. Goldsmith, at a disadvantage in his breeding, but full of address with his pen, drew upon his own absurdities and mistakes, and filled his dramas with ludicrous perplexity. O'Keefe was all for whim and impulse, but not without a good deal of conscience; and, accordingly, in his plays we have a sort of young and pastoral taste of life in the very midst of its sophistications. Animal spirits, quips and cranks, credulity, and good intention, are

triumphant throughout, and make a delicious mixture. It is a great credit to O'Keefe, that he can sometimes close upon the borders of the sentimental drama, and did it not only with impunity but advantage; but sprightliness and sincerity enable a man to do everything with advantage.

It was a pity that as much could not be said of Mr. Colman, who, after taking more licence in his writings than anybody, became a licenser *ex-officio*, and seemed inclined to license nothing but cant. When this writer got into the sentimental, he made a sad business of it, for he had no faith in sentiment. He mouthed and overdid it, as a man does when he is telling a lie. At a farce he was admirable; and he remained so to the last, whether writing or licensing.

Morton seemed to take a colour from the writers all round him, especially from O'Keefe and the sentimentalists. His sentiment was more in earnest than Colman's, yet, somehow, not happy either. There was a gloom in it, and a smack of the Old Bailey. It was best when he put it in the shape of humour, as in the paternal and inextinguishable *tailorism* of Old Rapid, in a *Cure for the Heart-Ache*. Young Rapid, who complains that his father "sleeps so slow," is also a pleasant fellow, and worthy of O'Keefe. He is one of the numerous crop that sprang up from *Wild Oats*, but not in so natural a soil.

The character of the modern drama at that time was singularly commercial; nothing but gentlemen in distress, and hard landlords, and generous interferers, and fathers who got a great deal of money, and sons who spent it. I remember one play in particular, in which the whole wit ran upon prices, bonds, and post-obits. You might know what the pit thought of their pound-notes by the ostentatious indifference with which the heroes of the pieces gave them away, and the admiration and pretended approval with which the spectators observed it. To make a present of a hundred pounds was as if a man had uprooted and given away an Egyptian pyramid.

Mr. Reynolds was not behindhand with his brother dramatists in drawing upon the taste of the day for gains and distresses. It appears by his Memoirs that he had too much reason for so doing. He was, perhaps, the least ambitious, and the least vain (whatever charges to the contrary his animal spirits might have brought on him) of all the writers of that period. In complexional vivacity he certainly did not yield to any of them; his comedies, if they were fugitive, were genuine representations of fugitive manners, and went merrily to their death; and there is one of them, the *Dramatist*, founded upon something more lasting, which promises to remain in the collections, and deserves it; which is not a little to say of any writer. I never wish for a heartier laugh than I

have enjoyed, since I grew wiser, not only in seeing, but in reading the vagaries of his dramatic hero, and his mystifications of "Old Scratch." When I read the good-humoured Memoirs of this writer the other day, I felt quite ashamed of the ignorant and boyish way in which I used to sit in judgment upon his faults, without being aware of what was good in him; and my repentance was increased by the very proper manner in which he speaks of his critics, neither denying the truth of their charges in letter, nor admitting them altogether in spirit; in fact, showing that he knew very well what he was about, and that they, whatsoever they fancied to the contrary, did not.

Mr. Reynolds, agreeably to his sense and good-humour, never said a word to his critics at the time. Mr. Thomas Dibdin, not quite so wise, wrote me a letter, which Incledon, I am told, remonstrated with him for sending, saying, it would do him no good with the "d——d boy." And he was right. I published it, with an answer, and only thought that I made dramatists "come bow to me." Mr. Colman attacked me in a prologue, which, by a curious chance, Fawcett spoke right in my teeth, the box I sat in happening to be directly opposite him. I laughed at the prologue, and only looked upon Mr. Colman as a great monkey pelting me with nuts, which I ate. Attacks of this kind were little calculated to obtain their end with a youth who persuaded himself that he wrote for nothing but the public good; who mistook the impression which anybody of moderate talents can make with a newspaper, for the result of something peculiarly his own; and who had just enough scholarship to despise the want of it in others. I do not pretend to think that the criticisms in *The News* had no merit at all. They showed an acquaintance with the style of Voltaire, Johnson, and others; were not unagreeably sprinkled with quotation; and, above all, were written with more care and attention than was customary with newspapers at that time. The pains I took to round a period with nothing in it, or to invent a simile that should appear offhand, would have done honour to better stuff.

A portion of these criticisms subsequently formed the appendix of an original volume on the same subject, entitled "Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres" [1807]. I have the book now before me, and if I thought it had a chance of survival I should regret and qualify a good deal of uninformed judgment in it respecting the art of acting, which, with much inconsistent recommendation to the contrary, is too often confounded with a literal instead of a liberal imitation of nature. I particularly erred with respect to comedians like Munden, whose superabundance of humour and expression I confounded with farce and buffoonery. Charles Lamb taught me better.

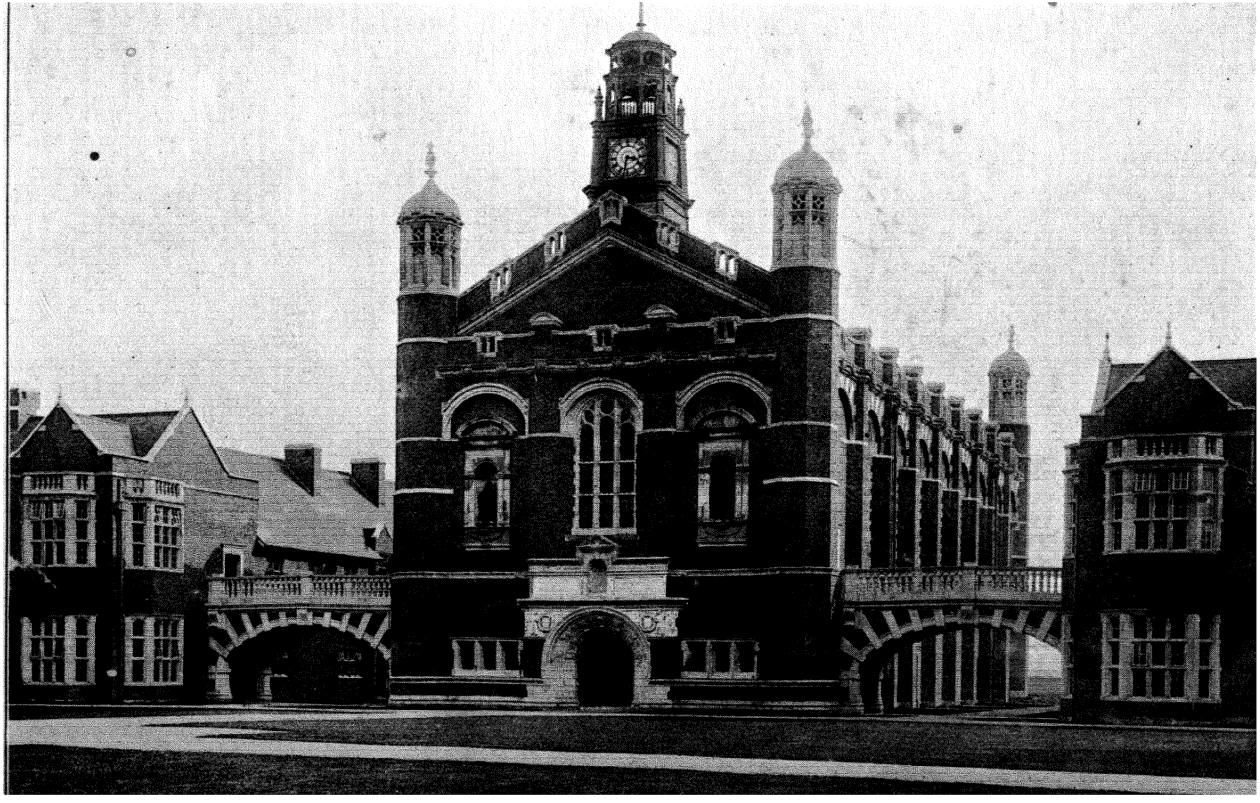
LAMB

Table Talk: January 31st, 1821.

LAMB was a humanist, in the most universal sense of the term. His imagination was not great, and he also wanted sufficient heat and music to render his poetry as good as his prose; but as a prose writer, and within the wide circuit of humanity, no man ever took a more complete range than he. He had felt, thought, and suffered so much, that he literally had intolerance for nothing; and he never seemed to have it, but when he supposed the sympathies of men, who might have known better, to be imperfect. He was a wit and an observer of the first order, as far as the world around him was concerned, and society in its existing state; for as to anything theoretical or transcendental, no man ever had less care for it, or less power. To take him out of habit and convention, however tolerant he was to those who could speculate beyond them, was to put him into an exhausted receiver, or to send him naked, shivering, and driven to shatters, through the regions of space and time. He was only at his ease in the old arms of humanity; and humanity loved and comforted him like one of its wisest, though weakest children. His life had experienced great and peculiar sorrows; but he kept up a balance between those and his consolations, by the goodness of his heart, and the ever-willing sociality of his humour; though, now and then, as if he would cram into one moment the spleen of years, he would throw out a startling and morbid subject for reflection, perhaps in no better shape than a pun; for he was a great punster. It was a levity that relieved the gravity of his thoughts and kept them from falling too heavily earthwards.

Lamb was under the middle size, and of fragile make; but with a head as fine as if it had been carved on purpose. He had a very weak stomach. Three glasses of wine would put him in as lively a condition as can only be wrought in some men by as many bottles; which subjected him to mistakes on the part of the inconsiderate.

Lamb's essays, especially those collected under the signature of ELIA, will take their place among the daintiest productions of English *wit-melancholy*,—an amiable melancholy being the groundwork of them, and serving to throw out their delicate flowers of wit and character with the greater nicety. Nor will they be liked the less for a sprinkle of old language, which was natural in him by reason of his great love of the old English writers. Shakespeare himself might have read them, and Hamlet have quoted them.



THE NEW CHRIST'S HOSPITAL (BIG SCHOOL) IN 1920.

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1804. By Northcote.

1806. By Washington Allston.

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1814 ? By T. Phillips (in Murray's edition of *Table Talk*).

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